



Neighbors

Resident dedicates
five years as post
commander; 4



SUN CITY WEST

INDEPENDENT

Neighbors

Local church
donates blankets
to Benevilla; 20



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Neighbors help neighbors at community food pantry

Service provided to Sun City
West residents

By Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Sun City West residents have an opportunity every Monday to visit the food pantry located within the walls of the community.

The Sun City West Foundation and Valley Community Food Bank partner to provide food support for seniors.

The Sun City West Food Pantry, 14465 R.H. Johnson Blvd., is open from 9 to 11 a.m. each Monday to seniors living in Sun City West, with proof of residency.

The pantry accepts food donations as well as monetary donations, which provides the ability for pantry volunteers to purchase food items that are needed, but not donated.

Currently, the other need is for volunteers called “runners” to cart the food items out to the vehicles

• See **Pantry** on page 5



Sun City West Posse volunteers Laurie Laws and Carol Miller (Independent Newsmedia/Jennifer Jimenez)

Vacation watch tops out at 1,802 homes during busiest time

Posse volunteers offer many
free services to residents

By Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Earlier this year, Maricopa County Sheriff's Officer Lt. Scott Kellar talked about how tremendous the help of Sun City West Posse volunteers are.

This includes calls or services and supporting the organization.

As part of the service, the posse offers a program called vacation watch, which helps promote safety

in the community.

Posse volunteer Frank Mackaman has been working the program for the past two and one-half years on patrol and as a scheduler.

“We average between 10 and 11 shifts per week during the summer and anywhere from five to seven patrols covering those shifts,” he explained.

Each patrol starts patrolling before 6 a.m. and right now there are about 1,670 homes on vacation watch, which is down from three

weeks ago. The highest number for the summer was 1,802 homes.

Mackaman said that is about 150 fewer homes than in 2025. That year the high was 2,005 homes.

There are also short term vacation watch applications, which fluctuate each month, and those do not show up in the numbers at the end of the month.

Fewer than 20% of the applications are for short term time frames. In the summer months, Mackaman

• See **Watch** on page 5



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SUN CITY WEST STITCHERS CREATES WEEKLY

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



SHOW AND TELL OFFERS TIME TO BRAG

Nine bags of various kinds led Rip 'N' Sew's show and tell parade for August. Quilts and wall hangings tied for runners-up. Rounding out the items club members showed were sports-themed pillowcases and an assortment of small items. Ten members brought items to display. Rip 'N' Sew, a Sun City West club, will have its next show and tell 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Sept. 7. Pictured, Helen Grant, right, made this quilt of a doe and fawns. Helping her hold it is Natalie Blackshear. (Submitted photo/Gary Reynolds)

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SERVICE

Resident dedicates five years as commander at Post 94

By Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

At the start of the month, a former Mary Ellen Piotrowski Legion Post 94 member completed his fifth year as commander.

Jack Coyle passed the leadership role to James Andrews who will serve for the 2026-27 year.

“Jack (Coyle) was an excellent and extremely dedicated post commander,” said Legion Post 94 member Rudy Grom.

He began as a first vice commander for three years and then decided to run for commander when no one else wanted to. Coyle said his job was to mainly chair all the membership and executive committee meetings and help the other officers with their responsibilities.

During his time as commander, membership grew by approximately 100 new members since 2021, which was his first year as commander.

Monthly meeting attendance grew from an average of 35 to up to 50 people in the general meeting.

“We had to move into a bigger room because it was standing room only,” said Coyle.

According to Coyle, one of the most challenging parts of being a commander is getting volunteers, except for the pancake breakfast fundraiser. During this event, Post 94 members and residents not affiliated attend to support the organization.

The last pancake breakfast earlier this year brought in around 575 participants and raised approximately \$7,000.



Mary Ellen Piotrowski Legion Post 94 members Wayne Reidman, Cmdr. Jack Coyle and Larry Garcia. (Independent Newsmedia/Jennifer Jimenez)

Coyle said the money raised is used for various legion programs and

approximately six outside organizations.

“I like how the post helps the community and veterans and I enjoy doing things with people who I have something in common with,” said Coyle.

There are currently 363 members in Post 94, made up of 237 Vietnam veterans and 10 members who served in WWII. The oldest member is 103, and the youngest is 97 from that war. There are 38 veterans who served in Korea and some from the Persian Gulf.

The youngest member is 21 and is currently serving in the Marine Corps and another member who lives in Germany and does not attend meetings.

Visit azlegion94.org.



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Staff
Jeremy Carr

Editor

Zev Black, Jennifer
Jimenez

Reporters

Ben Daniels, Frank
Dias, Greg Garcia, Ann
Kampmeyer, Debbie
Kelly, Lisa Norman,
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Patrick O'Grady

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Watch

• From page 1

said it is difficult to guarantee they can make it out to a house for those gone for less than one week, but every attempt is made.

"We try to emphasize doing a vacation watch perimeter patrol at a home the first time in the first week the homeowners are gone. A home is most vulnerable when folks forget to lock up when they leave, and we try to get to the house in the first week to catch those things," said Mackaman.

He said this program started back in the late 1970s as a free service and continues with all posse staffed with volunteers and no funding from the state, county or federal level. The organization relies on community donations.

"Vacation watch is a very valuable program to us, because we are able to get peo-

ple to come in and recruit and a service that people are really happy with," said Sun City West Posse Cmdr. Carolyn Patterson.

Patterson recently received an email from a resident who was out of state calling to ask if the posse could close the trash lid that was left open by the trash company. She said sometimes the key-holders of neighbors will leave doors unlocked and these patrols will connect the dots to get the house secured again.

She said if they come across a situation where a window or door looks like it has tried to be forcibly open, they will get Maricopa County Sheriff's Office deputies over.

Mackaman said when patrol members pull up to a house, they confirm it is the correct address, then ring the doorbell, test the front door and walk the perimeter. After a storm there may be roof tiles on the ground and those are noted and re-

ported to the homeowner and ensure the property is secure.

"When the routes are compressed we probably see 45 houses on a shifts and cover a dozen miles. We can walk around 20 homes in an hour; at this time of year we can go around between 18-20 homes," said Mackaman.

In winter months, fewer homes are on vacation watch and then patrols drive all over the community driving between 25-30 miles to see just 20 houses.

For those who do not apply for vacation watch, the regular posse patrols drive down every street in Sun City West three times a day to get eyes on every home but do not leave the vehicle.

Visit //scwposse.org/vacation-watch-2/ or call 623-584-5808.

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.

Pantry

• From page 1

and unload for patrons, as well as help to unload the donated items and place them inside the pantry.

There are less than two dozen volunteers operating the pantry during these summer months, with numbers fluctuating as winter visitors return. The program fosters the theme of "neighbors helping neighbors," as most of the volunteers also reside from within the community.

Sun City West resident Joe Kowalkowski used to help run the program and recently retired.

"Now, I pick up food donations from two churches and bring it here," he said.

Now, Peoria City Councilmember Jon Edwards for the Willow District leads the pantry, and he said the demand is up with the pantry averaging 145 people throughout the summer months.

"We are open for two hours on Mondays, and we are serving people that whole time," he said.

Food that is not given out is stored in a



Sun City West Food Bank Pantry volunteer Tom Matraw helps to transport food from the pantry to patrons' vehicles in the parking lot. Volunteer Jon Edwards helps to get the food items needed. (Independent Newsmedia/Jennifer Jimenez)

designated storage closet that is secured. Edwards said every three weeks the pantry is giving out about one pallet of food.

Edwards said there are residents who return every week and rely on the pantry food to have a meal at home.

In addition, the pantry is working to add new meal kits packaged from items that are donated or purchased with the cash donations. This program has yet to roll out but is in the packaging process to ensure seniors can get what is needed in a

bag to make a nutritious meal, along with a recipe. Monetary and food donations can be dropped off during pantry hours or 8 a.m.-noon Monday-Thursdays, at the Sun City West Foundation office.

Donations can also be dropped off at the Valley View Thrift Store, 13576 W. Camino Del Sol. Call 623-584-6851.

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CLUB NOTES UPCOMING PROJECTS, CLASSES

The Artistic Hand Lettering, Cards & Mixed Media Club will continue to collect holiday cards for the veterans through early December. "Big Shot" die cutting machine training resumes 10 a.m.-noon Aug. 31. Call Debby Fradette (228-337-0097 or djfradette@gmail.com) to sign up. Introduction to Calligraphy classes will be offered 11 a.m.-noon Fridays, Oct. 16, 23, 30 and Nov. 6. Cost is \$40, payable only by check directly to instructor Char Cash and all participants must be prior registered to ensure we have materials for all. To register stop by the club during regular hours or contact Debby Fradette at djfradette@gmail.com. The club meets 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday and Friday and 6-9 p.m. Wednesday in the Kuentz center's Pueblo Room. Call Dottie Schmit (602-758-9854) or Kat McGinnis (480-806-8053), visit artisticandlettering.scwclubs.com or email ahlcandmm@gmail.com for more information. Club membership is \$10 annually. Pictured, new member Mary Kay Portzen works on a card at a recent workshop. (Submitted photo/Melanie Harrison)



CLUB MEMBERS TAKE BREAK FOR BUTTON HEART ART

Rip 'N' Sew members recently chose a way to use "no less than 80" buttons as part of the students' directions. They glued buttons on wooden valentine hearts to make button heart art. Lynn Craig and Jolene Piaskowski taught the 11 students at the Sun City West club. Class participants were Eva Weisberg, Robyn Reynolds, Susan Steffan, Louise Howden, Lynn Craig, Rose Waldon, Linda Logan, Florence Neese, Angie Claudon, Helen Grant and Jolene Piaskowski. Pictured, from left, are Weisberg, Reynolds, Steffan, Howden, Craig, Waldon, Logan and Neese. Not pictured: Claudon, Grant and Piaskowski. (Submitted photo/Gary Reynolds)

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FOOD

As need grows, food bank works to keep families fed

By Zev Black
and Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

According to Amy Tekulve, director of marketing at Valley View Community Food Bank, the organization served 900,000 people last year. This year, the group is on pace to serve even more.

Right now, an average of 2,000 individuals are coming through Valley View's doors every day.

"The need continues to grow," Tekulve stated in an email.

She added the group's biggest challenge continues to be trying to keep up with the growing demand while managing the rise of food costs.

"Many working families and seniors are finding it more difficult to make ends meet," Tekulve stated. "We're seeing more first-time visitors

seeking assistance than ever before."

Tekulve stated the food bank's goal is simple: "Ensure that no family has to choose between paying bills and putting food on the table."

That wouldn't be possible without volunteer support, which, according to Tekulve, has grown this year.

"We're fortunate to have an incredible volunteer base," she stated in the email. "In addition to our regular volunteers, we've welcomed many new corporate and community volunteer groups this year."

This past year, Valley View moved into a new Sun City space, 10733 W. Peoria Ave. Tekulve stated the new facility has improved the group's ability to receive, organize and distribute food.

Another highlight has been the steady growth of Valley View's part-

nerships across the community.

"We are incredibly grateful for the support of local schools, churches, businesses, civic organizations and service clubs that have come alongside us to help fight hunger," Tekulve stated. "These partnerships not only provide much-needed food and resources but also create opportunities for people of all ages to get involved and make a meaningful impact in our community."

That being said, the greatest need right now is financial support.

"Monetary donations allow us to purchase food at significantly reduced costs through our food bank partners, stretching every dollar much further than traditional retail purchases," Tekulve stated. "Volunteers are also always needed, and food donations of nonperishable

items are greatly appreciated."

Valley View is just one of several resources in the area helping put food on the table.

Banner Olive Branch Senior Center Director Jennifer Lawless said the website vivery.org is a resource identifying food pantries in a specific area.

There is an option to select a radius and individuals can learn more about each specific location, such as hours and requirements.

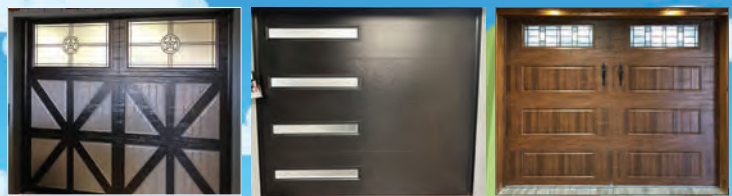
According to the website, there are 16 food distribution sites within a five-mile radius and 20 within a 10-mile radius of Sun City.

Lawless added there are a lot of churches in the area that also offer food pantries once a week, which most people do not know about.

Visit feedingaz.org.

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VETERANS

Veterans can learn about VA pension benefits

Veterans may qualify for a tax-free VA benefit that can help ease costs, and Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church is offering a free educational presentation at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2026, at Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church, 13658 W. Meeker Blvd.

Henry C. GrosJean, Veteran Improved Pension advocate, will provide a presentation that will explain the VA Improved Pension, formerly known as Aid & Attendance. This enhanced, tax-free monthly pension is available to many wartime veterans

and surviving spouses who need assistance with everyday personal care.

The program is intended for veterans, spouses of veterans, surviving spouses, family members, caregivers, and anyone helping a veteran navigate long-term care decisions.

Attendees will learn about eligibility requirements, including wartime service qualifications, financial guidelines and the types of care that may be covered.

This free event is open to the public.

Sign up at shepherdumc.org.



SPAM MEMBERS KEEP BUSY

Members of Scrapbooking, Papercrafts & More club keep cool in summer workshops. Linda Cherry taught a class on making a clear window greeting card. Members personalized their cards by stamping personal greetings on the inside of the card and embellishing the outside with die cut shapes, ribbon or stamped images. Residents can create papercrafts, cardmaking or scrapbooks. The club meets 4-9 p.m. Wednesdays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Thursdays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Fridays and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays, at the Beardsley Recreation Center Agave Room, 2755 W. Beardsley Road. Call Sandy Cryer at 623-640-9387 or email scwscrapbook@gmail.com. (Submitted photo/SPAM)

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OPINION

LETTERS

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his constituents and by that I mean all of us, not just the Republicans he picks and chooses to attend photo ops in his D.C. office glittering with golden gewgaws in emulation of the president.

I have not seen one single accomplishment for CD 8 since Abe has been in office. Much of CD 8 is on Social Security and Medicare since a portion of the district includes the Sun Cities.

Drastic cuts are coming and even Social Security is in danger yet not a word about these two vital social programs. I'm very tired of not having a chance to engage with my representative — he even turns off comments on social media which, by the way, is against the First Amendment.

It's time for a change in representation. Hamadeh won't engage with us and is busy chasing issues that have nothing to do with CD 8. Let the Tate brothers take care of themselves and let us take care of Abe by removing him from office this fall.

Connie Morrison
SUN CITY WEST

Reader says feds should control federal elections

Response to Constitution requires postal service to deliver ballots:

The Constitution states very little about the U.S. Post Office. The Postal Act of 1792 adds more to it, as well as Kohl vs. United States, 1875.

A big change was the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970. Another big change came in 2022, whereby Congress approved a \$107 billion financial overhaul of the U.S. Postal Service to modernize and invest in efficient service. Yet in 2023, the Postal Service still lost \$6.5 billion and \$9.5 billion in 2024.

Should mail-in ballots be allowed? I believe there needs to be federal regulations governing federal elections. This pressure between state government and federal government is an old one going all the way back to our country's beginning.

Can the president, by executive order, change that? I doubt it. I suspect it will ultimately be determined in the courts — that is, if Congress kicks the can down road, like it is doing with the Social Security Trust Fund.

George Hilburn
SUN CITY WEST

Will seniors pay more for prescriptions in 2027?

Congressman Abe Hamadeh has closely aligned himself with President Trump and his administration. That's why I think Congressional District 8 voters should pay attention to the administration's latest Medicare decision — and what it could mean for Arizona seniors.

The Trump administration has announced it will end the Medicare Part D premium stabilization program after 2026. That program helped keep Medicare prescription drug plan premiums from rising sharply.

Without it, many Medicare beneficiaries are expected to pay

• See **Letters** on page 12

Why so much sympathy for the undocumented?

Mr. Gibson in his letter, "ICE facilities anything but humane, reader says," suggests that I investigate much further before presenting what he believes is one side of the story.

It seems to me that he believes his side of the story is the right one based on "many respected news organizations" including the liberal, left-wing New York Times. Are the other ones possibly CNN, MS Now?

Hmm, I wonder?

I cannot understand why there is so much sympathy for these illegal criminals. Does he really want them to stay in our country? Don't they realize that because Biden failed to stop millions from coming in that it has affected our housing, schools, medical facilities, etc.?

Jean Goncalves
SUN CITY WEST

Time for a change in CD 8 representation

I heartily concur with Anne Whitmore's Aug. 5 letter, "Why is Abe Hamadeh defending the Tate brothers?" concerning our representative's strange championing of Andrew and Tristan Tate, who face 59 criminal charges of sexual assault in the U.K.

I'm seriously confused because I thought his responsibility and actual job is to represent those of us in Congressional District 8, Arizona.

Instead of holding Town Hall meetings where he can hear from his constituents, he's busy fighting extradition for these two highly questionable men. It's simply not in his purview and he needs to focus on

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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Letters

• From page 10

higher monthly premiums for their prescription drug coverage beginning in 2027. Administration officials estimate that about 45% of Part D enrollees will see premium increases, many in the range of \$11 to \$20 per month, unless they switch plans.

For seniors living on fixed incomes, every dollar matters. Higher Medicare prescription drug coverage costs come on top of rising housing, grocery, and utility bills. Many retirees in Arizona's 8th Congressional District already struggle to make ends meet. Telling seniors to shop for a new plan every year is not a real solution.

Congressman Hamadeh has consistently supported President Trump and his policies. If he supports ending this program, he should explain why Arizona seniors should pay more for the Medicare prescrip-

tion drug coverage they rely on. If he does not, he should say so publicly and work to protect Medicare beneficiaries.

Healthcare affordability should not be a partisan issue. Seniors paid into Medicare throughout their working lives and deserve stable, affordable prescription drug coverage.

In CD 8, voters should remember this: a vote for Abe Hamadeh is a vote for the Trump administration's Medicare policies—including ending the Part D premium stabilization program, which is expected to leave many seniors paying more for their prescription drug coverage.

Anne Whitmore
SUN CITY WEST

This writer is using a pen name.

Frustrated by old, tattered political signs

I am frustrated and question why the responsible parties of the political signs put up prior to elections don't

remove the signs immediately after the voting ends.

This is a trashy eyesore, in my opinion. Over time the signs break or are torn by the heavy winds and sun rot. Not to mention they often block views at the street corners, which impedes our safety.

I wonder if the Sun City West community could adopt a bylaw prohibiting political signs in our community? People could still be allowed to distribute flyers and hold signs at the polling places, but that's it.

If this is not a feasible option or possibility for our Recreation Centers of Sun City West board, could the impose a fine to the political candidates whose signs are not swiftly removed?

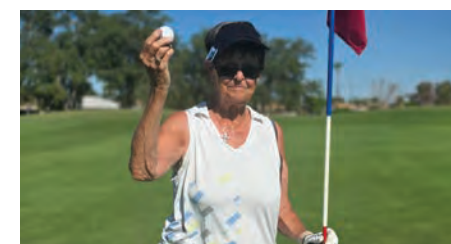
It has been three weeks since the last election closed and here we are ... reddened with old, tattered visibility impediments and valueless distractions.

Please, can the political parties

and their worker bees be more respectful and responsible in swiftly removing their advertisements when the elections are over? It is not our responsibility.

Deb Anderson
SUN CITY WEST

The Sun Cities fall under Maricopa County jurisdiction. To review political sign regulations, visit <https://www.maricopa.gov/6365/Campaign-Signs>--DD-3009-01.



THIRD ACE

Barbara Davies recently hit her third hole in one. It was on hole 7 at the Quail Run Golf Course. Davies, age 82, is a members of the Willowcreek 18-hole Ladies League. (Submitted photo/Cheryl Claggett)



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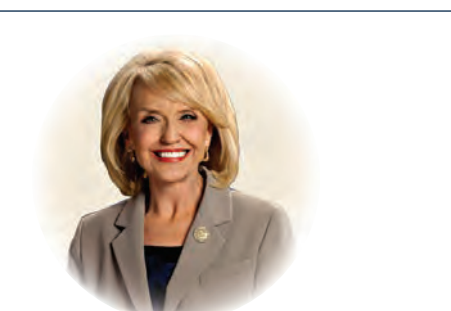
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CANCER SUPPORT GROUPS RETURN TO THE COMMUNITY

Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church invites anyone whose life has been touched by cancer to attend the Cancer Support Group that returns after a summer break. The class is at 2 p.m. the first and third Tuesday of the month. The first class is Tuesday, Sept. 1 at Shepherd of the Hills, 13658 W. Meeker Blvd. The Cancer Support Group provides a safe environment where participants can share their experiences, ask questions, and receive support from others who understand the unique challenges of living with cancer. The group is led by Health Educator Julie Killebrew, whose extensive background includes 15 years of nursing education and 30 years of oncology nursing experience. The Cancer Support Group is offered free and open to the entire community. Call Killebrew at 623-584-2280. (Submitted photo/Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church)

Knights host upcoming food drive

The Knights of Columbus Council 11809 will host an upcoming food drive to support Valley View Community Food Bank.

The drive will take place from 9 a.m.-noon Thursday, Sept. 17, at Our Lady of Lourdes Church parking lot, 19002 N. 128th Ave. and the Sun City West Foundation Parking Lot, at the intersection of R.H. Johnson and Stardust Boulevards.

Canned goods, boxed meals and non-perishable food items are needed and monetary donations will be accepted.



VARIETY IS SPICE OF LIFE

Palo Verde Patchers' weekly meetings are for social gathering and information sharing. The last item on the agenda is Show 'n Tell by members showing their latest creations. Some are magical floating quilts as Diane Becker's Skeletons made for a family member. Or there is Linda McMullin's quilt made entirely of scraps, showing how versatile those odd scraps can be. Though not a quilt, Jodi Davila's counted cross-stitch was done on hand dyed fabric she produced. The piece was then framed in a custom painted frame by Jodi. The members enjoy seeing all the very diverse fiber arts that the members create. Visit patchers.scwclubs.com or attend at Tuesday meeting at 9:45 a.m. at the Kuentz Recreation Center. Call club president Mary Roberts at 541-550-9932. (Submitted photo/Patricia Casey)



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Sun City West - October 28, 2026 - SCW Foundation Center
Mesa - November 13, 2026 - Mesa Marketplace Swap Meet
Apache Junction - January 6, 2027 - Central Arizona College
Surprise - January 19, 2027 - The Colonnade
Litchfield/Goodyear - February 17, 2027 - Tuscany Falls Clubhouse(Pebble Creek)
Chandler - February 23, 2027 - Sun Lakes Country Club
Peoria - March 25, 2027 - Westbrook Village
Sun City West - April 13, 2027 - SCW Foundation Center
Sun City - May 3, 2027 - Sundial Recreation Center

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CHURCH OFFERS GRIEF SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church invites anyone experiencing the loss of a loved one to participate in one of two free grief support programs designed to provide hope, healing and compassionate companionship. From 2 to 4 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 3, GriefShare returns with a new 13-week session meeting in the Fellowship Hall, 13658 W. Meeker Blvd. Rooted in Biblical principles, GriefShare combines engaging video lessons, a participant workbook, and supportive group discussions to help individuals understand the grieving process and discover practical tools for healing after the loss of a loved one. All course materials are free. A more flexible option includes the church's Grief Support Group that meets 10-11 a.m. Wednesdays. The group is open to anyone grieving the loss of a spouse or significant other, parent, sibling, friend or those experiencing anticipatory grief. These free groups are open to the entire community, regardless of faith tradition. Call 623-584-2280 or visit shepherdumc.org. (Submitted Photo/Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church)



WEST VALLEY ARTS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES LUNCHTIME THEATER SEASON

The West Valley Arts Council will present Luncheon Theater performances noon-1 p.m. one Thursday a month, October through April, at the Arts HQ Gallery, 16126 N. Civic Center Plaza. From season tickets to single tickets, reserve space for upcoming shows are listed at eventbrite.com/o/31034282871, or call the gallery at 623-584-2626 during open hours, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday. Seats are limited, but a season pass gets admission to all Luncheon Theater shows. Visit tinyurl.com/ybe3r236. Learn about West Valley Arts Council and Luncheon Theater at westvalleyarts.org. (Submitted Photo/City of Surprise)

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SUN CITY CHURCH COLLECTS DONATIONS

Willowbrook United Methodist Church, 19390 N. 99th Ave., held its annual "Undie Sunday" Aug. 9. Thanks to the generosity of church members, 961 pairs of socks, underwear and t-shirts were received, in addition to two boxes of diapers and \$100 in cash donations. The donated items are being given to Justa Center, Wesley Community & Health Centers, UMOM's New Day Center and The Salvation Army in Surprise. Pictured are Judy Arkwright and Liz Peck with some of the items collected. (Submitted photo/Linda Borton)



CLUB MEMBERS COLLECTING CARDS FOR VETERANS



The Artistic Hand Lettering, Cards & Mixed Media Club will continue to collect holiday cards for the veterans through early December. "Big Shot" die cutting machine training resumes 10 a.m.-noon Aug. 31. Call Debby Fradette (228-337-0097 or djfradette@gmail.com) to sign up. The club meets 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday and Friday and 6-9 p.m. Wednesday in the Kuentz center's Pueblo Room. Call Dottie Schmit (602-758-9854) or Kat McGinnis (480-806-8053), visit artistichandlettering.scwclubs.com or email ahlcandmm@gmail.com for more information. Club membership is \$10 annually. Pictured are Kat McGinnis and Margie Neumiller making treat bags for Grandview Terrace residents. (Submitted photo/Melanie Harrison)

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12759 W. Ballard Dr.,
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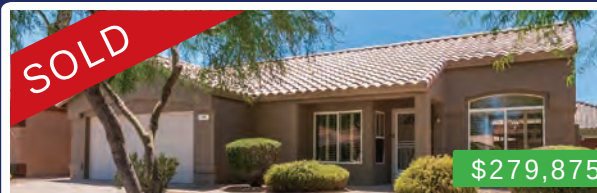
Highly sought after Prescott model. Home has 1872 sq. ft., 2 bedroom, 2 bath, den & great room floor plan. Home is located just a block & half from SCW's Desert Trails GC pro shop. Don't Wait! Call Today to View!



15192 W. Las Brizas Ln., SUN CITY WEST
MLS# 7059982

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-151st, L-Corral Dr., R-Acapulco. L-Las Brizas Ln.

Highly desired Prescott model is located on the 7th fairway of Desert Trails GC. This 1856 sq. ft. home has 2 Bdrms (split), 2 baths plus a den. New roof underlayment 2022, HVAC in 2020 & kitchen appliances 2019. Quick close of escrow is possible. Home has been well maintained. This one is one you'll want to see! Call today to view!



22202 N. Cochise Ln., SUN CITY WEST
MLS# 7051608

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

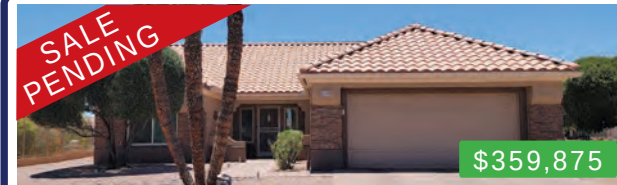
Popular La Paz model located in the Palm Ridge Rec. Cntr. area of SCW. Home has 1086 sq. ft., 2 bedroom, 2 bath, great room floor plan & a block wall fenced private backyard. New roof underlayment 2026. Neighborhood HOA allows pets & rentals. Call today to view!



12759 W. Ballard Dr., SUN CITY WEST
MLS# 7064685

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

Nicely maintained Gemini/Twin home just a half a block from SCW's Stardust GC club house. 1419 Sq. Ft., 2 Bdrms, 2 baths plus a large, screened patio. New HVAC 2023. Guest bath updated. Porcelain plank tile flooring. HOA allows pets (max 2) & rentals. Quick close of escrow possible. This one is one you'll want to see! Call today to view!



23100 N. Drifter Way, SUN CITY WEST
MLS# 7062138

Dir: Bell Rd./RH Johnson, Dr. N-RHJ, R-Meeker, L-135th, L-Deer Valley Rd., R-Dusty Trail Blvd., R-Drifter Way

Popular Rio Verde model (expended). This 1612sq. ft. home has 2 Bdrms (split), 2 baths plus an added den/office/craft studio. Both bathrooms updated including walk in/roll in showers (2023). Paid off solar lease. Quick close of escrow is possible. No neighborhood HOA fee. This one is one you'll want to see! Call today to view!



12635 W. Eveningside Dr., SUN CITY WEST
MLS# 7040339

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

Fabulous panoramic view of Stardust GC's 4th & 5th fairways & greens. Home has 2599 sq. ft., 3 large bedrooms (split), 2 updated bathrooms, golf cart garage plus an added 175 Sq. ft. art/crafts studio or office. This home is truly special & an absolute must see! Call today to view!



DONATION

Drum Arizona donates handmade drums to center

Drum Arizona, Inc., a Sun City-based nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting healing and wellness through rhythm, recently brought the gift of music, culture and joy to 60 participants at Choice Day Treatment Center in Glendale.

Choice Day Treatment Center is a nonprofit organization that provides daytime programs and compassionate care for individuals with developmental disabilities and special needs. The center serves adults with a wide range of disabilities, including autism, Down syndrome, intellectual and developmental disabilities and physical disabilities requiring wheelchairs or walkers. Trained caregivers provide a safe, supportive environment where participants enjoy meaningful activities and social interaction.

The Drum Arizona team was welcomed by staff and participants who were excited to experience a Native American drum circle. During the interactive session, participants learned simple rhythms, shared laughter and experienced the healing power of making music together.

At the conclusion of the drum circle, each of the 60 participants received a gift of their own 10-inch handmade Native American-style deerskin drum, complete with a handcrafted drumstick and carrying bag. The drums were theirs to keep and take home as a lasting reminder of the experience.

Every drum is handcrafted by Drum Arizona volunteers using genuine deerskin. Volunteers from Sun City, Peoria, Phoenix, Glendale, Surprise and El Mirage donate countless hours making

drumsticks, assembling drums, painting each drum with a Native American-inspired animal and preparing every gift for its recipient.

Inside each carrying bag is a drum birth certificate, care instructions and information explaining the Native American symbolic meaning of the animal painted on that particular drum. Every drum is unique, making each gift personal and meaningful.

The 60 drums presented at Choice Day Treatment Center were donated free of charge through the generosity of Drum Arizona's volunteers and supporters.

"This is about much more than giving away drums," said Dr. Lydia A. Woods, founder of Drum Arizona. "We are giving individuals an opportunity to experience the joy

of rhythm, to express themselves through music, and to take home something that reminds them they are valued and celebrated."

This event also marked another milestone for Drum Arizona. During its nearly 11 years of service, the organization has now donated more than 1,100 handmade drums to children, veterans, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and others facing life's challenges throughout Arizona.

For Drum Arizona, every donated drum represents far more than a musical instrument. It is a symbol of hope, healing, inclusion, and the power of community volunteers working together to make a lasting difference—one drum, one person, and one heartbeat at a time. Volunteers can call 404-217-2459 for more information.

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DONATION

Blankets donated by local church benefit Benevilla

Donations meet the needs of the organization

By Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Members of a Sun City West church donated more than 24 quilts to Benevilla to benefit various programs.

Advent Episcopal Church, 13150 W. Spanish Garden Drive, has a small group of people who love to sew and serve others and began sewing quilts.

Member Jill Kratzer said after retiring from a 30-year professional career, she began serving as a hostess at Birt's Bistro at Benevilla, then moved to delivering hot meals, taking people on grocery store runs and doctor visits.

Janet Lennon and Kratzer have been primarily working on these blankets, with help from other members from time to time.

"We meet together from 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at my home, but if more people wanted to join us, we could look for a larger place," said Kratzer.

To join the pair, call Kratzer at 602-670-2290.

Making these quilts and giving them to Benevilla is something important to Kratzer, who said she was raised by her grandparents and loves to support the organization that helps seniors.

"Benevilla is so grateful for the handmade gifts and other items community members provide to all of our programs and locations which meet a need and bring a smile to our members," said Sara Villanueva, Benevilla



Benevilla Donor Relations Manager Daphne Vincent and Advent Episcopal Church members Jill Kratzer and Janet Lennon hold up a blanket donation. (Submitted photo/Benevilla)

vice president of donor relations.

She said local residents and corporate partners have also donated art supplies and new hygiene supplies for use in Benevilla's Life Enrichment Adult Day programs, Intergenerational programs and at Wirtzie's Preschool and Childcare Center.

In addition, Benevilla often holds holiday donation drives for requested gift items for members of The Benevilla Bridges program. The Bridges program provides housebound adults who are on a limited income volunteer assisted grocery shopping and transportation to medical appointments. This helps older adults and adults with disabilities with more independence and the ability to stay in their own homes as long as possible.

For more information, call Benevilla at 623-584-4999.

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.

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 17

- A felony pursuit was reported at 8:26 p.m. at the intersection of North 105th Avenue and West Alabama Avenue.
- A fraud or con game was reported at 12:07 p.m. in the 10800 block of West Kelso Drive.
- A fraud or con game was reported at 2:04 p.m. in the 12000 block of West Desert Sun Lane.
- A theft was reported at 12:21 p.m. in the 13000 block of North 100th Avenue.
- A vehicle crash with no injury was reported at 1:26 a.m. in the 13600 block of West Remuda Drive.

July 18

- A fraud or con game was reported 6:41 p.m. in the 10300 block of Northwest US60 Grand Avenue.
- A follow up was reported at 5:02 p.m. in the 10800 block of West Cameo Drive.
- Trespassing was reported at 6:03 p.m. in the 11000 block of North Coggins Drive.
- A vehicle crash with no injuries was reported 11:47 a.m. in the 12600 block of West Seneca Drive.
- Criminal damage was reported 10:24 a.m. in the 11100 block of West California Avenue.
- Criminal damage was reported at 6:28 a.m. in the 15600 block of North Bowling Green Drive.

July 19

- An assault was reported at 10:25 p.m. in the 11100 block of West Kansas Avenue.
- Criminal damage was reported at 9:48 p.m.

in the 10000 block of West Sandstone Drive.

- Threats to commit an offense were reported at 8:02 p.m. in the 11100 block of West Arizona Avenue.
- Criminal damage was reported at 7:48 p.m. in the 14200 block of West Dusty Trail Boulevard.
- Criminal damage was reported at 5:19 p.m. in the 15800 block of North Bowling Green Drive.
- A fraud or con game was reported at 8:06 a.m. in the 13600 block of North Teakwood Drive.

July 20

- A fraud or con game was reported at 7:31 p.m. in the 10700 block of West Peoria Avenue.
- An assault was reported at 5:17 p.m. in the 16100 block of West Heritage Drive
- An assault was reported at 11:15 p.m. in the 12400 block of North Cherry Hill Drive.
- A burglary from a vehicle was reported at 10:05 a.m. in the 19300 block of North New Tradition.
- Illegal dumping was reported at 8:24 p.m. in the 13800 block of West Sky Hawk Drive.
- A fraud or a con game was reported at 6:10 a.m. in the 10300 block of West Floriade Drive.

July 21

- A missing person was reported at 3:45 p.m. in the 14100 block of West Horizon Drive.
- Criminal damage was reported at 4:19 p.m. in the 10700 block of West Bell Road.
- An assault was reported at 9:40 a.m. in the 11300 block of West Kansas Avenue.

July 22

- An insurance loss report was reported at 2:06 p.m. in the 16400 block of North Desert Holly Drive.
- A theft from a vehicle was reported at 12:55 p.m. in the 13600 block of North Newcastle Drive.

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WRITING

Senior center to host creative writing workshops

Doing Grief Community Healing Project will offer two creative writing workshops inviting people to play with words, explore creativity and express stories and experiences that matter to them.

“Word Play to Bring Joy, Connection, and Healing” will be noon–2 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 27, and Thursday, Sept. 24, at Banner Olive Branch Senior Center, 13049 N. 103rd Ave. Led by author, poet and songwriter Shea Darian, the workshops are open to everyone from experienced writers to those who have never written more than a letter or grocery list.

The workshops will explore prose, memoir, poetry, song and other creative forms, inviting participants to dis-

cover how words can bring their stories and contemplations to life.

“I’d like to inspire people with the joy and healing writing can bring,” she said. “Writing can be a form of prayer or meditation. It can help us process grief, remember someone we love, tell our stories, gain perspective and heal.”

Darian’s relationship with words began early. Although she was one of the slowest children in her first-grade class to learn the alphabet, she was captivated by language and the way others could make words come alive from a page.

At age 9, she wrote her first poem, inspired by the changing seasons and December snow in Iowa, where she grew up. Her teacher accused her of

plagiarism.

“I was devastated,” Darian said. “I had just experienced the joy of creating with words for the first time, and suddenly I was being told it wasn’t mine.”

The misunderstanding was eventually cleared up, and her teacher apologized. But the experience stayed with Darian, who now seeks to create an encouraging and caring space where others can discover their own written voices. At age 12, when her parents gave her a guitar, she began writing songs.

During the workshops, participants will write and may share their work, although sharing is optional. No experience is necessary. Supplies will be provided, or participants may bring a favorite notebook and pen.

“You don’t have to think of yourself as a writer to discover what writing might open up for you,” Darian said.

Darian is the author of “Doing Grief in Real Life: A Soulful Guide to Navigate Loss, Death & Change.” She is director of Doing Grief, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and a spiritual care provider offering Healing Circles, family support and one-to-one grief support on a sliding scale.

RSVP by calling 623-465-6000 or emailing Connect@DoingGrief.org.

There is a suggested donation of \$5–\$10. However, all are welcome regardless of ability to donate.

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ATHLETE

Athlete perseveres through wildfire delays at USATF National Championships

What began as a routine trip to the 2026 USATF Masters Outdoor Track & Field Championships in Geneva, Ohio, quickly became one of the most unusual national championships in Dr. Lydia A. Woods' 22 years of Masters competition.

More than 1,700 athletes from across the United States gathered to compete in one of the nation's premier Masters track and field events. After the opening day, smoke from the massive Canadian wildfires drifted into northeastern Ohio, creating hazardous air quality that forced officials to cancel competition for two consecutive days.

Woods completed only one event before the shutdown, earning a seventh-place ribbon in the hammer throw. Athletes then waited through two days of uncertainty, hoping the smoke would clear and the championships could continue.

Fortunately, conditions improved. After a two-hour delay on Saturday morning, officials resumed competition with a revised schedule that compressed two days of events into the remaining weekend. The women's pentathlon and the weight throw were canceled, and sprint preliminaries were eliminated so the championships could be completed safely.

Saturday became one of the busiest days of her Masters career as Woods competed in seven events.

At age 73, Woods competed in 12 events over the four-day national championship and returned to Arizona with 10 national awards, including three bronze medals and seven ribbons. Her bronze medals came in the long

jump, triple jump and the 4×100-meter relay. Woods earned fourth-place ribbons in the steeplechase and 200-meter hurdles, fifth place in the 80-meter hurdles, sixth place in the discus, seventh-place ribbons in the high jump and hammer throw and an eighth-place ribbon in the javelin.

One of the most dramatic moments came in the 200-meter hurdles. Battling for third place, Woods glanced at a longtime competitor approaching the final hurdle, clipped the hurdle and fell. Hearing spectators encourage her to "Get up, Lydia!" Woods got to her feet, finished the race and earned a fourth-place ribbon.

The final event presented another challenge when the shot put and pole vault were scheduled almost simultaneously. Woods chose the pole vault, one of her favorite events. For the first time in 20 years, Woods failed to clear the opening height and recorded a "no height."

"Despite the interruptions, the championships will be remembered for the resilience of athletes, officials and volunteers who adapted to unprecedented circumstances created by the wildfire smoke," Woods said.

As she reflected on the weekend, Woods was reminded that success is measured by more than medals: "Sometimes the greatest victories are perseverance, adaptability and simply being grateful for the opportunity to compete."

"After 22 years in Masters track and field," Woods adds, "this championship proved once again that you never know what any given meet will bring."



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Juliana Lerner

Juliana Lerner, 87, of Sun City West, passed away suddenly on Friday, May 22, 2026.

Born September 30, 1938, in Bankovci, Croatia, Juliana's life was a journey of resilience,

creativity, and love. After experiencing upheaval during WW 2, Juliana and her family found a new start in Germany. It was there she met the love of her life, Bill, on a train when they were teenagers. They had a son, Michael and emigrated to Canada, then to Ohio. Their son passed away in Ohio and they moved to San Diego where Bill found work in the Aerospace industry. They later retired to sunny Sun City West, where they enjoyed life while supporting each other.

Juliana lit up every room with her spirit and generous heart. She delighted in making

jewelry and ceramics, and she loved to dance. Family and friends were everything to Juliana; she treasured time with loved ones and created lifelong memories.

She is lovingly survived by her beloved husband Bill, her brother, Michael and his wife Dragica, and her nieces, nephews, and cousins in Europe, in the U.S., and Canada.

A celebration of Juliana's life will take place at her home, 13717 W. Gable Hill Dr., Sun City West, on Saturday, September 12, 2026. Cremation has taken place, and quests are welcome to gather between 10am and noon.

WORSHIP



Russ Robbins blows the shofar with Rabbi Dana Evan Kaplan and Cantor Baruch Koritan at Temple Beth Shalom of the West Valley. (Submitted Photo/Temple Beth Shalom of the West Valley)

Temple invites non-members to High Holy Days services

Temple Beth Shalom of the West Valley is welcoming non-members to participate in its High Holy Days services in September.

Rosh Hashanah starts Friday, Sept. 11, and commemorates the creation of the world. It marks the beginning of the Days of Awe, a 10-day period of introspection and repentance that culminates on Monday, Sept. 21, in the Yom Kippur holiday, also known as the Day of Atonement.

The High Holy Days services will be conducted by Rabbi Dana Evan Kaplan and Cantor Baruch Koritan at Temple Beth Shalom of the West Valley, 12202 N. 101st Ave.

"Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur remind us that change is possible," Kaplan said. "We cannot rewrite yesterday, but we can choose how we will live tomorrow. The High Holy Days

challenge us to become more compassionate, more honest and more fully human."

The Temple Beth Shalom Sisterhood is hosting a Break the Fast meal 6:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 21, following Yom Kippur services. Call the Temple office at 623-977-3240 to make reservations by Monday, Sept. 14. The cost is \$25 per person with no charge for children 12 and younger.

The cost to attend all services is \$250 per person, and tickets are required for all events. Tickets will not be sold at the door and partial tickets are not available. Reservations can be made by contacting the Temple office at 623-977-3240 or templebethshalomaz@gmail.com from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Check the Temple's website, tbsaz.org, for the High Holy Days schedule.



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ART



Daniel R Combs, West Valley Arts Council artist member and featured artist. (Submitted photo/WVAC)

West Valley exhibition showcases the art and process of printmaking

The West Valley Arts Council is presenting "Lasting Impressions," a unique exhibition celebrating the craftsmanship and creativity of printmaking. Open to the public with free admission, the exhibit invites visitors to discover the many techniques artists use to create original prints while exploring the beauty and versatility of this timeless art form.

Located at the WVAC Arts HQ Gallery, 16126 N. Civic Center Plaza, "Lasting Impressions" features 80 original works by Arizona artists, offering an educational and visually engaging look at the diverse world of printmaking.

Visitors will experience everything from traditional linocuts and woodcuts to gel printing, silkscreening and other innovative printmaking techniques.

Printmaking is a centuries-old artistic process that combines creativity with technical precision, allowing artists to produce original works through carefully crafted printing methods. Lasting Impressions offers a rare opportunity to see the wide range of techniques used by contemporary local artists while gaining insight into the meticulous processes behind each piece.

"The gallery did a phenomenal job hanging my work," said Daniel R Combs, WVAC artist member and featured artist. "I love how they displayed the original carved plates alongside the final prints—it really pulls back the curtain on the physical process behind the imagery."

Gallery hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday.

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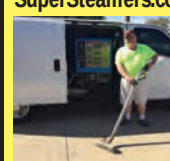
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Civility Checklist

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.

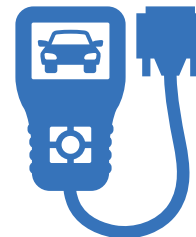
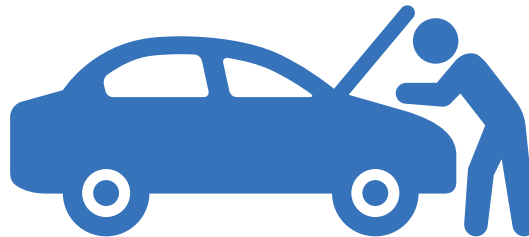
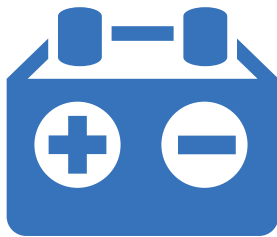
☐ **Respect privacy.** Keep private things private — whether it involves your own information or those with whom you disagree. Revealing private information about someone else is rude, unethical, potentially harmful and, in many cases, illegal.

☐ **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.



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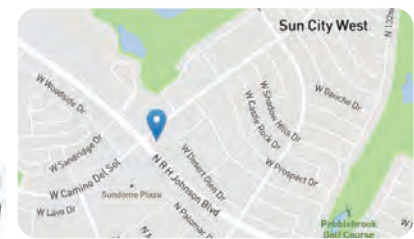
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WE'LL PAY TOP DOLLAR FOR YOUR TRADE-IN!
 Get up to \$10,000 for older vehicles with fewer than 140,000 miles.

Benefiting



Phoenix Children's

A portion of proceeds from all new and used vehicles sold gets donated to PCH

LIBERTY BUICK

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623 432 1310

Sales Hours: Mon-Fri: 8am-8pm • Saturday: 8am-6pm • Sunday: 10am-6pm



In-stock vehicles only. All pricing plus: Tax, Title, License, \$599 Doc Fee & \$2,996 Dealer options. Must present this entire ad to the Sales Department for Liberty Discount, discount off Dealer advertised Addendum price. GM sales rebates & incentives not valid on leases. *Active Military, Reserve & Retired Military. ^Leases allow 10K miles per year with \$0.25 per mile overage. GM rebates & incentives subject to change without notice. Images for illustration purposes only. Featured vehicles in-stock at publication deadline and are subject to prior purchase sale/lease. See Liberty Buick for Details. Offers expire 9/1/2026.