



## Neighbors

Local nonprofit supports foster children; **14**



# INDEPENDENT

## Clubs

Craft club celebrates Christmas in July; **24**



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

## E-bikes keep seniors' passion for cycling moving

Pose safety risks for riders of all ages

By Jennifer Jimenez and Maya McFall

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Cyclists are riding around Sun City West every day on various modes including bicycles, pedal-assist and e-bikes.

Many safety concerns surrounding e-bikes are being voiced throughout the state, but for some residents in Sun City West, the e-bike or pedal-assist bicycles allow the passion for cycling to continue into retirement.

Sun City West Cyclists Club member Gini Baker is an e-bike rider and considers herself an athlete in her 70s and is a fairly new biker.

• See **Bikes** on page 5



The North County Fire & Medical District Board evaluates the budget every fiscal year to maintain the necessary service levels. (Submitted photo/Arizona Fire & Medical Authority)

## Residents will keep primary fire district tax rate

**Decision made by North County Fire and Medical District Board**

By Jennifer Jimenez  
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Sun City West residents will continue to pay the same fire district tax rate for fiscal year 2026-2027.

The North County Fire & Medical District Board adopted a budget to keep the same primary fire district tax rate as the previous year. Ac-

cording to Dep. Chief Kane Nixon, this was a deliberate decision made to support the financial stability of residents while ensuring the Arizona Fire & Medical Authority has the resources necessary to continue delivering the premier level of fire and emergency medical services the community expects.

Nixon explained property taxes are the primary funding source that allow the North County Fire & Medical District to provide fire and emer-

gency medical services to Sun City West.

"Those funds support the firefighters and paramedics who respond to emergencies 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as well as the stations, fire engines, ambulances, equipment, training and technology needed to deliver those services," said Nixon.

He said property tax revenue helps to make sure when someone calls for

• See **Fire** on page 5

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## RESIDENTS REPAIR, RESTOCK LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

Nancy Wright, with Arrowhead-West Phoenix Pi Beta Phi Alumnae Club, and Susie Wolfe, of the Wickenburg Public Library, show off the newly restored and repainted Little Free Library. A summer storm caught and blew off the Library door, so the alumnae group fixed it up and restocked it with both children and adult books for the Wickenburg public to enjoy. (Submitted photo/Lolly Looman)



## CERAMIC CLUB ALREADY IN THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

Vintage ceramic Christmas trees are a rare find at an estate or garage sale and are usually expensive to buy, but the Ceramic West club has several tree molds to choose from so members can make their own. The pouring teams gather weekly to produce art forms, including different Christmas tree sizes. A finished Christmas tree, tipped with snow and lit with tiny colored lights, makes the pouring teams duties worthwhile. Pictured are Maylin Moore, Art Juarez and Kathy Culliton. (Submitted photo/BK Pritchett)

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## Fire

• From page 1

help, highly trained professionals arrive quickly and with the equipment that is needed. Also, this money supports community risk reduction programs, fire prevention efforts and emergency preparedness initiatives that help keep residents safe long before an emergency occurs.

"The North County Fire Medical District is proud of our staff for finding a way to keep our tax rate flat and amongst the lowest in the state of Arizona. While we continue to offer the highest level of services to the community," said Richard Bookie, board chairman.

Each year the decision is made based on the district's financial position, according to Nixon, and the board directors make a deliberate decision to maintain the district's existing tax rate rather than increase it. He said this reflects a commitment to fiscal responsibility and recognizes the financial pressure residents are experiencing.

## Bikes

• From page 1

"In a senior community the biggest problem is integrating. Early e-bikes would surge and less e-bikes go fast and coast and that is extremely annoying to someone who is a pace rider. I would ride at the back because I wanted to break into the group and not bother anyone," she explained.

She uses an e-bike because this enables her to play two major sports in one day. Baker can bike 20 miles and swim two miles or bike and add a round of 18 holes of golf. But at 75, she would not be able to do that without the use of an e-bike. Her bike has a pedal assist with a throttle. Baker said most e-bikes have a governor, which allows them to travel only at a specific speed.

Baker said a regular bicycle might weigh between 10-15 pounds, while her e-bike is between 45-50 pounds. She ad-

"Holding the tax rate flat for the current fiscal year required careful planning and disciplined budgeting to ensure services could be maintained without placing additional burden on taxpayers," said Nixon.

Since the district's budget and tax rate are evaluated every year, maintaining the current rate this year should not be interpreted as an indication that a significant increase is anticipated in the future, Nixon explained.

All future rates go through the regular budgeting process, taking into consideration service demands, economic conditions, operational costs and long-term financial needs, he added.

In addition, maintaining a flat fire district tax mill rate for the current fiscal year does not mean reducing services, according to Nixon. He said the board's expectation is that residents continue receiving the same high-quality service.

Nixon said the passage of Proposition 407 last November by district voters included a \$40.4 million bond measure with 57.2% of voters showing support.

mits if she fell over her bike is going to be heavier sitting on her, but she also argues fenders on the e-bike prevent dirt and mud from being thrown up.

"Yes, e-bikes are just as safe," said Baker.

In the club now, there are 85-year-olds who have evolved to an e-bike and this allows those individuals to continue to ride with the group. Baker said the group of evolving cyclists to e-bikes should be encouraged and remain a part the social group.

According to the League of American Bicyclists' 2024 Bicycle State Report Card, Arizona is one of the most dangerous states in the country for bicyclists, ranking 37th place.

Arizona recorded a five-year high of 1,379 total bicycle crashes in 2024, a 21% increase over 2023, according to the Arizona Department of Transportation. About 44 cyclists lost their lives and more than 1,300 were injured.

These crashes include e-bike riders, al-

"Proposition 407 established a dedicated funding source for major capital investments such as fire engines, ambulances, station improvements, firefighter cancer-prevention infrastructure and other long-term facility and equipment needs. Because those capital needs are being addressed through voter-approved bond financing, the board was able to focus the fiscal year 2026-2027 operating budget on maintaining emergency response capabilities and keeping the primary tax rate unchanged," said Nixon.

Russell "Smitty" Smith described the importance of shared response to the community and his personal experience during a recent Sun City West Posse meeting.

His house nearly burned down about five years ago, when six different fire departments showed up to salvage it.

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*Reporter Jennifer Jimenez can be reached at [jjimenez@iniusa.org](mailto:jjimenez@iniusa.org). Please submit comments at [yourvalley.net/letters](http://yourvalley.net/letters) or email them to [AzOpinions@iniusa.org](mailto:AzOpinions@iniusa.org). We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines.*

though exact e-bike data remains unmeasured at a state level.

According to a blog post by bicycle crash lawyer Robert Goldwater, e-bike adoption is contributing to the upward trend of bicyclist fatalities.

Many e-bike riders are new to cycling and could potentially have less road awareness and bicycle handling at higher speeds.

Last summer in Sun City West, "No e-bikes" signs were placed on the Javelina Trail, located north of Deer Valley Drive. According to a press release from Recreation Centers of Sun City West officials, motorized vehicles are already prohibited, but these signs helped to clarify.

General Manager Stephen Erno said during a general manager operations meeting last year, this reminded him of the time when cities and towns were trying to get motorized scooters under control and said these signs are probably the best solution for now.

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## CLUB

### Meet Mac-Cro-Knitter Carol Pritchard

**How long have you been a member of the Mac-Cro-Knit?** I've been a member of Mac-Cro-Knit for 24 years. Mac-Cro-Knit was the first club I joined when we moved to Sun City West.

**What brought you to the club?** There was a craft fair in the courtyard by the administration office. I spoke with some ladies at the Mac-Cro-Knit table and they invited me to the club.

**What do you enjoy most about being a member?** I enjoy the camaraderie and the diverse backgrounds of the members. Over the years we have had members from Germany, France, China, Israel, Wales, and England. Each member brings skills and techniques that they learned in other countries and areas of the United States. There's always something to learn.

**Who taught you and crochet?** My grandmother taught me to crochet as a child to keep me occupied. She would sit me down with a crochet hook and yarn to see how long I could make a chain. Both my grandmother and mother crocheted, but only my grandmother knitted. She knitted continental style (holding yarn in left hand). In later years, when I began knitting, I found that because I crocheted mostly all my life, it was more comfortable and easier for me to hold the yarn in my left hand so I continued knitting continental style.

**What do you enjoy about knitting the most?** I enjoyed knitting lace because it's a challenge and the end result is so beautiful. Also, I liked knitting Scandinavian color work. However, about 10 years ago,



**Mac-Cro-Knit club member Carol Pritchard showing her knitted shawl and doll. (Submitted photo/Lisa Capriotti)**

one of our members who was excellent at knitting lovely, detailed dolls, was kind enough to share her patterns and technique with me. So once I started knitting those beautiful dolls, I was hooked. I also enjoyed knitting animals. Now I knit less complicated projects.

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



### BASKETEERS STAY COOL WITH ICE CREAM

The Sun City West Basketeers found a way to beat the heat at their recent ice cream social. Deb Crimi, Betty Hoyt and Ellen Klingsberg served up ice cream with all the toppings to members as games were played. The Basketeers meet 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays at the Kuentz Rec Center Mesa Room. (Submitted photo/Jill Zine)

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## COMPUTERS

# Computers West offers expertise in several tech areas

## Social, technology club helps residents

By Jennifer Jimenez  
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Technology support comes with long phone calls, online chats and usually require a large fee.

However, Sun City West residents have a resource inside their own backyard that offers expertise in the areas of software, computers, tablets, cell phones, Smart TV's and other devices.

Classes include iPhones, Android phones, Zoom, PC Windows, Linux, Google Docs, Forms and Sheets, security cameras and digital coupons. These classes are based on member requests and currently include everything from Artificial Intelligence, how to cut the cord, and Microsoft Office products, to tricks in the computer and phone operating systems.

Club member Laura King is the club expert on genealogy, according to member Norm Falcone. King has been working in genealogy for more than two decades. Falcone said she can help people start at square one with a family tree, and that resident can come back each week and do a little bit more.

"The club offers the total software package, which is pretty expensive for people to use at home. So they can



Members of the Computers West Club take part in a class. (Submitted photo/Computers West Club)

come here. Any day of the week, we are open and work on their genealogy. And over a period of time, they'll get better and better at it. And then those people start to help other people, as well," he explained.

King said in this age group, a lot of people who start genealogy do it because they want to preserve the history and the stories of their families, for their grandkids and their great grandkids and things like that.

There are four rooms within the Computers West Club, Palm Ridge Recreation Centers, 13800 W. Deer Valley Drive, and members can take part 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Friday, except for the summer months when hours change to 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Inside the club, there is also a flight

simulator that helps residents learn how to fly and an open source group that gives free software to people who want to load it onto personal equipment, Falcone said. There are currently just under 1,100 members in the club, which costs \$20 a year, and individuals get access to all aspects of the club.

"Most members treat this like a doctor's office and join because they know at some point they will need the help, but they are not sure when," said Falcone.

Member Lyle Vogt said he was one of those guys who came in and knew nothing and has learned a lot. He said over the past couple of years he has grown very comfortable and is almost to the point where he can teach a class.

Club member Peter Jeffries said as

a club member there is no limit to the number of times someone can receive repair or technical support.

"We do not charge people anything except for what it costs for the new part," he said.

Different individuals in the club do different things. Gary Reynolds said nobody knows everything, but everybody knows something.

According to club members there are people in the club that know nothing about computers, but are eager to learn and others know a lot.

Lynn Watt is a member of the club and said this group is a wealth of knowledge and is a great resource to the community. This includes helping residents avoid computer scams or adding a home security system and advising residents on what is needed.

"They can help by telling me if I need a faster Internet speed and the types of systems there are and also understand what will work best with my knowledge of technology," said Watt.

If they do not have the answers, the Computers West Club will have someone there who will find the answer, according to Watt.

Reporter Jennifer Jimenez can be reached at [jjimenez@iniusa.org](mailto:jjimenez@iniusa.org). Please submit comments at [yourvalley.net/letters](mailto:yourvalley.net/letters) or email them to [AZOpinions@iniusa.org](mailto: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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## STITCHERS KEEP BUSY

Residents who like to be creative and learn new ways to stitch projects can join Creative Stitchers. There is a teacher for each craft, including counted cross stitch, needlepoint, hardanger, embroidery, smocking, rug hooking and punch needle. Membership is \$10 a year and is open to Sun City West residents. The group meets 8-11:30 a.m. Mondays at Kuentz Recreation Center Kiva room, 14401 W. R.H. Johnson Blvd. To use the club room, two or more members are required. The general meeting takes place the third Monday of the month. Residents can stop by on Monday mornings to see what the club is all about. Visit [stitchers.scwclubs.com](http://stitchers.scwclubs.com) or call John Harrison at 480-363-6392 for more information. Pictured, Jesse Davlin stitched a pineapple and castle. (Submitted photo/Jeanette Hill)



## CRAFT CLUB CREATES FOR VETERANS

Members of the Artistic Hand Lettering, Cards and Mixed Media Club are making cards for the Military Order of the Purple Heart 1-4 p.m. Friday, July 24. The club pledges a minimum of 500 cards every year and usually exceeds that number. Last year, they also collected about 3,000 gifts and each got a handmade card hand signed by the coordinators. Club members will also learn how to make wire designs to use on cards 10 a.m.-noon July 27 and Fun Fold Friday with Judy Ross is July 31. The club meets 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday and Friday and 6-9 p.m. Wednesday in the Kuentz center's Pueblo Room. Call Dot-tie Schmit (602-758-9854) or Kat McGinnis (480-806-8053), visit [artisticandlettering.scwclubs.com](http://artisticandlettering.scwclubs.com) or email [ahlcandmm@gmail.com](mailto:ahlcandmm@gmail.com) for more information. Membership is \$10 annually. Pictured are members making treat bags for Grandview Terrace residents. (Submitted photo/Melanie Harrison)





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# OPINION

## Take the Civility Pledge

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/](http://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.

## Proposed Surprise ICE facility hardly a 'concentration camp'

In response to Skip Porter's letter, "Why I'm no longer spending money in nearby Surprise," the letter contains this sentence: "I am disappointed that Surprise would host a concentration camp (the proposed regional U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement intake and processing facility that is coming to Surprise)."

Concentration camp? Really?

The Nazis of Germany were trying to kill all Jews, who were living in Europe.

When the Allies liberated these camps, those who had not yet died or been killed were emaciated from starvation and disease.

How can you compare an intake and processing facility to that? Is the government planning mass executions and starvation of those they're holding for deportation? I think not.

Incidentally, how could the leadership of Surprise stop the federal government?

Secondly, Turning Point USA, founded by the late Charlie Kirk, who was assassinated for his beliefs, has no more influence than any of several leftist organizations, which also attempt to influence governmental agencies.

Lastly, I am glad that we are still able to express ourselves openly. Taking your money elsewhere is a time-honored form of expression going all the way back to the late 1700s in Colonial America.

Good job for that, at least!

**George Hilburn**  
SUN CITY WEST

## LETTERS

*The term "concentration camp" is defined by dictionaries as a place where a large number of people are confined or detained without trial. According to Yad Yashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, the Nazi regime operated several types of camps, including concentration, labor and hard labor camps, extermination camps, transit camps and prisoner of war camps.*

## RCSCW's math can't be correct, resident says

During RCSCW's annual membership/board meeting, CFO Clif Swann stated that the savings resulting from the imposition of credit card user fees would save about \$300,000, which would be about \$6 per member if equated to dues.

That can't be correct.

The budget for this fiscal year projects \$16,416,535 in membership revenue, including owners, associates and landlord dues. Divide that by next year's dues of \$618 per person and the result is 26,564 paying cardholders.

Divide that number into the projected \$300,000 savings, and the result is \$11.29 savings per person, almost double the \$6 claim made by Swann. By his math, \$300,000/\$6 equals 50,000 people, but there aren't 50,000 people living here.

I found the CFO's remarks flip-pant and off the cuff, with little respect to those who the funds really belong to — the owners, associates and landlords.

We'll never see a dime. Instead of a smaller dues increase reflecting this savings, we got one that ignores the savings and piles on

more dues instead.

During my second term on the Budget and Finance Committee, I proposed Sun City West enter the current century and allow residents to opt out of mailed paper invoices and annual golf card "reminders." With first-class stamps now up to 82 cents, many thousands of dollars would be saved on invoice postage alone, plus some (unknown) number of unnecessary reminders.

Add envelopes, paper, printing and employee costs to manage the daily deluge of outgoing invoices, and some real cash could be saved. CFO Swann refused to consider it, claiming this has been tried before and didn't work, and that collections would increase.

No one I know, including many long-time residents, ever heard of this being tried before. I think it is time our CFO looks for employment elsewhere.

**Frank Bagnato**  
SUN CITY WEST

## Reader supports Surprise ICE facility

I would like to respond to the writer of the letter, Why I'm no longer spending money in Surprise, published in the July 8 edition of the Sun City West Independent. The letter-writer objects to the proposed ICE facility, calling it a "concentration camp."

The truth, in my opinion, is that the ICE detainees that are to be housed there temporarily until they can be deported back to their home countries will be treated better than some hardworking-Americans are.

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**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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Platform tennis combines the skills of tennis, squash and racquetball. (Submitted photo/Joel Piaskowski)

## Sun City West platform courts get an upgrade

After passing several RCSCW committees, with final approval by the governing board, the platform tennis courts at the R.H. Johnson Tennis Complex are ready for their upgrade. The four courts were in need of repair after all their years of use.

New post tension slabs will be installed over the existing surface. All fencing will be removed prior and reinstalled at the end of the project. According to Herschel Workman, RCSCW capital projects manager, the contractor has been selected.

Elite Sports Builders are anticipat-

ed to start the work the first week of August, with an estimated completion timeline of 8 weeks. A budget of \$305K was approved by RCSCW.

According to PaddlePro.com, Sun City West has the only platform tennis courts in Arizona.

"With the continuing growth of platform tennis in the community, this is a well deserved upgrade," stated Butch Lynd, president of the Tennis Club.

Visit platformtennis.org and watch the brief video, or visit tennis.scw-clubs.com for more information.



## JUNE ACES

Desert Trails June aces are Mary Train, low gross 72, and Kimberley Carter, low net 51. (Submitted photos)





## IDEAS TAKE SHAPE AT SILVERCRAFT WEST'S TABLE TALK TUESDAY

Questions become solutions as SilverCraft West members gather for Table Talk Tuesday in the club's workshop. Demonstrations, mentoring and open discussion help members refine techniques, overcome project challenges and discover new ideas for handcrafted jewelry (Submitted photo/SilverCraft West)

### THEATER

# Theatre West offers August acting workshops

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.

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 Saturdays, Aug. 22 and 29. The two-session workshop costs \$10. The workshop will give participants hands-on experience turning a partially written one-act play into a completed production. During the first session, actors will work in groups to complete a script while exploring plot, character development and performance choices. The second session will include rehearsal and a live presentation for family and friends.

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



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# Local nonprofit supports foster children

NONPROFIT

**Partners with other organization to reach more individuals**

**By Jennifer Jimenez**  
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A Sun City West resident assisting another nonprofit made the decision to come alongside and serve.

Vonnie Bayard formed Fostering Hearts In Our Community as a way to continue to ease the difficult transition Arizona's foster youth face as they age out of foster care.

"I started making these duffel bags in attempt to help OCJ Kids. This need already existed and we are helping take it to another level to get more bags down," she said.

Bayard said as Fostering Hearts has grown, they have reached more organizations and partners and continue to give to OCJ Kids. She said 360 bags are going to the Department of Child Safety.

Northern Arizona University and Grand Canyon University also have programs. At GCU, those in the Fostering Futures program, students who came out of the foster system can get meals, housing and education.

Fostering Hearts provides essential care kits, which come in various sizes and include items in the categories of bed linens, bath essentials, hygiene and kitchen items.

"We need more people involved and unless someone has come out of the system here in Sun City West we are in a bubble, and the rest of the West Valley is facing these circumstances," said Bayard.

She said working alongside these other organizations allows them to focus on other needs foster youth has.



**Foster Hearts nonprofit hosts a golf tournament yearly as a fundraiser to support the organization. (Submitted photo/Fostering Hearts)**

The organization is growing and looking for new board members, volunteers and sponsors.

Currently, Bayard takes 20 starter kits to two churches in Sun City West and returns two months later to pick up the filled started kits. She said 90% of the money raised goes to foster youth and the organization is run solely by volunteers. Distribution of the bags happens once a year and the organization continues to make more.

Last year, 478 kits were given out to partner organizations, with 248 delivered in 2024.

"The people here want to give and are very generous with strong values, (but) when they see organizations with the administration of 45% they are adverse to that," said Bayard.

She said when residents hear about Fostering Hearts and how much money goes directly to youth, they are eager to fill a bag and head out shopping.

Email [fosteringhearts.info@gmail.com](mailto:fosteringhearts.info@gmail.com) or call 623-252-5523.

*Reporter Jennifer Jimenez can be reached at [jjimenez@iniusa.org](mailto:jjimenez@iniusa.org). Please submit comments at [yourvalley.net/letters](http://yourvalley.net/letters) or email them to [AzOpinions@iniusa.org](mailto: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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Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-Meeker, L-135th, L-Deer Valley Rd., L-Tom Ryan, R-Via Manana, L-Las Brisas, R-Pecos, L-Cochise Ln.

**SUNDAY, JULY 26<sup>TH</sup>**  
**10:00AM-NOON**

**15357 W. Black Gold Ln.,  
SUN CITY WEST**

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

**TUESDAY, JULY 28<sup>TH</sup>**  
**10:00AM-NOON**

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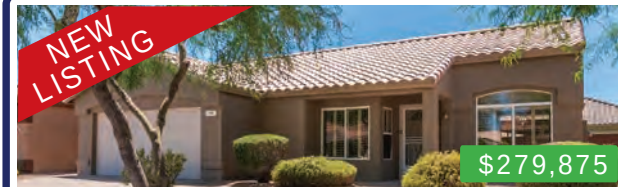
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Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-Meeker, L-135th, L-Deer Valley Rd., L-Tom Ryan, R-Via Manana, L-Las Brisas, R-Pecos, L-Cochise Ln.

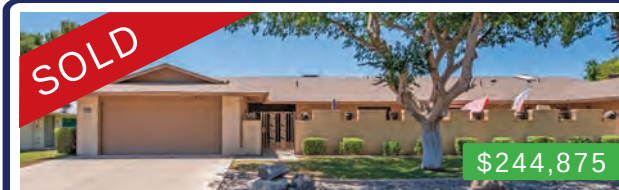
Popular La Paz model located in the Palm Ridge Rec. Cntr. area of SCW. Home has 1086 sq. ft., 2 bedroom, 2 bath, great room floor plan & a block wall fenced private backyard. New roof underlayment 2026. Neighborhood HOA allows pets & rentals. Call today to view!



**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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## SENIOR SOFTBALL CELEBRATES DERBY WIN

Christie Nunes, a member of the Angels of Liberty 75 and older senior women's softball team, returned from a national tournament earning second place. She is pictured here with her mother Doris Waldron, who receives care from Encore Hospice, who sponsors the team's tournament fees of \$2,500 and her nurse Christina Samad. Manager Bev Burger said this team would not be able to travel and participate without the community support. Nunes came home crowned a home run derby champion with seven total. (Submitted photo/Vinnie Taibbi)



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## BETH EMETH HOSTS OPEN HOUSE

Beth Emeth Congregation of the West Valley, 13702 W. Meeker Blvd., hosted a successful open house in Sun City West. The event was held for three hours July 12. Rabbi Lev Ettelsen spoke to members and potential members interested in more information about the synagogue. Beth Emeth congregation member Gary Cohen said it was a nice gathering, which ended with several new people joining as members. This community event included an ice cream social, 2026 High Holiday ticket sales, a sing-along with Judy Hamer and the chance to tour the synagogue. (Submitted photo/Beth Emeth Congregation of the West Valley)

# PORA

## Leadership series returning to PORA

### Officials call on residents to share individual stories

By Jennifer Jimenez  
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Residents will have the opportunity to attend an expanded leadership series at the Property Owners and Residents Association.

This year's classes are expected to start in the fall and will be taught directly by the agencies that shape the daily lives of the community, including the Maricopa Association of Governments, Arizona Corporation Commission, Maricopa Board of Supervisors, Arizona Department of Transportation, Maricopa County Department of Transportation, air quality, water resources and state representative and senators.

"These sessions give residents a direct line to the people who make decisions affecting transportation, utilities, safety and long range planning," according to a statement from PORA officials.

Part of this series includes fea-

turing residents in Sun City West. Board Director Cindy Putman said many people in the community have lived extraordinary lives, traveled the world, served in unique professions or have a specific expertise.

Putman said it is important to have the leaders and the organizations that design the surrounding area in the county speak to residents to explain the things happening around Sun City West.

"That is one of our missions to learn who the leaders are and talk to them to help more people understand and get involved in the association to make a difference," said Putman.

Putman said residents can cover any topic and could reach others in the community. Topics include laughter, grief, diagnosis or others. Putman said there will be no selling of products or services, just connection.

Residents interested in attending the leadership series or submitting a class idea may send information to cputman@cox.net.

### Del Webb presentation next month

The Friends of the R.H. Johnson Library Speaker Series will feature a presentation on Del Webb next month. The Sun Cities Area Historical Society will give the presentation 2 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 26, at the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center Lecture Hall, 19803 R.H. Johnson Blvd.

Registration is required for this event and can be done at [suncitywest.librarycalendar.com](http://suncitywest.librarycalendar.com) or by calling the Data Resource Center at 623-544-6644. This reserves a seat in the lecture hall.

Entry after the start time will be subject to availability.

### Preventative parking lot maintenance coming up

The parking lot maintenance on the lower half of the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center is set to begin soon.

Recreation Centers of Sun City West officials are advising residents to plan ahead since work was scheduled to begin July 20. The completion date is approximately Friday, July 31.

The work includes small asphalt repairs to isolated areas of the parking lot, along with seal coating and restriping that will affect larger areas.

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## Letters

• From page 10

They are given menus for three meals a day, they have clean bedding, recreational facilities, medical care, legal services, etc.

They came into our country thanks to Joe Biden. They committed a crime by just walking in, but also included amongst the inmates are rapists, murderers, pedophiles, gang members, terrorists, and drug and sex traffickers!

Do we really want these people in our country? I don't! Perhaps the letter-writer would volunteer to take some of them into his/her home and support them?

God bless America and God bless the ICE agents who face danger every day in their jobs.

**Jean Goncalves**  
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

**Please send your comments to**  
**AzOpinions@iniusa.org.**

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

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, 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.*

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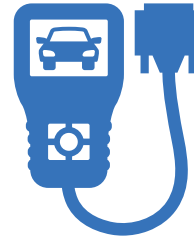
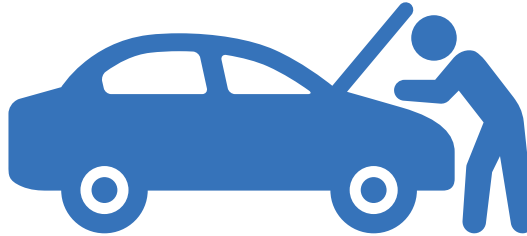
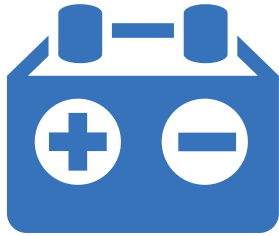
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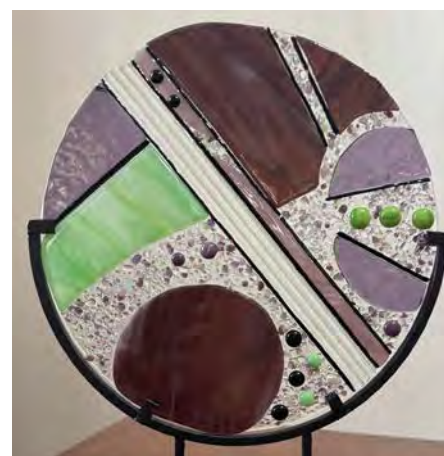
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## GET FEET DANCING WITH DANCESENSATIONS AUGUST WORKSHOPS

The DanceSensations club is offering a Beginning Tap workshop 2-3 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, Aug. 4-27. Intermediate Tap is noon-1 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, Aug. 3-26. Song and Jazz Dance is 3:30-5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 4, and Thursdays, Aug. 13, 20 and 27 (vocal warm-ups, learn lyrics, sing and dance). Cost per workshop is \$40. All classes are open to Sun City West residents and are in the dance studio of the Palm Ridge center. Residents can try before committing. A registration form and further information can be found in the dance studio or at [dancesensations.scwclubs.com](http://dancesensations.scwclubs.com), by email [resident@scwdancesensations.com](mailto:resident@scwdancesensations.com) or by calling 623-594-3408. (Submitted photo/Paulette Halle)



## CREATIVE CLUB OFFERS BEGINNER CLASSES

The Fused Glass and Enameling Club offers two classes for beginners every month. Class sizes are kept small to allow for personal interaction with instructors. Hours are 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Saturday and 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday. Call 623-544-6532 or 702-278-0955 for more information. Pictured is a work of art by Deb Harwell (Submitted photo/Deb Daly)



## CLUB PROVES IMITATION IS A FORM OF FLATTERY

Rip 'N' Sew members took a recent class on making a sunflower wall hanging, similar to Vincent van Gogh's series of paintings called "Sunflowers." Sunflowers symbolized friendship, gratitude and the southern sun's brilliance to van Gogh. Jolene Piskowski taught the class at the Sun City West club. Pictured with their sunflower wall hangings made from cloth are, from left, Kay Grevas, Susan Steffan, Karen Everett, Janet Horst, Connie Province and Janet Thrush. Melissa VanDyken and Ginny Bignell participated in the class but are not pictured. (Submitted photo/Jolene Piskowski)

## PORA

# PORA officials work to reduce monthly costs

## Looking into software to remove manual processes

By Jennifer Jimenez  
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Property Owners and Residents Association officials continue to work to revamp the association and have uncovered ways to save money.

Board President Jim Scott said a \$350 monthly savings began when new insurance policies were renegotiated. They did not go cutting out any services, rather the association was over-insured and changing things decreased the price.

"Mike McInnes, who is our accountant, went through our insurance policies and sat down with a brokerage and realized many things on the policies that were not needed," said Scott.

Additionally, PORA officials found many digital phones the association was being charged for were located unused inside a closet. Scott said corporate officials with Cox Communications worked with them to reevaluate the bill and that is still being worked out. Grand Canyon Business Solutions is the IT contractor for PORA and will also be assisting the association with switching from Cisco phone lines to a ring central system done over the Internet.

"As soon as that formal request to get the phone numbers transferred is complete, the bill will get redone and we will be looking at spending \$1,000 a month less from this change," he explained.

The vendor program is a service many members join the association for and the program will be revamped. The plan is to provide a profile card

for businesses that will include photos of completed work, contact information and reviews. Scott said this will be a big win for everyone when this is completed.

Innes and Ron Rada are also working with DeeDee Runner tracking all expenses and income using QuickBooks and monthly financials will be available on the website.

Another change includes membership prices increasing. It used to call \$15 for a single person and \$25 for a household, but Scott said as costs go up the price needed to increase and moved to a \$30 flat membership fee for all.

"This is not going to make the organization self-sustaining by any stretch, but ideally we got a minimal skeleton crew for staff and so we wanted to be reasonable, and \$30 was kind of the balance," said Scott.

Scott said revenue declined over the past several years, but now PORA is no longer in survival mode. The association is looking to increase membership and get donations back to sustainable levels.

Visit [porascw.org](http://porascw.org).

## Save the date for the upcoming book sale

The Friends of the R.H. Johnson Library book sale, featuring books, DVDs, puzzles and other items, is 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, at the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center Social Hall, 19803 N. R.H. Johnson Blvd.

All proceeds go into purchasing materials that are available inside of the R.H. Johnson Library.

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**CLUB CELEBRATES ‘GRAND OLD FLAG’**

Rip ‘N’ Sew members made their own versions of Old Glory to help celebrate America’s 250th birthday. Teacher Jolene Piaskowski showed students how to use the club’s AccuQuilt cutting machine and the small tumbler die to shape the fabric pieces needed. The club members in the class could choose their own fabrics and the red, white and blue colors. Shown with their creations are, from left, Robyn Reynolds, Janet Horst, Eva Weisberg, Kryss Matherly, Janet Thrush and Jeanne Phillips. Three other members of the Sun City West club took the class and completed their flags but are not pictured. They are Ginny Bignell, Karen Everett and Helen Grant. (Submitted photo/Jolene Piaskowski)

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Rich VanVulkenburg, Lance Brown and John Evans (Tied at 60)  
Glenn Warrington and Jim Haaland (Tied at 61)  
2nd flight: (Handicaps 18-27)  
John Mitchell (Low Gross) 72 Jim Meier (Low Net) 56  
Dave Gearhart and Mike Anastasio (Tied at 57) Tom McNally-58  
Ron Stallbaum and Randy Geidt (Tied at 59)  
Fred Preston and Wayne Hendrickson (Tied at 60)

**Echo Mesa Women's Golf Club**  
**July 14**  
Odd Holes  
Flt. 1 Handicap 21-37 Game  
Sue Anderson 22.5  
Stacy Hoenig 25  
Janet Eriksson 29.5  
Ginger Emerson 31  
Carolee Randel 31  
Colleen Zarate 31  
Nine Holers  
Joanne Honce 44  
Kay Grossman 53

**GAMES**

**Tuesday Division Bridge**  
**July 7**  
1 Rosemary Dougherty 4280  
2 Bo Anderson 4210  
3 Rita Hughes 4170  
4 Marilyn Torgrimson 3320  
**July 14**  
1 Dennis Hemmer 3800  
2 Marilyn Torgrimson 3690  
3 Larry Hughes 3630  
4 SAharon Nedza 3560

**Desert Trails Ladies Golf**  
**July 14**  
Flight 1 Low Gross D. Craig 68 Low Net M. Train 59  
Flight 2 Low Gross C. Ellis 84 Low Net P. Farrell 55  
Flight 3 Low Gross S. White 84 Low Net L. Saelens 57  
Flight 4 Low Gross M. Doucette 86 Low Net J.



## 'GO GANG' MEMBERS MEET IN SUN CITY WEST

Members of the Palo Verde Patchers' Go-Gang special interest group work with a cutter that will precisely cut several layers of fabric with dies in a multitude of shapes. Saving time in cutting pieces for larger quilts that may need hundreds of pieces for assembly. The club has a vast collection of dies for members to use during the meeting. The Go Gang recently had several of members working on scrap garden quilt such as the two above. Helen Grant and Linda Gagnon's quilts are comprised of all blocks done just putting the rows together. The next Go Gang meeting is the second Saturday of September. Visit [patchers.scwclubs.com](http://patchers.scwclubs.com) or contact club president Mary Roberts at 541-550-9932 for more information. (Submitted photo/Patricia Casey)

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## Civility Checklist

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

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



*Now that you've read the checklist, take the Civility Pledge at [yourvalley.net/civility-pledge](http://yourvalley.net/civility-pledge).*



## Colleen Ann McKemie

Colleen Ann McKemie, 81, passed away peacefully on April 20, 2026, in Sun City West, Arizona.

Born on August 4, 1944, Colleen was preceded in death by her beloved

husband, John C. McKemie, and her parents, David and Virginia Lee Warner. She is survived by her children, Jill and John David; her bonus daughters, Sharon and Pam; her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Family was the center of Colleen's life, and she treasured every moment and memory shared with those she loved.

Colleen was a beloved member of the Sun City West community, where she generously gave her time volunteering at the local library and supporting

the Sun Health Foundation through fundraising efforts. She also found lasting friendship and purpose through P.E.O., taking great pride in helping women achieve their educational goals. Whether she was hosting gatherings, lending a helping hand, or simply welcoming others with her warm smile, Colleen had a remarkable gift for making everyone feel valued and at home.

A private family service will be held to honor Colleen's memory. She will be deeply missed and forever cherished.



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Allyson, 16



StepUpStopCancer.org

INDEPENDENT  
NEWS MEDIA

## CLUBS



A single theme results in a variety of card styles created by members of SPAM. July's card art exchange theme was "Christmas in July." (Submitted photo/Christina Hecht)

# Craft club celebrates Christmas in July

Members of Scrapbooking, Papercrafts and More take part in a monthly card art exchange the first Thursday of each month, where they can see what fellow card makers are creating and garner ideas and insight into different techniques and mediums.

In efforts to stay cooler during the rising temperatures, the most recent theme was "Christmas in July."

Each participant creates two cards based on a theme provided the previous month by the project's coordinator, Lloyd Vining. After a brief show-and-tell, one card is swapped

with another participant via a random draw; the second card is donated to one of the club's philanthropic groups, such as the Sun City West Garden Club, which then sell the cards to raise funds for local philanthropies.

SPAM meets in the Beardsley center's Agave Room on Wednesday (4-9 p.m.), Thursday (9 a.m.-3 p.m.), Friday (9 a.m.-3 p.m.) and Saturday (9 a.m.-5 p.m.).

Call Sandy Cryer, club president, at 623-640-9387, visit scrapbooking.scwclubs.com or email scwscrapbook@gmail.com for more information.

## 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

- 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.
- Trespassing was reported 8:39 a.m. in the 19000 block of North R.H. Johnson Boulevard.

### 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.

## Yoga Club announces new instructor, summer classes

The Yoga Club announces the addition of Ashley Van Valkenburgh, Pilates instructor/substitute. She will be the substitute for the summer Pilates classes 8:30 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays Aug. 3-Oct. 30 at the Beardsley Recreation Center's yoga studio.

She will also offer classes 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Restorative Pilates is designed especially for those who want to maintain mobility, age well, reduce pain and restore the body so it moves with ease again. In restorative Pilates, participants slow down and focus on safety, proper alignment and what the body needs. Classes are mat-based and often include props such as bands, balls, yoga straps/blocks or Pilates circles - each used to support specific areas of the body.

Non-Yoga Club members, may try one free class. A pre-membership virtual punch card is available for purchase for \$24 allowing residents to try four classes prior to joining the club. Annual membership for the calendar year is \$10, non-prorated. The Yoga Club is open to RCSCW cardholders and their accompanied guests.

For club member information and class schedules visit [scwyoga.com](http://scwyoga.com) or call 623-256-0746.



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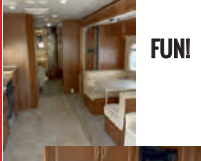
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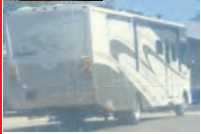
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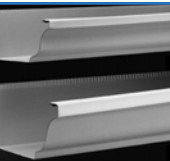
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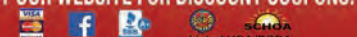
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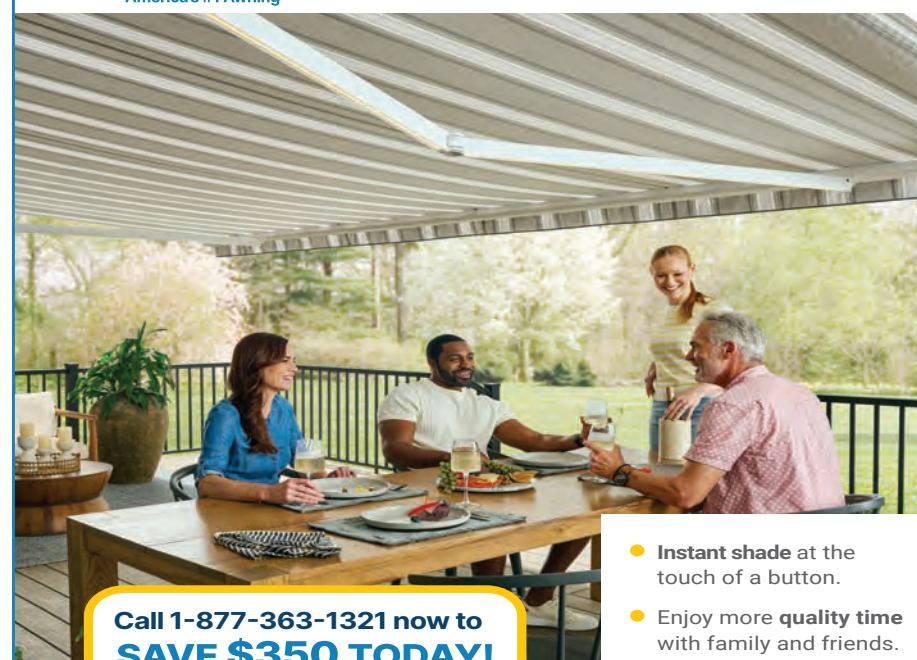
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