

Neighbors

Ladies attend
'Three's Company'
themed event; **4**



INDEPENDENT

Dance

Poms celebrate
America's
250th birthday,
local veterans; **9**



July 22, 2026 Volume 66 Issue 29 Your Nonpartisan Community Newspaper • YourValley.net

Resident raises concerns during emergency incidents

By Zev Black
and Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The common misconception when a vehicle collision occurs is to keep the vehicle in the exact place of the incident. However, Arizona Fire & Medical Authority officials suggest "steer it and clear it."

Deputy Chief Kane Nixon said if the accident is a minor fender-bender, nobody is seriously injured and the vehicles can still safely drive, then it should be moved.

"Carefully move the cars out of the travel lanes to the shoulder, a median, or a nearby parking lot," he explained. "Leaving drivable vehicles in the middle of a roadway dramatically increases the risk of a

• See **Concerns** on page 5

Sun City golfers chase the sport's rarest thrill: The hole-in-one



RCSC Director of Golf Eddy Renio said he's hosted over 500 tournaments where a car was offered as a reward for a player hitting an ace, but nobody has gotten one. (Independent Newsmedia/Zev Black)

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

As the old saying goes: "Everyone remembers their first." Their first hole-in-one, that is.

Just ask Sun City resident Mary Stratford, who can tell exactly what it felt like to hit her first hole-in-one back in 1999. Or Sun City resident Dave Pertile, who remembers every detail on the shot that landed him in the newspaper.

According to Recreation Centers of Sun City Director of Golf Eddy Renio, there have been 59 reported holes-in-one on RCSC courses since 2014.

The most have been hit at Lakes West Golf Course with 16 holes-in-one. Lakes East Golf Course is second with 12, followed by Riverview Golf Course with nine.

Renio stated in an email that hitting an ace is like winning the

• See **Golf** on page 5

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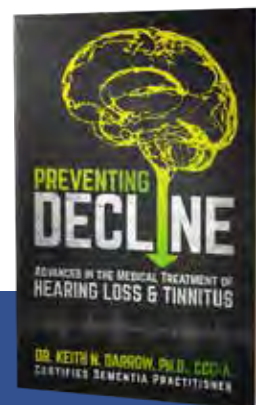
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SUN CITY LADIES ATTEND 'THREE'S COMPANY' EVENT

The West Valley Red Hat Queen's Council at the Sun City Elks Lodge #2559 recently hosted a Mrs. Roper luncheon and bingo event. A total of 94 ladies attended, all dressed as Helen Roper from the "Three's Company" television show. Queen Elyse Soffer and her court from the Red Hat Dazzling Jewels chapter were commended for their organization. The event began with all attendees standing to sing "God Bless America," followed by a lunch and rounds of Bingo with cash prizes for the winners. Special recognition was given to the Sun City Elks Lodge kitchen staff, Elker Helpers, club manager Karen Petra and bartender Patty Hodo for their service and keeping the ladies refreshed throughout the event. (Submitted photo/Sandy McLemore)



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Golf

• From page 1

lottery.

"The odds are not in your favor, but when it happens, it's exciting for everyone in the group," he stated. "Hole-in-ones are a rare feat. Some people play their whole life and never make one."

He added he thinks it's so exciting because it's something every golfer seeks.

"We may want a perfect swing but we all really want that 'one' perfect stroke that puts the ball in the hole for an ace," Renio stated.

He has hit one ace in his golfing career, so far.

Stratford on the other hand has hit 10 holes-in-one, with four coming in Sun City.

"The first one was very exciting," she stated in an email. "And from then on, you're just feeling so lucky when they go in. I love each and every one of them and I celebrate them. It's been a lot of fun."

She was even lucky enough to have two holes-in-one in the same week.

After hitting an ace, tradition calls for buying a round for everyone in the clubhouse. Stratford said those drinks cost her \$800 that week, and even people who

never drink ordered one.

Pertile stated his first ace came while playing with his father, adding it was the furthest thing from his mind while stepping up to the tee box on hole five at Sun City South Golf Course. In fact, his dad told him to take an extra club because of the humidity.

"I hit it well, right at the pin and one hopped it into the hole," he stated. "Well, we were all jumping around and giving high fives. So special to do it with my dad."

He added he's had a couple more holes-in-one since then, but "nothing compares to that first one with my dad."

Concerns

• From page 1

secondary, much worse chain-reaction crash, and it creates massive traffic backups that delay our emergency vehicles from getting to other critical calls."

Moving to safety doesn't change who was at fault, but it absolutely keeps everyone safer, he added.

If residents are involved in a traffic accident, it depends on where the vehicle comes to rest, but the default rule of thumb is if the car is in the middle of a busy roadway it is generally much safer staying inside it with your seatbelt buckled until emergency services arrives, Nixon said.

He described the vehicle as a multi-ton shield equipped with airbags and crumple zones.

"The moment you step out onto a busy street, you become an unprotected pedestrian exposed to passing traffic," Nixon said. "Now, there are two major exceptions. If your vehicle is on fire, or if you've managed to safely pull completely off the roadway onto a wide shoulder or a nearby parking lot, then it makes sense to exit carefully and move to a safe sidewalk or grassy area."

Individuals stuck in a lane of traffic should stay there, turn on the hazard lights and wait for the big fire apparatus to block the traffic.

When approaching an accident, Nixon said slow down and if at all possible, avoid



Sun City West resident Angie Jones captured this photo of a car accident near the intersection of Camino del Sol and Spanish Gardens. (Submitted Photo/Angie Jones)

the area entirely. In fact, he said driving "as normal" past emergency scene is incredibly dangerous. In addition, if individuals hear of a blocked intersection, he said taking a different route is helpful because it keeps the perimeter clear so fire engines, ambulances and police cars can maneuver quickly.

"The absolute best way passing drivers and pedestrians can help us is by focusing entirely on their own safety and giving us the room to do our jobs. I know our community is incredibly caring, and people naturally want to see if they can lend a hand, which is a beautiful trait of Sun City West. But an active emergency scene is a complex, high-risk work zone," he explained.

The exceptions are if individuals are directly involved or have a specific medical skill and witnessed the crash.

"Arizona law requires drivers to exercise caution whenever they approach a

stationary vehicle displaying flashing or warning lights," MCSO Sgt. Joaquin Enriquez stated in an email.

The best thing a driver can do is change lanes to move away from a vehicle on the side of the road. However, should this not be possible, it is acceptable to maintain a safe speed under Arizona's Move Over Law.

"This law helps protect law enforcement (MCSO) firefighters, EMS personnel and stranded motorists who may be working or standing near moving traffic," Enriquez stated.

As part of their duty, the Sun City Posse works to protect firetrucks on the side of the road so both residents, firefighters and the fire truck are protected.

Members position their car with its lights on so people will see there's an emergency vehicle down the road or

• See **Emergency** on page 15

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NONPROFIT

R. U. OK. Program can save lives

By Zev Black
 INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

For the roughly 75 Sun City residents enrolled in the R. U. OK. (Are You Okay) Program, safety starts with a simple phone call every day. According to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department Communications Division, the program "provides peace of mind for both participants and their families."

Every day at the same time (the resident gets to choose the time), MCSO will call those enrolled with an automated message asking the recipient to press a certain number if they are okay. If the resident doesn't answer on the first call, the computer will try two more times.

If the resident still doesn't answer, a real person will call the resident. And if that fails, a deputy will be sent to the residents house.

"While the call itself is simple, it can quickly identify when someone may need assistance, whether it's due to a medical emergency, a fall or another unexpected situation," the MCSO Communication Division stated in an email. "Sometimes just knowing that someone will notice if they don't answer provides a tremendous sense of security."

According to Sun City Posse dispatcher Joe Sendelbaugh, the program started in Australia to prevent suicide.

"It's a program to combat isolation to some extent or help the person feel safer," he said. "And people around that person feel safer as well."

The Sun City Posse helps MCSO by assisting residents through the sign up process, which Sendelbaugh said is easy. He added that he always encourages residents to ask questions.

"We're really concerned that our people are taken care of," Posse executive officer Don Erlitz said.

He added residents don't have to live alone to be enrolled in the program. Along with a couple other reasons, that has prevented some people from signing up.

"This is such an easy program," Erlitz said. "It's absolutely free, including the stamp to send it back to us... Some people are hesitant. They say 'my neighbor checks on me every day.' I've heard that many times. Or my son. What happens if your neighbor falls? Then nobody knows."

The MCSO Communication Division stated in the email there have been "numerous occasions" in which a participant didn't answer the scheduled call.

One of those times resulted in a welfare check where the on-scene deputies saw the resident's feet sticking out between the bed and the wall. They had fallen out of their bed and were unable to get up or call for help. The deputies called for medical services.

"It's a powerful reminder that what starts as a simple daily phone call can ultimately become a lifesaving intervention," MCSO stated.

Erlitz and Sendelbaugh, who both love the program, said there is one downside. There is currently no system to allow deaf residents to use the program. MCSO stated it is "always interested in ways to make our services more accessible and inclusive." That being said, there are no immediate plans to implement this into the program.

"However, as communication technologies continue to evolve, we remain open to evaluating options that would allow more members of our community to benefit from wellness check programs like R. U. OK.," it stated.

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HEALTH

Banner Health receives \$6 million grant to accelerate early detection of Parkinson's disease

Banner Sun Health Research Institute has been awarded \$6 million over three years through a grant awarded by Aligning Science Across Parkinson's, in partnership with The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, to support the development of biomarkers to help identify those with Parkinson's disease.

Banner will join the Collaborative Research Network, an international, multidisciplinary, multi-institutional network working to address high-priority research questions about the disease. The announcement is part of ASAP's \$261 million expansion of the CRN, which now includes 67 teams across 187 institutions in 24 countries. The network brings together leading scientists to tackle critical questions about Parkinson's through team-based collaboration and open science, enabling data sharing and faster progress across the field.

The program, led by Nicholas Ashton, PhD, senior director of Banner's Fluid Biomarker Program, brings together a multidisciplinary team of co-investigator institutions spanning biomarker discovery, antibody devel-



(Metro Creative Graphics)

opment, and assay deployment, including Beckman Coulter Diagnostics, Quanterix, Abcam, and the University of Gothenburg.

"We are so thrilled to be recognized by this global research initiative that supports a collaborative approach to accelerate research and validation of emerging therapeutic targets for Parkinson's disease and related disorders," said Dr. Ashton. "This recognition supports our overarching mission to develop and validate fluid-based biomarkers that enable earlier detection of disease and help advance the development of targeted therapies."

Aligning Science Across Parkinson's is expanding the research network to map the biological blueprint of Parkinson's disease and build a

standardized toolkit of global research resources needed to turn discoveries into treatments. This next phase of the initiative focuses on understanding why Parkinson's varies from person to person — including differences in symptoms, age of onset, and rate of progression — and advancing discoveries toward more precise diagnostics and future therapies. This effort includes developing new resources that allow researchers around the world to work from the same high-quality foundation, removing obstacles that slow down drug development.

"Parkinson's disease is incredibly complex, with wide variation in symptoms, age of onset, and progression between patients," said Corey

Casper, MD, MPH, Banner Health's chief research officer. "This funding enables Banner to contribute our biomarker expertise to a coordinated, global effort tackling the most critical questions about the disease and moving promising discoveries into the treatment pipeline faster."

Over the past five years, the CRN has generated hundreds of research resources, including datasets, code, protocols, and lab materials, which are used by scientists worldwide.

The Fluid Biomarker Program includes two labs that are among the few worldwide where biomarker blood tests and cerebrospinal fluid assays are both developed and engineered for large-scale deployment. Led by Dr. Ashton, who made major contributions to biofluid research at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, the program is developing and validating biological markers in bodily fluids to support early detection of neurodegenerative diseases, cancer, and autoimmune disorders. The program spans the full spectrum from biomarker discovery to clinical implementation, serving academic and industry partners worldwide.

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SUN CITY POMS CELEBRATE AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY, HONOR VETERANS

The Sun City Poms once again performed at Sun City's "Ring That Bell" ceremony July 4 at the Bell Center. Their two routines, "Today is your 'Birthday' by the Beatles" and "Military Medley," honoring the armed forces, paid tribute to America's 250th anniversary. After that morning performance, the Poms honored veterans at American Legion Post 62 with "Military Medley/God Bless America" and "Today is Your Birthday." Pictured are Laurie Walsh, Diana Lamb, Deborahanne Wicher, Cath Reel, Peggy Parsons, Sherry Cantrell, Cindy Kress, Sharen Valentine and Kathleen Emerson. Not pictured: Debbie Kruep, Chrys Main, Jeanene Willson, Anita Doll, Julie Yake and Laurie Cherry. (Submitted photos/Jan Desmond)

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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.

Homeowner understands why RCSC charges per household

The Recreation Centers of Sun City tried fees for singles that were half the rate of couples. That is why there are still grandfathered homeowners who still pay at those rates.

My assumption is that RCSC discovered that they couldn't budget on fees that changed whenever a spouse died or a home was sold.

Any usable budget has to have a reliable income amount to work from. If your income fluctuates consistently, it is much harder to pay bills and plan for future costs. Now, RCSC has a budget based on number of homes times the RCSC fee.

I am single now and also wish my fee was reduced, but understand why that wouldn't be fiscally responsible.

Patrice Massey
SUN CITY

No evidence we're subsidizing wealthier EPCOR water users

I would like to help Sun City resident Jill Duckett, quoted in the July 8 issue of the Independent (EPCOR proposes water rate increase for Sun City), better understand EPCOR's water rate structure.

I am an appraiser of privately-owned and operated — but regulated — monopoly water companies.

Duckett says she believes "there are too many fees on what EPCOR charges." First, EPCOR uses what is called an increasing block rate pricing structure in charging its customers. More simply, EPCOR reserves a "block" of 1,000 gallons per month per person and charges for the full 1,000 gallons whether we use it or not. Water usage above 1,000

LETTERS

gallons/month (33 gallons per day per resident) is charged at a higher rate.

Private, investor-owned water utilities are monopolies and are not allowed to gouge its water prices nor charge a variable market rate. The Arizona Corporation Commission allows EPCOR to make about 9.6% return on its costs (actual, audited operating and replacement costs plus debt).

EPCOR's overhead costs run about 33% and are subject to ACC audit and approval. However, taxes and costs to maintain the regulatory oversight of the ACC reflect about another 33%. EPCOR pays its fair share of property taxes to Maricopa County unlike a municipal water department which pays no taxes.

Here is the existing EPCOR charge per household per month per service area as found online ranked from high to low price (median home price in parentheses):

Paradise Valley: \$34.18 (\$5 million)
Fountain Hills: \$23.33 (\$682,000)
Mojave: \$16.47 (\$380,000)
Sun City West: \$14.83 (\$385,000)
Sun City: \$13.69 (\$365,000 – SFR's only)

There is no apparent subsidizing of wealthier areas by Sun City.

I am responsible for any errors in my understanding of the above and I have no conflict of interest with EPCOR.

Wayne Lusvardi
SUN CITY

Valley's too hot, parched for AI data centers, reader says

Arizona is being asked to absorb a wave of new artificial intelligence

and data center plants, each one consuming massive amounts of electricity and releasing equally massive amounts of waste heat.

These facilities run continuously, and every megawatt they use becomes heat that must be expelled into the surrounding air. In cold climates, that heat is an asset. In greater Phoenix, it is a direct threat to public health.

The core principle is straightforward: AI plants should be built only where their waste heat can be used.

Cold-weather cities with district heating networks can capture this heat to warm homes. Industrial zones can use it for process heat. Coastal desalination hubs can use it to preheat seawater. Greenhouse agriculture can use it to extend growing seasons.

In those locations, AI plants become part of a larger energy system, and their heat is recycled instead of wasted.

In Arizona, none of that is possible. The heat is simply dumped into the air. Studies from Arizona State University show that neighborhoods downwind of a single data center warm by 1.3 to 4 degrees.

With dozens of facilities proposed across the Valley, the cumulative impact becomes unavoidable: hotter nights, higher APS bills, increased strain on seniors and a growing urban heat island that already ranks among the worst in the nation.

Arizona gains the heat, the water consumption, the grid demand and the environmental burden. Other states gain the economic value of using the heat productively. That imbalance is unacceptable.

Arizona's leaders should adopt a

• See **Letters** on page 16



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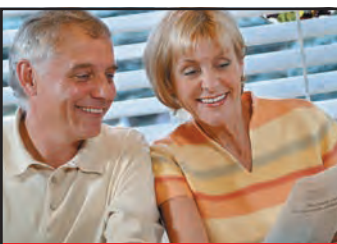
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MEALS

Sun City Meals on Wheels grows as Sun City West program ceases

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

As the Sun City West Meals on Wheels program is scrambling to find a new kitchen partner, its Sun City counterpart is thriving.

According to its president, Cheryl Duter, the Sun City group has seen an increase in their client base in Sun City and Youngtown. She added she's aware of the situation in Sun City West, but the organization's charter limits who it can serve.

"It is unfortunate that the Sun City West home delivery program has ceased operation," she stated. "Unfortunately, we cannot deliver to Sun City West. Our charter is for Sun City and Youngtown only."

Lifestream, which prepares the meals, agreed to lower the cost from \$10.50 per day to just \$8. Duter believes this is the reason there is a higher demand for meals. Low-income clients can pay \$4.

"Two years ago, we were charging \$10.50 per day for meals, but we knew that was really high for our clients," Duter stated. "Lifestream agreed to help us reduce the cost to our clients; splitting the cost so we could reduce the cost of meals to \$8 a day."

Clients get two meals a day: a hot meal consisting of protein, starch and vegetables and a cold meal with a sandwich, fruit, milk or juice and a dessert.

Duter stated the group's volunteers "really care about the clients."

"We have volunteers who visit cli-



(Submitted Photo/Metro Creative Graphics)

ents at the hospital, help with household chores, bring cookies and other goodies," she stated. "They genuinely care. They are often the first alert to family members when there is something amiss with the client."

She added Meals on Wheels is often the one to notify family members when a client falls or is taken to the hospital. These volunteers are crucial to the success of Meals on Wheels. Duter stated the group is always looking for volunteers to give up two hours a week helping out.

"The two-hour investment is worth a million in 'feel good that you did something for someone who needed help,'" she stated.

Go to suncitymealsonwheels.org or call 623-974-9430 for more information.

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.

DAUGHTERS



Lynn Conner, treasurer Jane Woehrl, Tish Alicki, regent Linda Lundberg, vice regent Mary Hart and parliamentarian Kathie Mittelsteadt. Not pictured are Twila Lobitz, Natalie Snyder, associate member and honorary state regent Marilou Fellman and associate member and honorary state regent Jo Andress. (Submitted photo/Twila Lobitz)

Sun City Daughters attend state conference

Ten members of Sun City's National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Agua Fria chapter, attended the annual spring Arizona state DAR conference, held at the Fort McDowell We-Ko-Pa Resort.

Honorary chapter regent and state chaplain Twila Lobitz was elected to serve as the Arizona state vice regent for the 2026-28 term. Lobitz was also responsible for the invocations, benedictions and table blessings for each of the conference business sessions, dinners and luncheons.

During the Celebration of Life ceremony, Lobitz memorialized 42

Arizona state Daughters who passed away during the past year, which included Agua Fria chapter members honorary chapter regent Madeline Mitchell Shackelford and Daughter Mary Anne Pennington McMartin.

At one of the business meetings, chapter regent Linda Lundberg delivered the annual chapter regent's report of events and activities the chapter participated in during the past year.

The Agua Fria chapter received the Arizona Public Relations award from state regent Sarah Ziker.

Visit aguafria.arizonadar.org for more information.



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Sun City • September 23, 2026 • Sundial Recreation Center

Sun City West • October 28, 2026 • SCW Foundation Center

Mesa • November 13, 2026 • Mesa Marketplace Swap Meet

Apache Junction • January 6, 2027 • Central Arizona College

Surprise • January 19, 2027 • The Colonnade

Litchfield/Goodyear • February 17, 2027 • Tuscany Falls Clubhouse(Pebble Creek)

Chandler • February 23, 2027 • Sun Lakes Country Club

Peoria • March 25, 2027 • Westbrook Village

Sun City West • April 13, 2027 • SCW Foundation Center

Sun City • May 3, 2027 • Sundial Recreation Center

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RELIGION

Sun City church welcomes new pastor

Lakeview United Methodist Church, 10298 W. Thunderbird Blvd., has welcomed the Rev. Dr. Kristin D. Hansen, her husband and two adult children as new members of their church family.

On Sunday, July 5, she led her first church services at Lakeview's 8 and 9:30 a.m. worship.

"I'm honored to be Lakeview's first senior pastor who is a female and I'm grateful for such a warm welcome into this community," she noted.

Beginning July 1 as senior pastor of Lakeview, this is Hansen's 28th year in the ministry. After serving at churches in Ohio, Indiana, California, Georgia and Michigan, she was previously senior pastor of First United Methodist Church of Gilbert where she continued to bring a wealth of experience and perspective to her ministry.

Hansen's main focus is to build genuine connections with the congregation members and to not just know their names, but their stories, life histories and their faith journeys.

"I want Lakeview to feel like a place where every person's story matters and others are welcome to come and share their unique story," she said.

Before entering the pastoral ministry, Hansen worked in radio broadcasting, which she feels still shapes how she thinks about storytelling and connecting with the community. With this in mind, Hansen is planning to launch a storytelling project about the life on Thunderbird Boulevard "inspired by the format of some old radio shows, featuring the



The Rev. Dr. Kristin D. Hansen (Submitted photo/Caryl Jo Dagro)

voices and stories of the people in the Lakeview community."

Born in Frankfort, Germany while her father was serving in the United States Army, Hansen grew up and lived in Indiana. She earned her Doctor of Ministry from Portland Seminary, studying under theologian Leonard Sweet, and also studied at Anderson University in Indiana, Wesley Seminary in Washington D.C. and the University of Vienna in Austria. Her ministry is shaped by a deep love for scripture, a heart for people and a creative vision for the future of the church.

Hansen enjoys her life with her family, with both children being active in United Methodist young-adult ministry.

Her leisure activities include time with her dog, a challenging puzzle, watching "Star Trek" and gaming with the imaginative world of role-playing video games, which are "defined by deep narratives, character progression, and meaningful decision-making."

Emergency

• From page 5

down a side road.

“We try to position our cars so that people are coming down the road, especially if we might be at a corner and the fire trucks are down the other road, people might now see that there’s an emergency vehicle down that other road,” Sun City Posse Cmdr. Arlene Kluizenaar said. “They make the turn and they need a little warning that there’s emergency vehicles down there.

They also ensure nobody messes with the firefighters while they are doing their job.

“There are some very well-meaning residents in Sun City, but the firemen need to do what they need to do at that moment,” Kluizenaar said. “They don’t need the neighbors interrupting them at that time.”

She said the Posse does this because it has “always been seen as a need of the fire department that we can fulfill when we are in service.”

Enriquez stated that personal safety is the number one priority should someone witness a crash. After that, she advised to call 911 if there are “injuries, vehicles blocking traffic, fire or other hazards.”

When calling 911, individuals

should provide the location, number of vehicles involved, any injuries and immediate danger. Enriquez added that people should not place themselves in danger trying to help others unless it is “an immediate life threatening emergency and it can be done safely.

“Unless you are trained to provide emergency medical care, please avoid moving injured persons unless they are in immediate danger, such as from fire or oncoming traffic,” she stated. “Witnesses often provide valuable information that helps MCSO accurately determine what occurred. However, the public should avoid interfering with investigations or remaining at the scene longer than necessary once their information has been provided.”

Nixon said residents can protect emergency personnel by treating their workspace with the same caution as a high-risk construction zone. Put cell phones away, eliminate distractions inside your car and pay close attention to the firefighters or police officers who are directing traffic.

In addition, drivers should never drive over a fire hose lying across the road. Nixon said it is an absolute life-line for putting out fires and protecting crews.

“If the community focuses on protecting us, we can focus 100% of our energy on the emergency,” he added.

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, July 22** – Pork stuffed peppers, Scandinavian mix vegetables, broccoli, roll, peaches
- **Thursday, July 23** – Pot roast, carrots, collard greens, brown rice, pear
- **Friday, July 24** – Egg salad sandwich, raisin salad, sliced cucumber, strawberries
- **Monday, July 27** – Chicken teriyaki with vegetables fried brown rice, tempura sweet potato, broccoli, banana
- **Tuesday, July 28** – Pork meatballs in tomato sauce, roasted vegetable couscous (eggplant, zucchini, peppers), carrots, pineapple chunks

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Letters

• From page 10

clear policy: AI plants belong in regions where their waste heat is an asset, not a burden. If the heat cannot be captured and used, the facility should not be built.

This is not antitechnology. It is responsible siting. It protects seniors, protects neighborhoods and protects Arizona's future.

Trish Mormon
SUN CITY WEST

Sun Cities residents urged to conserve water

Living in the desert means living with limits, and water is the first one we should respect. Every summer reminds us that we are not fighting the heat, we are living in it. That means using our resources wisely, planting what survives here naturally and stopping the waste we see every day on our streets and sidewalks.

Nothing is more frustrating than watching sprinklers run full blast onto concrete. Sidewalks don't need watering.

It is unsustainable. We cannot afford to lose water that we cannot replace.

The solution is not complicated. It is practical, affordable and proven: Plant more desert trees. Natural shade trees — palo verde, mesquite, ironwood and desert willow — are built for this climate.

They grow deep roots, tolerate extreme heat and, once established, require very little water. These trees don't fight the desert, they work with it.

Shade is not decoration. It is protection.

A mature desert tree can lower ground temperatures by 20 to 45 degrees, making sidewalks walkable, reducing heat stress and cutting energy use for nearby homes.

Shade cools entire neighborhoods,

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

not just individual yards. When we plant the right trees, we reduce the need for turf, lower irrigation demands and create cooler microclimates that help everything else use less water.

Living in the desert requires common sense. Stop watering the sidewalk.

Fix misaligned sprinklers. Choose native trees instead of thirsty ornamentals. Treat water like the limited resource it is.

If we do these simple things, we will build a cooler, healthier, more resilient community — one that respects the land we live in and protects the future we depend on.

Cindy Putman
SUN CITY WEST

The author serves on the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association Board of Directors. She submitted this on behalf of PORA's Water Committee.

Sun City Bell Center extends hours

The Bell Recreation Center, 16820 N. 99th Ave., extended its Sunday hours beginning July 19, moving to 5 a.m.–9 p.m. to match its Monday–Saturday schedule.

The Recreation Centers of Sun City says the change gives members consistent hours throughout the week at one of the district's highest-use centers.

The bowling area is not included in the change and will continue operating Sundays from noon to 7 p.m.

CLUBS

Dance club keeps community fit

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Rose Schwartz, the former instructor for Sun City's Dance for Fitness Club, was once thanked by name in Cloris Leachman's Emmy Award acceptance speech. She drew 1,000 people a week to her classes and missed only one session in decades — when she was booked on The Today Show.

Today, Sun City's Dance for Fitness Club has a different instructor, Marjorie Vickery.

But more than 50 years later, it's still going strong, filled with dancers who've made it their own.

Club member Shari Guida said growing old "changes how you look at life," adding that dancing puts things into perspective.

"There are times I'm dancing and I think of my mother and I think of my grandmother..." she said. "They could not have done at 67 what I did at 67, let alone where I'm at now. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to get this exercise, to have the quality of life."

The Dance for Fitness Club meets 9–10 a.m. Tuesdays at the Bell Recreation Center, 16820 N. 99th Ave., and 9–10 a.m. Wednesdays and Fridays at the Sundial Recreation Center, 14801 N. 103rd Ave.

While dancing starts at 9 a.m., club president Roxie Whitney said members usually show up early.

"We talk about our kids, our trips, our aches and pains, the weather," she said. "We just have a good group. If you're missing for a couple of weeks, somebody's going to call and say are you okay. It's just like a big family."

Club vice president Sue Flores said it's one of the friendlier clubs she's been a part of.

"It's not judgmental," she said. "I've been in other clubs where it's like you're going back to high school with



Pictured on the dance floor are Sue Flores, Roxie Whitney and Shari Guida. Guida says participation in the Dance for Fitness Club helps put other aspects of life in perspective. (Independent Newsmedia/Zev Black)

the cliques. We're not a cliquish club."

Guida said this is because the members come from different backgrounds, but put it all aside while dancing.

"That's what makes it nice," she said. "Nobody cares what you wear. Nobody cares that you don't know the dance steps... They get their exercise in a group setting where nobody's judging them."

"We tell them 'just keep moving,'" Whitney said. "If you don't know the steps, just keep moving."

In addition to the dancing, the group holds bi-annual general meetings followed by a party. It also creates gift baskets made up of essentials like toothpaste, socks, combs and brushes for senior nursing homes.

"You never know if you're going to be in that position," Flores said.

"When I was your age, I didn't even think I'd be in a 55 or older community, let alone down the road. But as you age, you don't know what's going to happen."

Club dues are \$5 per year, and those interested can attend three dances for free before choosing to sign up.

For more information, call Whitney at 952-472-4021.

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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.

JUNE 26

- Criminal damage was reported 9:02 p.m. in the 12400 block of North 113th Avenue.
- A fire was reported 7:08 p.m. in the 12100 block of West El Cortez Place
- A vehicle crash with injuries was reported 5:07 p.m. at the intersection of North 151st Avenue and West Heritage Drive.
- A vehicle crash with injuries was reported 4:18 p.m. at the intersection of North 111th Avenue and West Olive Avenue.

JUNE 27

- An assault was reported 9:07 p.m. in the 12100 block of West Candelaria Drive.
- Criminal damage was reported 6:21 p.m. in the 10500 block of West Ridgeview Road.
- A fraud or con game was reported 1:30 p.m. in the 19800 block of North R.H. Johnson Blvd.
- A fraud or con game was reported 10:09 a.m. in the 14800 block of North Agua Fria Drive.

JUNE 28

- Criminal damage was reported 3:51 p.m. in the 10200 block of North 115th Avenue.
- A vehicle crash with no injuries was reported 2:34 p.m. at the intersection of North 107th Avenue and West Alabama Avenue.
- An assault was reported 2:28 p.m. in the 9900 block of West Bolivar Drive.
- Criminal damage was reported 11:22 a.m. in the 13000 block of North 111th Drive
- Threats to commit an offense were reported 10:39 a.m. in the 10200 block of West Clair Drive.

- Threats to commit an offense were reported 4:21 a.m. in the 12600 block of North 113th Avenue.

JUNE 29

- A fraud or con game was reported 12:44 p.m. in the 10900 block of West Deanne Drive.
- A vehicle crash with injuries was reported 12:02 p.m. at the intersection of West Meeker Boulevard and West Granite Valley Drive.
- A vehicle crash with injuries was reported 10:24 a.m. at the intersection of North R.H. Johnson Boulevard and North Camino Del Sol.

JUNE 30

- Threats to commit an offense were reported 6:30 p.m. at the intersection of 111th Avenue and Alabama.
- Adult abuse was reported 9:37 a.m. in the 13600 block of North Newcastle Drive.
- A traffic violation was reported 1:53 p.m. at the intersection of 111th Avenue and Kansas.

JULY 1

- A traffic violation was reported 10:37 p.m. at the intersection of North 111th Avenue and West Connecticut Avenue.
- A vehicle crash with injuries was reported 1:54 p.m. at the intersection of North Boswell Boulevard and West Campana Drive.
- An assault was reported 11:40 a.m. in the 13800 block of North Thunderbird Boulevard.
- A theft was reported 10:45 a.m. in the 14800 block of North Del Webb Boulevard.
- Threats to commit an offense were reported 8:27 a.m. in the 13500 block of West Paso Trail.
- Found property was reported 7:35 a.m. in the 15400 block of North Boswell Boulevard.
- Criminal damage was reported 8:30 a.m. in the 17200 block of North Boswell Boulevard.
- A theft was reported 8:12 a.m. in the 11100 block of Northwest US60 Grand Avenue.

Christmas comes to Sun City in July

The Bell Ceramics Club is hosting its "Christmas in July Glaze & Take" event noon-4 p.m. Saturday, July 25, at the Bell Recreation Center, 16820 N. 99th Ave. Attendees can paint their own Christmas tree or Christmas cactus.

The cost starts at \$85, depending on the chosen piece and any extra decorative items.

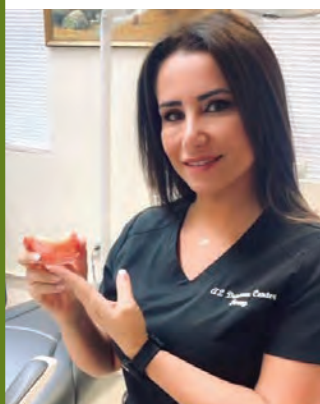
No experience is needed and space is limited.

In addition, The Fairway Ceramics Club is hosting a "Christmas in July Craft Fair 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday, July 24 through Sunday July 26 in the Fairway Music Room, 10600 W. Peoria Ave., and club rooms 210 and 218.

Browse a variety of handcrafted items created by club members for a potential gift.

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ROSIE HONORED AT SUN CITY EVENT

Among those attending Sun City's July 4 Ring That Bell ceremony at the Bell Center were Rosie the Riveter Florence Carter, age 100. Presenting her with a dozen red and blue roses are Robert Scent, Chief U.S. Navy, Retired, as Uncle Sam, and Sharon Word, as Lady Columbia Liberty. Many of the Rosie Rose Buds were honored as well. (Submitted photo/Linda L. Lundberg)

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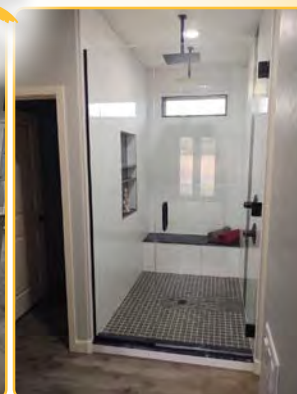


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LAW

Sun City firefighter's cancer plight prompts change in Arizona law

By Howard Fischer
CAPITOL MEDIA SERVICES

State lawmakers have decided that firefighters in Arizona should not have to go through the hassles that Matthew O'Reilly had with his insurance company.

It's all because of a comma — or, more to the point, a missing one, in state law.

What they learned is that how text is formatting can make all the difference in the world.

O'Reilly, a firefighter in Sun City, was diagnosed with a type of cancer after a routine screening. He had his thyroid removed and went through recovery.

But even as he was healing, O'Reilly said the insurance company that was providing workers' compensation coverage insisted that the type of cancer he had just wasn't covered. Why?

It turns out that the list of diseases that state law says are presumed to be job-related for firefighters was worded to cover "adenocarcinoma or mesothelioma of the respiratory tract," leading the insurer to conclude his non-respiratory adenocarcinoma was not covered.

Put simply, according to Sen. Kevin Payne, there should have been a comma after adenocarcinoma that would have made it clear the provision about respiratory tract was meant to include only mesothelioma.

O'Reilly said the cancer diagnosis made him focus on things like family and treatment and recovery.



Firefighter Matthew O'Reilly details the hurdles he had to overcome to get his workers' compensation insurer to cover his cancer because of a missing comma in current law. (Capitol Media Services/Howard Fischer)

"I never thought about having to fight for my benefits, whether you should about whether an insurance company's going to fight for a comma," he said. "But here we are."

That resulted in having to fight for more than a year.

"During that time I was trying to heal, I was also dealing with hearings and legal arguments, uncertainty of whether my benefits were going to be covered or not," O'Reilly said.

"As firefighters, we know that the job comes with risks," he said.

"But if one of those risks gets you sick because of the job, we should not be abandoned, we should not have to prove over and over against the law of what the law means and what it's intended to mean."

O'Reilly eventually did get his

• See **Law** on page 21

Law

• From page 20

coverage. But what's in Senate Bill 1215 should make that unnecessary for others who find themselves in the same position.

Burned by the issue of punctuation, Payne, a Peoria Republican, recrafted the law so the list of presumptively covered conditions is no longer in a single sentence. Now, each of the 23 conditions has its own numbered paragraph.

"SB 1215 matters because it helps ensure the next firefighter does not have to go through what I went through," O'Reilly said.

"It means firefighters diagnosed with a covered job-related cancer can focus on treatment, recovery, and family instead of fighting insurance companies," he said at a ceremonial signing of the bill by Gov. Katie Hobbs.

"This is not just about punctu-

ation," said O'Reilly. "It's about people."

Dan Freiberg, president of the 9,000-member Professional Fire Fighters of Arizona, said the legislation sends an important message.

"Arizona will not allow insurance companies to exploit ambiguity in the law at the expense of sick firefighters," he said.

Firefighters also gained another change in law designed to protect their health and prevent them from becoming ill in the first place.

House Bill 2641 also was signed prohibits the use of PFAS — a category known as "forever chemicals" — in the foam used by firefighters to put out blazes.

The chemicals help the foam spread over burning flammable liquids, helping to shut off the flow of oxygen.

Arizona lawmakers, aware of the health hazards, had previously forbidden the use of PFAS, which

have a known link to cancer, in foam used for testing and training. But it left the door open for other uses when actually fighting fires.

Rep. Sarah Liguori said there is no reason for that exception given the known health hazards from the chemicals.

"Firefighters spend their career running toward danger," said the Phoenix Democrat.

"Every time a firefighter answers a call they accept risks the rest of us hope we never have to face," she said.

"But they shouldn't have to prevent risks that are preventable."

Liguori, noting the inherent risks of cancer to firefighters, said it makes sense to eliminate at least one risk factor.

She also said anything that reduces the use of PFAS helps everyone else, what with the chemicals showing up in drinking water in many communities.

The immediate ban on PFAS in firefighting foam in Arizona does have an exception for public airports — at least through the end of 2030.

That is in line with changes to the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2024 which sets the same date.

Freiberg said the theme behind both new laws is providing additional protections against the risks that come with what is inherently a "dangerous job."

"We know what it means to run toward danger when everybody else is running away from it," he said.

"But the greatest threat facing firefighters today is not the fire directly in front of us," Freiberg said. "It's what follows us home: toxic smoke, burning plastics, diesel exhaust, contaminated gear, dangerous chemicals we cannot see, we can't smell them, and we also cannot avoid them."

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SCHOA



The SCHOA headquarters, 10401 W. Coggins Drive. (Independent Newsmedia File Photo)

Sun City HOA seeks candidates for open board seats

Three 3-year Sun City Home Owners Association board of director seats are opening for qualified residents to serve Sun City.

To become an official candidate, pick up a packet at the SCHOA Office, 10401 W. Coggins Drive, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Monday–Thursday and 9 a.m.–noon Friday. Packets will become available Monday, July 27.

Those looking to run must be a member of SCHOA.

Key dates in the election process include:

- July 27: First day candidate packets are available
- Aug. 10: First day to submit candidate packet
- Sept. 25: Last day to submit candidate packet
- Sept. 29: Candidate orientation & photos
- Nov. 1: Voting begins (must be a SCHOA member)
- Nov. 15: Voting ends at midnight Sunday
- Nov. 16: New board announced
Call 623-974-4718.

CAN offers free benefit checkups

Sun City and surrounding area residents who wonder if they are missing out on benefits can look to Sun City Community Assistance Network.

Sun City CAN provides a variety of free services, including the Benefits Assistance program that finds benefits and entitlements for clients.

Trained counselors assist low-income residents find and apply for federal, state and local programs.

Call the CAN office at 623-933-7530 to make an appointment.

The CAN office is located at 10195 W. Coggins Drive.



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Be a Civility Advocate!



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.

SCORES

GOLF

DT Winners

1st flight: (Handicaps 5-18)

Glenn Warrington (Low Gross) 61

Mike Bashaw, Scott Klein and Fred Preston (Low Net Tie) 55

Richard VanVulkenburg, Mike Dmitriev, Everett Dorsey and John Evans (Tied at 58)

2nd flight: (Handicaps 19-29)

Don Bols (Low Gross) 69

Wayne Hendrickson and Michael Anastasio (Low Net Tie) 51

James Dunn-56 Mike Byers, Jim Meier and Rich McAndrews (Tied at 59)

July 1

Game played was Red, White and Blue

1st flight: (Handicaps 5-19)

Richard VanVulkenburg and Glenn Warrington (Low Gross Tie) 66

John Evans (Low Net) 55 Jim O'Neil-56 Burton Mur-ray-57

Mike Griffith and David Kuhlman (Tied at 59)

2nd flight: (Handicaps 20-27)

David Gearhart (Low Gross) 74 Doug Smith (Low Net) 56

Don Giese, Wayne Hendrickson and Ron Stallbaum (Tied at 58)

John Mitchell and Michael Anastasio (Tied at 59)

Echo Mesa Women's Golf Club

June 23

High/Low

Ft. 1 23 - 36 Game Score

Ginger Emerson 23.5

Berne Dybas 24.5

Carolee Randel 25

Veda Barganier 26.5

ReNae Keuck 28

Eileen Fargher 28

Nine Holers

Joanne Honce 39

Desert Trails Ladies Golf

June 23

Flight 1 Low gross D. Craig 70 Low Net K. VIC 55

Flight 2 Low Gross S. Ambrosius 80 Low Net J. Rick-er 59

Flight 3 Low Gross K. Carter 85 Low Net J. Relyea 59

Flight 4 Low Gross C. Wendling 87 Low NET M. Judd, J.moore 56

Echo Mesa Women's Golf Club

June 30

Low Gross

Ft. 1 23 - 36

Linda Geyer 77

Sue Anderson 80

Ginger Emerson 80

ReNae Keuck 82

Nine Holers

Joanne Honce 44

Desert Trails Golf

July 7

Flight 1 Low Gross D. Craig 71 Low Gross C. Ellis 54

Flight 2 Low Gross P. Ferrell 78 Low Net L. Bunn 60

Flight 3 Low Gross J. Relyea 82 Low Net D. Phillips 56

Flight 4 Low Gross M. Doucette , M. Judd 87 Low Net J. Martin 51

Echo Mesa Women's Golf Club

July 7

Low Gross/Low Net

Ft. 1 22 - 33 Low Gross Low Net

Veda Barganier 72

Linda Geyer 51

Carol Weinberg 52

Carolee Randel 54

Nine Holers

Kay Grossman 55

GAMES

Monday Night Bridge

June 22

1st Susan and Roger Anderson 4610

2nd Ray and Carolyn Murphy 4090

3rd Bill Cooper and Barb Carl 3880

4th Liz and Gene Mitofsky 3860

Small Slam

Ray and Carolyn Murphy

Tuesday Division Bridge

June 23

1 Marion Hare 4410

2 Dennis Hemmer 4050

3 Marilyn Torgimson 3700

4 George Nelson 3650

SCWCBC Tuesday Division Bridge

June 30

1 Dennis Hemmer 3970

2 Michael Agresto 3900

3 Marion Hare 3860

4 Marilyn Torgimson 3340

One Partner Contract Bridge

July 6

1st place - Bill Cooper and Carl Ramsey 4,270

2nd place - Dianne Wuethrich and Mary Lou Hindal 4,150

3rd place - Barb Sumner and Bonny Yamashita 3,980

4th place - Roger and Susan Anderson 3,860

Small slam bid and made: Jackie Burrell and Lynda Strobel

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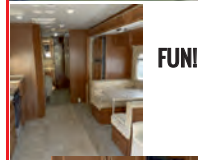
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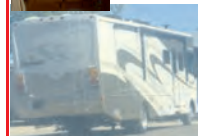
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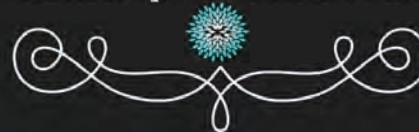
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