

Neighbors

Residents named
Board of Visitors
flower girls; 4



TOWN OF PARADISE VALLEY

INDEPENDENT

Business

Smart Fit
Method to
open in fall; 24



August 26, 2026

Volume 43 Issue 34

Your Nonpartisan Community Newspaper • YourValley.net

COMMUNITY NEWS

Flock cameras remain in use amid privacy concerns

Police say they are committed
to responsible use of automated
license plate reader cameras

By Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Town of Paradise Valley plans to retain its use of Flock automated license plate reading cameras despite a flurry of Valley cities looking to end their relations with the company.

The Paradise Valley Police Department conducts weekly audits of the system and has not found any concerning use or misconduct, according to Paradise Valley Police Chief Freeman Carney.

PVPD Public Information Officer Kelly Ingram said the audits are conducted internally by the department using information provided by Flock.

"Flock automatically records system activity, including searches and associated user information. PVPD reviews that activity weekly to ensure use of the system is consistent with

• See **Cameras** on page 12

Paradise Valley backs short-term rental changes

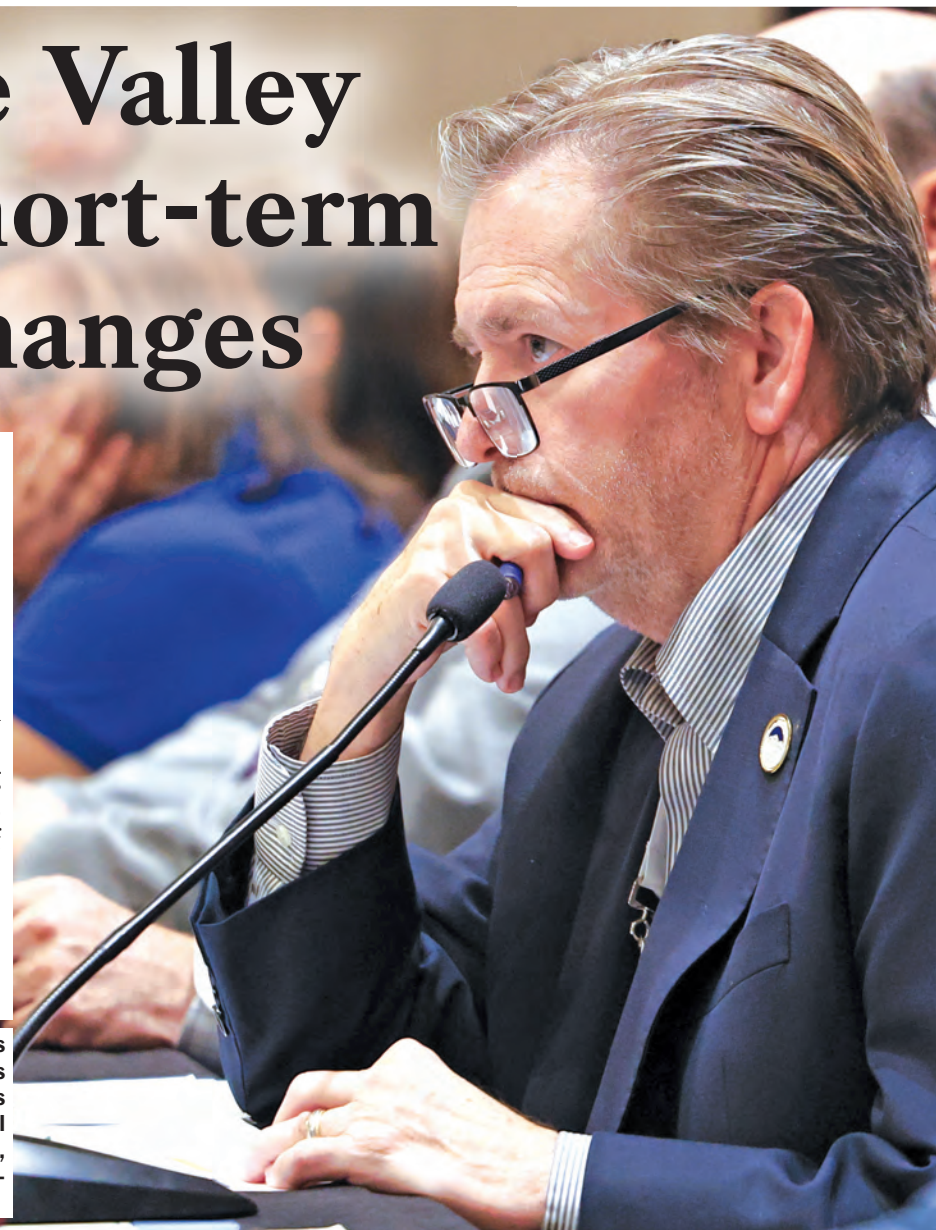
Mayor Mark Stanton
presented four resolutions
developed by Arizona cities
at annual conference

By Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Paradise Valley Mayor Mark Stanton presented four resolutions aimed at changing Arizona's short-term rental laws during the Arizona League of Cities and Towns' annual conference.

• See **Rentals** on page 16

Paradise Valley Mayor Mark Stanton presents resolutions to the Arizona League of Cities and Towns' annual conference resolutions committee about gaining more local control in the short term rental industry on Aug. 19, at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix. (Independent Newsmedia/Allison Kotzbauer)



New Website for Homesellers

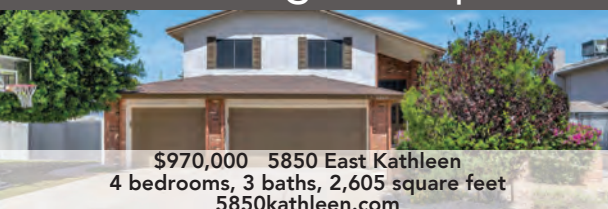
72HOUR.com

Permit No. 1424
Phoenix, Arizona
PAID
US POSTAGE
PRRT STD

Postal Customer
ECRWSSDDM

THE CHOICE IS OBVIOUS

Our Knowledge is Unparalleled, Our Connections are Limitless and Our Marketing Works



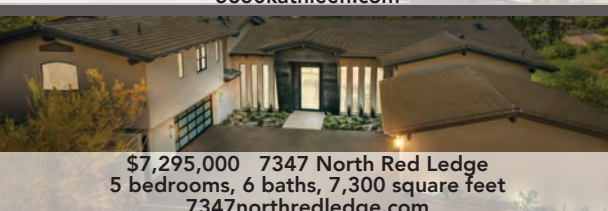
\$970,000 5850 East Kathleen
4 bedrooms, 3 baths, 2,605 square feet
5850kathleen.com



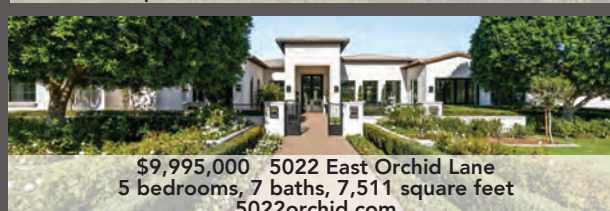
\$2,895,000 3308 East Stella Lane
46,200 square foot lot - Plans Available for this Home



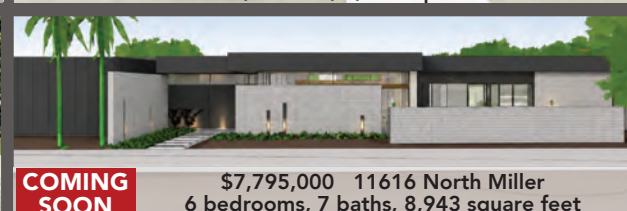
\$7,300,000 7102 East Kalil
5 bedrooms, 7 baths, 8,200 square feet



\$7,295,000 7347 North Red Ledge
5 bedrooms, 6 baths, 7,300 square feet
7347northredledge.com



\$9,995,000 5022 East Orchid Lane
5 bedrooms, 7 baths, 7,511 square feet
5022orchid.com



**COMING
SOON**

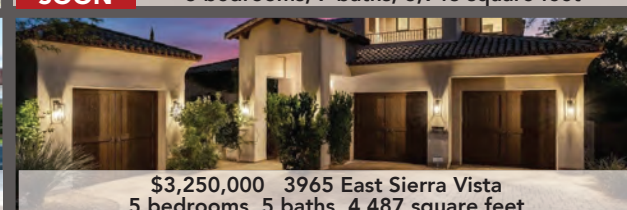
\$7,795,000 11616 North Miller
6 bedrooms, 7 baths, 8,943 square feet



\$1,395,000 8675 East Via De Los Libros
3 bedrooms, 3 baths, 2,412 square feet
8675viadeloslibros.com



\$9,595,000 9790 North 56th Street
4 bedrooms, 5 baths, 8,144 square feet



\$3,250,000 3965 East Sierra Vista
5 bedrooms, 5 baths, 4,487 square feet



**SALE
PENDING**

\$5,199,000 8441 East Cortez Street
5 bedrooms, 6 baths, 5,765 square feet



**NEW
LISTING**

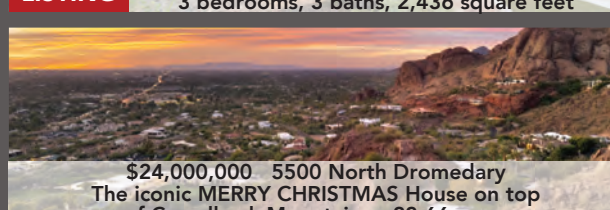
\$1,549,000
2626 East Arizona Biltmore Circle #17
3 bedrooms, 3 baths, 2,436 square feet



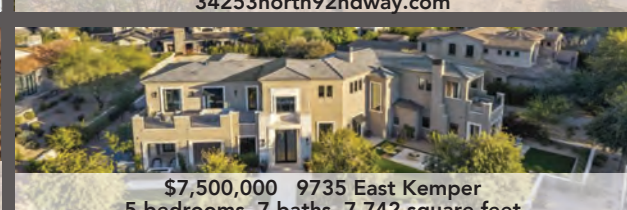
\$1,950,000 34253 North 92nd Way
4 bedrooms, 5 baths, 3,552 square feet
34253north92ndway.com



\$1,495,000 7157 East Rancho Vista #4001
3 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2,213 square feet
7157ranchovista4001.com



\$24,000,000 5500 North Dromedary
The iconic MERRY CHRISTMAS House on top
of Camelback Mountain 23.66 acres



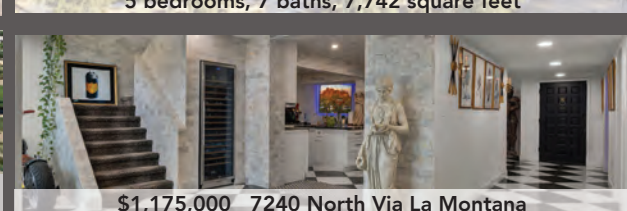
\$7,500,000 9735 East Kemper
5 bedrooms, 7 baths, 7,742 square feet



\$14,895,000 6824 East Hummingbird
5 bedrooms, 7 baths, 7,850 square feet



\$3,840,000 4642 North Alta Hacienda
1.09 acres Phoenician Golf Course View Lot,
\$1,000,000 under appraisal! Altahaciendalots.com



\$1,175,000 7240 North Via La Montana
3 bedrooms, 4 baths, 3,613 square feet



Robert Joffe



Jonah Joffe



Adam Joffe



Andrew Mehlman



Z. Jawanmardi



Dan Lombard

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SUMMER VACATION CHANGED BECAUSE IT GOT TOO HOT.

WE MAY BE ABOUT TO DO IT AGAIN.

BY GREG HAGUE

Here's something I learned recently about summer vacation that surprised me. Like most people, I always assumed kids got summers off because farm families needed them home to work the fields. Makes sense. It also turns out to be mostly wrong. Historians who've studied nineteenth-century school calendars found almost the opposite. Rural schools often ran in winter and summer, when kids weren't needed for planting and harvesting. Some city schools, meanwhile, operated nearly year-round.

So what helped create the long summer break we know today? **Heat.** City classrooms in July were miserable. Air conditioning didn't exist. Families who could afford to leave town did, attendance dropped, and fears about summer disease outbreaks didn't help. Eventually, reformers standardized the calendar around a summer break. Think about that. One of the most permanent traditions in American childhood was shaped, in large part, by people adapting to the conditions they were living in.

We changed the calendar because July stopped making sense.

We just did it so long ago that we forgot it was ever a decision.

I've been thinking about that since watching CBS Sunday Morning interview Jeff Goodell, who has spent years writing about extreme heat. He was asked how much of American life is built around a climate that no longer exists. His answer was simple: all of it. That got me wondering. What if our idea of summer starts sliding down the calendar? Not disappearing. Sliding. What if September and October start doing the work July used to do, and the months we've penciled in for football, homecoming and pumpkin everything start behaving more like August?



At first, that sounds a little dramatic. Then you look around. July was the hottest month ever recorded in the Lower 48, surpassing the Dust Bowl record. Texas has now seen what CBS described as a second "once-in-a-thousand-year" flood in twelve months. Indiana recorded a record 77 tornadoes. Earlier this month, Hurricane Lala passed Hawaii without making landfall, but flooding swept about 100 homes from their foundations on the Big Island. And heat waves in major U.S. cities now occur about three times as often as they did in the 1960s.

But here's the part I can't stop thinking about, and it has nothing to do with politics.

We are remarkably good at getting used to almost anything if it changes slowly enough.

Nobody compares this July to 1936. We compare it to last July. Then next July gets compared to this one. Little by little, the definition of "normal" moves, and we move right along with it.

A drift you can't feel is still a drift.

It's like watching your child or grandchild grow up. You don't notice much difference from Tuesday to Wednesday. Then somebody shows you a picture from four years ago and you can't believe you're looking at the same kid.

Which brings me to Arizona. What if spring break eventually moves to February because April is simply too hot? What if high school football moves deeper into winter? What if Thanksgiving becomes a pool day more often than not? And here's a big one for us. What if the winter visitors we plan so much of our Valley economy around start arriving in December instead of October and leaving in March instead of May?

You don't have to agree on why it's happening to notice that a great many things we treat as permanent, school calendars, tourist seasons, insurance models, where we build and what we build, were designed around certain conditions.

We treat these things like laws of nature. They're not. Somebody designed them.

And when the conditions change enough, eventually some of those decisions may have to change too.

That's what fascinates me about the summer vacation story. The people who reshaped the school calendar weren't trying to make some grand statement. They looked at a hot July, looked at a brick school building full of children and decided it didn't make sense anymore. So they changed it. Practical. Unglamorous. Sensible.

Maybe that's the larger lesson. We spend a lot of time arguing about why things are changing. Sometimes the more useful question is what we're going to do if they do.

The weather isn't asking our permission. It never has.

The only question is whether we'll be as practical as the people who came before us and change the things we actually can.

Greg Hague CEO, 72SOLD

2025 Inc 5000 #1 Fastest Growing Business in Arizona

ON YOURVALLEY.NET

The Arizona education guide

Independent Newsmedia has joined the Arizona Media Association and 13 other newsrooms in a statewide reporting collaboration. These reporters, funded by the Arizona Local News Foundation and Report for America, are taking a closer look at two major issues facing Arizona education: the rapidly expanding Empowerment Scholarship Account program and the challenge of recruiting and retaining teachers.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/47dpfsxh>

Tax credit could add layer to Arizona's school choice system if state opts in

A new federal education tax credit scheduled to launch in 2027 could become another source of education funding for Arizona families, but only if the state chooses to participate.

The Federal Scholarship Tax Credit allows individual taxpayers to receive a dollar-for-dollar federal income tax credit of up to \$1,700 for qualifying cash donations to Scholarship Granting Organizations. Those nonprofit organizations would then award scholarships to eligible students for approved education expenses.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/3zb5nk4y>

Chapparal Firebirds ready to take flight with experience

After fielding a young but competitive team in 2025, the Chaparral Firebirds are anticipating an electric year on the field this season.

According to Coach Trace Carroll, this particular team loves to compete and has been tested on the field this summer.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/yjyp28h7>

Paradise Valley residents named Board of Visitors flower girls

The Board of Visitors announced that 46 high school seniors have accepted invitations to be honored as 2027 Flower Girls, including 11 from Paradise Valley. These young women will participate in events throughout the school year that raise funds for Phoenix-area nonprofits serving the healthcare needs of women, children and the elderly.

Paradise Valley participants include Soledad Tumialan, Lily Vartughian, Lucy Gottfurcht, Mia Steinmetz, Claire Meyers, Paige Cusolle, Charlotte Beabeau, Mila Detmer, London Maas, Riley Tezanos and Allison Weddell.

Flower Girl events include the Board of Visitors 73rd annual fashion show luncheon Dec. 12 and the Board of Visitors 112th annual charity ball April 10, 2027. Both events will be at the JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa, 5402 E. Lincoln Drive, Scottsdale.

Five communities across the Valley are represented in this year's Flower Girl class. Along with Paradise Valley are Arcadia, Biltmore, Central Phoenix and Scottsdale.



Flower Girls from Paradise Valley include, from left, (first row) Soledad Tumialan, Lily Vartughian, Lucy Gottfurcht, Mia Steinmetz, (second row) Claire Meyers, Paige Cusolle, Charlotte Beabeau, (back row) Mila Detmer, London Maas, Riley Tezanos and Allison Weddell. (Photo by Scott Foust, submitted by Board of Visitors)

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Volunteer post leads to executive director job at Family Promise

By J. Graber

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Ted Taylor had just sold a tech company he was president of in 2010 and found himself in between jobs when his pastor got a hold of him.

"He said, 'Ted you've been volunteering for Family Promise (of Greater Phoenix) for three years,'" Taylor said. "I'm chairman of the board, our executive director's stepping down and I think you should do this. I said, what? First, I don't know anything about nonprofits. I don't have any kids and I don't know how to work with women."

Family Promise of Greater Phoenix is a Scottsdale-based nonprofit that puts up families experiencing



Ted Taylor is stepping down as CEO of Scottsdale-based Family Promise of Greater Phoenix after 16 years at the helm. (Courtesy Family Promise of Greater Phoenix)

homelessness over night mainly by working with local congregations (churches and synagogues) to let them sleep in their facilities.

And Taylor took over the reigns of the organization 16 years ago

with no clue what he was doing without having done his due diligence.

He walked in for his first day and there were just two employees, and he was one of them.

"To make matters worse, I found out we had \$80,000 in balloon debt I didn't know about that was due the next February and I started in July," he said.

Then his assistant asked him how he defined a family, and he didn't know how to answer.

He contacted the nonprofit's national headquarters in New Jersey and got back the answer: it is who the children see as their parents and have legal custody of them.



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YourValley.net

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Public invited to Fresh Start Women's Foundation's Sip & Soirée

Fresh Start Women's Foundation invites the community to its annual Sip & Soirée fundraiser celebrating the strength and courage of Arizona women changing their lives and their families' futures.

The event will start at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 12 at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, 7575 E Princess Drive.

The event brings the community together to uplift women on the path to economic independence and personal empowerment. Money raised helps fund

Fresh Start's comprehensive services that empower women to overcome barriers, build career paths, and achieve long-term self-sufficiency for themselves and their children.

This year's event highlights include:

•Sip & Shop Marketplace — A curated selection of local businesses and interactive experiences, paired with refreshing wine and mocktails.

•Luncheon — There will also be live entertainment.

•Luxury Handbag & Super Raffle — The raffle will feature exclusive prizes including designer bags and premium packages.

•Community Partner, Volunteer, and Fundraising Ambassador Celebrations — Dedicated supporters who champion Fresh Start's mission will be recognized.

For more information, and to buy tickets, visit <https://tinyurl.com/bdh2fswt>.

Family Promise

• From page 4

When he heard that, Taylor knew he was in the right place because the organization was about helping everybody.

In the beginning there were just four families in the program in the Valley but by about a year into it Taylor went to the board and said, "We're serving 30 families a year and you know what, I think we need to go up to 100."

It's hard to overstate what Taylor has done for the organization.

He increased the number of congregations the organization works with from 13 to 44. He's grown the organization's annual budget from \$250,000 to more than \$3 million and increased its net assets to more than \$6.5 million, including \$1 million in cash reserves.

The number of employees has grown into 21.

"Even though the organization existed before Ted joined us, this is really a classic start up situation," Family Promise of Greater Phoenix Board Chairman Tim McGough said. "Two people in a garage, not literally a garage, but effectively a garage."

And it's grown from there.

The organization serves more than 700 families a year and has served more than 2,400 families during Taylor's tenure.

One family in particular stands out in Taylor's mind from the early days.

"By that time there was a waiting list to get in and I had welcomed a family except for dad, and this man comes to the gate," Taylor said. "He's tattooed head to toe, his head was completely shaved and he's crying. I looked at him and said what's up, man? What's going on, and he said, 'This is the first time I've ever been allowed in a shelter with my family.'"

Within three weeks the guy, named Mike, had three jobs and was earning a substantial paycheck.

"He was the best dad, amazing to his children. He'd been on hard times, he'd been beat up a lot in his life, had a very difficult up bringing. I fell in love with Mike and his family."

Family Promise of Greater Phoenix has a 70% success rate for getting families into sustainable housing they can afford, but not every story has a fairytale ending.

About two months into Mike's stay, Taylor's assistant called him and said you have to come back right away.

"I walked into the courtyard and Mike was in the courtyard drunk," Taylor said. "It broke my heart. I'll never forget it because Mike is an amazing man who wanted nothing but to be a good father to his children."

Taylor asked him the next day what happened.

"He said I chose alcohol over my family," Taylor said in a shaky voice. "I had to exit that family but it was a reminder to me that life is tough ... the struggles people

go through are real. I would look after Mike today if I could find him."

But Family Promise of Greater Phoenix doesn't just help families anymore, it also helps their pets since 2012.

Taylor had a family in his office one day and everything was ready to go to get them in when the mom said she had hidden the family pet in front of the shelter.

"I said I can't bring the pet in because I don't have insurance for it, and I've got other families here, but I might have someone who could temporarily take her, but they walked out of the shelter in tears," Taylor said.

Then a month later he got a call from the assistant of a PetSmart executive who said his boss went to a fundraising event and wanted to know how he could help.

"I shot down there, and they said what do you want to do?" Taylor said. "I want to build (an animal) shelter in the facility. They were like, do you have a plan? I said no. They said, do you have a budget and I said no, all I have is a dream. They said, we're going to do it ... \$54,000 later, on Oct. 1, 2012, we opened the first shelter ever in the Phoenix area that allowed pets."

What's more, that executive was promoted to president of PetSmart, and he built shelters for every Family Promise across the nation.

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.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

MOVE-IN READY BEDBROCK ESTATE

Just completed in the heart of Paradise Valley, crafted by renowned BedBrock Developers with award-winning Drewett Works Architecture. This contemporary residence features a 6-car garage, 12-16 foot ceilings, hand-selected finishes, and seamless indoor outdoor living centered around the pool and spa. The thoughtfully designed layout includes four en-suite bedrooms, an office, flex space, an entertainer's kitchen with formal dining, and a refined one-bedroom casita, with every detail reflecting BedBrock's renowned craftsmanship. Reach out for more details and a private tour.

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OPINION

Take the Civility Pledge

Yes, I will do my part to help my community become a safe place for people to engage in civil discourse about public issues. Visit iniusa.org/civility-pledge/ 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.

Solutions available, but no action on leaf blowers

Why does the town council refuse to do anything about the obnoxious leaf blowers that spew dust and add to our brown haze and gasoline fumes that destroy our lungs?

Two years ago, the town council met in its study session and did nothing. They use the excuse that we have limited government, though that technically means hiring third-party contractors for cheaper, instead of hiring more city staff.

It's funny how Paradise Valley residents espouse hands-off government, but they run to the Town Hall when a problem harms us.

At the candidates' forum two months ago, candidates seemed to pride themselves in ignoring complaints and refusing to mandate protections to help us. They said the town would ask residents causing the problems to work it out voluntarily, which never happens with wealthy property owners.

We don't want limited government. Town Hall is the people, and we expect proactive government that finds the best solution, enacts it through ordinance so it has teeth and then enforces it vigorously.

The town council has received plenty of solutions but supports the residents who are causing the problems instead of protecting us neighbors who are harmed.

The town can outright ban them within 1,000 feet of residences, as Los Angeles and other cities do. The town can also mandate electric blowers, which are the same price and quieter.

Jay Ross
PARADISE VALLEY

Government should not compete with private enterprise

Please send your comments to
AzOpinions@iniusa.org.

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

Over a decade ago on council, the former police chief flagged a critical "911" issue: our alarm monitoring system's hardware had failed. We restored it temporarily, but it was on life support and required urgent replacement.

Updating the hardware would have cost far more than the \$50,000 spent last year. I opposed spending public money on a system that, even new, could not match private-sector offerings. Roughly 600 residential addresses used the Paradise Valley Police monitoring service then; the number was already declining and has now fallen to 255.

I am fundamentally against government competing with private enterprise. Most of the council wanted to continue the service, so I sought the best possible solution. I contacted Paradise Valley resident and former Entrepreneurs' Organization member Jay Jennings, whose family then owned Safeguard Security. Though opposed to government involvement, I asked him to advise council and staff. Jay delivered a cloud-based solution that avoided a large capital outlay and received no financial benefit — he simply donated his expertise.

This is the same pattern seen in New York City, where Mayor Mamdani's government-run grocery stores operate at a deficit while competing with private businesses. Both cases represent government deficit spending that undercuts private enterprise and uses tax dollars to pursue a utopian vision of government's role. I hope the current council chooses a superior

private option — technologically and financially.

Private providers already offer audio and video monitoring far ahead of our system. We should let innovative private businesses meet market needs rather than spend \$50,000 to prop up a shrinking service for 255 residents.

Paul Dembow
PARADISE VALLEY

Mosquitoes and monsoon: When to seek medical attention

In Arizona, mosquito bites are more than a backyard nuisance, especially during monsoon season. The body's reaction to mosquito saliva causes the familiar bump and itching. A typical bite may appear as a puffy, reddish bump within minutes, a hard, itchy, reddish-brown bump or multiple bumps about a day later.

Most common bites can be treated at home by washing the area with soap and water, applying an ice pack for 10 minutes, using a baking soda and water paste, or using an over-the-counter anti-itch or antihistamine cream according to the label. Scratching should be avoided because bites can become infected.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an infected bite may look red, feel warm or show a red streak spreading outward. Worsening symptoms should be checked by a healthcare provider.

We hear a lot about West Nile Virus in Arizona, and so far this year, 55 cases have been reported in the state, according to the CDC. About 80% of those infected with the virus do not develop symptoms. If symptoms do develop, they tend to be mild and include fever with headache, joint pain, body aches, vomiting, rash or diarrhea.

♦ See **Opinion** on page 26

Some people know this market through statistics. I know it though a lifetime of living it.

This market tells a different story. Experience, not trends, is what helps you navigate it with confidence.

For nearly 30 years, I've helped Paradise Valley families make confident real estate decisions through every type of market, combining local knowledge with thoughtful guidance and long-term perspective.



ELEVATED BY EXPERIENCE.

If you're considering a move this fall, or simply wondering what today's market means for your home, I'd love to be a resource.



Heather MacLean

Founding Agent, Arizona

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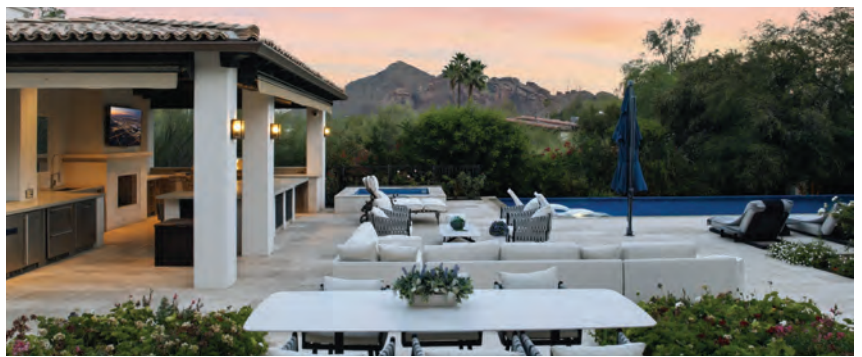
AVAILABLE STATELY PROPERTIES



7150 N HILLSIDE DRIVE
PARADISE VALLEY, 85253 | \$30,000,000
5 BEDS | 8 BATHS | 12,440 SQ FT ON 2.8 ACRES



6610 N MOUNTAIN VIEW DRIVE
PARADISE VALLEY, 85253 | \$9,288,888
5 BEDS | 8 BATHS | 8,363 SQ FT ON 1 ACRE



6650 N HILLSIDE DRIVE
PARADISE VALLEY, 85253 | \$5,999,999
5 BEDS | 7 BATHS | 6,021 SQ FT ON NEARLY 1 ACRE



7525 N CLEARWATER PARKWAY
PARADISE VALLEY, 85253 | \$4,999,999
6 BEDS | 7 BATHS | 8,290 SQ FT ON 1.5 ACRES

#1 IN PARADISE VALLEY



SOLD: \$32,388,888
5724 E MOCKINGBIRD LANE | PARADISE VALLEY, AZ
REPRESENTED BOTH BUYER & SELLER



SOLD: \$20,975,000
5901 E EDWARD LANE | PARADISE VALLEY, AZ
REPRESENTED BOTH BUYER & SELLER



SOLD: \$19,250,000
6025 E CHOLLA LANE | PARADISE VALLEY, AZ
REPRESENTED BUYER & SELLER



SOLD: \$16,000,000
6724 N 62ND STREET | PARADISE VALLEY, AZ
REPRESENTED BUYER & SELLER



SOLD: \$18,750,000
6447 E McDONALD DRIVE | PARADISE VALLEY, AZ
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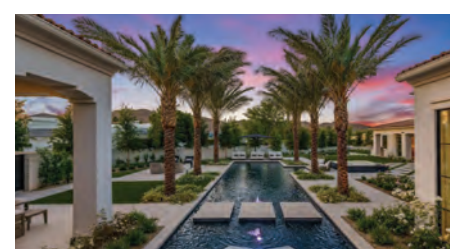
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FROM THE COVER

Cameras

• From page 1

Department policy and is for legitimate law-enforcement purposes,” she stated in an email.

Although as of Aug. 18, no misuse of Flock cameras by department personnel has been found, PVPD does have procedures in place if concerning activity was found in an audit, Ingram stated in an email.

“Depending on the nature of the concern, access to the system may be suspended while the matter is reviewed,” she stated. “If the review identifies potential misconduct, the matter would be addressed in accordance with the Department’s established investigative and disciplinary procedures.”

PVPD has not changed or updated its policies or procedures surrounding Flock camera use because of recent discovery of other departments’ misuse but they will remain alert to any additional checks and balances of the system as they arrive and implement what feels most appropriate.

“PVPD, as with all evolving technology, will continue to evaluate available auditing and accountability features and determine whether additional policy or procedural changes are appropriate,” Ingram stated.

Paradise Valley currently has Flock cameras installed at 26 intersections, according to Ingram.

Ingram also stated PVPD does not automatically share its ALPR camera database with other municipalities.

Paradise Valley Town Manager Andrew Ching said in his Aug. 14 weekly update that the town is aware of misuse of ALPR cameras by other agencies, but the Paradise Valley Police Department remains committed to “responsible use, transparency, accountability and public trust” in its use of the technology.



Cars drive by a Flock camera at the corner of East Lincoln Drive and North Tatum Boulevard on Aug. 19 in Paradise Valley. (Independent Newsmedia/Allison Kotzbauer)

“The Paradise Valley Police Department has used license plate reader technology for more than 10 years to support investigations to help keep our community safe. The technology has helped disrupt burglary groups, investigate kidnappings, recover stolen vehicles, and assist in locating victims,” Ching wrote in his weekly update.

Several cities last week announced they were discontinuing contracts with Flock after spotting what most called misuse or “anomalies.”

Flock, one of the largest companies making ALPR cameras, uses artificial intelligence to capture information about vehicles, including their location and the time they were recorded, according to the company. That information is stored for seven days unless the law or an authorized investigation requires otherwise.

According to Flock’s website,

data is shared only to the extent an agency allows, searches are tied to individual user profiles and searches are reviewed for potential misuse.

The cameras are designed to assist law enforcement with investigations.

According to Flock’s Impact Census, the technology helped locate more than 10,000 missing people in 2025.

Ching clarified that ALPRs capture license plates, not drivers’ faces and the system does not use real-time tracking or facial recognition.

During the past month, agencies across the Valley have ended their contracts with various ALPR companies, launched investigations into potential officer misuse and limited how much data is shared and with whom in response to concerns about employee abuse of the technology.

In Tempe, the city stopped sharing data from its cameras with other

entities Aug. 10. According to a city press release, the decision came in response to privacy concerns raised by the community and recent misuse of the system by two local law enforcement agencies.

Chandler Police Department, Apache Junction Police Department and Pinal County Sheriff’s Office will not renew their camera contracts, and Chandler Police employees are now blocked from using the technology until the contract expires.

Police in Surprise and Goodyear have opened investigations into potential abuse of the ALPR systems by officers and the Surprise Police Department has stopped all use of the cameras.

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FROM THE COVER

Rentals

• From page 1

The resolutions would increase the maximum municipal permit fee for operating a short-term rental from \$250 to \$500, clarify municipalities' authority to place liens on properties for unpaid short-term rental penalties or fines, create a process allowing voters in individual municipalities to decide whether additional short-term rental regulations are appropriate and clarify the definition of short-term rentals as it applies to multifamily buildings and mobile home parks.

All four resolutions were supported and passed by the League's Resolutions Committee. With the committee's approval, the resolutions will move to the league's executive committee before becoming part of the league's legislative agenda for the upcoming session. Stanton said

municipalities could then work with state lawmakers to pursue legislation supporting the resolutions.

"Today was a great example for the entire state," Stanton said. "It's an issue. It's an issue for larger municipalities, it's an issue for Paradise Valley, and we're really committed to staying in front of it."

Stanton said the resolutions are ultimately about returning regulatory authority to cities and towns.

"The key to it is going back to local control and giving the ability for a municipality to decide what's best for its community," Stanton said.

The resolutions prompted discussion among mayors about whether the proposed changes went far enough.

Bullhead City Vice Mayor Dan Alfonso questioned why the proposed permit-fee increase was limited to \$250, saying the additional revenue would not cover the costs associated with short-term rental enforcement,

trash and cleanup.

Scottsdale Mayor Lisa Borowsky responded, "We would go with any dollar amount that would pass through the Legislature."

Chandler Mayor Kevin Hartke suggested adding guardrails to the resolution that would allow voters to decide whether additional short-term rental regulations should be adopted.

"I don't think just whatever cities want to do, based on our past legislature and perhaps a mistrust of cities, that that's going to fly," Hartke said. "If there was some parameters and guardrails on there, I suggest it might have a better shot."

Prescott Mayor Cathey Rusing also supported the effort to restore local control, pointing to the unique short-term rental challenges facing her city.

"I stand with our sister cities," Rusing said. "I fully support this resolution. I think it would be an import-

ant first step."

For Paradise Valley, Stanton said the town's primary concern is keeping bad actors from using short-term rentals to host large parties or otherwise operate outside town regulations.

He said the town has worked to stay ahead of those problems through its licensing and monitoring process, as well as coordination among town departments.

However, companies that are not acting in the town's best interest are also planning ahead and lobbying in the Legislature.

"We're not against the short-term rental industry," Stanton said. "The biggest challenge we've got is the bad actors."

Allison Kotzbauer can be reached at akotzbauer@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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SUSD moves forward with second phase of school closures

By J. Graber

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Scottsdale Unified School District Governing Board is moving forward with Phase II of its school closure plan and wants to hear what the public thinks about it.

The board has set the time for a public hearing on the plan for 6 p.m., Sept. 22, at the Desert Mountain High School auditorium, 12575 E. Via Linda, in Scottsdale.

Members of the community will have two minutes each to share their opinions on the possible closures.

The board is then scheduled to discuss the issue at its Sept. 8 meeting and decide which schools, if any, to shut down during its Oct. 6 meeting.

The schools being considered for closure/relocation are Copper Ridge School, Cheyenne Traditional School, Laguna Prep, Redfield Ele-



Scottsdale Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Scott Menzel said discussions about future school closures are hard but necessary. (Courtesy Scottsdale Unified School District).

mentary School, Desert Canyon Elementary and Desert Canyon Middle School.

All the schools under consideration have student bodies of less than 400, according to information provided by SUSD.

Phase II includes the possible closure of at least two and possibly three schools by the end of the 2027-28 school year.

Phase III of the plan does not include closing any more schools. Instead, it's about developing a plan to grow attendance in each of the district learning communities..

The national phenomena of declining enrollment in public schools — Scottsdale Unified has lost approximately 6,000 students in the last 15 years — and low state funding numbers have made the closures necessary, district Superintendent Dr. Scott Menzel has said in the past.

"There will be many opportunities for people to weigh in and express their

opinions," Menzel said at the board's Aug. 4 meeting. "I would also just say it's not easy in terms of the conversations we have to have, but I think it's very important as we pursue our commitment to full and thriving schools."

Phase I began in the 2025-2026 school year and took effect this school year with the closure of Pima Elementary and Echo Canyon K-8 schools. Each of those schools had student populations of fewer than 300 students.

It was a controversial move that was unpopular with many families at the two schools, and board members Carine Werner and Amy Carney voted against it.

That left board Member Matthew Pittinsky, board Vice President Mike Sharkey and board President Donna

• See **SUSD** on page 26

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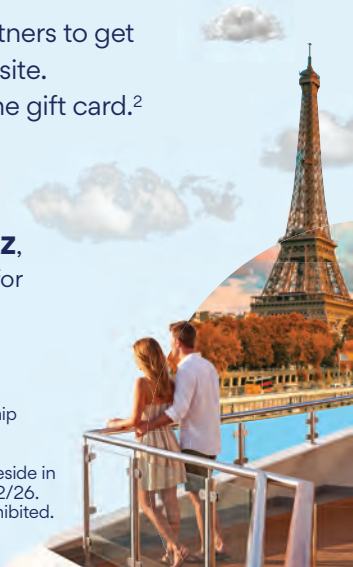
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Free art exhibit celebrates open space, national parks

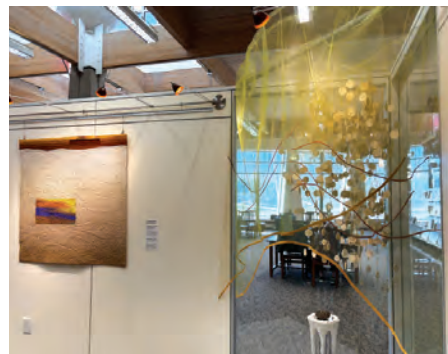
By J. Graber

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Everyone knows libraries are built to expand people's minds, and visitors to Scottsdale's Civic Center Library can do that through more than books and digital materials through Sept 30. That's because the gallery in the center of the building's main floor is hosting Scottsdale Art's latest free exhibition, "Open spaces: fiber arts addressing the landscape."

"It's really celebrating the National Parks Service along with the beauty and value of open space like parks and land that doesn't have any development," said the exhibit's curator Wendy Raisanen.

The exhibit features weaving, quilting, felting, fabric manipulation and fiber-featured mixed media pieces by 15 artists from the Valley and Tucson.



Scottsdale Arts' free exhibition "Open spaces: fiber arts addressing the landscape" at the Scottsdale Civic Center Library, 3839 N. Drinkwater Blvd., is on display through Sept. 30. (Courtesy Brian Passey)

"We've got one gal from Tucson, Rachel Stark, who is using cactus skeletons as a structure to hang and weave from," Raisanen said. "She's weaving hand-loomed wool with semiprecious stones."

Another artist, Jacey Coca, of Peo-



Peoria artist Jacey Coca has woven beads around sticks and bones found in nature to make them look like ritual pieces. (Courtesy Brian Passey)

ria, has woven beads around sticks and cattle bones found in nature to make them look like ritual artifacts.

"The landscape is important because it is good for our mental health," Raisanen said. "To go to these places really helps ground you back into being a human being on this Earth."

The exhibit is on display while the National Park Service is celebrating its 110th birthday, which really is a coincidence, but an important one, Raisanen said.

"Right now, when we have so many national parks in danger of being developed or mined or utilized by the (federal) government, I think it's important to show people the value of national parks. Once you wreck it, it's gone, there is no more, so the preservation of our national parks is extremely important."

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Fulton Homes' The West's Most Western Rodeo returns to Scottsdale Sept. 11-13. (Photo Courtesy Rodeo Scottsdale)

Fulton Homes' The West's Most Western Rodeo rides back to Scottsdale

Fulton Homes' The West's Most Western Rodeo is returning to Scottsdale this fall.

The rodeo performances will begin at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. on Sunday Sept. 11-13 at West-World of Scottsdale Equidome Arena, 16601 N. Pima Road, according to a press release and the organization's website.

The PRCA-sanctioned event will feature three days of rodeo competition, western heritage, live music and family entertainment.

Highlights include Veteran Appreciation Night as well as a live performance from Neon Circus on Sept. 11, a post-rodeo concert by The Contrabandits on Sept. 12, and the final national qualifying event for the Junior National Finals Rodeo that features competitors vying for a share of a \$6,000 bonus purse earned throughout the series.

Gates will open two hours prior to each performance. For information and to buy tickets, visit <https://rodeo-scottsdale.com/>.



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Smart Fit Method to open Paradise Valley, Scottsdale locations

Father and son founders turned personal health scare into wellness concept

By Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

For as long as Connor Darnbrough can remember, he and his father, Rob, were always training.

Darnbrough grew up in Canada competing as a free skier while his father was also a competitive athlete. Fitness was a way of life for the two, but looking back, Darnbrough said they were missing an important piece.

“My dad and I were overdosing exercise,” Darnbrough said.

That perspective changed after his father was diagnosed with an aortic aneurysm at age 49.

Darnbrough said doctors told his father to stop physical activity altogether, and live a “sedentary” lifestyle.

“They actually said, ‘If you see a hill, turn away,’” Darnbrough said. “That led my dad into a really bad place health-wise, mentally, physically, and I kind of saw what that did, how his medical condition basically altered his life.”

Watching his father’s life change inspired the pair to rethink what fitness should accomplish.

Instead of focusing only on performance or appearance, they wanted to create a place that helps people improve their long-term health while still staying active.

The result was Smart Fit Method, an integrated fitness and wellness company that combines strength training, recovery services and personalized, data-driven coaching under one roof, with multiple locations in both California and Utah.

Now, the company is expand-



Smart Fit Method will open new locations this fall in Paradise Valley and Scottsdale, bringing its personalized fitness, recovery and wellness concept to Arizona. (Photo submitted by Smart Fit Method)

ing into Arizona with two locations opening this fall — one in Paradise Valley at 11260 N. Tatum Blvd. and another in Scottsdale at 7400 E. McDonald Drive.

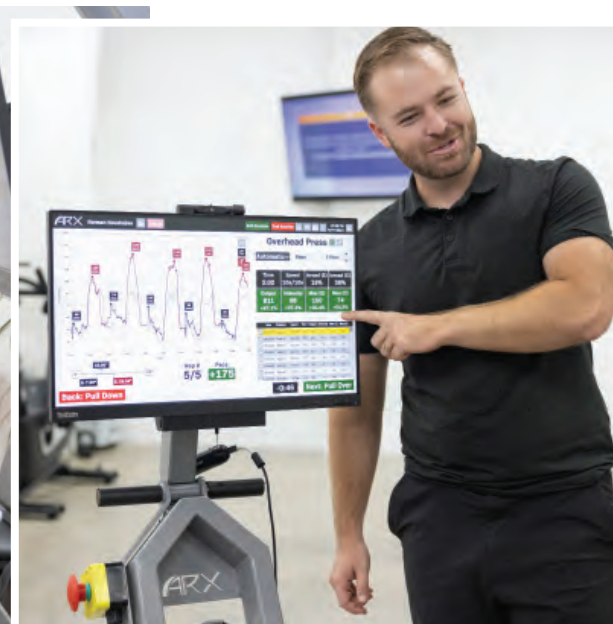
Every member begins with a comprehensive health assessment before receiving an individualized plan that combines strength training, recovery technologies and one-on-one coaching, and necessary recovery services like red light therapy, cold plunges and more.

Darnbrough said the goal is to give people a more efficient approach to

wellness by replacing multiple providers with one personalized system.

Smart Fit Method is designed to fit into members’ lives by offering flexible access to personal training throughout the day instead of limiting them to a handful of scheduled sessions, he said.

“I find that giving them more access to come in on their own schedule, just allows them to fit it into their routine and deal with the realities of life: careers, responsibilities, kids, and they can stay more consistent,” Darnbrough said. “When they’re consis-



Smart Fit Method, a fitness and wellness company focused on personalized training and healthy aging, will open two Arizona locations this fall. (Photo submitted by Smart Fit Method)

tent, they get better results.”

Every 90 days, members are reassessed to ensure their fitness plan continues to evolve with them and helps people of all ages and abilities improve their strength and mobility, Darnbrough said.

Darnbrough said the company chose to expand into Arizona because of the state’s large active and aging populations, believing the concept can help residents stay healthy and reach their full physical potential.

“I get to see on a daily basis other people thrive with health conditions or their situation rather than to survive it on a daily basis,” Darnbrough said. “The improvements people see are pretty staggering.”

Allison Kotzbauer can be reached at akotzbauer@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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SUSD

• From page 18

W. Lewis voting in favor of the move.

The closures saved the district about \$2.5 million, but the administration says more schools have to be closed before the numbers work and put the district back in the black.

Pittinsky has said in the past that while he knows it's not a popular stance, he supports closing even more schools if that is what it takes to right size the district footprint and put the

district back on sound financial footing.

"I hate to talk about numbers when these are families (involved), but the decision to (close schools) is a financial decision to direct resources that could be going to other places to support the excellence in our district," he said at the board's Dec. 9, 2025, meeting.

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.

OPINION

Opinion

• From page 8

My advice is that preventing mosquito bites is the best medicine.

The CDC recommends EPA-registered repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol or 2-undecanone, and recommends loose-fitting long sleeves and pants. Permethrin-treated clothing and gear can help, but permethrin products should not be used directly

on skin. Around the home, remove standing water once a week by emptying, scrubbing, turning over, covering or throwing out items that hold water.

The best approach is to treat bites early, watch for warning signs and reduce mosquito exposure before bites happen.

Saman Manzouri, D.O. is a Valley physician. This opinion was edited for length and can be read in full online at <https://tinyurl.com/ynm4c9ku>.

Saman Manzouri, D.O.

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EMPLOYMENT ADS

Starting at **\$45**

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NOTICE
Independent Newspapers will not knowingly accept any advertisement that is illegal or considered fraudulent. In all cases of questionable value, such as promises of guaranteed income from work-at-home programs - if it sounds too good to be true, chances are that it is.

If you have questions or doubts about any ad on these pages, we advise that before responding or sending money ahead of time, you check with the Better Business Bureau at 877-291-6222 for previous complaints.

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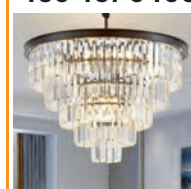


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