



Business
P.B. Bell
celebrating
50 years; **12**



Neighbors
National
golf tourney
showing; **22**

ELECTION

**Results official,
canvassed after
special council
meeting**

**Thomasson, Brown, Nassikas
win council seats**

By Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

With all ballots finally counted, unofficial results released last week showed Anna Thomasson, Bob Brown and Bill Nassikas winning the three Paradise Valley Town Council seats up for grabs. The results became official when they were canvassed on Tuesday, Aug. 4, after press time.

After all ballots were finally tallied last week, Anna Thomasson led the polls with 2,635 votes, totalling 30.32% of ballots cast.

Bob Brown was second among the candidates, according to unofficial results.

Votes for candidate Brown tally 2,377, earning 27.35% of the votes in the town council race.

Bill Nassikas came in third place with 1,997 votes, accounting for 22.98% of counted ballots.

• See **Election** on page 16

**Two Friends Granola
launches in the Valley**

**Local friends
transform
homemade recipe
into growing
business**

By Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT
NEWSMEDIA

A homemade holi-
day gift between
friends has grown
into a new Valley busi-
ness built on wholesome
ingredients, creativi-
ty and years of shared
meals.

• See **Granola** on page 17

**Scottsdale resident Dr. Manisha
Javia with her long time friend
and Paradise Valley resident Jodi
Mastro with the granola they cre-
ated. (Photo submitted by Two
Friends Granola)**





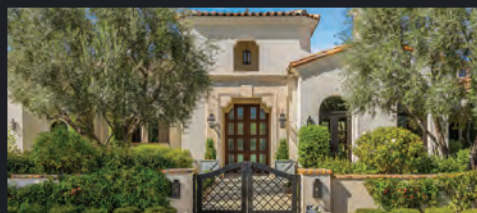
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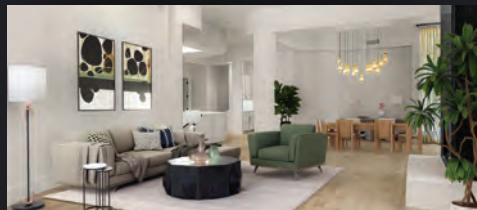
\$13,500,000

8820 E Sands Dr
Scottsdale, AZ 85255



\$4,899,000

8487 N Canta Bello
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253



\$3,995,000

1402 E Coral Cove Dr
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Paradise Valley, AZ 85253



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THE SALESMAN WHO *NEVER* SOLD ME A THING

BY GREG HAGUE

Years ago I bought my Porsches from a salesman named Gary Hopkins. One afternoon Gary called. "Greg, a new one just came in. It's in the back garage, still under the cover. I haven't even put it on the floor yet. Come down before anyone else sees it."

So I went. Of course I went.

There we stood, just Gary and me, and he pulled off that cover like he was unveiling a sculpture. He didn't pitch. He didn't mention financing. He didn't recite a single feature. He stepped back and let me circle the car while I felt something every buyer on earth wants to feel chosen.

I paid full price that day. Happily. Gratefully, even. I actually thanked him for the opportunity.

It took me years to wonder how many other buyers like me Gary had lined up that week, in case the first one said no.

Here's what Gary understood, and what most salespeople don't. The finest salespeople in the world don't appear to be selling. Make no mistake, they're selling. Gary wanted to sell me that Porsche more than I wanted to buy it. He'd simply learned to sell at a higher altitude. He didn't pressure. He positioned. He never asked for the order. I asked him.

I wasn't Gary's customer that day. I was his applicant.

And notice what I didn't do. I didn't negotiate. A buyer who feels privileged never grinds you on price. Nobody haggles over a favor.



If you think this only works one Porsche at a time, consider Hermès, the French luxury house behind the Birkin handbag. A Birkin starts around \$10,000. You won't find one on a shelf. You can't order one online. You can't even walk in and ask for one. Well, you can, but you'll be politely told nothing is available. Customers spend years buying scarves and belts to build a "purchase history," hoping to someday be invited into a private room and offered the chance to buy. In 2024, frustrated shoppers filed a lawsuit in California claiming they'd spent tens of thousands of dollars just to become eligible.

Read that again. People are suing for the right to hand a company \$20,000. Mark Twain saw it coming 150 years ago, when Tom Sawyer stood at that fence and got the neighborhood boys to pay him, in apples and marbles, for the privilege of doing his whitewashing. The surest way to make someone want something is to let them believe they may not get it.

The home selling system I developed is built on three buyer "competition windows," each designed to make every buyer feel like Gary just called them about the car in the back garage. First to see. First with a chance to own. The positioning does the selling. When you have 4½ minutes, watch my competition window video at 72HOUR.com. It's a lesson on how to sell anything without appearing to sell.

Here are a few principles, whatever you sell.

You can have an abundance of product and still make scarcity felt. Supply out of view. Limited buying windows. Qualifications before you can buy. A calendar with one opening.

Educate, don't pitch. Explain your product the way a professor shares something fascinating, not the way a peddler pushes something desperate.

Let buyers feel selected. "Come down before anyone else sees it" is the most powerful sentence in sales, and it contains no selling at all.

And never ask for the order. Build the moment where they ask you.

Never misrepresent a thing. Stay accurate. Stay transparent. It's simply positioning.

The best salesman I ever met never sold me a thing. I sold him on "why me."

Greg Hague

CEO, 72SOLD

ON YOURVALLEY.NET

Arizona budget ends \$30M in workforce, education initiatives

The fiscal year 2027 state budget did not renew more than \$30 million in one-time workforce and education appropriations that were part of the fiscal year 2026 budget.

The reductions impact programs focused on college affordability, dual enrollment, adult education, workforce training and high school graduation success.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/5yf8636r>

Court papers filed in effort to block Arizona school voucher vote

Supporters of universal vouchers for private, parochial and home-schooled children are going to court to stop a public vote to rein in the program.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/4e3urk3n>

Back-to-school costs climb as Arizona families look for ways to save

Between school supplies, clothing, technology, extracurricular fees and transportation costs, preparing students for a new school year can add up quickly.

Financial experts say planning ahead can help families avoid unnecessary debt, while community organizations across Arizona are stepping in with free backpacks, school supplies, health services and other resources.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/3rsc4d62>

Maricopa County Attorney's teen council tackles reckless driving, drugs

By Janet Perez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The beating death of 16-year-old Preston Lord still looms large over municipal and county efforts to not only stem teen violence but also to understand the issues teens face.

This summer, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office provided an update on its Teen Advisory Council's first year.

"When we started seeing more teen violence in our communities, we asked ourselves a question that I think many people skip over — what is actually going through teenagers' heads when they see these acts of violence happening? What are they actually experiencing in their schools and with their friends? These questions are what led me to create the Teen Advisory Council," Maricopa County Attorney Rachel Mitchell said during a press conference when she introduced some



The Teen Advisory Council created by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office has finished its first year. The council is comprised of 27 students from 21 high schools across the county. (Photo courtesy of Maricopa County Attorney's Office)

council members.

The 27 teen members hail from 21 high schools representing nine cities and towns across Maricopa County. After hearing from experts about teen violence, gangs, guns and social media, the teens selected reckless driving

and substance abuse as the topics they would focus on in their first year on the council.

"Reckless driving ... is a misdemeanor, but oftentimes as a prosecutor I see that charge accompanied by

• See **Teens** on page 26

SUPPORT

How Arizona retirees may support foster youth through their IRA

By Michael Brewer
SPECIAL TO THE INDEPENDENT

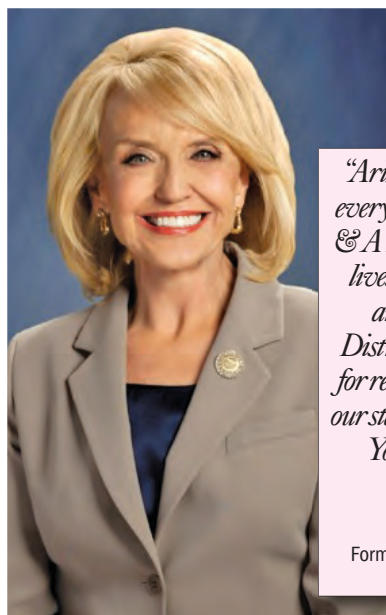
Many Arizona retirees are surprised to learn they can make a lasting difference in the lives of foster children through a simple gift from their Individual Retirement Account.

If you are age 70 1/2 or older, you may be eligible to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution directly from your IRA to a qualified nonprofit. If you are required to take a Required Minimum Distribution, a QCD can count toward satisfying that requirement while potentially reducing your taxable income.

For many retirees, it's one of the most tax-efficient ways to support a cause they care deeply about.

At Hope & A Future, serving Arizona foster youth

• See **Retirees** on page 26



"Arizona's foster children deserve every opportunity to succeed. Hope & A Future has been transforming lives for more than two decades, and a Qualified Charitable Distribution is a meaningful way for retirees to invest in the future of our state's most vulnerable children. Your legacy can become their opportunity."

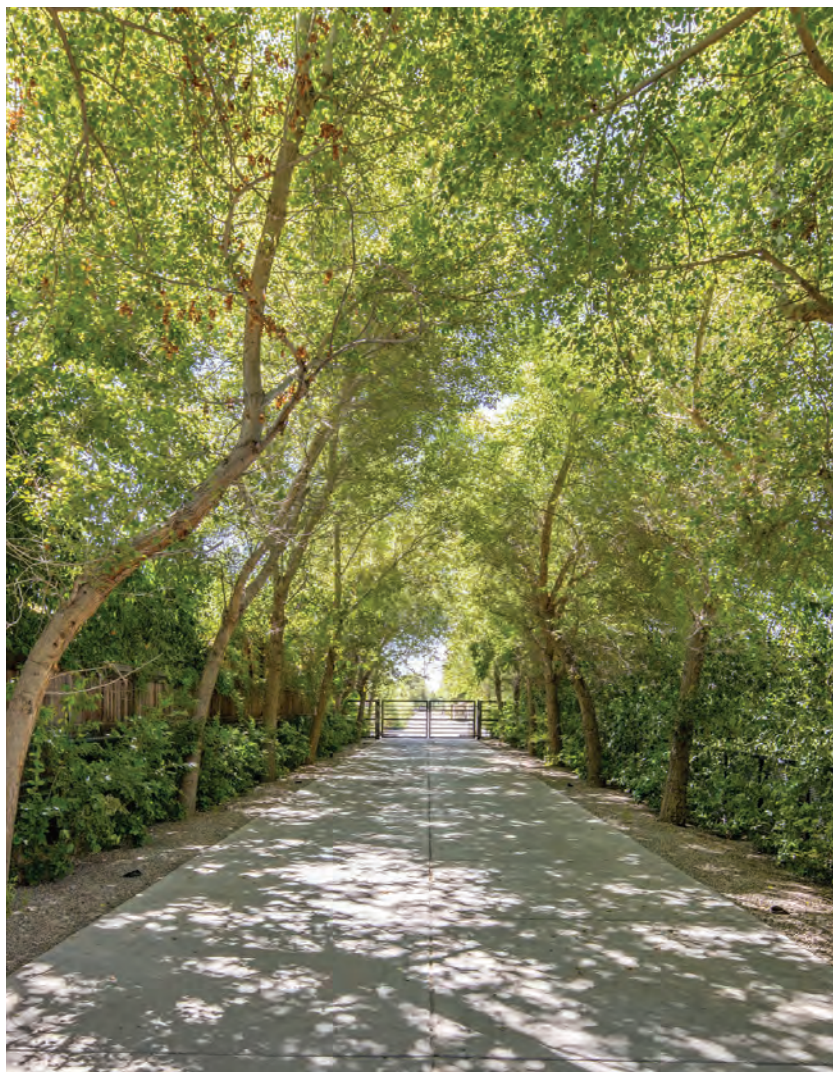
— Jan Brewer

Former governor of Arizona and Hope & A Future governing board member

Jan Brewer (Photo submitted by Michael Brewer)

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Notre Dame Prep will compete on new turf at Bemis Field when football season begins in August. (Photo courtesy George Prelock)

Notre Dame Prep completes installation of new turf field

By Brittany Bowyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A handful of Notre Dame Prep athletes will notice a big change to their playing surface when they return to school this fall.

Thanks to a grant from the Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority, the Saints were able to upgrade their aging turf at Bemis Field to new, state-of-the-art playing surface.

"Notre Dame Preparatory High School was awarded the \$250,000 grant in the fiscal year 2026 grant cycle," a spokesperson for the AZSTA stated in an e-mail. "The request met AZSTA's Youth and Amateur Sports grant criteria and was recommended by the Youth and Amateur Sports committee. The grant was approved by the AZSTA Board in June 2025, along with the other recipients."

NDP is pleased with the upgrade.

"We are grateful for their support in helping us invest in the future of Notre Dame Prep," the school posted on Facebook June 12.

Since beginning in 2001, the AZSTA has awarded nearly \$40 million to fund

more than 700 projects across Maricopa County. According to the AZSTA website, one of the main goals of the grant is "to participate in and encourage partnerships that benefit youth and amateur sports and promote physical activity."

Construction on the field began in May and wrapped up at the end of June. The new playing surface will be used by football, flag football, soccer and lacrosse.

Turf fields generally have a lifespan of about 10 years before needing to be replaced to avoid safety issues.

Saints Head Football Coach George Prelock said the school was due for field renovations, as the turf had been installed about decade ago. He says theoretically, the new turf should help reduce the overall number of injuries.

"Football is a contact sport," Prelock said. "You can't guarantee the fact that kids aren't gonna get hurt or anything, but when it comes down to it, if you're doing everything like keeping up with the fields like we do ... that's what really matters."

Since Notre Dame Prep first got turf installed, the cost of the project has become slightly more affordable for programs.

However, had Notre Dame Prep not received the grant, they would be looking at footing a bill anywhere between \$600,000 to \$1 million for the necessary improvements.

"Anytime you get something new, it's exciting," Prelock said.

The installation of the new turf will help to elevate what's already viewed as one of Arizona's top high school football venues. It also helps attract players to come to Notre Dame Prep to be student-athletes.

"It really is gorgeous," Prelock said about the stadium and the facilities. "We're very blessed."

Last year, the Saints' football program went 6-6, falling to Horizon in the second round of the playoffs. In its second season as an official sport, girls flag football finished the season 3-9. Notre Dame Prep boys soccer also struggled last season, going 3-13-2, but the girls were able to bring home the 5A Championship last season while finishing the year 14-8.

Brittany Bowyer is a Report for America corps member, covering sports for Independent Newsmedia in Arizona.

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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.

The unnecessary hazard of leaf blowers

Thanks to Victor Alexander, who pointed out the social cost of leaf blowers (7/29/26), and to Sarah Snell, who listed a few of their many health hazards (7/8/26).

The preponderance of leaf blowers can probably be attributed to landscape companies, more so than to homeowners demanding blowing. Landscape companies strap a blower on an unskilled worker (or two) on every crew, and that man blows whether it's needed or not. We pay for that blowing — in dollars, in health, and in quality of life. And so does the worker. Can we really justify having our workers suffer such consequences?

Who hasn't seen workers trudging along blowing clouds of dust and not much else?

We must put restrictions on landscape companies to solve over-blowing, or simply ban blowers completely. At least the gas-powered models.

Town council: you've heard us complaining for years. Please take action to minimize this plague.

PV residents: speak up if you're concerned about the impact on your health, the disruption of your peace, and the ethics of exposing other humans to this unnecessary hazard.

Bambi Vincent
PARADISE VALLEY

Finding fun, balance and confidence this August

Here is what I read in a recent blog post. "August is our month of fun, balance and confidence."

"Fun" was described as being happy by seeing the sun as one great, big happy face shining down upon us. "Balance" was added by being the time to plan for the school year ahead.

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.

Then last was "confidence," presented as believing in yourself and valuing your own judgement.

Here is a short comment from a new mom. "One expert gave me information about a schedule. Then another equally prominent and highly respected educator recommended a different one. Next a friend gave me a 'fake' one. What should I do? Ask AI?"

Not so fast. How about making your own educated and "confident" opinion?

As you probably already know, AI is there to help in many excellent ways, but not in all. That is why we still have to be very careful. AI, with all its valuable information, is not one of us and actually operates at a disadvantage. It cannot be "happy" or have any "fun." It cannot enjoy "balance" or display any "confidence." AI is exactly what it says it is, "artificial."

It is great to know that we are "real" and that we have different amazing qualities. If we stop using them for any reason, we will decrease our ability to have them. We can easily smile with the sun, and we should have fun with family and friends, reach for balance and believe in ourselves with confidence.

Interestingly enough, "fun, balance and confidence" are not in any school curricula. That means it is up to us — parents, grandparents and teachers — to model them when we can. Great that we have August to practice for a busy year ahead.

Sally Goldberg
FOUNTAIN HILLS

Cancer can be isolating; Arizona's extreme heat can make it worse

Extreme heat does not just change the weather. It shapes daily decisions that affect care, health and quality of life.

While these changes may seem temporary, prolonged isolation can take a lasting toll. Loneliness and social isolation are associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression and emotional distress. For someone navigating cancer, those feelings can make an already difficult experience feel even heavier.

Cancer treatment addresses the disease, but cancer affects far more than physical health. It affects relationships, routines, confidence, work, caregiving responsibilities and a person's sense of normalcy. Emotional well-being influences how people cope with treatment, communicate with loved ones and hold onto hope during treatment and survivorship.

Showing up for someone facing cancer does not require elaborate plans or perfect words. Consistent acts of care and connection can make a real difference.

A phone call. A text message. An offer to pick up groceries. A ride to treatment. An invitation to come over for a cool indoor visit. Sitting quietly and listening without trying to fix everything. These small acts can become lifelines for someone who may be feeling forgotten.

Communities also have an important role to play. Local organizations, neighbors, employers, faith communities and volunteers can all help create opportunities for connection, especially during seasons when isolation is more common.

Arizona summers will always bring

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REPRESENTED SELLER



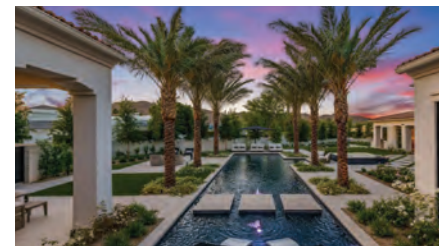
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6650 N HILLSIDE DRIVE
PARADISE VALLEY, 85253 | \$5,999,999
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REAL ESTATE

P.B. Bell celebrates 50 years of business

By J. Graber

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

For a business to last 50 years, it has to do something right.

And Justin Steltenpohl, CEO of Scottsdale-based P.B. Bell apartment management company, thinks he knows what his organization does right.

First is to do the right thing, he said.

“Many banks will tell you during the hard times many guys file for bankruptcy, we didn’t do that,” Steltenpohl said. “We paid our guarantees when we were required to pay our guarantees.”

The second thing is to treat people well.

“We take care of our people, meaning our employees, we take care of our vendors,” Steltenpohl said. “And by ‘take care,’ I mean we just treat them well; we treat them with respect. My employees do not feel like a number.”

On the glassdoor.com website, employees have rated working at P.B. Bell just shy of four out five stars.

And that translates to success in the company’s operations. A company doesn’t get five-star Google reviews because Justin Steltenpohl showed up and shook someone’s hand, he said.

“Those people don’t know who Justin is; they don’t care who Justin is,” he said. “It’s because of the way our people act, the way they treat our residents and treat our vendors and everybody else. That’s what gives us our reputation. And I think our reputation has carried us through some difficult times. When you think about it, over 50 years we’ve gone through all of the crises, if you will.”

P.B. Bell survived the savings and loan scandal of the late ‘80s and early ‘90s. It weathered the storm during



Justin Steltenpohl, CEO of P.B. Bell apartment management company, figures the secret to the company’s success over the last 50 years is doing the right thing and treating people well. (Courtesy P.B. Bell)

the great recession of 2008, and it’s thriving during the current financial environment.

But when Steltenpohl talks about crises and hard times, at least from a business standpoint, he doesn’t mean the COVID years.

“Emotionally, it was awful,” Steltenpohl said, but people didn’t move out of the Phoenix area because of COVID. If anything, more people came, he said.

Phil Bell started out as a CPA for a home building company and through a circuitous route, became owner of his own company.

He founded P.B. Bell in May 1976, and bought the company’s first apartment complex — the Greens

Apartments, in Phoenix — in 1980.

Phil Bell’s son Chapin Bell remembers the old days.

“As a kid I remember when a monsoon would happen in the middle of the night,” Chapin Bell said. “My dad would come wake me up in the middle of the night and we would drive to one of the buildings he owned, climb on the roof and start sweeping the rain off the roof and that type of thing.”

And when the company grew, it started offering third party apartment property management services and then got into the construction contract business before ultimately selling off its shares in that part of the company.

Providing homes always provided joy for Phil Bell, his son said.

“It really did,” Chapin Bell said. “His philosophy was we want to provide clean, safe, unique places for people to live ... It’s very important for him, and it’s part of our DNA, the apartments we own and manage are quality places for people to call home.”

Chapin Bell took over as CEO in 2019, before the title passed to Steltenpohl.

During the past half-century, the team has developed or acquired over 11,500 units and managed over 60,000 units throughout Arizona. It has employed thousands of people, won awards and supported local charities like the Arizona Multihousing Charitable Foundation.

It currently manages around 6,000 apartments around the state.

“As a company, I think our sweet spot is two- and three-story, garden style, wonderful, apartments in suburban locations,” Steltenpohl said. “We do that probably better than anybody. I think our strength is our management ... You have some companies out there might not have the people with the knowledge they need in a time like this. Whereas, our average tenure is almost seven years for an employee, and that’s probably close to double the average in this industry.”

“Part of that goes back to taking care of our people. That allows us to have more experience, understand more, grow more,” he continued. “In times like this, those are the folks you need managing your property.”

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FROM THE COVER

Election

• From page 1

Daran Wastchak ended with the lowest vote total, equaling 1,682 votes, accounting for 19.35% of the counted ballots.

Bill Nassikas wrote in an emailed statement he is grateful for the confidence Paradise Valley residents have placed with him by electing him to the town council.

“As a newly-elected town council member, I look forward to contributing to the preservation of the quality of life I’ve come to enjoy since moving to town some 20 plus years ago,” Nassikas wrote. “My door is always open to those who may have thoughts or suggestions to keep our town a great place to reside.”

Bob Brown thanked his family, volunteers and supporters who took time and energy to help him in his



Residents leaving Paradise Valley Town Hall after voting. (Independent Newsmedia/Allison Kotzbauer)

campaign, in an emailed statement.

Brown also looks forward to listening and working collaboratively to address challenges and opportunities Paradise Valley is facing and said he feels honored to be able to do so, he wrote.

“I am truly honored and grateful for the trust the residents of Paradise

Valley have placed in me by electing me to serve on our town council,” Brown stated. “I am excited to begin serving the people of Paradise Valley and getting to work on your behalf.”

Wastchak said in an emailed statement he enjoyed meeting with residents throughout his campaign and believes the people of Paradise Val-

ley make it the best town in Arizona. Wastchak also congratulated the three winners of the election and he looks forward to serving the town in other ways in the future.

“I’m grateful beyond words for all the people that supported my campaign for town council and cast their vote for me,” he wrote.

Council Member Thomasson said in an emailed statement she is excited to continue working for the residents of Paradise Valley and is looking forward to collaborating with her fellow candidates in the future.

Incumbent Mayor Mark Stanton sought another term after being elected mayor in 2024 following three terms on the town council. Stanton ran unopposed and garnered 3,165 votes.

Allison Kotzbauer can be reached at akotzbauer@iniusa.org. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org.

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FROM THE COVER

Granola

• From page 1

Paradise Valley resident Jodi Mastro and Scottsdale resident Dr. Manisha Javia recently launched Two Friends Granola after years of bonding over cooking, entertaining and gathering with family and friends.

The company offers three granola flavors along with recipes designed to encourage people to slow down, share good food and connect with one another.

Javia has been making her granola recipe for more than 20 years, about as long as she and Mastro have been friends. The two met when their children were in the same preschool class, and Mastro has encouraged Javia to turn the recipe into a business ever since.

“Jodi has always been my cheerleader,” Javia said. “She’s always been like ‘You need to sell this.’”

For now, Javia and Mastro are keeping the business small, selling online and through pop-up events, including at Nordstrom. As they introduce the granola to new customers, they said they have met people from across the country who are drawn not only to the flavor but also to its simple ingredient list.

“A lot of times we’ll see people turn it over to look at the ingredients and then they’re surprised,” Mastro said.

Javia, who develops the recipes, said each flavor contains just seven or eight ingredients, a philosophy that grew out of her desire to make healthy, delicious food for her family when her children were young.

She said the recipes are intentionally balanced with both sweet and salty flavors rather than being overly sweet like many granolas on the mar-



Two Friends Granola offers three granola flavors with simple ingredients meant to perfectly balance sweet and salty flavors. (Photo submitted by Two Friends Granola)

ket.

After becoming empty nesters and finding themselves with more free time, Javia and Mastro decided it was the right opportunity to build a business around recipes their families had enjoyed for years.

I’ve always kept myself busy. Busy with my work, and with my kids, and then when I became an empty nester I had two and a half extra days out of the week, not including my weekends, to stay busy, and so I just couldn’t seem to find another hobby,” Javia said. “I think it was around the holidays, and Jody was like, ‘Oh, you got to really sell it,’ and it was just, like, ding. You know what? If we’re gonna do this, let’s do it now. This is the time.”

Allison Kotzbauer can be reached at akotzbauer@iniusa.org. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to A2Opinions@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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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.

ARTS

Phoenix Children's Chorus opens auditions for 2026-27 season

Registration open for placement sessions, choir enrollment

Phoenix Children's Chorus is inviting young singers from across the Valley to join its 2026-27 season.

The opportunity offers a range of choir opportunities for children of all abilities, experience levels, and interests. From neighborhood-based choirs and an adaptive choir for children with disabilities to its Signature Program, the organization provides multiple pathways for students to experience the benefits of music education and performance.

Designed to meet the needs of a diverse range of students and families, Phoenix Children's Chorus offers several participation options throughout the Valley. Programs include Neighborhood Choirs in North Phoenix and the Northwest Valley, the Adaptive Choir for children with disabilities, and the organization's Signature Program in Central Phoenix, which provides comprehensive choral training, performance opportunities, and national and international tours.



Youth from across the Valley take part in the various Phoenix Children's Chorus programs. (Photo provided by Phoenix Children's Chorus)

During the 2026-27 season, Phoenix Children's Chorus will present eight public performances and participate in community appearances throughout the Valley. Students in the Signature Program will also have

opportunities to travel, with tours planned to England in June of 2027.

No audition is required to join the Neighborhood Choirs or Adaptive Choir, making it easy for children of all experience levels to participate.

Students interested in the Signature Program are invited to attend a placement session, designed to help identify the choir that best matches their age, experience, and musical goals.

Sign up at phoenixchildrenschorus.org/signature.

Rehearsals for the Neighborhood Choirs and Adaptive Choir begin Aug. 26. Placement sessions for the Signature Program will take place July 25, Aug. 1, and Aug. 8, and can be scheduled by visiting phoenixchildrenschorus.org or by calling 602-534-3788.

The season begins with the annual Choir Retreat in Williams, where singers enjoy a weekend of music-making, outdoor adventures, team-building activities, and opportunities to connect with fellow choir members. For many students, the experience marks the beginning of friendships that last for years.

Families interested in learning more about choir options, scheduling a placement session, or registering for the 2026-27 season may visit phoenixchildrenschorus.org/join or call 602-534-3788.

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NEIGHBORS

Paradise Valley resident tees off at prestigious national golf tournament

Chaparral girls golf team earns national tournament experience, wins sandhill shootout

The Chaparral High School girls golf team represented Arizona at the PGA 2026 Girls High School Golf National Invitational, held July 11-13 at Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina after winning the Arizona state championship in October.

The team of Yuer Li, Sonia Hu, Phoebe Brethower, Mila Hu and Paradise Valley resident Lillian Broderick

ick competed against top high school programs from across the country. The team was coached by Tammie Brethower.

While California's Santa Margarita Catholic High School claimed the overall national championship at 20-under-par, Chaparral finished the tournament by winning the 2026 Sandhills Shootout on the final day.

The national invitational marked the team's first appearance at the event. With the fall high school golf season approaching, the Firebirds are preparing for another run at a state title and hope to qualify for a return trip to Pinehurst next summer.



Sonia Hu, Lillian Broderick, Yuer Li, Mila Hu and Phoebe Brethower at the PGA 2026 Girls High School Golf National Invitational, held July 11-13 at Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina. (photo submitted by Linda M. Gomez)



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 Surprise • January 19, 2027 • The Colonnade
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 Chandler • February 23, 2027 • Sun Lakes Country Club
 Peoria • March 25, 2027 • Westbrook Village
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 Sun City • May 3, 2027 • Sundial Recreation Center

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Chaparral High School's Criminal Justice Career and Technical Education program has been selected for a mentorship program by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office. (Courtesy Scottsdale Unified School District)

Maricopa County Attorney's Office selects SUSD's Chaparral High for mentorship program

Chaparral High School was selected by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office as an exclusive partner school for its high school mentorship program.

Each school year, the Maricopa County Attorney's Office selects two high schools across the region to participate in this partnership. Chaparral secured the spot following a competitive selection process that included faculty interviews and an on-site showcase walk through of the school's classroom environment, according to a press release.

Through this collaboration, prac-

ticing legal professionals will visit Chaparral classrooms monthly. Students will receive direct mentorship from prosecutors, investigators and victim advocates who will share their personal career journeys, break down complex, professional experiences, and discuss real-world, high-profile cases.

The program features career experiences, opportunities to shadow prosecuting attorneys and judges and a chance to spend time learning face-to-face from a sitting Superior Court judge on the bench.

OPINION

Opinion

• From page 8

intense heat, but they do not have to bring greater isolation.

Free support groups, educational programs, wellness classes and other resources are available in Arizona and across the country to help people facing cancer and their loved ones find connection, practical guidance and support throughout treatment and survivorship.

By recognizing that emotional health is part of cancer care, we can

help ensure that every person impacted by cancer has access to compassion, connection and a community that walks beside them through every season.

Because while cancer can feel isolating, no one should have to face it alone.

Kristen Genovese is chief executive officer of Cancer Support Community Arizona. This opinion was edited for length and can be read in full online at <https://tinyurl.com/yxbwudz2u>.

Kristen Genovese
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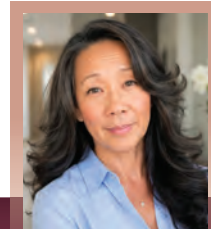
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Teens

• From page 4

much more serious felony charges like endangerment or fleeing law enforcement," Mitchell said. "We learned from our teens that they and their peers don't know what to do even if the police just pull them over or if they get into a crash."

The council created a pamphlet providing information on what to do during a traffic stop or following an accident. The teens also created a public service announcement.

"Because I am a new driver, this has shown me how much responsibility comes with being behind the wheel," council member Evie Thiebaut said. "I think most teens see driving as freedom, however it is also about making smart decisions and knowing your decisions can affect the community around you."

On the issue of substance abuse, the teens created a flyer focusing on overdoses.

"It's a real answer to a real question that teens are asking — what do I do if my friend overdoses? It's a moment where we would all be tempted to panic," Mitchell said. "Even though naloxone is more accessible than ever, it doesn't do any good if you don't know how to use it. With the right information, anyone can save a life."

Retirees

• From page 4

since 2004, these gifts help provide life-changing programs for Arizona foster youth, including mentoring, summer camps, life skills training, scholarships, transitional housing, and caring adult relationships that continue long after child leaves foster care.

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With police across the Valley concerned about how social media attracts hundreds of teens to gatherings that can turn violent, Tebow said she has found herself in such settings.

"I have been in situations where I have seen fights happen," Thiebaut said. "I have not seen it recently, think that it definitely has gotten better over the past few months. Police have been doing a really good job monitoring social media. But in those cases, it's best to just get out of where you are and just find (a safe place)."

Queen Creek became a flash point for incidents of teen violence in the Valley when Lord was assaulted at a house party on Oct. 28, 2023. Lord died of his injuries two days later.

Seven young men from Gilbert were arrested and charged in 2024 with Lord's death. One has pleaded guilty to manslaughter and the remaining six are awaiting trial.

Last year, Gov. Katie Hobbs signed "Preston's Law," which allows for more serious charges to be filed against those who take part in a group attack.

Teens interested in applying for a spot on the 2026-2027 teen council can find more information on MCAO's website, <https://tinyurl.com/mrzyv3r4>.

Janet Perez can be reached at jperez@iniusa.org.

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