



Business
Stylist shares
25 years of
memories; **6**



Neighbors
Local teens
represent
town; **20**

COMMUNITY NEWS

Paradise Valley weighs future of gas-powered leaf blowers

Council members prepare to discuss potential regulations this fall

By Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Paradise Valley's Public Works Department is testing both handheld electric leaf blowers and larger backpack-style blowers as the town council prepares to discuss concerns over the noise and environmental impacts of gas-powered landscaping equipment this fall.

Public Works Director Isaac Chavira said the town contracted for several electric blower models and tested their performance against the department's gas-powered equipment. The findings will be presented to the council during an upcoming fall session.

The testing found the electric blowers generally weighed 7 to 10 pounds more than the department's

• See **Leaf Blowers** on page 24

Save the Spire committee refines plans for town hall site

Volunteers and design professionals spent summer developing plans for historical spire ahead of September town council check-in

By Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Save the Spire committee spent the summer refining plans to give Paradise Valley's historic spire a permanent home at the town's municipal complex, incorporating feedback from Town Council and staff ahead of a Sept. 10 check-in.

• See **Spire** on page 25

Save the Spire group members Ariana Urban, John Anderson, Scott Jarson, Doug Jorden, Christine Labelle, Rod Cullum, Catherine Kauffman and Erik Peterson at the Arizona Biltmore on Aug. 19 in Phoenix. (Photo submitted by Christine Labelle, taken by Andrew Jarson)



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THE RICH MAN WHO PRACTICED BEING POOR

BY GREG HAGUE

I just read an interesting story about one of the richest men who ever lived. His name was Seneca, and he had a strange habit.

Two thousand years ago Seneca was tutor and advisor to a Roman emperor, and he owned estates across Italy and more money than a man could spend. Every so often, on purpose, he'd set it all aside for a few days. The cheapest food. The roughest clothes. Then he'd ask himself one question: "Is this the condition I feared?"

He wrote to a friend recommending the exercise.



Not as penance. As medicine.

Why would a man that rich rehearse being poor? Because he'd figured out something that we, with air conditioning to keep us comfortable, a car in the driveway to take us anywhere, and DoorDash to deliver most any meal we desire, have mostly forgotten. Misery doesn't live in your circumstances. It lives in the distance between your circumstances and what you expected.

You've probably heard that happiness is the gap between expectation and reality. That's true, and it's also incomplete, because there are two levers and most of us only ever pull one. We spend our lives yanking on reality. Bigger house, better title, the right school for the kids. Seneca discovered that the other lever moves easier, and it never wears out.

Let me put on my Twain hat for a minute. Over the years I have grieved over deals that fell through, vacations that weren't perfect, kids who rebelled,

and businesses that weren't making money. I can now report that I never owned a single one of them. I was mourning things that never existed. I suspect you've done the same, which brings me to a sentence I believe is worth reflecting on:

Most sadness is grief for something you never actually had.

Read it twice. The promotion that went to someone else. The house that should have sold by now. The retirement that was supposed to look a certain way. None of those were yours. They were forecasts. And we mourn a bad forecast with the same tears we'd give a real loss, which is a bit like weeping over a canceled flight to a city you've never seen.

Now turn it over. If most sadness is grief for what you never had, then most happiness is simply noticing what you were never promised. Your legs work.

Your coffee is hot. Somebody in your life would be glad to hear from you today. **Nobody guaranteed you any of that, and yet here it all is.**

I'm not being naive. There is real loss, real illness, real pain, and no clever sentence fixes those. But if you're reasonably healthy, and you likely have years ahead in which you'll wake up feeling physically fine, then I'd gently argue that almost everything else is a matter of what you're measuring against. And you can change the ruler in an afternoon. You can change your whole life on any given Tuesday. Health is flexibility. That's the part people forget.

The one expectation I'd tell you to raise, not lower, is the one you hold for yourself.

Wake up with a purpose worth getting out of bed for and the rest of the day tends to fall in line behind it. Purpose is the odd expectation that closes the gap instead of widening it, because you're the one who gets to meet it.

I talk often about probability increasers, the small, repeatable moves that raise your odds of closing the sale, keeping the marriage, or simply having a better day. Seneca's question is one of the best I've ever come across. Ask it on a gloomy morning and watch the odds on the afternoon improve.

Seneca died a very rich man. He'd spent his life rehearsing having nothing. I used to think that was a contradiction.

Now I think it was the whole trick.

Greg Hague CEO, 72SOLD

ON YOURVALLEY.NET

Tourism's reach across Arizona goes far beyond hotels and resorts

When visitors come to Arizona, their dollars don't stop at the hotel.

They pay for meals at local restaurants, fill up rental cars, shop at stores, etc. In many Arizona communities, that spending has become an important part of keeping businesses open, creating jobs and helping to pay for public services.

That impact reached a new high in 2025.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/msan9b5y>

Amazon set to expand drone delivery of lightweight packages

Millions more people may be able to get smaller, lightweight Amazon packages delivered by drones by the end of the year under a plan the company announced Thursday to expand the airborne shipping to suburban areas in nearly 500 U.S. cities.

Customers could receive the drone deliveries in as fast as 30 minutes, Amazon said in a news release. The drones can carry packages up to 5 pounds.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/58hfympha>

Italian American pride among 3 new Arizona specialty license plates

Three new license plates have been added to the Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division's list of specialty plates – Italian American Heritage, Kidney Disease Awareness and Suicide Prevention.

The new plates bring the total of offerings for Arizona drivers to 107.

Read online: <https://tinyurl.com/9btae499>

Paradise Valley Youth Council takes center stage at statewide conference

Members carried the town flag and joined youth leaders from across Arizona

By Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Paradise Valley Youth Advisory Council carried the town's flag during the Parade of Flags at the opening ceremony of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns' annual conference.

Six Youth Council members joined Vice Mayor Christine Labelle, the council's adviser, in representing Paradise Valley during the ceremony.

The Parade of Flags is part of the conference's opening ceremony and brings representatives from cities and towns across Arizona together to recognize the communities participating in the annual gathering.

For the Youth Council, which is



Youth Council members Ollie Wurth and Saniya Dwivedi carry the Town of Paradise Valley flag at the League of Arizona Cities and Towns' annual conference on Wednesday, Aug. 19, at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix. (Independent Newsmedia/Allison Kotzbauer)

in its first official year, the ceremony marked an opportunity to represent Paradise Valley beyond the town's borders and participate in a statewide civic event, said Youth Council member Umeed Singh.

"It's a really cool thing that we

gotta be here today," Singh said. "This is the first year Paradise Valley has had a youth council. Previously, it's just been the mayor and other council members who had to come and support themselves, but

• See **Conference** on page 20

CHARITY EVENT

Kasai's new owner sponsors annual charity golf tournament



Alice Cooper joins executives from Alice Cooper's Solid Rock Teen Centers during Kasai Scottsdale's 2025 Fire & Fairways charity golf tournament. (Photo submitted by Emma Russello)

Kasai Japanese Steakhouse's new owner has donated \$5,000 to support the restaurant's annual Fire & Fairways Charity Golf Tournament benefiting Alice Cooper's Solid Rock Teen Centers.

Scottsdale-based Executive Decisions Group Inc., which recently acquired Kasai, is serving as the title sponsor of the fourth annual tournament.

The event is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 21, at the Westin Kierland Golf Club in

Scottsdale.

Proceeds from the tournament will support Alice Cooper's Solid Rock Teen Centers, which provide free music, arts and vocational training programs for Arizona teenagers.

Kasai, founded in Arizona in 2001, said it plans to expand the restaurant brand nationally while continuing to operate alongside the founding Russello family.

To register, donate or become a sponsor, visit <https://tinyurl.com/bdjt8e27>.

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BUSINESS

Behind the chair for 25 years

Hairstylist Jennifer Hayes talks building connections

By Allison Kotzbauer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

For more than 25 years, Scottsdale hair-stylist Jennifer Hayes has done more than cut and color hair; she's been a listening ear, confidante and source of encouragement for the women who sit in her chair.

From her years working at the Westin Kierland to her private studio in Old Town Scottsdale and new chapter at LifeSpa inside Life Time Paradise Valley, Hayes has built lasting relationships with her clients.

For her, helping women feel beautiful has always been about more than what they see in the mirror, Hayes said.

Hayes has become someone her clients can turn to for more than a fresh style. She has become a trusted person to sit with, relax, let it all out and leave feeling a little better, both mentally and physically, she said.

"The bond that I have with my clients, that's the reason why they come back to me," Hayes said. During COVID, they were coming literally to my house. They're like, 'I am not going anywhere else. I'm coming to you,' They're so loyal.



Jennifer Hayes, Arizona local and hairstylist of 25 years has built more than just a client list in Scottsdale. (Photo submitted by Jennifer Hayes)

And I think it's because of the bond that we have created, it has nothing to do with the hair."

Hayes said her greatest strength in creating strong connections with her clients is to be vulnerable herself.

"What's helped me more than anything is my own struggles in life, and how once I kind of took down the walls ... my clients

really started opening up," she said.

For longtime client Lucia Del Vecchio, that connection began roughly 15 years ago when Hayes was still working at the Westin Kierland.

Del Vecchio had recently gone through breast cancer treatment, which had left her hair changed and difficult to manage, and she remembers sitting in Hayes' chair for the first time and crying.

"The hair that I had on my head, I didn't recognize," she said.

Hayes worked with her to find a style that made her feel like herself again, and Del Vecchio has been coming back ever since, she said.

"It really goes beyond hair," Del Vecchio said. "Since that day I won't let anybody else touch me, because ... she just really listens. I can't explain it."

Today, she makes the trip to Hayes every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. after church, rain or shine; a weekly ritual she has kept for years.

"I consider her not only my hairstylist, but an amazing friend/family," she said.

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.

Dawning PR opens Scottsdale office



Dawning PR recently celebrated the opening of its Scottsdale office. (Courtesy Marion Rhoades Photography)

After 13 years in business, Dawning PR recently opened a Scottsdale office, in the Camelback Tower, 6900 E. Camelback Road, suite. 601.

The six-person firm offers services in media relation, community relations, crisis communications and social media campaigns. The company also offers a how to package for organizations looking to do their own public relations.

Clients include nonprofits, such as the Western Spirit, Scottsdale's Museum of the West as well as private companies like Russ Lyon Sotheby's International Realty and Northwest Advanced Bio-Fuels.

For more information, visit dawningpr.com or call 480-220-6051.

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YourValley.net

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OPINION

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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.

AI is no match for the community of Paradise Valley

Access to our neighborhood is a main street with no outlet. One way in and the same way out. With no through traffic, the street is a neighborhood favorite for morning dog walks.

Several weeks back on my morning walk, there was a driverless ride-share vehicle parked on the street, obviously waiting for its next fare. From that day forward, the vehicle was there every morning.

One of these vehicles in the neighborhood was kind of a novelty, but then one grew to three. Three lined up every morning and, as one exited, within minutes another filled its position.

The increased traffic became a real issue on trash days and days when the local landscapers parked to service the neighborhood. Trash can pick-up was blocked and those vehicles loomed as we tried to maneuver their parking. They increased the traffic by 20-fold!

My wife and I both had the opportunity to speak with Anna Thomasson as she campaigned for her Paradise Valley council position. Anna spoke of her commitment to serving her constituents and to her dedication to preserving the essence of Paradise Valley.

I sent an email to Anna regarding the situation and within the hour received a response. Anna's requested the assistance of PV Community Resource Officer Vasilije Sagovnovic (Officer V), who responded the next day reporting that he contacted the responsible company and they agreed to change their parking algorithm.

My intent is to commend Anna Thomasson for her delivering what she promised in her campaign; for Officer V for his fast action; and to call

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out the company for their total disregard for our personal privacy, using our neighborhood as their parking lot. Apparently, the AI algorithm underestimated the power of community.

Michael Dezelon
PARADISE VALLEY

Who is going to pay for the 'expensive water?'

"Arizona is not running out of water. We are running out of cheap water." The line has become a slogan for anyone who wants to admit scarcity without accepting limits.

It turns a physical problem into a financial one. If water only costs more, Arizona can keep growing, keep building and keep approving new demand. We just need more pipelines, pumps, treatment plants, storage, recycling and money.

Expensive for whom?

Existing residents are already conserving. They have removed lawns, installed efficient fixtures, accepted restrictions and paid higher utility bills. Cities reuse wastewater. Farmers have improved irrigation. Yet every gallon saved can become an excuse for another subdivision, industrial project or population target.

That is not conservation. It is creating room for more demand.

Arizona likes to point out that it uses roughly the same amount of water it did decades ago despite millions of new residents. That is an achievement, but it does not prove the formula works forever. Much of that

success came from converting farmland, improving efficiency and getting more value from each acre-foot.

Farmland, efficiency gains and the Colorado River are finite.

Arizona can move water, treat it, recycle it and pump it from farther away. None of that creates water. Infrastructure changes where water comes from and how much it costs.

Money cannot repeal hydrology.

Arizona should first determine how much dependable water it actually has, then decide how much growth fits within that supply. New development that needs expensive new water should pay the full cost of securing and delivering it.

So, when someone says, "We are only running out of cheap water," ask the question they usually leave out: Who is going to pay for the expensive water needed to keep growth going?

Rusty Childress
RIO VERDE

Let's restore power to 'we, the people'

Arizona became the 48th state on February 14, 1912, with a state Constitution that begins with the words, "We, the people of the State of Arizona..."

Our state constitution goes on to state, "All political power is inherent in the people, and governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

If political power belongs to the people, should our elections be bought and paid for by a small group of powerful interests? Does unlimited election spending enhance the political voice of Arizona citizens, or does it allow concentrated wealth to exercise disproportionate political power?

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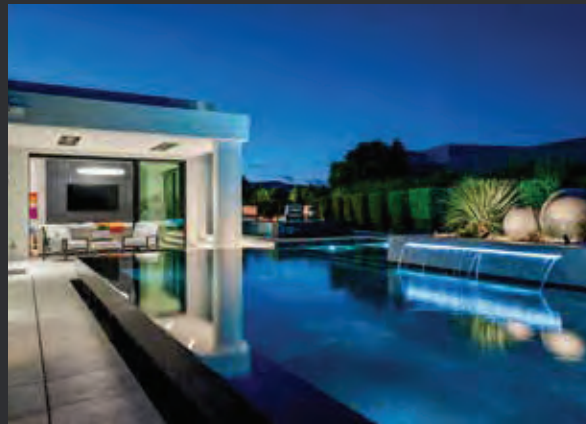
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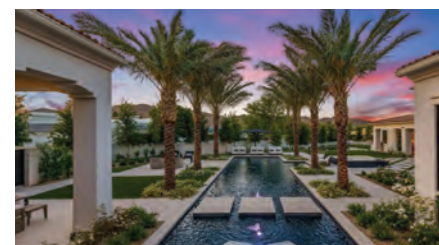
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Kids can visit Western Spirit for free Sept. 5-6

Children ages 17 and under can visit Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West for free Sept. 5-6 as the museum celebrates the opening of its newest exhibit over Labor Day weekend.

"Woven: Navajo Textiles from the Pelberg Collection" explores the artistry and traditions behind contemporary Navajo weaving through seven works by Diné (Navajo) artists. The exhibit highlights how generations of knowledge and regional traditions are combined with individual choices in color, pattern, materials and design.

Families visiting during the opening weekend can participate in hands-on activities, including a take-home weaving project. The exhibit also includes touchable displays featuring raw wool, dyed skeins and a woven sampler, along with images of Diné weavers working at their looms.

The works are part of the Art and Linda Pelberg Family Collection of Native American Art, which was donated to Western Spirit in 2022 after nearly 50 years of collecting.

Western Spirit is located at 3830 N. Marshall way in Scottsdale. For more information, visit westernspirit.org.



Textile work featured in the Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West's "Woven: Navajo Textiles from the Pelberg Collection." (Photo submitted by Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West)

ON TOUR

Alejandro Fernández adds Valley stop to 2026 tour

Mexican music icon paying tribute to legendary father on U.S. run

Mexican music icon Alejandro Fernández has announced an extension of his acclaimed De Rey A Rey Tour with new dates for 2026, including a Valley stop.

The tour kicks off in May and will arrive at Arizona Financial Theatre on Sept. 20.

Alejandro's daughter, Camila Fernández, will join him on tour as the opening act.

The De Rey A Rey Tour is a tribute to Fernández's legendary father, Vicente Fernández. Through timeless ranchera classics the show celebrates a musical legacy.

Recognized for both his artistry and philanthropy, Fernández was

honored by the U.S. Congress in 2023 for his four decades of contributions to Mexican music, Latino culture, and global humanitarian efforts. Earlier this year, he became one of the first Latin artists to donate to the Los Angeles Fire Department in response to the devastating wildfires that swept the region — a place he calls his second home.

Tickets are available at ticketmaster.com.

Alejandro is the first artist to achieve #1 album sales in four consecutive decades (1990s, 2000s, 2010s, and 2020s). He has 12 #1s on Latin Airplay Billboard's chart, the most chart-topping songs by a regional Mexican artist.

Similarly, he has earned four Latin Grammys, including Best Ranchero/Mariachi Album for his 17th album "Te Llevo en la Sangre" from 2024.



Alejandro Fernández (Photo provided by Live Nation)

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Jarson & Jarson support Save the Spire and pledges a portion of our compensation on each Paradise Valley sale to help install this inspirational artistic beacon.



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The Singletons supports single parent families battling cancer in Arizona. (Photo Courtesy of AZ Lemonade Stand)

Local partnership supports Arizona single-parent families battling cancer

The Singletons partners with AZ Lemonade Stand for month-long fundraiser

The Singletons, an Arizona-based nonprofit organization designed to help single parent families battling cancer, is partnering with local business AZ Lemonade Stand to help support Arizona families in need.

The month-long campaign will donate a percentage of qualifying online purchases of AZ Lemonade Stand products to The Singletons.

The Singletons for over a decade has been providing single parents in Arizona who are battling cancer or have a child battling cancer with emotional, physical and financial

support.

The non-profit provides nutritious meals, household essentials like cleaning supplies, gifts for special occasions, as well as allows children and their families to participate in fun activities and wellness workshops, according to The Singletons website.

Partnerships like their campaign with AZ Lemonade Stand allows The Singletons to offer support to families going through unexpected hardship and health concerns.

The fundraiser will run from Aug. 20 to Sept. 20 and is available online only.

To learn more about The Singletons visit its website: <https://thesingletonsaz.org/>

NEIGHBORS

Hope Women's Center to celebrate success

Hope Women's Center will hold its 2026 Night of Hope Gala, "Stories Rewritten," Saturday, Sept. 19, at the Omni Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Montelucia, 4949 E. Lincoln Drive, in Scottsdale.

The evening is dedicated to celebrating the strength, resilience and courage of the women and teen girls the center serves across Arizona, according to a press release.

The gala will bring together community members, donors, advocates and supporters for an evening of connection, storytelling and impact. The event will begin with a cocktail reception at 6 p.m., followed by dinner and a live auction at 7 p.m.

The gala theme, "Stories Rewritten," reflects the transformative

journeys of the thousands of women and teen girls who have found hope, healing and renewed purpose through Hope Women's Center's programs.

For more than four decades, Hope Women's Center has provided free programs and classes designed to engage, encourage and equip women and girls facing difficult life circumstances. True to their mission that no woman in Arizona should face a crisis alone, the center now operates out of seven locations and over 60 satellite sites through its Hope on the Road mobile program.

For more information, or to purchase tickets, visit NOH2026.givesmart.com.



The theme of Hope Women's Center's 2026 gala is "Stories Rewritten" to celebrate the strength, resilience and courage of the women and teen girls the center serves across Arizona. (Courtesy LuCorp Marketing)

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BUSINESS



Center Court Pickleball Club has opened a new, 35,000-square-foot, indoor facility with 13 courts near Shea Boulevard and the Loop 101. (Courtesy Center Court Pickleball Club)

Center Court Pickleball Club opens second indoor facility in Scottsdale

Center Court Pickleball Club opened a new location at 10220 N. 90th Street.

The new site, which is the company's fourth in the Valley, features 13 tournament-quality indoor courts, the company's new corporate headquarters and a dedicated training center, according to a press release.

The new club will provide players of every experience level with a year-round, climate-controlled place to play, improve, compete and connect.

Over the past seven months, Center Court Pickleball Club has trans-

formed the former Scottsdale Fiesta Retail Center into an indoor pickleball destination featuring sound absorption technology, professional-grade lighting that minimizes glare, fully equipped locker rooms with showers and the Power Plate performance and injury prevention program featuring guided pregame warm-ups, mid-match recovery resets and post-game recovery protocols, free with membership.

For more information, visit centercourtpickleball.com.

ENTERTAINMENT

Actor/musician Finn Wolfhard planning Phoenix tour stop

Actor and musician Finn Wolfhard, with a new album out this month, will bring his tour to Phoenix in October.

After first establishing himself as the frontman of several indie music projects, Wolfhard launched his solo career with his debut album "Happy Birthday" in 2025. His sophomore album, "Fire From The Hip," was released July 10.

He'll be in town at the Crescent Ballroom on Oct. 12.

Wolfhard gained fame playing Mike Wheeler on the Netflix series "Stranger Things." He also played Richie Tozier in the horror film "It" and its sequel, "It Chapter Two",

and Trevor Spengler in the supernatural comedy "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" and its sequel "Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire."

"Happy Birthday" has amassed more than 64 million streams to date. In 2025, he completed a sold-out U.S. tour and capped off the year with his first sold-out solo London headline show at Electric Brixton.

This year has seen him host "Saturday Night Live" as well as appearing on the lineups for major festivals including Lollapalooza, Osheaga and Austin City Limits.

For tickets, visit crescentphx.com/tm-event/finn-wolfhard-the-common-side-effects-tour/.



Finn Wolfhard is set to perform in the Valley. (Photo provided by Jill Fritzo Public Relations)



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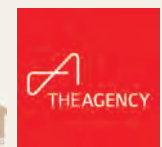
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Conference

• From page 4

now we finally get a chance to show Paradise Valley's diversity in terms of age."

Singh said it is not just about representing Paradise Valley in the community, but showing that young people are here and wanting to help.

"There are kids in Paradise Valley, and we want to be involved in leadership," he said. "We want to be involved in the government. We want to get to know the community and just try and better our community and other communities."

After the flag ceremony, the Youth Council members participated in the conference's youth program, where they connected with other youth leaders from across Arizona and took part in activities focused on leadership, civic engagement and collaboration.

The program included exercises on



Youth Council members Ollie Wurth, Umeed Singh, Saniya Dwivedi, Claire Young, Mia Steinmetz and Allison Weddell with the Town of Paradise Valley flag at the League of Arizona Cities and Towns' annual conference on Wednesday, Aug. 19, at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix. (Independent Newsmedia/Allison Kotzbauer)

identifying personal values and leadership goals, networking with other youth councils and sharing ideas about projects and issues in their communities.

The experience gave Paradise Valley's Youth Council members an opportunity to learn from other young leaders and build connections beyond

the town, Singh said.

"Since it's our first year, we really want to push to get our name out there ... We want to try and get Paradise Valley more notice in terms of the youth community," Singh said. "We want to try and get ideas about starting new events. We're going to try and get more ideas on how other

youth groups plan those and get those to happen."

Youth Advisory Council Adviser and Vice Mayor Christine Labelle said it was a great first official event for the Youth Council to attend and their interactions at the conference made her proud.

"Today was a great first experience for our Youth Advisory Council. They did a wonderful job representing Paradise Valley in the flag parade, but I was equally proud to watch them throughout the day interacting with elected officials, other municipalities and youth groups from across the state," she said. "They worked together, carried themselves well and represented our town exactly as we hoped they would."

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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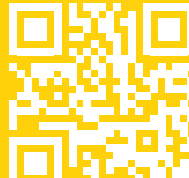


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FROM THE COVER

Leaf Blowers

• From page 1

gas models. Battery runtime ranged from 15 minutes to one hour, requiring employees to stop work to change batteries. Chavira said the shorter runtime also meant jobs took longer and could increase the potential for back injuries.

None of the electric models outperformed the gas blowers in power, Chavira said, meaning employees could spend more time working near traffic. The town would also need upgrades to its shop and potentially its vehicles to accommodate charging.

To operate four backpack blowers for about an hour and a half, the initial cost is estimated at \$15,000 to \$19,000 for blowers, batteries and other equipment.

Chavira said testing also found that some manufacturers' advertised runtime and noise levels did not match the town's experience.

"There are some (electric blowers) that are a little quieter than others, but in comparison to the gas operated, the decibels on them are pretty close," he said. "We have to be very careful in terms of making decisions based on what manufacturers are putting out there."

The town also encountered equipment reliability concerns. Chavira said the Fairmont Princess Resort identified a faulty battery that dam-



Town of Paradise Valley Facilities Maintenance Technician Eric Shurtleff and Lead Public Works Technician Roberto Olivas use hand-held electric blowers to clear debris in front of Town Hall on Thursday Aug. 27, in Paradise Valley. (Independent Newsmedia/Allison Kotzbauer)

aged several blower units before the issue was discovered.

"My personal opinion, I don't think the technology is there yet, but I think it's just a matter of time," Chavira said.

Public Works Superintendent Chris Martinez is preparing a presentation of the department's findings for the council, Chavira said.

Meanwhile, Council Member Karen Liepmann said she has been working with residents on a pro-

posed ordinance that would prohibit gas-powered leaf blowers and other small portable landscaping tools in Paradise Valley, with a phase-in period for education before enforcement.

Liepmann said she believes transitioning to electric equipment would benefit residents' health, reduce noise and air pollution and align with the town's General Plan.

"The operation of gasoline-powered landscape equipment generates exhaust that adversely affects air

quality and public health," she said. "Excessive noise generated by gasoline-powered landscape equipment interferes with the quiet enjoyment of our property, diminishes the quality of life within the Town, and is inconsistent with Paradise Valley's long-standing commitment to preserving our distinctive character."

Vice Mayor Christine Labelle said Paradise Valley generally favors limited government but that approach does not mean ignoring activities that affect residents' health, safety or quality of life.

"This issue is long overdue for a practical, fact-based discussion," Labelle said.

Labelle said she is looking forward to the issue coming before the council and hopes members can find a meaningful solution.

Council Member Anna Thomasson said residents raised the concern with her while she was campaigning for reelection this summer, and she is eager to learn more about possible solutions.

"We have been hearing from residents about this issue for quite a while, and I'm looking forward to our upcoming study session and learning more," Thomasson said.

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FROM THE COVER

Spire

• From page 1

The committee, made up of town residents, architects, engineers, preservationists and other volunteers, is working on plans for the 92-foot spire that once stood atop Ascension Lutheran Church.

With the group's proposed plans the spire will sit at roughly 78-feet tall plus a 6-foot tall base at the Town Hall Municipal Complex in an effort to preserve the spire while also taking into account some council members concerns about the height of the historical piece, according to Save the Spire member and Vice Mayor Christine Labelle.

The Paradise Valley Town Council voted 6-1 in May to approve the spire's permanent placement at the town hall complex, with Council Member Scott Moore dissenting.

The town accepted ownership of the spire in June 2024 after the church's new owner donated funds to have it removed before the building was demolished for a luxury-home development.

Since then, the Save the Spire group has evolved from an effort to preserve the church into a broader collaboration focused on preserving the spire and incorporating it into the town's civic landscape.

Labelle said the project has received nearly \$100,000 worth of donated professional services and materials from architects, engineers, attorneys, builders, preservationists and other volunteers.

"The effort has grown from a campaign to Save the Spire into a broader collaboration focused on preservation, architecture, public art and Paradise Valley's history," La-

belle said.

Architect Erik Peterson, president of PHX Architecture and a member of the Save the Spire team, said the project provides an opportunity to preserve a piece of the Valley's architectural history.

"I feel a unique opportunity for me to add my skills to work to save this spire and have it resurrected for all the town to admire for years to come," Peterson said. "It symbolizes the presence of these great architects that came out of this unique school in the Valley and the organic designs that were inspired by nature."

John Anderson of 180 Degrees is also helping design the project. Anderson, who serves on the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation's board of trustees, said a fellow foundation member told him how another piece of historic Arizona architecture was set to be torn down to make way for new development, a practice that happens too often, Anderson said.

"Now that the spire is safe, and the Town of Paradise Valley has agreed to allow us to re-erect the spire at the town's municipal complex, we have organized a team of professionals who are working on a pro-bono basis to design the best solution for showcasing the spire at its new home," Anderson said.

The original church, built in 1963, was designed by William Wesley Peters, Frank Lloyd Wright's son-in-law and apprentice. Save the Spire formed in late 2023 as residents sought to preserve the church before ultimately shifting their focus to saving the spire.

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Civility Checklist

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

☐ **Take the high road.** Respond to the topic — not the person. Refrain from demonizing others for their opinions. Assume those you disagree with are, like you, genuinely interested in improving the community.

☐ **Be respectful.** Bullying, public humiliation, insults, name-calling, harassment, and threats directed at another person — or that person's race, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc. — have no place in civil discussions. Find ways to respectfully disagree without questioning someone's character or motives.

☐ **Be truthful.** Base your opinions/arguments on facts. Value honesty. Make only accurate statements when making your point and avoid exaggeration and stereotypes. When appropriate, cite your sources of information that others may question.

☐ **Don't misrepresent.** Always identify your opinions as opinions (not stating opinions as facts). Never misrepresent the views of others or falsely claim your opinions represent someone else. If quoting the words of others, identify and credit the source.

☐ **Listen & learn.** It's both polite and respectful to listen to those we disagree with (as well as those we support) and be genuine in our attempts to understand their point of view. Expand your mind by thoughtfully seeking out views that don't agree with your own.

☐ **Look for common ground.** When disagreeing with others, look for even small areas of agreement — which can be the gateway to working together for the greater good.

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

☐ **Set a good example.** Practice civil behavior online as well as in public and in your interaction with others. Encourage others to practice these civil behaviors. And it's OK to challenge disrespectful behavior — but be courteous, respectful and helpful in your approach.



Now that you've read the checklist, take the Civility Pledge at yourvalley.net/civility-pledge.

BUSINESS

Rising Young Professionals event to feature business leaders

The Scottsdale Rising Young Professionals are featuring some valley-area business leaders as guest speakers for their upcoming event.

The event, titled From SRYP to VIP, will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Sept. 3 at The Homestead Community Center at DC Ranch, 18600 N. 98th St., according to a press release.

Speaking at the event are Ashley M. Anderson, associate director of People and Talent for ASU's Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, as well as Chris Hodnett, senior principal team lead at

Chick-fil-A, Inc., and Sarah Kearney, executive director of the Blue Zones Project Scottsdale.

The speakers will share insight at the event on leading a multigenerational workforce and how business leaders can embrace generational differences in order to strengthen collaboration and build higher-performing teams.

For more information and to register for the event, visit <https://business.scottsdalechamber.com/events/details/sryp-to-vip-bridging-the-gap-13659>.



Ashley M. Anderson, associate director of People and Talent for ASU's Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, will speak at the From SRYP to VIP event on Sept. 3. (Photo courtesy Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce)

OPINION

Opinion

• From page 8

money, including foreign-linked money, is flooding our elections. Billionaires and secretive super PACs, with no stake in our communities, are shaping our future.

Americans get it, and we're fighting back. Twenty-five states have already called for a constitutional amendment to restore the ability of Congress and the states to set reasonable limits on money in elections. This movement didn't start in Washington. It started in living rooms, town halls and letters just like this one.

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