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INDEPENDENT

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Sun City Fire Marshal warns of DIY repairs

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

It starts with a YouTube video and a trip to Home Depot. It can end with firefighters on your lawn.

Sun City Fire District Fire Marshal Kenny Kovac recently wrote a letter urging residents to stop attempting home repairs. He stated firefighters have responded to multiple fires in recent months traced back to residents performing their own plumbing and home maintenance work without the proper training or credentials. He added many of the repairs have resulted in major damage and “placed lives at risk.”

“Many residents believe they can save money by performing repairs themselves,” he stated in the letter. “Unfortunately, what may appear to be a simple plumbing repair often involves the use of torches, electrical components, or gas connections.”

In an email, Kovac stated this is a

• See **DIY** on page 5

From trash to comfort, Sun City group turns plastic bags into beds



Kendra Moore, Charline Hunt, Stacy Lindauer, Jody Swank, Kim Cecena and Nancy Ostrander pose in the supply room.
(Independent Newsmedia/Zev Black)

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Every plastic bag that passes through Jody Swank’s hands gets a second life. Each Monday and Tuesday, a group of women file into Sun City Christian Church, 9745 W. Palمرas Drive, to create sleeping mats for homeless people in the area.

This project first started when

Swank saw a blurb on Nextdoor about a Florida group doing the same thing. She tried doing it herself, but it took a long time. She put her own post looking for help on Nextdoor and had her first within 10 minutes.

So, Swank created the Caring Angels. The process of creating one sleeping mat is a long one — over 80 hours of work.

First, the plastic bags are sorted into different colors. After that, they are flattened, folded and cut into strips. After tying pieces together, they are able to be crocheted into the mats.

At the beginning, she was working out of her garage. Now, after moving around multiple times, she’s found a home at the church.

• See **Beds** on page 5

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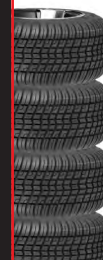
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POMS

New Poms president discovers more than meets the eye

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

She's a month into her presidency and said there's already more to the role than she expected. Cindy Kress, the new president of the Sun City Poms, is learning quickly that leading the 33-member organization is about far more than what's visible from the outside.

"There's a lot more communication involved with this," she said. "I think the biggest part is making sure you keep in touch with people who contact the Poms. That and the bookings."

She added her biggest fear is double booking or forgetting a performance. However, that shouldn't be a problem because of how much of a team effort the Poms are. There were also roles she didn't realize existed

before she took over.

"It's such a good group of women," Kress said. "I think everything we do, I see all of us being a part of it. I'm the president, but I see all of us being a part of having a positive impact on the Poms."

She also believes the timing is perfect for her to step into this new role.

"It's slow right now because it's summer," she said. "That kind of gives me some practice time to work things in. That part is nice... It gives some practice and learning at how to actually do it and keep things organized."

It's a feeling she knows all too well. A former principal at the high school and elementary school level, Kress believes it takes a full year to learn everything.

"I think experience really helps," she said. It's kind of learn as you go. I can work pretty well with that."

Her first month has been a success. She said she's received congratulatory cards, adding the group has her back.

"The group of women that we are, out there making people smile, entertaining, enjoying what we do as much as them enjoying us," Kress said. "I'm enjoying my leadership at this point. I hope I continue to feel that way. I'm sure there will be some overwhelming times, but my goal is to just keep us moving forward."

Reporter Zev Black can be reached at zblack@iniusa.org. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines.



Cindy Kress, Sun City Poms new president, in her full outfit. (Submitted Photo/Jan Desmond)

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Beds

• From page 1

She said she used to run a project in southern California, working with the community to raise funds and help homeless people. She was connecting with them one-on-one, but it became too much emotionally.

She still wanted to give back but needed a change.

"I realized that I don't have to physically be the one making this happen," she said. "All I have to do is plant the seeds... It's a job that I haven't had. I don't think I've ever felt this way before."

But she's quick to point out she didn't get here alone.

"It actually means the world to me," Swank said. "I haven't gotten this far on my own. One of my beliefs all along is that it does take a village."

One of those members of the village is Kendra Moore.

She moved to Sun City a little over three years ago and joined the Caring Angels shortly thereafter.

DIY

• From page 1

pattern the department is seeing, which prompted the letter.

"We want to educate residents before a serious tragedy occurs," he stated. "Our goal is not to discourage people from maintaining their homes; it's to make sure they're doing it safely and know when to call a qualified professional."

One of the most frequent culprits, according to Kovac, is a homeowner soldering copper pipe with a propane torch. The fire doesn't always start where one would expect it. Heat can travel and build inside a wall due to something as innocent as the accumulation of dust.

"Sometimes, the fire starts slowly and smolders inside the wall for minutes or hours before becoming visible," Kovac stated. "Another possibility is the use of heat producing tools near combustible

"I want to do something to give back," Moore said. "There's a lot of homeless. When I learned about this project, it filled many checkboxes for me because we're keeping bags out of the landfill and out of the environment and also serving others."

She added that she grew up poor, which is another reason she wanted to be a part of this project.

"I know first hand how people can fall through the cracks," she said. "I think it's good we do a small part at making their lives a little bit more comfortable."

The sleeping mats weren't the only thing that took shape for the Caring Angels. The volunteers who gathered to make them found something they weren't expecting: each other.

"It started out so small and everyone sat with the person they knew," Swank said. "Pretty soon, they'd sit at another table and you just start visiting. You realize we're all the same, we're all the same."

The Rev. Brett Winters said he's thrilled the group get together at the



(Independent Newsmedia/Zev Black)

church because "people need a place to gather."

"Loneliness and isolation is such a big detriment to our older adults," he said. "The sleep mats they're creating are great. They're serving the community, but the time in which they're here together gathered in community, they're their own little group of support."

Swank said she is always looking for more volunteering willing to participate in any capacity. Whether that's crocheting, folding or sorting plastic bags, any help is welcome.

For more information, call 623-972-6179.

materials without the proper protection of heat shields, a fire watch, etc. Some residents like to burn weeds next to their homes."

He added the most common category for a fire is electrical work.

"People often assume replacing a receptacle, or modifying wiring, adding circuits is easy because they have done it before or a video was watched," he stated. "Unfortunately, improper electrical work can remain hidden behind walls and create a fire hazard long after the repairs are completed."

Lisa Gray, general manager for the Sun City Home Owners Association, stated in an email that SCHOA does not have requirements regarding home improvements.

She added this is the first time the group has heard of this issue.

"It is concerning that the fire department has encountered it frequently enough to feel the need to alert property

owners and encourage greater awareness," she stated. "We do, however, appreciate the fire department bringing this matter to our attention and helping to raise awareness of the safety concerns."

She added that SCHOA doesn't have the power to regulate these kinds of repairs because the work is being done on the resident's own property.

Kovac reminded residents that many repairs require permits and inspections to "ensure the work is completed safely."

"Attempting repairs without the proper permits can create additional hazards and may affect insurance coverage in the event of a loss," he stated. "The message is simple: If you are not trained and licensed to perform the repair, do not attempt it yourself."

For more information, residents can contact the Sun City Fire Marshal's office at 623-974-2321, SCHOA at 623-974-4718 or the Maricopa County Planning and Development at 602-506-3301.

POLITICS

Biggs courts Sun City Republicans ahead of governor's race

By Noah Flug
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Republican gubernatorial candidate Andy Biggs spent much of the evening June 16 making his case to voters at the Sun City Republican Club's monthly meeting, delivering remarks focused on affordability, border security, public safety and education.

Biggs enters the final stretch of the Republican primary campaign as the frontrunner for the GOP nomination. Recent polling compiled by The New York Times shows Biggs holding a substantial lead over fellow Republican David Schweikart ahead of the July 21 primary. However, the same polling shows incumbent Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs maintaining a narrow lead in the general. Recent surveys have shown Hobbs leading Biggs by between four and five percentage points, though a November Emerson

College poll found the race within a single point.

With the primary just over a month away, Biggs used the event has both a campaign stop and a policy forum. Before delivering his speech, the congressman worked his way through the room, stopping to speak individually with attendees.

When asked about his outlook on the general election, Biggs said he believes the race is competitive.

"I think it's within the margin of error," Biggs said.

Grant Stieber, a staff member with the Biggs campaign, echoed that optimism.

"The energy is really good," Stieber said. "We're feeling really great."

Throughout his remarks, Biggs repeatedly criticized Hobbs' administration, arguing Arizona has become less affordable during her tenure. He

cited housing costs, utility rates and economic growth as major concerns for voters.

"My promise to you is we're going to make Arizona affordable again," Biggs told the crowd.

Biggs also pledged to increase support for law enforcement, protect school choice programs and pursue what he described as government efficiency efforts aimed at reducing waste and fraud in state government.

The congressman told attendees that public safety remains a priority and expressed strong support for Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations and deportation efforts. He also said he would oppose sanctuary city policies in Arizona if elected governor.

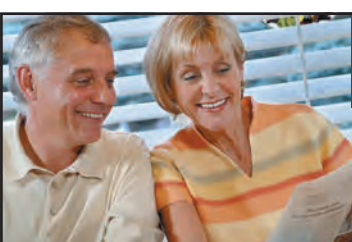
During a question-and-answer session, Biggs addressed Arizona's newly created lieutenant governor position,

which voters will elect for the first time in 2026.

Biggs said he has not yet selected a running mate and plans to make a decision after securing the Republican nomination. He said more than 60 people have expressed interest in the position and that he is looking for someone who can help travel the state and potentially oversee efforts to identify government waste and inefficiency.

Biggs also argued that the next governor will have significant influence over Arizona's future because the winner is expected to appoint three Arizona Supreme Court justices during the next term. Additionally, he pointed to the governor's role in the state's redistricting process following the 2030 census.

Looking ahead to November, Biggs emphasized Republican unity and voter turnout as keys to defeating Hobbs.



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BOOKS

Banned books find a home at Sun City church

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

In 2009, Todd H. Bol created the first Little Free Library in Hudson, Wisconsin. Now, according to littlefreelibrary.org, there are more than 200,000 registered book boxes around the world. More than 400 million books have been distributed.

Church of the Palms in Sun City, 14808 N. Boswell Blvd., hopped on the trend when it unveiled its own Little Free Library June 15.

However, this one is a little different. This box focuses on books that have been banned in some capacity in the United States. No single law prohibits these books nationwide. They are titles that have been removed from school curriculum or library shelves by local school boards or community groups. They often center around themes of race, sexuality, religion or language.

Paul Whitlock, reverend at Church of the Palms, said he wanted to start this because those at the church believe people should have the right to choose what they read.

"A banned book ensures that censorship doesn't dictate stories that are available to the community," he said. "It keeps the choice where it belongs, in the hands of the reader."

He added that Church of the Palms is a progressive faith community and is "always looking at issues and exploring issues."

"We take great pride in being progressive," Whitlock said. "We are an open and affirming church. That's our church lingo saying we welcome everyone including the LGBTQ+ community."

He went on to say that the "gener-



The box is located outside the church. (Submitted photo/Paul Whitlock)

ic church" has a long history of telling people what to think.

"We're not like that," he said. "We invite people to think on their own. As we approach our 250th anniversary of the country, censorship hurts the most when people can't afford an alternative... We are democratizing literature and ensuring intellectual freedom is a luxury item available to all."

Some of the books in the box include "A Wrinkle in Time," "The Hunger Games," "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "The Hate U Give."

According to library.nashville.gov, "The Hate U Give" is a banned book because it "Allegedly promotes 'divisiveness'" and "refuses to pretend racism is solved."

Whitlock believes books are a window into the lives of others, adding every banned book is a voice taken away from someone in the neighborhood who needed to hear it most.

"We created this because in a world where important voices and stories are often silenced, this little box stands as a beacon of free expression and intellectual freedom," Whitlock said. "It's completely open to any in and around our community."

For more information, go to thepalms.org.

TRAVEL

Sun City residents embark on Costa Rica adventure

By Diana Graettinger
and Nada Kennon

SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Thirty-four residents from Royal Oaks LifeCare Community recently returned from a 10-day adventure in Costa Rica, where they experienced the country's natural beauty, culture, wildlife and hospitality.

Led by Royal Oaks event coordinator Nada Kennon, along with experienced Costa Rica travelers Bill and Jet George, the group explored some of Costa Rica's most breathtaking destinations while creating memories and friendships that will last a lifetime.

The adventure included visits to coffee and chocolate plantations, where residents learned about two of Costa Rica's most famous exports and enjoyed sampling both. The group also



More than 30 residents from Royal Oaks LifeCare Community took part in a 10-day adventure in Costa Rica, where they experienced the country's natural beauty, culture, wildlife and hospitality. (Submitted photo/Nada Kennon)

explored the Arenal Volcano region, crossed hanging bridges high above the rainforest canopy and participated in an evening rainforest walk where they encountered colorful frogs, insects and other wildlife.

Residents embraced a variety of experiences throughout the trip. Some enjoyed ziplining through the rainforest, while others snorkeled in the Pacific Ocean. The group also took riv-

erboat excursions, spotted crocodiles, sloths and white-faced monkeys in their natural habitat and had a sunset dinner cruise that provided spectacular views of Costa Rica's coastline.

One especially memorable surprise occurred on the final day of the trip when members of the group had the opportunity to meet Laura Fernandez Delgado, Costa Rica's president-elect, creating a unique and unexpected high-

light to an already remarkable journey.

The trip also showcased the spirit of adventure that exists among Royal Oaks residents. From exploring rainforests and crossing hanging bridges to snorkeling and ziplining, residents in their '80s and '90s eagerly embraced new experiences and proved that age is no barrier to adventure.

The Costa Rica trip may be over, but the adventures continue. An Alaska cruise is already planned for July, and additional travel opportunities are being explored.

"Our residents are truly extraordinary," Kennon said. "They continue to embrace new experiences, build lasting friendships, and prove that retirement is not about slowing down. At Royal Oaks, they're living the dream — always ready for their next adventure."

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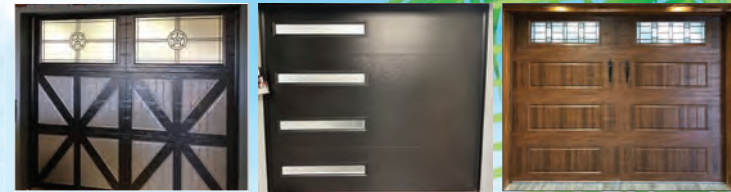
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OPINION

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Yes, I will do my part to help my community become a safe place for people to engage in civil discourse about public issues. Visit iniusa.org/civility-pledge/ to take the pledge.

Your Opinion

Our opinions page is to provide an open forum for our readers. We hope to stimulate debate, not to dominate or control it. We reserve the right to edit our opinions, and we insist on civility. Please include your name and phone number, so we can contact you for clarification or confirmation. We welcome your photo. All opinions must be no more than 300 words.

Those that are judged as personal attacks or complaints about neighbors, businesses or other opinion writers will not be considered. No person may submit more than two opinions for publication during a calendar month. Two submissions in the same issue will not be published. The content of a submission is the responsibility of the person who submitted it.

Speak Up

We support the use of pen names. Too many people don't speak up because they fear intimidation or even danger to their families and/or careers. Pen names are an important part of our nation's history.

Corrections

We will promptly correct all factual errors. We offer a "right of reply" to the people about whom we write. Readers who disagree with a news story are welcome to respond with a letter.

From the Newsroom: A word about pen names

By Kelly O'Sullivan

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

When Sun City and Sun City West readers visited our newsroom on May 18 for coffee and conversation with the staff, it was both enlightening and productive. There were lots of comments, questions and exchanges of ideas.



Kelly O'Sullivan

One reader raised the subject of pen names, which are used liberally by residents in both communities, wondering if some people submit letters under multiple pen names. It's a valid concern, one that I was happy to address by sharing what goes on behind the scenes when someone submits a letter under a name

other than their own.

I have the pen name conversation multiple times a week (sometimes multiple times a day) with readers from the Sun Cities and from across the Valley. First, I let them know that we cannot publish a letter under a pseudonym if we cannot confirm the writer's identity, and to do that, we need the person's real name, address and phone number.

I also let them know that the Independent doesn't share their information with anyone, and that their letter will include only their pen name and city when it publishes, as well as an editor's note that makes it clear they're writing under a pseudonym.

Most readers provide the information and once I confirm who they are, I

move their letter forward if it meets our civility guidelines. If someone declines to provide the information, I let them know that we're here if they change their mind, then archive their letter.

Some ask why we need to know who they are. We need to know for the same reason that we fact-check opinion submissions to the best of our ability — we're accountable for what goes into our digital and print publications. Just like Woodward and Bernstein knew who their Watergate informant, "Deep Throat," was from Day 1, we need to know whose opinion we're sharing, even as we protect their identity.

I also let letter-writers know that once they choose a pen name, they need to use

• See **Names** on page 12

LETTERS

married couples, but it is not true for unmarried couples like us. We pay more than both married couples and single residents.

When I asked about this at the RCSC office, I was told the bylaws were written in 1960 and have never been updated.

Sun City has evolved since 1960. Our policies should, too. It's time for the RCSC to modernize its bylaws so all committed couples are treated fairly, regardless of marital status.

Ken Litwak
SUN CITY

Mountain View rec center will have something for everyone

The renovation of Mountain View Recreation Center has been approved, and groundbreaking is anticipated in December.

Please note that the existing building officially opened in 1967, making it 59 years old. We have

residents in the community who are younger than that. It will be for the community, not just the Sun City Players Community Theater.

The Recreation Centers of Sun City Board of Directors will schedule the new building for clubs that want to use it. Its modern design and updated technology should also attract other groups that prefer a theater setting over an auditorium. In addition, outside organizations could use the venue.

Started in 1961, the Sun City Players Community Theater has maintained its status as one of the

• See **Letters** on page 14

Please send your comments to
AzOpinions@iniusa.org.

We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines.



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REALTYONEGROUP

Names

- From page 10

it each time they submit a letter and that it's helpful to include their verification information each time, too.

We don't allow people to go back and forth between their pen name and real name, or to submit letters under new pen names unless there's a compelling reason, like compromised identity, to change their name.

Why? Again, it's about accountability. Other readers need to know that at Independent Newsmedia, it's one person, one pen name. Can someone sneak one through? There's always that possibility, but we work hard to ensure that it doesn't happen.

Some other things readers should consider when submitting a letter under a pen name:

- Names like Anonymous, Concerned Citizen, Jane Doe or John Q. Public don't cut it. In the past, we allowed tongue-in-cheek names, like Harve Morespect, and those will stand. Going forward, that won't be the case — those writing under a name other than their own will be asked to submit a realistic-sounding first and last name. They can even throw in a middle name or initial if they like; it just needs to be a legitimate human name.

- If you're having trouble choosing a pen name, consider one that's easy to re-

member but isn't easily traceable to you. Many years ago, a family member wrote under a pen name that combined the town where our father grew up and our mother's maiden name.

- Not using your real name isn't a license to throw civility out the window. We review all letters to ensure they meet the guidelines set forth in our Civility Checklist. While it's natural to want to lash out at those who disagree with us or to copy and paste talking points that we haven't vetted because they fit our narrative, the fact is that if we don't engage in respectful, honest and civil dialogue, our message is lost or diluted.

Readers also should know that the maximum word count for letters to the editor is 300 words, and we don't publish complaints or testimonials about specific businesses or employees. Letters may be submitted via our online form at yourvalley.net/letters or emailed to AzOpinions@iniusa.org.

Exercising one's First Amendment rights by sharing their opinion is an incredible thing, one that we hope Independent readers in the Sun Cities will continue to do seriously, respectfully, honestly and civilly.

If you have any questions about opinions, please reach out. I'm happy to answer, as are my colleagues.

Kelly O'Sullivan is opinions coordinator with Independent Newsmedia, Inc., USA's Arizona newsroom. Reach her at kosullivan@iniusa.org.

Banner Olive Branch Senior Center offers meals, pantry service

Banner Olive Branch Senior Center, 13049 N. 103rd Ave., offers in dining, to-go meals and food pantry services. The food pantry available at no cost 7-11 a.m. Tuesday-Thursday. The center staff recommends a suggested donation of \$5 (\$5 fee for under 60). Lunch is served at 11 a.m. at no cost for anyone over 60. Breakfast is served 6:30-8:30 a.m. Monday-Friday. Cost is \$5 for breakfast and is open to all. To-go meals are now available daily for \$5/meal and are open to all. To-go meal distribution is 11 a.m.-noon Monday-Friday. The center also offers benefits reviews and information and referral services as well as many activities. Call 623-465-6000.

Menu

- Wednesday, June 24 - Chef salad with ham and cheese, shredded carrots, tomato, hard boiled egg, no-salt crackers, croutons, honey mustard dressing, mixed fruit
- Thursday, June 25 - Beef cabbage rolls, Italian mix vegetables, peas, roll, pineapple chunks
- Friday, June 26 - Baked salmon, wild rice blend, roasted brussel sprouts, Scandinavian mix vegetables, apple sauce
- Monday, June 29 - Egg bake casserole made with gouda and cheddar cheese, peppers, onions, and spinach, roasted potatoes, biscuit, banana
- Tuesday, June 30 - Pork chop with peaches, green beans, peas and carrots, brown rice pilaf, apple slices

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Letters

• From page 10

most enduring and active clubs for 65 years.

The last play, "Once Upon a Mattress," brought in over 3,900 patrons. They must be doing something right, and they are all volunteers.

We are a large community, and there is something available for everyone's interest.

Many people in the community like the low-cost performances the club offers

Charlie Mannino
SUN CITY

Mountain View theater will enrich Sun Citians' lives

In response to Mack Beth's repeated cutesy, faux-Shakespearean letters: Enough! His tirades against a new, improved performing arts

theater in Sun City show no cogent reasoning, in my opinion.

Community performing arts spaces are always multiple-use, allowing a variety of music, dance, theatrical works, special films and events to entertain everyone.

Theatre since ancient times has been a vital part of human culture, to communicate knowledge and express emotions. We still gather in many ways to dance together around those primitive fires. Just look at New York's recent wild communal joy in the final minutes of the Knicks victory in Game 4!

A more modern facility at Mountain View Recreation Center to adequately accommodate backstage storage, costume and make-up areas, and up-to-date lighting, sound projection and audience seating would surely be a showcase to attract more varied use. The entire community would be enriched in numerous

ways that make Sun City vitally stimulating.

Recreation Centers of Sun City provides space and funds to support an abundance of activities: sports, games, hobbies, fitness, studio art, clay, dance, music, etc. And, of course, golf!

A better venue for performance by creatives who live here could only enhance all our lives — and make Sun City even more interesting to potential new residents!

Please don't resist forward growth just because you personally don't understand the value of something.

Pat Tonnema
SUN CITY

Coyote letter triggered memories for reader

Reading Sue Wilson's coyote letter reminded me of my experience when I moved to Arizona nearly 15 years ago.

To avoid the summer heat, I tried walking late at night or at daybreak. I got a bad feeling, turned and saw a coyote or dog as big as a Great Dane following me. I decided to join a health club.

For years, the Posse offered dog-walking safety classes. The Sun Cities HOAs used to invite Arizona Game and Fish Department speakers to discuss living with wild animals. What happened?

There was I time I could have my morning coffee, say hi to dog-walkers, and watch for coyotes, javelinas, rabbits, quail, stray cats or dogs and feel like I was back in the America I knew 70 years ago. I think developers and climate change killed most of them.

Many dog walkers have walking sticks, flashlights, whistles, anything to scare off the coyotes. I miss my America.

Scott Mitzner
SUN CITY WEST

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NEIGHBORS

Welcome committee president, 95, helps seniors settle in

New residents at Sun City West Assisted Living, 13810 W. Sandridge Drive, often meet Antoinette Woods before they unpack their first box.

At 95, Woods serves as president of the community's welcome committee, helping new residents get familiar with daily life, activities and dining. She joins them at meals, walks them through the community and shares details about programs and events happening throughout the week.

Woods also takes part in Celebration of Life ceremonies held within the community, where she reads a passage about life for residents and families gathered in attendance. Outside the community, she attends funerals for fellow residents as another way to support them.

Her schedule remains active. Woods still participates in morning exercise classes and water walking, and she is known throughout the community for her healthy habits and positive outlook.

"Antoinette gives new residents someone they can sit with right away, and that changes the experience for



Antoinette Woods (Submitted photo/Peyton Reese)

many families," said Carrie Kaye, life enrichment director of Sun City West Assisted Living. "She makes time for people every day. Whether she is walking someone to a meal or reading during a service, she brings care and consistency to the community in her own way."

Visit pegasuseniorliving.com/sun-city-west for more information.

SUN CITY CHURCH OFFERS 'GAMES AND FELLOWSHIP'

Lakeview United Methodist Church, 10298 W. Thunderbird Blvd., is hosting "Games and Fellowship" 12:30-3:30 p.m. every Wednesday. It is suggested that those interested bring a neighbor or friend and also a favorite game: cards, bridge, dominoes, Mexican Train, board games, puzzles, etc. However, no experience is necessary and individuals need not bring a game, as they can always join a game already beginning or in progress. During June, July and August, the gamers meet in Fellowship Hall, and during the other months they meet in Smoot Hall after the Amazing Grays luncheons, at approximately 12:30 p.m. No beverages or snacks will be provided, so participants are encouraged to bring their own. Call 623-974-5821 for more information. (Submitted photo/Metro Creative Graphics)



POETRY

Local resident publishes collection of poems on peace

Sun City West resident and author-screenwriter-producer Claire Hutchinson has published a new collection of inspirational poetry, "Peace: Christian Poetry Volume 7."

According to Hutchinson, "the volume explores the biblical theme of peace and encourages readers to find lasting peace in every circumstance through Jesus Christ, the One who brings true peace."

Hutchinson says the collection is both "a celebration of the peace that comes from God through Jesus Christ and a testimony to God's power, love, saving grace and the eternal truths revealed in His Word."

The poems are divided into six sections: "The Source of Peace," which explores peace through God and Christ's gift of salvation; "Inner Peace," which focuses on peace through trust, prayer, and God's presence; "Living in Peace," which examines peace through spiritual

growth and obedience; "Peace with Others," which emphasizes unity, humility, and forgiveness; "Proclaiming Peace," which encourages sharing God's peace through witness and influence; and "Peace in Life's Struggles," which highlights God's sustaining peace in times of trial.

Pastor Rich Van Heukelum, of New Hope Fellowship in Sun City West, said the collection is "perhaps [Hutchinson's] best!"

"This seventh volume by Claire Hutchinson guides the reader to sense the wonder and the truth of God's Word in her beautiful poetic style. Always accurate to God's Word, this work on 'Peace,' a commodity all mankind seems to be missing, is shown to be available in and through God," he added.

The book is available on Amazon.com in paperback and ebook formats. Signed copies may also be ordered directly by emailing claire@claire-hutchinson.net.



"Peace: Christian Poetry Volume 7," by Claire Hutchinson (Submitted photo/Claire Hutchinson)



SUN CITIES RELAY FOR LIFE SLATES BOWLING BENEFIT

The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life of the Sun Cities is hosting a Strike out Cancer Bowling Benefit Saturday, Aug. 22, in the Sun City West Sports Pavilion. Registration forms are available at the Pavilion Grill entrance until work is completed at the bowling alley, then they will be at the check-in desk. Bowling includes three games of no-tap for \$25 a person and five on a team. Bowling is at 10 a.m. with a 9 a.m. check-in. Contact Marilynn Shaw, shaw.marilynn@gmail.com, for additional information. (Metro Creative Graphics)



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POMS HELP AT FOOD BANK

Members of the Sun City Poms volunteered June 11 at St. Mary's Food Bank, sorting and packaging food for those in need. Present were Cath Reel, Shea Stoiber, Jan Desmond, Deb Kruep, Deborahanne Vicher, Chrys Main and Anita Doll. (Submitted photo/Jan Desmond)



SUN CITY DAUGHTERS HONOR MEMBER

Members of Sun City's National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Agua Fria chapter, presented chapter Daughter Martha Jordan with an NSDAR 50-year anniversary membership certificate to honor her long-term dedication, leadership and service to the society and the community. The group gathered for an hour of conversation and refreshments in the library at the Peoria Sierra Winds Retirement Community. Pictured are honorary chapter regent Jean Sinchak, chapter registrar Cindy Miers, past chapter regent Linda Lundberg, chapter chaplain Debbie Schneider, Martha Jordan, chapter treasurer Jane Woehle and chapter regent Kathie Mittelsteadt. Visit aguafria.arizonadar.org for more information. (Submitted photo/Doug Miers)

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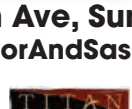
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SUN CITY LIONS CLUB NAMES NEW OFFICERS

Sun City Midweek Bell Lions Club officers for 2026-27 were introduced by past international director Dave Roberts. Pictured, in back, are Lions John Dietz, director, Tim Scoville, "tail twister," Kristine Scoville, vice president, Steve Shmatko, secretary, Loren Greenberg, treasurer, Ed Lyndon, director, and Don White, director; in front are Lions Ruth Dent, director, Jan Wagner, president and LCIF coordinator, Becky White, immediate past president, and Sue Kirk, director. Not present for the photo were Lions Tina DeMonico, director, and Bill Ritman, membership chair. (Submitted photo/Janice Wagner)

AMERICA

Church to present 'Sing America's Song'

Indoor hot dog picnic to follow

The sanctuary choir of First Baptist Church, 17419 N. Conquistador Drive, will present a patriotic musical, "Sing America's Song," 5 p.m. Sunday, June 28.

According to minister of worship Nancy Jakes, this is a "musical tribute to America's 250 years as a nation founded on biblical principles."

"Our choir feels privileged to honor God for 250 years of blessings, as we also honor our country's founders, military, civic leaders and citizens through songs of faith and gratefulness," she added.

There will also be an indoor picnic with grilled hot dogs and all the



(Metro Creative Graphics)

trimmings.

"So please join us," senior pastor Dr. Kirby Kennedy stated. "We look forward to celebrating this once-in-a-lifetime birthday with our community."

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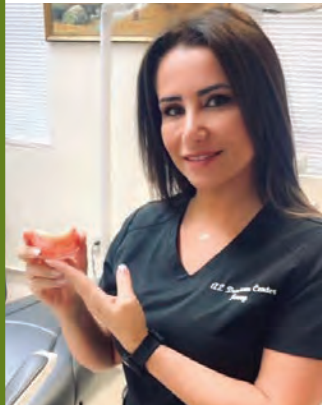
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News in Brief

Republican clubs hosting primary candidates forum

The Sun City West Republican Club will hold a primary candidates forum Saturday, June 27, at the Palm Ridge Recreation Center in Sun City West.

Doors open at 1 p.m. and the event is 1:30-5:30 p.m. with doors. Admittance is free, and will include refreshments, water and the option to buy 50/50 raffle tickets. Booker Ice Cream will be sold for \$5 cash per serving.

All 24 candidates who will appear on the Republican primary ballot in Sun City West have been invited to attend.

Voters can hear from the candidates personally by attending this event. Questions can be submitted in writing in advance (email Vice-President@scwrepublicans.com) or in writing during the event.

All Republicans and Independents from the Sun Cities and surrounding areas are welcome.

Visit SCWrepublicans.com.

Church plans grief support classes

A new six-week grief recovery class will be offered at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Sun City West, 13601 W. Aleppo Drive.

The class will focus on issues related to the death of a loved one; spouse, child, parent, sibling, cousin or other close persons.

It is open to the public, there is no cost and class materials will be provided by the church.

The class is taught by Pastor John Kelley and Dana Kelley. Both have decades of experience helping people deal with their grief.

The group will meet 1-2 p.m. Tuesdays, June 30, July 14, 21 and 28 and Aug. 4 and 11, in the church's Esty Fellowship Hall classroom-1. Call 623-587-7417 to sign up, or show up to either of the first two classes.

The church emphasizes strict confidentiality, in and out of the classroom, to respect class members.



SUN CITY ELKS HOLD FLAG DAY SERVICE

The officers of Sun City Elks Lodge #2559 hosted a Flag Day service June 14 for members and guests. The Color Guard, which included many Elks service members recently back from the Arizona Honor Flight, escorted the flags. The Elks have been commemorating Flag Day since 1907. The service highlighted the history and significance of each of the nine flags of the United States through words and music. (Submitted photo/Sun City Elks)

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Civility Checklist

How to engage in respectful, honest & civil dialogue about public issues

- ☐ **Take the high road.** Respond to the topic — not the person. Refrain from demonizing others for their opinions. Assume those you disagree with are, like you, genuinely interested in improving the community.
- ☐ **Be respectful.** Bullying, public humiliation, insults, name-calling, harassment, and threats directed at another person — or that person's race, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc. — have no place in civil discussions. Find ways to respectfully disagree without questioning someone's character or motives.
- ☐ **Be truthful.** Base your opinions/arguments on facts. Value honesty. Make only accurate statements when making your point and avoid exaggeration and stereotypes. When appropriate, cite your sources of information that others may question.
- ☐ **Don't misrepresent.** Always identify your opinions as opinions (not stating opinions as facts). Never misrepresent the views of others or falsely claim your opinions represent someone else. If quoting the words of others, identify and credit the source.
- ☐ **Listen & learn.** It's both polite and respectful to listen to those we disagree with (as well as those we support) and be genuine in our attempts to understand their point of view. Expand your mind by thoughtfully seeking out views that don't agree with your own.
- ☐ **Look for common ground.** When disagreeing with others, look for even small areas of agreement — which can be the gateway to working together for the greater good.
- ☐ **Respect privacy.** Keep private things private — whether it involves your own information or those with whom you disagree. Revealing private information about someone else is rude, unethical, potentially harmful and, in many cases, illegal.
- ☐ **Set a good example.** Practice civil behavior online as well as in public and in your interaction with others. Encourage others to practice these civil behaviors. And it's OK to challenge disrespectful behavior — but be courteous, respectful and helpful in your approach.



Now that you've read the checklist, take the Civility Pledge at yourvalley.net/civility-pledge.



Linda Lou Brooks

It is with heavy hearts and gratitude for a life well-lived that we announce the peaceful passing of Linda Lou Brooks (Rakestraw) on June 7, 2026, at the age of 88 in Queen Creek, Arizona. She was born on March 13, 1938, in Pekin, Illinois, the beloved daughter of the late

Mr. and Mrs. Smith P. Rakestraw.

Linda's journey through life was marked by her unwavering compassion and dedication to others, a testament to her nurturing spirit. She pursued a career in nursing, earning her Registered Nurse degree in 1960 from St. Francis Hospital in Peoria, Illinois.

On March 19, 1960, Linda married Ralph E. Brooks, with whom she shared a beautiful partnership until his passing in 2022. Together, they built a family grounded in love, faith and respect, raising three children: daughters: Karen Simpkins (Gregory) and Diana Rose (Kerry) and son Mark Brooks. Linda's legacy is further enriched by her seven grandchildren and ten great grandchildren.

Linda was also preceded

in death by three-brothers, one-sister and one-granddaughter. Beyond her professional life, Linda was active in her community. She often volunteered, by taking blood pressures at screening clinics in a variety of settings. Her faith could easily be seen at church as she sang in the choir.

Linda had a special passion for the Sun City Poms, in which she was an active member for many years in the early 2000's. In her personal time, Linda found solace and creativity with painting, sewing, crocheting, and a variety of other crafts.

A celebration of Linda's life with interment of her remains will be at a future date. She will be deeply missed but forever remembered by all whose life she touched.

Sun City Independent seeks July 4 news, events

Is your church, club or neighborhood planning something special for the Fourth of July and America's 250th birthday? Let us know about it!

The Sun City Independent is preparing a special, commemorative edition for Wednesday, July 1, and we want your patriotic community news.

Send July 4 activities and photos to jcarr@iniusa.org. Deadline is 5 p.m. Wednesday, June 24.



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ILLINOIS CLUB SLATES YEAR OF ACTIVITY

Members of the Illinois State Club of Sun City West took part in a Saturday at the Sports Pavilion partaking Wii bowling games. The high scorers (pictured) were Eric Stelter and Debora Braun. The group's July breakfast will be at the Links Restaurant, followed by monthly breakfasts at various restaurants throughout the Valley. In addition, the club has arranged for monthly dinners, including a pizza party with entertainment at Paulie's in Sun City. Annual club elections will be in November and will include lunch followed by a presentation from the Sun City Historical Society. As the year draws to a close, the club will celebrate the holiday season with a Christmas party at Carrabas Restaurant, which will include a visit from Santa. Membership is open to all the Sun City communities as well as the surrounding communities of El-Mirage and Surprise. Email IllinoisstateclubofSCW@gmail.com for more information. (Submitted photo/Judy Serdiuk)

POLICE REPORTS

Editor's Note: The following information is obtained from Maricopa County Sheriff's Office District 3. This column lists arrests, not convictions, unless otherwise stated. Arrested persons listed here who are later found not guilty are welcome to inform the Independent by calling 623-972-6101.

MAY 28

- Trespassing was reported 8:04 p.m. in the 11200 block of West Rhode Island Avenue.
- Traffic violation was reported 2:54 p.m. at the intersection of North R.H. Johnson Boulevard and North 128th Avenue.
- A fire was reported 1:35 p.m. in the 13500 block of West Ballad Drive.
- A vehicle crash with no injury was reported 12:24 p.m. in the 13500 block of West Camino Del Sol.
- Criminal damage was reported 6:05 a.m. in the 13000 block of North 113th Avenue.

MAY 29

- An assault was reported 8:50 p.m. in the 12200 block of North 107th Avenue.
- A theft was reported 4:20 p.m. in the 10000

block of West Royal Oak Road.

- Criminal damage was reported 4:49 p.m. in the 11500 block of West Longley Lane.
- Criminal damage was reported 4:58 p.m. in the 11600 block of West Longley Lane.
- A burglary was reported 5:01 p.m. in the 10100 block of West Burns Drive.
- Indecent exposure was reported 11:52 a.m. in the 10500 block of West Coggins Drive.
- Neighbor trouble was reported 10:14 a.m. in the 13700 block of West Ballad Drive.
- A burglary was reported 5:01 a.m. in the 12200 block of North 113th Avenue.

MAY 30

- Shots fired 10:13 p.m. in the 11600 block of West Beck Drive.
- A fraud or con game was reported 4:29 p.m. in the 11800 block of North Sun Valley Drive.
- Assault with a deadly weapon was reported at 5:17 p.m. in the 11600 block of North 103rd Avenue.
- A theft was reported 1:33 p.m. in the 10000 block of West Bell Road.
- A fraud or con game was reported 11:47 a.m. in the 12900 block of West Castlebar Drive.

- An attempted vehicle theft was reported 5:40 a.m. in the 11600 block of West Duran Avenue.

MAY 31

- A burglary was reported 1:06 p.m. in the 11600 block of West Peoria Avenue.
- A vehicle crash with no injury was reported 7:28 a.m. at the intersection of West Connecticut Avenue and West Florida Avenue.

JUNE 1

- Threats to commit an offense was reported 8:17 p.m. in the 10500 block of North 115th Drive.
- A fraud or con game was reported 4:29 p.m. in the 14300 block of West Circle Ridge Drive.
- An assault was reported 6:12 p.m. in the 10700 block of West Sun City Boulevard.
- Trespassing was reported 1 p.m. in the 10400 block of West Thunderbird Boulevard.
- A theft was reported 10:12 a.m. in the 13200 block of North 109th Avenue.
- A vehicle crash with injuries was reported 6:43 a.m. in the 10800 block of West Peoria Avenue.

JUNE 2

- A vehicle crash with no injury was reported 7:31 p.m. in the 10600 block of West Thunderbird Boulevard.
- A theft was reported 1:31 p.m. in the 10700 block of West Wedgewood Drive.
- Trespassing was reported 12:50 p.m. in the 11200 block of North 107th Avenue.
- A citizen assist was reported 11:18 a.m. in the 13800 block of North Del Webb Boulevard.

JUNE 3

- Trespassing was reported 8:02 p.m. in the 11200 block of Northwest US60 Grand Avenue.
- A theft was reported 3:50 p.m. in the 1200 block of North 113th Avenue.
- A burglary was reported 2:05 p.m. in the 10000 block of West Royal Oak Road.
- A fraud or con game was reported 11:37 a.m. in the 14400 block of West Whitewood Drive.
- Identity theft was reported 12:31 p.m. in the 15000 block of West Buttonwood Drive.
- A fight was reported 5:01 a.m. in the 10000 block of West Desert Rock Drive.
- A theft was reported 6:09 a.m. in the 10400 block of West Snead Drive.



Germaine L. "Gerry" Kurlinski

Germaine Lucille "Gerry" Kurlinski, age 87 years, passed away on June 9, 2026 at her residence in Sun City, Arizona. She was

born on December 13, 1938 in Bay City, the daughter of the late Norbert and Isabel (Sporman) Kurlinski. Gerry attended St. Stanislaus Kostka Catholic Grade School and graduated from St. Stanislaus Kostka High School in 1956. Being from a hardworking and diligent upbringing, Gerry began working at Peet Packing Co. in Bay City after high school and not long after started with General Motors. She was employed there from 1960 until 1984, where she held various

jobs and learned a lot about computers. When EDS separated from GM, she would remain with EDS and until her retirement in 1996. Gerry was very proud that with just a high school education she had a long successful career and ended as an advanced systems engineer. Following her retirement she moved to Sun City, Arizona.

Gerry was devoted in her catholic faith from attending St. Stanislaus Church as a child and later being a member of

St. Josaphat Catholic Church in Saginaw and St. Joseph Catholic Church in Auburn. Gerry was also a member of St. Joachim and St. Anne Parish in Sun City.

Gerry was an avid bowler and golfer all or her life. She was the Michigan Publinx Senior Champion in 1989 and the Bay County Golf Woman's Champion in 1990. Gerry was a member of the SWBA of 35 years and in 2003 was inducted into the Saginaw Bowlers Hall of Fame.

Surviving family

include her brothers, Richard Kurlinski of Bay City and Roger Kurlinski of Antioch, California; nieces and nephews, Kenneth Kurlinski, Michael Kurlinski, Patrice (Mark) Legner, Marilyn (Gregory) Wlodarczak, Gregory (Durelle) Kurlinski and Steven (Rebekah) Kurlinski; great-nieces and nephew, Erika and Olivia Kurlinski and Alex (Olivia) Wlodarczak; as well as special friends, Linda and Suzy. Gerry was preceded in death by her sisters-in-law, Sybille and Helen

Kurlinski.

Funeral liturgy will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, June 29, 2026 at Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish – St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, Fr. Pat O'Connor presiding. The family will greet friends on Monday at the church from 10:00 a.m. until the time of the liturgy. Private entombment will be at Floral Gardens Mausoleum. In lieu of flowers, those desiring to make a memorial contribution are asked to consider the American Cancer Society.

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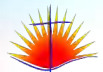

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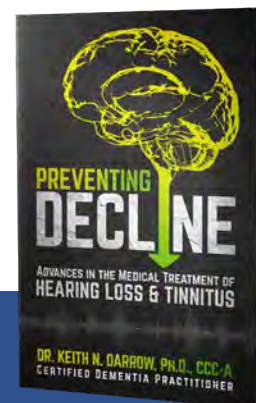
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