

ARCADIA NEWS

VOL. 33 NO. 11

ARCADIA • BILTMORE • CAMELBACK CORRIDOR

FEBRUARY 2026



TIME FOR AN ADVENTURE

The Desert Disco Club inspires its members to explore mountains, try new activities and build friendships.

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LET'S MEET UP!

Arcadia residents are invited to the Neighborhood Association's annual meeting in February.

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ART ONE LIVES ON

b-art gallery partnered with the Art One Foundation, preserving a legacy while connecting Phoenix artists.

PAGE 5

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arcadianewsonline.com (for archives)

Arcadia News is published monthly by Arcadia News for residents of the Arcadia neighborhoods, and is available free of charge, limited to one copy per reader. Mailed subscriptions \$36 annually for Continental U.S. Contact office for details. Additional copies of the current issue of Arcadia News may be obtained from the Arcadia News office. All content is copyrighted (©2026) by Arcadia News. Contents in full or part may not be reproduced without the expressed written consent of the publisher. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily the opinions of the publisher or its employees and does not constitute an endorsement of products or services. Readers are urged to verify any statements. Advertisers assume full liability and responsibility for all content of advertisements printed and for any claims arising from such advertising and represent that all licenses and consents and waivers have been obtained including from third parties having rights in text or graphics. The Advertiser and/or its agency agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless Publisher for, from and against any loss, damage, claim, cost or expense relating to or resulting from Advertiser's advertisements, including from the unauthorized use of Advertiser of any name, photograph, sketch or words which may be protected by copyright or trademark law. Articles and photographs can be submitted, to be considered for use in future issues. Any unsolicited manuscripts or photographs cannot be returned. The publisher reserves the right to reject any advertisement which is not in keeping with the standards of this publication.

Audited by:



Monthly circulation: 19,000.
Primary distribution by
U.S. Postal Service.



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Scottsdale's Civil War Roundtable explores history beyond battles, preserving stories, hosting expert speakers, and connecting enthusiasts through monthly gatherings.

(back) Karen Henderson Johnson,
Yoonie Witt, Michelle Vallow,
Olga Gutierrez-Moya, Kristy Resch,
Margo Placencio, Kimberly Smeester,
Jill Tadwick, Amy Johnson.
(front) Kim Langan, Rae Blaski,
and Shelley Dillon-Pearce.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY JOHNSON



BUILDING A

Safer Community-

1 SWIM LESSON AT A TIME

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Ten or so years ago, if you'd have asked me to go on a hike – could be Camelback, could be a short jaunt on the side of a random hill – I would have laughed and said 'eh, I'll meet you for mimosas after you're done.' I was not about to put on some boots and carry myself up a mountain, no thank you, ma'am.

Nowadays, though, I love a good trek. Grab some friends, don't forget your shades and get ready to see some awesome views. Plus, there's always a burrito or pancakes waiting at the end.

That idea is similar to what Arcadian Amy Johnson had in mind when she started the Desert Disco Adventure Club. She wanted to hike as many miles as she could and thought she'd see if anyone else wanted to do the same. Turns out, there were a whole bunch of ladies ready to climb, make new friends, and discover something new about their state (which is celebrating its 114th birthday this year)!

Speaking of birthdays, the Phoenix Writers Club is celebrating its centennial in 2026.

Founded by women journalists barred from a men-only press club, the group continues to support writers of all backgrounds and experience levels and remains committed to fostering creativity and mentorship through monthly meetings, guest speakers, and a shared belief in writers helping writers.

Keep an eye out for the upcoming Home & Design and Camp Guide, coming your way soon. Have a fantastic February, and thank you, as always, for reading Arcadia News.

Mallory
– Mallory



UPCOMING THEMES:

MARCH

Arcadia Home & Design

APRIL

Camp Guide

MAY

Mothers

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"In February, nature reminds us that even in the coldest moments, beauty can still flourish." – Gabriela Alemán

ARCADIA'S PETS

1. BEAR is a four-year-old white lab who has been part of our family since he was 8 weeks old. Bear was born on a farm surrounded by various animals, including a very large pig and a turtle, where we believe he picked up many of his endearing mannerisms. He is affectionate, always eager for cuddles and belly rubs. Bear loves to play and especially enjoys long walks when the weather is cooler. From the moment we brought him home, Bear has been a loving addition to our family, constantly reminding us of the beauty of unconditional love. – *Matt B.*



2. DUNE is an 18-month-old dog rescued from the streets and saved from euthanasia through Underdog Rescue. Since June, he's become crate and doggy-door trained. Sweet, affectionate, and irresistibly cute, Dune is up for adoption and hoping to find a loving Arcadia-area family to call home. He's a true love bug! – *Jennifer C.*



3. Hi Arcadia News readers! Meet **GUSTAVE** (or Gus, or Goose). He's five and we got him when he was eight weeks old. He's the friendliest and happiest dog you'll ever meet. He's got a lot of energy but even more love for everyone and everything he crosses paths with. If you shop at the Safeway on 48th and Indian School you'll see him there – he never misses our weekly grocery store adventure! – *Tyler T.*



4. Hi, I'm **MOZZIE!** A four-year-old, fun loving good boy that will do anything for a game of fetch. What I lack in common sense I make up with an abundance of cuteness. Some would say I am spoiled; I just say I'm well taken care of! – *Amber and Travis P.*



Would you like to share your pet? Send a photo and a description (50 words max) of your pet to editor@arcadianews.com or text it to 602.840.6379. 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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VOTED BEST TAKEOUT IN THE WEST VALLEY VIEW 2023, 2025
VOTED BEST LOCAL BURGER IN THE WEST VALLEY VIEW 2025
VOTED BEST OF THE BEST SEAFOOD AND TAKEOUT IN THE WEST VALLEY VIEW 2025
VOTED BEST SEAFOOD IN THE GLENDALE STAR 2020, 2023, 2025
VOTED BEST SEAFOOD IN LOVIN' LIFE 2023, 2024, 2025
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Art One Foundation forges new creative partnership

By Cliff Summerhill

When b-art gallery opened its doors in Phoenix, owner Andy Byrnes envisioned more than a traditional space. He wanted to create a welcoming environment where art felt approachable, conversations came naturally, and artists could thrive. Today, through a meaningful partnership with the Art One Foundation, that vision is helping preserve a legacy while creating new opportunities for artists across the Valley.

"As both a collector and an artist, opening the gallery felt like a natural extension of our work and my belief that art should be approachable," Byrnes said. "I want b-art to be a space where high-quality artwork and accessibility coexist."

That philosophy made b-art a natural home for artists connected to the former Art One Gallery, which closed after serving the community for more than three decades. When the gallery shut its doors, many artists lost not only a place to show their work but also a sense of belonging. Byrnes saw an opportunity to help sustain that momentum.

"When Art One closed, it left a noticeable gap in the community," Byrnes said. "Partnering with Max and Rebecca, who knew of them so well, allowed us to give many artists a new home and space to grow at b-art."

For Max Smith, gallery manager and leader of the Art One Foundation, the partnership represents continuity and hope.

"Being featured at b-art has helped reestablish opportunity," Smith said. "In many ways, b-art represents the next step Art One always encouraged its artists to take."

The gallery itself is designed to foster connection. Visitors can check out upcoming exhibitions and find opportunities to meet artists in an atmosphere that invites people to engage.

"b-art is intentionally designed as a place for conversation, discovery, and connection," Byrnes said.

Beyond exhibitions, b-art gives back to Phoenix's artist community. A percentage of all sales is donated to the Art One Foundation.

"After the gallery closed, the foundation lost a physical space to



With nine movable wall panels, the space can transform to support exhibitions, intimate gatherings, workshops, and a multitude of events.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANDY BYRNES

connect directly to the community," Smith said. "b-art has helped restore that connection, allowing us to continue funding programs that support student artists in meaningful ways."

In December, the Art One Foundation awarded \$3,500 in grants to Maryvale High School's visual arts department, One Step Beyond, Inc., and Autism Academy of Phoenix.

"This support would not be possible without community partnerships," Smith said.

"Phoenix is a city shaped by creativity through art, architecture, design, and construction," Byrnes said. "Offering a place where designers and collectors can source high-quality artwork is essential to the cultural growth of the city, and it's something we're proud to be a part of."

Byrnes sees b-art as a space that will continue to evolve, hosting exhibitions, workshops, fundraisers, and intimate events. The gallery will also debut a solo exhibition by Arizona artist Loren Yagoda on February 6.

b-artphx.com
artonefoundation.com



EVER WISH YOUR VOICE COULD BE HEARD?

ARCADIA NEIGHBORHOOD ANNUAL MEETING

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21
8:30-10:00 a.m.

Join your neighbors for an engaging morning with elected officials and community leaders, plus important neighborhood updates and open discussion.

- Complimentary breakfast
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- Relevant pending issues
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LIONS, TIGERS & BEARS... AND E-BIKES!

Okay... not the animals. But e-bikes are becoming a real concern, and we'll be talking about it - along with other key issues affecting Arcadia.



Bring your questions, concerns, and suggestions.
This is your community - help shape it.

WE'LL SEE YOU FEBRUARY 21!!!

Prince of Peace Church
(3641 N. 56th St.)



www.acmna.org

WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?

BRIEFS

Mark your calendars: The annual **Arcadia Cares: Food for Kidz Packathon** is back and scheduled for Friday, March 6 (4-7 p.m.) and March 7 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (3641 N. 56th St., Phoenix). The community is welcome to volunteer to help pack meals for underprivileged families. Sign-up is now open.

popphoenix.org

The first annual **AONA Car Show** is rolling into Arcadia Osborn on February 28, 2026, from 8 to 11 a.m. at First Chinese Baptist Church (4910 E. Earll Dr., Phoenix). Spectators are free, so bring your friends, family, and appreciation for great cars to enjoy a morning of automotive fun. Have a vehicle you'd like to show off? Participants can register via a QR code on Instagram.

arcadiaosbornphx.com

The Arcadia Camelback Mountain Neighborhood Association will hold its **Neighborhood Meeting** on Saturday, February 21, at 8:30 a.m. in the choir room at Prince of Peace (3641 N. 56th St.,

Phoenix). Connect with neighbors and get the latest updates on key issues impacting Arcadia and the surrounding areas. Coffee and pastries will be served.

acmna.org



Burn Boot Camp opened a new location near Arcadia at 7607 E. McDowell Road in December. The studio offers unlimited 45-minute fitness camps, one-on-one trainer and nutrition support, and complimentary child watch and is currently running a special: four weeks for \$69.

burnbootcamp.com

The annual **Arizona Fine Art Expo** (26540 N. Scottsdale Road) invites guests to meet artists in their creative space and immerse themselves in the process – it's worth the drive if you're an art lover! Throughout the event, 120 on-site artists will showcase mediums such as bronze, stone carving, metal and wood sculptures, southwest art, western art and mid-century modern pieces. This expo is ongoing until March 29. Admission starts at \$10; 12 and under in free.

arizonafineartexpo.com



The 2026 **New Horizons High School Student Art Exhibition**, held annually at the Shemer Art Center (5005 E. Camelback Road) since 1987, is on display until February 15 and features approximately 90 works of art created by students from over 46 high schools across the Valley. Stop by, check out the pieces and show some love to our local artists.

shemerartcenter.org



Arizona Indian Festival at the Scottsdale Civic Center.

EVENTS

SUNDAY 2/1

Arizona Indian Festival

10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Scottsdale Civic Center, 3939 N. Drinkwater Blvd. Held in conjunction with the Parada del Sol, the Arizona Indian Festival will showcase American Indian tribes from all around the state. Guests can check out Indian "villages," arts and crafts, traditional dancing and singing, cooking demos, travel and tourism vendors and a variety of traditional cuisine. This event is free.

arizonaindiantourism.org

El Puente Fest

2-6 p.m. at the Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado Pkwy. This festival brings together artists of all ages to "highlight the importance of connecting traditional arts and culture practices from one generation to the next." Attendees can watch high school mariachi bands, elementary school ballet and folklórico dances and participate in free activities. There will also be food trucks and vendors. This event is free.

culturalcoalition.com

SATURDAY 2/7

Movies at the Boardwalk

5-8 p.m. at the Arizona Boardwalk, 9500 E. Via de Ventura, Scottsdale. Movies at the Boardwalk is a free family event with music, games and prizes. This evening's movie is *Coco*. There will also be character meet and greets, photo ops, activities and a make-and-take Valentine's Day card. Don't forget folding chairs and blankets! Admission is free.

azboardwalk.com

Baroque to the Future

7 p.m. at Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W. Rio Salado Pkwy. MusicaNova Orchestra invites audiences to experience a concert

that transforms Baroque era inspiration into contemporary sound. Guests will hear "overlooked gems paired with inventive modern works, revealing how composers across centuries have drawn on Baroque forms to create something new." Tickets start at \$32.

musicanovaaz.org

THURSDAY 2/12

Loteria Night

7:30 p.m. at Desert Botanical Garden, 1201 N. Galvin Pkwy., Phoenix. Join DBG for eight rounds of the garden's version of Lotería – a Mexican game that uses a grid of colorful images – like bingo without numbers. Attendees can play for a chance to win prizes while enjoying music by DJ Chacho Mike and a menu of street tacos, tamales and more. Drinks are also available for purchase, and this event is for grown-ups only. Tickets start at \$35.

dbg.org

Glow Up @SMoCA

7 p.m. at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, 7374 E. 2nd St., Scottsdale. Glow Up is a series focused on self-care and wellness. Each month features sound baths and gentle yoga inside SMoCA's exhibitions, led by Melinda Milton, a skilled practitioner, who will guide guests through meditative techniques. Need a breather? Look no further. Tickets are \$25.

scottsdalearts.org

THURSDAY 2/12 – SUNDAY 2/15

ALICE (in Wonderland)

Times vary, at Phoenix Symphony Hall, 75 N. 2nd St. In this interpretation by choreographer Septime Webre, Ballet Arizona's ALICE (in Wonderland) blends ballet and contemporary dance for a whimsical journey that promises to delight audiences of every age. "Breathtaking sets,

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WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?



ALICE (in Wonderland) at Phoenix Symphony Hall.



Loteria Night at Desert Botanical Garden.

striking costumes and music performed by The Phoenix Symphony” will enchant all. Tickets start at \$36.
balletaz.org

THURSDAY 2/12 – SUNDAY 2/22

Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show
8 a.m. at WestWorld, 16601 N. Pima Road, Scottsdale. Featuring more than 2,100 horses, attendees will witness a variety of showings at the 71st annual Arabian Horse Show. There will also be immersive experiences, a fine art exhibit, and craft and shopping vendors. Admission is \$15; tickets good for all 11 days are \$75.
scottsdaleshow.com

FRIDAY 2/13

Love is in the Air, a Valentine’s Cabaret
7 p.m. at Paradise Valley United Methodist Church, 4455 E. Lincoln Dr. Join the vocalists of PVUMC’s music department for Love is in the Air, a heartfelt cabaret celebrating love – just in time for February 14. From musical theatre favorites and opera to pop hits and soulful classics, this concert features a mix of personal favorites, solos, and playful group numbers, all accompanied by live piano. This event is free.
pvumc.org

SATURDAY 2/14

Love Blooms Merchantile Market
10 a.m. at Scottsdale Civic Center, 3939 N. Drinkwater Blvd. A day of shopping local? Yes, please! The Love Blooms Market boasts 50+ vendors, permanent jewelry and tattoos, a kissing booth, hands-on make and take experiences, beer and cocktail tents, live music, food booths, and activities for the kids. This event is free.
merchantilemarket.com

Used Book Sale
8 a.m. at the Arizona State Fairgrounds, 1826 W. McDowell Road, Phoenix. Book Lovers rejoice! The 69th annual Used Book Sale happens at the state fairgrounds. There will be over 500,000 books, paperbacks, videos, CDs, DVDs, albums, puzzles and memorabilia for you to choose from. This event is free, but you might have to pay for parking.
vnsabooksale.org

SUNDAY 2/15

Willo Historic Home Tour
9 a.m., starting at Third Ave. and W. Monte Vista Road in downtown Phoenix. This 37th annual tour will showcase restored historic homes and gardens in various styles and eras. After the tour, guests are invited to a street fair with shopping and vendors, live music, food trucks and a beer and wine garden for the grownups. Tickets are \$25.
willophx.com

MONDAY 2/16

Touch a Truck
9 a.m.-2 p.m. at North Phoenix Baptist Church, 5757 N. Central Ave. Get ready to get up close and personal with over 50 vehicles at the annual Touch a Truck event. There will be fire trucks, police vehicles, helicopters, race cars and military autos for attendees to explore, plus food vendors and interactive games. Proceeds go to Camp Patrick for kids with Spina Bifida. Tickets are \$5 per person.
camppatrick.com

TUESDAY 2/17

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable
6 p.m. at the Scottsdale Public Library, 3839 N. Drinkwater Blvd. This month’s Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable will host living historian Curt Fields for his

presentation, “An Evening with General Grant.” Dr. Fields has portrayed General and President Grant in 22 states so far. Doors open at 5 p.m. for meeting the speaker, book sale, and Civil War videos. This event is free.
scottsdalecwrt.org

Technology Tuesday
2 p.m. at Beyond Accessible, 15525 N.

83rd Way, Scottsdale. Confused by all that newfangled technology? Never fear – Beyond Accessible is here. Experts will help participants with the endless possibilities of cell phones, such as new features, apps, and techniques for photography, social media and more. This class is free, but registration is required.
beyondaccessible.com

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WHAT'S HAPPENING, ARCADIA?



Creepy Book Club Retreat at The Scott Resort.



Furry Friends Fine Arts Festival at Shemer Art Center.

THUR. 2/19 – SUN. 2/22

Creepy Book Club Retreat

Times vary, at The Scott Resort, 4925 N. Scottsdale Road. Three days of authors, books and entertainment, all in the name of the thriller genre. Guests will find a welcome reception, an up-and-coming author expo, lunch and evening entertainment. Lounge by the pool with a good book in hand! Headlining the retreat are Ashley Winstead, Jason Rekulak and Lucinda Berry, among others. Tickets start at \$375 for the weekend.

thecreepybookclub.com

FRIDAY 2/27

Arizona Cocktail Weekend

Hours and locations vary. For those who enjoy a good drink every now and again, Arizona Cocktail Weekend is everything you might dream of. Educational seminars, a cocktail carnival, a mixologist dinner, cocktail market and competition are a sampling of the events taking place over the weekend. Ticket prices vary depending on which event you want to attend.

arizonacocktailweekend.com

SATURDAY 2/28

Furry Friends Fine Arts Festival

9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Shemer Art Center, 5005 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix. An art festival for the entire family, pets included. Shemer will showcase all things animal with paintings, drawings, photography, ceramics, metal, furniture and clothing. There will also be vendors, paw readings, pet adoptions, contests, live entertainment and activities for the kids. Admission is \$5 per person or \$15 for the family.

shemerartcenter.org

Spirited Sipping Seminar

3 p.m. at Mountain Shadows Resort, 5445 E. Lincoln Dr., Scottsdale. Hosted by Hearth '61, these seminars are designed to teach attendees about the history of wine and spirits through savory sips. Students will learn about classic and modern drinks – anything from vino to cocktails is on the table. This month's class revolves around "Fun with Sancerre." Class size is limited to 20 people. Tickets start at \$45 per person.

mountainshadows.com

Thrive to Five Playfest

9:30 a.m. at the Arizona State Fairgrounds, 1826 W. McDowell Road, Phoenix. Presented by Southwest Human Development, this event is for the littles to learn and have fun all in one. There will be free books, playtime, make-and-take activities, photo booths, a sensory friendly play area, yard games, stage performances, a crafters market and early childhood resources. Tickets are \$10 per family.

swhd.org/playfest

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**VALENTINE'S DINNER,
COVERED** 

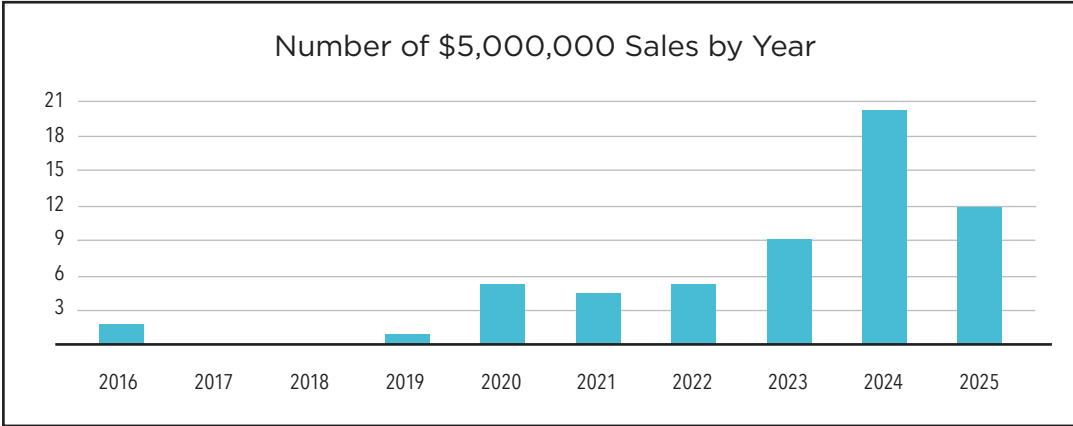
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\$5,000,000 Sales: *A New Normal in Arcadia Proper*



For much of the last decade, a \$5 million home sale in Arcadia was an outlier that was often tied to a single, standout property. The first time the \$5mil barrier was broken in Arcadia was in 2016 when 6415 E Exeter was sold for \$6,000,000. This was a stunning 9,221 sq.ft. home designed by Mark Candelaria and built by Nance Construction on a prime acre lot in Lombardi Estates.

Since then, 57 homes have sold over \$5mil! What was once rare air is now becoming a monthly occurrence that is paving the way for even higher sales in the future. Here is what we are seeing:

- 1. New Construction Has Redefined the Ceiling** New construction builds are often bigger than ever with guest houses, resort-style yards, and other amenities. These homes are setting new comps for the future.
- 2. Buyer Profiles Have Changed** Arcadia Proper is attracting buyers relocating from high cost coastal markets, where \$5 million represents a lateral move rather than a stretch. These buyers are comfortable paying for land, architecture, and location.
- 3. Scarcity of True “Prime” Lots** The supply of tear-down lots in Arcadia Proper continues to shrink. As inventory tightens, the best streets and view corridors command premiums that simply didn’t exist a decade ago.

Arcadia Proper is no longer chasing luxury status, it is defining it. While not every home will trade at these levels, the presence of these large sales helps to permanently raise the profile of the neighborhood and anchors pricing on the higher end.

For more in depth analysis on your home or the market, give me a call anytime to chat statistics. Our edge is your gain. Have a great 2026!

Tucker Blalock



THE BROKERY

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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

MONDAY 2/2

Reba: The Tribute

7:30 p.m. at Arizona Broadway Theatre, 7701 W. Paradise Lane, Peoria. Experience country royalty with Corrie Sachs' tribute to Reba McEntire. Sachs has been named Las Vegas' No. 1 Reba tribute artist and impersonator – so you know this show is authentic! You might hear songs like Sunday Kind of Love, What if It's You, and Fancy. This is a non-dining event, and tickets start at \$78.

azbroadway.org

FRIDAY 2/6

Canada Week

8 a.m. at Queen Creek Olive Mill, 25062 S. Meridian Road. Snowbirds, flock here! Happening every day until February 8 (starting at the end of January), Queen Creek Olive Mill is welcoming friends from the north with the 12th annual Canada Week. The big draw is the release of a limited-edition maple balsamic vinegar, but there's also Canadian food and drink specials all week long, plus live music and plenty of shopping. This event is free.

queencreekolivemill.com

SATURDAY 2/7

The Secret Garden

7:30 p.m. at Fountain Hills Theater, 11445 N. Saguaro Blvd. We may all recall the story that is The Secret Garden: Mary Lennox is sent to live with her reclusive uncle. When she discovers a hidden door in the estate's mysterious gardens, she embarks on a journey of transformation, magic and the beauty that lies within. Tickets are \$40 for adults, \$18 for youth.

fhtaz.org

SUNDAY 2/8

A Chorus Line

2 p.m. at the Peoria Center for the Performing Arts, 10580 N. 83rd Dr. Set during a single high-stakes audition, this show places audiences inside the rehearsal



Navajo Rug and Jewelry Show at the Holland Community Center.

hall as 17 dancers reveal their hopes, fears, and stories – all in pursuit of a coveted spot in the chorus. Hear iconic songs, see electrifying choreography and gain an intimate look at the lives behind the spotlight. Tickets start at \$43.

theaterworks.org

FRIDAY 2/13 – SUNDAY 2/15

Chandler Fine Art and Wine Festival

10 a.m. in downtown Chandler, 178 E. Boston St. Guests of this fifth annual festival will find more than 100 world-class artists showcasing their wares (paintings, drawings, photography, sculptures and more) in an outdoor gallery while the region's best wineries keep the beverages flowing. There will also be shopping, food and live entertainment. This event is \$5; tasting tickets and souvenir glass are \$30.

thunderbirdartists.com

SATURDAY 2/14

Second Saturdays

4 p.m. in downtown Peoria. Come check out a free, family-friendly music and art festival, open until 8 p.m. The historic district comes alive with art, live music,



Canada Week at Queen Creek Olive Mill.

vendors, hands-on activities, and community. Eat, drink and be merry – there's something for everyone!

peoriaaz.gov

Jack Talks Lecture Series

2 p.m. at the Tubac Presidio State Historic Park, 1 Burruel St., Tubac. Historian Jack Lasseter shares the epic story of the Buffalo soldiers, black troopers in the U.S. Army after the Civil War, and their contribution during the Indian Wars. Tickets are \$15 and include admission to the Tubac Presidio State Historic Park and Museum and refreshments.

tubacpresidio.org

SATURDAY 2/21

Navajo Rug and Jewelry Show

10 a.m. at the Holland Community Center, 34250 N. 60th St., Scottsdale. Shop for one-of-a-kind handmade Navajo rugs, jewelry, and crafts and experience Native music, weaving demonstrations, stories, and cultural teachings. One hundred percent of proceeds support the Navajo Elders. There will be food and bev available for purchase, but admission is free!

hollandcenter.org

Arizona Renaissance Festival

10 a.m.-6 p.m. at the festival grounds, 12601 E. US 60, Gold Canyon. Ren Fest is here! Guests can enjoy entertainment, music, jousting tournaments, games, activities, mermaids, acrobats and food fit for a king. Dress up in your best 16th-century costume and head to Gold Canyon to eat, drink and be merry. Tickets are \$38 for adults; \$26 for kids.

arizona.renfestinfo.com

THURSDAY 2/26

Only the Lonely

7:30 p.m. at Hale Theatre, 50 W. Page Ave., Gilbert. Enjoy a night of Roy Orbison's career-spanning hits, which of course include Pretty Woman, Only the Lonely, Blue Bayou and more. Orbison, AKA "the Big O" was

an American icon admired by legends including Elvis Presley – and now, you can see his music performed for real on the stage. Tickets start at \$47.

haletheatrearizona.com

SATURDAY 2/28

Boots & Bangles II

11:30 a.m. at We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort, 10438 WeKoPa Way, Fort McDowell. Hosted by the Fountain Hills Women's Club, this year's Boots & Bangles event promises to be even bigger and better. The afternoon will feature live music by KC & the Moonshine Band and DJ Jason O'Neal, line dancing, silent auctions, a 50/50 raffle, a selfie photo booth, lunch, bevies and more, with proceeds benefitting scholarships for women in the community. Tickets are \$80.

fountainhillswomensclub.com

Beach Bootcamp

9 a.m. at Revel Surf Park, 4503 S. Power Road, Mesa. Soak up the sun and get your sweat on with Revel Surf. Instructor Pam Paley will guide attendees through a 60-minute, high-energy, athletic, and fun challenge designed to help you "build your beach body." Once you're done, head over to the beach or surf lagoon to relax. Admission starts at \$43.

revelsurf.com

The Arizona Super Show

11 a.m. at State Farm Stadium, 1 Cardinals Dr., Glendale. Showcasing lowrider and custom cars, attendees will also find live entertainment and a celebration of car culture at this event. Guests can network and explore the latest trends in the automotive industry while checking out classics, viclas, bicycles, fashion, music, food and more. Tickets are \$59 per person.

thearizonasupershow.com

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CLS athletics seeks second consecutive softball title

By Alex Gross

Zach Miller has stepped foot on countless sports fields throughout his life, from rec league soccer pitches to perfectly manicured NFL turfs. Few of these athletic endeavors, though, have been more rewarding than getting to coach his two daughters on the softball field.

It just so happens that the family bonding has resulted in quite a few victories.

The Christ Lutheran Lady Lions are riding an undefeated regular season record and a 126-13 run differential into the playoffs,

“

It’s an easy job to coach these kinds of players.

”

where they hope to continue winning on their way to another championship for the school.

The Lions won the CYAA championship last year and came into this season with pressure to repeat. But most of last season’s champions were graduating eighth graders, meaning that coaches had to look for new talent to step up to the plate.

“Fortunately, the new members of the team have more than delivered,” Coach David Bellman said. “We have several girls who play on high-level club softball teams as well

as girls who play and excel in other sports, but all are great athletes and have some sort of history with the game.”

Only two current players will graduate in the spring, so the team’s younger core will remain intact for next season.

Bellman and Miller had big shoes to fill when replacing former Head Coach Quinn Klappenback, who led the Lady Lions to three undefeated seasons and only two losses in four years. This year’s roster has made the transition as seamless as possible.

“It’s an easy job to coach these kinds of players because they all get it,” said Miller. “They practice hard, they want to get better, and they get along with each other. They want to win for each other.”

That winning spirit pervades throughout sports for these athletes, and it’s driven many to want to pursue careers in high school athletics, too. Some, like Bellman’s youngest daughter, already have collegiate softball aspirations.

Each coach has two daughters on the team and that’s given them both insight into their kids as athletes and as individuals.

“It’s interesting because they bring completely different strengths so it’s fun to watch them together,” said Bellman.

“Having played tons of sports myself, I understand what it’s like to kind of have a different personality, especially in all the locker rooms I’ve been in,” said Miller. “To be able to coach them and then have



Kaydence M., Nora W., Remi M., Dacey B., Cadyn G., Coach Zach, Lilly S., Daley B., Coach David, Brie B., Coach Randall, Charlotte T., Hannah H. and Ida D.

each of them take coaching differently – that’s definitely been something I’ve had to grow at.”

The growing pains have nonetheless been worthwhile, as Bellman and Miller have not only picked up right where Coach Klappenback left off, but also learned how best to help their daughters through future athletic endeavors.

How each athlete has developed in real time while maintaining a championship standard of play has resulted in foundational

moments of growth and memories they can cherish for life.

“It’s special to look at the banner in the gym knowing the three of us had a part in it,” said Bellman.

The Lady Lions shutout the St. Gregory Spartans 16-0 in their first postseason game. CLS scored early and racked up 12 hits highlighted by an inside-the-park homer from Lilly and triples from Cadyn and Remi, while Brie threw two innings of no-hit ball and struck out five.

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The box that saves parents from bathroom doorway duty

By Mallory Gleich

Arcadia mom Kara Forney came up with Good Guygiene the way many business ideas do: through experience. When her kids were in the tween stage, she realized there’s a time when hygiene matters – a lot – but she found that boys don’t necessarily have the tools, interest, or confidence to manage it without a gentle nudge from mom or dad.

“What surprised me was how hard it was to find a solution that was age-appropriate, clean, and aimed at boys – something that didn’t feel preachy, didn’t feel childish, and didn’t require moms to become full-time ‘hygiene managers,’” Forney said.

That’s when the idea clicked: make hygiene feel like something he gets to own, not something he’s nagged into doing. Forney built Good Guygiene as a bimonthly confidence delivery – themed boxes that come with personal care items, grooming gear and more for tween and teen boys. The brand officially launched two years ago.

“I’m the one obsessing over themes, products, and experience because the tone matters. It has to feel cool, simple, and doable for boys,” she said.

Behind the scenes, the business works with partner brands purpose-built for

teens and tweens, and provides operational support to ensure shipping and fulfillment run smoothly.

“The heart of it, what goes in, why it’s in there, and how it’s presented to boys – that’s very intentionally guided. The goal is always the same: make it engaging enough that my son *actually uses it*,” Forney said.

Good Guygiene is not just products. Each box has a theme, a tip sheet, and a “vibe that makes hygiene feel like something positive instead of a battle.”

“And frankly, I love anything that gets us moms out of the bathroom doorway referee role,” Forney said. “We have hundreds of very enthusiastic subscribers so far (both the boys and their moms), and it is growing every month.”

Each theme is developed to address a specific hygiene challenge boys face in real life at that moment – at-school hygiene, summer heat, oral care, body basics, etc.

Forney said that the “Down There Care” box received exceptionally high marks from moms because it addressed something most parents feel a bit uncomfortable talking about with their son, but desperately need to – it made an awkward topic practical, normal, and manageable.

“What’s really cool is that this is for me, and me only, and I get to have my own products, which makes me excited to try them out and learn about what they do,” one



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KARA FORNEY

Good Guygiene are themed boxes filled with personal care items, grooming tools, and tips to makes hygiene approachable for teen and tween boys.

subscriber said. “Every box is something new and different.”

“My favorite part is the moment it flips from ‘mom has to police this’ to now he’s owning it,” Forney said. “That’s the whole point: give him the tools, make it feel approachable, and let him build confidence through small wins.”

The brand will continue to support a tween or teen boy through his entire “hygiene era.” That means leaning into more creative themes that tackle real-life moments like sports stink, surviving the school day, travel,

and even tech hygiene, while also offering approachable content for parents who are navigating this stage without making it feel heavy or clinical.

Along the way, the brand will continue partnering with best-in-class, clean companies so boys can discover products they genuinely enjoy using and parents can feel confident about what’s inside. The bigger vision is simple: raise boys who feel confident taking care of themselves.

goodguygiene.com



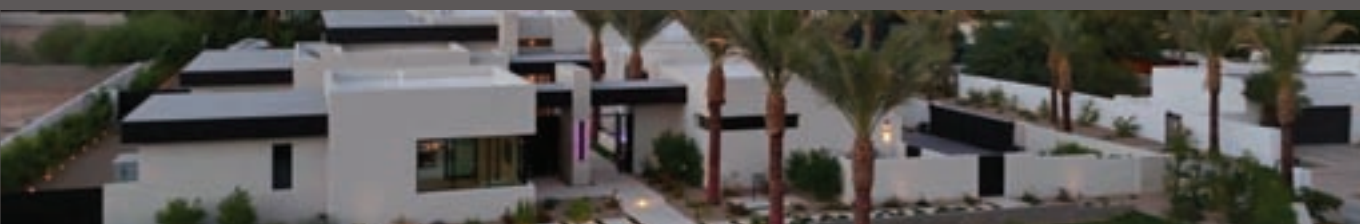
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In the Kitchen

In the Kitchen with **Thomas Porter**, owner of The Coffee Builders

901 S. 7th St., Phoenix • thecoffeebuilders.com

Thomas Porter’s career path has wound through massage therapy, music, woodworking, and restaurant design before landing behind the counter at Coffee Builders. What began as a hands-on showroom for his company evolved into a café that brings intention, imagination, and a love for creating experiences that make people feel welcome.

You’re an Arizona native?

I was born and raised in Phoenix, on the west side. I was homeschooled until junior high and went to New School for the Arts when it was in Scottsdale. I was a massage therapist for 12 years before woodworking and music, and coffee is my latest ‘poker in the fire.’

What industries were your parents in?

My mother was a controller for a construction company and later a massage therapist. My dad owned an alarm company and did commercial landscaping. Completely different industries.

Where did the inspiration for the coffee shop come from?

I built out a lot of restaurant interiors with my other company, Porter Barnwood, so I wanted to create a space where restaurateurs could come in and see what we were capable of building. I also wanted to become the customer; I wanted to learn more about the operations and the practices and what it took to set it up.

I created Coffee Builders and had a really good time doing it. The shop took on a life of its own and has surpassed all my expectations so far. We opened two years ago.

When opening the shop was there ever a moment where you thought, ‘What am I doing?’

Yes! I know quite a few chefs and people in town in the industry, so I spoke with tons of them. Every single one of them said the same thing: Don’t do it [laughs]. I kept thinking, ‘Wow, is it really that bad?’ And I was reminded of the stress and I see it, but it’s been a wonderful experience!

Everyone romanticizes a coffee shop, and I think those that get into restaurants maybe haven’t been able to experience the building process. It’s like doing a home remodel. It’s hard to put together, but that’s what I do, so it wasn’t my first rodeo. It was, however, my first time employing people in that industry and setting up those processes, but I wanted to learn. I also didn’t want to go anywhere for lunch [laughs].

What was that hiring process like?

Every industry seems to have its own vibe. My woodworkers are different from my ironworkers and my concrete guys and so on. My people at Coffee Builders... well, there’s something to be said about young energy and hospitality. It’s hard to put it into words. You have such a vibrant energy in your teens and 20s that kind of goes

away a little as you get older. We have an incredible team at Coffee Builders.

What was the building used for before it became a coffee shop?

I used it for storage but before that it was a storefront for a big junkyard. We used it as a temporary showroom when I was building Porter Barnwood, but it was basically sitting there empty until we came up with the coffee idea. Because I own the space, because we could walk in and do all the work ourselves, we had such an advantage cost-wise. There was a committee of one making decisions [laughs].

Did you always know it would be coffee?

I wanted food and coffee. It’s tough, because it’s a small space, but I knew I wanted coffee, and I knew I wanted a café. There was a little café growing up that I loved, named *der Kaffeekuchen*, which is German for ‘the coffee cake.’ This little German guy used to own it, and I would go in there and get these strawberry rhubarb pastries and coffee on a regular basis. I would go whenever I could. It was amazing.

They sadly went out of business and when I was creating Coffee Builders, I searched for the German baker for a long time... sure enough, I found him out in Sun City! We had lunch together and he brought me his old recipe book with all the pastries and cakes they’d make. It was so great to meet him.

How did you come up with the menu items?

Most of the businesses I own focus on things that no one else has. The coffee shop – even though there are a lot of coffee shops around here – really has a different vibe. We focus on continual creative flow.

That’s the inspiration, is to create something that’s next level. It’s like that with the furnishings, the interior, the food. Phoenix has a great food and coffee scene, but sometimes we get bored. A lot of restaurants have similar menu items, I think. I wanted to make I wasn’t bored with this food.

Tell us about the themes.

I like to introduce themes because it gives us a muse. We’ve had special guests come by, like Bob Gurr, who was a legendary Imagineer that helped build Disneyland. At that time, a lot of the drinks focused on storytelling. Without trademark infringing [laughs], one recent theme rallied around fantasy [think wizards]. To me, a coffee shop is an escape from reality.

I want to go somewhere where I can cozy up with friends or family and enjoy good food and drinks. Themes



are a way to create an environment where we’re all having fun together and letting creative juices flow.

Is there a staple menu that’s always available?

Yes! We have a regular coffee shop menu, so if you’re looking for a flat white, we’ve got that. We have a specialties menu, plus a rotating menu with seasonal or themed drinks. Those are what I’d consider a little more high-end.

Where do the beans come from?

All over the place. We roast a lot of our single origins ourselves but have a local company that does the roast for our espresso blend, which is an Ethiopian-Yirgacheffe-Sweet Brazilian mix. We have a distillery that roasts a bourbon-barrel-aged bean for us. That is done in Kansas. We’ve got Sumatran, single-origin Mexican... beans from all over the world.

Which drink and food item are most popular?

We have a drink called the Abuelita cocoa, which is a spiced Mexican chocolate mocha. We have one that I won a chef competition with a while back called the Kentucky

Fire and Ice. It's an iced bourbon barrel-aged cold brew with a mixture of different milks.

It's smoked with white oak chips at your table – it sounds dangerous but it's lovely. The cabernet latte is also very popular and bougie. It's a cabernet and Arizona honey reduction and has this chocolate-covered cherry quality to it.

Do you work with your team to come up with recipes?

I like to involve them in the thematic, rotating things, but a lot of it is just me. Cooking and making these combinations is a form of catharsis and stress relief.

I find inspiration from reading. There are a lot of recipes from all over the world that I've seen, so I read about those and bring the ingredients in and mess with them.

Is there place you've traveled that piqued your inspiration?

I'll tell you somewhere I need to go that has to do with *smørrebrød*, an open-faced Danish sandwich that we have on the menu. When I saw them for the first time I thought, 'Why is no one doing this, these are beautiful.' Noble Bread makes



It's magical to see someone experience something for the first time. We get an opportunity to do that on a regular basis.



our custom bread for these sandwiches. Copenhagen is on my list!

What is one item in the kitchen you find yourself using all the time?

Oh, there's so many. If I could choose one thing in my personal kitchen, it's a grill. I know that sounds basic, but I love fire and natural grill flavors and smoke.

What are your hobbies outside of work?

Music. We play a lot of bluegrass and country stuff. I was playing regionally with a bluegrass band for a while and my son and I will travel back east and go to conventions and recording sessions. He's one of my baristas now but I think he'll end up going into music.

Who are some of the chefs that inspire you?

Chris Gross is one of my favorites. I don't know him that well but I've had the pleasure of eating at his restaurants and as far as the quality and artistry... he tells stories with his food. Chris Collins – we've built a lot of stuff for him. He's got this rare mix of energy and good food and a focus on service that I love.

I love what he's doing. He's one of my culinary heroes.

Chris Bianco is a friend of mine and all three Chris's are different from one another but Bianco comes in like your favorite uncle. I just want to hang out with him.

What is your favorite part of the restaurant industry?

My favorite experience is being able to provide someone with something you can see genuinely excites them. I hate to say that I love the short term satisfaction that we provide, but in the other industries, we work with customers over the course of months, and some of that initial magic wanes after a bit. The romantic part of the business is 10 percent of the whole industry – 90 percent is you cleaning *[laughs]*.

It's magical to see someone experience something for the first time. We get an opportunity to do that on a regular basis.

... least favorite part?

Cleaning – no, just kidding! Anytime you have a large group of people in one place, you can't avoid some outside drama making its way in. It's not just staff,

it's also customers, but we do a really good job of having a space where that doesn't exist. We're always focused on 'everybody eats, everybody drinks, and everyone feels loved.'

What restaurants would you recommend to a Valley newcomer?

I guess it depends on if they're tourists or moving to the Valley, but Rito's first off – it's the best green chile burro I've ever had. That's top of my list. Hana Sushi, the owners are very sweet and very particular about their sushi. There's a Vietnamese place that has good pho. These are all hole-in-the-wall places but they're so good.

What's next for Thomas Porter?

I am in the process of putting plans together for two restaurants here at Porter Barnwood in the near future. We're going to start doing some fun experiences. We're going to do a Galentine's and Valentines custom roasting experience. We have a roaster and we'll have a tasting and food menu along with some education of the different beans and attendees can make their own coffee roast that day. It's going to be really fun!



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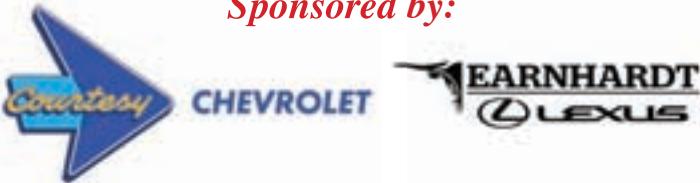
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Austin King

Growing up, most every kid looks forward to their first bike. But perhaps no one more than Austin King – whose dream, he said, was “always to ride a bike.”

His father owned a bicycle shop so he was introduced to the magic of two wheels early on. As a youngster he got into cycling and never stopped pedaling. First through the streets of his neighborhood, as far as daylight would allow.

As a teenager, King began testing his ability in amateur cycling races. After high school he went to Tucson and trained and competed until he eventually qualified for the U.S. National Cycling Team. After years of competing – and winning – in the U.S., his accomplishments took him to Europe.

“I lived out of a suitcase but got to see the world. It was like having a window on life itself,” he remembered. His training regimen and the competitions took him throughout the continent. At 25 and after four years of professional competition, he decided to get off his bike and get a real estate license.

“I just got tired of saying goodbye to my wife,” he said.

The segue from cycling to custom homebuilding was house flipping. It was 2011 and the recession was still raging, so he and his partners bought distressed houses, renovated them and sold them. They worked on 10-12 at a time. He eventually left house flipping to others and started Rafterhouse in 2012, building spec homes in Arcadia.

Four years later, he had his first build-to-suit project and Rafterhouse was on its way to becoming a respected



luxury homebuilder. He admits that he worried if homebuilding would hold his attention.

“I wondered if anything else would fulfill me as much as cycling,” he said.

While still in Tucson, King met his wife, Suzanne, and he used his realtor’s commission to buy her a wedding ring. She grew up in Arcadia and they were certain that was where they wanted to raise their family. They have three children: Lilly (15), Oliver (13) and Hazel (11).

“If you’re a controlling person, this business isn’t for you,” King said. “There’s so much to manage and work with, and that makes it a really interesting business. The industry is bizarre; there are so many chiefs in the teepee.”

King says Rafterhouse was created to be more

intentional in building homes and he is proud of all that they have achieved.

“What we set out to do is create an original, something that has never been done before,” he said.

With his business on track and the children a little older, King took his bike out of mothballs. One day led to two and now he rides every morning for two hours before taking the kids to school. His competitive spirit has lured him back into Pro 1 races, this time against guys 20 years younger.

“No wins yet but I’m fearless and this may be the year that I beat the younger people I’m racing against,” he said.

Asked what he’d like to do after he retires, and he doesn’t hesitate: “Someday I want to be the watering guy at Berridge Nursery.”

“What we set out to do is create an original; something never been done before.”



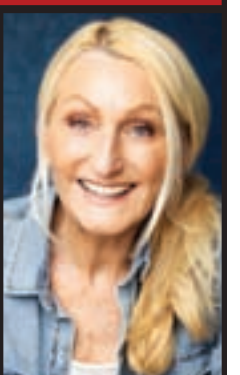
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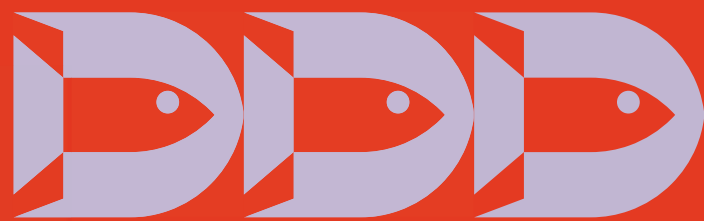
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Seniors and students connect through the power of music

By Mark Hays

Music has a unique way of bringing people together, and recently, students from Biltmore Prep and Larry C. Kennedy Schools did just that during a special visit to Morningstar Senior Living. The students treated residents to a live performance that showcased developing instrumental skills and a growing confidence in vocal performance, creating a joyful and meaningful exchange across generations.

The visit is part of a tradition led by longtime music educator David Rowe, who has made community performances a



The joy and pride from the students was immense.



cornerstone of his teaching philosophy. For Rowe, sharing music beyond the classroom is just as important as learning scales or mastering technique.

“As a music teacher who started by playing for the old folks in the retirement home, it has been a tradition to take my students to demonstrate their skills to an appreciative audience,” he said.

That tradition came to life once again at the Morningstar Senior Living community

located near Glenrosa Avenue and 32nd Street. As the students performed, the response from residents was immediate and heartfelt, Rowe said, filling the room with smiles, applause, and emotion.

“The people were more than appreciative,” he said. “They had huge smiles while listening to the children. Some even shed some tears of joy!”

The performance featured students at varying stages of their musical journeys. Biltmore Prep musicians, many in their first or second year of band instruction, played flute, clarinet, saxophone, trombone, trumpet, and drums. Students from Larry C. Kennedy provided vocal performances, demonstrating both technical skill and expressive confidence.

They prepared a varied program with music and narration for about 30 minutes,” Rowe said. He noted that the students selected the music. “The girls love to sing Laufey, and the band kids wanted to play ‘When the Saints Go Marching In.’”

Beyond the music itself, the visit offered students an opportunity to connect personally with the residents. They introduced themselves, engaged in conversation, and learned firsthand how their performances impacted audience. According to Rowe, the experience left a lasting impression on both groups.

“The senior center is eager for our return. We have created a bond with them, and since



Paul, Karina, Lexie, Alicia, Angel, Carter, Peggy, Shakty, Izabelle and Leilani.

the school is right around the corner, we were able to walk back after the performance,” he said. “The joy and pride from the students was immense. It just shows how important it is to work hard. The reward is in a successful experience.”

Rowe has been a dedicated figure in music education for more than four decades,

beginning his career in the 1980s at Miami High School. Today, he continues to inspire young musicians, teaching Band and Guitar at Biltmore and Loma Linda School, and Voice and Guitar at Larry C. Kennedy – ensuring that music, and the connections it creates, continue to resonate across generations.

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHRIS MARTINEZ

The Ahsan Center for Excellence in the Creative & Performing Arts opened in December.



Salter Performance Hall features a 600-seat theater, advanced lighting, and flexible staging.

\$24M state-of-the-art performance center debuts at PCDS

By Rachael Bouley

Phoenix Country Day School celebrated the grand opening of the largest structure ever built in its nearly 65-year history: The Ahsan Center for Excellence in the Creative & Performing Arts.

The \$24 million, almost 24,000-square-foot facility includes a 600-seat theater, performance and rehearsal spaces, and specialized production and support areas designed to elevate arts education for pre-k through grade 12 students.

“This new, transformative arts facility represents a milestone in PCDS’s commitment to artistic innovation, collaboration,

creativity, and student expression,” Director of Communications Chris Martinez said.

The Ahsan Center was made possible through the collective philanthropy of donors to PCDS’s Play On! Campaign – the most ambitious campaign in school history, according to Martinez – including parents, alums, grandparents, and friends, with the Ahsan family’s generosity naming the building.

The school’s strategic plan emphasizes the visual, digital, and performing arts as central to students’ experience by fostering meaningful connections and deeper self-understanding. However, the school needed updated facilities to support these



At the grand opening, students gathered to perform for guests on the brand-new stage.

endeavors, and thus, building a state-of-the-art performance center was identified as a strategic priority.

Construction began in June 2024 and ended in November 2025 – which was ahead of schedule – giving students and staff much to look forward to.

“The new center provides students with a professional-quality environment, enhancing the arts experience across all divisions and ensuring they continue to thrive as a vital part of PCDS,” Martinez said.

Salter Performance Hall will house the majority of music and theater acts. It will also be used for select guest performances, speakers, school ceremonies, and more.

Behind the scenes, students will hone their skills in costuming, scene building, and technical theater, with a professional-grade stagecraft and scene shop, a costume lab, and three dedicated dressing and makeup rooms.

The new building also includes spacious rehearsal and lobby areas, a 150-seat balcony, and innovative sustainable systems, including LED lighting, solar-reflective materials, and high-efficiency HVAC.

The main-floor lighting and sound are designed so that theater technology students are fully visible during productions, rather than hidden away, and there are side stages instead of a traditional orchestra pit, ensuring musicians remain clearly visible with flexible staging for a variety of productions. The cyclorama projection screen and system is another special feature, as this large, curved backdrop on the stage creates immersive projections and lighting effects.

All of these features and more were proudly on display at the grand opening,

which began with a reception in the Taira Family Breezeway featuring a string performance by senior Audrey Weinschel and string teacher Maurine Fleming. The Ahsan and Salter families led the ribbon-cutting ceremonies, followed by a musical performance by faculty and a tour of the theater and collaborative arts environments.

“The grand opening hit me on a much greater emotional level than I expected. The fact that this moment, when the building and all the fantastic art that we will begin creating in the space has arrived, got me all choked up,” Director of Arts Keith Burns said.

Among the 175 guests in attendance were donors, arts faculty members, and representatives from Chasse Building Team, ADM Group, Inc., and Foursite Consulting. The project partners were recognized on Hope Stage, with remarks from the Board of Trustees President Martin Felli and Head of School Andy Rodin.

“I thought back through all the phases of designing, developing, and planning, the ups and downs of the process, and the exceptional support from the PCDS community... how it all culminated with the spectacular opening ceremony was delightfully overwhelming,” Burns said.

The Ahsan Center for Excellence in the Creative & Performing Arts is not open for public events, but will host school-related performances and gatherings. It’s part of ongoing campus improvements, including the upcoming Reese House for Music, Art & Theater.

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Members of the Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable gather monthly to share stories, hear from leading historians, and support the preservation of Civil War history.

Scottsdale Civil War group explores history beyond the battles

By Michael P. Murphy

There is a reason why there continues to be so much interest in the Civil War 160 years after General Lee's surrender in Appomattox. There are endless stories connected to the catastrophic events... stories that are about more than generals, battles, and bloodshed.

Sharing these stories is the mission of the Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable, one of hundreds across the country. They meet on the third Tuesday of each month from September to May in the lower level of the Scottsdale Library. It is a welcoming gathering where members share a common fellowship in history.

Nationwide roundtables began during the centennial in the 1960s, when history buffs found each other, formed groups, began inviting speakers, and grew as an organization. The Scottsdale group has been in its current form for the past 30 years.

"We have leading historians come and speak to us," President Mark Stoler said. "We also have a lot of activities, but the monthly meetings are our core. Through membership

dues and donations, we contribute every year to Civil War preservation."

Over the past decade, the group has donated more than \$50,000 to battlefield preservation. Because those opportunities offer matching funds with multipliers, donors have contributed \$2.5 million in land parcels for battlefields and other Civil War sites.

The popularity of these groups extends surprisingly far beyond the U.S. Online presentations enabled the roundtable to attract members from the East Coast, Brazil, and Venezuela. Current sessions are broadcast live and archived for future viewing online.

Arizona itself has a place in Civil War history. The Battle of Picacho Peak in 1862 was a small but significant skirmish



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JIM PAYNE

Historian Curt Fields will be presenting on February 17.

that reshaped the boundaries of our state and New Mexico. Visitors to the Pioneer Cemetery in Phoenix will see segregated burial sites for Union and Confederate veterans.

"The legacy still impacts us today," Stoler said. "There are so many different characters involved, and that means you can tell great stories. If you like stories, great characters, and great events, you can't go wrong with the Civil War."

Sessions begin at 5 p.m. with a casual social hour in the lower lobby and a display of donated books to take home. Presenters who are authors usually have books and will hold signings before the event. At 6, the program moves to the auditorium.

On February 17, the Scottsdale roundtable will host historian Curt Fields, appearing as Ulysses S. Grant in character and uniform. Grant was president during our country's 1876 centennial. Having Fields on hand to reflect on the end of the Civil War is fitting for this year's 250th celebration.

scottsdalecwrt.org

How civic-minded teens are shaping the future of their city

By Michael P. Murphy

It's good to know the community we live in, but it is equally important to understand how a community *works*. This is the purpose of a group of civic-minded teens known as the Paradise Valley Youth Group: to achieve a deeper understanding of their community and to be better engaged in it.

XCP junior Saniya Dwivedi knows a thing or two about youth involvement in the community. Last year, she founded Health in Movement to emphasize the importance of physical activity. She is also a co-founder of the youth group.

"I wanted the opportunity to learn from the policy makers and government officials, but also for those officials to learn what youth are all about, too," she said.

At their first event, members volunteered at the annual Veterans Day car show, held at the Paradise Valley Town Hall, where they helped with fundraising. At their next event, the group helped with a blood drive, setting up and using their social media savvy to promote it.

Part of learning how the community works came from a tour of the Paradise Valley Police Department. An officer gave them a first-hand look at how the



IMAGES COURTESY OF SANIYA DWIVEDI

Officer Phan, Saniya Dwivedi, Mia Steinmetz, Christine Labelle, Oliver Wurth and Umeed Singh.

department operates. They got a behind-the-scenes look at things most citizens often wonder about.

"It was so interesting," Saniya said. "We were given a tour of a police car, saw the jail cells, and talked with the officers. It

was very informative and super cool to learn so much about our town — things I didn't even know. Everyone there was so nice and welcoming."

The Paradise Valley Youth Group has a core of eight young people who show up

consistently, but through social media and good word of mouth, many others are now reaching out. Saniya mentioned that they are talking with Paradise Valley officials about their goal to be approved to become an official council.

Looking ahead, the group will continue to meet at the town hall and strive to strengthen their roles as young leaders. During spring break, they will tour the Paradise Valley courthouse, observe a trial, speak with a volunteer judge, and learn the inner workings of the system.

As Saniya sees it, they are creating spaces where students give back and create tangible things that can make a difference. She makes it clear that it's not just her, but other co-founders and members who do so much to make the group successful.

"I just love meeting new people. These are my neighbors, and this is an amazing opportunity to get together and get off our phones and make a real connection," Saniya said.

Learn more on Instagram
@paradisevalleyyouthgroup

Phoenix Writers Club celebrates 100 years

By Chrissy Doern

In 1926, a tenacious group of women journalists – unable to participate in an exclusive men’s journalism club – banded together to establish the Phoenix Writers Club (PWC). This pioneering initiative was born out of their shared determination to create a welcoming and supportive environment for writers. Over its illustrious history, PWC has evolved to embrace not only women and journalists but also a diverse array of individuals passionate about the art form.

This March, to commemorate Women’s History Month, PWC honors the indomitable spirit of its founding members who, a century ago, forged a haven for creativity amidst the challenges. These innovative women exemplified a remarkable ability to foster collaboration and connection, demonstrating resilience in their pursuit of artistic expression.

Today, the legacy of the Phoenix Writers Club is one of inclusiveness and community, as it continues to encourage relationships that celebrate the writing journey. Some of its members have become nationally known poets, journalists, and more.

President Cindi Reiss has lived in Phoenix for 48 years, but still considers herself a Jersey girl at heart. Her husband, three children, two sons-in-law, four grandchildren, and 120-pound grand-dog

keep her grounded, bringing her insight as she continues her passion.

Reiss’s journey has included writing skits and programs to entertain and educate during her career as a clown and actor; articles for newspapers and magazines; and writing life event poems.

Each monthly PWC meeting features a guest speaker who delves into topics affecting writing and publishing. The club, along with each speaker, hopes to build a supportive environment



Cindi Reiss

that encourages the development and improvement. In addition, PWC actively supports charities and educational programs, dedicating time and resources to inspire the next generation.

“As our club grows, so does our excitement to learn, share our writing, and enjoy the friendships. It’s been wonderful to exchange experiences, advice, and tips along the way,” Reiss said.

With an annual membership fee of \$40 running from October through September, the Phoenix Writers Club remains accessible to writers at every stage. Monthly meetings, held on the third Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon



PWC members Deborah Partington, Cindi Reiss, Beth Liechti-Johnson and Navissa Kaiser.

at the Devonshire Senior Center, include a guest speaker, light bites, and refreshments. Members contribute \$10 per meeting and guests pay \$15.

More than a century after its founding, the club continues to offer precisely what its creators envisioned in 1926: a place

where writers come together to learn, share, and belong. As PWC celebrates its 100th year, it stands as a testament to the enduring power of writers helping writers – one story, one meeting, and one generation at a time.

phoenixwritersclub.com



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Amy Johnson, Margo Placencio, Kimberly Smeester and Jill Tadvick.

DANCING

THROUGH THE DESERT ONE PEAK AT A TIME

By Kylie de Best

Phoenix is really a hiker's dream – from Camelback Mountain to the Superstitions, the options are endless, and the weather is (almost) always perfect for a day outdoors. Wanting to take on a challenge and climb as many mountains as she could, Arcadian Amy Johnson created the Desert Disco Adventure Club (DDAC) – and gained so much more than miles.

Formed in December 2024, Amy envisioned a group that would help inspire women to explore the world and create meaningful connections while having fun through healthy adventures. The core values of DDAC include connection, kindness, gratitude, inclusion, thoughtfulness, and charity.

"I had attended groups before and found that most people would show up for a hike and you would never see them again," Johnson said. "I wanted to build a community where the women feel seen and welcomed so that they continue to show up."

To keep the personal touch and allow each woman to be recognized and celebrated, it's kept to under 50 people. Current members range in age from 30 to 60 and are from all over the Valley. While hiking is a big part of the club, they also paddleboard, kayak, ski, snowboard, participate in organized runs, and do high ropes and obstacle courses.

The hikes are moderate to strenuous, ranging from 6-12 miles on average, with

anywhere from 1,000'-3,000' of elevation gain. DDAC typically hikes 1-3 times per week with an average of 5-10 people per hike. Their main event takes place on Saturdays, with shorter hikes mid-week.

Sometimes there's even a theme, such as dressing as Where's Waldo for a hike in Arches National Park and wearing all black and matching birthday headbands to celebrate a member's birthday on Camelback.

They also travel out of state – in 2026, the group is headed to Utah, California, Montana, and Colorado. They've also traveled to Page, Greer, Lake Havasu, Flagstaff, Tucson, and Bisbee for overnight trips.

"Our biggest hike was 22 miles in the Grand Canyon, down to the river and back up the same day," Johnson said. "We've also hiked over 70 miles in six days while in Oregon in September!"

The group also finds it essential to give back to the community. They partnered with Gye Di, a foundation that assists children with severe physical disabilities in getting out into nature using all-terrain wheelchairs.

While there is no charge to join, members should be willing to commit to 1-2 activities with the group per month and feel comfortable hiking at a moderate to hard level.

Those interested in joining can learn more @desertdiscoadventureclub



Amy Johnson, Margo Placencio, Kristen Ackerman, Kimberly Smeester, Meg Gross, Jill Tadvick, Katie Vandenberg and Rae Blaski.



Margo Placencio, Kristen Ackerman, Claudia Duarte, Jill Tadvick, Sharon Joseph, Karen Johnson Henderson and Amy Johnson.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMY JOHNSON



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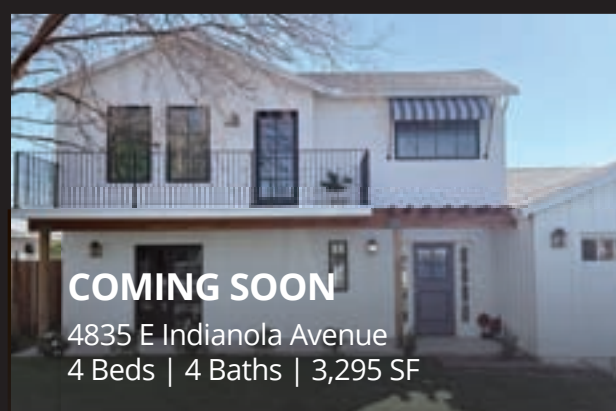
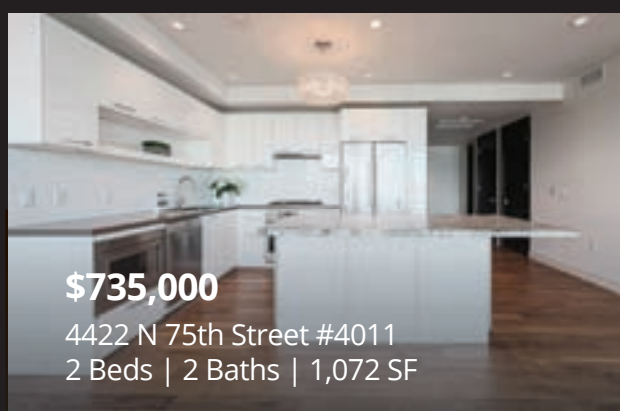
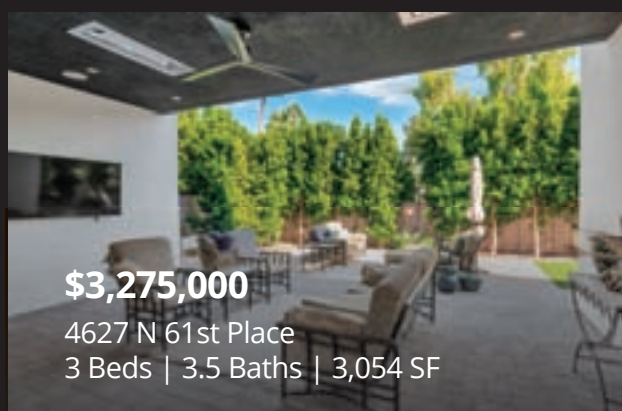
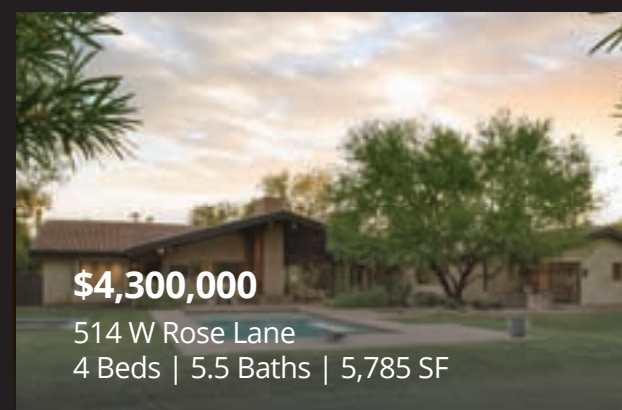
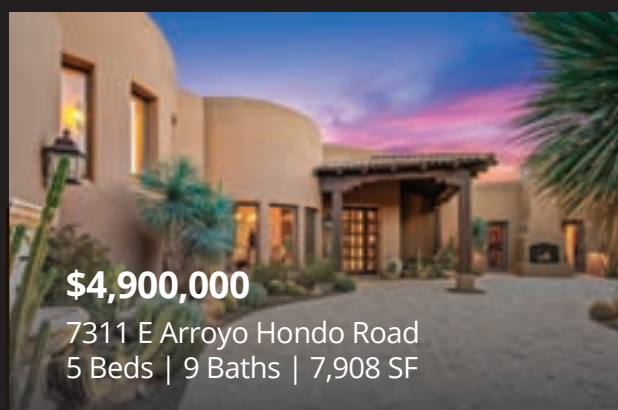
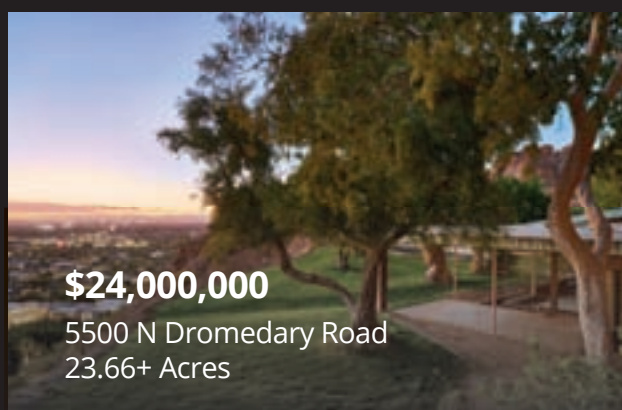
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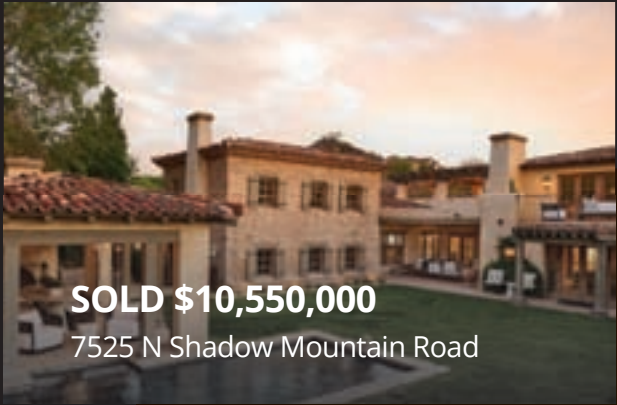
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Million-can milestone met for St. Vincent de Paul

By Sherry Sklar

Each year at Xavier Prep, students are asked to dedicate themselves to academics and serving others in the broader community. Nowhere is that commitment more visible than during the school's annual canned food drive, a longstanding tradition that reflects the school's values and emphasizes leadership. This year, the drive reached a new milestone, with students contributing more than one million cans and food equivalents for St. Vincent de Paul.

Spearheaded by Xavier's National Honor Society (NHS), the four-week event encouraged classmates to help ease hunger among families in need. Students collected several thousand pounds of non-perishable food and raised more than \$100,000 in donations. While the goal was to surpass last year's total of 693,683 cans and \$70,000 raised, this year's outcome exceeded expectations.

"Each dollar donated equals 10 cans of food through St. Vincent de Paul's buying power," said Tara Metzger, NHS advisor. The nonprofit weighs all food donations after collection to determine the final total.



SVdP CEO Shannon Clancy (bottom, far right) with Xavier Prep's National Honor Society.

Student leadership is central to every phase of the drive, which begins planning in August. NHS officers challenged themselves to strengthen their efforts through planning, goal setting, and the development of grade-level competitions, prizes, and treats to engage students.

Building on successful past initiatives, such as the protein push to encourage the donation of nutritious items like tuna and peanut butter, members were also required to donate 50 cans or \$25. During the month-long campaign, from October 21

to November 15, volunteers worked early-morning shifts to sustain momentum and energy across campus. Teachers, staff, and administrators supported the effort.

"When the final numbers came in, the excitement was overwhelming," Metzger said. "Students were amazed to see what they had accomplished together, and there was a shared sense of pride in knowing how many lives their efforts would touch."

"This year, our community came together in an extraordinary way for St. Vincent de Paul," NHS President Flannery Walsh said.

"Knowing how many lives this effort will touch makes us incredibly proud."

Food insecurity remains a growing challenge across Arizona. According to St. Vincent de Paul and Feeding America, more than one million Arizonans face food insecurity, and demand at food banks has risen sharply in recent years as families struggle with higher housing and grocery costs. St. Vincent, a nonprofit founded in 1946, relies on community donations to sustain its food pantries and housing services.

According to St. Vincent de Paul CEO Shannon Clancy, the effort ranks among the largest school-based food drives in the country.

"This is not simply a food drive," she said. "By providing food, families can direct their limited resources toward housing and other essentials."

For Metzger, the drive's impact extends well beyond the number: "After 16 years as an advisor, the canned food drive remains my favorite Xavier tradition," she said. "It captures who we are as a community – students choosing to lead with compassion, collaboration, and purpose."

Arcadia residents invited to the ACMNA's annual meeting

You may have never heard of the Arcadia Camelback Mountain Neighborhood Association, but if you live in the neighborhood, guess what? You're already a member!

And everyone is invited to the association's annual meeting taking place Saturday, February 21 at Prince of Peace Church. It is a time to learn about all that is going on in the neighborhood and have your voices heard.

"We only meet once a year and the agenda covers everything that our residents are likely to be interested in," Board President Marvin Borsand said. "Besides, breakfast is free and it's nice for people to be able to meet their neighbors."

The meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. and feature various keynote speakers, including City Councilman Kevin Robinson and District 6 legislators.

Some of the pressing issues facing the neighborhood will also be addressed, including zoning and building restrictions, E-bike issues, noise and safety ordinances, and the ever-multiplying "party houses."

There will also be an update on the 56th Street improvement project, from Camelback Road to Thomas Road, scheduled to begin this year.

As always, there will be a question and answer session at the end of the meeting, allowing residents to share their thoughts and ideas on how to preserve and enhance the neighborhood. A complimentary raffle will also be held with some great prizes going to the lucky winners.

Borsand said that anyone interested in joining the board may also state their interest at the meeting. Election of new officers will also take place at that time.



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*Robin's
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BY ROBIN SEWELL

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

If you've ever felt that head over heels, can't stop thinking about it kind of love, then you understand the Grand Canyon State. Arizona doesn't flirt. It sweeps you off your feet. One minute you're cruising along a sunsplashed highway, and the next you're staring at Monument Valley, wondering how a landscape can feel both ancient and brand new at the same time. This spectacular beauty isn't just sitting on our map, it's posing, catching its light, holding the frame, waiting for you to show up and give it the close up it deserves.

That's the thing about Arizona: it always feels personal. Take Tombstone. You wander its wooden boardwalks expecting a reenactment or two, but somehow you end up feeling like you've stepped into a sepia toned memory or, if you're lucky like me, become a main character at the gunfight at the O.K. Corral. The clink of spurs, the swing of saloon doors, the stories that refuse to stay in the

past are all amusingly over the top, and that's just one dimension of Arizona's charm.

I didn't expect it to feel like falling in love, the racing heart, that dizzy rush, those familiar butterflies in my stomach. But that's exactly what happened skydiving over Eloy. As I was in freefall the surrounding mountains appeared as if they were hand painted by someone with a flair for drama, dipped in golden light. Once I hit terra and regained my composure, I realized this is Arizona at its most extra and its most honest.

Of course, love isn't always euphoric. Sometimes it's soft, quiet, maybe even wrapped in pine. Our highcountry hideaways like Greer and Alpine feel like Arizona is whispering, "I can be cozy, too." Cool mornings, trout-filled lakes, cabins that smell like woodsmoke... this is the part of the relationship where you can exhale and think, I could stay here forever. But that wouldn't be fair to the rest of Arizona because this state is deep.

How deep? Try 6,093 feet at the highest point along the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. This Arizona beauty can quiet even the chattiest traveler. The North Rim isn't a showoff, it's a natural stunner, wilder and more intimate than its southern sibling. The air is cooler, the pines taller, the colors softer yet somehow more dramatic. And in that moment, it stops being just a wonder of the world and becomes a wonder of your heart – something that stays with you long after you've driven away.

Arizona has a way of keeping you curious. Just when you think you've experienced all its moods, it shifts the light, changes the wind, reveals a new color or story. Loving Arizona is an invitation to wander with wonder.

And of course, Arizona has a birthday on Valentine's Day. If any state was destined to make you fall in love again and again... it's Arizona.

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DISTRICT 6 UPDATE

February's events

A new month brings a full slate of programs designed to help residents get involved and make a difference. Here's what's happening in your neighborhood:

TEEN VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

S'edav Va'aki Museum is opening applications for its Spring Teen Volunteer Program, offering young residents a chance to learn, lead, and engage through hands-on museum experiences. Ages 14 to 17 are invited to apply, with opportunities to support educational programming while gaining valuable leadership and teamwork skills.



KEVIN ROBINSON

Councilman
District 6

602-262-7491

District6@phoenix.gov

Students who participated in the fall session and plan to continue this spring may qualify to step into newly created Teen Leader roles. Teen Leaders will assist museum staff by training incoming volunteers, facilitating established activities, and helping develop new program materials that enhance the visitor experience. Applications are now open and can be submitted online.

COFFEE CHATS

This year, the City's popular coffee chats are getting a new twist. To make them more accessible to residents with daytime commitments, all coffee chats will now be held in the evening. The goal is to ensure more community members can attend, ask questions, and share ideas in a relaxed setting. Dates and locations will be announced soon.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PHOENIX YOUTH LEADERS

Phoenix students who are making a difference may be eligible for the Outstanding Phoenix Youth Leader of the Year award. Open to students in grades 9 through 12, the program recognizes those who have overcome adversity while making positive contributions. Winners from each council district will receive \$1,000, with two overall recipients earning an additional \$2,000. Applications are due by March 1, and finalists must be available for in-person interviews on April 11.

SAVE WATER, SAVE MONEY

Phoenix Water Services is offering residents a free, customizable AZ Water-Wise Kit to help reduce indoor and outdoor water use. Kits may include efficient showerheads, hose timers, and other tools designed to make conservation simple. In addition, homeowners can take advantage of the City's Grass Removal Incentive, which offers \$2 per square foot for removing non-functional grass, supporting both sustainability and lower utility bills.

TAX TIME

The City of Phoenix is also seeking volunteers for its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program. Each year, trained volunteers help prepare free tax returns for low-to moderate-income individuals and families. Certified training is provided, and opportunities range from tax preparation to interpreting and site coordination.

—Councilman Kevin Robinson

30 YEARS AGO



Where are they now?

The roots of this Arcadia family remain firmly planted, even as the kids have grown into lives of their own. Chloe and Alex attended Hopi, Ingleside, and Arcadia, surrounded by the same tight-knit community their mom, Susie, served for years as a realtor specializing in the Arcadia area.

Chloe, now 32, is studying to become a wildlife ecologist at ASU, while 35-year-old Alex works as an estimator for AZ Painting Company. The Arcadia legacy continues with a grandchild, a fifth-generation Arcadian, who Susie hopes will one day walk the halls of Arcadia High as well.



As for that old headline: "Love, Arcadia Style," it still rings true, reflected in the neighbors and friends whose unwavering support over the years is a testament to what makes the community so special.

ARCADIANEWSARCHIVES.COM



AHS senior midfielder Alex Lara.



AHS boys varsity soccer team.



AHS sophomore Michael McNeil.

High school soccer hits the field with State glory up for grabs

By Rachael Bouley

New year, big goals. That's the consensus among high school soccer programs throughout the Arcadia area, with finals starting mid-February and plenty to play for. Let's check in with Arcadia, Brophy, Xavier, and Veritas soccer teams.

ARCADIA HIGH BOYS

The Titans went 5-6-1 in their first 12 games, giving them strong momentum headed into the second half of the season in the 4A Desert Sky Region.

"Even in the games we have lost, we have competed very well," Coach Andrew Lang said. "Our strengths are defensive play and great shooters on the team, while our weakness is breaking down the final third against stronger opponents."

Lang lets players use their creative flow during the game and make their own decisions, rather than micromanaging from the sidelines. After missing out last year, they are eager to see where they can go in the postseason.

"Each day, we are getting better, and we hope to be ready for the playoffs when the time comes," Lang added. "Our ultimate goal is to create players who are better people overall and to build their soccer knowledge and skills."

ARCADIA HIGH GIRLS

Arcadia girls had a handful of losses to start the season, but bounced back in a big way with a 10-0 shutout over Mesquite in the 4A Desert Sky Region. Senior Claire Christensen led with three goals, followed by junior Savannah Flores and sophomore Kaidyn Beller with two apiece.

They also won an invitational vs the Gilbert Tigers 1-0 in December.

"We play a very difficult schedule, so to see our growth against other teams is very important to us," Christensen said. "My personal highlight is scoring the first goal of the year in our kickoff tournament. I scored the first goal in that tournament freshman year, and it was really cool to finish high school the same way I started."

Although the Titans were 3-4 in six conference games at press time, they had two starters out with illness and introduced a new goalkeeper. Each loss came against teams that made last year's playoffs.

"Aside from the first game, we have been very competitive in each of our losses. We have a young team with only three seniors and over half of the team being either a sophomore or freshman," Coach Bill Christenson said. "I feel like our defense is strong, but we need to improve at generating better scoring opportunities."

After finishing second in the region and progressing to quarterfinals last postseason, the Titans are working hard to continue that positive momentum.

In the last half of the regular season, Arcadia faces regional opponents Marcos de Niza, Cactus Shadows, St. Mary's, and Saguaro, plus non-region vs. Thunderbird, Coronado, and Chaparral.

"I expect us to make the playoffs. We are getting better each week and will be playing our best soccer at the end of the season," Christenson said.

"The time we spend together shouldn't be measured by how many games we win or lose but the relationships that are gained, the lessons learned, and the community we build."

BROPHY PREP

With a 14-0 start to the season, including 12 games on the road and only one at home, Brophy has scored 31 goals and conceded only three, equaling 11 shutouts so far. As of mid-January, the Broncos were not only first in the 6A Central Region but also ranked third in the state. Senior co-captain Alex King is proud of the team's determination and ability to work together.

"Every day, we are pushing each other in practice so that when we step on the field,



Brophy sophomore Nico McGalla.



Senior goalkeeper JP Odden.

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Veritas girls varsity soccer team.

I know that I have 11 warriors ready to go out and fight for their brothers to win a soccer match,” King, who plays center back, said. “No matter your position or playing time, everyone has a role to execute. That’s what makes our team special.”

Coach Marc Kelly credits the team’s depth of talented players for helping them improve throughout the season.

“It’s not uncommon to see us sub nine players at a time, to continuously refresh energy levels and pressure on other teams throughout the match,” Kelly said. “What you see is a buy-in for all of these players, who would ordinarily be playing 80 minutes, to contribute in shifts, rest, then repeat; and the result is that we’ve been winning big games in the second halves, or earlier.”

Brophy has proved hard to break down defensively, with senior/captain goalkeeper JP Odden leading in saves and shutouts. The team features 24 field players and two goalies. Twelve players have scored so far this year, led by junior Joey Fritz with eight goals in the first 13 matchups.

Over winter break, they traveled to Chapman University to play a tournament against three top California teams, coming away with two victories, including a two-goal rally in the second half and a last-second score from junior Conor Byers as the final whistle blew.

After making it to the quarterfinals last season, the Broncos are ready for whatever comes their way in the final stretch.

“I’m looking forward to seeing how this



Veritas boys varsity soccer team.

team grows and evolves,” Coach Kelly said. “I see them as an exotic plant that’s been given the right nutrients and best conditions... and it’s getting ready to sprout some crazy, incredible flowers as spring approaches!”

VERITAS PREP BOYS

After getting out of the gate slowly with a loss in their first game, the Falcons have bounced back, winning their next three by a combined score of 17-4.

“So far, we have stacked up favorably to the competition,” Coach David Zook said. “We have a strong, balanced attack. We’ve had six players score goals, and five players assist in those goals.”

While Veritas continues to work on the defending backline, they have a strong foundation as they look to leave their mark



Xavier varsity soccer team.

11-0 home victory over Fountain Hills, and they also had a successful trip to Tucson, with a thrilling overtime 1-0 victory over Desert Christian.

They will finish up the regular season by facing region teams Phoenix Christian, Maryvale Prep, and St. John Paul II Catholic, as well as Chandler Prep and Arete Prep.

XAVIER PREP

The Gator girls look to follow up on their dramatic 2-1 overtime victory in the AIA Open Division State Championship last year, which saw them win their fifth straight state title.

They started the season 4-1-1, dropping a tough overtime loss to O’Connor before rebounding with 1-0 and 14-0 victories against Boulder Creek and Camelback, respectively. There was some tight competition, and with 1:36 left in the match against BC, senior Kyleigh Carr scored to snap the shutout and give Xavier their first win of the season.

Four freshmen, one sophomore, five juniors, and 14 seniors make up the roster, with Olivia Yu, Lara Henderson, and Francesca Diaz leading the team in goals. Senior Elie Lopez leads with shots, while Henderson has a team-high two goals per match. Senior goalkeeper Colleen Cundiff and freshman Avellina Saunders both have shutouts on the season.

The Gators face fellow 6A Central Region teams Desert Vista, Sunnyslope, and Millennium, along with Shadow Ridge and Pinnacle, in the lead-up to the playoffs.

on the 2A Valley Region and go further in the state tournament after falling in the first round last year. Their current stats as of press time sit at 4-2-1.

“We have a process for everything we do, and when players buy into it, we are successful,” Zook explained. “If we continue to play as we are right now, and avoid injuries or sickness to key players, we are in line for the playoffs. The team has set a goal to compete for the 2A Championship.”

VERITAS PREP GIRLS

Last season saw the Falcons go 5-0 in the 2A Valley Region before exiting the playoffs in the first round. They are eager to make more progress and are working hard after a 3-3 start.

At press time, their biggest win was an



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Cheer teams bring high kicks, big smiles and school pride

By Kylie de Best

The cheer and pom teams at Arcadia, Veritas, and Xavier dedicate hours to delivering unforgettable routines for sports teams, fans, family, and competition judges alike. From early-morning practices to traveling for competitions, these teams have created more than just award-winning performances – they’ve made memories and friendships that last.

ARCADIA HIGH

Arcadia’s pom team started their competitive season off strong with USA Regional II in December. They competed in the Varsity Advanced Small Pom and Varsity Advanced Small Jazz Divisions, placing first in jazz and second in pom, qualifying them for Nationals. On January 15-17, they competed against 30 teams in both categories. The team is looking forward to representing Arcadia at the USA Spirit Nationals in Anaheim in February.

While preparing for State and Nationals, the Titans will be cheering on the Arcadia boys varsity basketball team – hoping to see them all the way to the playoffs. The athletes had the opportunity to work with choreographers Liz Blalock (former Cardinals cheerleader and current dance choreographer), Ellie Schroer (Arcadia pom alum and current Cardinals cheerleader), and Pip Schultz (current Las Vegas Raiders cheerleader).

“Being a member of the team has helped me develop new skills, better time management,

and school spirit,” pommie Larkyn Davies said. “I’m so grateful to the girls on my team, and Coach Bree, for making this year the greatest experience possible!”

The cheer team focused on their competition routines and skills while also preparing for football, basketball, and school events. Every week, the team participates in strength training and tumbling classes. According to cheer captain Taydem Kraft, this combination of preparation, skill development, and teamwork enabled the team to excel in competitions.

Varsity and JV cheer teams showed off their skills at the AIA Game Day State, where cheer showed off their game day routine and placed fourth in the D2 Large Cheer division.

They also competed in a show cheer routine at the USA Arizona Regional 2 competition, placing third in the varsity Small Intermediate Show Cheer division. The JV team competed against varsity teams in the Medium Crowdleader division at both USA Arizona Regional 1 and USA Arizona Regional 2, placing third at one and sixth at two.

VERITAS PREP

The Falcon spiritline was started two years ago by Veritas moms Coley Arnold and Meghan Gottfredson. While they are not competing yet, this season they are currently adding more stunting and are excited to see this program grow.

“I do competitive dance, and the addition of the spiritline has now allowed me to dance and support my school at the same time,” Julia Gottfredson said. Team practices start with warmups led by the team captains. New choreography is learned, and other routines are cleaned up.

So far in 2025-26, the team has learned eight sideline dances, eight cheers, and four halftime routines. In January, they debuted the new routines at the pep rally and at Hoopcoming.

XAVIER PREP

Xavier Cheer has 14 National titles and 13 State Championship titles on the roster thus far. This year, they competed in various USA Spirit Regionals and AIA-sanctioned events, most recently placing first at Regionals, which earned their bid to the USA Spirit Nationals.

According to Coach Kathryn Treadwell, the team is heavily committed to performing their best, with practices held four days a week. Their goals for the season are to make finals in all of their routines at both the AIA Traditional State and USA Spirit Nationals.

“Practices are extremely important. The amount of dedication it takes to wake up and move your body this early in the morning is amazing, and the girls don’t miss a beat,” Treadwell said.

The team is refining their traditional/show cheer routine, their all-girl stunt routine, and their Game Day/Crowdleader routines, in hopes of winning their third consecutive National title at the USA Spirit Nationals in February.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARCADIA HIGH

Talia Kovac, Quinn Trost, Harper Brown, Scarlett Shapiro, Brielle Forst, Sammie Yee, Lillian Fadeley, Taylor White, Makayla Dehnert, Taydem Kraft, Avery Scovel, Sarah Salt, Xiana Ward, Lola Hampton, Marina Bertolino, Abigail Smith, Leah Layman, Charlotte Niedzialek and Penelope Luster.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARCADIA HIGH

(front) Anahi De La Cruz, Leilani Peres, Chrysanthemum Oritz, Grace King, Annabella Colonna, Kyndall Bernal, Dalia Harney, Miriam Johnson. (back) Alison Rodriguez Portillo, Omniya Muhummad, Noelle Vendredi, Mariah Dukes, Shyla Clifford, Sofia Barr, Nevaeh Nelson, Ava Lee, Siena Yonushonis, Adia Walters and Grace McCarthy.



PHOTO COURTESY OF COLEY ARNOLD

(front) Jack Pals, Emily Gottfredson, Ella Dutchak, Kate Seoane, Harper Rowland, Tatum Savale. (middle) Katelyn Wilkinson, Eva Luebke, Alice Livak, Anna Jean, Ava Hickey. (back) Lana Rowland, Izzy Sinatra, Lucy Austin, Lia Karber, Zoe Pivin, Simon Burki, Ryleigh Schroeder, Julia Gottfredson, Abby Soukup and Teagan Sullivan.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA ZUBA

(front) Carleigh Chase, Macy Turner, Kendall Hamilton, Hazel Vynalek, Braylee Jevnick, Makenna King, Bella Luna, Jamison Jolesch. (middle) Noelle Neal, Olive Edelstein, Maggie Raddatz, Kaitie Hoffman, Daniela Ramirez, Olivia Perry, Susannah Root, Kate Callahan. (back) Isabella Villanueva, Quinn Teevan, Sophia Meyerand, Lola Smith, Natalia Sumner, Logan Stoner, Vivian Myers and Paige McKeever.



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Xavier and Brophy take first at inaugural pickleball competition

By Cliff Summerhill

Students from Xavier and Brophy Prep kicked off their winter break at the 2025 Arizona High School Pickleball Championships, finishing first overall in a tournament that brought together students from 25 Arizona high schools.

The combined Brophy-Xavier team earned 26 points over two days of competition, narrowly finishing ahead of Corona del Sol, which placed second with 24 points. Mountain View finished third with 19.

Brophy’s involvement began through its pickleball club, which partnered with Xavier as the sport is coed.

“We were all excited, and the Broncos were grateful that the Gators led the way,” Brophy’s moderator Patrick Higgins said.

Several students played key roles in the win, including juniors Colin St. Hilaire and Druva Vignesh, as well as sophomore Warren Park. Xavier athletes also turned in strong performances throughout. Freshmen Ava Shoen and Makenna McLachlin won the Girls Doubles, and Ava and Colin added runner-up finishes in Girls Singles and

Mixed Doubles. Ella Boyle, Alayna Zimmerman, Mia Calihan, and Georgia Schultz helped keep the momentum high.

“The students were thrilled to represent Xavier and Brophy and win the top team award,” said Coach Paul Shoen. “It was a bit surreal because it isn’t a widely recognized sport yet, and all of a sudden they were competing against 25 other schools.”

The winners received JOOLA-branded paddles and a soft sponsorship that includes discounts and the possibility of future professional demonstrations.

The championship event was organized by Arizona High School Pickleball, an initiative launched by the team behind PURE Pickleball & Padel. The group helped start and support more than 30 high school clubs across Arizona during the 2025 school year.

Their mission is to make pickleball a high school sport in Arizona and to make Arizona a blueprint for other states to follow. Event leaders said they hope school support continues to grow as more students get involved.

In addition to five state championship

“The students were thrilled to represent Xavier and Brophy and win the top team award.”



Xavier and Brophy beat 25 other high schools.

events and the high school state championship event, the initiative announced the PURE Academy, a new development program for all ages and skill levels, which started in January. With a new high school pickleball

league expected to launch this spring, organizers say the enthusiasm and participation seen at this year’s championship are a positive sign for the sport’s future in Arizona. purepickleball.com



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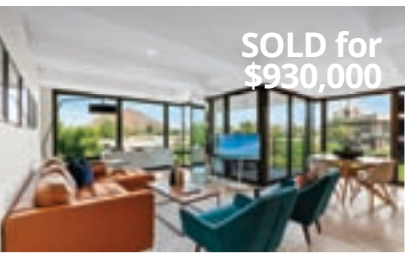
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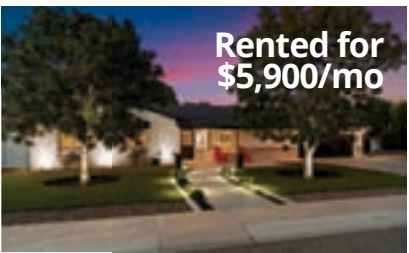
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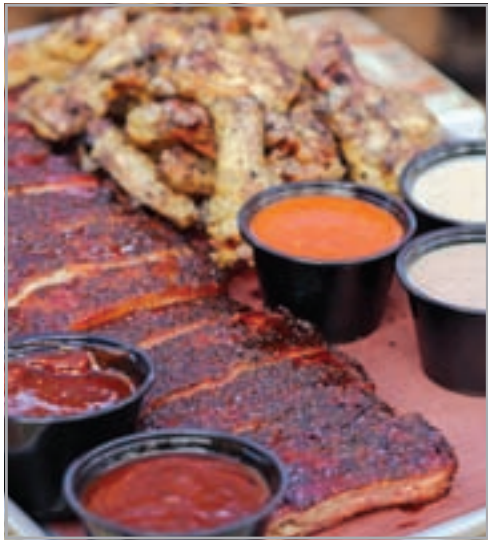
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Taylored Charcuterie



Caldwell County BBQ

The Dining Scoop

It doesn't matter who or what you're celebrating – a sports team, your significant other, your family, yourself... there's never a wrong time for meats, cheeses and accoutrements when it comes time for snacking. The charcuterie board is a place to keep said snackies in easy reach – and these Valley businesses can help you plan a spread for the big game or a night in, whatever your heart desires this February!

Taylored Charcuterie

tayloredcharcuterie.com

Taylored Charcuterie debuted in January 2022 after owner Taylor Hicks started making boards for her own parties and events. She started posting on social media that she was offering charcuterie boards and began receiving requests from people she didn't know. After learning the legalities of owning a charcuterie company and obtaining all the right paperwork (plus a commercial kitchen space to rent out), Taylor was in business.

"I decided to expand my scope of delivery because honestly I have a hard time saying no!" Taylor said. "If I can make your event special then why wouldn't I do everything I can to make it happen? A customer can find someone closer to them, but they see the value and artistry in my product."

Everything about Taylored Charcuterie is customizable. The company can provide anything from individual cups, boards, grazing tables, charcuterie letters/numbers, breakfast boards, and workshops. Grazing tables have various add-on options such as florals/greenery and elevated risers with four different styles to choose from.

"I love a good theme and making your charcuterie board match the aesthetic you are trying to achieve, whether that's matching the color scheme with food safe florals or adding little touches to make it

obvious what theme you are going for," Taylor said. Her favorite theme thus far would have to be "a cutie is on the way" for a baby shower where she created a grazing table spread on elevated risers that incorporated fresh citrus throughout.

"Since it's February and football watch parties are happening, I would use spicier meats such as calabrese or peppered salami, seasoned nuts, robust cheeses such as an aged gouda or gloucester onion chive, and style the salami into the shape of football for a special touch," she said.

There's another side of Taylored Charcuterie called Taylored Barkuterie, which is charcuterie for dogs. Taylor started networking with dog treat companies in the Valley and proposed bringing different vendors together to create a sample platter AKA a BARKuterie board.

"I like to call it a 'Taste of Arizona' for your dog. The idea is your pup gets to try a sample of a treat from these different companies and find what they like; then you can look up who made the treat and buy a whole bag from that vendor," Taylor said. "I enjoy supporting other small businesses!"

Charcuterie Bar & Co

charcuteriebarandco.com

Charcuterie Bar and Co is the brainchild of best friends and Valley residents Chanel and Sarah. Officially launched in June 2024, the business grew from a shared love of charcuterie and a vision: make food feel like an experience, not just a spread. With no formal roadmap, the pair jumped in headfirst, researching, binge-watching TikToks about mobile businesses, and leaning on friends for guidance.

"We wanted to create something that instantly elevated a girls' night or a fun day with friends. Most of our nights out were spent at places like Postino or cute

wine bars," Chanel said, "and we started asking ourselves why this experience has to live somewhere else. We wanted to bring that vibe directly to people in a way that felt personal, interactive, and a little extra (in the best way)."

While a storefront wasn't part of the original plan, recent conversations about a potential Arcadia location in the future means that this duo has big dreams and goals in store.

Charcuterie Bar and Co's signature service is the Charcuterie Cart. Complete with on-site setup and a curated selection of meats, cheeses, and accompaniments, the cart allows guests to build their own boards from a rotating selection of 12 options.

"Guests are served by our staff on either a keepsake mini board or a disposable box with a lid perfect for mingling," Chanel said.

A brunch menu caters to daytime events, and traditional boards are available for classic occasions. The business also expanded its offerings with a Cake Cart in partnership with SweetNess Cakes & Treats, giving guests the chance to customize mini cakes with the same interactive energy as the charcuterie experience.

"The most popular board is the personal mini board, hands down. People love being able to build from the 12 options on the cart," Chanel said. "It turns food into an experience, and everyone gets exactly what they want."

Local sourcing is a priority, with ingredients selected from area vendors whenever possible to support the community. Themes are another favorite part of the process, from Sarah's Valentine's boards with custom macarons to Chanel's girls' night setups.

"We had custom mini macarons from a local baker that were almost too cute to eat and I still think about how delicious they were," Sarah said.

Looking ahead, Chanel and Sarah are focused on growth, new menus, themed carts, and continuing to create moments that feel thoughtfully designed for every guest, whether at a private party, corporate event, or celebration in between.

FOOTBALL THINGS

If you're throwing a party for that upcoming football game, here are a few spots offering snacks and catering options.

Minnow Sushi & Cocktails (4501

N. 32nd St., Phoenix) is offering sushi platters, available for pickup on February 8. Designed for sharing, the trays feature a mix of specialty and classic rolls, bento boxes, nigiri, and sashimi, all prepared fresh and packaged for easy hosting. The Big Fish Party Platter feeds six to seven guests. Preorders are required.

eatminnow.com

Pedal Haus (730 S. Mill Ave., Tempe)

is celebrating with drink specials until 3 p.m., half-off chicken and cauliflower wings all day, team-themed Jell-O shots, and a free celebratory shot for guests wearing the winning team's colors after the big game.

pedalhausbrewery.com

Tracy Dempsey Originals (1323 W.

University Dr., Tempe) is leaning into comfort-forward favorites with a lineup of snacks. The menu includes caramelized onion dip, pimento cheese, the ever-popular "naughty dip," sweet-and-savory snack mix, ham and cheese sliders on house-made Parker House rolls, and pepperoni and veggie supreme galettes. Orders must be placed by February 1 for February 7 pickup.

tracydempseyoriginals.com

It's a bit of a drive, but good BBQ is worth it! Caldwell County (8315 W.

Washington St., Peoria) is bringing back its once-a-year smoked wings, available by the dozen or two dozen and paired with buffalo, Alabama white sauce, or BBQ ranch, alongside larger preorder options that include ribs, house-made jalapeño cheddar sausage, family meals, and sides. Orders are accepted online and must be picked up day-of.

caldwellcountybbq.com



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These recipes have a lot of heart

With American Heart Month and Valentine’s Day in February, it’s a natural time to connect the idea of love with heart-healthy habits. When it comes to heart health, it doesn’t have to be all or nothing. One of the easiest ways to care for your heart is by making simple swaps that reduce saturated fat and cholesterol while increasing fiber, antioxidants, and plant-based protein. These small changes add up.

For breakfast, a classic morning favorite gets a heart-healthy upgrade thanks to breakfast burritos made with seasoned tofu and vegetables. Swapping eggs and processed meats for tofu adds plant protein without cholesterol, while vegetables bring fiber and nutrients that support cardiovascular health.

A veggie-packed hummus sandwich is an easy lunch. Creamy hummus replaces mayo, cutting back on saturated fat while adding heart-healthy fats from tahini and white beans. Layered with fresh vegetables on whole-grain bread, it’s a satisfying meal that supports steady energy and healthy circulation.

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

For dinner, tinga-style tacos made with jackfruit offer smoky, saucy comfort of traditional tacos without the heaviness of meat. Jackfruit’s texture makes it a great stand-in, and when paired with spices and a tomato-based sauce, it delivers big flavor with a lighter impact on your heart. These swaps aren’t about restriction. They’re about enjoying familiar foods in ways that support long-term health, one meal at a time.

Join my monthly membership for printable recipes, health videos and live Zoom cooking classes – spring classes are available now! Only \$10 a month!

Breakfast burritos Serves 4

• INGREDIENTS •

- 1 tbsp. oil
- ½ diced onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ diced jalapeno (discard seeds)
- 1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 tbsp. lime juice
- ½ tsp. each: chili powder, cumin, salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 1 block extra firm tofu, pressed
- ¼ cup plant-based milk
- 1 tbsp. nutritional yeast
- ½ tsp. black salt
- ½ tsp. each: salt, onion powder, turmeric (for the tofu)
- Vegan cheese (optional)
- Black olives, cilantro
- 4 large tortillas
- Hot sauce
- Optional: fresh tomato and avocado for serving



• DIRECTIONS •

1. Add the oil to a pan and bring heat to medium high. Add onion, garlic and jalapeno and cook for eight minutes.
2. Add the black beans plus ¼ water, lime juice, chili powder, cumin and salt. Cook on low for about 15 minutes then blend using an immersion blender or food processor or mash by hand.
3. Add a little oil to a large frying pan and bring heat to medium. Crumble in tofu, then add the milk, nutritional yeast, salt, onion powder, and turmeric. Cook and stir for 5-10 minutes.
4. Grab a tortilla and layer in some of the tofu scramble, a big scoop of the blended beans, some vegan cheese, black olives, cilantro, and hot sauce.
5. Roll up and store in the fridge. When ready to eat, warm up in the oven or microwave for a few minutes until the cheese melts.
6. Add some fresh tomato and avocado and serve.

Hummus sandwich Serves 2

• INGREDIENTS •

- 1 zucchini, thinly sliced lengthwise
- Olive oil, salt and pepper
- 2 cans cannellini beans, drained
- 1 cup parsley
- 1 cup cilantro
- ½ cup tahini
- 1 lemon (zest and juice)
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- ½ tsp. pink salt
- ½ avocado, sliced
- ¼ cup shredded carrots
- 3 sliced radishes
- 2 leaves green leaf lettuce



• DIRECTIONS •

1. Add the oil to a cast iron skillet and bring heat to medium-high. Add the zucchini strips and grill for one to two minutes on each side until charred and tender.
2. Add the cannellini beans, tahini, lemon zest and juice, cumin, garlic, olive oil, salt, parsley, and cilantro to a food processor and blend until smooth.
3. Toast bread and spread the hummus on both sides. You’ll have leftover hummus to use as a veggie dip!
4. Add a layer of shredded carrots to each side so they stay put in the hummus.
5. Then on one side add the zucchini strips, radish slices, avocado slices, and lettuce.
6. Press together and slice in half.

Tinga tacos Serves 4

• INGREDIENTS •

- 2 cans jackfruit
- 1 tbsp. of avocado oil
- 3 cups diced beefsteak tomato
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup vegetable broth
- 1 chipotle in adobo, diced
- 1 tsp. each: cumin, oregano, pink salt
- Juice of one lime
- Hard or soft taco shells

• GUAC •

- 2 avocados
- 2 tbsp. red onion
- 2 tbsp. cilantro
- 1 tbsp. lime juice
- ½ tsp. pink salt
- Mash together!



• DIRECTIONS •

1. Drain and rinse the jackfruit to remove the brine flavor. Cut off the hard tip and discard, then shred the rest with your hands.
2. Add oil to a skillet and bring heat to medium high. Add onions and garlic and cook for five minutes.
3. Next, add the vegetable broth, diced tomatoes, diced chipotles, and spices. Cook over low heat for 10 minutes until the tomatoes are cooked through. Crush the tomatoes as they cook.
4. Add the jackfruit and lime juice. Simmer for 10 minutes.
5. Warm up shells, add taco jackfruit mixture, top with guacamole.



Margaret Eze clears land for a farming co-op in Nigeria created through Sunrise for Rural Dwellers, an organization that assists with educating women and families.

Supporting rural widows through community and care

By Mark Hays

Lily Tirone has spent the past several years helping build a lifeline for widows and families in rural Nigeria through a nonprofit called Sunrise for Rural Dwellers. The organization focuses on communities where basic resources such as clean water, medical care, and economic opportunity have long been scarce.

“Sunrise for Rural Dwellers really started with what a Nigerian priest saw was in need in his community,” Tirone said.

She met Father Tony Okolo, now serving a parish in Lake Havasu City, who frequently visited his home country and wanted to help improve the region. As he went back home, he saw things that were really difficult for the people there, especially those living in the villages. Tirone said that Father Okolo knew resources were extremely scarce — especially water.

Tirone and her husband became involved by helping Okolo pursue the dream of

providing those resources. As a result, a hospital is preparing to open, and the organization has helped hundreds of underprivileged people. Sunrise for Rural Dwellers partnered with Project C.U.R.E. in Phoenix to equip the facility, which volunteers believe will become a premier healthcare provider for the region.

“For \$10,000, we were able to see 850 people. Some of them had never seen a medical doctor in their life, and we were able to do it for about \$12 a person.”

During one of Okolo’s return trips, another crisis became impossible to ignore.

“He realized very quickly that the most disenfranchised population was the widow population... There is a disproportionate number of widows. Men tend to die a lot younger,” Tirone said.

Widows in the region, she explained, often face extreme discrimination, including loss of property and exclusion from community life.

Learning that information led to the



Lily Tirone

launch of Women for Widows, the project Tirone now oversees as vice chair. She works alongside committee members Carter Mogren and Linda Sredzinski, coordinating projects serving over 450 widows and their families. To start, she said, “food security was the number one thing on the list.”

Many widows were already skilled agricultural workers, so Tirone proposed creating a cooperative farm. Sunrise for Rural Dwellers purchased land that the women could cultivate for their families while selling surplus crops for income. Last year, the co-op added a cassava processing building, so members can benefit more from growing the staple crop.

“We knew the top price for cassava would be in flour form, and we were able

to outfit them with this beautiful building,” Tirone said.

Education has become a significant pillar of the effort. Many widows, Tirone said, had never attended school. Now, through a tiered vocational program, they learn literacy and arithmetic skills, along with vocational training options.

The organization also recently sponsored more than 100 children to attend school, hoping to break this cycle for future generations. The project faced some cultural resistance, as Tirone expected. But through the help of local leadership, the organization and those it helps continue to thrive.

“These women are just so hungry for opportunity, and that’s all they needed. Everything that we have provided for them, they have knocked out of the park,” she said.

Sunrise for Rural Dwellers operates through small U.S. and Nigerian boards and remains entirely volunteer-run.

sunriserd.com



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DID YOU KNOW? PICKLES

HOW MANY? 20B

According to market research reports based on USDA data, U.S. pickle consumption was about 9.5 pounds per person in 2023. Industry sources continue to use the widely cited estimate that Americans consume around 20 billion pickles annually!



HOW EXPENSIVE? \$38

Flamingo Estate is a Los Angeles-based luxury brand best known for its candles and olive oil. The company partnered with actress Pamela Anderson for a limited-time pantry essential, appropriately named Pamela's Pickles.

The pickles are made with a recipe passed down by Anderson's great-aunt, and Pamela added her own touch with rose petals. Each jar is \$38 (before tax), but 100 percent of the proceeds support the California Wildlife Center, so at least you're snacking for a good cause.



WHICH COUNTRIES?

Anthropologists have documented that in some communities, particularly in Fiji and parts of Micronesia, underground fermentation pits (holes dug into the earth, lined with banana or breadfruit leaves) carried deep social and marital significance.



These pits functioned as long-term food reserves, capable of sustaining families through storms, droughts, or periods of scarcity. A man's ability to maintain full, well-kept fermentation pits demonstrated physical labor and careful planning, but also his capacity to provide for a family during hard times. As a result, showing these "pickle pits" to a potential bride's family functioned much like displaying land, livestock, or stored grain in other cultures.

WHAT YEAR? 1492

Christopher Columbus is often linked to pickles because of their practical importance during long sea voyages. During that well-known excursion, Columbus stocked his ships with pickled and preserved foods, including pickled cucumbers, because they lasted longer than fresh produce. Pickled foods helped provide trace nutrients and acids that could reduce the risk of scurvy, a disease caused by vitamin C deficiency that devastated many early crews.



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DID YOU KNOW? PICKLES

Ancient Egyptian queen Cleopatra claimed pickles made her beautiful.

Pickles have been around since ancient times. Some believe the first pickle was created in Mesopotamia in 2400 B.C.E. Others believe it was as early as 2030 B.C.E.

When the Philadelphia Eagles beat the Dallas Cowboys in sweltering heat in September 2000, many of the players attributed their win to one thing: immense quantities of ice-cold pickle juice.

The phrase “in a pickle” was first introduced by Shakespeare in his play, *The Tempest*. The quotes read, “How cam’st thou in this pickle?” and “I have been in such a pickle.”

November 14 is National Pickle Day.

Sweet pickles are made by soaking dill pickles in strong Kool-Aid and are very popular in parts of Mississippi.

You can hear the crunch of a good pickle at 10 paces.

Napoleon was a big fan of pickles. In fact, he put up the equivalent of \$250,000 as a prize to whoever could figure out the best way to pickle and preserve foods for his troops.

In Connecticut, in order for a pickle to officially be considered a pickle, it must bounce.

The majority of pickle factories in America ferment their pickles in outdoor vats without lids, leaving them subject to insects and bird droppings. According to food scientists, the sun’s direct rays prevent yeast and molds from growing in the brine.

Old-time picklers couldn’t accurately measure the salt needed for making pickle brines, since the density of commercially bought salt varied from year to year. To get around this potential problem – too little or too much salt can cause pickles to spoil – many recipes recommended using “enough salt to float an egg” in the brine. While this method yielded fermented pickles that could keep all winter, they were too salty to be eaten. Picklers had to soak the pickles in water for days to make them edible.

Pickling vegetables not only improves their flavor, it can also make them more nutritious and easier to digest.

SAY WHAT? FIND THAT WEIHNACHTSGURKE!

The Christmas pickle ornament (Weihnachtsgurke) is a holiday tradition where a small pickle-shaped ornament is hidden in a Christmas tree, and whoever finds it first on Christmas morning wins good luck, a treat, or the honor of opening the first present. Despite its German name, there’s little evidence it actually began in Germany, and many Germans have never heard of it – experts believe it became popular in the United States in the late 1800s when retailers imported German glass ornaments and promoted the pickle as an “Old World” custom. Over time, fun (but unverified) legends – like stories involving St. Nicholas or a Civil War soldier – helped turn it into folklore, and today it remains a playful tradition especially loved in parts of the Midwest with strong German-American roots.



WORD SEARCH

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

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Let the crumbles fall where they may

As I sat, sipping a cup of hot coffee, to write this article, the thought came to mind that not everyone has been introduced to the enticing world of scones. Much like receiving blank stares from folks in the produce section at the grocery store after singing the praises of rutabagas, many might not know how fantastic they are and haven't experienced the exquisite taste.

Between England, Scotland, and Ireland, the precise origin of the scone is somewhat open to debate, but it is believed to have originated in Scotland in the early 1500s with the first known print reference made by Scottish poet, Gavin Douglas, in 1513. Food historians say that scones were invented by medieval monks while others say they were invented by Scottish settlers in America. The earliest scone-like cakes were made with unleavened barley or oatmeal dough and fruit, shaped into large rounds, scored into four or six wedges and cooked on a griddle over an open fire. These resembled the *bannock*, which was the traditional Scottish flatbread and a staple in the diets of the Scottish and Welsh common folk. This bread is said to have taken its name from the Stone of Destiny, the place where Scottish kings were once crowned.

The word is thought to have originated from the Dutch *schoonbrot*, meaning fine white bread; and the closely related German *sconbrot*, which means beautiful bread. This pastry can be pronounced in two different ways: s-con and s-cone and there doesn't appear to be a definitive answer as to which one is correct. Guess it depends upon which side of the pond you're on.

The history is like all other tales: complicated, a bit vague and often not well documented.

It comprises contradictions and debates that confusingly overlap each other. For certain, the tale has journeyed through centuries of tradition and exquisite taste that are intertwined with British culinary traditions and the evolution of tea culture. They are a tempting type of baked pastry that doesn't use yeast, typically sweet or savory, and known for their unique versatility and buttery flavor. Unlike croissants or Danishes, scones have a peculiar crumbly texture that's not quite a cake or a biscuit and should never be described as flaky or laminated.

To this day there are unraveled myths about the evolution of afternoon tea and the importance of scones. Did Countess Anastasia introduce it to Paris in 1837 or did the English Spa towns set the stage back in the 1750s? Some comfortably conclude that Anna Russell, the seventh Duchess of Bedford and close friend of Queen Victoria invented it. Supposedly, sometime in the early 1840s, Anna stated that she couldn't wait until 8 p.m. to have dinner and started something special by inviting folks to enjoy tea, sandwiches, scones and cake with her around 4. This time of spirited conversation and light food was enjoyed so much that the ritual of 'Afternoon Tea' took hold. During the Victorian era scones mixed with currants gained prominence by way of the increased availability of refined flour.

As time wove its intricate tapestry, scones started to undergo transformation and were refined and reimagined. With the introduction of baking powder in the 19th century, they began to rise and take on a fluffier, delicate balance of flavor and light texture. The traditional recipe started



to include eggs, baking powder and other nutritious items. Blending old traditions with new ones turned the plain and ordinary scone into a sweet indulgence. Pastry chefs, with their time-honored recipes and meticulous techniques could now turn out scones that would be the centerpiece of any event.

A scone is best eaten immediately out of the oven because they tend to dry out quickly. If you know you won't eat them the day you make them, wrap and freeze them. Sometimes it's a simple affair – a buttery blank canvas waiting for a dollop of butter, jam, drizzle of honey, or clotted cream. Other times, a scone is a decadent treat all on its own loaded with fruits such as raisins, cranberries, blueberries, raspberries and strawberries, shredded cheese and luscious herbs like rosemary, thyme, oregano and lavender buds. Either way, it's a perfect accompaniment for tea or coffee.

I was raised to never eat with my fingers, but my Scottish grandfather had his own ideas and taught me at an early age how to eat a scone. Never cut it – break it in half by hand and eat the bites. To this day I find myself pulling apart morsels of warm zucchini muffins and cranberry bread with my fingertips to savor their textures.

This delectable treat will always have a place on our plates because they have stood the test of time and are a true symbol of warmth and hospitality. With every bite you'll experience a taste of nearly 500 years of history, one that has traveled from Scotland to our table, yet is lovingly still tied to its roots.

Whether you like traditional, fruit, cheese, herb or American style scones shaped in triangles, fancy rounds, squares or diamonds, start with the main ingredients as cold as possible as this will help to guarantee the soft, light and well-risen qualities. It's ideal to work with chilled bowls and a chilled pastry cutter. Don't overmix – varying sized lumps are what you want. Don't forget to give the scones that final chill in the refrigerator which relaxes the gluten and yields a tender texture in addition to cooling the butter down again for that crumbly texture. Keep the cold weather outside and savor the aroma of freshly baked irresistible scones. Enjoy!

Cranberry Orange Scones

SCONES:

- 2 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup caster sugar
- ¼ cup light brown sugar, packed
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 ¼ sticks frozen unsalted butter, grated
- ¾ cup heavy cream, plus more for brushing
- 1 large cold egg
- 1 tbsp. orange zest
- ¼ tsp. ground cardamom
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ tsp. orange extract
- 1 tsp. bourbon
- 1 ½ cups frozen cranberries

GLAZE:

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tbsp. fresh orange juice
- ½ tsp. orange zest
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/8 tsp. salt

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and line a baking sheet with parchment.
2. Rub orange zest with both sugars to release flavor.
3. In a large bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, sugars, salt, and cardamom.
4. Cut in grated butter until mixture is crumbly. Fold in cranberries.
5. In another bowl, whisk cream, egg, vanilla, orange extract, and bourbon.
6. Make a well in dry ingredients, pour in liquids, and mix until a shaggy dough forms.
7. Turn onto floured surface, gently flatten to 1 ½-inch thickness, and cut into 8-10 wedges. Chill 5-10 minutes.
9. Brush tops with cream and sprinkle with demerara sugar.
10. Bake 18-20 minutes until lightly golden.
11. Rotate halfway if needed.
12. Cool on a rack, then drizzle with glaze.



Thyme in My Kitchen

BY SHERRY KLUSMAN

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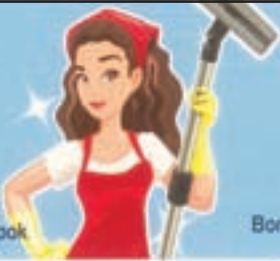
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Titan Times

VOL. 3 NO. 4

FEBRUARY 2026

From the students of Arcadia High School

On stage at Arcadia

By Francesca Mena

This spring, Arcadia theater is proud to present two mainstage productions: *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, and *All of Greek Mythology in 99 Minutes or Less* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*.

The Iliad, *The Odyssey*, and *All of Greek Mythology in 99 Minutes or Less*, written by Jay Hopkins and John Hunter, is a satirical comedy that presents all the drama and complexity of Greek mythology in a hilarious and fast-paced way for all audiences.

Arcadia's theater and technical theater teacher, Richard Fairchild, is directing this show, with senior Emily Rios Quinto as student director. *The Iliad* will be open to audiences in the Arcadia auditorium on March 5, 6, and 7. Don't miss your chance to see the Greek gods walk down the red carpet, a silly reenactment of the Trojan War, and all your favorite Greek myths on the big stage.

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee is a musical based off of a book written by Rachel Sheinkin, music and lyrics by William Finn, and created by Rebecca Feldman. It is also Arcadia's second mainstage production for the 2025-2026 school semester.

The show follows an eccentric group of six kids, and a few audience volunteers, at the Putnam County Spelling Bee as they compete for the \$200 prize and a ticket to nationals. Directed by senior Samantha Hizme, *Spelling Bee* will have two performances on March 26 and 27.

As always, both of Arcadia's shows are completely student run. Everything onstage and backstage, from the set to the choreography, is created, built, and overseen by students in the tech and acting programs. Keep an eye out for tickets on the Arcadia Theater Instagram in the coming weeks.



Richard Fairchild and Samantha Hizme.

CLASS OF 2027 JOINS NHS

The National Honor Society is an organization that recognizes high school juniors and seniors for their outstanding commitment to the four pillars of NHS: scholarship, service, leadership, and character. It aims to utilize the skills and drive of its students to better the school and the community. On January 14, NHS inducted the class of 2027, marking the official start of the two semesters they will serve.

Gia Catton was recently elected NHS President by her peers, and she said she cannot be more excited. When asked how she feels being elected president, she said, "I was actually so surprised and grateful

for everybody who voted for me. I really plan on making this a great year."

Under the leadership of the NHS officers, Vice President Isla Berry, Secretary Sydney Kelley, Treasurer Sarah Salt, and Service Chair Bryce Witt, NHS members will work to serve their school and community.

"In the fall, we do Tavan buddies – where throughout the semester, we write letters to second graders at Tavan Elementary – and I'm really excited for that," Gia said.

The class of 2027 is already having a great year, and we can't wait to see what these juniors and seniors do as members of the National Honor Society.

– Francesca Mena

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