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July 2013

Diamondback Air Won't Let You Sweat the Summer Heat

By Kimberly Searles

Step outdoors on any given day in July, and you know all you need to know about this time of year—it's hot!

The last thing you would ever want to happen in this smoldering heat is for your air conditioner to malfunction.

So, it makes sense to get your system checked out to make sure it can handle the higher, and most likely, constant demand.

"Having a qualified inspection of your air conditioning system is crucial," stated John Herman, owner of Diamondback Air. "It can mean the difference of spending less than \$100

for preventative maintenance compared to thousands of dollars in costly repairs."

You also could end up needing more than repairs to your A/C system.

"The biggest thing we see during this time of year is the collapse of ceilings because of a clogged drain," said John, who is a local Las Sendas resident.

According to John, the humidity from monsoon moisture can build up and cause drains to clog. Eventually, the moisture weakens the drywall, causing your attic insulation and debris to land on the floor beneath.

Homeowners also can save up to 20 percent of their energy costs by simply changing their air filters monthly or every other month. Dirty filters often are the culprits behind your A/C freezing up and creating blockage in the drain, which makes your system work twice as hard. You see the effect when your electric bill skyrockets.

The experts at Diamondback Air can help you prevent major catastrophes and save on energy costs. July marks the company's 20th year of helping Arizona residents stay cool and delivering great customer service.

"What sets Diamondback Air apart from others is that we take the time to educate our customers, and let them know that they have options," said John. "You always have a choice. Sometimes, the most expensive route isn't

always the best way to correct the problem."

Diamondback Air is big enough to handle any job, yet small enough to provide the individual attention every customer deserves.

"We pride ourselves on superior, personalized customer service," John said. "As the owner of the company, I try to make it a point to visit every job. Oftentimes, I'm right there beside the technician."

While tune-ups are important for maintenance, some A/C companies use this as a way to get their foot in the door. Then, they may try to upsell homeowners to more costly repairs,

which many times, aren't even necessary.

John points to the expense of Freon as an example. It can run as high as \$125 per pound, which can easily add up to \$1,000 for a typical unit. These rising costs are due to some Freons being phased out as they're being replaced with environmentally safer (and less costly) refrigerants required by the newer A/C models. While the costs from these phased out Freons can be high, homeowners should know they can request their service technician to weigh the Freon they are adding, so they can be sure they're getting what they've paid for. What's more, some technicians fail to mention there may be less costly alternative Freons—even for their older A/C unit.

Choices are important for those homeowners who cannot afford costly repairs and service. In that case, Diamondback Air works with the homeowners. They even work with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Angels on Patrol.

"Diamondback Air's approach is to do what's best for the customers, and help them avoid spending more than necessary to keep their homes cool," John stated. "And we try to help those in need when we can."

For John and Diamondback Air, honest, reputable customer services are the backbone of all they do.

"We want longtime relationships with our customers,

one in which they know we're going to do right by them because we're concerned about what's in their best interest," said John.

He stresses the importance of having a qualified professional do a thorough inspection of your system. Homeowners can ask their service professional to check the drain, and they should be sure to have that inspection documented.

"We want residents to know that they don't have to sweat it," said John. ■

Diamondback Air services all makes and models, and service extends beyond air conditioning to include heating, electrical and plumbing services. The company also offers free second opinions. To schedule an appointment or learn more, call (602) 977-0800 or (480) 496-4475 for the East Valley. To learn more about the services, you also can visit the Web site at www.diamondbackair.com.

Do you have questions about prepping your A/C unit after reading this article? Engage in an e-mail Q&A session with John Herman, owner of Diamondback Air, at john@diamondbackair.com.



TAKE PART IN OPEN MIC NIGHT AT O'NEILL'S PLACE

Submitted by O'Neill's Place

Got Talent? Bring it to Open Mic Night at O'Neill's Place.

Every Saturday night, O'Neill's Place is now having friends, family, patrons and even staff performing their special talents.

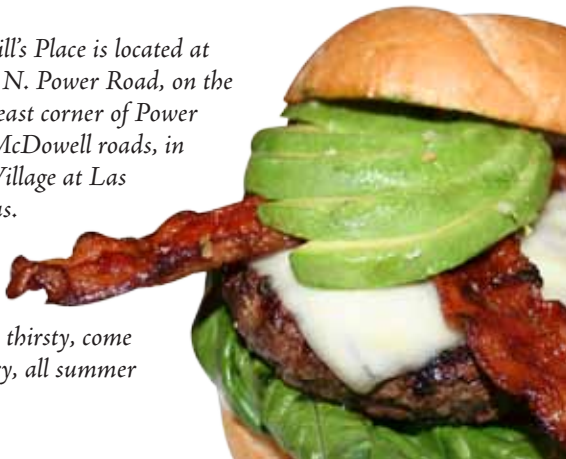
Whether it is singing, playing an instrument, or even performing comedy, come on down and have some fun.

Continuing throughout the summer, every Saturday night is Prime Rib Night. Enjoy a juicy 12-ounce steak, baked potato and sautéed vegetables for only \$15.

Also continuing is Monday Madness, which offers a one-half pound burger and a pint of beer for \$8. ■

O'Neill's Place is located at 2855 N. Power Road, on the northeast corner of Power and McDowell roads, in The Village at Las Sendas.

Come thirsty, come hungry, all summer long.



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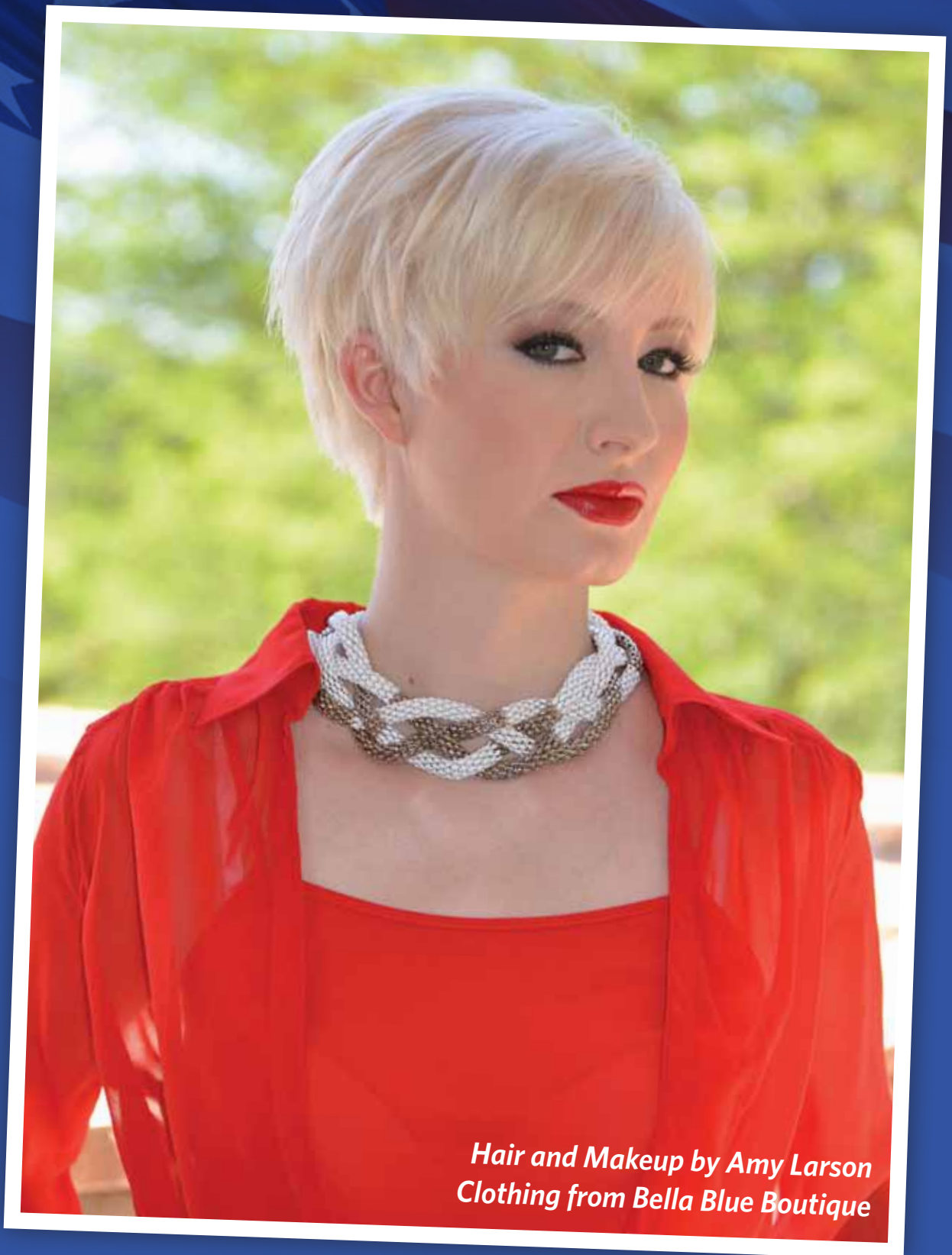
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PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILDREN Prepare for Kindergarten

Story by Laurie Struna

Photos by Mike Barcia and David Luna

The thought of kindergarten setting the stage for a successful education can be daunting, and parents across the country are discussing whether their children are ready for kindergarten or would benefit from another year in preschool.

Parents can calm apprehensions by understanding they are a key component to their children's success in school. Here are a few tips to help parents with kindergarten readiness.

HELP DEVELOP A LOVE FOR LEARNING

According to Kim Freehan, early childhood specialist for Mesa Public Schools, preparing children for kindergarten is an exciting time. It's when they grow into independent and enthusiastic learners. Children who develop a curiosity and a desire to figure out how things work, along with an interest in the world of books and language, will do better in their school career.

Parents can help their children develop a passion for learning by building confidence in their ability to learn. Exposure to a variety of books will increase children's language skills and self-expression. Children love unique words, and it is fun to experience young learners using them in daily conversations. Can your child speak clearly to express thoughts, feelings and ideas, or answer questions about key details in stories? Here are a few activities to stimulate learning in your child.

- ♦ Select books about real-life people, places and events. Study the pictures together to see how they illustrate the facts.
- ♦ Passionate readers acquire their love for reading in the home. Help to instill a love for reading by allowing your children to see you read on a daily basis.

Remember to read a wide range of magazines, newspapers and books.

- ♦ Encourage your child to ask questions.

INDEPENDENCE AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH

One important intricacy to kindergarten success is independence and emotional growth. The social-emotional growth is a major contributing factor for kindergarten readiness, believes Kim. "If these skills are not developed prior to kindergarten," she said, "they may struggle with behavior in groups and with peers." Children are more likely to be successful if they know how to follow the rules. Can they listen to a story without interrupting? Are they able to cope with changes in schedules? Children will need to make decisions and complete tasks without their parent's help. Make sure your child is able to master the following independent skills:

- ♦ Go to the bathroom and wash his hands.
- ♦ Blow his nose and cover his mouth when he coughs.
- ♦ Open a juice box and insert the straw.
- ♦ Be able to work buttons, snaps and zippers.
- ♦ Put belongings in their appropriate place.

Each child's path to success may be different. Have a milestones discussion with your child's preschool teacher or pediatrician. Keep in mind education is a partnership between school and family. Consider having a conversation with the future principal and kindergarten teacher.

Remember to trust your instincts, because you know your child best. The most important factor in preparing for kindergarten is to love and nurture your children. ■

For more information regarding Mesa Public Schools early childhood programs, please visit www.mpsaz.org/preschool.



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YOU MAY WANT TO REASSESS RETIREMENT ASSUMPTIONS

What makes financial sense for some baby boomers may not make sense for you

By John P. Duncan

Here are some commonly held assumptions—suppositions, which may or may not prove true for you, depending on your financial and lifestyle circumstances.

1. You should take Social Security as late as possible. Generally speaking, this is a smart move. If you were born in the years from 1943-1954, your monthly benefit will be 25 percent smaller if you claim Social Security at 62 instead of your full retirement age of 66. If you wait until 70 to take Social Security, your monthly benefit will be 32 percent larger than if you had taken it at 66.¹

So, why would anyone apply for Social Security benefits in their early 60s? The fact is some seniors really need the income now. Some have health issues or the prospect of hereditary diseases influencing their choice. Single retirees don't have a second, spousal income to count on, and that is another factor in the decision.

2. You'll probably live 15 to 20 years after you retire. You may live much longer, especially if you are a woman. According to the Census Bureau, the population of Americans 100 or older grew 65.8 percent between 1980 and 2010, and 82.8 percent of centenarians were women in 2010. The real eye-opener—in 2010, slightly more than a third of America's centenarians lived alone in their own homes. Had their retirement expenses lessened with time? Doubtful, to say the least.²

3. You should step back from growth investing as you get older. As many investors age, they shift portfolio assets into investment vehicles offering less risk than stocks and stock funds. This is a well-regarded, long-established

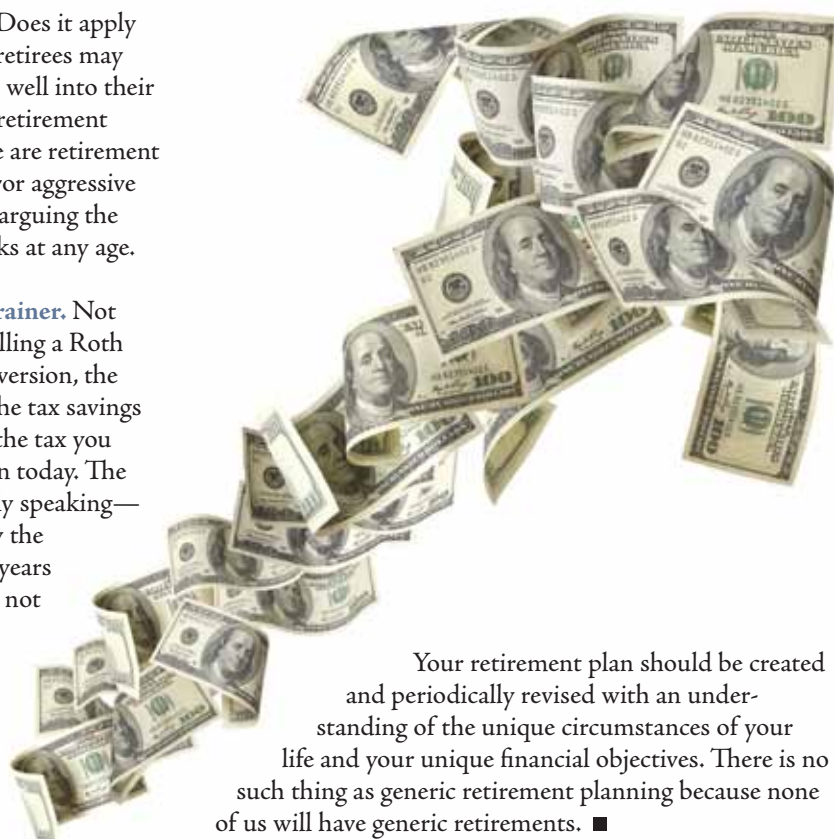


tenet of asset allocation. Does it apply for everyone? No. Some retirees may need to invest for growth well into their 60s or 70s because their retirement savings are meager. There are retirement planners who actually favor aggressive growth investing for life, arguing the rewards outweigh the risks at any age.

4. Going Roth is a no-brainer. Not necessarily. If you are mulling a Roth IRA or Roth 401(k) conversion, the big question is whether the tax savings in the end will be worth the tax you will pay on the conversion today. The younger you are—roughly speaking—the greater the possibility the

answer will be yes, as your highest-earning years are likely in the future. The conversion may not be worth it at all if you are older and at or near your peak earning potential.

5. A lump sum payout represents a good deal. Some corporations are offering current and/or former workers a choice of receiving pension plan assets in a lump sum payout instead of periodic payments. They aren't doing this out of generosity. They are doing it because actuaries have advised them to lessen their retirement obligations to loyal employees. For many pension plan participants, electing not to take the lump sum and sticking with the lifelong periodic payments may make more sense in the long run. The question is can the retiree invest the lump sum in such a way that might produce more money over the long run, or not? The lump sum payout does offer liquidity and flexibility, which the periodic payments don't, but there are few things as economically reassuring as predictable, recurring retirement income. Longevity is another factor in this decision.



Your retirement plan should be created and periodically revised with an understanding of the unique circumstances of your life and your unique financial objectives. There is no such thing as generic retirement planning because none of us will have generic retirements. ■

John P. Duncan is President/Founder of Gold Leaf Advisory, a comprehensive wealth management firm located in Mesa. He is an author, speaker and sought-after expert in retirement planning and implementation. His practice is designed to provide objective advice to individuals and businesses with net worth above \$1 million. For more information, send an e-mail to info@goldleafadvisory.com.

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EDUCATION

This Junior High School Offers EXTRA CREDIT AND A GRADE ABOVE

By AnnElise Makin

Self Development Charter School (SDCS), an award-winning, free-of-charge venue, teaches its students a grade level above, and then some.

This also is true for SDCS's junior high academic program. SDCS's mission promises to promote special talent, and coach students individually in their academic pursuits.

"SDCS has a strong reputation for its excellent preschool and elementary school program," principal Anjum Majeed stated. "We provide a solid academic foundation for every age level. Soon, we will be completing the process to become a Cambridge School, but our individualized junior high school program still might remain a best kept secret."

SDCS students progress through academic levels, not grades. Each student advances at his own best speed. Along the way, young learners create student-directed and teacher-monitored opportunities for independent study. Highly self-motivated individuals may end up having completed Algebra II in the eighth grade.

Students are encouraged to create their own initiatives. One example is last year's highly successful talent show. "An eighth-grader who wanted to make a difference, Max Gau, came up to us with the idea for a talent show," Ms. Majeed said. "He organized the auditions, and hosted the program masterfully."

In spring 2013, SDCS graduated highly self-motivated eighth-graders. Up from six students last year, 10 young men and women were released to various high school tracks. They have nothing to fear. SDCS graduates usually have done extremely well for themselves in high school.



Cody Rappoport graduated from SDCS with honors last year, with a solid Algebra II score under his belt. He was more than ready to take on high school.

"The program was nice," Cody recalled. "It gave me an advantage because they taught us ahead of grade level. I already learned some concepts in junior high before I would enter high school in the fall."

Among Cody's favorite memories were the field trip to the DaVinci exhibit at the Arizona Science Center, and the excursion to the zoo with an overnight stay in tents. However, he also holds the teaching staff in kind regard.

"We had really good teachers," Cody recalled. "They helped us a lot with the work. They were kind, but corrected us. We did get a lot of one-on-one teacher time."

Allyson Hamburg-Eylers has made a huge success of her first year at Highland High School. As a freshman, Allyson registered for the maximum of honors classes, ranked No. 1 in her grade level, and reached the top 5 percent overall. She also continues to passionately pursue volleyball, her favorite sport.

During her time at SDCS, Allyson enrolled in an early morning computer class at Highland High School, earning a 98 percent score. An ambitious student who feels drawn to a career in international affairs, she took a Stamford online class at home. And Allyson reached the semi-finals of the Grammmable grammar bee at the State Capitol.

Not coincidentally, Allyson credits



her amazing academic success to SDCS. "I learned to manage my time better," Allyson stated. "They taught me good study habits, and gave me valuable test-taking tips so I don't have to study that long."

Instead of socializing, for example, the busy student now uses half of her lunchtime for homework, the other half for talking with her friends.

Cade Cote started at the SDCS preschool as a 1-year-old, when his mother, Sherri Cote, was an instructor there. More than a dozen years later, Cade has progressed to Williams Field High School, in

Gilbert, where his family resides.

"When I switched to public school, in the eighth grade, I was not challenged as much. It was a lot easier," Cade reported. The passionate sportsman—football, soccer and basketball—earned a weighted GPA of 4.3 in his freshman year by taking honors classes.

"I have learned to stay on top of academics, become a great test-taker, and absorb more knowledge with superior note-taking skills," Cade reflected. "I had really good teachers, and the principal, Ms. Majeed, was always involved with the students."

Cade's younger sister, Chloe, also rose through the ranks of SDCS. Her public school teachers were greatly impressed with her homework and writing skills. ■

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HEALTH

IDENTIFY THE CAUSES, DIAGNOSIS AND Complications of Atrial Fibrillation

By Dr. Afroz Ahmad, Las Sendas Cardiology, PC

This is the second article in the four-article series on atrial fibrillation by Dr. Ahmad. The first article of the series appeared in the June edition of Up Close, and introduced the topic of atrial fibrillation. The remaining two articles in the four articles series will address treatment options for atrial fibrillation and the challenges with blood thinners, including Warfarin.



Nature wants the heart to beat in a certain rhythm, but, as discussed in the previous article, with atrial fibrillation, the synchrony or rhythm of the heart is lost.

CAUSES FOR ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

There are many causes for atrial fibrillation. The risk rises with increasing age. Additionally, males are more prone to develop atrial fibrillation than women. The presence of underlying heart disease also increases the risk.

Most common heart-related causes for atrial fibrillation include long-standing high blood pressure, and coronary artery disease, which actually is the blockages in the coronary arteries. Heart failure and diabetes also are associated.

Certain diseases not related to the heart also may predispose to atrial fibrillation. These include snoring, kidney disease, obesity, and thyroid hormone malfunction. Interestingly, both overactive and/or underactive thyroid hormone may cause atrial fibrillation.

Atrial fibrillation also may occur in families and may be inherited. Alcohol also is a very common cause.

Similarly, atrial fibrillation may be related to medications. Bronchial asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) medications like theophylline, if used on a regular basis, may increase the risk. The jury

is still out if drugs taken to treat osteoporosis, for example, may increase the propensity for atrial fibrillation.

DIAGNOSIS OF ATRIAL FIBRILLATION HISTORY

The diagnosis starts with a detailed history of current symptoms. Alerting symptoms for atrial fibrillation include a history of palpitations, dizziness and/or lightheadedness. Many patients present with ankle swelling or shortness of breath. Chest pain with exertion also may occur. Sometimes, a sensation of

the heart jumping out of the chest is the only presenting complaint.

Sleeping habits are addressed to elicit history of snoring. A comprehensive history of palpitations in family members, parents, siblings and cousins may unmask hereditary causes of atrial fibrillation. A meticulous drug history also may give pointers toward the causes. Alcohol intake, both quantity and frequency, also is addressed.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Evidence of COPD, swollen ankles, high blood pressure or an enlarged thyroid gland may point toward the cause of atrial fibrillation. Increased body index and weight measurements also may explain the propensity toward atrial fibrillation.

BLOOD TESTS

Malfunction of the thyroid may be seen on the blood test results. Low levels of certain salts in the body, including potassium and magnesium, may reveal the precipitating cause for atrial fibrillation.

COMPLICATIONS OF ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

Atrial fibrillation per se is not a deadly rhythm. However, if sustained for long, it may pose serious problems. The

complications fall under two categories, namely heart rate and blood clots.

HEART RATE

The heart rate, if fast, leads to palpitations, chest pain and shortness of breath. If a fast heart rate is sustained for long periods, the heart may simply tire out. This may cause heart failure with ankle swelling and shortness of breath.

Similarly, a slow heart rate, with atrial fibrillation, may cause fatigue, lassitude or passing out.

BLOOD CLOTS

Nature wants the blood to be squeezed out of the heart and pumped into the body with each heartbeat. With atrial fibrillation, the heart no longer squeezes adequately.

With atrial fibrillation, the heart merely fibrillates or quivers. When the heart quivers, the blood is not completely expelled from the heart. When it remains in the heart, it simply stagnates. A blood clot is formed by the stagnated blood in the heart.

The route and direction taken by the blood clot dictates the complication. This blood clot may break off and go to the brain, where it may cause a stroke. The same blood clot also may go to a limb, leading to loss of a limb. A clot to the eye may cause visual impairment, and a clot to the intestinal blood supply may cause severe abdominal pain, requiring surgery.

The rationale to treat atrial fibrillation is to avoid or minimize the risks of the the above mentioned complications.

Still, the most important message to take home is that atrial fibrillation is not a deadly rhythm. ■

Dr. Afroz Ahmad is a multiple board certified cardiologist practicing at Las Sendas Cardiology, PC, located at 3514 N. Power Road. For information, or to make an appointment, call (480) 361-9949.

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Dr. Ahmad is a highly experienced cardiologist. She holds numerous board certifications and is fellowship trained:

- American Board of Internal Medicine
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REAL ESTATE

CONSIDER VARIOUS FACTORS WHEN Deciding to Sell Now or Wait a Year

By Lorraine Ryall, Realtor, CDPE, CSSN Coldwell Banker Trails and Paths



Most people who are considering selling their home usually have reasons other than trying to sell at the peak of the market, and need to sell right away or in the near future.

For those homeowners who want to move, but don't have a specific timeframe, it can be hard to decide whether they should sell now, or wait another year. After all, home prices are still going up, and if they wait until next year, their home value will be higher than it is today. That may be true, but there are other factors to consider than just the increasing sales price to determine when the best time is to sell.

Here are some other factors to consider:

BUYING YOUR NEW HOME IN THE SAME MARKET

If you are planning on selling and buying another home in the same area, selling now or waiting a year becomes irrelevant. Both homes are in the same market, and if prices increase on one, they will increase on the other. If you wait another year for your home value to go up, the house you are buying also is going to increase in price at the same rate. The only difference is if you are purchasing a higher priced home, it actually will go up a little more. Selling now or waiting a year really doesn't make any difference as far as the net profit goes if you are buying again in the same market. If you are moving out of state, it can make a difference, but only if the market where you are buying is increasing at a slower pace than here in Arizona.

INTEREST RATES CAN HAVE THE BIGGEST IMPACT

After seeing record low interest rates over the past few years, rates have now started to increase, and they are expected to continue to go up. This can have the biggest impact on whether to sell and buy now or wait a year. The chart below estimates the home price increase of 15 percent, a down payment of 20 percent, current interest rate of 4 percent with an increase to 5.5 percent in a year. As you can see, the sales price is slightly impacted, but the biggest difference is your monthly mortgage payment. With interest rates on the rise, now is the best time to make your move.

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\$517,500	Purchase price of new home
\$115,000	More to purchase new home
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DINING

IL FORNO PIZZA WINS LAS VEGAS PIZZA CONTEST

By Dawn Abbey

Il Forno chef and co-owner Giorgiono Vignali won first place for the best authentic pizza in a recent pizza competition in Las Vegas, according to fellow co-owner Mat Tran, and the prize won them a whopping \$15,000.

Mat is convinced they won because of the quality of all their homemade items—the dough, the mozzarella, the sauce and the sausage. “In addition, we had a little trick that added just the right extra flavor to make ours great,” Mat said. “We added a basil leaf to the middle of the pizza before baking it.”

Mat explained how the competition worked. “The contest went on for three consecutive days, and they had pizza-making contests in several categories, with hundreds of entrants,” said Mat. “We were entered in the traditional competition.” A traditional pizza was considered to be pepperoni and sausage.

“Each day, they judged a different component of the pizzas,” Mat continued. “The first day, we had to make our pizza dough from scratch in front of the judges. The second day, they judged our sauce making. They also sampled our homemade mozzarella cheese and homemade Italian sausage that we brought with us,” he stated. “The last day, we put it all together, and they picked the pizza they liked best. It was ours.”

Since the contest was sponsored by various pepperoni makers, the pizza contestants had to choose from one of four pepperoni brands to use on their final product. Mat

and Giorgiono decided Hormel worked best for them.

If you want to try their award-winning pizza, made in their wood-fired oven, they are offering a special of any two-topping, 16-inch pizza for \$16, or a 12-inch, two-topping pizza for \$8. A 12-inch pizza, with up to six toppings, is only \$13.

Il Forno also is offering summer specials. For lunch, any large sandwich, excluding the New York steak or Di Palma, is only \$6.50, and a large calzone is \$8.

During summer, kids under 10 can eat free for dinner. Dinner entrées, including soup or salad, are \$16 each. For each dinner entrée ordered, you get a free kid’s meal.

“We’ve also started stocking some great new Italian wines that are a lower price, like moscato and Citra varietals,” said Mat. “Don’t bother cooking. Enjoy a great homemade meal or award-winning pizza with us.” ■

Il Forno is located on the west side of The Home Depot center, at Power and McKellips roads. For information or take-out, call (480) 807-0888.



COMMUNITY

AZ BRAIN FOOD IS MAKING A Difference One School at a Time

By Sharon Wozny

Friends Ruth Collins and Rhonda Frost, parents of Mesa Public Schools (MPS) children, saw a need in the community four years ago, and wanted to address it.

What was the need? Not every child in MPS had enough food to eat over the weekend.

AZ Brain Food, a nonprofit organization, was born. This group’s main focus is to provide students with food for the weekend, so they can be ready to learn. Research shows children who are well fed are not as sick, and are better behaved in school.

Here is where AZ Brain Food comes in. This organization provides a weekend food bag for each student a teacher identifies. Healthy, non-perishable, shelf stable, child-friendly and lightweight food is provided. Packages include a pop-top canned good, fruit juice, fruit cup, Easy Mac, cereal, pudding, granola bars, peanut butter or tuna, tortillas and chocolate milk.

In the fall of 2013, AZ Brain Food will service every elementary school. This is quite an accomplishment in four years, since there are 56 elementary schools in Mesa, and these two friends started with two schools in 2009.

Grants, foundations, eagle projects, school drives and donations help provide the food. Volunteers are the key to this organization. Every week during the school year, 60 to 80 volunteers get together at the warehouse to package the 2,000 bags needed.

AZ Brain Food has spread to



Fountain Hills, where a church sponsors the students. Gilbert also participates. Tempe and Chandler begin participating in the fall.

“We are going one school at a time,” said Ruth. “We never had it planned to get this big. We go year to year.” It truly is amazing what these ladies have accomplished, and the difference they are making in the lives of students all over the East Valley. Based on surveys filled out by each teacher, at the end of the school year, 70 percent of kids were doing better overall.

Ruth is in awe of the amazing people she has met, and how the community has embraced this organization. “This is my free time, and I am using it in the best way possible,” she said.

As St. Catherine of Siena said, “Be the person God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire.” Thank you, AZ Brain Food, for being that group, and for setting our little part of the world on fire. ■

If you would like to donate time, money or food, please contact Ruth Collins at www.azbrainfood.org.

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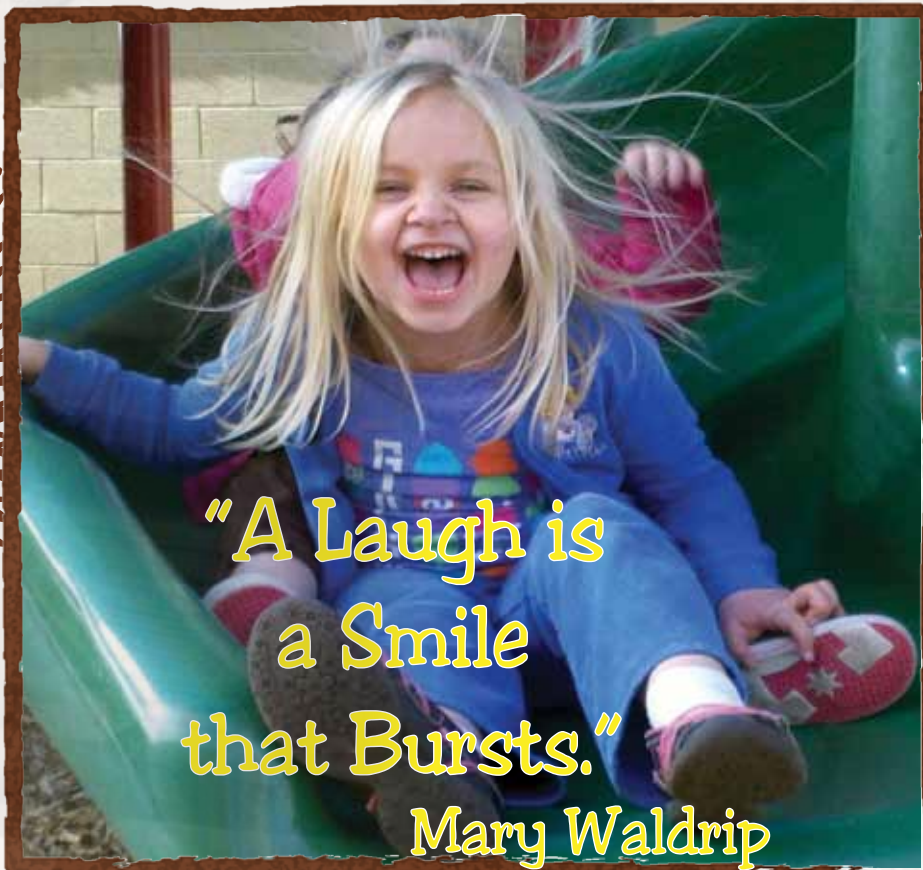
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COMMUNITY

Social Club Enjoys Vista GROVE ACADEMY PRESENTATION

*Prepared by Marilyn Husted, Social Club Secretary
Submitted by Jay Williamson, Social Club Publicity*

You may have seen the small sign on McKellips Road, near Lindsay Road—Vista Grove Preparatory Academy—and thought this must be an exclusive private school.

Members of the Red Mountain Ranch Social Club learned otherwise at their meeting on Thursday, June 13. Members heard Lynn Thomson, AmeriCorps member, and Abelardo Batista, school leader, discuss the school and its particular needs.

VISTA GROVE ACADEMY PRESENTS PROGRAM

“Vista Grove is a public charter school owned by the Leona Group, whose target is at-risk children. Our mission includes providing an outstanding arts program and developing the love of learning as students pursue their dreams,” Lynn explained. “As many as 90 percent of our students live below the poverty level,” she continued, “and 30 percent are homeless, meaning they don’t know where they are going to live from day to day. We actively seek out this population, and make them feel very welcome in this environment.”

Vista Grove began four years ago with 100 students. The school now has 400 students, grades kindergarten through grade eight, with Abelardo at its helm. He has worked for the Leona Group in various capacities for 16 years. There are plans to expand to grades kindergarten through grade 12.

It is funded like any other public school, but receives no money for facilities or transportation. Through various funding efforts, five buses are now available to take students to and from school and to special events, performances, and on tours. All teachers are not only state-certified, but highly qualified.

Abelardo enthusiastically explained that he supports a loving, caring staff who provide a family-like environment for the students. There are three core values emphasized. They are character, rigor and dreams. Each year, every child takes a tour of a local college to develop the dream of pursuing higher education. However, to be ready to learn, each student needs to be well-rested, fed, clean and properly dressed. That’s where the Uniform Exchange Program comes in.

Lynn explained that all Vista Grove students are required to wear the school uniform, but many cannot afford to do so. She quoted studies showing that uniforms directly improve success by having students focus on their studies, not on their attire or that of others.

Lynn shared several situations that the school has experienced. For example, she described a little boy graduating from kindergarten who had no proper clothes. So, three staff members bought him everything, including shoes and socks. His self-esteem rose dramatically. There were two little sisters who lived in-between going from one place to another, having no consistency with food or clean clothes. And there were two small brothers who described their park days as these days when they slept in the park.

The Uniform Exchange Program provides uniform items (shirts and pants) that could be worn for each school day and then returned. Volunteers are needed to fund raise, develop partnerships, shop for supplies and uniforms, organize the items in a usable space, man the exchange

(fingerprint card is required) and maintain the uniforms. The program will start this fall. The public is encouraged to tour the school, and find out more about the program.

Abelardo emphasized that in addition to a rigorous academic program, performing arts is an important part of the curriculum. Every student is a member of at least one choir. Performances have included singing the national anthem at Arizona Diamondbacks games at least eight times. There is the Winter Program at the Mesa Arts Center each year, which includes at least 250 students from the choirs and orchestras. “This can be a defining moment in a child’s life,” Abelardo said. “My dream is to have rich and poor in the same school, with the same opportunities for everyone. This is the American dream.” ■



Lynn Thomson and Abelardo Batista

For more information about Vista Grove Preparatory Academy, contact Abelardo Batista at (480) 924-1500, or send an e-mail to Abelardo.Batista@leonagroup.com.

The next meeting of the Red Mountain Ranch Social Club will be on Thursday, July 11, at 9:30 a.m., at the Red Mountain Ranch Country Club. You do not need to be a member to attend.

For more information about the Red Mountain Ranch Social Club, send an e-mail to Jay Williamson at jaywilliamson57@yahoo.com.

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DINING

VISIT PACINO'S FOR A GREAT ITALIAN MEAL AND YOU MIGHT EVEN SEE AL, TOO

By Dawn Abbey

The owner of Pacino's has quite a story to tell about the name of his new Italian restaurant and its décor.

"It all started years ago at a casino in Vegas, when a guy next to me said, 'Hey, Al Pacino's little brother,'" said Frank Spaccarelli, who bears a resemblance to the well-known actor. "I've always admired Al Pacino and his movies, and I was looking for a name for my new California restaurant. My own name is too hard to spell," he said with a laugh.

After 28 years in the restaurant business in California, Frank opened his own Italian restaurant there, and named it Pacino's Spaghetti Factory. After that, a lot of Pacino-related events started happening. "People would sometimes stop me on the street, and ask me if I was him," said Frank. Frank met Al Pacino's cousin, and then, his stepmother, whose autograph he has framed.

So, when Frank and his wife, Alicia, recently moved to Mesa to start their new Italian restaurant, they naturally named it Pacino's. The walls are covered with Al Pacino movie posters, photographs and other memorabilia. With the comfortable booths and subdued lighting, you might even imagine the Godfather enjoying a plate of pasta in the corner.

But Pacino's also is a happening place. When you first walk in, you notice a large granite-topped bar with comfortable stools and a visible selection of libations—a perfect place to enjoy the Happy Hour specials from 3 to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, featuring \$3 drafts and Coastal Vines wines, as well as unique appetizers like truffled parmesan and herb french fries with aioli, or the



Alicia and Frank Spaccarelli

house specialty—meatball sliders.

Pacino's meatballs are like none you have ever had since grandma's kitchen. Hefty, two-inch-diameter portions of juicy, seasoned ground veal, pork and beef, pan-seared, smothered in ragu, and garnished with pecorino cheese and arugula, all on a buttery grilled bun.

An open kitchen is the focal point of the room, and is manned by Chef Charles DelliPizzi, who has worked in some of New York's five-star restaurants. Frank's cousin, Michael Spaccarelli, is also part of the team.

"We prepare all our dishes a la minute," said Frank. "So, your selection

is always made fresh, just for you." Pacino's offers a variety of pastas and pizza. The Italian entrées offer unique and interesting ingredients for lunch and dinner, like pork tenderloin in agro dolce, an Italian sweet and sour sauce, with garlic spinach and creamy polenta. "Everyone's favorite is our Fra Diavolo," Frank claimed. It's linguini with shrimp, mussels and Manila clams in a peppery tomato sauce. Or try some of the homemade gnocchi.

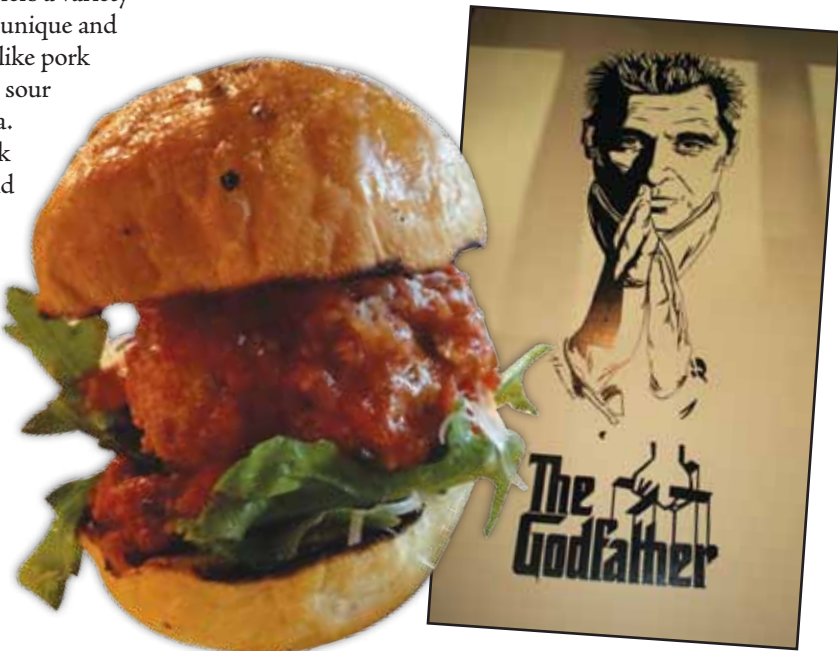
Unique is a funghi pizza with roasted mushrooms, caramelized onions, mascarpone cheese, and arugula with fig balsamic reduction. "This one is a favorite of our special customers Terry and Becky," said Frank.

Desserts include Gianduja Semifreddo, a white Italian mousse with complements of hazelnut and chocolate, and Lemon Panna Cotta, custard with an amazing raspberry balsamic reduction sauce.

Frank and Alicia are proud to enlist local vendors for their menu items. Breadsmith, next door, supplies hearth-baked breads; olives and extra virgin olive oils come from Queen Creek Olive Ranch and Epicurean Season; Desert Eagle Brewing Company, with Main Street Blonde Ale on tap; and Dolce Vita provides gelato. "We are constantly looking for local suppliers, so we can support the community," said Alicia.

"Come in," said Frank. "We welcome you into our famiglia and our hearts. And we have entertainment Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights." ■

Pacino's is located in The Village at Las Sendas, at 2831 N. Power Road. For information or take-out orders, call (480) 985-0114. Hours are 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Thursday; 10:30 a.m. to whenever, Friday and Saturday; and 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday.



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Red Mountain Ranch Area Market Report

Sales for the Month of May 2013



John Karadsheh

Address	Square Feet	Sold Price	Short Sale or REO*
6513 E. Snowdon St.	2,047	\$247,000	
3751 N. Kings Peak	2,222	\$260,000	
6334 E. Viewmont Dr. #52	1,695	\$290,000	
6635 E. Venue Cir.	2,424	\$299,000	
6165 E. Riverdale St.	2,834	\$325,000	
6334 E. Viewmont Dr. #38	1,978	\$349,900	
6645 E. Redmont Dr. #7	2,396	\$396,000	
4055 N. Recker Rd. #64	3,538	\$575,000	
5962 E. Viewmont Cir.	2,894	\$619,900	
6446 E. Trailridge Cir. #29	7,213	\$875,000	

ALL SALES IN MAY WERE REGULAR SALES (NO SHORT SALES OR BANK OWNED!)

Information gathered from the Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service is deemed reliable, but not guaranteed. Sales Information Provided By John Karadsheh, ABR, CRS, ASSOCIATE BROKER, Coldwell Banker Trails & Paths Premier Properties. www.BuyAndSellAZ.com

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COMMUNITY

Soroptimist International of Mesa Welcomes New Board Members

Submitted by Soroptimist International of Mesa

Soroptimist International of Mesa held its annual installation of new officers on May 29, at the Superstitions Springs Golf Club Restaurant.

Lifetime Member Corrine Brooks installed the board members for 2013/2014. Members include Sunnee O’Rork, President; Patsy Fimbres, President Elect; Norma Cota, Vice President; Kellie Bliven, Secretary; Connie Griffith, Treasurer; Betty Gregory, Assistant Treasurer; Jennell Wise, Two-Year Director; Sheila Byrne, One-Year Director, and Donna Kohlhasse, Past President. Sheila Byrne was presented the Outstanding Service Member of the Year award in recognition of bringing eight new members to the club this past year. New members inducted were Regina Russell, Stephanie Stang, Aurora Feehely and Kris Godinez.

Soroptimist is an international organization for business and professional women who work to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world. More than 80,000 Soroptimists in 120 countries volunteer time and support local community and international projects. The next event in Mesa will be *Women We Treasure Tea*, on Sept 28. ■

For more information about Soroptimist International of Mesa, call (480) 577-2549.



EDUCATION

Parents Often Inquire How Best to PREPARE THEIR CHILD FOR KINDERGARTEN

By Linda Steiner, MEd
Certified Teacher and Reading Specialist

Is preschool a necessary step for success in kindergarten? With every question, comes the same answer, “Yes.”

The logical and best decision parents can make is to enroll their child in Self Development Preschool.

Self Development Preschool takes pride in setting high standards for students beginning their educational journey. As teachers, we believe the dedication to becoming lifelong learners starts early. I suggest the preschool, not only as a teacher, but also as a parent whose child attended the preschool, and transitioned well and with success into the kindergarten program.

Self Development Charter School (SDCS) offers a unique and advanced kindergarten program. This program allows children to begin their educational learning experience in a caring and an intellectually stimulated environment. The classroom introduces kindergarten and first-grade curriculum goals, and encourages concept mastery and academic confidence.

The kindergarten program prepares children to learn key subject matter, which yields knowledge for a classroom environment transition for first grade. The school’s success centers on teaching children the advanced curriculum in a structured and methodical approach.

The classroom concentrates on mastery in math, reading and writing. Teachers teach listening and communication skills, higher level thinking, and provide a nurturing classroom for social growth. “As a lead teacher, I believe there is one goal at the beginning of each day,” said Amber Wiley, preschool lead teacher. “Fill our students with knowledge and compassion,” she said. “Every day is an



opportunity to enrich the lives of every student attending. We want to instill a love for learning.”

Cinda Foley, also a lead teacher, shares the same belief. “I take pride in setting high standards for students beginning their educational journey,” she said. “I know the dedication to becoming lifelong learners starts early.”

As a certified kindergarten teacher and state-endorsed reading teacher, I know the importance of early education intervention to promote a foundation for academic success. The school uses a multi-sensory phonics instruction, focusing on visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic techniques, which reach each child’s learning style. They learn phonemic awareness, red words (sight words), spelling, writing and reading within each lesson.

By the end of the year, children are reading at or above first-grade level, writing grammatically complete sentences, as well as authoring and editing their own book. Mathematical components include number concept and introduction to addition and subtraction, with daily math facts, fact families, and word problems.

The dedication and sincere devotion of the teachers to instill these essential concepts is amazing. Each classroom has two certified and professional teachers whose goals are to set up these kindergartners for success. As lead teacher, I see the commitment to student’s education every day, and share my positive comments.

I welcome all parents to experience this exceptional learning environment for your child. I am proud to recommend SDCS as the path to your child’s academic success. Parents need to be a part of this exceptional learning adventure for their child.

SDCS delivers a well-rounded educational experience for your child. The school offers children the opportunity to develop a love for learning and a daily challenge to think at a higher level. ■

For more information, please contact Self Development Preschool at (480) 396-3522, and Self Development Charter School at (480) 641-2640.



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REAL ESTATE

REAL ESTATE AND POKER Have Factors in Common

By John Karadsheh

While I have many passions, I recently realized my top two have some very real similarities.

Growing up, I watched my dad play poker at our house with his brothers and his friends on Friday nights after my mom made a big dinner. It never ceased to amaze me how he would consistently win. Call it luck, or call it skill, I think a lot of it had to do with his ability to read his opponents. At the end of the night, he was almost always the big winner.

My dad also had his fair share of luck and skill buying and selling real estate. Some properties were for investment, and some were the homes in which we lived, but, either way, he always was able to negotiate great offers, and that resulted in him buying low and selling high.

So, what do poker and real estate have in common, you ask? Success in poker requires a certain amount of luck, a good head for math, and the ability to be very observant. Did your opponent call or raise in a weak fashion? Did he show aggression when none was needed? Did he twitch his left eye when that ace of spades came on the turn? These are all essential bits of information, which must be analyzed in order to make the most informed decision.

The same skills can be applied to real estate. When I receive an offer on one of my listings, the first thing I do is sit back and let all of the information in front of me



John Karadsheh

sink in before I respond. Next, a conversation with the buyer's agent is critical. I try to gather as much information about the buyers as I can get their agent to divulge. Then, there is the math. There are many ways to craft a deal that will work for all parties. The same applies when I am representing a buyer. Even with a tight inventory in the marketplace, I want my buyers to get the very best deal on the property that works for them.

Poker and real estate also must be looked at as business transactions. In poker, if you think someone is raising you just to be a bully, the worst thing to do is to let your pride get the best of you and play right into his trap. You need to play the cards, the odds, the position and the person collectively, or you will ultimately lose.

In real estate, if a buyer submits a *lowball* offer, don't get insulted. While the property you are selling might be your home, to the buyer, it is still just a house. Take a step back, and think of selling your home solely as a business decision. Forget about the notches in the doorjamb with your kid's height marked along the sides. Forget about the custom mural your aunt painted on the wall. These memories don't have any monetary value to anyone but you,

and they shouldn't get in the way of the ultimate goal of selling your investment. Similarly, when buying a home, it is important to assess when it is wise to get in a bidding war, and when it is wise to wait until the right property comes along. ■

John Karadsheh is a licensed REALTOR® with Coldwell Banker, Trails and Paths Premier Properties. He also is an Associate Broker, Accredited Buyers Representative, a Certified Residential Specialist, and was voted in the Top 10 Residential Real Estate Agents in Arizona for 2012 and 2013 by Ranking Arizona, the Best of Arizona Business. You can contact John with any of your real estate questions. Call him at (602) 615-0843, or go to his Web site at www.BuyAndSellAZ.com.



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COMMUNITY

LAS SENDAS RESIDENT TURNED POP SINGER RELEASES HER FIRST ALBUM

By AnnElise Makin

Unstoppable—when she sings, she puts her heart out there. Sheridan Blair, age 17, a Red Mountain High School senior from Las Sendas, brought some of her musical compositions together in a *six-pack* to be released this July.

Sheridan has been singing for as long as she can remember. “I started taking voice lessons when I was 7 years old,” she recalled. She wrote her first lyrics at age 13, when her mother, Wendy Skarda, was diagnosed with breast cancer, and underwent rigorous treatment.

As many neighbors and friends may remember, one heartfelt song, titled *Still Standing*, became the battle hymn for the Hit for the Cure Red Mountain Ranch breast cancer fund-raiser. Later on, Sheridan wrote the song *Not Alone* for the Relay for Life, and presented it during the event at the candlelight vigil.

Sheridan has competed in talent searches and songwriting competitions across the Valley. She takes pop music, an easy listening genre, rather seriously. This girl “... basically sings all the time,” Wendy stated.

For the last five years, Sheridan has written scores of new songs. One of her pop music idols is Demi Lovato. She emulates this pop star, because she feels connected to a similar vision of providing useful lessons to young girls through her music.

“I want to be a role model with good morals,” Sheridan said. “Somebody who doesn’t drink, who uses common sense, offers compassion—somebody to look up to.”

Vying for possibly a music career and definitely a lot of ambitious training, Sheridan has refined her voice skills under the exacting tutelage of maestro Stëv Skye. Before her teacher was moving to California, the singer grabbed the opportunity to put her bests out on the market.

“A good testing of waters,” said Wendy. That’s where

she feels in tune with the singing coach. Sheridan’s career aspirations also are pulling her toward California, however. Singer, songwriter and recording artist—all these sound good to her.

Yet, she has one other talent to fall back on, her big knack for writing.

“My music coach wanted me to write songs to fit what young people are listening to,” Sheridan said. “He wanted

me to draw on my own experience. Naturally, there was plenty of high school material to reach back to.”

As high school often presents young people with conflicted messages, Sheridan chose to offer teenagers a boost through her music. “Don’t give up on yourself, keep learning who you really are,” she encourages her peers.

“It took almost a year to bring all the components together,” Wendy reported. “Sheridan has only been writing lyrics for the CD for the last six months.”

The selection was neatly whittled down to six thematically aligned tunes. “Quite an amazing process,” this proud mom conceded. Music coach Stëv composed the arrangements and generated the instrumental tracks.

The thematic aspect for the mini-album revolves around teenage pains and gains, identity search, heartbreak and many familiar struggles. Sheridan presents her songs with a strong voice and skilled interpretation. Some of these titles for inspiration are called *Dangerous*, *Up* and *Beautiful*.

One big fun part of producing the album was the cover shoot. Renowned photographer Mimi Hershey directed the singer’s image quest. While Sheridan contributed ideas for hair, clothing and accessories, the photographer factored together her skin type and face shape, and matched the backdrop to the mood.

This was a meaningful experience for the photographer, as well. Mimi has 30 years of experience in photography, and watched Sheridan grow up as her mother’s best friend. Sheridan used to call her Aunt Mim.

The photographs turned out beautifully, and endorsed Sheridan’s aspirations. Yes, the girl and her music are beautiful. ■

Now, watch for Sheridan’s musical debut on iTunes. You will find her tunes under Sheridan Blair. Find Sheridan Blair on YouTube at youtube.com/itssheridanblair. And like the Sheridan Blair fan page on Facebook under Sheridan Blair.





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HEALTH

Studies Show Need for WISDOM TEETH REMOVAL

By Dr. Paul Kelly of AzMax Oral Surgery

Dr. C. Martin Farnsworth DMD of Las Sendas Dental Health

Over the years, questions have been raised about the efficacy (prudent need) of third molar (wisdom) teeth removal as a preventive measure compared with waiting for pathology (problems) to develop.

The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons Board of Trustees endorsed the concept clinical and biological research was needed to further investigate the answers to these questions.

In 1993, a special committee was appointed to critically review existing literature, and to design a prospective longitudinal clinical trial, which could give us more information, and continue to build upon our knowledge in the future. Multiple universities and doctors have been involved since then, and the data has been collected into what has become known as the *Third Molar Clinical Trials*.

From these clinical trials, there have been more than 70 articles or abstracts published, all yielding scientifically-based reasons supporting the removal of asymptomatic wisdom teeth before problems ever arise. These studies include evidence for increased risk of bone loss and periodontal disease around the second molars,

increased risk of decay on the second molars, premature loss of the second molars due to external resorption, and chronic oral inflammation with negative impact on cardiovascular, obstetrics, metabolic and renal outcomes.



Further publications have also shown increased risk of worsening of periodontal disease among pregnant women with retained third molars, and risk of pre-term, low birth weight babies. The findings also provide validation for prompt intervention of wisdom teeth removal to avoid adverse health-related

quality of life issues, such as pain, oral function and resuming a normal lifestyle.

The evaluation of wisdom teeth is part of the normal exam your dentist does on a regular basis. Sometimes, an additional X-ray, called a panoramic, is needed to look at all the surrounding anatomical structures when determining the health/risk benefits surrounding the keeping or removing of wisdom teeth. Regardless of age, or with or without pain, the evaluation of a person's wisdom teeth should be done periodically to help prevent future problems. ■

For questions, please contact Dr. Paul Kelly at (480) 325-7665 or Dr. Martin Farnsworth at (480) 283-5854.

Las Sendas Dental Health is located at 2947 N. Power Road, Suite 103.

LOCAL BUSINESS

EAGLE SERVICES OFFERS EXPERTISE With Your Electric Car and Home Surge Protector

Submitted by Eagle Services

As technology advances in the electric car industry, so does the electrical demand to accommodate these advances at our homes.

Eagle Services Electrical Division can install dedicated 40-amp, 240-volt circuits from your main electrical panel to your garage, in most cases, for an affordable price. Eagle Electrical also will install car chargers supplied by the customer. These mount fairly easy on standard garage walls.

George Robbins, a licensed, bonded and insured electrician, with more than 22 years experience, sees two types of chargers quite often. These are the Nissan Leaf and Chevy Volt. He suggests installing the 240-volt model because it charges much faster than the 120-volt.

Another electrical item for today's high tech homes is Whole House Surge Protection. This device, made by Eaton Cutler Hammer, and endorsed by HGTV actor Mike Holmes (*Holmes on Homes* creator), mounts at the source of your electric power, the main electrical panel. It mounts inside or below the panel, and requires a dedicated 20-amp, 240-volt circuit breaker for power. It basically stops the surge from entering the home.

The utility company power fluctuates and surges homes throughout the day without notice most times. With monsoon season coming, your

home can be surged by a lightning strike a mile away. Eaton recommends using power surge strips for added protection and warranty replacement of appliances and devices.

Eagle Electrical also offers 24-hour emergency service any day of the week, George said. ■

For more information, or to contact George, call (480) 659-4942, or e-mail George@EaglePAE.com. The company also has a Web site at www.eagleplumbingandair.com. Free estimates are available.



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SPORTS

AMGC Golfer Chelsea Harris Plays U.S. Women's Open

By Dawn Abbey

New member of Alta Mesa Golf Club (AMGC) Chelsea Harris qualified this year to play in the U.S. Women's Open at Sebonack Golf Club, Southampton, N.Y., which took place this past June.

Chelsea moved to the Valley in January, from Bloomington-Normal, Ill., and promptly became a member of AMGC. "There are a couple of other professional women golfers out there, and we play together for fun," she said.

The 23-year-old is a recent graduate of the University of Iowa, where she attended on a four-year scholarship, and was a member of the golf team.

"I started playing golf when I was about 4 years old," said Chelsea, "and began golfing competitively at age 10."

In order to qualify for the U.S. Women's Open, Chelsea had to complete a 36-hole walking course. "There were only 20 places open in the U.S., and each qualifying location tournament had only a limited number of winning spots," Chelsea explained. "I played in Chicago, which only had two spots, and placed second out of 75 entrants."

According to its Web site, the U.S. Women's Open began in 1946, and is the longest running event currently on the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour. The 72-hole format is one of the LPGA's four major championships, and is not LPGA Tour co-sponsored. ■



EVENT

ENJOY SALT RIVER'S Halloween Spooktacular

Submitted by Salt River Tubing

If you are looking for a uniquely spooky, ghoulish, spectacular and a howling great time, dare to visit Salt River Tubing's Halloween Spooktacular event on Saturday, July 20, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Take a ride on specialty buses, such as Purple Haze, the River Rat, Cleopatra's Bar and the Jolly Clown Ride. Don a Halloween costume, and join the zany Salt River Tubing crew for a lifetime experience on the Lower Salt River in beautiful Tonto National Forest. It's Halloween in July!

The popular event draws thousands each year to the Lower Salt River. Tubers enjoy a howling, ghoulish time as awesome phantoms, frightful witches, scowling pumpkins and eerie voices echo throughout the day. Costumes are optional for tubers. However, the tubing company will be awarding \$17 tube rental passes for best costumed tubers (passes are valid on a return visit). Photo opportunities with the zany Salt River Tubing employees add extra sizzle to fun in the sun in Tonto National Forest.

"Are you searching for fun and the coolest ride in the Valley of the Sun?" That's the question posed by President and CEO of Salt River Tubing Henri Breault. "Our Halloween Spooktacular is just the ticket for a memorable, summertime adventure in July," he continued. "Our zany, fun-filled crew is determined to put the wow in your Salt River adventure, and create a unique journey in the great outdoors of Tonto National Forest during our Halloween Spooktacular. Don a mask, paint your face, and join us for the ride of your life on the chilling and thrilling Salt River



rapids," Henri said. "High step it with our line dancers in the Monster Mash."

The USDA Forest Service national program, *More Kids in the Woods*, was designed to encourage efforts to get kids and teens outdoors and exploring ways to connect youth and nature. Salt River Tubing's Halloween Spooktacular event is aligned with this commitment.

The cost of tube rental is \$17 per person/tube (includes sales tax) and includes inner tube rental and shuttle bus service. Children must be 8 years or older and at least 4 feet tall for tube rental and shuttle bus service. Children, non-swimmers and inexperienced swimmers should wear life vests.

Glass containers are prohibited by law in the Lower Salt River Recreational Area and will be confiscated. Ice chests and coolers will be inspected for glass containers before boarding shuttle buses. Have a great time by responsibly appointing a designated driver before beginning your tubing adventure.

The latest tube rental is 3:30 p.m., weather and water flow conditions permitting. The last shuttle bus pickup is 6:30 p.m.

Salt River Tubing is located in Tonto National Forest, just seven minutes from Highway 202 East, on Power Road, operating under permit by the USDA Forest Service. ■

For more information about Salt River Tubing and the Halloween Spooktacular event, visit the Web site at www.saltrivertubing.com, or call (480) 984-3305. Daily operating hours are 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

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LOCAL BUSINESS

Interior Designer Offers GUIDE TO SUMMER FLORALS

By Amanda Billings, Interior Designer,
Allied ASID

Every year, once I've stowed away all of my Christmas decorations, I am dying for the bright cheery colors of spring.

I tend to leave my house alone for a little while, enjoying the *spring clean* feel, but as soon as the warmer weather rolls around, I am putting a fresh touch to all of the florals in the house. If you feel the same way, and want to find some ways to update or bring a little life into your space, I have some tips for you.

For those of you who read my blog on the color trends for this year, you may notice the correlation in the color palettes . . . if you didn't, please do. Visit www.cocomilanos.com, under news and events. Not all of the palettes have transcended into floral design, but one in particular is the rise in pastels. Sherwin Williams introduced it as *Vintage Moxie*, but we are seeing it everywhere, from fashion to home décor.

This color palette is working its way into floral this season through the use of cool pastel tones. We are seeing lots of soft purples, greens and blues. While the green tulips and white ranunculus are acting as neutrals, balancing the arrangement gives it a delicate and soothing color palette.

Another color trend in floral design is the use of bold contrasting colors (colors opposite each other on the color wheel). I know everyone is

automatically thinking red and green, but contrasting colors are so much more.

One example of a contrasting color palette is blue and orange.

Because cobalt (blue) is such a timeless color, many people already have it in their homes. If you

are looking to spice it up, add in a pop of orange.

Many people tend to get nervous about using orange, but the addition of white is softening the look of the arrangement, so the orange is just an accent to the blue. However, even by definition, orange brings a pop of life to any space.

It is said to inspire energy, happiness, and creativity.

When creating an arrangement, another principle I like to follow is to mix textures. There is not an exact formula or pattern for floral arrangements, but adding different elements is a basic rule of thumb. What I found to be interesting in floral design for this season is mixing succulents with flowers. I absolutely love this new concept. For years, I have been adding small wild flowers with my succulent arrangements. With new inspiration for the coming season, I have been mixing them with large flowers.

The last detail I would like to discuss is using oversized items in arrangements. I have used many different oversized sunflowers in my day, but now we have poppies, dinner plate dahlias and kale. If the container is fitting, don't be afraid to go big.

Hopefully, this has left you inspired. If you have any more questions on floral arrangements, or anything else I can help you with in your space, please feel free to come visit me. I love a good puzzle, and I live for finding just the right solution for your space. ■

The CoCo Milano's store is located at The Village at Las Sendas, 2837 N. Power Road, Suite 104. For more information, call (480) 641-2626, visit the Web at www.cocomilanos.com, or send an e-mail to info@cocomilanos.com.



BEAUTY

COSMOS SALON HAS THE Solution for Curly Hair

By Dawn Abbey

Natural curly hair can be gorgeous, but it also can drive you crazy when it has a mind of its own. With the monsoon season upon us, those with curly hair have to fight to keep their locks straight. But why keep them straight? "Let those natural curls shine," said Sandy Barbetta, co-owner with husband, Cosmo, of Cosmos Salon and Day Spa.

Sandy is putting together a free *Calling All Curls Night* seminar at the salon to show clients how to care for curly locks, from the cut, to the style, to the right products made especially for enhancing and defrizzing curls.

Sandy asked, "Did you know that hair gets frizzy on damp days because the hair is reaching out for missing moisture? It's all about moisture. We'll show you a three-step process to completely hydrate your hair, so your curls stay put and shine instead of frizzing," she continued. "And all the products are botanically based and healthy for your hair."

According to Sandy, cutting curly hair also has its tricks. "For instance, it should be cut dry, and each curl cut separately," she explained. Sandy and her stylists will demonstrate different cuts for each type of curly hair—swavy, wavy, Botticelli and corkscrew. There also are styling aids designed especially to enhance waves and curls.

At press time, the final dates had not yet been established for the seminar. So, if you are interested in attending or learning more about curly and wavy hair products, call the salon at (480) 844-0707 to sign up. ■

Cosmos Salon and Day Spa is located at the northeast corner of Power and McDowell roads.



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Prepare for Monsoon Storms BY TRIMMING TREES

By Kimberly Searles

Soon, the cicadas will sing their song, warning us of the impending monsoon storms.

While the severity of some seasons vary, at least one storm wreaks havoc on those artistically manicured lawns and trees.

If not properly prepared for the coming storms, mesquites, Palo Verde trees and other native desert trees could suffer irreparable damage. As a result, homeowners can be left with an unsightly mess in their yards, not to mention lost money in their investments.

"A little preventative maintenance goes a long way in helping your trees weather the monsoon storms," said Dennis Kirby, of All Pro Trees and Landscaping. "Ultimately, it can save the cost of replacing a tree, or years of reshaping to get it back to its pre-storm glory."

Few residents realize that the wide, full canopy of trees traps the fierce winds, leaving no other option but to rip through the tree and uproot it.

Some might argue these trees naturally occur in the desert. So, what's the big deal? In the desert, these trees have natural supports, which allow them to withstand the harsh elements. However, these cultivated trees stand on reduced, spindly legs. That fact alone makes trimming and thinning them all the more important.

For nearly 10 years, tree expert Dennis and his wife, Sue, have been operating All Pro Trees and Landscaping in the North Mesa area. As Arizona natives, they understand the

different challenges desert climate brings to trees, which is a huge benefit to their clients.

"Arizona trees need a lot of trimming," Dennis stated. "Because irrigated trees grow fast in this area, frequent trimming is a must."

Although many options are available for this service, All Pro Trees and Landscaping takes the time to educate homeowners about their options.

"Tree trimming is an art that requires a deep understanding of not only the trees, but also the environment in which we live," Dennis said. "Our priority is to give clients the best service possible, but we also want to do what's best for the tree, so that the homeowner's investment lasts a long time."

Special trees thrive on expert care. Too much skinning can kill a Queen Palm tree, and climbing, as many do, damages the tree. The experts at All Pro understand the nuances of the different tree species here, and use the appropriate professional equipment to get the job done right.

Mid-June and July is the heart of palm tree season, which means seedpods need to be removed so they don't clutter the yard or pool with debris. Cutting them too early can cause the seedpods to grow back. All Pro advises homeowners to take care of palms just in time to avoid these pitfalls and save time and money.

Citrus trees and Ficus trees also pose unique challenges for proper maintenance. Whether it is monthly landscaping service, yard cleanups or even frost damage, All Pro Trees can help.

"We are a family-owned company, and can handle all residential, HOA and commercial needs," stated Dennis.

All Pro Trees and Landscaping provides all evaluations at no cost to the client. In fact, you pay only after you are fully satisfied with their work.

"Our main priority is making our customers happy,

and helping them save money in the long run," said Sue. "There is no greater compliment for the work we do than when our customers refer us to their friends and family."

Clients rely on All Pro for the quality they bring to the table, or in this case, yard. Fully bonded and insured with all employees covered under workman's comp, All Pro provides worry-free service.

Not only does All Pro provide sculpting and trimming, but the company also offers deep root fertilization, full yard cleanup and much more.

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