



north central news

the voice of the north central phoenix community since 1999

volume 28, issue 8 • august 2026

www.northcentralnews.net

Making the case for historic preservation

By Kathryn M. Miller

Sunnyslope's Acacia Library represents more than just a place to check out books and media. To the community members who showed up to speak at the North Mountain Village Planning Committee (VPC) meeting on July 15, it has been a place to learn English and seek higher education, a place to escape, a place to dream and a place that showcases the legacy of well-known Valley architect Bennie Gonzales.

At the end of the day, it is the preservation of Phoenix history – of the building, the area and the people – that is at the forefront of a current move to obtain Historic Preservation Overlay zoning status for the library, which was built in 1969. A cause spearheaded by Julia Taggart, president of the Sunnyslope Historical Society, and one that the non-profit Preserve Phoenix fully supports.

Preserve Phoenix is the only historic preservation advocacy organization in Phoenix, although there are many other groups that work within specific neighborhoods, particular eras or in Arizona more broadly. The volunteer board is small, but the work is important, says board president Erin Lindsey, and as an Arizona native and founder of the Phoenix Art Deco Society, work that is close to her heart.

The Society is "how I met all of these crazy preservation people. They sucked me in – in a really great way

please see PRESERVATION on page 8



Lindsay Murray, the new principal at Madison Camelview Elementary School is preparing for the new school year for both her kids (pictured) and the hundreds of students at her school (submitted photo).

A successful school year starts now

By Kathryn M. Miller

As a new school year gets underway, Lindsay Murray is not only getting her own children geared up for the transition from summer vacation back to a school schedule, but she also is focused on making sure the approximately 600 students at Madison Camelview Elementary School have a successful start to their 2026-27 school year.

Murray will begin the new school year in a brand-new position in the Madison School District – as principal at Camelview, after serving as assistant principal for four years at Madison Simis Elementary School, then as principal for the past three years. Drawing on her experience as both an educator and administrator, she says that the first month of school is crucial as families head back to school and get back into successful routines.

"I think the biggest thing is to remember that kids are resilient, and oftentimes I think parents are so much more concerned than the kids are," Murray said. "They're excited. They might be nervous and have the butterflies to go

to school and see their new friends, but the biggest thing you can do is a parent is to make sure that you are on a schedule. Summer is different...getting back into a school routine where they are going to bed at a consistent time, waking up at a consistent time about a week before the year starts can be really helpful."

The principal added that oftentimes she sees kindergarten and first-grade parents having a challenging time envisioning the drop-off experience and encourages families to practice that process.

"It is OK to contact the school and see if you can drive through the parking lot and practice getting out of the car in the morning, or the student carrying

please see SCHOOL YEAR on page 6

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From the Editor

Nothing is constant except change – a trite observation, perhaps, but one that has been rattling around in my head this last month as the team at *North Central News* worked on one last issue together.

If you read Tara’s letter (page 4), you know that after 27 years, the paper has been sold. We are not going away, the September issue will come out, and we hope to be here for many years to come. But we will continue without our founder, Tara, and the glue that has held our office together for more than a decade, Janice. And, of course, everyone’s favorite office mascot, Abbey.

Working at a community newspaper is a lot like being a part of a family.



We care about the neighborhoods that we cover and the people who live in them. And we care about one another. I’m not going to lie...this hurts.

However, North Central is my community, too, and I am committed to continuing to cover the neighborhood news that matters and voicing your concerns to city leaders and the broader community. And while I can’t speak for our sales manager, Joanne, I know that she will keep bringing her A game in support of our dedicated advertisers, to whom we are grateful.

I have never liked goodbyes. So, Tara and Janice, until next time, thank you for everything you have done for us and for the North Central community. And to you, our neighbors, thank you for your readership and your continued support as we travel this journey together.

Until next month, all my best,
Kathryn M. Miller
Editor, *North Central News*
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COMMUNITY

Thank you for 27 years of community support

Tara A. Blanc, Publisher

For nearly 27 years, *North Central News* has been bringing independent local news and advertising to the North Central community every month. It has been an honor and a pleasure to have been part of building a medium that has persevered for more than a quarter century through economic downturns, a pandemic, and a myriad of social and political changes, including the demise of too many print newspapers. So, it is with mixed emotions that I will step down as publisher and owner of the *North Central News*, effective Aug. 1.

When the late John Myers, a local publisher, Tim Mullan, a local realtor, and I joined forces to create a community newspaper for the North Central area in the fall of 1999, I had no idea that the paper would have this kind of longevity. That it has is a tribute to the staff we've had over the years, our loyal advertisers, and all of you in the community who have offered us such staunch support. Our content has evolved and expanded over the years, but our focus on the community has remained constant as we have highlighted the local achievements, issues, and concerns that impact the North Central community.

As of Sept. 1, *North Central News* will be published by the O'Rourke Media Group, a local media company that specializes in publishing local community newspapers in 45 markets across nine states, including the *CITYSunTimes* and several other Arizona community newspapers. Despite the change in ownership, our readers and advertisers should expect the same focused level of local news and feature coverage and the same great attention to local advertisers.

I've been incredibly fortunate in the people who have chosen to be part of our *North Central News* family. I'm so grateful for the support from our editor, Kathryn Miller, our sales manager, Joanne Day, and our office manager, Janice Backus, who are the ones who make this paper happen each month. I cannot thank them enough. I'm also very grateful for the former editors, sales representatives, and administrators who helped us build the paper over the years. I offered advice, provided support, and wrote the checks, but these are the people who did all of the hard work.

We never could have started the paper, let alone survived for 27 years,



The NCN staff (front, from l-r): Joanne Day, sales manager; Janice Backus, administrator; Abby, official mascot; (back, l-r), Kathryn Miller, editor, and Tara Blanc, publisher.

without the support of our advertisers. The support we've received from local Realtors, school districts, and businesses large and small has allowed us to provide a free-circulation community newspaper every month for more than two decades. To the many North Central businesses that have supported us over the last 27 years, I am truly grateful.

And last, but not least, I want to express my gratitude to you, our readers. Your encouragement and criticism have played a vital role in our growth and evolution, and I am deeply grateful to those of you who take the time to read our paper, patronize our advertisers and offer us thoughtful feedback on what we do.

In an era in which media outlets are being consolidated or simply shut down, it's more important than ever for small, independent newspapers to continue giving a voice to their local communities. Local newspapers not only support local economies and preserve local history, they also play a vital role in strengthening community ties, supporting local democracy, and holding local institutions and officials accountable. I have every confidence that the new ownership of *North Central News* will continue this commitment to the community and I hope you all will continue to support the paper as it moves into a new era.

I know this is the right decision, but it is not an easy one, and saying goodbye is one of the most painful things I've ever done. I will miss the vibrancy and community of North Central and, most of all, I will miss my *North Central News* family. To them and to our readers and advertisers – thank you for allowing me to be a small part of your lives for the past 27 years. It has truly been an honor.

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The North Central News is published monthly by North Central News, Inc. The circulation is 22,000 copies mailed directly to homes and businesses in North Central Phoenix and 3,000 copies distributed from racks in the North Central area.

If you would like to advertise in North Central News, call 602-277-2742 or e-mail advertising@northcentralnews.net to order a free media kit.

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COMMUNITY

SCHOOL YEAR continued from page 1

their backpack into the school,” Murray said. “And then letting them have some ownership... letting them pick out their new shoes or their new backpack, that can make them feel a little bit more special.”

Other easy tips for parents: make sure that your child has shoes that they can tie by themselves; make sure that they can open and close their own lunch box; always label their belongings; and for nervous students, place a photo of yourself and the family in the student’s backpack, “Then, if they’re feeling nervous, they can just look at it and know that you care about them,” Murray said.

In the Madison District, the first day of class is Tuesday, Aug. 11, and at Camelview, Meet the Teacher events will be held the day before – a perfect opportunity to do a “dry run” for the first day of school and a chance to get to know the teacher, drop off supplies and explore the student’s classroom, Murray said.

The broader community also has the ability to contribute toward a successful school year through volunteer opportunities, “Whether you are someone who wants to come have lunch with students and support their social and emotional wellbeing or maybe support their reading through tutoring; we have an Art Masterpiece program if you like the arts and want to share your passion with the students – there are tons of ways to volunteer,” Murray said.

And the principal is eager to get to know Camelview families and neighbors. Those who are interested in donating resources to the school or supporting the school community in other ways are always welcome to reach out to her.

The Madison District has a vision

statement: “Inspiring passion for learning and leading in an ever-changing world.” But what inspires Murray?

“Oh my gosh, you made me emotional,” Murray said. “I am inspired every day by my kids. I am a much more empathetic leader and educator now that I have children of my own, and I see the world through their eyes a little bit, and being motivated to make sure that they have a great experience and that the world that we are setting them up for is going to be one that they can contribute positively to and they feel welcome in and included in – that’s what motivates me. I aspire to make sure that the next generation of students can have the same wonderful educational experiences that we did.”

Grant supports art engagement

Art Heals Arizona announced that the organization was awarded a \$150,000 grant from Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust. The grant is designated for building fundraising capacity through increasing effectiveness, donor retention and long-term sustainability for funding vital services that help transform children’s trauma to resilience through the arts.

The grant will help support the development team in the areas of marketing, volunteer engagement, and annual giving. This team will focus efforts on creating and implementing strategies that will build and maintain strong relationships between prospective donors and Art Heals Arizona.

Art Heals Arizona (formerly Free Arts of Arizona) was founded in 1993 and has worked to transform children’s trauma to resilience through the arts. For more information, visit www.arthealsaz.org.



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PRESERVATION continued from page 1

– and it totally changed my life,” Lindsey said. “It feels good to make a difference with some really awesome preservationists who have been doing this for years and years and years.”

The organization’s mission is to preserve and protect the city’s historic buildings, neighborhoods and districts, and through their efforts, the history of Phoenix unfolds.

“When you start investing in the history, even individually learning about the where you’re from, where you’re living, you have this connection to it, and that builds community and it builds culture,” Lindsey said. “Sometimes the culture of Phoenix seems really weird. Not a lot of people are from here or they move and come back, or they’re transplants. But there’s something about the history, a tangible history in a building that you can experience if it’s still around for you to enjoy and learn about. You build camaraderie with your neighbor, with the place that you’re from. Sometimes the identity of Phoenix gets so lost. I think that identity is here in our historic buildings.”

One of the biggest threats to historic preservation is the sheer amount of new development – “it is so much easier to just tear things down,” Lindsey said. But the organization is not anti-development or anti-progress, and they don’t want developers to see historic preservation as a roadblock.

“We want people to know that protecting these buildings doesn’t just mean protecting it for the sake of it still being there,” she said. “It means adaptively reusing them and encouraging developers and the city and to think outside of the box when it comes to redevelopment, especially in downtown. Historic



Barney Gonzales, son of the architect Bennie Gonzales, addressed the North Mountain Village Planning Committee members at a July 15 meeting as the community made the case for historic overlay zoning for the 57-year-old Acacia Library (photo by Kathryn M. Miller).

preservation adds value to a development; there’s a way that we can all coexist and create something really great for our city while also honoring the past.”

A big win for preservation community came in March this year, when a new owner stepped in to save the Mystery Castle. Another came on July 17 with ASU’s withdrawal of legal action against downtown’s Louis Emerson House, as they sought to acquire the property through eminent domain. Built in 1902 – 10 years before Arizona become a state – Preserve Phoenix considers it an irreplaceable Phoenix landmark.

“Oftentimes, the losses in preservation weigh heavy on us,” Lindsey told us after the announcement. “So, to have a win this big is something worth celebrating and we are so thankful to everyone who wrote letters, signed the petition and shared the story of the Emerson House – our voices do matter, and this is the proof!”

Residents who want to learn more about local preservation efforts can join Preserve Phoenix at the Louis Emerson House for a casual celebration and

open house on First Friday, Aug. 7. Also, a happy hour event is in the works at Sunnyslope’s popular Let it Roll Bowl (12th Street and Dunlap Avenue), which features a preservation-worthy Pierson and Miller 1960 exterior. Details will be announced soon. Learn more at www.preservephx.org.

As for the North Central cases in the overly zoning process, the North Mountain VPC voted unanimously to move the Acacia Library case forward. The Roman Roads historic preservation case was recommended unanimously by the Camelback East VPC on July 7. Both cases will be heard by the Planning Commission on Aug. 6 and Phoenix City Council on Sept. 9. Find information at www.phoenix.gov – search “Historic Preservation.”

Phoenix offers crisis assistance

from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) after changes were made at the federal level last summer. The Arizona Center for Economic Progress says that the decline is especially concerning for children, older adults, people with disabilities and low-wage workers who rely on SNAP to help cover basic needs.

“When benefits are reduced or families lose eligibility, the consequences ripple beyond individual households, increasing pressure on food banks, schools, health systems, and local economies,” the organization said in a statement.

With that in mind, in July, the city of Phoenix announced the launch of Targeted One-Time Crisis Assistance to provide short-term financial support to households that have experienced a complete loss of SNAP nutrition assistance on or after Oct. 1, 2025.

The program helps households maintain stability by covering essential utility expenses, allowing families to use more of their remaining income to cover other essential expenses.

Created as part of the Phoenix City Council’s approval of a supplemental budget allocation of \$3.15 million for Flexible Financial Assistance, the program began July 6 and will remain available while the limited funding lasts.

Eligible applicants will receive \$600 toward a utility account and \$100 in transportation assistance. To qualify for the program, applicants must meet certain criteria and provide photo identification, proof of city of Phoenix residency, SNAP case number and utility account number(s).

Apply online at www.phoenix.gov/benefitlossassistance. Residents who have questions or need assistance may send an email to benefitlosshelp@phoenix.gov or call 602-262-7627 (SNAP).



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COMMUNITY

Shade trees available to SRP customers

Registration for the two remaining SRP Free Shade Tree Program virtual workshops is now open. Workshops are scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 29, at 10 a.m., and Saturday, Sept. 26, at 10 a.m. The program, which is offered in partnership with Trees Matter, gives current SRP customers two free shade trees after they complete a free online class that teaches them how to maximize the benefits of their trees.

When planted in strategic areas, shade trees can help reduce energy costs by up to 25 percent, improve air quality, increase property value and support local wildlife. All trees offered through the program are desert-adapted species. Participants will learn about the benefits of each species and how to care for them during the online workshop. Customers will be notified of the tree pickup date after completing the webinar. In 2026, SRP distributed nearly 6,000 free trees to customers. Since the initiative began in 2012, 33,000 customers have planted trees



After attending a virtual workshop, SRP customers have the opportunity to add shade to their property through the utility's Free Shade Tree Program (submitted photo).

through the SRP Shade Tree Program. For more information and to register, visit www.srp.net/shadetrees.

Enjoy evening of film, conversation

The Women's Giving Collective of Southwest Human Development will host an evening of strength, resilience and purpose at a screening of the film "Three (Extra)Ordinary Women," Aug. 12, 5:30 to 8 p.m. at Osborn Maledon, 2929 N. Central Ave., Suite 2000.

The film tells the story of three middle-aged women of color united by friendship and a shared goal—to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro who challenge themselves to rewrite the narrative of what women can achieve. Through their journeys, each woman asks: "What is my personal Kilimanjaro?" Their answers reveal powerful stories of resilience, shaped by experiences with trauma, poverty, and adversity. Today, they continue to pursue meaningful goals that uplift both their lives and their communities. The event includes refreshments and

a post-film Q&A with Pearlette Ramos, one of the film's protagonists, and Alison Steier, Ph.D., vice president of Mental Health Services at Southwest Human Development, who will offer insights and reflections inspired by the film. Tickets are \$10 for Collective members; \$20 for non-members and guests. RSVP at <https://pro.gofundme.com/event/wgc-three-extraordinary-women/e815891>. For additional information, visit www.swhd.org/wgc.

Tournament benefits Lura Turner Homes

The Lura Turner Homes 31st annual Golf Tournament will be held Friday, Sept. 11, at Grand Canyon University Golf Course, 5902 W. Indian School Road. The shotgun start is at 6:30 a.m.; cost per player is \$200 through Aug. 15; \$225 afterwards. All proceeds benefit the special needs residents of Lura Turner Homes for Developmentally Disabled Adults, founded in Phoenix in 1965 by Methodist deaconess Lura Turner. For details, visit www.luraturner-homes.org or call 602-943-4789.

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A photograph of the exterior of Denver's Car Care. The building is a single-story structure with large glass windows and doors. Several cars are parked in front of the shop. A sign on the building reads "DENVER'S CAR CARE" and "PHOENIX, AZ".

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North Central Phoenix

JUNE 2026

MARKET UPDATE

\$1,244,060

AVG SALE PRICE
(+28% from last year)

\$434.37

AVG SALE PRICE/SQFT
(+4.8% from last year)

\$735,000

MEDIAN SALE PRICE
(+8.5% from last year)

\$386.27

MEDIAN SALE PRICE/SQFT
(+2.6% from last year)

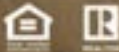
77

DAYS ON MARKET
(+15% from last year)

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SOURCE: ARMLS AND THE CROMFORD REPORT
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85020, 85021, 85028



COMMUNITY

Twirling corps expands membership

The Arizona Twirling Athletes Baton Twirling Corps is expanding its membership to boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 15 in the central and north Valley areas.

A special introductory session will begin the week of Aug. 24 at Rose Lane Elementary School, Madison Heights Elementary School, Sunnyslope Elementary School and Desert Foothills Jr. High. The eight-week training session will meet once a week for 45 minutes. The youth will be instructed by Becky Hewitt, director of the award-winning unit for the past 51 years.

A number of skills will be included in the program, including marching, dancing, gymnastics and baton twirling. The nonprofit performing unit can be seen in many local parades and performances this fall in the Valley, including the APS Electric Light Parade and the Fiesta Bowl Parade, where they perform with their winning parade float down Central Avenue. The corps also sponsors a special training



The Arizona Twirling Athletes Baton Twirling Corps will host introductory sessions at a handful of areal schools in August as it seeks to expand its membership (submitted photo).

camp for members during the month of June each year at the Wigwam Resort and competes each year at the Regional Twirling Competition in San Diego.

For times and registration fees, call Hewitt at 602-743-2681 or visit the organization’s website: www.arizonatwirlingathletes.org.

Supply grant window closes Aug. 10

A few new classroom supplies can go a long way, says Arizona Public Service (APS). They can turn a math lesson into a hands-on activity, help students see a concept click in real-time and give teach-

ers more ways to bring learning to life.

That is the idea behind the APS Supply My Class program, which helps K-12 public school and public charter school teachers within the utility’s service territory purchase supplies that support student learning, creativity and confidence.

Now entering its ninth year, the APS Supply My Class program provides \$500 prepaid cards to qualifying teachers to buy classroom supplies.

For many teachers, that funding helps cover much more than pencils, notebooks and markers. It enables the creation of more engaging, interactive classrooms where students can participate, collaborate and connect what they are learning to everyday life, the utility said.

Previous Supply My Class winner and middle school teacher, Jodie Ray-Marlowe, used the funding to purchase supplies that have helped to increase the active participation in lessons among her students. This included practicing concepts in real time and connecting math to daily decisions like comparing prices, calculating discounts, understanding rates of change and evaluating cell phone plans or budgeting options.

“The impact extends far beyond supplies,” Ray-Marlowe shared. “This support has helped make it easier to create lessons where students can explore ideas, work through real-world examples, feel more capable as math learners and build stronger connections to the math they use every day.”

To enter, teachers can visit www.aps.com/supplymyclass to complete their application by 12 p.m. Aug. 10. Winners will be randomly selected and notified by Oct. 9.

Bookstore hosts ‘Educator’ night

Changing Hands Bookstore will celebrate teachers, educators and librarians during Educator Appreciation Night, scheduled at the Phoenix store, 300 W. Camelback Road, Aug., Friday, Aug. 21, from 6 to 8 p.m.

During the event, educators will enjoy a 20 percent storewide discount, free refreshments, free swag for classrooms and more. There is no need to RSVP. Just grab a fellow educator friend or three and join the fun.

Learn more by visiting www.changinghands.com. Contact the store by calling 602-274-0067.

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Tuesday, August 25 | 10 am

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COMMUNITY

Pet of the Month

Delightful Diamond loves everyone that she meets

Truly a gem in every way, Diamond (pet number 852017) is a special pup who is patiently waiting at the Arizona Humane Society for her forever home. As with many pets who have made their way to Valley shelters, this adorable 5-year-young Shepherd mix found her way to the shelter after her previous family could not afford her medical care.

Diamond's previous family became worried about her after she lost her appetite and was no longer eating. Thinking she may have eaten something she should not have, they brought her to the Arizona Humane Society and surrendered her to ensure she got the help she needed.

Luckily, X-rays revealed that this loving girl did not ingest anything she shouldn't have but her bloodwork did reveal elevated protein levels, which her new family will need to keep an eye on in the future.

Those who know this gentle pup say she is extremely calm, loves everyone she meets and fits in perfectly with everyone around her. While on field trips with volunteers, Diamond has also proven to be a great walker, calm in the car and gets along great with kids and other dogs who match her serene lifestyle.

Diamond's adoption fee includes her spay surgery, current vaccinations, a microchip and a follow-up wellness exam with a VCA Animal Hospital. Visit this sweet girl at the Arizona



Diamond is an adorable 5-year-young Shepherd mix who is gentle, calm, friendly and looking for a forever home (photo courtesy of Arizona Humane Society).

Humane Society's South Mountain Campus or learn more at www.azhumane.org/adopt to give her the loving forever home she deserves.

Help pets weather the storm

With the monsoon season in full swing, the Arizona Humane Society (AHS) reminds pet owners that there can be an increase in injuries and animals escaping from homes and yards when a pet's sensitivity to storms results in intense fear. Storm phobia is one of the most common phobias in dogs and cats and may present as general anxiety, whining and barking, hiding, house soiling, or destructive behavior.

The AHS Behavior and Training Team recommends the following tips. First, never punish pets for showing fearful or anxious behavior. Act calm and interact with them like you usually would

to show them a storm is "no big deal."

Create positive associations with storms by giving their favorite treats, toys and verbal praise for calm behavior during a storm. Start as early as possible and continue reinforcing this throughout their lives. Some pets may be unaffected for years and then develop storm anxiety symptoms.

Help desensitize pets to storms by playing a thunderstorm CD or music tracks found online at low volume during happy times, like eating and playing. Gradually increase the volume over time. Also, create a safe space. It could be a crate or a closet. Ensure proper ventilation and access to their space when you're not home.

Another tactic: tire them out. Use obedience classes and daily exercise to help reduce anxiety. Drown out the noise by turning on the TV or radio and bathroom fans. Some pets will take comfort in repetitive, familiar sounds like dishwashers or washing machines. And reduce the impact of lightning flashes by closing blinds and turning on both inside and outside lights.

Use calming tools like a Thundershirt or pheromones, and always consult with your veterinarian or behaviorist. Some pets have such severe anxiety that medication is needed to keep them safe.

Finally, make sure your pet is microchipped, wearing a collar and is kept indoors. If they must go outside to potty, attach a harness and leash and go out with them.

If your pet goes missing this summer or you find a lost pet, visit

www.azhumane.org/lostpet for tips on helping get them back home.

Paws group promotes literacy

The nonprofit Paws for Youth is encouraging families to include pets in at home learning routines after seeing firsthand how therapy dogs can help children become more confident readers through the organization's Animals, Books & Children (ABC) program.

Throughout the school year, trained therapy dog teams from Paws for Youth visit schools across Arizona, giving children an opportunity to read aloud to a nonjudgmental animal companion. The program is designed to build confidence, improve motivation and help children develop a lifelong love of books.

The organization said that teachers participating in the program regularly report improvements in students' willingness to read aloud and engage with books. Some children who are initially reluctant readers become enthusiastic participants after spending time with a therapy dog.

Families can recreate many of the same benefits at home. Paws for Youth recommends creating a comfortable space where children can read aloud to a family pet. The audience doesn't have to be a dog. Cats, rabbits, birds, reptiles, fish and even favorite stuffed animals can provide a supportive audience for young readers.

For more information, visit www.pawsforyouth.org.

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TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Corley receives 'Community' award

Audrey Corley, founder of Melrose District mainstay Boycott Bar, has earned the Greater Phoenix Equality Chamber's 2026 Community Partnership Award.

For more than two decades, Corley has helped shape what LGBTQ+ nightlife, community and belonging can look like in Phoenix, the Chamber said. Now, that work is being recognized with a 2026 Community Partnership Award for their lasting role in creating safe, visible and community-centered spaces across Greater Phoenix.

"This award means a lot because it reflects the people and partnerships behind Boycott," Corley said. "No one builds community alone. Boycott has grown because people needed a place where they could walk in, feel comfortable and know they belonged. That has always been the heart of it."

The Greater Phoenix Equality



Audrey Corley, founder of Melrose District mainstay Boycott Bar and owner of Title 9 Sports Grill, was recognized with the Greater Phoenix Equality Chamber's 2026 Community Partnership Award (submitted photo).

Chamber of Commerce, also known as GPECC, supports the region's LGBTQ+ business community and works to advance economic opportunity, business equality and inclusion. Its Annual Hero Awards recognize busi-

nesses, business owners and community leaders showing dedication, leadership and advocacy for the LGBTQ+ community.

For Corley, the recognition marks a meaningful moment in a career defined

by resilience, representation and local impact. At a time when lesbian bars have become increasingly rare across the country, Boycott has continued to stand out as a cultural and community fixture in Phoenix. The bar has been featured by "The Lesbian Bar Project" documentary, named to *USA TODAY*'s 2024 Bars of the Year list and recognized locally for its role in keeping LGBTQ+ spaces visible, active and rooted in community care.

"What I am most proud of is that Boycott still feels personal," Corley says. "People come here to celebrate big moments, to find their people, to dance, to laugh, to exhale. Sometimes they come in just needing a place where they do not have to explain who they are. That matters."

The honor comes during a period of continued growth for Corley, whose work has expanded beyond into women's sports and broader community-centered hospitality. Title 9 Sports Grill, also in the Melrose District, created to put women's athletics front and center, has become another gathering place for fans who have long wanted more visibility, more screens and more energy around women's sports. For Corley, the connection between Boycott and Title 9 is simple: both are built around belonging.

For more information about Boycott Bar, visit www.boycottbarphx.com. Learn more about GPECC by visiting www.equalitychamber.org.

Business Briefs

Burlington joins Colonnade lineup

Burlington Stores, Inc., announced that it will open another new store, this time at Camelback Colonnade, 1919 E. Camelback Road. With an anticipated opening later this summer, this will be the 32nd store to open in the state, adding to the off-price retailer's rapidly growing national footprint.

Originally known primarily as a destination for coats and outerwear, today, Burlington says that it offers customers up to 60 percent discounts off other retailers on top-quality branded merchandise for the entire family and home, including apparel, beauty and décor.

The new locations feature Burlington's reimagined store design,

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North Central Pet of the Month



GRIFFIN

Owners: Lara and Clint Plecas

Age: 5 years old

Breed: Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

Nickname: Griff or Bubba Dude

Education: Pet Smart University Graduate

Work Experience: Kitchen clean up crew, lifeguard since 2021

Funny Quirks: Greets us at the door with a shoe
Most Adventurous Activity: Boogie Boarded in the Ocean

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TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

which reflects the company’s broader strategy to modernize stores. In 2026, Burlington plans to open 110 net new stores across the country, all featuring this refreshed format. Shoppers can anticipate wider, more organized aisles and bold signage to allow for easier store navigation. Over half of the brand’s existing locations have already converted to the new layout, with the balance of the stores expected to transition by the end of 2026, the company said.

For more information about the company, visit www.burlington.com.

HonorHealth announces breast surgical fellowship

HonorHealth and Arizona Center for Cancer Care announced the launch of Arizona’s first Breast Surgical Oncology Fellowship Program. HonorHealth’s Breast Surgery Fellowship Program received accreditation from the Society of Surgical Oncology and the American Society of Breast Surgeons to establish this new and in-demand program, which will be operated in close partnership with the Comprehensive Breast Center of Arizona (CBCA).

HonorHealth currently supports 21 residency and fellowship programs and serves as the primary clinical affiliate for the ASU John Shufeldt School of Medicine and Medical Engineering.

The launch of this fellowship comes at a critical time for the healthcare workforce, the company says. A 2024 report from the Association of American Medical Colleges projects a significant physician shortage nationwide, estimating a deficit of 13,500 to 86,000 physicians by 2036. Of those, 10,000 to 19,900 – up to 74 percent of the total shortfall – are expected to be surgeons, underscoring the urgent need for expanded surgical training programs, including specialty surgical care.

The first fellows will begin training in 2028 following the national match process. For more information contact bsfellowship@honorhealth.com.

Phoenix ranked No. 4 best conference city

U.S. News & World Report, publisher of Best Hotels, Best Vacations, Best Cruise Lines and Best Travel Rewards *please see RANKED on page 18*

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TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS



The Arizona Biltmore was recognized as a top Phoenix-area conference hotel in the inaugural 2026-27 U.S. News & World Report Best Conference Cities and Best Conference Hotels rankings (photo courtesy of Arizona Biltmore, LXR Hotels & Resorts).

RANKED continued from page 17

Programs, announced its inaugural 2026-27 Best Conference Cities and Best Conference Hotels rankings, identifying the top destinations and properties for meetings, conventions and business events across the United States.

While Las Vegas secured the inaugural title as the No. 1 Best Conference City in the U.S. for 2026-27, Phoenix was recognized in the No. 4 spot, with the Arizona Biltmore earning the top spot among Phoenix-area conference hotels.

The publisher called Phoenix a “standout destination,” primarily due to its “stunning desert mountain scenery, 300-some days of sunshine annually and an airport close to the city center.”

The announcement focused on how the city’s hotels “embrace desert decor in the accommodations and meeting spaces with earthy tones, and encourage visitors to unwind after a busy day with amenities like sprawling pools and relaxing spas.”

Developed with input from event industry experts, the new rankings evaluate the factors that matter most to conference planners and attendees, including meeting space, accessibility, affordability, destination appeal and – for hotels – business and leisure amenities.

Ballet Theatre acquired by Ballet Arizona

In July, The School of Ballet Arizona announced its expansion with the addition of a new satellite campus following the acquisition of Ballet Theatre of Phoenix, located near 7th Street and Bethany Home Road. The

organization said that the milestone acquisition continues The School of Ballet Arizona’s mission-driven growth in the Valley and will be the school’s second satellite campus.

For the past 10 years, Ballet Theatre of Phoenix, founded by artistic director Jennifer Cafarella Betts, has been a part of the arts community in North Central Phoenix, offering programs for students of all ages, a strong adult open class community and a home for multiple forms of dance instruction. The acquisition will continue upon the legacy of instruction established by Betts, while also offering additional instruction and performance opportunities for students ages 3-20 in Phoenix.

The new satellite campus will be integrated thoughtfully and gradually. Since the campus already has its own students, families, teachers, and traditions, The School of Ballet Arizona says that it will honor the community that exists there while carefully introducing its standards, curriculum structure, and educational philosophy. The goal is to preserve what is meaningful to those families while creating a new path forward for their students.

Enrollment is now open for students at the Washington, Mesa and North Central campuses. Adult open classes are available at each location for ages 14 and older. Auditions for new students ages 8-20 will be held on Aug. 8 at the Washington Campus. To learn more, visit www.balletaz.org/school.

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This year's European adventure was inspired by my brother, Michael, who has spent years exploring the world and always comes home with stories. This summer, some of the Lieb family had our own version of European Vacation, traveling through Switzerland, Paris, and London. One experience stood above the rest. As Michael shares below, what began as a vacation became something much more meaningful, a journey into our family's history.

One of the most meaningful moments of our trip was Bobby's and my visit to the gravesites of our great-grandparents in the Jewish cemetery at Friedhof Unterer Freisenberg in Zurich, Switzerland. In 2025, I hired Frankel & Fisch Family Historians to research our ancestry, and the experience has been remarkable. Their research traced our family back to the early 1700s and uncovered stories that we never knew. Our hope is that our children may continue to preserve this history. As the saying goes, "A family tree can wither if nobody tends to its roots."

Our mother's maiden name was Sharon Nessel, shortened from Nesselstrauss. During the late 1800s, our family lived in what is now Latvia. Following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, a wave of antisemitism spread throughout the Russian Empire. Seeking safety and a better future for their family, our great-grandparents, Heimann and Sarah Nesselstrauss, left their homeland and settled in Zurich after their marriage in 1877. They raised six children, all of whom eventually immigrated to the United States. Our grandfather, Max Nesselstrauss, later shortened the family name to Nessel when he arrived in America in 1914. He eventually settled in Georgia, where he married our grandmother, Rose, and together they welcomed our beloved mother, Sharon Nessel, in 1927.

One discovery that gave us a good laugh was learning that Sarah's family, the Aronsohns, provided a dowry of 1,000 rubles when she married our great grandfather, Heimann.

Although all six of their children eventually left Switzerland, Heimann and Sarah remained in Zurich for the rest of their lives, passing away in 1910 and 1918. With the help of the concierge at The Dolder Grand Hotel, who contacted the Israelitische Cultusgemeinde Zürich (ICZ), the caretakers of the historic Jewish cemetery, we were able to locate both gravesites. Standing there was an emotional and humbling experience. We took an Uber across Zurich to visit two people whose names and stories we didn't even know until this research began. In that quiet cemetery, our family's history suddenly became very real and a deeper appreciation for the people whose courage and sacrifices made our lives possible. After all, we don't own our family history. We simply preserve it for the next generation.

Michael Lieb, for Bobby Lieb



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6447 N 17TH PL 5 BEDROOMS 3 BATHROOMS 2,400 SQ FT	\$739,000
6424 N 17TH PL 3 BEDROOMS 2.5 BATHROOMS 2,068 SQ FT	\$649,000
2 W GEORGIA AVE 9 2 BEDROOMS 2.5 BATHROOMS 1,280 SQ FT	\$425,000

PENDING

14 W COLTER ST	\$1,100,000 (UCB)
6439 N 17TH PL	\$715,000
17627 N 1ST ST*	\$574,900

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5700 N 33RD PL***	\$3,475,000	6943 W TETHER TRL**	\$779,000
6524 N 61ST ST	\$3,000,000	6455 N 17TH PL	\$755,000
1345 E OCOTILLO RD	\$2,000,000	114 E SAN MIGUEL AVE	\$730,000
3312 E GLENROSA AVE*	\$1,195,000	6425 N 17TH ST	\$662,000
2210 ENCANTO DR NW	\$1,167,000	6443 N 17TH PL	\$660,000
1109 W FRIER DR*	\$989,000	11021 N 13TH ST	\$525,000

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SCHOOL DAYS

Students participate in art contest

The Men’s Arts Council (MAC) announced the winners of the “Artists on the Field” art competition, which took place in the spring. The competition rallies young artists from local high schools to showcase their skills by painting classic cars during the Copperstate 1000 car show and kick-off event, held April 12.

“We are excited to be able to bring this opportunity to young artists,” said Sentari Minor, president of the Men’s Arts Council Board. “We witnessed some amazing talent this year and want to congratulate every student who stepped out and showed off their skills.”

The 2026 Artist on the Field first-place winner is Jaelyn Gorskie from North High School. Second place is Naomi Simmons, and third place went to Alice Ishii, both students at Camelback High School.

This year, 20 students participated, representing Maryvale High School, Carl Hayden Community High School, North High School and Camelback High School. Students received \$100 for their artwork and \$100 for participating in the event, with first place taking home an additional \$300, second place taking home an additional \$200, and third place taking home an additional \$100. Every participant also received four passes to the Phoenix Art



Camelback High School student Alice Ishii (pictured at work on her art piece) joined 19 other students at the “Artists on the Field” competition as part of the 2026 Copperstate 1000 event held this spring (photo courtesy of Men’s Arts Council).

Museum as well as a commission letter for the completed artworks.

Winners were selected via vote taken from MAC members, art teachers from the participating high schools and the public. For more information, visit www.mensartscouncil.com.

School Briefs

GLENDALE UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT GUHSD heads back to school

With the first day of school on Monday, Aug. 10, Glendale Union High School District (GUHSD) is

encouraging students and families to prepare for the 2026–27 school year. Preparing in advance by attending walk-through registration, submitting required immunization records, completing the free or reduced-price meal application and reviewing the district’s new Clear Bag Policy can help ensure a smooth transition back to campus.

Beginning the school year prepared also allows students to focus on what matters most: building positive routines, staying engaged in the classroom and establishing strong attendance habits from day one, the district said. Since registration dates, first-day schedules and campus-specific information vary by school, families are

encouraged to visit their school’s website for the latest updates.

The district said that by preparing early and staying informed, students and families can begin the new school year with confidence and be ready for a successful year ahead. Visit www.guhsdaz.org.

Athlete competes at national level

GUHSD extended its congratulations to Sunnyslope High School student Vanessa Phillips for representing Team Arizona in Competitive Cheer at the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games, where the team earned a silver medal.

Phillips was one of more than 133 athletes selected to represent Arizona at one of the nation’s largest sporting events, bringing together more than 3,000 athletes across the United States. Her achievement reflects the dedication, teamwork and perseverance that define both Special Olympics athletes and the Sunnyslope community, the district said.

Student represents at FBLA conference

Sunnyslope High School student Tennyson Usher has been elected as one of eight Arizona Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) state officers for the 2026–27 school year.

After successfully advancing through the application process, exams, inter-



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SCHOOL DAYS



Each year, student leaders are elected as Arizona Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) state officers. The organization helps students build skills confidence (submitted photo).

views and a statewide campaign during the FBLA State Leadership Conference, Usher earned the support of student delegates across Arizona. In addition to his leadership accomplishments, he is a member of the Sunnyslope football team and is on track to graduate in the top one percent of his class.

District hosts Data Day

Preparing for a successful school year starts with informed decision-making. GUHSD administrators came together for the district’s annual Data Day, where they analyzed student performance, shared effective practices across all campuses and explored ways to strengthen student achievement. Through collaborative discussions, the district explained that school leaders

identified opportunities for growth, aligned district priorities and developed strategies to support every learner. “By using data to guide planning and instruction, Glendale Union High School District remains committed to empowering students with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need to succeed in college, career and life.”

MADISON SCHOOL DISTRICT District recognizes MAC leader

In mid-July, Madison School District congratulated Dane Flores, MAC Club Leader at Madison Camelview Elementary School, on being a recipient of the Truly Extraordinary Award from the 2025-26 school year.

please see MAC LEADER on page 24

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SCHOOL DAYS

MAC LEADER continued from page 23

Madison’s Truly Extraordinary Award recognizes staff, volunteers and community members for their work, contributions, and support of the district and students.

“We are all so grateful for his dedication, his patience, and the way he makes every student feel seen, heard and valued,” the district said. “Thank you, Dane, for your commitment to Madison.”

App keeps parents connected

As Madison School District prepares for the 2026-27 school year, the district is reminding parents to make sure they have ParentSquare downloaded and an account activated.

ParentSquare is the Madison School District’s primary school-to-home communication platform, and it is where parents receive important back-to-school information throughout the year.

The app allows parents to receive important district and school announcements; stay up to date with



At a June Osborn Leadership Summit, Superintendent Felipe Carranza discussed the district’s core values with school and district leaders as they prepared for the 2026-27 school year (photo courtesy of Osborn School District).

back-to-school information and reminders; get urgent alerts and notifications; view photos and classroom updates from teachers; and communicate directly with teachers and staff with real-time language translation

First day of class is Tuesday, Aug. 11. Learn more at www.madisonaz.org/parentsquare.

OSBORN SCHOOL DISTRICT
District leaders ready for new school year

Ahead of its first day of school for the 2026-27 school year, July 30, the Osborn School District kicked off planning for the year in June with its newly-

named Osborn Leadership Summit 2026. Attendees came away renewed in their resolve to make the district “the best of the best,” the district said.

At the event, school and district leaders workshopped everything from district direction, guiding principles, data analysis, district practice alignment, marketing efforts, instructional vision and more.

In a social media post, the district said, “This is a team of people who brings a profound love for Osborn to everything they do, and we are so excited to continue to chart this course through the 2026-27 school year with them at the helm!”

WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT
WESD returns to class for 2026-27 school year

The Washington Elementary School District (WESD) is enrolling for the 2026-27 school year, which begins on Monday, Aug. 10.

Whether it is free, full-day kindergarten, premiere special education and gifted services, art, music, PE, STEM

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Open House | Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026

12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

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Saturday, Dec. 5, 2026 or

Saturday, Dec. 12, 2026 at 7:30 a.m.

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SCHOOL DAYS

or online learning, the WESD has a program to meet the individual needs of each child, the district said. With multiple A+ Schools of Excellence, a National Blue Ribbon and a National Title I Distinguished School, the WESD is a top 10 elementary school district as featured in the 2026 edition of Ranking Arizona, published by AZ Big Media. Additionally, 84 percent of WESD schools are an “A” or “B”.

The district is currently enrolling kindergarten through eighth grade students for the 2026-27 school year. Enroll online at www.wesdschools.org/families/registration or stop by the WESD Welcome and Registration Center, located at 3200 W. Cholla St. For additional information, call 602-896-6950.

District seeks support staff

WESD is always looking for passionate individuals to join its team, and the district currently has a variety of job openings for certified and classified employees.

The district offers competitive teacher salaries of \$53,100 to \$80,520 (including approximately \$3,100 in performance pay), student loan forgiveness, school-age childcare discounts, medical, dental and vision benefits and employer-matched contributions to Arizona State Retirement. The district says that it also provides the most support for teachers including instructional coaches on every campus, weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLC), regular professional development and social workers on each campus.

To view current job vacancies and apply online, visit <https://jobs.wesd-schools.org>. For questions, call 602-347-2622.

New leadership at area schools

The Washington Elementary School District welcomed new school leaders for the 2026-27 school year.

Formerly the assistant principal at Mountain View School, located at 801 W. Peoria Ave., Annie Diaz is now the new principal. Brittany Womack will join her as assistant principal. Together, they bring a shared commitment to fostering a positive school culture, supporting student success and partnering with families to help every child thrive, the district said.

Orangewood School, located at 7337 N. 19th Ave., welcomes Danielle Krause as its new assistant principal. She joins the Orangewood team with a passion for student achievement and collaboration and looks forward to supporting students, staff and families throughout the school year.

PRIVATE AND CHARTER SCHOOLS
Prep students look toward the future

Over the summer months, students at Madison Highland Prep participated in a variety of programs to prepare them for the coming school year as well as for taking their next steps towards college.

With its focus on STEM, over the summer months the school helped its VEX Robotics campers “Think it. Build it. Test it.” They tackled hands-on STEM challenges and worked together to bring their ideas to life.

In mid-July Madison Highland Prep seniors participated in an in-state college application workshop led by Dr.

please see FUTURE on page 26

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SCHOOL DAYS

FUTURE continued from page 25

Sherer. The event helped students navigate the application process with confidence, the school said.

Finally, playing instruments from flutes to saxophones and everything in between, Pep Band campers spent time in July building confidence, improving their musicianship and having a great time together as they prepared for the new school year.

The first day of the 2026-27 school year at Madison Highland Prep, located at 1431 E. Campbell Ave., is Aug. 10. Learn more about the school and its programs by calling 602-745-3800 or visiting <https://madisonhighland-prep.com>.

Brophy student wins Merit Scholarship

In July, the final National Merit Scholarship winners were announced, and Brophy College Preparatory's Gregory Zabor was among those named as a College-Sponsored Merit Scholarship. Zabor was among 750 other college and university financed designees announced in July, bringing the number of 2026 National Merit Scholars to about 6,500.

Officials of each sponsor college selected their scholarship winners from among the finalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program who will attend their institution. College-sponsored awards provide between \$500 and \$2,000 annually for up to four years of undergraduate study at the institution financing the scholarship.

Zabor says that he will likely pursue a career in biology at his scholarship sponsor school, Texas A&M University. The school is chartered by Congress as the state's land-grant, sea-grant, and space-grant university. Faculty and academic resources annually place Texas A&M among the top 10 producers of sponsored research, according to the National Science Foundation, in disciplines ranging from the humanities and social sciences to the life sciences and engineering.

Gators return from Peru

In July, Xavier College Preparatory welcomed its students back from Lima, Peru, where they experienced an "incredible journey of learning, service, faith, and cultural immersion."

The school said in a social media post that the final days of the trip were spent exploring the rich history and traditions of Cusco before returning to Lima for one last day together.

"As they make their way back to Arizona, they bring home so much more than souvenirs, they return with new perspectives, lifelong friendships, unforgettable memories, and a deeper appreciation for the beauty of God's people and creation."

The school thanked the faculty leaders, host families, community partners and everyone who made this life-changing experience possible, adding, "We are so proud of these world-traveling Gators for embracing every opportunity to learn, serve, and grow while representing Xavier with kindness, curiosity and compassion."

Two students earn College Board honors

Valley Lutheran High School announced that Dani Coleman and Henrik Bergquist have been named recipients of the College Board National Recognition Award, a prestigious honor recognizing outstanding academic achievement and strong performance on the PSAT.

The College Board National Recognition Program celebrates students whose academic excellence and dedication have distinguished them among their peers. Coleman and Bergquist earned this recognition by scoring in the top 10 percent of PSAT test-takers at Valley Lutheran High School while also maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher.

The College Board National Recognition Award highlights students who have demonstrated exceptional academic potential, helping them stand out to colleges and universities during the admissions process.

Valley Lutheran High School is located at 5199 N. 7th Ave. For additional information, visit www.vlhs.org.



Dani Coleman



Henrik Bergquist

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GENERATIONS

Senior Living Stay engaged at city senior centers

Older residents who are looking for a space to stay cool and entertained, as well as find community with neighbors, are invited to check out one of the 15 city of Phoenix senior centers. For an annual membership fee of \$20 for Phoenix residents, individuals will find monthly events, classes and trips this summer and beyond.

In the North Central area, visit the Devonshire Senior Center at 2802 E. Devonshire Ave., or the Sunnyslope Senior Center at 802 E. Vogel Ave. Both centers are open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Contact Devonshire at 602-262-7807 or Sunnyslope at 602-262-7572.

This month, Devonshire members will enjoy a trip to Number One Buffet (Aug. 12), celebrate Gorgeous Grandma Day with Desert West Senior Center (Aug. 28), and to MacAlpine's Diner (Aug. 31). Sunnyslope members will travel to Sugar Bowl (Aug. 5), take a shopping trip to Arrowhead Towne Center (Aug. 17) and enjoy a Hawaiian luau at the Marcos de Niza Senior Center.

In addition, the Sunnyslope center offers Memory Café on the first Wednesday of the month from 10 to 11 a.m. This event provides residents living with early to moderate dementia a safe place to socialize and participate in activities facilitated by professionals to simulate brain health. Advance registration required.

For more information about Phoenix senior centers, as well as other city programs for seniors and older adults, visit www.phoenix.gov/humanservices/programs/older.

Check out the library in August

In addition to providing access to nearly two million physical items – from books to DVDs, CDs and video games – the Phoenix Public Library system offers bountiful and diverse programs each month to residents of all ages. This month, area adults can engage in crafts, book events and more at Acacia Library, located at 750 E. Townley Ave.

The Creative Memoir Writing Class kicks off on Aug. 6. Held from 1 to 3

p.m., the class will be held on the first and third Thursdays of the month August through December. This workshop will give writers, beginning or experienced, the opportunity to read their current work and allow a group critique for the benefit of learning from each other.

In addition, the library will host Book Talk on Friday, Aug. 7, from 1 to 2 p.m. The casual meeting brings residents together to discuss recent reads and recommendations. And the Front Porch Book Club meets every third Wednesday from 1 to 2 p.m. to discuss a chosen book. This month's book is "Strangers in Time" by David Baldacci.

To learn more about programs offered at Acacia Library or any of the city's 16 other libraries, visit www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org.

Kids & Families School opens fall enrollment

With a new school year on the horizon, families who are looking for activities that do more than fill an after-school schedule are invited to explore the unique combination of physical activity, discipline, confidence-building and creative expression offered at The School of Ballet Arizona.

The school is opening enrollment for its 2026-27 school year and will host open auditions on Aug. 8 for students ages 4 to 20.

The school offers instruction for every level, from children discovering dance for the first time to advanced pre-professional students preparing for careers in ballet. Students train under a curriculum rooted in classical technique while gaining performance experiences rarely available at the school level, including collaborations with the Phoenix Youth Symphony Orchestras and opportunities to perform alongside Ballet Arizona's professional company.

Placement is based on age and experience, and the school says its programs are designed to "meet dancers where they are, providing a supportive environment for beginners while challenging experienced students to continue growing." The Upper Division and Studio Company programs also attract aspiring professional dancers from around the world.

GENERATIONS



Children of all abilities, experience levels and interests are invited to join Phoenix Children's Chorus for its 2026-27 season (submitted photo).

For more information or to register for auditions, visit www.balletaz.org/school/school-year.

Children's Chorus seeks new members

Phoenix Children's Chorus invites young singers from across the Valley to join its 2026-27 season, which offers a range of choir opportunities for children of all abilities, experience levels and interests. From neighborhood-based choirs and an adaptive choir for children with disabilities to its nationally recognized Signature Program, the organization provides multiple pathways for students to experience the benefits of music education and performance.

During the upcoming season, Phoenix Children's Chorus will present eight public performances and participate in community appearances throughout the Valley. Students in the Signature Program will also have opportunities to travel, with tours planned to England in June of 2027.

No audition is required to join the Neighborhood Choirs or Adaptive Choir, making it easy for children of all experience levels to participate. Rehearsals for the Neighborhood Choirs and Adaptive Choir begin Aug. 26. Students interested in the Signature Program are invited to attend a placement session, designed to help identify the choir that best matches their age, experience, and musical goals. This month, sessions will be held Aug. 1 and 8. Sign up at www.phoenixchildrenschorus.org/signature.

"Whether a student is exploring music for the first time, looking for an inclusive environment where they can thrive, or seeking a more intensive performance experience, we have a place

for the," said Troy Meeker, artistic and executive director of Phoenix Children's Chorus. Our goal is to help every singer grow in confidence, develop meaningful friendships, and discover their unique voice."

For additional information, visit www.phoenixchildrenschorus.org/join or call 602-534-3788.

PCM opens Prep applications

Children ages 9 to 17 who love music but do not have a place where they can meet other young musicians and hone their skills are invited to apply to the Phoenix Conservatory of Music (PCM) College Prep Program.

PCM's College Prep Program (CPP) is designed for students in grades 4–12 who are ready to grow as musicians, leaders and creative thinkers. Whether a student dreams of attending a top music college, pursuing a career in the creative industries, or simply wants to develop confidence and skills that will last a lifetime, the CPP goal is to provide the community, mentorship and opportunities to help them succeed.

Through an immersive 10-month experience, CPP students participate in contemporary music ensembles, music theory, songwriting, production, career exploration, leadership development and enrichment classes designed to mirror the expectations of college-level study and help students develop essential skills.

Prospective students must complete and application, complete a theory placement test and schedule an audition and prior to the fall application deadline of Aug. 29. For additional information, call 602-353-9900 or visit www.pcmrocks.org/college-prep.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



A new exhibit at the Arizona Science Center, open through Sept. 20, explores the life and legacy of cultural icon and culinary pioneer Julia Child (submitted photo).

New exhibit explores life of culinary pioneer

The traveling exhibition “Julia Child: A Recipe for Life,” created and toured by Flying Fish, will remain at the Arizona Science Center through Sept. 20.

The exhibition explores the key ingredients of Julia Child’s personal journey that became part of America’s culinary revolution through a series of immersive experiences. Child’s insatiable curiosity and tenacious spirit drove her to endlessly try, test and teach how to make delicious food. Learning to cook empowered Child, who in turn empowered others, profoundly transforming American cuisine and food culture in the process.

“Julia Child approached cooking much like a scientist approaches research, relying on scientific precision to make recipes reliable for a broad audience,” said Tammy Stewart, Hazel A. Hare president and CEO of the Arizona Science Center. “Her passion and curiosity defined an era of cooking, and we’re proud to tell her story while highlighting her scientific contributions.”

Pivotal, inspiring moments in the icon’s life are highlighted alongside the supportive network of family and friends who contributed to her career, offering a comprehensive view beyond her renowned status as a television personality and author. Guests will experience interactive spaces such as The French Chef television studio, where

they can operate a vintage video camera, mix “ingredients,” and feel like part of the show. Photographs by Child’s husband, Paul, are also included, along with her personal correspondence and favorite kitchen tools.

“Julia Child: A Recipe for Life” is included with admission to Arizona Science Center, located at 600 E. Washington St. Children under age 3 always receive free entry. For more information and to purchase tickets, call 602-716-2000 or visit www.azscience.org.

Catch ‘Molly’ exhibit before it closes

The PBS KIDS series produced by GBH Kids, “Molly of Denali,” is brought to life in The Heard Museum’s cultural exhibit, “Molly of Denali: An Alaskan Adventure,” which will close Aug. 30.

Set in the fictitious rural Alaskan village of Qyah, the show follows the adventures of Molly Mabray, her family, friends, and dog Suki and is infused with Alaska Native values, history, traditions and language.

The exhibit showcases Alaska and Molly’s life in both the summer and winter seasons. Visitors can pretend to fly a replica bush plane, drive a snowmobile and navigate a snow maze in snowshoes. The center of the exhibit features the Trading Post and the Tribal Hall from the series where guests will have the opportunity to explore the great outdoors of Alaska and Alaska

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



At the “Molly of Denali” exhibit at Heard Museum, visitors can explore the great outdoors of Alaska and Alaska Native life through hands-on activities, like ice fishing (submitted photo).

Native life including camping, ice fishing, discovering replica ice sculptures and caring for sled dogs.

A closing celebration is scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 30, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event will focus on traditional youth games from Alaska. Through live demonstrations, guided participation, and an interactive workshop, guests will learn how these games are played, where they come from, and the values they carry across generations. Try your hand at the games yourself, see them in action, and discover how movement, skill and play are connected to community and culture in Alaska Native life. This is a rare opportunity to learn directly through doing – perfect for families and curious learners of all ages.

“Molly of Denali: An Alaskan Adventure” is included with admission to the museum, located at 2301 N. Central Ave. Visit www.heard.org or call 602-252-8840 for information.

Five15 invites you to MELT

Summer group exhibition “MELT” is hosted by Five15Arts and boasts artworks from over 60 Valley artists of varying styles, subjects and media including ceramics, photography, fiber art, oil, acrylic, and watercolor paintings, and much more. All artworks are small in size, providing an overview of the artists’ skills and current work, and a unique opportunity to add to one’s art collection.

Drawing on their individual knowledge and taste, the member artists of Five15Arts collective asked five other artists to exhibit alongside them. Unique to this show, most works are available for immediate purchase and

removal by the buyer, to be replaced by an alternate piece, ensuring this show will evolve over its duration.

A list of confirmed guest artists is available on the group’s website. Residents can view the show and meet some of the artists at receptions scheduled for First Friday, Aug. 7, 6-9 p.m., and Third Friday, Aug. 21, 6-9 p.m. Visit www.five15arts.com or @Five15Arts on Instagram to learn more.

Exhibit explores folk art evolution

Found:re Contemporary and Found:re Phoenix Hotel, located at 1100 N. Central Ave., announced the opening of their latest art exhibition. Hung across the first floor of the hotel is “WTFolk” (What the Folk), which debuted in mid-July. This exhibition cycle presents a collection of local artists whose work expands, challenges, honors or reimagines folk art.

“We are excited to present this new exhibition to our art community and art lovers,” said Jordan Zurn, Found:re’s group sales and catering manager and art and culture curator. “WTFolk” aims to ask what folk art is and how visual languages continue to evolve in the present.”

The exhibit features the work of dozens of artists explored through a variety of mediums, in 2D and 3D work. The chosen artworks consider the objects, symbols, patterns and stories that carry meaning across generations.

“WTFolk” will remain on display through Sunday, Jan. 10, 2027. The works will be for sale in person and at www.foundrecontemporary.com. For additional information, visit www.foundrehotels.com.



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

On the Town

This month offers dozens of opportunities for residents to cool off, chill out and explore the Valley’s venues, museums and gardens. Find family-friendly events, free First Friday happenings, cultural events, live bands, theater and more. See you on the town in August!

Saturday Flashlight Night

Aug. 1-29
Desert Botanical Garden
www.dbg.org; 480-941-1225



Los Straitjackets

Aug. 3
Crescent Ballroom
www.crescentphx.com;
602-716-2222

‘Measure for Measure’

Aug. 6-9
Southwest Shakespeare Company
at Theatre Artists Studio
www.swshakespeare.org

First Friday at the Museum

Aug. 7
Phoenix Art Museum
www.phxart.org; 602-257-1880

First Friday in the Garden

Aug. 7
Japanese Friendship Garden
www.japanesefriendshipgarden.org;
602-274-8700

First Friday: The Pocket Protectors

Aug. 7
The Nash
www.thenash.org; 602-795-0464

Greg Mendez

Aug. 8
Valley Bar
www.valleybarphx.com



Steel Pulse

Aug. 13
The Van Buren
www.thevanburenphx.com;
480-659-1641

Phoenix Funkeros

Aug. 14
Crescent Ballroom
www.crescentphx.com;
602-716-2222

Rosson House Happy Hour Tour

Aug. 14
The Square at
Heritage and Science Park
www.thesquarephx.org;
602-258-0048

Workshop: Build a Birdhouse

Aug. 14
Arizona Science Center
www.azscience.org;
602-716-2000

‘Matilda’ the Musical

Aug. 14-30
Valley Youth Theatre at
Herberger Theater Center
www.herbergertheater.org;
602-252-8497

Coffee House Saturdays: David Manley

Aug. 15
North Mountain Visitor Center
www.northmountainvisitorcenter.org;
602-343-5125

Create Play Date

Aug. 15
Phoenix Art Museum
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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The Nash
www.thenash.org;
602-795-0464

Free Family Summer Saturday: Meet Molly
Aug. 22
Heard Museum
https://heard.org;
602-252-8840

Florence Project Benefit Show: Esso and More
Aug. 22
Valley Bar
www.valleybarphx.com

Coffee House Saturdays: Pea Joys Duo
Aug. 22
North Mountain Visitor Center
www.northmountainvisitorcenter.org;
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'Murder for Two'
Aug. 26 – Sept. 20
The Phoenix Theatre Company
www.phoenixtheatre.com;
602-254-2151

Electric Ramble
Aug. 27
The Rhythm Room
www.rhythmroom.com;
602-612-4981

'Jack Rabbit and the Desert Tortoise'
Aug. 27 – Sept. 27
Great Arizona Puppet Theater
www.azpuppets.org;
602-262-2050



Danielle Nicole Band
Aug. 28-29
The Rhythm Room
www.rhythmroom.com;
602-612-4981

'Glitter & Doom'
Aug. 28-30
Methods of Madness Dance Theater at Herberger Theater Center
www.herbergertheater.org; 602-252-8497

'Sounds of Suffrage'
Aug. 29
The Square at Heritage and Science Park
www.thesquarephx.org; 602-258-0048

Save Ferris
Aug. 31
The Rebel Lounge
www.therebellounge.com

Brandon Flowers
Sept. 1
The Van Buren
www.thevanburenphx.com;
480-659-1641

All event dates are current at the time of publication. Check with individual venues for up-to-date show information. Find events throughout the month at www.northcentralnews.net/events.

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Joe Seriale serves up classic diner fare including a combo of eggs, bacon, sausage and French toast at his eponymous Joe's Diner (photo by Darryl Webb for North Central News).

Café Chat

Joe's dishes up classic diner fare

By Marjorie Rice

Joe Seriale didn't set out to own a diner, but friends and neighbors, after years savoring his camp breakfasts, cook-outs, luaus and other feasts, told him he'd be a natural. And they wouldn't take no for an answer.

Joe and Joan Seriale had been taking their family to camp out on the beach for years on spring break vacations. In April 2010, 60 hungry friends and neighbors followed them.

"They made me cook, and by the third day they were on me," Joe said. "They said, 'Joe, you've got to open a restaurant, and there's only one name.' 'What's the name?' I asked. They said, 'Joe's Diner.' I looked it up and couldn't believe the name was available."

He and Joan opened Joe's Diner that August, in a hot rod shop on 16th Street. "It was an absolute moon shot," he said.

"This was at the time of the 2008 crash, and one thing I could see was that people who were at the high end weren't making it. The \$9 and below menus were." That set the menu – classic diner dishes for breakfast and lunch, with some upscale additions including house-made croissants, crepes and avocado toast, to name a few.

The basics are there – meatloaf, burgers, hot pastrami and tuna melts,

classic club and Monte Cristo sandwiches, omelets, biscuits and sausage or chorizo gravy, waffles and buttermilk pancakes. Those pancakes, topped with house-made lemon curd, vie with Joe's classic Number 2 breakfast – two eggs, two slices of bacon, two sausage patties and a side of pancakes, potatoes, biscuit and gravy, French toast or Belgian waffle – as customers' number-1 favorite.

A carne adovada bowl is the newest addition, with spicy pork over scrambled eggs and breakfast potatoes. There's also a "cowboy benedict" with an open-face biscuit topped with sausage patties, eggs, gravy and potatoes or fruit. Classic Benedict is served on Saturday and Sunday only.

As much as possible, dishes are made from scratch, Seriale said. "We make six jams, all in-house. We used to make nine, but it got out of hand."

Eventually, the hot rod shop went bankrupt, and the Seriales went looking for a new location, settling on the former South China Buffet building on 7th Avenue in the Melrose District. They opened in July 2013.

The diner capped a long culinary career for Seriale, who started out at age 11 washing dishes and busing tables for his grandmother, who owned a combination dining hall, café, lounge and motel in Welton, a small agricultural town about 35 miles east of Yuma. "I lived across the street," he said. "She was short-handed one day for the

please see JOE'S on page 36

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

JOE'S continued from page 35

Kiwanis meeting, and she called up and said, 'Can Joe come over?'"

Later, he went to the University of Arizona to study engineering, working his way through by waiting tables, and after three years, he decided engineering wasn't a good fit.

"I had been working at restaurants steadily all that time and decided that was where I was comfortable," he said. That led to studies at the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco, with an externship at a Club Med in Martinique in the French West Indies. When his professional knife set disappeared at the Martinique airport, he was left working with a very basic batterie de cuisine.

"It taught me to do a lot with nothing," he said. "It really humbles you, after all that high-end education, to work in a jungle in an open-air kitchen, with people who spoke a different language. Working with people when you have to communicate in other ways, you find that if you work shoulder-to-shoulder, they're more apt to buy into whatever you're trying to do."

After the academy, Seriale began a peripatetic career, including working in the kitchens of posh hotels and a luxury yacht, and he opened several restaurants, getting them through the rough spots before moving on.

"Working on the yacht gave me a chance to actually explore my food," he said. "I had a very small repertoire at that point. There was no Food Network, it was three food magazines and your cookbooks, and that was all there was."

He also worked as a live-in chef for wealthy clients, one of whom owned the old Hills Bros. Coffee mansion in Piedmont. "I stayed in the butler wing with my own library," he said. "It was so far beyond a farming kid's dreams."

One of those clients invited him to be his private chef in Illinois, making him a great offer: work in his home for a year, then he'd help him open his own place. That first venture was a "rude awakening to reality," that failed miserably, Seriale said. But it taught him an important lesson: learn the business fundamentals of running a food company.

Seriale finally moved back to Arizona to care for his father, who was ill at the time. When his dad recovered, Seriale moved to the Phoenix area, where he worked at various locations,



Lado a Lado, a collaboration between Upward projects and the founders of Chiwas Hospitality Group, will bring regional Mexican cuisine to the iconic Joyride space at 5202 N. Central Ave., which closes Aug. 2 (illustration by Nicolas Graffanino).

eventually moving to Tom's Tavern, where he met and married Joan. When their first child was on the way and the family needed medical insurance, Seriale moved to the food service industry, eventually working for Sysco until that fateful beach vacation and his move to his own place.

Today, "We're a family owned, scratch restaurant," Joe said. "We're family oriented, a great place for kids. I take care of the kitchen and business logistics, but Joan's the one you remember. My wife is the reason we have a good dining room. Not only will she remember your name, she'll remember your dog's name. All of my servers are moms. Empathy is baked in."

Joe's Diner, 4515 N. 7th Ave., is open daily from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. For information, call 602-535-4999 or visit www.joesdineraz.com.

Dining Briefs

Lado a Lado coming to Uptown

An iconic North Central mid-century building begins its new culinary chapter this month when the Phoenix location of Joyride Taco House closes end-of-day Sunday Aug. 2, after 12 years..

One of five Upward Projects properties located on Central Avenue north of Camelback Road, the space at 5202 N. Central Ave. will become Lado a Lado, which is Spanish for "side by side." With a culinary perspective rooted in the traditions of Northern Mexico, the new concept will be an Upward collaboration with chefs Armando Hernandez, Nadia Holguin

and Roberto Centeno, the founders of Chiwas Hospitality Group. The concept pays homage to their roots: growing up cooking and eating in the kitchen with their families and enjoying the fruits of their labor side by side.

For Upward Projects, early pioneers of Phoenix's modern independent dining scene, it opens a new chapter on what the company says they do best: "transforming a storied space into a vibrant community hub designed around the neighborhood."

Lauren Bailey, CEO and co-founder of Upward Projects, said, "This partnership really just grew out of a natural connection. We've been big fans of Armando, Nadia and Roberto and their restaurants for a long time, and in the summer of 2025, our teams got together, started talking shop, and completely clicked. They are brilliant at what they do, and after throwing around some ideas we thought we could bring something unique and cool to the neighborhood."

Known for their critically acclaimed concepts Tacos Chiwas, Cocina Chiwas, Tortillas Chiwas, Espiritu, Main Burger and Aruma Cafe, Chiwas Hospitality Group have earned national recognition, including multiple James Beard Award nominations, for their approach to regional Mexican cuisine. At Lado a Lado, the experience and design will be inspired by familial shared meals of the Sonoran region, the company said. More details will be revealed in the coming months. Diners can expect a menu that offers a contrast of fire and sea, and smoke and citrus, with a strong emphasis on open flame, wood-fired cooking. The heartbeat of

the kitchen, the parrillada and raw bar, will serve as central elements to the physical design of the restaurant.

"We have a lot of respect for the Upward Projects team and the way they connect with people and create a sense of place," the Chiwas team said in a joint statement. "For us, it's always been about delivering a genuine experience and celebrating culture through food. We've wanted to bring our flavors to North Central Phoenix for a long time and doing it alongside partners who care about this community as much as we do makes it really special."

Lado a Lado is slated to open its doors in Uptown Phoenix later this fall. Visit www.ladoaladophx.com for more information.

Botanical garden welcomes Quail House

In July, the Desert Botanical Garden announced that it will welcome a new food and beverage destination this fall with the opening of Quail House Coffee & Creamery.

Located in a newly built space just past the admissions gate, Quail House will offer coffee, tea, gelato and grab-and-go bites and a menu created by acclaimed Arizona chef and restaurateur Mark Tarbell. Designed for guests on the go or those looking to linger a little longer, the spot invites guests to stop by for breakfast, lunch or an afternoon treat while exploring the garden destination.

The project was made possible through support from the T.W. Lewis Foundation, whose longtime commitment to the garden has helped bring many new amenities and experiences to life for visitors, the organization said.

Quail House will be operated in partnership with Tarbell, who took the helm of Gertrude's by Tarbell's and Patio Café in 2025. A James Beard Award nominee, Iron Chef America winner and one of Arizona's most celebrated culinary innovators, Tarbell brings nearly four decades of hospitality experience and a passion for fresh, ingredient-driven cuisine to the concept.

"After a stroll through the Garden, Quail House is designed to be that happy pause in the day, a welcoming, relaxed gathering spot where great moments unfold over local coffee and sweet treats," says Tarbell.

The name Quail House pays tribute to one of the garden's desert residents and celebrates the unique beauty, character and life of the Sonoran Desert.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Additional details, including a formal opening date, will be announced soon. Visit www.dbg.org for information.

Hudson House
to open at PV

Vandelay Companies is expanding its portfolio by bringing its East Coast-inspired concept, Hudson House, to Greater Phoenix with two new locations slated to open in 2027. The two forthcoming Hudson House locations will anchor new developments in the Valley, the first of which will open within PV, the \$2 billion mixed-use development by RED Development at Cactus Road and Tatum Boulevard, and the second will open in Heritage Park, a mixed-use development located in downtown Gilbert’s historic Heritage District.

The company says that the expansion “deepens Vandelay’s commitment to the Arizona market, joining the highly anticipated Scottsdale debut of its sultry, celebrity-favorite concept, Drake’s Hollywood, which remains on track for a fall 2026 opening.”

Hudson House is an eatery inspired by the West Village in New York City, with a nostalgic design and a menu heavily influenced by the East Coast



When it opens in 2027, Hudson House will bring its East Coast style, raw bar, approachable dining favorites and signature cocktails to PV (photo courtesy of Vandelay Companies).

sensibilities. Known for a spacious sit-down raw bar and a large wraparound bar, diners can look forward to East Coast oysters, plates such as fish tacos and chicken parmesan, and a house cheeseburger, prepared with thin-seared patties and a special house sauce.

At the center of the bar program is Vandelay’s “World’s Coldest Martini.” The cocktail is available in multiple iterations, including the savory Bleu & Gold, which is topped with housemade blue cheese-stuffed olives. For those

preferring a sweeter profile, the stone fruit martini mixes peach vodka and white cranberry juice.

Visit www.hudsonhouse.com for updates and opening announcements.

Chef’s Week adds
dinner series

The Arizona Restaurant Association announced a new series during the 2026 Arizona Chef’s Week, which takes place from Friday, July 31, through Sunday, Aug. 9, and features

prix fixe menus priced at just \$55 or \$66 per person, depending on the establishment.

The Chef’s Week Dinner Series features intimate one-night-only dining experiences at four popular local restaurants, hosted by a select group of the state’s most celebrated chefs. These events take place throughout the 2026 Arizona Chef’s Week and will be held Tuesday, Aug. 4, Wednesday, Aug. 5, Thursday, Aug. 6 and Sunday, Aug. 9. Participating chefs and restaurants include Chef Joey Maggiore of The Italiano, Chef Justin Beckett of Beckett’s Table, Chef Mark Tarbell of Tarbell’s, and Chef Carson Dodd of The Ends.

Each dinner has been thoughtfully curated by the participating chef and features a unique multi-course menu, expertly paired cocktails and wines, and a one-night-only culinary experience that won’t be repeated. The limited-seating Arizona Chef’s Week Dinner Series features a chef-curated multi-course menu, along with cocktail and/or wine pairings, creating an intimate dining experience for guests.

For more about the Chef’s Week Dinner Series and to purchase tickets, visit www.arizonachefsworld.com/chefs-week-dinner-series.

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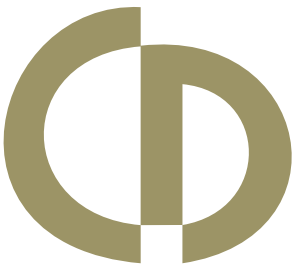
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