PEORIA INDEPENDENT
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Volume 29 Issue 2

INSIDE

Peoria elects new mayor; **12**



NOV/DEC 2026
Arizona's Nonpartisan Newspaper
FREE

Traffic stops rise, city seeks to curb accidents

By Philip Haldiman
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Traffic enforcement is up and collisions have held steady in Peoria compared to recent years, police say.

Collision totals have reduced 4% from 2023 to 2025, and a further reduction of 7% is anticipated for 2026, over last year, according to Police Chief Thomas Intrieri.

Total DUIs are down from 2024 to 2025.

The Peoria Police Department released its annual report for 2025 that documented a variety of crime metrics throughout the city including calls for service, response times, and trends, among others.

Intrieri projects an 11% reduction in collisions from 2023 to 2026, based on the monthly average as of July 31.

• See **Traffic** Page **25**

Lake Pleasant sailing biz ousted

Boaters decry move by Maricopa Water District

By Philip Haldiman
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Lake Pleasant in Peoria is a significant hub for the state's sailing community, but many boaters say the Maricopa Water District has removed a major part of the operation without providing a comparable replacement, leaving the area without needed support.

The district, which manages Pleasant Harbor at the lake, abruptly canceled the lease of Tiller and Kites, the state's largest sailing operation that is an accredited international sailing school and provides sailboat service, repair, and is a charter provider at Pleasant Harbor Marina.

Officials with MWD have not responded to direct questions about the lease cancellation. In a statement they said the district is trying to maintain its priority as a water provider as its primary purpose while continuing to have amenities available for lake users.



The Maricopa Water District has ended the lease of Tiller & Kites at Lake Pleasant, owned by Victor Felice. (Submitted/Tiller & Kites)

Growing dispute

Tiller and Kites Owner Victor Felice said the water district has done more than close a local business, it has removed a piece of Arizona's sailing infrastructure and left sailors, students, veterans, youth organizations, boat owners, and instructors without services.

"Sailing requires qualified instructors, training boats, facilities, and consistent access to the water. Those resources do not appear by themselves. They must be built, maintained, and supported," Felice said. "The Maricopa Water District has removed a major part of that infrastructure without providing a comparable replacement."

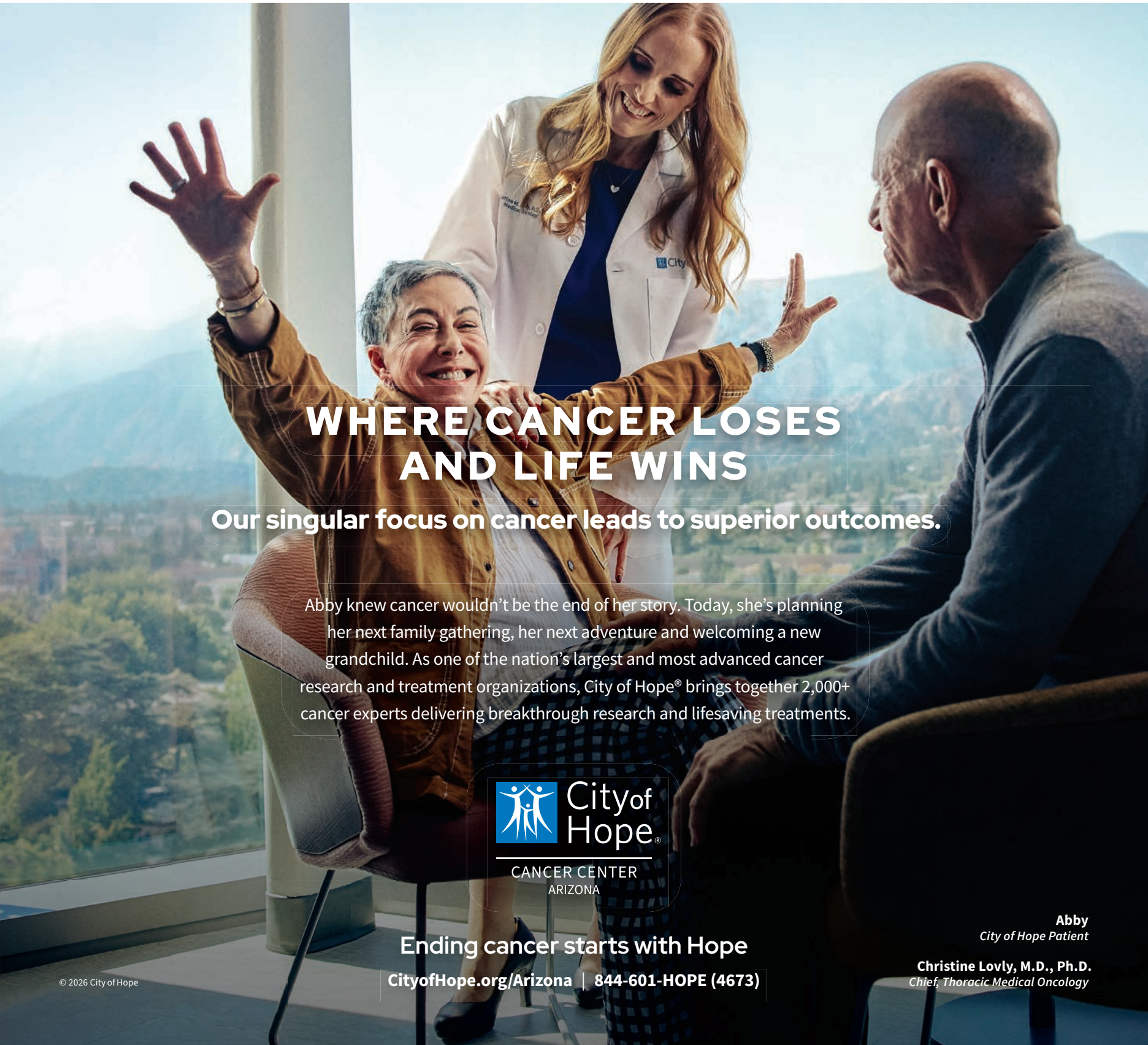
Felice added that for years he has requested a multiyear lease with MWD, but the district has refused, keeping Tiller & Kites under a year-to-year lease for

• See **Sailing** Page **16**

See Frank May's monthly real estate article in the center spread
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NEWS IN BRIEF

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Celebrating 20 years of friends, books imagination

For two decades, Friends of the Peoria Public Library has helped to bring learning, discovery and connection to the community.

The Peoria City Council recognized the group's 20-plus years of supporting Peoria's libraries through fundraising, educational programs and community outreach at their public meeting Oct. 20.

To mark the occasion, the Friends presented the city with two framed copies of artwork by "The Family Circus" cartoonist Bil Keane, one for each Peoria library. The art shows a young boy entering a library filled with books and imagination, the artwork celebrates the possibilities waiting inside.



Councilmember Rick Stokes alongside members of Friends of the Peoria Public Library at the city council meeting Oct. 20. (City of Peoria)

Council approved funds for second public safety helicopter

Peoria City Council approved funds for a second public safety helicopter at their public meeting Nov. 10.

The total cost for the aircraft is $5.79 million.

A portion will be paid by a $2.85 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. The city will pay the remaining balance of $2.94 million, of which $952,000 was already approved by council, according to a staff report.

The city's funding share includes costs associated with aircraft acquisition, public safety equipment installation, applicable taxes, and related inspection and delivery expenses.

To read the full story, go to yourvalley.net/peoria-independent.

Peoria moving forward with $1B advanced water purification facility

Peoria is moving forward to bring a new advanced water purification facility online that officials say will give the city greater water security as questions arise about current supplies.

To reach full potential, the city will invest more than $1 billion into the project over many years, and work has already begun.

Chris Sterne, Peoria's water services engineering supervisor, said staff is developing a long-term financial strategy for the AWP facility and its supporting projects with the goal of integrating the investments into the city's existing rate structure over time.

The water department will put out a solicitation for an engineering consultant in the next few months to guide in the early steps of preparing for AWP.

Advanced water purification is a multistep process that uses technologies to remove contaminants from water, most significantly producing high-quality drinking water from wastewater.

To read the full story go to yourvalley.net/peoria-independent.

• See **Briefs** Page **10**

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

November 1917:
Peoria's first newspaper, The Peoria Enterprise, began its life in print, covering the agricultural community decades before it was incorporated in 1954. The weekly publication was printed through April 1921.

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Medicare And You™

Stay Vigilant This Annual Enrollment: Protect Yourself, Know Your Options, and Never Go It Alone



Jim Schmidt, Medicare And You™

By Jim Schmidt

Trusted & Seasoned Medicare Authority, Advocate, & Advisor

Welcome back! Last month I promised to show you the red flags of Annual Enrollment, and right on schedule, the phones are ringing. The Annual Enrollment Period runs through December 7th, and any change you make takes effect January 1, 2027. This is the season when the wolves in sheep's clothing are busiest, so let's talk about protecting yourself, knowing where you stand, and why you should never have to navigate any of this alone.

The phone call you never asked for.

Here's a rule every Medicare beneficiary should know by heart: if you did not ask for help, and you did not give anyone permission to contact you about your Medicare, no one should be calling you about it. Medicare's marketing rules prohibit agents, brokers, and plans from making unsolicited calls. A stranger calling to say your plan is "changing," that you "qualify for more benefits," or that you need to "verify" your Medicare number is breaking a major Medicare compliance guideline — period. And remember, Medicare itself will never call you out of the blue asking for your Medicare number, Social Security number, or bank information. Medicare doesn't sell anything.

What to do when they call.

Hang up. You don't owe a scam caller a polite goodbye. Never confirm your Medicare number, date of birth, or any personal information. Write down the date, time, phone number, and company name the caller used. Then turn them in. Report it to 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or to the Senior Medicare Patrol at 1-877-808-2468, a free program that helps stop fraud in its tracks. Every report protects you and your neighbors. And if you ever suspect you've been switched to a plan you didn't choose, call me right away. That can be fixed, and I'll help you do it.

Know what you have before you decide what you want.

The best defense against a high-pressure pitch is knowing exactly what you have. Pull out your ANOC — the Annual Notice of Change I asked you to hold onto last month — and know your premium, copays, out-of-pocket maximum, and whether your doctors and prescriptions are still covered in 2027. Then look at the full picture: what your current plan offers next year, and what competing plans from other carriers offer in your area. A plan waving "shiny add-ons" isn't automatically better than one that quietly covers your doctors and medications at a lower cost.

The right broker in your corner.

That's where a trusted, local broker earns your confidence. A proper review is respectful and unhurried. It starts with your needs, not a sales script. A good broker lays your current coverage side by side with what the market offers for the year ahead, explains the differences in plain English, and tells you honestly when your plan still fits. You should never feel pressured, and you should never be asked to sign anything on the spot.

That's the standard I've held myself to since 2006, because a broker's role is serious. This isn't a magazine subscription or a phone plan. This is your health plan! It deserves honesty, care, and someone who treats it that way.

Not just for Annual Enrollment — all year long.

Too many people learn the hard way that the person who enrolled them in October is nowhere to be found in March. That's not how it should be. Your broker should be there all year — when a claim is denied, when the pharmacy says your drug isn't covered, when you move, lose a spouse, or simply have a question keeping you up at night. Medicare doesn't stop being confusing on December 8th, and your support shouldn't either. If you're on a Medicare Advantage plan and something isn't working come January, the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period, January 1 through March 31, allows one plan change. You have options.

You are never alone.

Medicare has a way of making good, capable people feel isolated — sitting at the kitchen table with a stack of mail and a ringing phone, unsure who to trust. You don't have to live that way. Simple question or complicated situation, you deserve real answers from someone who knows you, and who will still pick up the phone next year and the year after that.

About the Author:

Jim Schmidt is a trusted Medicare Advocate here in Arizona, since 2006. Jim never charges a fee for those that are in need or reach out to him. Contact Jim any time at 480-296-3900 or JimSchmidt@Medicare-AndYou.Reviews

I do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options.

BUSINESS IN BRIEF

MORE ONLINE
See more news at yourvalley.net

Flower Child sets opening date for Peoria restaurant

Flower Child says it will open its Peoria restaurant at The Trailhead on Nov. 17.

Now spanning 18 states, the popular restaurant continues its growth with Flower Child Peoria, 8226 W. Happy Valley Road, becoming its 48th location.

The restaurants will offer the bright, lively atmosphere Flower Child is known for, alongside its made-from-scratch dishes that cater to all lifestyles, from vegetarian and vegan to gluten-free and everything in between, according to a news release.

The restaurant will offer dine-in service, online ordering and takeout through the Flower Child app. Flower Child is open daily for lunch and dinner from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.



Flower Child is opening its newest restaurant at The Trailhead in Peoria. (Submitted/Flower Child)

Sonic drive-in permanently closed

The Sonic drive-in at 8359 W. Deer Valley Road permanently closed Oct. 30.

A flyer at the location thanked employees, saying with a "heavy heart" the business has officially closed, and thanked the employees for their hard work, dedication and contributions over the years.

A Sonic spokesperson sent a statement to Peoria Independent, but did not address the reason for the closure: "We want to thank our guests and the community for their support and patronage over the years. We appreciate the opportunity to have served you."

The Sonic closure is one of three

• See **Sonic** Page **8**



The Sonic at 8359 W. Deer Valley Road has permanently closed. (Sonic)

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ArchWell™ HEALTH

Sonic
• From page 6

fast food closures at 83rd Avenue and Deer Valley Road in the last year, the others being Jack in the Box and Salad and Go.

Peoria Innovation Core earns Westmarc's Economic Engine Award

Westmarc has named the Peoria Innovation Core the 2026 West Valley Economic Engine Award.

City officials accepted the award at State Farm Stadium Oct. 22.

The award recognizes PIC for generating significant economic impact and job creation in the West Valley.

The honor celebrates Peoria's work to attract businesses, expand career opportunities and strengthen the regional economy.

Amkor Technology, the PIC's first business now under construction, represents a $12 billion investment in Peoria for the first and second phases of its advanced packaging and test campus.

With the additional expansion, Amkor expects its Peoria workforce to grow to about 3,500 employees.

Westmarc's annual Best of the West Awards recognize leaders, organizations and initiatives advancing innovation, economic development and quality of life across the region.



Peoria has won Westmarc's Economic Engine Award. Pictured is Amkor Technology being built, the first tech company in the Peoria Innovation Core. (Independent Newsmedia/Philip Haldiman)



Precious Metals Refinery opened its newest location in Peoria Nov. 2. (Submitted photo/PMR)

Precious Metals Refinery brings new location to city

Precious Metals Refinery opened its newest location in Peoria, 9127 W. Union Hills Drive, Suite C, Nov. 2.

The location expands PMR's presence in the West Valley and joins the company's existing Valley locations in Phoenix, Scottsdale and Tempe.

Precious Metals Refinery specializes in purchasing gold, silver, diamonds, jewelry, watches, coins, bullion, and estate collections.

Unlike traditional pawn shops or buyers who send valuables away for evaluation, PMR provides private, secure buying offices where customers can watch their items being evaluated in front of them.

PMR's buyers explain the evaluation process, answer questions and provide competitive offers based on each item's characteristics and current market conditions.

Customers are not obligated to sell, and complimentary evaluations are available to customers who want to better understand the potential value of their items.

Council approves agreement amendment for spec building

Peoria City Council approved a new amendment to its purchase and sale agreement with Opus Development Co., which has plans to build a speculative industrial space on 12.2 acres in the Peoria Innovation Core near the northeast corner of Amkor Way and 96th Avenue.

This is the agreement's sixth amendment and was required to come before council because it is related to parcels adjacent to the Opus parcel — Lot 4 and Lot 5, which are city owned.

The approval allows for construction to move forward on the project.

To read the full story, go to yourvalley.net/peoria-independent.

Cancer group names Peoria resident chief development officer

Cancer Support Community Arizona has named Peoria resident Aaron Dunn chief development officer.

Dunn brings more than 25 years of leadership experience across nonprofits and faith-based communities, with a background in revenue growth, corporate partnerships, large-scale fundraising events, and team development.



Aaron Dunn

Dunn will lead CSCAZ's development strategy, working alongside CEO Kristen Genovese and the development team to strengthen donor relationships and grow philanthropic investment. His focus will include corporate partnerships and sponsorships, individual and major gifts, fundraising events, and legacy giving. His leadership will help build the financial foundation for CSCAZ's continued growth as the organization works to expand its impact across Arizona.

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Briefs

• From page 4

Peoria leader named economic development director of year

Peoria's Maria Laughner has been named Economic Development Director of the Year by the publication "Government Business Review."

Bringing jobs closer to home and expanding opportunities for residents are at the heart of Laughner's work, according to a recent city newsletter.



Maria Laughner

The "Government Business Review" publication highlights Laughner's "live-work-play" approach, connecting business attraction and job creation with housing, schools, infrastructure and amenities.



The city approved funds for second public safety helicopter. (City of Peoria)

Guided by the city council and city manager's vision, her work is helping Peoria grow as an employment hub while preserving its quality of life, the newsletter states.

From advancing the Peoria Innovation Core to building workforce partnerships that connect students with career opportunities, Laughner is helping shape a future with shorter commutes and more opportunities in Peoria, the newsletter states.

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EDUCATION NEWS

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Peoria Unified kicks off superintendent search



Peoria Unified students excited to learn. The district has launched its superintendent search. The new leader will oversee nearly 40,000 students throughout the district. (Peoria Unified)

District will take input from staff, parents, community members

By Philip Haldiman
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

To kick off its search for a new superintendent, Peoria Unified School District is asking for input from the community.

Spokesperson Sara Meredith said the district is conducting a survey to gain input for the superintendent search.

Staff, parents and community members may take the brief survey at hyasurvey.com/peoriaaz through Monday, Nov. 23.

"We launched the superintendent search survey with the hopes of getting as much community feedback as possible," Meredith said.

The governing board approved $36,000, allowing the executive firm Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates to conduct the local and national search.

For the next step in the timeline, a leadership profile will be presented to the governing board for approval Dec. 9.

Superintendent applications will close Jan. 8, 2027, and candidate interviews are expected to begin in February. Anticipated superintendent selection is expected to take place in February or March.

TIMELINE

Nov. 23: Superintendent survey closes

Dec. 9: Leadership profile will be presented for approval

Jan. 8: Applications close

February: Candidate interviews expected to take place

February or March: Anticipated superintendent selection expected to take place







Peoria Unified marching bands performing at the Sounds at Sunrise competition. (Submitted photo/Sounds of Sunrise)

Peoria Unified bands shine at Sounds at Sunrise

Nearly 20 high school marching bands from throughout the state descended upon Sunrise Mountain High School in Peoria for the Third Annual Sounds at Sunrise marching competition, Oct. 17.

Sunrise Mountain High School took first place in the 4A division, and Centennial High School took first place in the 3A division.

The competition marched on with Peoria Unified schools winning and others placing high in their divisions

This event was an Arizona Marching Band Association competition, using "quality adjudication that follows national standards and trends, integrating contemporary marching arts design and technology."

Arizona schools face choices over spending

Arizona ranks near the bottom nationally in per-student education spending, while just over half of school districts' operating budgets go directly toward classroom instruction.

According to the Arizona Auditor General's fiscal year 2025 School District Spending Analysis, 52.1% of statewide operational spending went toward instruction. At the same time, national comparisons continue to show Arizona spending less per student than most other states.

Read the full story at yourvalley.net/peoria-independent.

Teenager earns rookie of year racer honor

Peoria High School sophomore Drew Madrid has earned the 2026 International Motor Contest Association Southern Region Rookie of the Year honor in the Hobby Stock division.

Drew is a three-sport varsity letter athlete and honor roll student, competing in football, basketball and baseball. He has also spent the year racing a full-size IMCA Hobby Stock while continuing to compete in go-karts and RC dirt-track racing.

Drew's racing experience spans three levels of the sport: full-size dirt-track racing, go-kart racing and RC dirt-track racing. Each requires a different type of control, strategy and discipline.



Peoria High School sophomore Drew Madrid has earned the 2026 International Motor Contest Association Southern Region Rookie of the Year honor in the Hobby Stock division. (Submitted photo)

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Huynh does whatever it takes for Lions

By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Braxton Huynh had not played quarterback for four years.

With sophomore starter Jason Haines out for the year and senior backup Kenny Raymond not cleared to play for one of the most anticipated games with Centennial in the rivalry's history, that's where he was Nov. 6.

Coach Colin Thomas did not hesitate, even though Huynh had three to four days of practice.

"The competitor that he is, he embraced that challenge," Thomas said. "I thought he did a heck of a job in the first half before he got hurt. He's the ultimate competitor and teammate. He saw what the team needed and was ready to go for us."

Huynh played quarterback until he entered high school. Now he was taking snaps in a contest MaxPreps labeled the No. 1 game in the country.

He completed four passes for 47 yards and a touchdown, before being injured. Raymond was cleared at halftime and finished the 21-14 win.

"That experience Friday, me going to quarterback, at first it was a little shocking. But my coaches and teammates did a good job of talking to me and preparing me for that game," Huynh said. "Even being hurt and being on the sidelines, being able to cheer my teammates and watch was extremely fun."

Huynh should be back — probably at receiver — for the Lions home Open Division quarterfinal



Liberty senior wide receiver Braxton Huynh poses in the team room at the Peoria high school Nov. 10. (Independent Newsmedia/ Richard Smith)

Nov. 20.

He watched from the Mountain America Stadium stands as Liberty won its first Open Division title in 2023.

"Playing youth ball was a lot of fun and games, and it still is, obviously. But seeing how Liberty moves with the program I knew this was serious. This is a different type of ball," Huynh said. "Specifically Liberty, too, because Liberty does things no other high school does."

One year later, he was a key cog in helping the Lions defend the crown against Chandler Basha.

As a sophomore Huynh led the Lions with 64 catches for 1,074 yards and 11 touchdowns.

"He's a very detail-oriented kid and very driven. Even as a freshman you could see that," Thomas said. "We bought him up as a sophomore and realized pretty quickly that he was going to be a dynamic player. He was our best player on the field most of that year as a sophomore."

He said senior quarterback Hayden Fletcher was a mentor.

"Before the season, we had the 7-on-7 things. Even for that he would always be there, helping me communicate with stuff I didn't know," Huynh said.

Injured during the Lions 2025 game at Corner Canyon in Utah, Huynh missed the next four games of his junior year.

Huynh was the lone source of offensive explosiveness in Liberty's 19-16 Open semifinal loss to Basha, catching seven passes for 101 yards and a score.

He said the 2026 team is the closest knit group he has been a part of.

It began at camp in Prescott, with teammates talking about their lives outside of football.

"Sometimes I think about last year and I think it was separated into groups a little bit. I really think this team is one whole team," Huynh said. "I'll go out there and fight for my guys. Every guy is all in for each other. It's really showed on the field."

Thomas said Huynh grew into a leadership role naturally, particularly this year.

He works with Haines, receiver Jayveon Davidson and tight end Jayden Sellers plus another sophomore — younger brother Brody.

This team knew what it had before the season.

Its lone loss at Basha brought the team back to Earth

"Sometimes the losses, you learn more from them," Huynh said.

Chandler, Basha and Chandler Basha began the season ranked in MaxPreps' national top 25.

Liberty ended it with the top seed in the Open Division. Now they want to get back to the title

"It would be nice to do something no one thought we would do at the beginning of the season," Huynh said.

Huynh committed to play at San Diego State.

He has taken sports medicine classes at Liberty and thinks he will major in a related field.

West Valley Preps' boys basketball preview

Compiled By Richard Smith
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The boys basketball season starts Nov. 18. The Peoria Independent asked the local coaches for their outlook on the season.

Glendale Prep Griffins

2A West Region

2025-26 Record: 19-8 overall, 7-1 region (First round of 2A playoffs)

Coach: Noah Roundy (Fourth season as Glendale Prep coach)

Top Returnee: G Ben Wieland, 6-3, Jr., (3.9 ppg, 1.1 rpg).

How many years have you coached basketball? I have coached basketball for eight years and going into my fourth year as head of the program.

What is your team's best attribute entering this season? Our team's best attribute is their coachability. This is a group that will do anything I ask with a smile on their face. We will be able to throw other teams off with our length and speed defensively.

What will your team need to improve for the season to be a success? We will need to improve on the details, specifically on the offensive end. Our group is younger this year, and has lots of room to grow in ball handling, decision making and overall initiating offense.

Who are your team leaders? Our team leaders are our only varsity returner, 6-3 junior guard Ben Wieland, 6-2 junior forward KJ Devine, and senior forward Andrew Abusada. Ben will be our primary offensive threat, able to get downhill and use his length to score. KJ plays with so much energy on the glass, that he will be getting many offensive putback opportunities. Andrew leads by example and will do anything that is asked of him showing the others how a senior can and should lead.

Who are newcomers to the varsity squad who could make an impact? Two others that will make an impact are brothers Mason and Max Salonga. They are pests on defense that will pick you up full court and continue to improve on the offensive end. Another varsity newcomer that will make an impact is Evan Larson. He plays with so much energy, and will be able to make things happen on both ends with his speed and length

What needs to happen for your squad to reach the state tournament this season, or achieve the goals the team has set? Our goals are to be the best versions of ourselves and get 1% better everyday. Realistically with a younger group, our goal is to make the play-in game being seeded 9-24. This goal can be accomplished if we can disrupt other teams on the defensive end, and if we can get the shots we want to take on the offensive end while limiting turnovers.

Liberty Lions

6A Desert Valley Region

2025-26 Record: 22-9 overall, 6-2 region (6A champions)

Coach: Mark Wood (21st sea-

• See **Basketball** Page **27**



Sailing

• From page 1

nearly a decade. Now that he has been denied a lease renewal, the local sailing community is in jeopardy, he said.

"This is not simply about Tiller and Kites. It is about whether Arizona intends to maintain a viable sailing community. If a major sailing operation can be eliminated without a replacement plan, every sailor should be paying attention," Felice said. "The community deserves transparency. Sailors deserve answers. Parents deserve answers. Veterans and adaptive sports participants deserve answers. Youth organizations deserve answers."

MWD has not responded to specific questions regarding the termination of the lease.

In a statement sent to Peoria Independent, recently appointed



Tiller & Kites on a sailing excursion with the Blind Buccaneers, a group of blind and visually impaired teenagers. (Submitted/Tiller & Kites)

MWD General Manager Andrew Fraser said the decision not to renew the lease was made prior to his appointment.

Fraser said under new leadership, the district will evaluate the services and operations at Pleasant Harbor to ensure they align with the district's mission, operational needs and long-term objectives.

Maricopa Water District's primary purpose as an irrigation district is to provide water for agricultural, rural, and municipal uses, while the recreational services at the lake are secondary and play a role in serving the community and supporting the district's broader interests, Fraser said.

"Our goal is to ensure Pleasant Harbor continues to provide valuable recreational opportunities while remaining consistent with the district's responsibilities and interests. As part of this evaluation, we will be reviewing the various services and business arrangements at Pleasant Harbor to determine how best to manage these resources moving forward," he said.

Blowback

The closure of Tiller & Kites has drawn attention from local boaters and a state legislator.

Sen. Janae Shamp, R-Surprise, in a letter to the MWD board,

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Sailing

• From page 16

said the closure of Tiller & Kites threatens to extinguish the most influential sailing facility in Arizona and undermines years of economic activity that has made Lake Pleasant known to sailors worldwide.

Shamp formally requested the MWD board and management schedule a meeting with the principals of Tiller & Kites to negotiate and execute a "renewed, long-term lease that provides the stability necessary for continued operations and growth."

She also requested a written explanation of the decision-making process that led to the lease non-renewal or cancellation of Tiller & Kites.

None of that has come to fruition, and Shamp said she is frustrated by MWD. She said she is prepared to pursue action in the next legislative session if the district does not respond.

"Canceling or refusing to renew a lease for an established, community serving operator that has operated in good faith for years raises serious questions of process, transparency, and priorities. Month-to-month tenancy is incompatible with the capital investment, program development, grant applications, and institutional partnerships required to sustain and expand sailing at this level," Shamp wrote in the letter. "I feel for the local business owners who are now facing the loss of everything they've built because of these arbitrary decisions by a select few."

In an emailed statement to Peoria Independent, she said "The (Maricopa Water District) board's behavior is something I would have expected from a communist regime, not here in America. The board still has a chance to do the right thing by these business owners."

Colette Birch, who has had sailboats on Lake Pleasant for 12 years, likened the absence of Tiller & Kites to losing a mechanic that can only work on your automobile.

"It's no different from your car. Boats need regular maintenance just like a car should receive oil changes regularly," she said.

Source of Revenue

Pleasant Harbor Marina is home to 214 sailboats — 62 docked and 152 in storage that brings in nearly $600,000 in annual revenue, according to a Maricopa Water District board document.

The docked boats equate to about $360,840 in annual revenue or an estimated 8.5% of docked boat revenue. The stored boats equate to about $230,000 in annual revenue or an estimated 12% of stored boat revenue.

"The sailboat customer base represents a meaningful source of recurring Pleasant Harbor revenue," the document states.

Local boaters have said without the support Tiller & Kites provides, the sailing community could dry up at Lake Pleasant, which would be a hit to the MWD budget.

Read the full story online at yourvalley.net/peoria-independent.

Senior News Editor Philip Haldiman can be reached at phaldiman@iniusa.org, or on X @philiphaldiman. 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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Home sales dip in October

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

More people closed on single-family homes so far this year than in the same 10-month period last year, according to data from Phoenix Realtors.

Closed sales rose 0.8% through October. However, closed deals last month plummeted 17.9% compared to a year earlier.

Pending sales slipped 4% year to date, and new listings were down 2.2% compared with the same period last year. In October alone, pending deals fell 45.9%, and new listings slumped 9% compared to last year.


Sammy Glassman

"Results through October are not too bad compared to last year," said Sammy Glassman, board president of Phoenix Realtors. "Single-family home sales took a big hit for the month. Interest rates, economic concerns and the upcoming election all combined to make it a tough month."

Peoria is facing a similar situation.

With year-to-date numbers, Peoria saw homes close at a pace 2.6% faster than in 2025, with pending sales dipping 3.2% and new listings slipping 1.2%.

The median price of a Peoria single-family home was flat, rising just 0.2% to $530,000 from $529,000 last year.

Glassman said days on the market in Peoria held steady this year at 73, the same as last year.

Median sales price so far this year in Greater Phoenix remains flat at $480,000 when comparing through the end of October last year. The median price was down 1% compared to October 2025.

PEORIA HOUSING BY THE NUMBERS

New Listings: 278 (-9.4%)

Pending Sales: 108 (-45.5%)

Closed Sales: 159 (-14.5%)

Days on Market Until Sale: 75 (+1.4%)

Median Sales Price: $515,000 (-0.9%)

Average Sales Price: $564,461 (-5.5%)

Percent of List Price Received: 98.2% (0.0%)

Inventory of Homes for Sale: 937 (+18.8%)

Months Supply of Inventory: 4.6 (+21.1%)

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Peoria experiences elections across the board

By Philip Haldiman
Independent Newsmedia

In this year's general election, there were races for mayor, city council, and Peoria Unified School District governing board, as well as propositions affecting residents across the city.

And as Election 2026 comes to a close, with the season of giving approaching, the winners are thankful for the gift of victory, including Peoria Unified, which received approval from the voters for an extended maintenance and operations override that will result in millions in funding for school programs and people.

Most recent results show the override, known as Proposition 428, has 53% with 46,638 votes in favor, and 47% with 41,355 votes in opposition, according to unofficial results.

Final official results are expected to be approved in the coming week.

Voters failed to approve a 15% override in the election last year, and had the measure failed this year, the district would have had to cut a total of $33 million by fiscal year 2029.

District officials said that could have meant a compensation decrease for staff as well as elimination of certain health care professionals and assistant principals on all district campuses.

It also could have meant increase in class sizes and decrease in programs such as arts, music, physical education and gifted education programs, as well as fees related to athletic and extracurricular activities, among other cuts or fees.

Interim Superintendent Tahlya Visintainer said in a statement the district could not be prouder to be part of a community of educators, support staff, business leaders, retirees and parents who rallied for the district to pass Proposition 428.

For the children who rely on a school nurse, the kindergartners who start their day in a full-day classroom and the students who find their place in band, art and athletics, Peoria Unified's community voted to keep those opportunities alive, she said.

"Our community has entrusted us to educate more than 34,000 students and we are grateful for their support. We will be careful stewards, and we will continue to involve our community in conversations on what restoring these funds means for our future," she said.

Also in the Peoria Unified School District, incumbents Melissa Ewing and Heather Rooks will retain their seats on the five-person board.

• See **Election** Page **26**

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Higher Prices, Fewer Sales: What's Really Happening in the Upper Westside?

If you have been following my monthly market updates, you know that real estate numbers can sometimes (I'm being gracious using the word 'sometimes') tell a confusing story. One month prices are up, the next month they are down, and it can leave homeowners wondering what their home is actually worth. This month is a perfect example of why I always encourage people to look beyond just the average sales price.

Over the past 30 days, the average sales price across our entire Phoenix area MLS dropped 1.20%. Here in 85383, however, the average sales price jumped an impressive 11.71%. That sounds like fantastic news, especially considering that our average sales price dropped almost 19% the previous month.

But before we celebrate too much, let's put those numbers into perspective.

Of the 79 homes that sold in 85383 over the past month, 12 sold for $1 million or more, including two that sold for $2,050,000 and $2,075,000. Compare that with the previous 30 days, when we had only six sales over $1 million, with the highest selling for $1,986,250.

What I find particularly interesting is that last month, only 6.1% of the homes sold were priced at $1 million or more. This month, that number jumped to 15.2%. So even though we had fewer total sales, we actually doubled the number of homes selling above $1 million. That helps explain why our average sales price increased so dramatically. It doesn't necessarily mean individual home values increased that much. It means we had a larger percentage of higher priced homes included in this month's sales.

That is why I think looking at the bigger picture is so important.

When we compare where we started the year to where we are today, the story looks a little different. In January, the average sales price across our entire MLS was $609,432. Today, it is $609,226. That is practically unchanged.

Here in 85383, our average sales price is actually down approximately 3.2% since January. So despite some pretty dramatic monthly swings, our local market has experienced a modest decline in average sales prices over the course of the year.

Another number that caught my attention is the number of homes selling. During the previous 30 days, we had 98 homes close in 85383. This past month, that number dropped to 79, a decrease of approximately 19%. At the same time, our average days on market increased from 80 to 94 days.

That tells me buyers are still out there, but they are taking their time and being more selective. Homes are selling, but sellers need to be prepared for a longer marketing period than we experienced earlier in the year.

Interest Rates Are Back in the Headlines

Mortgage rates have also been making news recently. After several weeks of modest declines, rates took a noticeable jump following the latest inflation report.

According to the mortgage rate reports I reviewed, the average 30 year fixed mortgage rate had declined to approximately 7.18% in early November. However, following hotter than expected inflation numbers, Mortgage News Daily reported rates jumping to approximately 7.30% on November 10 (the day before I'm writing this article).

While that may not sound like a huge difference, even small changes in interest rates affect monthly payments, especially with today's home prices. For buyers already stretching their budgets, affordability continues to be a major concern.

And that affects sellers, too.

When buyers are concerned about their monthly payments, they become more sensitive to pricing. They may ask for closing cost assistance, interest rate buydowns or other concessions to make the purchase work.

So What Does This Mean for Upper West Side Homeowners?

I think the biggest takeaway is that our market is still moving, but it is not the same market we experienced a few years ago. Buyers have become more cautious, homes are taking longer to sell, and pricing correctly from the beginning is more important than ever.

One thing I always remind sellers is that your home is not competing against the average home in 85383. It is competing against the homes buyers are looking at in your particular neighborhood and price range.

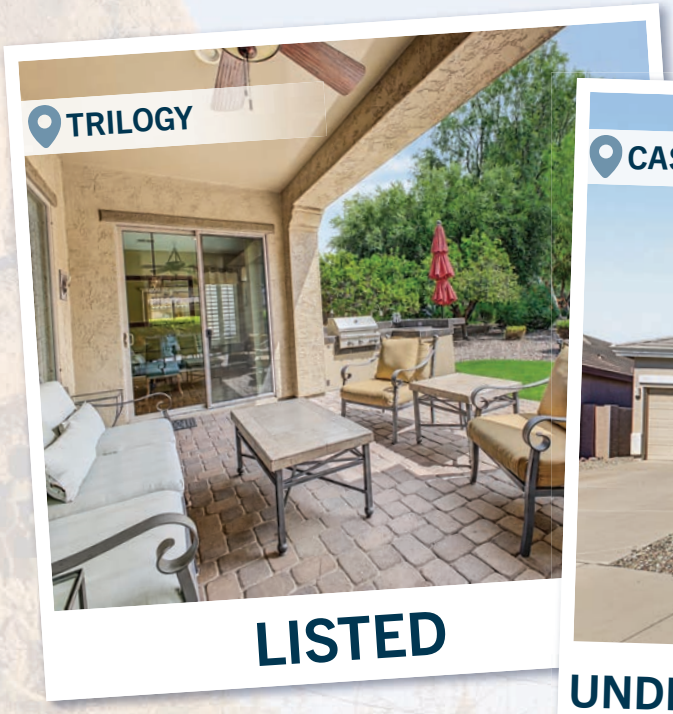
If you are considering selling in the next three to six months, give me a call. I would be happy to look at what homes similar to yours are actually selling for, how long they are taking to sell, and what you can realistically expect in today's market.

Sometimes the best decision starts with simply having the right information.

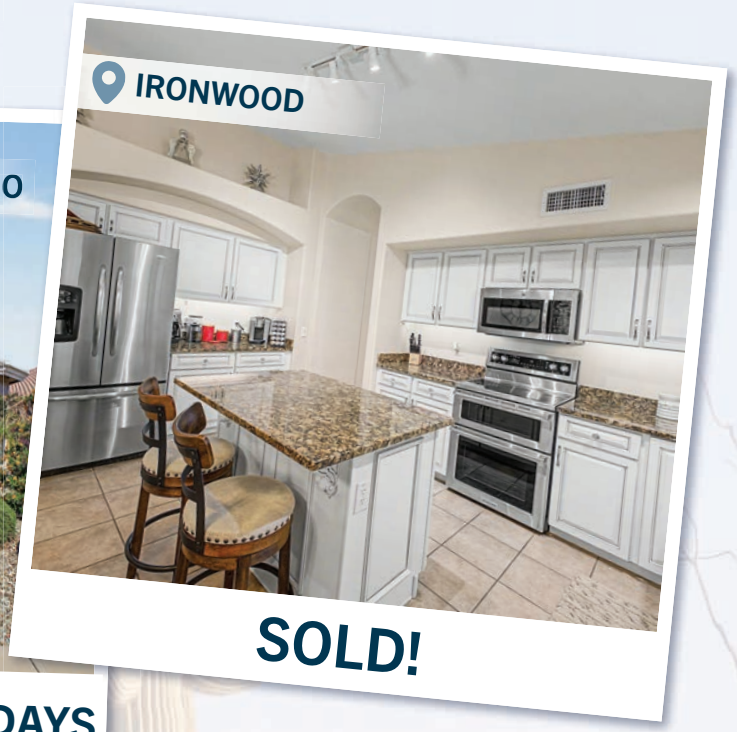


Frank May grew up in the Valley, graduating from Northwest Christian School and Northern Arizona University. He is a real estate agent and has been helping both buyers and sellers for over 25 years. Dave Ramsey, RamseyTrusted/Endorsed Local Provider 2003-2026.

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Nature, wellness peacefully collide at Saddleback

By Philip Haldiman
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

An ambitious master-planned community in far north Peoria is being developed to blend homeownership with natural surroundings and a wellness-forward lifestyle.

Austin-based Castle Hill Partners, developers of the $1 billion Saddleback community, offered an exclusive hard-hat tour of the 5,300-acre project Oct. 22. The development, upon completion, is anticipated to include about 6,500 single-family homes, 180 multifamily residences, a resort and up to 2 million square feet of commercial development.

Prices for homes in the first phase range from the mid-$400,000s to the mid-$600,000s, with homes built by Lennar and Taylor Morrison.

Build out is projected in about 15 years.

Carlee Ryan, vice president of development for Castle Hill, said the first residents of the first village, named Saltbrush, recently moved in and 33 home sites in the neighborhood have been sold.

She said with 2,500 acres of open space throughout the project and 60 miles of trails, the focus at Saddleback is on outdoor recreation and connection to nature.



Carlee Ryan, vice president of development for Castle Hill Partners, leads a hard-hat tour of Peoria's newest master-planned community Saddleback Oct. 22. (Independent Newsmedia/Philip Haldiman)

"Every neighborhood village will have their own local trail, and the idea is that every village will be able to get on the greater Saddleback trail network," Ryan said. "I've stolen this from our trail designer Avid Trails, but every homesite is a trailhead, and that is how we like to think about it. From here you can get anywhere."

Currently the focus has been on building Saddleback's residential aspect and continuing on a major native plant salvage operation that developers say sets this master-planned community apart from others.

Tim Keenan, vice president of construction and development for Castle Hill, said Saddleback is a legacy project that stands out from other housing communities.

He said the salvage operation has saved thousands of saguaros, as well as other native plants that were on the land prior to construction.

The plants were taken from their original location on site to one of three nurseries on the property and cared for until they were strategically relocated and replanted throughout Saddleback.

The salvage operation was no small feat because of the many rules in Arizona governing saguaros and how ecologically and culturally vital they are to the Sonoran Desert.

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Saddleback

• From page 22

Keenan said people have been trying to develop the Saddleback land for 40 years, but the terrain and native plants have made it difficult.

He credits Castle Hill for sticking with their vision and not being afraid to make it work.

"To me, Saguaros are Arizona. I've never worked on a bigger salvage project than this, and it was a major undertaking," he said. "Each plant was moved with great care to one of the nurseries on site where we watered and kept the plants alive. Saguaros are unique because they must be planted in the same direction they were originally in the ground. And they must be kept upright so they don't fall over, which is the worst thing that can happen to them. This is the last project I will work on before I retire. I'm proud of a lot of my projects, but this is special."

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When the Kids Come to Visit

By Jenna Meyer
Executive Director, Sierra Winds

The holidays have a way of making things visible.

Adult children fly in, drive in, show up with casseroles and good intentions. They sit across the dinner table from a parent they haven't seen since spring and notice things like a stack of unopened mail, a refrigerator that's mostly empty, or a house that feels a little harder to manage than it did the last time they were here.

They don't say anything right away, but they drive home thinking about it.

I've heard this story more times than I can count from adult children who came to tour Sierra Winds not because their parent asked, but because Thanksgiving or Christmas brought something into focus that hadn't been visible from a distance. The holidays have a way of compressing time and putting people in the same room. Sometimes what you see in that room prompts a conversation that may be overdue.

That conversation is a hard one to start. Nobody wants to feel like they're pushing. Nobody wants to feel like they're being managed. The dynamic is delicate, and I've watched it go sideways when it's approached as a problem to solve rather than a future to plan together.

The families who navigate it best tend to come in curious rather than decided. They're not arriving with a plan to convince anyone of anything. Instead, they're asking questions. What would make things easier? What does a good day look like? What would you want if something changed?

Those questions open doors that phrasing like "we need to talk about your living situation" tends to close.



Jenna Meyer

What I'd suggest to any adult child heading home for the holidays is this: pay attention to what you *observe*, but lead with what you *feel*. "I've been thinking about you" is heard differently than "I've been worried about you." One opens a conversation while the other puts someone on the defensive before it's even started.

And if the conversation naturally turns to what options exist and what a community like Sierra Winds actually looks like day to day, I'd encourage families to explore it together. Approach it not as a decision being made for someone, but as a choice being made with them. There's a real difference, and the people on the receiving end feel it immediately.

The holidays are a natural moment for all of this, because being together is rare enough that the timing matters. Use the time well. Ask the questions that are harder to ask from across the country. Listen more than you talk.

And if what you hear tells you it might be time to learn more, Sierra Winds is a good place to start.



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Traffic

• From page 1

Intrieri said in his experience, there are two things that every resident desires — low crime and safe streets.

As a former motorcycle cop, Intrieri said, he has worked using data to deploy personnel to be most effective through awareness and visibility by being present in the right areas at the right times to affect behavior.

"We used to joke around and call it behavior modification, but that's exactly what it is. We are modifying behavior and we are letting people know that they need to be aware of their surroundings and the risks they pose to others," he said.

Citations and written warnings grew from 8,981 in 2023, to 12,057 in 2025 – a 34% increase in traffic safety efforts, according to the annual report.



Thomas Intrieri

In 2026, the forecast for proactive enforcement and education is 18,418 citations and warnings — a deliberate investment in visible deterrence, Intrieri said.

DUIs are down slightly from 702 in 2024 to 688 in 2025.

It's about the visibility, he said.

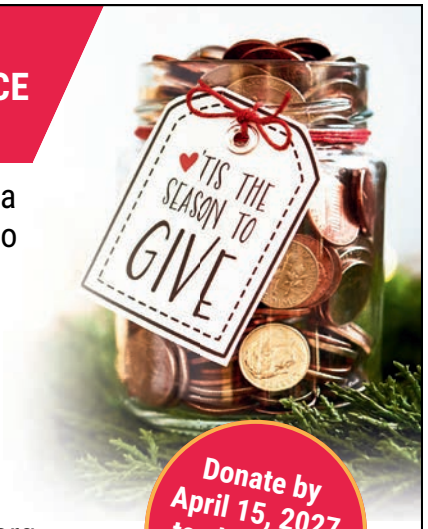
"A ticket isn't always about just enforcement. It's about education," Intrieri said. "If you look at the numbers, we've had a significant impact."

Senior News Editor Philip Haldiman can be reached at phaldiman@iniusa.org, or on X @philiphaldiman. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to AzOpinions@inusua.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long

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Election

• From page 19

Mayor and Council

Councilor Michael Finn will continue his more than 11-year stint on the Peoria City Council, but starting in January he will be sworn in as mayor.



Michael Finn



Art Miller

Maricopa County's most recent counts show Finn has 56% with 35,121 votes, and former Peoria Police Chief Art Miller has 44% with 27,241 votes, according to unofficial results.

The council has set aggressive economic development goals in recent years to attract major advanced industries to the city, such as microchip testing and packaging company Amkor Technology.

City officials say investments into the Peoria Innovation Core and North Peoria Gateway will bring high-paying jobs and more revenue into the city.

Finn will take that pro-economic development platform, as previously laid out by Mayor Jason Beck, to the mayor's office when he is sworn in next year.

Finn thanked the police and fire departments, as well as city council, fellow elected officials, community leaders, and the many volunteers and supporters of his campaign.

He also thanked Miller.

"We both care deeply about this community and want to see it succeed, and I sincerely wish him and his family all the best," Finn said. "While elections are competitive by nature, governing requires collaboration, mutual respect, and a willingness to work together. As mayor, my commitment is to represent every Peoria resident. We may not always agree on every issue, but I believe we share a common goal: ensuring Peoria remains a safe, thriving community where families and businesses can succeed."



Eva Osuna

Eva Osuna will be the next Pine District representative for the Peoria City Council, bringing to her seat historical city roots that originated with her uncle's service at the dais decades ago.

Johnny Osuna's service on council spanned 17 years throughout the 1980s and 90s, and his namesake resides on Peoria's historic gathering place downtown, Osuna Park.

Maricopa County's most recent counts show Osuna has 63% with 3,940 votes, and her opponent Joysaphine Waitman-Powell has 37% with 2,3207 votes, according to unofficial results.



Joysaphine Waitman-Powell

Acacia District incumbent Jennifer Crawford won her seat against write-in candidate Emily Saeteurn.

Tad Snidecor ran unopposed for a council seat in the Palo Verde District.

Other Propositions

Voters also approved Proposition 429, which asked for authorization for the Peoria school district to sell, lease or exchange Kachina Elementary School 5304 W .Crocus Dr. and the Peoria Unified District Administration Center 6330 W. Thunderbird Rd., Glendale.

The district doesn't have to sell the properties, but now has the authority to do so.

It is being supported by 69% with 56,433 votes, according to the most recent unofficial results.

Finally, Proposition 417 will pass, a city ballot measure that asked voters to approve a franchise agreement with the Rose Valley water company, which provides water to approximately 2,400 households in the West Valley, largely Peoria.

This proposition is being supported by 63% with 40,394 votes, according to the most recent unofficial results.

Senior News Editor Philip Haldiman can be reached at phaldiman@iniusa.org, or on X @philiphaldiman. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to AzOpinions@inusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our Civility Guidelines.









Basketball

• From page 15

son as Liberty coach)

Top Returnees: F Jacob Hunter, Sr., 6-5 (14.2 ppg, 7.4 rpg); F Trevin Davis, Soph., 6-6 (9.5 ppg, 3.5 rpg)

How many years have you coached basketball? I'm entering my 29th year of coaching.

What is your team's best attribute entering this season? We have a mix of veterans and youth. Our senior leadership is strong and our returners know what it means to win it all.

What will your team need to improve for the season to be a success? The entire season is a quest to become the best version of ourselves. In order to do that, we must become connected, and the best way to do that is through trust. When we get healthy, and we become unbreakably connected, we have a chance to have an incredible finish to the year.

Who are your team leaders? All of our players are leaders. Senior leaders Nicholas Topolosek and Jacob Hunter are four year varsity lettermen with two state championship rings so their voice is strong on the team. Milton Phinnessee III and Trevin Davis are strong voices as well.

Who are newcomers to the varsity squad who could make an impact? Amaurie Beausejore is a senior transfer from Desert Mountain and will make an impact when he gets eligible. We have six sophomores and one freshman on our roster as well.

What needs to happen for your squad to reach the state tournament this season, or achieve the goals the team has set? The more trust we build, the more connected we will be.

Sunrise Mountain Mustangs

5A Northwest Valley Region

2025-26 Record: 13-13 overall, 4-6 region

Coach: Gary Rath (12th year as head coach)

Top Returnee: G Isaac Maskovich, Sr., 6-1 (12.4 ppg, 2.2 apg); G Carter Pendleton, Sr., 6-2 (8.4 ppg, 3.2 rpg).

How many years have you coached basketball? 12th year varsity boys coach, 25th overall as a varsity coach (13 as girls head coach at SMHS).

What is your team's best attribute entering this season? Our ability to spread the floor and shoot along with our unselfishness.

What will your team need to improve for the season to be a success? Defensive rebounding, minimizing our turnovers, shot selection and being able to defend bigger teams.

Who are your team leaders? Steven Brown, Xavier Stassen, Isaac Maskovich and Carter Pendleton.

Who are newcomers to the varsity squad who could make an impact? Nash Parcells (senior from JV last year), and transfer Jon Yaskowitz (senior).

What needs to happen for your squad to reach the state tournament this season, or achieve the goals the team has set? Defensive rebounding, minimize turnovers are the two big things for us.

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'MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET'

ABOUT: Nov. 20-Dec. 27, at Arizona Broadway Theatre, 7701 W. Paradise Lane, Peoria. Performance times vary.

INFO: The holiday musical follows Kris Kringle, a department-store Santa who claims to be the real Santa Claus, exploring themes of family, belief and Christmas spirit.

WEB: azbroadway.org



(Submitted/Campbell's Farmers Market & Craft Fair)

CAMPBELL'S FARMERS MARKET & CRAFT FAIR

ABOUT: 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 21, and Saturdays, Dec. 5 and 19, in the lot across from Campbell's Restaurant, 9098 W. Pinnacle Peak Road, Peoria

INFO: The outdoor market features fresh foods, handmade crafts and other goods from local vendors. It operates on the first and third Saturdays of each month from September through May.



TheaterWorks brings back the classic tale of Ebenezer Scrooge in "A Christmas Carol," which runs Dec. 4-20 on the Peoria stage. (Submitted/TheaterWorks)

WEB: campbellsrestaurantfarmersmarket.com

THANKSGIVING DAY CLASSIC

ABOUT: 7:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 26, at Peoria Sports Complex, 16101 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria

INFO: Arizona Road Racers hosts a 10-mile race at 7:30 a.m., a 5K at 8:15 a.m. and a 1-mile fun run at 8:30 a.m. Finishers receive medals. Participants may donate unwrapped toys for the Peoria Toy Drive, and a portion of proceeds supports Peoria Diamond Club charitable programs. Registration is online only.

WEB: arizonaroadracers.com

'TRIBUTE TO TOBY'

ABOUT: 7:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 30, at Arizona Broadway Theatre, 7701 W. Paradise Lane, Peoria

INFO: "TOBY – The Experience" pays tribute to country singer Toby Keith. The concert runs approximately 90 minutes, with tickets listed at $70.

WEB: azbroadway.org/shows/tribute-to-toby-2

'A CHRISTMAS CAROL'

ABOUT: Dec. 4-20, at Peoria Center for the Performing Arts, 10580 N. 83rd Drive, Peoria. Performance times vary.

INFO: TheaterWorks presents the Charles Dickens story of Ebenezer Scrooge and the spirits who visit him on Christmas Eve. An ASL-interpreted performance is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5.

WEB: theaterworks.org

WHOVILLE PJ PARTY

ABOUT: 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Dec. 5, at Peoria Sports Complex, 16101 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria

INFO: A Mighty Change of Heart hosts its third annual holiday gathering featuring games, crafts, music, children's activities and gifts. The event serves foster and adoptive families and requires advance registration. Registration was listed as sold out when last checked.

WEB: amchaz.org

YOUR EVENTS, PLEASE

We welcome your events for our neighborhood To-Do List page. Please send the following for publication in our calendar: name of the event, time, date and location with address and if there is a cost to attend.

Email us: **aznews@iniusa.org**

IN EVENTS

The Surprise Independent will host a senior expo 9 a.m.-noon Jan. 19, 2027 at The Colonnade, 19116 N. Colonnade Way, Surprise. Individuals wishing to participate may reach out to the sales team.

Email: **azad@iniusa.org**

• See **To-Do** Page **29**

To-Do
• From page **28**

ABBA HOLLY JOLLY CHRISTMAS

ABOUT: 7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 7, at Arizona Broadway Theatre, 7701 W. Paradise Lane, Peoria

INFO: ABBA FAB performs holiday songs and ABBA hits accompanied by a nine-piece band. The concert runs about 90 minutes, with tickets listed at $70.

WEB: azbroadway.org

'THE NICE LIST'

ABOUT: Dec. 9-23, at Arizona Broadway Theatre, 7701 W. Paradise Lane, Peoria. Performance times vary.

INFO: The family holiday musical follows two elves entrusted with Santa's Nice List while he is away from the North Pole.

WEB: azbroadway.org

'JINGLE JACKS'

ABOUT: Dec. 10-24, at Arizona Broadway Theatre, 7701 W. Paradise Lane, Peoria. Performance times vary.

INFO: Four Canadian lumberjacks present a holiday musical performance featuring songs in styles ranging from barbershop and classical to jazz, rock and hip-hop.

WEB: azbroadway.org

PEORIA UNIFIED BOARD MEETING

ABOUT: 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10, at Peoria Unified School District Administration Center, 6330 W. Thunderbird Road, Glendale



(Submitted/Peoria)

INFO: The Peoria Unified School District governing board will conduct district business during its regularly scheduled meeting. The agenda will identify matters for discussion and possible action.

WEB: peoriaunified.org

CANDY CANE LANE

ABOUT: 4–10 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Dec. 11-12, at Peoria Sports Complex, 16101 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria

INFO: The holiday festival features more than 150 shopping vendors, food trucks, Santa photos, children's activities, snow and bubble play, bounce houses and a toy drive. Admission is $5, children 2 and younger enter free, and parking is

• See **List** Page **30**



List

• From page **29**

free. Some activities cost extra.

WEB: psiloveaz.com

PEORIA HOLIDAY FESTIVAL

ABOUT: 5-9 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 12, at Centennial Plaza at Peoria City Hall, 8401 W. Monroe St., Peoria

INFO: The city's holiday festival features seasonal entertainment, Santa visits, food trucks, artisan vendors and family activities.

WEB: peoriaaz.gov

PHOENIX BRASS COLLECTIVE HOLIDAY CONCERT

ABOUT: 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 16, at Peoria Center for the Performing Arts, 10580 N. 83rd Drive, Peoria

INFO: The Phoenix Brass Collective presents a free holiday concert featuring brass and percussion musicians.

WEB: theaterworks.org

VISTANCIA FAMILY FUN COMMUNITY MARKET

ABOUT: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 20, at the Village of Vistancia parking lot, 29701 N. Sunrise Point, Peoria

INFO: The monthly community market features more than 90 vendors offering farmers market products, food, arts and crafts, along with children's activities, food samples and prize drawings. Admission and parking are free. The event is open to the public and pet-friendly.

WEB: Facebook: Vistancia Farmers Market & Craft Show

'SLEIGH BELLS SWING'

ABOUT: 7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 21, at Arizona Broadway Theatre, 7701 W. Paradise Lane, Peoria

INFO: The Big Easy Live performs Christmas favorites in New Orleans-style swing and big-band arrangements. The concert runs approximately 90 minutes, with tickets listed at $70.

WEB: azbroadway.org

ACROSS THE YEARS RUNNING FESTIVAL

ABOUT: Beginning 9 a.m. Monday, Dec. 28, and continuing through Sunday, Jan. 3, at Peoria Sports Complex, 16101 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria

INFO: Aravaipa Running hosts an endurance-running festival featuring timed races of six hours to six days and fixed-distance events ranging from a marathon to 200 miles. Runners complete laps on a 1.42-mile course. A Last Person Standing race begins at noon Thursday, Dec. 31.

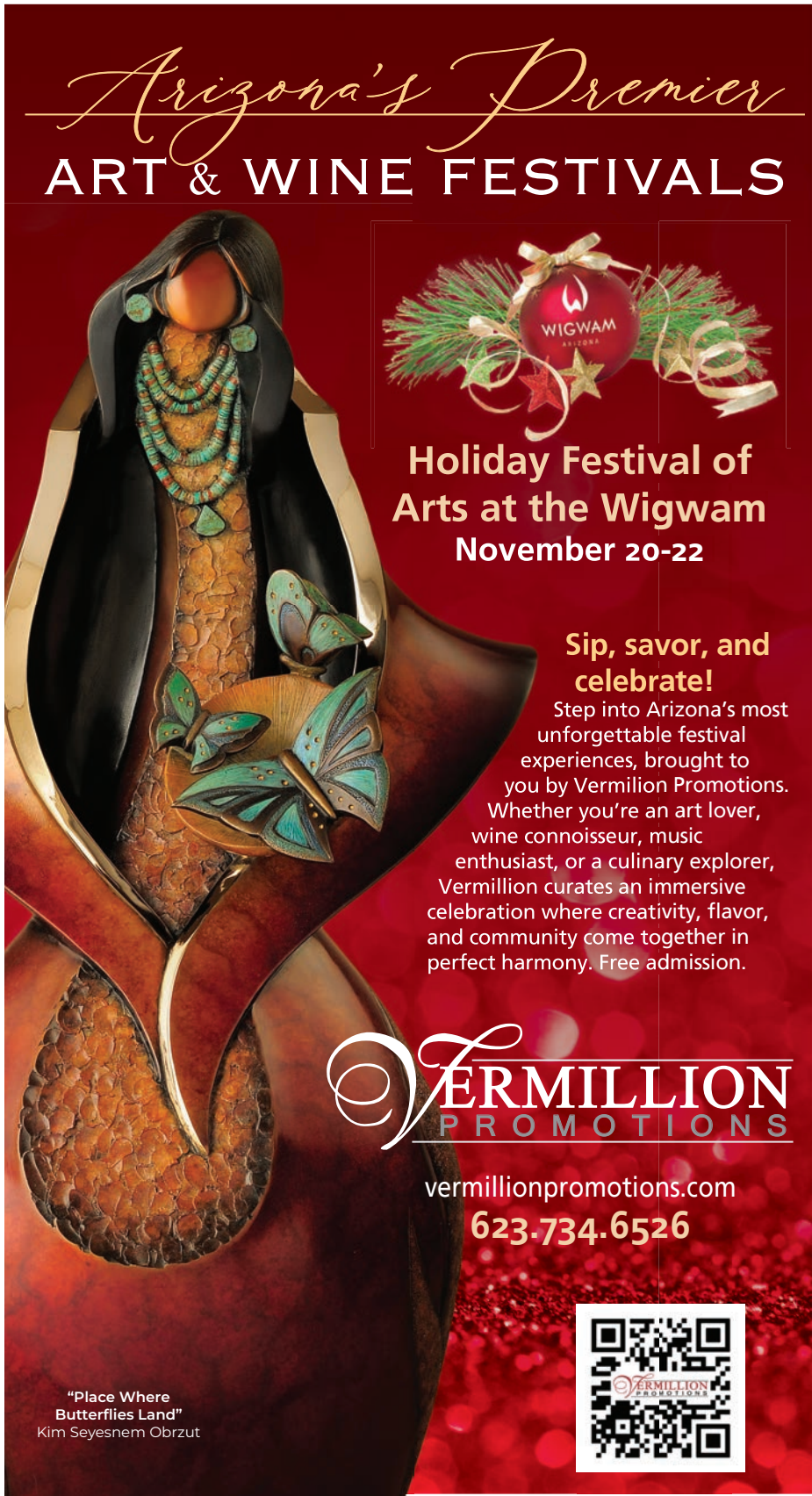
WEB: aravaiparunning.com

NEW YEAR'S EVE AT ABT

ABOUT: 7-10:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 31, at Arizona Broadway Theatre, 7701 W. Paradise Lane, Peoria.

INFO: The theater's New Year's Eve celebration features New York-inspired food, desserts, live music, dancing, a champagne toast and party favors. Tickets are $125 plus fees.

WEB: azbroadway.org





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‘A Christmas Carol’ returns to TheaterWorks



TheaterWorks veteran BJ Garrett stars as Ebeneezer Scrooge in this year’s production of “A Christmas Carol.” (TheaterWorks)

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

TheaterWorks invites audiences to celebrate the holiday season with the return of “A Christmas Carol,” running Dec. 4-20, at the Peoria Center for the Performing Arts, 10580 N. 83rd Drive.

The production brings families and friends together for a festive theatrical experience filled with holiday magic, cherished traditions and the enduring spirit of Christmas.

Based on Charles Dickens’ beloved novella, “A Christmas Carol,” the play follows Ebenezer Scrooge, a bitter businessman whose life is transformed on Christmas Eve when he is visited by the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley, and three spirits representing Christmas Past, Present and Future.

Directing this year’s production is Cydney Trent, a longtime member of the TheaterWorks community with more than a decade of experience directing and choreographing on its stages.

Leading the cast this year as Ebenezer Scrooge is BJ Garrett, a familiar face to TheaterWorks audiences and a veteran of six previous TheaterWorks productions. Having portrayed Bob Cratchit, Jacob Marley and Old Joe, Garrett takes on the iconic role of Scrooge for the first time, marking a new chapter for the holiday tradition.

Joining Garrett is an ensemble of local performers, including Nathan Spector as Bob Cratchit, Bennett Allen Wood as Charles Dickens and Ixy Utpadel as the Ghost of Christmas Present, alongside talented actors from across the Valley.

IF YOU GO

What: “A Christmas Carol”

Where: TheaterWorks at the Peoria Center for the Performing Arts, 10580 N. 83rd Drive.

When: Dec. 4-20

Tickets: On sale now starting at $38, and available at theaterworks.org or by calling the TheaterWorks box office at 623-815-7930 (option 0). Box Office hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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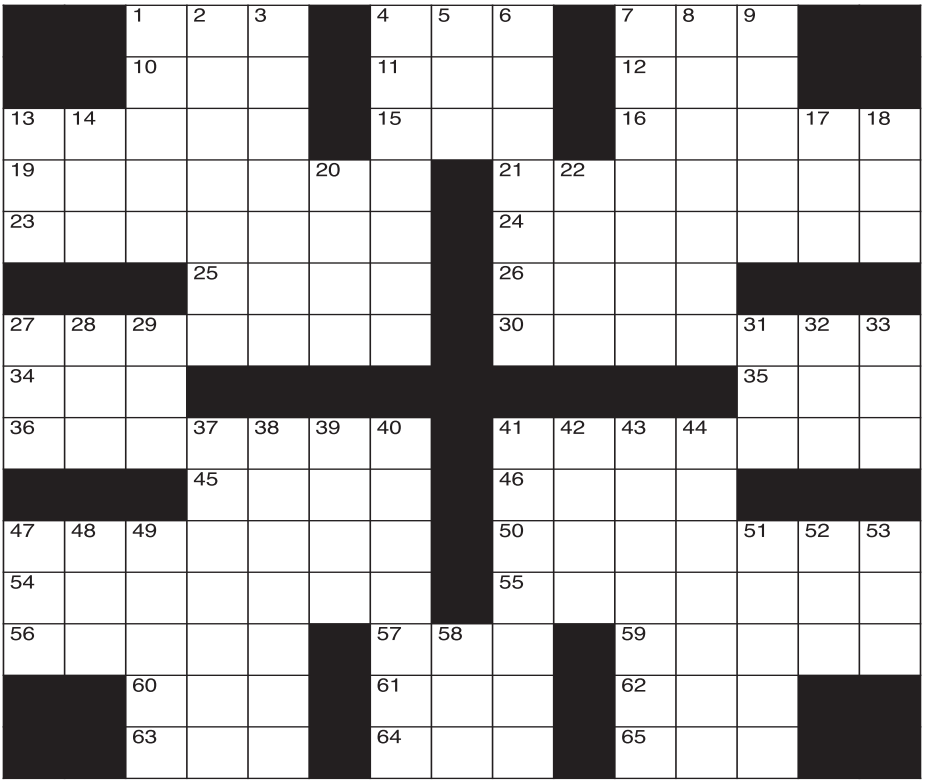
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4. Request
7. Clairvoyance
10. 007's creator Fleming
11. Male adult
12. Norse mythological figure
13. Coffin cloths
15. Breeze through
16. Ladyfish genus
19. We all take them
21. Nobleman's jurisdiction
23. Members of U.S. Navy
24. Rummy-like card game
25. Unable to move
26. Type of horse
27. Parted
30. Woman's cloak
34. South American plant
35. Prohibit
36. Something one takes
41. Dish detergent manufacturer
45. Romanian river
46. Personification of pity
47. Makes upset
50. Discuss again
54. Medical instrument
55. Support
56. Informal term for money
57. Catch doing something wrong
59. Prehistoric people
60. Large African antelope
61. Automobile
62. "Losing My Religion" rockers
63. High-resolution scientific instrument
64. A major division of geological time
65. Attempt

CLUES DOWN

1. Indoor plant
2. Fit to be sold
3. Rather
4. Collected
5. A baglike structure in a plant or animal
6. Irish rap group
7. Ageless
8. Lists indicating curriculum
9. Pokes at
13. Public television station
14. They __
17. Cooking tool
18. Separately managed account
20. Iron-containing compound
22. Swiss river
27. Former French coin
28. Electronic countermeasures
29. Taxi
31. Helps little firms
32. Unhappy
33. Midway between northeast and east
37. Glowing
38. Lists of items to be discussed
39. An informal body of friends
40. Indispensable quality
41. Neural structures
42. Brews
43. A place to dock
44. Festive singer
47. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
48. Northernmost point of mainland Wales
49. Most worthless parts
51. Type of "bear"
52. Take or consume
53. Defunct European organization
58. Swiss river

SOLUTION ON PAGE 37





SUDOKU

3			5					
9				6	4			
			8			7		2
			1				2	
	2		7				8	
	5						3	9
2		3						5
	4	6						
7			4					8

Level: Advanced

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8	6	3	2	1	4	5	9	7
1	9	2	7	5	3	6	4	8
5	7	4	6	8	9	3	1	2
6	3	1	8	2	9	7	5	4
4	8	9	5	3	7	6	2	1
7	2	5	6	4	1	8	3	6
2	1	7	3	6	8	4	6	5
3	5	8	4	6	2	1	7	9
6	4	9	1	7	5	2	8	3

ANSWER:

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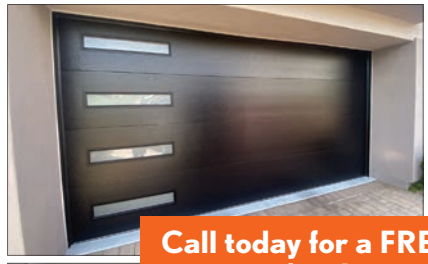
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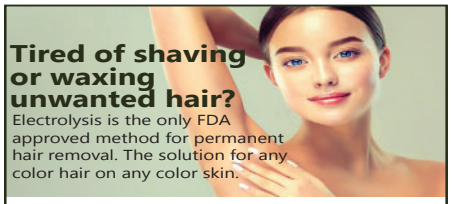
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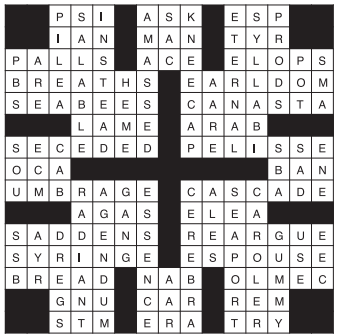
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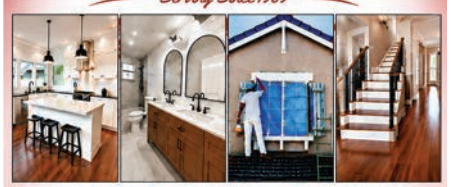
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