



Neighbors
 PORA volunteer reaches 20-year milestone; **12**

EPCOR files rate case application with ACC

Slew of virtual, in-person meetings coming up

By Jennifer Jimenez
 INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A rate case application is pending with the Arizona Corporation Commission by EPCOR Utilities, Inc.

This includes a review of the updated water rates for Sun City West, Sun City, Gateway (Mojave), Paradise Valley, Rio Verde and Sonoran water districts.

According to the EPCOR website, water rates have remained the same for more than five years. However, the cost of providing safe, reliable water services has gone up. In addition, the website stated "At the same time, we are also planning for long-term supply challenges, including drought, groundwater pressures, population growth and changing conditions affecting regional water resources."

• See **EPCOR** on page 5



Surcharge coming July 1 for specific transactions

Cash, check and debit cards incur no charges

By Jennifer Jimenez
 INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A 3% surcharge will be applied to all credit card transactions processed through member services and the Web Portal.

The Recreation Centers of Sun City West Governing Board approved the new budget, which means effective July 1, this surcharge will be added. This includes purchases and payments for member and associate dues, tenant fees, annual golf cards and member credit.

Member credit is virtual cash that members can use anywhere where the primary software system is used, such as golf, membership, recreation centers and library, said General Services Officer Katy O'Grady.

• See **Charge** on page 5

Annual golf cards will also have the 3% surcharge applied. (Submitted photo/Jennifer Jimenez)

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Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-151st.,
L-Deer Valley, R-Executive Way, L-Black Gold Ln.

SUNDAY, JUNE 28TH
10:00AM-NOON

**15208 W. Las Brizas Ln.,
SUN CITY WEST**

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ,
R-151st., L-Corral, R-Mazatlán Dr. to home

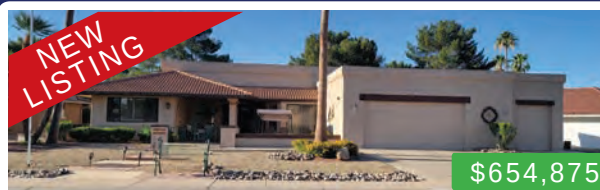
TUESDAY, JUNE 30TH
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**15208 W. White Rock Rd.,
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Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ,
L-Trial Ridge, L- White Rock Dr

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12635 W. Eveningside Dr , SUN CITY WEST
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Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-128th, R-Sunglow Dr. which becomes Eveningside Dr.

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15357 W. Black Gold Ln., SUN CITY WEST
MLS# 7002574

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-151st., L-Deer Valley, R-Executive Way, L-Black Gold Ln.

Highly sought after Prescott model. Home has 1872 sq. ft., 2 bedroom, 2 bath, den & great room floor plan. Home is located just a block & half from SCW's Desert Trails GC pro shop. Don't Wait! Call Today to View!



12548 W Parkwood Dr., SUN CITY WEST
MLS# 6982341

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-Parkwood Dr.

Expanded duplex. This 1757 sq. ft., 2 bedroom, 2 bath home has a 10' X 18" glassed encl. Lanai & combined with 30' x 17" great room there is ample space for entertaining. Home is located near SCW's Pebblebrook GC pro shop. Call today to view!



15208 W. Las Brizas Ln., SUN CITY WEST
MLS# 7000065... B/B ... 2.5%

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-151st., L-Corral, R-Mazatlán Dr. to home

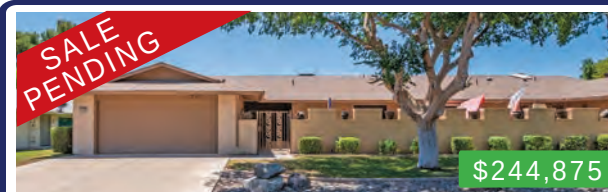
Popular Flagstaff model, 1970 sq. ft. (expanded), great room floor plan, 2 bdms, 2 baths & den on 7th fairway of Desert Trails GC. Enjoy the savings that comes with a paid off solar lease. Make arrangements today to view!



14165 W. White Rock Rd., SUN CITY WEST
MLS# 7010367

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, L-Trial Ridge, L- White Rock Dr

Highly desired Aspen model duplex located in the Grandview GC area of Sun City West. Home has 1866 sq. ft., 2 bedroom, 2 bath & an office/craft room. New interior paint 2026 & HVAC 2025. HOA allows pets & rentals. Being sold furnished. Call today to view!



12727 W. Copperstone Dr., SUN CITY WEST
MLS# 7024624

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-128th, R-Copperstone Dr.

Expanded duplex has 1697 sq. ft., 2 bedrooms, 2 baths plus a 19' X 9' glass enclosed AZ room/lanai. This home has been a successful seasonal rental & is being sold furnished. Neighborhood HOA also allows pets. Home is located close to SCW's Pebblebrook GC pro shop. Call today to view!



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DONATIONS

MCSO officials say donations are short this year for students in need

Donations will be picked up at the end of June

By Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The annual school backpack and supplies drive with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office is coming to an end and the Sun City West Posse is partnering to help them reach more than 1,000 students.

From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday, residents can drop off donated backpacks and school supplies at the Sun City West Posse Headquarters, 20450 N. Stardust Blvd. Supplies include pencils, pens, crayons, notebooks, paper, glue, scissors, rulers and protractors.

"If you can wrestle up some backpacks and supplies, that would be really great. The deputies will come

back at the end of month to get them. Schools open early this year for Aguila," said Sun City West Posse Cmdr. Carolyn Patterson.

MCSO Dep. Bill Cornwell said this year they are working to collect donations for 1,060 students. The first school event is Thursday, July 9. He said any donations residents can make will help.

"We are really slow right now on donations and we appreciate any help we can get," he said.

In previous years, residents have packed the Posse Headquarters, often coming in with multiple backpacks filled with needed supplies.

MCSO officials will go through all the donations collected from the district and distribute them to the students.



Sun City West Posse volunteer Nancy Jerosi with the donated supplies to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. (Independent Newsmedia/Jennifer Jimenez)

Donations will go to Aguila Elementary School in Aguila, an unincorporated community along U.S. 60 approximately 25 miles west of Wickenburg.

Reporter Jennifer Jimenez can be reached at jjimenez@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.

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Charge

• From page 1

"Our golfers in particular like the option of putting credit on their account and then being able to draw from it as needed when they check in for tee times, without having to worry about bringing cash or credit cards to the course," she said.

Additionally, O'Grady explained the Rec Centers benefit, which helps keep costs down because they pay the per-transaction credit card fee one time when the money is put on the account, rather than each time a golfer pays to play.

Many residents are speaking out against the surcharge fee, while others left comments of understanding on the association's Facebook page.

Meg Derry Bakke stated, "So you now offer a credit card service that you should have had for 15 years and now you charge for the service. So this means everyone still will walk in with cash or check. This does nothing to make this easier for the members or alleviate workload for employees. Another decision, or lack of one, that keeps the new generation questioning whether living here full time is a good decision. How many homes are for sale?"

Resident Jon Hurtado stated he understood and appreciated the heads up.

Association officials stated in part, "The

surcharge puts the costs incurred by individual members back on those members, rather than the membership as a whole. While many members use their cards because it's convenient, we all know the perks offered by credit card companies are a major influencing factor. The credit card companies set the fees but the Association has to pay them, and the individual users get the benefit."

The surcharge will only impact those who are creating the costs and said golf fees are different. Those fees can increase

to cover the credit card costs, without impacting the entire membership.

Residents can avoid the surcharge by using cash, check or a debit card when purchasing anything at member services. Those who pay dues through the web portal, can use the e-check payment option to avoid the fee.

As of Saturday, Aug. 1, member credit will no longer be available for purchase at the golf pro shops. Call 623-544-6100 for more information.



SMALL TOTES ONLY NEED ONE HANDLE

These one-handed totes prove popular whenever the class is taught at Rip 'N' Sew. Jolene Piaskowski recently taught the class at the Sun City West club. Shown holding their finished one-handed totes are, from left, Helen Grant, Susan Steffan, Margie Kennelly and Kay Grevas. (Submitted photo/Jolene Piaskowski)

EPCOR

• From page 1

EPCOR officials are hosting both virtual and in-person community meetings, which will kick off with the Sun City West water district, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday, June 23, at West-MEC Northwest Campus, 13201 W. Grand Ave. The presentation will also be available online after the meeting. Officials plan to share what is being proposed and how customers can participate in the ACC public process for this rate review. The review will take at minimum one year and no changes will take effect unless approved by the ACC.

A local organization in Sun City West

is sounding the alarm on the happenings at EPCOR to advocate for residents. Property Owners and Resident Association Board Vice President Jim Scott said EPCOR is seeking a rate increase, district consolidation and a formula conversion.

"Our wheelhouse is to protect our residents and ensure we all understand costs are increasing, but it must be reasonable and common sense at the same time," said Scott.

Scott said he has heard a consolidation increase is being thrown around at 20% and if that does not go through, Sun City West would get a 50% increase.

PORA officials stated they believe residents deserve to fully understand the

potential long-term consequences before any decisions are made.

According to Scott, this is not just about today's rate increase, the proposed utility consolidation and formula rate structure could have lasting impacts on customers for years to come.

He said residents need to be informed and involved from the very beginning of this process.

Email ratecasequestions@epcor.com with any questions.

Visit porascw.org.

Reporter Jennifer Jimenez can be reached at jjimenez@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.

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UTILITIES

EPCOR proactively shares information with customers

RUCO officials give 'kudos' to company for doing so
 By Jennifer Jimenez
 INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

EPCOR Utilities, Inc., is proactively sharing information with customers both in advance and during the beginning of a regulatory process that is expected to take well over a year.

This, as the company plans to file a water rate case with the Arizona Corporation Commission for all of its water districts, excluding San Tan. According to a statement from EPCOR officials, the proposal includes three primary components: consolidating smaller systems — Gateway, Sun City, Sun City West and Rio Verde — into the larger Sonoran district, introducing a more gradual approach to adjusting certain costs over time and revising the water usage tiers in Paradise Valley.

While word of a 20% up to 50% rate increase has been floating around, EPCOR officials stated it is important to be careful with broad percentages like that because the impacts vary significantly depending on the system, meter size and water usage. Sometimes, stand-alone rates for smaller systems, without consolidation, could result in higher increases. Officials said the proposal includes consolidation and a phased approach over three years, which is designed to help stabilize rates in a shared structure over time.

EPCOR stated there is not a single percentage that applies to all customers. The cost depends on location, usage and the structure the ACC approves.

Currently, customers are paying

water rates based on costs from 2019-2021, according to officials. Inflation has increased by 25%-30% and EPCOR officials said they have paid highest costs for power, labor, materials and water supply, all while keeping rates the same.

The statement read "While we've continued to provide safe, high-quality water and reliable service, the growing gap between rising costs and our last update must be addressed to sustain service. We're also investing in aging infrastructure — much of it decades old — to maintain safe, reliable service, provide high-water quality and to address challenges like drought, Colorado River uncertainties and growth."

Cynthia Zwick, Arizona Residential Utility Consumer Office director, said these in-person meetings provide an opportunity for customers to have a private conversation with company leaders.

"Kudos to EPCOR at this point for holding these information sessions before filing. I do believe the company is coming to those communities to truly hear what their customers have to say about it, and that is incredibly important. This is an opportunity to have customer concerns and support heard," she explained.

Zwick said once EPCOR does file, RUCO will file a motion to intervene in the case 30 days later. She said throughout this entire process, it is unusual for a company to get everything they are asking for, but the exact outcome is unknown until the ACC votes.

For more information, customers are encouraged to visit epcor.com or email ratecasequestions@epcor.com.

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Rec Centers amenities for RCSCW cardholders

The Rec Center News, the official publication of the Recreation Centers of Sun City West, is inserted in this week's Independent. The United States Postal Service includes homes in Sun City West and Corte Bella for this issue's delivery, however, those who live in Corte Bella, cannot use Sun City West amenities unless they are a guest of an RCSCW cardholder. Amenities are for cardholders only.



CLUB STAYS BUSY THIS MONTH

June continues to be a busy month for the Artistic Hand Lettering, Cards & Mixed Media club. Gelli printing is 6-9 p.m. June 24 and Fun Fold Friday is 1:30-4 p.m. June 26. Regular club hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday and Friday and 6-9 p.m. Wednesday. Contact Dottie Schmit (602-758-9854) or Kat McGinnis (480-806-8053), visit artisticandlettering.scwclubs.com or email ahlcandmm@gmail.com for more information. Club membership is \$10 annually. Pictured is Linda Cherry with her "steampunk" creation using The Craft-er's Workshop stencil butter in lime green and ocean blue. (Submitted photo/Melanie Harrison)

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.

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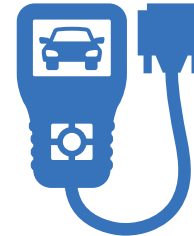
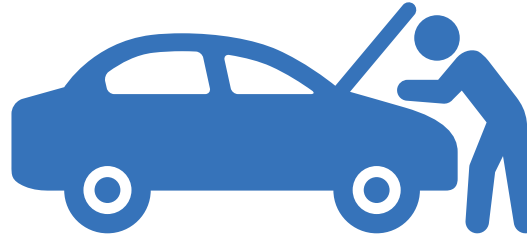
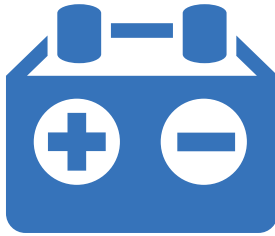
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OPINION

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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 Inde-

pendent 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

• See **Names** on page 19

LETTERS

powerful force for empowerment.

Children also stand to gain enormously from the thoughtful use of AI. In classrooms, AI-powered tutoring systems can adapt lessons to each student's learning style, strengths and pace.

For children with disabilities, AI-driven communication and learning tools are opening doors that were once closed, helping them participate more fully in education and daily life.

Alongside these benefits come serious concerns. As automation becomes more sophisticated, many jobs traditionally held by women may be reduced or eliminated. Without adequate education, retraining and workforce support, some women could face economic hardship and widening inequality.

At the same time, AI has introduced troubling new forms of online abuse.

Deepfakes, highly realistic AI-generated images and videos can be used to spread misinformation,

damage reputations and target women with harassment in ways previously unimaginable.

Children face their own set of risks. Experts worry that excessive reliance on AI and digital technologies could hinder social and emotional development.

The challenge is clear: Harness the extraordinary power of AI while preserving the values, relationships and human qualities that define who we are.

If society succeeds in striking that balance, AI could become a force for a better future.

Diane Smith, Women's Watch
CORTA BELLA

Women's Watch is a cooperative writing effort of the local chapters of the American Association of University Women, the League of Women Voters and the National Organization for Women. This piece has been edited for length and can be read in full online at <https://tinyurl.com/bdhuzm7f>.

• See **Letters** on page 18

AI: A future of promise and concern for women, children

From smartphones and virtual assistants to healthcare diagnostics and personalized education, artificial intelligence has become woven into the fabric of everyday life.

As this technology advances at an extraordinary pace, it offers tremendous promise. It also raises important questions about its impact on society.

For women and children in particular, the future of AI presents both remarkable opportunities and significant challenges.

Although the industry is largely dominated by male executives, women have played important roles in shaping its growth. Several successful AI companies have been co-founded or significantly influenced by women leaders.

Nevertheless, women remain underrepresented in AI ownership, executive leadership and investment funding.

For women, AI could become a

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MILESTONE

PORA volunteer reaches 20-year milestone

Volunteer hopes to continue to work for many more years

By Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Spending countless hours volunteering for a community she loves, this Sun City West resident celebrated 20 years of service to the Property Owners and Residents Association.

Marge Spencer was recognized by PORA officials for her dedication to the association. She was surprised by the flowers and certificate she received during a meeting earlier this year.

Spencer said the friendships she has established while working have been great and she and many of the girls go to lunch together and do things outside of work.

Her start at PORA began when she was asked to help meet new people who wanted to become members.

Previously in her professional career, Spencer worked with the public in a grocery store office and in banking.

"I have always enjoyed working with people and I enjoy coming in to PORA and making new friends. This is my life," said Spencer.

Her typical schedule has her working on Thursday mornings, but she also fills in when she is needed. A few weeks ago, she worked three days and said whenever they need someone they reach out to her.

Spencer spends most of her volunteer time working in membership and vendor services. She said PORA officials have brought in many different things over the years and it is amazing to see all that has changed.

"When I started here we were in a



Marge Spencer was honored for her 20 years of dedication to the Property Owners and Residents Association. (Submitted photo)

little room for vendor services and it is different now with us out front by membership," she said.

Spencer said on her off days she enjoys playing bingo in Sun City twice a week and tells people all about PORA. One individual lived in The Grand and wanted more information about the PORA trips, and Spencer signed her up for e-News through the association.

At 88-years-old, Spencer hopes to keep working, and she hopes her eyes will hold up and she can keep going. She does not want to just stay at home by herself and do nothing.

Reporter Jennifer Jimenez can be reached at jjimenez@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.

ENGAGEMENT

Resident stays engaged

When Michael Peters moved into Sun City West Assisted Living, 13810 W. Sandridge Drive, he didn't just settle in — he got involved and became engaged right away.

Peters is a fixture on the community's welcoming committee, greeting new residents and helping run events and programs. He calls Bingo. He shakes hands. He shows up. He even earned his food handler's license so he could pitch in at happy hour, a detail that says everything about the kind of resident he is.

"Michael is one of those people who makes this place better just by being here," said Carrie Kaye, life enrichment director of Sun City West Assisted Living. "He doesn't wait to be asked; he shows up, rolls up his



Michael Peters (Submitted photo/Dawn Miller)

sleeves, and does whatever needs to be done. Getting his food handler's license so he could help at happy hour? That's just Michael. We're lucky to have him."

Visit pegasus seniorliving.com/sun-city-west for more information.

WRITER

Local author a finalist for indie book award

Local author Rita Hanner-Ward has been named a finalist in the 20th annual National Indie Excellence Book Awards for her novel, "Tears of Iemanjá," recognized in the category of Multicultural Fiction.

The NIEA, now in its 20th year, is a program honoring books from independent authors and small presses across the country. Each year, the competition highlights works that demonstrate exceptional storytelling, craft and presentation.

"Tears of Iemanjá" has already been recognized as the winner of the International Impact Book Award in Romance, Multicultural & Interracial. This new honor marks another

milestone for Hanner-Ward, who writes under the pen name Kiva Wolfe and is currently expanding into screenwriting.

"This recognition is deeply meaningful," Hanner-Ward said, "and I'm honored to be included among so many talented independent authors."

The full list of winners and finalists is available at indieexcellence.com.

"Tears of Iemanjá" is available through major online retailers, including Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Google Play, and in large print through IngramSpark's global distribution.

Visit ritahanner-ward.com and kivawolfe.net for more information.

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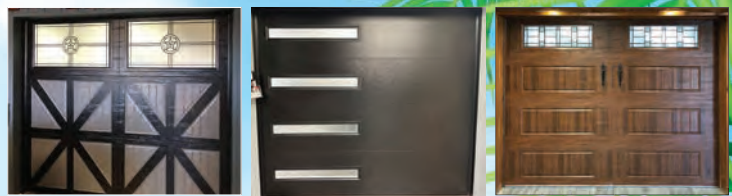


TENNIS CLUB SWINGING THROUGH SUMMER

The Sun City West Tennis Club invites new members to enjoy four sport activities: tennis, platform tennis, table tennis and adult red ball tennis. The R.H. Johnson Tennis Complex is home to 16 tennis courts, and the only four platform tennis courts in the state of Arizona. The table tennis room is located near the bocce ball courts/miniature golf area. The club offers social, recreational and competitive activities for all skill levels, especially novices. Membership dues of \$15 per year per person entitles residents to membership in tennis, table tennis, platform tennis and red ball tennis. For more information on times, groups, lessons and contacts for all four activities, visit tennis.scwclubs.com. (Submitted photos/Joel Piaskowski)

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POETRY

Local resident publishes collection of poems on peace

Sun City West resident and author-screenwriter-producer 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 City West 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@inusa.org. Deadline is 5 p.m. Wednesday, June 24.



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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 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."

Call 623-584-5738 or visit fbcschw.org for more information.

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.

Letters

• From page 10

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

Names

• From page 10

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 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 account-

ability. 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 remember 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 in-

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.

credible 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.

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THEATER



Twenty-four kids ages 9-13 took part in the first Build-A-Play Kids Theatre Camp at Stardust Theatre, 14401 R.H. Johnson Blvd. (Independent Newsmedia/Jennifer Jimenez)

Youth take over Stardust Theatre for a one-week camp

Provides opportunity for kids visiting outside the community

By Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The next generation of actors are took over the stage at Stardust Theatre.

The Build-A-Play Kids Theatre Camp “Whodunit” mystery play played June 19.

Experienced and new actors were on stage, with many who have previously performed in a theater production, but not quite like this.

Petty Sweeney, 11, from Surprise said this time the actors have a lot of creative freedom and say in what they wear, what to say and how to dress. She was looking for additional theater opportunities this summer and found this available nearby in Sun City West and said it has been a lot of fun getting to be in a “real theater.”

Tia Wooley, Stardust Theatre production coordinator said members have requested something for grandkids to do while visiting in the summer and the idea came to offer a summer day camp. The camp was open to youth outside of Sun City West to fill the availability

and Wooley said the group of 24 was at capacity.

“It has been amazing to watch these kids pick their names, hats, costumers and figure our character development. They also decide lighting and where to place the furniture and it its been great helping guide them and think through things,” said Wooley.

Wooley previously worked with youth in theater for many years and said this particular camp has been heartwarming to see the kids and how considerate and genuine they are. She said it is rewarding to watch everyone feel they are contributing and working together.

Wooley said she and Tanya Kindler, box office coordinator helped put this together. Based on the video game “Among Us,” each group was given a different section of the ship, each with a “Camp Counselor - Jim Roch, with the assistance of Jenny Kaupu lead the ‘Bridge’ team, Judy Ross leads the ‘Engine’ Room’ Tammy Wells in the Cafeteria and Woolley are leading the “Communications team”.

The group rehearsed , played theater games and learned character development with Lara Petrin.

POSSE

Sheriff's Posse cars are back in the community

Patrols continued throughout eight week halt of Sheriff's Posse cars

By Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Despite an eight week halt of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West patrol vehicles, no patrols were left out.

Cmdr. Carolyn Patterson said at no time did the volunteers leave the community without performing patrols.

"Between the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West and the Sun City West Poses, we patrolled the streets the same amount of time with the same enthusiasm and concern," she said.

During the June 16 general meeting, Patterson instructed those in the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West to turn the body cameras on when prepared to speak to Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and then a hard push off when complete and not to improvise.

The stop on rolling out Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West cars started soon after the April 7 rules change that came out, according to Patterson.

"Technically we did discuss different changes to go into policy GJ-27 and enforcement support at MCSO was agreeable to changes we requested. Some need to go up the channels and through monitors still. Generally, I believe all of the posses have come up with ways to work with guidelines within the policy," said Patterson.

She said the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West worked closest with MCSO officials including District



Sun City West Cmdr. Carolyn Patterson and District Three Cpt. Jesus "Chuy" Jerez speak to Posse volunteers. (Independent Newsmedia/Jennifer Jimenez)

Three Cpt. Jesus "Chuy" Jerez, to come up with ways to work without jeopardizing what they can do for the community and also MCSO without getting into any problems.

Patterson said everything is going great with the posses and MCSO enforcement support, adding they have talked things out and everything was ironed out really well.

Reporter Jennifer Jimenez can be reached at jjimenez@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.



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CLUBS

Meet Sun City West Mac-Cro-Knitter Pat McKenna

How long have you been a member of the Mac-Cro-Knit? Since late January 2026

What brought you to the club? I was looking for a new hobby, and while in my Arthritis Club I overheard Connie Ottemann (president of Mac-Cro-Knit) and Pauline Scalco talking about Mac-Cro-Knit and asked them questions. I came once and joined immediately.

What do you enjoy most about being a member? The people I have met, the fact that every single member has offered help and given me advice or have shown me things to try. Such a great club. It is so nice to go to the club and know it is very laid back and friendly. Some have even given me yarn.

How long have you been knitting/loom knitting? I started looming about the middle of February 2026 and haven't stopped. Tried knitting and sewing many years ago, didn't work that well either. Gave up.

What do you enjoy making the most? Big chunky blankets is the most fun. I make tons of baby hats, baby blankets, scarves, headbands, socks, going to try a shawl, butterflies, flowers, so many things can be made on a loom.

What makes our club special? The wonderful, kind, helpful and complimenting people. Instead of egos they just enjoy each others work. We all have something we are really good at, some have more talent but everyone has something.

How does it feel to donate handmade items to others? I try to make what donations are needed



Pat McKenna with her loom knitted blanket and hats. Also shown is her hand knitted elephant. (Submitted photo/Lisa Capriotti)

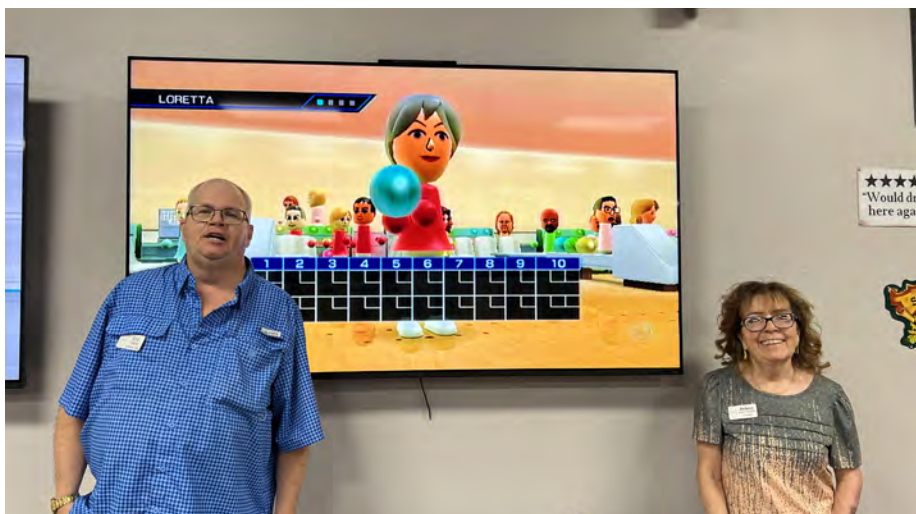
when I can. Some I need to learn how to do it but the fun is in the learning and then donating. I also make things for family and friends. I have not kept anything yet. Just my husband Al kept his blanket.

Mac-Cro-Knit meets 8-11 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Kuentz Center's Pueblo Room #3. New members of all skill levels are welcome. Contact club president Connie Ottemann at 402-499-1681 for more information.

PATCHERS WORKING ON SPECIAL PROJECT

Members of the featherweight group of Palo Verde Patchers are working on a special project for three grandchildren of recently deceased local resident Maria Sarrette. Volunteers took apart clothing to create these denim throws. Seated is sewer Donna Norman. Standing are Donna Norman, Cat Johnson and Lillian Schauer (coordinator). For more information about Palo Verde Patchers visit patchers.scwclubs.com or contact Mary Roberts at 541-550-9932. (Submitted photo/Patricia Casey)





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)



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THEATER

Theatre West offers August acting classes

Theatre West will offer a series of acting classes in August, featuring guest instructor Helene Benigno, a director, teacher and playwright with experience throughout the greater Phoenix theater community.

The classes are open to RCSCW cardholders and are designed for both beginners and experienced performers who want to strengthen stage skills, build confidence and explore character development, improvisation and scene work.

All classes will be at Stardust Theatre, Performers Door, 14401 W. R.H. Johnson Blvd. Fees range from \$5 for single-session classes to \$10 for two-session workshops.

Character Analysis will be 2-4 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 4. The fee is \$5. Participants will explore techniques for creating authentic, multidimensional characters by examining motivation, relationships and backstory. Exercises and scene work will give students practical tools to bring characters to life on stage and deepen their understanding of performance. Improvisation will be 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, Aug. 8. The fee is \$5. This high-energy class focuses on the fundamentals of improvisation while helping participants build confidence, spontaneity and comedic timing. Students will practice thinking on their feet, embracing the unexpected and connecting with fellow performers in real time.

Partner Scene Work is a two-session class scheduled for 2-4 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 11, and noon-2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 15. The fee for both sessions is \$10. The workshop will focus on subtext and motivation, encouraging actors to explore the dynamics between scene partners and the unspoken intentions that drive a scene.

During the first session, actors will participate in collaborative exercises, then be paired with a partner and assigned a staged reading scene to take home. In the second session, participants will review, warm up, rehearse with their partners and receive one-on-one time with the director. The class will conclude with scene presentations for the group. Memorization is not required.

Page to Stage will meet 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, Aug. 22, and noon-2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 29. The fee is \$10. In this hands-on workshop, participants will transform a partially written one-act play into a completed production.

During the first class, actors will work in groups to complete an unfinished script while exploring plot and character development. Groups will also cast their productions.

The second class will focus on rehearsal and refinement with guidance from the director. The workshop will culminate in live performances from each cast, showcasing each group's vision for an audience of family and friends.

Benigno holds a bachelor of science degree from SUNY Brockport, where she majored in broadcast journalism and completed dual minors in theater arts and criminal justice. She has taught and directed throughout the greater Phoenix area, working with organizations including Ghostlight Theatre, Phoenix Center for the Arts, Sun City Players, the cities of Goodyear and Avondale and Phoenix-area Girl Scouts. Her plays have also been staged at Arizona Broadway Theatre.

For more information or to sign up for classes, visit theatrewestscw.com or call Pat Martin at 360-490-0182.



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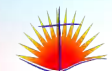
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Civility Checklist

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- ☐ **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.



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