



Clubs

Inside Sun City's
Sew N Sew
Club: 6



INDEPENDENT

Community

Sun City club
supports
community: 14



August 5, 2026 Volume 66 Issue 31 Your Nonpartisan Community Newspaper • YourValley.net

Fire and Medical expenses under budget

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Sun City Fire and Medical Department presented both June and fiscal year 2026 stats at its monthly meeting July 28.

June's total revenue was \$794,211, which was under budget by \$1,572,350. However, the non-tax levy was over budget by \$332,267 for a total of \$794,211.

"A couple things driving that," said finance director Gabe Buldra. "Predominantly grant revenue this month. Fire prevention and our non-transport medical fees also help contribute to that variance."

Total expenses for the month sat at \$1,939,581, under budget by \$32,454.

In the year, the depart-

• See **Fire** on page 5

Riding into retirement: How e-bikes are changing the game in Sun City



Warren Smock, Sandy Gettle, Lorena Lewis and Eric Lewis. (Submitted Photo/Warren Smock)

By Zev Black and Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

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

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

Sun City resident and Sun City Cycling Club Chairman Warren Smock is one of those individuals. To go along with his traditional bike, he rides a specialized e-bike.

He said he got the e-bike around three years ago and rides it 50% of the time because of ankle issues. However, he enjoys his regular bike more.

"They both have their place," Smock said. "You don't

• See **Bikes** on page 16



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SENIORS

Seniors Helping Seniors opens to show continued care

By Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Seniors Helping Seniors Sun City is open and serving individuals and hoping to be a good fit for someone in the community or their families.

President and owner Julie Vasquez is already working with individuals in Sun City, Sun City West, Peoria, El Mirage and Surprise.

"A couple of things inspired me personally including watching my own parents move into a 55 and older community and really wanted friendship with people they could relate to," said Vasquez.

Also, watching her mother-in-law visit from Colombia at 86-years-old and was accompanied by her daughter-in-law and never left her side. This provided her a look into what

could possible for other seniors in similar situations, with a little extra assistance.

There is no physical office for this business, as Vasquez said they operate wherever individuals need them such as in the home or independent living facility.

"I was drawn to the business model of Seniors Helping Seniors, especially in Sun City. It is a community filled with volunteers and neighbors helping neighbors. When I was looking into starting a business this seemed like a good fit," said Vasquez.

Vasquez's background includes understanding customer needs and how to meet those and understand challenges. Rather than sitting around conference tables, Vasquez said she is not sitting around board room ta-



Seniors Helping Seniors Sun City Owner Julie Vasquez. (Submitted photo/Julie Vasquez)

bles any more helping meet customer needs, instead she is at kitchen tables helping individuals build their medical plans.

Individuals whose needs are increasing and life is getting more diffi-

cult can seek the assistance of Seniors Helping Seniors.

"Many folks have us come out for a few hours a week to meet initial needs, such as keeping things clean or meal planning," said Vasquez.

Transporting individuals to appointments and personal care assistance are also services offered.

Vasquez said there is a growing need in the community as people evolve and want to remain in their home, while having the assistance needed to make it possible.

Call 480-480-5815 or visit suncityshs.com.

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

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Board clerk Phil La Barbera, board chairman Tim Wilmes and board member Charles Vickers. (Independent Newsmedia/Zev Black)

Fire

• From page 1

ment's total revenue for the year was at \$22,183,760. This is over budget by \$549,931.

The total tax levy is at \$16,296,190 which is under budget by \$694,524. According to Buldra, the county has not sent in tax money yet.

"I anticipate we'll make that up once we get June posting," he said.

Total expenses were also under budget

by \$818,346, for a total of \$18,926,439.

According to chief Rob Schmitz, there were 1,022 total incidents in June, 17 of which were related to a fire. There were 882 rescue and emergency medical service calls to go along with 28 false alarms.

The average response time was five minutes and 42 seconds while the average on scene time was 24 minutes and 20 seconds.

The department also continued to receive more aid from neighboring departments than given. It sent out 156 calls and

only got 130 calls for aid.

Lockbox appointments are booked through the end of August.

The next board meeting will take place 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 25, at the Administrative Offices, 18602 N. 99th Ave.

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

Banner Olive Branch Senior Center offers meals, pantry service

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

Menu

- Wednesday, Aug. 5 – Chef salad with ham and cheese, shredded carrots, tomato, hard boiled egg, no-salt crackers, croutons, honey mustard dressing and mixed fruit.
- Thursday, Aug. 6 – Beef cabbage rolls, Italian mix vegetables, peas, roll and pineapple chunks.
- Friday, Aug. 7 – Baked salmon, wild rice blend, roasted brussel sprouts, Scandinavian mix vegetables and apple sauce.
- Monday, Aug. 10 – Egg bake casserole made with gouda and cheddar cheese, peppers, onions and spinach with roasted potatoes, a biscuit and banana.
- Tuesday, Aug. 11 – Pork chop with peaches, green beans, peas, carrots, brown rice pilaf and apple slices.

CLUBS

19,000 teddy bears and counting: Inside the Sun City Sew N Sew Club



Sew N Sew Club president Ronn Enzweiler and club member Jackie Reyes. (Independent Newsmedia/ Zev Black)

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

There is nothing so-so about the Sun City Sew N Sew Club. Started around 40 years ago, its members create unique items mostly to donate to various charities in the Valley or, in one case, worldwide.

Within the group, its 120 members are a part of six different special interest groups. The groups are boutiques, Luke Air Force Base, veterans and shelter, dolls, embroidery and humanitarian.

Ronn Enzweiler, president of the

club and a retired nurse, is in the humanitarian SIG. He pioneered the Blankets for Ukraine program.

When the Russian invasion of Ukraine began in 2022, all Enzweiler could think about was the neonatal ICUs in Ukraine.

“War is going on all over the place,” he said. “What about those little ones in those incubators and the preemies and that?”

He thought making blankets for the children was a good idea so he started putting out phone calls. How-

• See **Sew** on page 8

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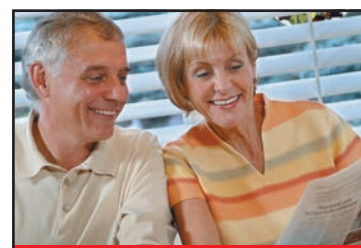


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Sew

• From page 6

ever, he said none of the major groups like Salvation Army wanted to participate because they required donations of this kind to be brand new, not handmade.

He then got in contact with a Ukrainian dentist living in the Valley who said she could help. He added that she told him nobody did anything like what the Sew N Sew Club was hoping to do.

That being said, they made it work.

Over two years the club sent more than 600 blankets to Ukrainian children in ICUs.

The program came to an end this past January after, according to Enzweiler, United States government officials had a public tiff with Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy.

"We just kind of refocused our efforts to more local here," Enzweiler said. "That's not bad either."

He did add that if they were able to start it up again, the club would be on it like "white on rice."

He said this meant a lot to him because his mother's parents came from eastern Europe around 1900.

"I remember my mother's parents," Enzweiler said. "When this started with the Ukraine, I saw my grandparents. And it was the babies."

Another major program the club has is its teddy bear donations.

According to Enzweiler, the group has made 19,000 teddy bears in over 11 years. And almost all of the fabric used was donated to the club.

"We use what comes in," Enzweiler said. "More than likely what comes to us for the bears is a pattern that is not appropriate for other

kids."

These bears are donated to children throughout the state.

Member Jackie Reyes, who has been a key member in making the bears, joined the club two years ago with zero sewing experience. She said she joined because she wanted to learn how to sew and to help with something charitable.

"It's nice to be doing something to donate," she said. "I know that some little kid is going to get a bear. Maybe he's homeless. Maybe he's been abused. You never know. I know that's going to bring them some joy."

She added it's important to her because "it just is."

"I care about people," she said. "I just feel like I'm doing something positive... This is very gratifying."

The club also creates a unique quilt for veterans. Each vet gets their own quilt because the club

wants it to be special for them.

"We want that veteran to know when they're receiving this quilt that it is for them," Enzweiler said. "We don't want to rush it through. Sometimes they have stories to tell. Sometimes they don't."

In addition to all that, the members make water bottle holders, bowl cozies for the microwave, placemats, potholders, kitchen towels and dog clothes, among other items.

If a member wants to make something for a family member or a friend, they are allowed to use the room but should make a small donation to the club.

"You're using our arm machine," Enzweiler said. "You're using our thread. It's your fabric. It's your idea. But you're using our equipment so give us a little something."

To learn more about the Sun City Sew N Sew Club, go to sewnsew.info.



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SUPPORT

Doing Grief returns to senior center with programs for healing, hope, connection

After a brief July hiatus, Doing Grief Community Healing Project returns to Banner Olive Branch Senior Center this August with a new season of programs inviting participants to find healing through story, creativity, spiritual enrichment and compassionate community.

Doing Grief welcomes everyone — not only those grieving a recent death, but anyone seeking greater resilience, belonging, hope and healing.

“Grief accompanies every meaningful loss throughout our lives,” says Shea Darian, founder of Doing Grief Community Healing Project. “We grieve broken relationships, illness, aging, disability, loneliness, changing identities, lost dreams, and the increasing losses that naturally come with growing older. Healing isn’t something we do once—it is the journey of a lifetime.”

Darian believes that healing happens through compassionate connection, creativity and community.

“We all suffer. We all experience loss. And we all need places where we can belong, be deeply heard, and rediscover hope,” Darian says. “Through intimate listening circles, the creative arts, spiritual enrichment, and compassionate community, we help people become their own best healer—and support one another along the way.”

August offerings include:

• **Resilience Story Circle:** “An Oasis in the Desert” Thursday, Aug. 6 | Noon–1:30 p.m. Participants share brief stories of the people or experiences that helped them through difficult seasons, discovering strength and resilience to carry on. Facilitated by Darian,

an, spiritual care provider and healing companion.

• **Healing Circle Orientation** Thursday, Aug. 6 | 1:45–2:45 p.m. Learn about Doing Grief’s confidential five-session Healing Circle small groups beginning later in August. Facilitated by Darian.

• **Sound Healing to Reduce Stress & Soothe Your Spirit** Tuesday, Aug. 11 | Noon–1 p.m. Experience deep relaxation through crystal singing bowls, ocean drum, and gentle flute. Facilitated by Linda Schlicher, sound healing practitioner.

• **Writing as a Healing Path (new)** Thursday, Aug. 27 | Noon–2 p.m. Explore creative writing as a tool for healing through guided exercises in prose, poetry or memoir. No experience is necessary. Facilitated by Darian.

In addition to community programs, Doing Grief offers Healing Circle small groups and one-to-one or family grief support by appointment.

All programs are in the second-floor movie room at Banner Olive Branch Senior Center, 13049 N. 103rd Ave. Suggested donation for most programs is \$5–\$10, though all are welcome regardless of ability to donate.

To RSVP, call Banner Olive Branch Senior Center at 623-465-6000 or email Connect@DoingGrief.org. Walk-ins are welcome as space permits.

Doing Grief Community Healing Project is an Arizona 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to helping people navigate grief and life’s many losses through education, support groups, creative arts, spiritual care, and community connection.



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OPINION

LETTERS

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Agrees RCSC should add guest passes as an option

I support Jennifer Anderson's suggestion to offer an annual Recreation Centers of Sun City guest pass, particularly for residents who live alone.

As a solo homeowner, I have several friends who visit throughout the year. I enjoy sharing the Sun City experience with them, and access to the recreation centers is an important part of that experience. This option could also benefit two-person households that regularly host visitors and should be available to them, too.

Although multi-person households technically receive greater value while paying the same fee as single-person households, I recognize that an annual guest pass could create additional costs for RCSC.

I suggest keeping the current fee-based punch-card option for residents who prefer it while adding an annual guest pass for those who request one. The annual "optional" guest card fee should fully cover the cost of producing the card, integrating it into existing software, and any related administrative expenses. Since the punch-card system is currently managed via software, estimating these costs should be relatively easy.

Even if the annual fee were as much as \$100, it would still be a worthwhile investment for residents who frequently host friends or family. Allowing visitors to fully experience our recreation centers could also help persuade some of them to make Sun City their home.

Bob Hoffman
SUN CITY

APS should pursue nominal rate hikes, not 14%

In response to Mel Meter's editorial comments supporting the proposed 14% rate increase in one year by for-profit monopoly, APS, I offer my comments and observations.

Meter suggests that the proposed massive increase is warranted due to operational and capital costs. I disagree! These costs have been well known for years and in some cases decades.

Given the long life of most capital assets, replacement can and should be funded with nominal increases in rates over time to capitalize a "sinking fund" reserved specifically for future spending on asset replacement.

A request for a 14% increase in rates demonstrates either corporate greed or extremely poor planning on the part of APS management; maybe both? In any case, rate-payers should not be required to shoulder such a massive increase in a single year.

In a competitive market, APS would not be able to do this as their customer base would decrease immediately. Perhaps the best thing that the Arizona Corporation Commission can do to protect consumers that have the bad fortune to be in the APS service area is to limit profitability to no more than

2% to 3% annually, including funding for future expenses in a sinking fund or something similar. This profitability would be guaranteed as there is no competition for the product and future expenses can be reasonably estimated and planned in advance.

Monopolies are permitted in the USA by very few exceptions, utility companies being one such exception. As such profits should be limited to a minimum.

One final thought for Meter since he believes that this increase in rates is reasonable and warranted. I suggest that he begin sending an additional 14% more than his monthly bill to APS immediately as a gift. I am sure it would be gratefully accepted.

Tom Slade
SUN CITY

Why is Abe Hamadeh defending the Tate brothers?

U.S. Rep. Abe Hamadeh of Congressional District 8 has chosen an unusual cause: defending Andrew and Tristan Tate, dual United States-United Kingdom citizens who face 59 criminal charges in the U.K., including rape, sex trafficking, assault and offenses involving indecent images of children.

British authorities are seeking their extradition from the United States to the U.K. to stand trial there.

The Tate brothers deny all charges. They are entitled to due process. So are the alleged victims.

Instead, Congressman Hamadeh has publicly argued that the Tate brothers should not be extradited, portraying the prosecution as po-

• See **Letters** on page 16

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/ 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.



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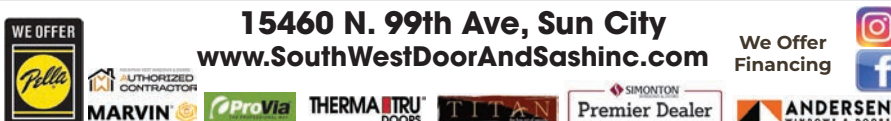


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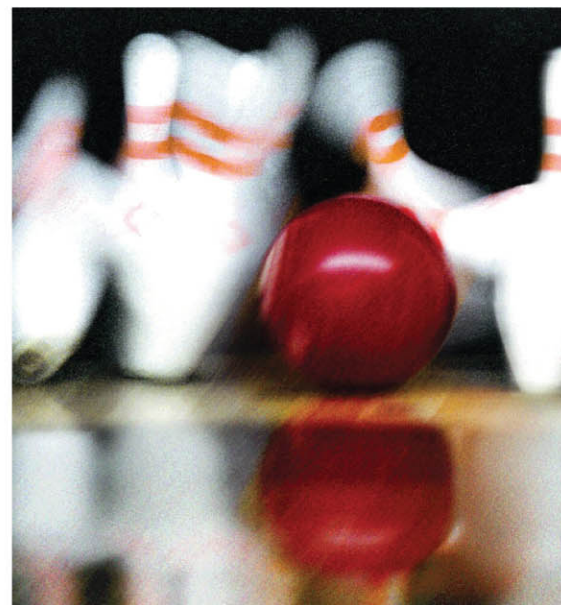


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SUN CITIES RELAY FOR LIFE SLATES BOWLING BENEFIT

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



SUN CITY RESIDENTS DONATE FOR VETERANS

Marine veteran Roy Parker and his wife Chris donated 265 crocheted caps, three crocheted shawls and two crocheted lap robes to Sun City's National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Agua Fria chapter, to be given to Arizona veterans. The caps, along with other items, will be donated to the Prescott veterans administration center, which supplies a rehab center, a hospital and a nursing home with donated items from different organizations and individuals. Chapter members donated skeins of yarn to help continue their hobby. Visit aguafria.arizonadar.org for more information. (Submitted photo/Shirley Staggs)



KNIGHTS COUNCIL INSTALLS NEW OFFICERS

Outside Guard Denny Wenzinger, Trustee Dick Eisenmunger, Financial Secretary John Gambino, Chaplain, Pastor Fr. Rey Clutario, Grand Knight Marty Carrara, Inside Guard Stan Friedman, Warden Jack O'Malley, Installing Official District Deputy Joe D'Andrea, Chancellor Tom Gilbert, Outside Guard Richard Farace, Trustee Denny Deal, Advocate Rudy Grom, Lecturer Jacob Elias and Treasurer Dennis Dionne took part in the installation of new officers for the Knights of Columbus June 27. Deputy Grand Knight Jay Nimens, Recorder Dan Brown and Trustee Ken Oliphant were not pictured. The Knights annually hold numerous community fundraisers and events, which help support various charitable organizations within Sun City West and the local area. St. Nicholas Council 17893 is already planning to hold the Fifth Annual Charity Golf Outing at the Sun City West Deer Valley golf course in April 2027. Proceeds from this charity event benefit many local nonprofit organizations in the Sun Cities area. (Submitted photo/Knights of Columbus)

SUN CITY ELKS PARTICIPATE IN PATRIOT TOUR

Several members of the Sun City Elks Lodge #2559 Riders took part in the Patriot Tour 2026. Linda Acritelli, one of these members, had the privilege of serving as the flag bearer on the route from Albuquerque to Gallup, NM. At every stop, a biography of a member of our armed forces is read, helping highlight why this ride is important. The biography of the World War II veteran for this stop revealed that he sacrificed his life to protect his comrades by shielding them from a hand grenade explosion. He hailed from Albuquerque and was only 21 at the time of his heroic act. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. The Patriot Tour is a 120-day, 15,000-mile motorcycle journey across the country, during which a single American flag is carried through all 50 states to raise funds and awareness for disabled veterans. Organized by the Nation of Patriots, this annual event brings together riders to offer financial assistance to military families in need. The Nation of Patriots is run by volunteers; all funds raised are used for assistance to our brave military men and women. Pictured are Anthony Caniglia, president of Nation of Patriots, and Acritelli. (Submitted photo/Sun City Elks Lodge #2559)



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- ▶ Why is the return on investment for industry leaders and the rich and famous just 5 years? What's the secret they know that you don't?
- ▶ Why do they get a 6.5% increase in home value but no increase in property taxes?
- ▶ For those who already have solar panels installed, can you explain how certain privileged individuals manage to acquire a \$16,000 Tesla Powerwall 3 for less than two-thirds of its price or pay approximately \$7,000 for Powerwall 3 with new solar installations.

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SUN CITY CLUB SUPPORTS COMMUNITY

The Sun City Step to the Music Club continues to support the Community Assistance Network with quarterly donations of gift cards for those in need. Sue Hetland, president, presented Debbie Campacci, CAN executive director, with a second batch of eight \$25 gift cards to Fry's. Campacci said she appreciated the ongoing donations, especially during the summer months when so many members are out of town, coupled with the continued rising costs of food and fuel. (Submitted photo/Cupid Grays)



BAGS OF BLESSINGS BEGINS AT LOCAL CHURCH

The first Bags of Blessings event occurred July 19, after worship at Desert Garden United Church of Christ. Members of the congregation came together to pack 96 backpacks filled with school supplies for elementary school children whose families are served by Native American Connections. Native American Connections serves individuals and families with affordable housing, health services and community programs. By preparing these school-ready kits, Desert Garden helps ensure children served by Native American Connections begin the new school year with confidence, dignity, and the tools they need to thrive. (Submitted photo/Rose Mohyla)

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.

JULY 10

- A suspicious person was reported at 8 p.m. at the intersection of North 113th Avenue and West Alabama Avenue.
- A theft from a vehicle was reported at 7:31 a.m. in the 13400 block of North Hawthorn Drive.
- A theft from a vehicle was reported at 7:31 a.m. in the 13400 block of North Hawthorn Drive.
- A theft from a vehicle was reported at 11:39 p.m. in the 15400 block of North 99th Avenue.
- A fraud or con game was reported at 10:25 a.m. in the 10700 block of West Boswell Boulevard.
- A vehicle crash with no injuries was reported 9:48 a.m. at the intersection of West Camino Del Sol and North 137th Drive.
- A vehicle crash with injuries with reported at 9:22 a.m. in the 13500 block of West Camino Del Sol.

- A theft from a vehicle was reported at 6:20 a.m. in the 13700 block of North 98th Avenue.

JULY 11

- A vehicle crash with no injuries was reported at 7:48 p.m. in the 14500 block of West Meeker Boulevard.
- Narcotics were reported at 10:01 a.m. in the 10600 block of West Santa Fe Drive.
- Suspicious activity was reported at 7:08 a.m. in the 12300 block of West Country Club Trail.
- An assault was reported at 2:02 a.m. in the 11300 block of West Crestbrook Drive.

JULY 12

- A theft was reported at 4:15 p.m. in the 15000 block of West Yosemite Drive.
- A burglary from a vehicle was reported at 1:11 p.m. in the 1200 block of West Deanne Drive.
- A fraud or con game was reported at 1:18 p.m. in the 10700 block of West Topaz Drive.
- Criminal damage was reported at 11:51 a.m. in the 15400 block of North 99th Avenue.
- An injured person was reported at 10:56 a.m. in the 11600 block of West Hackbarth Drive.
- An assault was reported at 6:12 a.m. in the 136000 block of North Newcastle Drive.
- Narcotics were reported at 1:07 a.m. at the intersection of North 109th Avenue and West

Connecticut Avenue.

JULY 13

- Trespassing was reported at 7:37 p.m. in the 18100 block of West Mission Lane.
- Threats to commit an offense was reported at 7:17 p.m. in the 17900 block of West El Caminito Drive.
- Fraud or a con game were reported 3:22 p.m. in the 14400 block of West Trading Post Drive.
- A vehicle crash with no injuries was reported at 5:22 p.m. at the intersection of North R.H. Johnson Boulevard and North 128th Avenue.
- A burglary from a vehicle was reported at 12:26 p.m. in the 11200 block of North 110th Drive.
- Criminal damage was reported at 11:59 a.m. in the 15400 block of North 99th Avenue.
- A vehicle crash with no injuries was reported at 9:54 a.m. at the intersection of R.H. Johnson Boulevard and North 151st Avenue.
- Criminal damage was reported at 7:23 a.m. at the intersection of North 103rd Avenue and West Santa Fe Drive.
- Shoplifting was reported at 6:57 a.m. in the 1900 0 block of North R.H. Johnson Boulevard.

JULY 14

- Fraud or a con game was reported at 7:57 p.m.

in the 11000 block of West Coggins Drive.

- A vehicle crash with no injuries was reported at 6:05 p.m. at the intersection of North 103rd Avenue and West Oakmont Drive.
- An abandoned vehicle was reported at 1:04 p.m. in the 13800 block of North 107th Drive.

JULY 15

- Fraud or a con game was reported at 4:21 p.m. in the 10100 block of West Ironwood Drive.
- A theft was reported at 2:35 p.m. in the 14500 block of West Granite Valley Drive.
- A fraud or con game was reported at 2:04 p.m. in the 10200 block of West El Dorado Drive.
- Threats to commit an offense were reported at 1:23 p.m. in the 15600 block of North Meadow Park Drive.
- An assault with a deadly weapon was reported at 11:25 a.m. in the 13600 block of North Del Webb Boulevard.
- A vehicle crash with no injuries was reported at 12:48 p.m. at the intersection of North 107th Avenue and West Peoria Avenue.
- A vehicle crash with no injuries was reported at 11 a.m. at the intersection of West Thunderbird Boulevard and West Candlewood Drive.
- Criminal damage was reported at 8:16 a.m. in the 15600 block of West Brown Street.



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Letters

• From page 10

litical persecution. Extradition is not a finding of guilt. It simply allows defendants to answer criminal charges where the alleged crimes occurred.

Congressman Hamadeh has previously supported legislation to restrict dual citizenship, yet he now publicly defends two dual U.S.-U.K. citizens. That inconsistency deserves an explanation.

Whether the Tate brothers are guilty or innocent is for the courts — not politicians — to decide.

The people of Arizona's 8th Congressional District elected Congressman Hamadeh to fight for us, not to spend his time and political capital defending internet celebrities accused of heinous sexual crimes. The Tate brothers have lawyers. We have one congressman.

Abe Hamadeh's choice of priorities raises legitimate questions about whether he is focused on the job Arizonans elected him to do.

Anne Whitmore
SUN CITY WEST

Bikes

• From page 1

work as hard, you don't feel like you get the same workout. Not that you don't get a workout. Some of it's mental."

He added e-bikes are for people who otherwise wouldn't be able to get out and exercise with a normal bike. For him, it was getting to the point where he couldn't keep up with the group.

"I don't want to be holding the whole group back," he said. "In a good group, there are no drop groups so they would stop and wait on me. I didn't want that to happen."

He's also not worried about getting injured while riding it.

"If you've got a cyclist who knows what they're doing, there's no more danger," Smock said. "I think what could possibly be the danger is the speed, but there are bicyclists who ride at the same speed. I don't think for a seasoned adult bicyclist that uses common sense, they're any more dangerous."

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, although 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.

The Cycling Club prohibits the use of e-bikes that do not require pedaling.

In Smock's opinion, this is because an e-bike that doesn't require pedaling is just a motorcycle.

"If you're riding a bike with a throttle and not peddling, you're riding a motorcycle," he said. "You're not riding a bicycle. Our experience overall is people riding the throttles tend to want to just go flat out, flying by. They don't want to ride with the group. They disrupt the group."

He added that it's about respect.

"We're trying to keep ourselves as a bicycle club, not a motorcycle club," Smock said.

To learn more about the Sun City Cycling Club, go to suncitycycling.com.

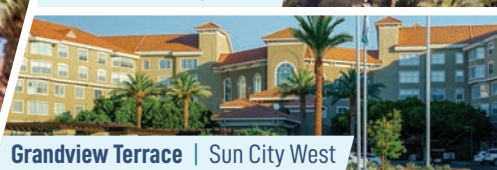


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NEIGHBORS

Know your neighbor: Pat Tonnema

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

How long have you lived in Sun City?

I moved here 10 years ago.

Why did you move out here?

Seeking a new chapter in life and a change from the gray skies of Seattle.

Where did you grow up and what was it like?

My father was a Marine Corps pilot, and I grew up not on a base but in Costa Mesa, California when it had space to roam and play.

What's a childhood memory that has stuck with you?

Family vacations to visit Yosemite, Yellowstone, the Redwood Forest, Mt. Palomar Observatory, and two trips across the country in a station wagon.

What's a favorite memory from adulthood?

Going through the Panama Canal on a 43-foot sailboat, dwarfed by huge container ships in the locks and entering the Pacific Ocean accompanied by hundreds of joyful leaping dolphins.

What's a time in your life when everything changed?

As for most of my age group: The Vietnam War. Also when I moved to Los Angeles and began to work in the film industry.

What brings you joy today?

New perspectives and inspiration from books, films, friends.

Who do you turn to when you need strength?

Not any specific person or source.

What are you most excited about in the future?

Rapid, essential scientific discov-



Pat Tonnema (Submitted Photo/Cheryl Drake)

eries that are not based on profit or greed.

What are you still dreaming about today?

A future of freedom from fear and suffering, for all humans.

Reporter Zev Black can be reached at zblack@iniusa.org. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to A&Opinions@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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DAR

DAR members preserve Revolutionary War roots

By Zev Black
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Revolutionary War may have ended 243 years ago, but its lineage still runs deep through groups like the National Society of the Children of the American Revolution, Sons of the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution.

Lynn Connor has been a DAR member for 63 years and recently transferred her membership to the Agua Fria chapter in Sun City after seeing a piece about the group in the Independent.

"It's been wonderful," she said. "They're great ladies. We work together."

She is related to Capt. John Meeks from New York, finding this out after her father dug through files in a New York library.

She first joined the CAR when she was 10 years old before transferring to DAR. Both her father and brother are in the SAR.

She said she's learned about how grateful she is to live in the United States during her time in the DAR.

"I don't think Americans today appreciate the country," Connor said. "I've been lucky enough to travel around the world twice and so I have seen a lot of different countries."

She added that she doesn't think today's children know about the American Revolution, saying it's important to teach them about how hard it was to become an independent country from England.

Member Shirley Staggs, who has been in the group since 2010, mirrored this idea, saying education is something the DAR promotes.



Daughter of the American Revolution members Shirley Staggs and Lynn Connor. (Independent Newsmedia/Zev Black)

"We promote patriotism," she said. "We promote education. And we promote historic preservation."

Staggs said her dad's side of the family goes back to the pilgrims, adding she has three patriots in her family lineage.

She said the Agua Fria chapter does a great job at cultivating friendships, but that this isn't the same for every chapter.

"Not all chapters are equal," she said. "My chapter back in Illinois, I hardly knew anybody."

Staggs added that when she was regent of the Agua Fria chapter, she told the officers to scatter around the meeting room to be friendly with all the members. For the past few years, she has been a door greeter.

"You get time to talk to everybody," Connor said. "It's a social time as well as a time of doing business at the meetings. And yes, I have made friends."

To learn more about the Agua Fria Chapter, go to aguafria.arizonadar.org.

SUPPORT

'Peanut Butter People' support Justa Center

Every Monday morning at Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church, 13658 W. Meeker Blvd., something special is happening — and it starts with peanut butter, jelly and a whole lot of heart.

Known as “The Peanut Butter People,” more than 40 volunteers gather each week at 8 a.m. to prepare hundreds of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for Justa Center, a Phoenix nonprofit dedicated to serving older adults experiencing homelessness.

Shepherd of the Hills was recently honored to welcome Rudy Soliz, director of operations for Justa Center, who visited to recognize the Sandwich Makers ministry and thank volunteers for their partnership in supporting some of the community's most vulnerable neighbors.

Since opening in 2006, Justa Center has been the only day resource center in the Phoenix area focused exclusively on adults age 55 and older who are experiencing homelessness. The organization provides a safe and welcoming environment where seniors can access critical services such as housing assistance, transportation coordination, benefits support, healthcare referrals, replacement identification and individualized case management.

This summer, the need has grown even greater. Justa Center was recently designated as an official cooling station, providing older adults with a safe, air-conditioned refuge from Arizona's extreme temperatures. As more people seek shelter and support, the demand for meals has risen significantly. The Peanut Butter People didn't hesitate to answer the call. To help meet the increased need, the team of volunteers recently increased its weekly production



Rudy Soliz, director of operations for Justa Center, visited Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church to recognize the Sandwich Makers ministry and thank volunteers for their partnership in supporting some of the community's most vulnerable neighbors. (Submitted photo/Luna Lorenzano)

from 760 sandwiches to 960 sandwiches each week.

During his visit, Soliz shared updates about Justa Center's expanding services and the growing number of seniors turning to the organization for help.

“Hearing directly from Rudy about the impact these sandwiches have on the lives of those Justa Center serves reminds us that even simple acts of kindness can make a lasting difference,” said Pastor Daniel Gomez. “We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our neighbors and support the incredible work being done at Justa Center.”

The Sandwich Makers meet every Monday at Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church. New volunteers are always welcome, and no experience is required.

The ministry is also seeking donations of 30-ounce jars of grape jelly, 48-ounce jars of creamy peanut butter (chunky and organic varieties are difficult to spread), sandwich-size zipper storage bags and snack-size zipper storage bags.

Donations may be brought to the church office 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

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SCORES

GOLF

DT Winners

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1st flight: (Handicaps 5-16)

Ed Lewton-27 Richard VanVulkenburg and Scott Klein (Tied at 28)

Glenn Warrington-29 Michael Anenen and Lance Brown (Tied at 30)

Gary Smith, Jack Johnson, Jim Haaland and John Evans (Tied at 31)

2nd flight: (Handicaps 17-27)

Steve Guthrie and Jim Meier (Tied at 29) Dan Weber-30

Dave Gearhart, Don Giese and Michael Anas-tasio (Tied at 32)

Mike Byers, John Mitchell and Doug Smith (Tied at 33)

Echo Mesa Women's Golf Club

July 21

Low Net

Flt. 1 - 21 - 37 Game

Veda Barganier 48

Carolyn Lopez 53

Stacy Hoenig 55

Janet Eriksson 55

Peggy Stowell 55

Nine Holers

Joanne Honce 24

Kay Grossman 28

DT Winners

At Stardust - July 22

1st flight: (Handicaps 6-18)

Gary Smith (Low Gross) 61 Mike Bashaw-56

Wayne Hendrickson-57

Mike Anenen and Jim O'Neil (Tied at 58) Dave Kuhlman-59

2nd flight: (Handicaps 19-27)

John Vignatti (Low Gross) 76 Jim Jarvis (Low Net) 58

Gary McGrath and Chuck Anderson (Tied at 60)

Ron Stallbaum and John Mollenkamp (Tied at 61)

James Dunn-62 Doug Smith-63

Desert Trails Golf

July 28

Flight 1 Low Gross K. Davis 72 Low Net P. Ferrell 52

Flight 2 Low Gross J.Hollenbeck 77 Low Net S. Light 52

Flight 3 Low Gross C. Wendling 87 Low Net D. Peck 60

Echo Mesa Women's Golf Club

July 28

Better Nine

Flt. 1 Handicap 28-32 Game

Peggy Stowell 24.5

Veda Barganier 25.0

Linda Geyer 25.5

Nine Holers

Joanne Honce 42

GAMES

Tuesday Division Bridge

July 21

1 Marion Hare 5070

2 Rita Hughes 4740

3 Shaaron Riebe 4240

4 Larry Hughes 4020

Small Slam(s): Larry Hughes and Rita Hughes

One Partner Bridge

July 27

1st place - Bill Cooper and Barb Sumner 4,370

2nd place - Marilyn Sage and Richard Cornelius 3,760

3rd place - Hal Norris and Sharron Riebe 3,700

4th place - Larry Hughes and Rita Hughes 3,510

Small Slams Bid & Made

Marilyn Sage and Richard Cornelius

Hal Norris and Sharron Riebe

SCWCBC Tuesday Bridge

July 28

1 Mary Vraney 4560

2 Rosemary Dougherty 4170

3 Pauline Maxwell 3880

4 Dennis Hemmer 3650

Small Slam(s)

Pauline Maxwell and Chris Lee

Sharron Riebe and Dennis Hemmer

Mary Vraney and Bonnie Matraw

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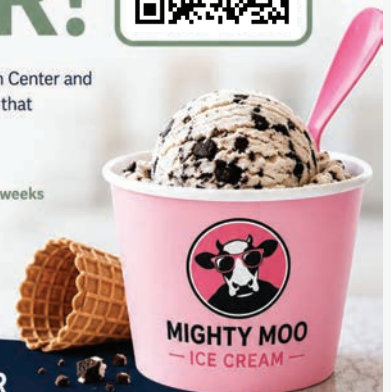
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MUSIC



Winners from the recent West Valley Country Music Association's Members Choice Awards include, clockwise from top left, Ken Wolffer, Lu Anne Camp, Bea Graves and Odie Piker, and Dan McCorison. (Photos provided by West Valley Country Music Association)

Calling all songwriters: West Valley accepting entries

The West Valley Country Music Association's ninth annual songwriters contest is underway.

The competition is designed to encourage and promote local aspiring songwriting talent. Contestants will retain all rights and ownership to their songs.

Entry deadline is Friday, Sept. 25.

All song submissions will be screened using a matrix scoring system by a selected listening group who are music professionals or who have

been music professionals. The top 15 songwriters will be invited to perform their songs at the Association's Songwriters Showcase at the Glendale Library auditorium, 5959 W. Brown St., where three different music professionals will judge for the top three.

The winners will receive cash prizes and more.

Contact Lu Anne Camp at wvcma66@gmail.com or text 623-556-6071 for more information or to request an entry form.

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SCAMS

How residents can protect themselves from scams

By Zev Black and Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Sun City West Foundation officials recently partnered with the Arizona Attorney General's Office to keep residents educated on the latest scams victimizing individuals and ways to protect themselves.

Kevin Brozek, community engagement officer at Arizona Attorney General's Office, said in Arizona online and romance scams are two that hit residents the hardest.

The medium amount of loss in the age groups of 70-79 and 80 and over is between \$1,000-\$2,000 per scam, while those 18 and under report an average loss of \$150 per scam.

"There is more money in our senior communities to be taken advantage of, and that means there is more risk for larger scams," Brozek said.

In 2025, Arizona was the fourth largest in losses in consumer scams with the three largest states on top, including California, Texas and Florida. He said the fact that Arizona is in the top five based on population is alarming, and it continues to increase.

The Arizona Attorney General's Office received 210,000 consumer complaints and more than \$4 million was recovered and returned to residents.

Brozek explained common elements of most scams include the scammer contacting an individual first. This happens by phone, email, text and even pop-up ads or warnings on a computer. He warned residents should be skeptical if someone is contacting the individual first without being contacted first.

"Another big one here in Arizona is the Internal Revenue Service scams," Brozek said. "The IRS will never reach out, other than by mail, but never call

back the number on the mail you receive. Look it up yourself to verify it is actually the IRS."

Beth Lucas, marketing manager for the Sun City Home Owners Association, said the most frustrating part about seniors being scammed is that the perpetrator is taking advantage of them.

"These scammers are taking advantage of people who have faith and trust and making honest deals," she said. "They sometimes try to take advantage of that kind of character that's in our community."

Her biggest piece of advice is there's nothing wrong with questioning somebody.

"Be cautious," Lucas said. "You don't have to answer the door. You don't have to answer the phone... It's not being rude. You have every right to question anyone about anything or check to make sure it's accurate, what they're saying."

Scammers will also heighten the individuals' emotions and cause people to fear the loss of an opportunity. Brozek suggests hanging up and taking time to think. A lot of people hear about investment opportunities, and Brozek said if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Running it by trusted friends and family will also help to avoid scams.

Additionally, scammers often ask for payment over the phone or personal information and Brozek warned individuals to avoid doing that because you never know who you are actually talking to.

Sun Canyon Bank Associate Branch Manager Gloria Petersen said a bank should never call a customer asking for any personal info like accounting numbers or anything like that. The bank

• See **Scams** on page 23

Scams

• From page 22

should have that if they are calling the customer.

"Customers should hang up and call their bank and let them know about the call and verify it was not the bank," Petersen said.

She said bank officials do call customers if there are any questions that the call is legitimate, including security questions that the customers set up to ask.

Petersen said officials try to educate the community about scams, including handouts on how to protect themselves.

She has had non-customers come in to get help with the scammers on the phone and she said they were scared and didn't know what to do and bank officials helped them.

"Do not trust caller ID or answer unexpected calls," Brozek said. "Legitimate businesses will never require personal information on that first initial contact."

Friends and family voice cloning is something scammers can easily duplicate and the person on the other end thinks they are speaking to a grandchild in trouble, but it is just a voice clone. Brozek said hang up and call the person directly or someone who would know whether this person is in danger. Creating a safe word or phrase can help to avoid falling victim to this scam, according to Brozek.

Romance and friendship scams often target seniors and Brozek said it is best to get another set of eyes on the situation that can be trusted. Asking for help, can help decipher if this is real.

In 2025, social media was the top way scammers contacted people for more than a \$2.1 billion dollar loss. Social media can be tracked easily by anyone, and Brozek said the recommendation is to turn off location tracking and if there is a handsome or beautiful person trying to contact you out of nowhere, just block that account or report on social media.

Other popular scams include fake websites, tech support pop-ups and

government and shipping carrier impostors. Looking into these accounts directly, without clicking on the link or message can help people avoid scams.

"Another thing we have noticed here in Arizona is improper insurance companies selling policies out of county," Brozek said. "The companies are legitimate, but could potentially be selling for another state or county and when you purchase it, you will have to go there when an appointment is needed."

Brozek said pausetake9.org offers resources to individuals who feel like they have been scammed or to get more information. Updated software, password changers and restarting devices weekly, can help to avoid fraud.

Passkeys help to set up two-factor authentication and makes it difficult for scammers to intercept that number provided to a phone. Secured websites do not always mean they are legitimate because those can be purchased, so Brozek said go to the site directly.

Now, password phrases are suggested that are usually 16 or more characters with random words, numbers and symbols and unique for each account someone is signing in to. Brozek said changing a password every 30 days can also help.

SCHOA partners with experts like the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department and the Maricopa County Attorney's Office to educate Sun City residents on the best practices when it comes to scans.

Individuals can freeze credit accounts at all three credit bureaus, including Equifax 866-349-5191, Transunion 800-916-8800 or Experian 888-397-3742.

Residents can sign up for the Do Not Call Registry at donnotcall.gov or call blocking at fcc.gov/call-blocking. Fraud can be reported by calling 911, going directly to the banks where the fraud occurred or by calling the Arizona Attorney General's Office 602-542-5763 or by email consumerinfo@azag.gov.

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Gerald "Jerry" P. Wilson

Wilson, Gerald P. "Jerry," 84, of Sun City, AZ, formerly of Benton City, WA, passed away June 13, 2026 following a brief illness. Jerry was born in St Paul, MN, the second of six children

of Walter and Ann Wilson. Jerry retired as a Major in the US Air Force in 1981 and went on to have a successful career as an engineer with Kaiser Engineers Hanford in Richland, WA.

While living in Benton City, Jerry became known as the Sourdough King for his love of making sourdough and sharing it with others. Family reunions in MN always included an Uncle Jerry sourdough pancake brunch. In retirement, Jerry and Jo enjoyed the RV lifestyle for many years, traveling to Bluegrass & Old Time

Music Festivals, where Jerry would participate in jam sessions playing one of his many banjos, and spending summers crabbing on the Washington coast. After settling in Sun City, Jerry and Jo became active in Dance for Fitness and volunteering for the Seattle Mariners during spring training.

Jerry is survived by his wife, Josephine Wilson, his three children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Three brothers and one sister also survive him. Jerry is preceded in death by his parents and one brother.

MUSIC

Professional flutist earns Doctor of Musical Arts degree

Sun City West resident hopes to bring music to the West Valley

By Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

When Dianne Winsor of Sun City West retired, she was not quite finished with her passion for playing the flute.

Recently, she earned the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in flute performance from Arizona State University.

Winsor has committed her life to playing the flute and began playing when she realized her love for the sound of the instrument.

"I thought that the flute sounded like a singing human voice and I wanted to be able to play that instrument," she said.

The instrument requires constant practice and study, and to be a good flute player, Winsor said she has to work at it every day. She encourages her students and colleagues to do the same.

A lifelong professional flutist, Winsor served as principal flute of Spain's Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León from 1991 to 2021, performing internationally and recording for labels including Naxos, Deutsche Grammophon and Decca. She holds a Master's of Music degree from the New England Conservatory in Boston.

Winsor teaches privately at Musical Surprise in Surprise and welcomes flute students of all ages. She is a member of the Arizona Flute Society and will teach at its Summer Flute Workshop in Phoenix in June. She will also perform at the National

Flute Association's annual convention in Portland, Oregon, in August.

Winsor spent three decades as an orchestral performer. She has worked with distinguished international conductors and toured worldwide as principal flute of her orchestra. She said this is a unique and valuable experience and that she can share this special knowledge with her students.

As part of her degree at ASU, she performed three full solo recitals. She hopes to offer more recitals now that her degree has been completed.

Winsor explained that it is extremely difficult to obtain a full-time orchestra position in the United States.

"I auditioned in Europe and won a full-time principal flute position in Spain. That was my job for 30 years, until I retired in 2021," she said.

Winsor says that her experience at ASU was rewarding but unusual.

"Most ASU music students are just beginning their careers, and here I was, an experienced professional returning for an advanced degree after a full orchestral career," she said.

"I truly appreciated the opportunity to update my skills and to interact with the next generation of flutists at ASU."

Winsor retired to Sun City West in 2022. It took her one year to complete the application and audition process for ASU's highly competitive doctoral program.

Now that she has completed her degree, Winsor hopes to perform more with local ensembles, chamber music groups and as a solo recitalist in the Sun City West and West Valley area.

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INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

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Apache Junction • January 6, 2027 • Central Arizona College

Surprise • January 19, 2027 • The Colonnade

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

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