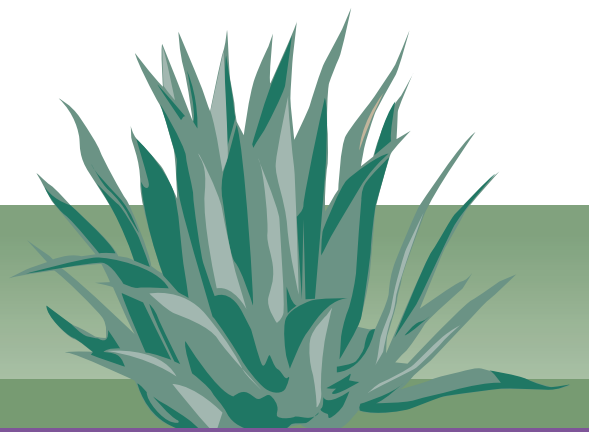


Mesa Uplands Up Close



Bringing neighbors closer to their community

December 2012

CAMPBELL'S DANCE STUDIO Presents a Holiday Tradition

By Dawn Abbey

For the past 23 years, Campbell's Dance Studio has presented *The Nutcracker* ballet every holiday season for the enjoyment of the community.

Not only does this production provide a stage for many talented local classical ballet students, but it also has created an exciting and nostalgic tradition for many who attend year after year.

Last year, a uniquely new choreography was introduced into the production by studio choreographer of 17 years, Lawrence Rollins. "Larry created a *dancing Drosselmeyer* to carry the character of Clara's godfather, Herr Drosselmeyer, throughout the ballet's story," said studio owner Frances Campbell. "He has everything that happens presented in the form of dream sequences that he magically sets in motion. This year's production also will have some new surprises."

This year, the role of Drosselmeyer, played for 14 years by Mark Kleinman, has been taken over by his son, Ryan Kleinman. Currently a student at the University of Arizona (U of A), Tucson, Ryan has grown up dancing in many roles in past performances of *The Nutcracker*.

Lauryn Baehr, a student at Stapley Junior High School, will perform the role of Clara. Zac Birdwell, now on a full scholarship in the dance program at the U of A, will return to play the part of *The Nutcracker*. Zac's younger brother, Winston Birdwell, will be playing the role of Fritz, Clara's younger, tormenting brother. Lisette Larson, a student at Mountain View High School, portrays the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Despite creative changes over the years, the only parts of the ballet choreography Lawrence refuses to alter are the dance between the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Nutcracker, and the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy. "These are original as they were performed in the ballet's



première, at the Mariinsky Theatre, in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Dec. 18, 1892," Lawrence said. "This is tradition, and I teach my students to respect tradition by doing the original choreography."

The Nutcracker will be performed on Friday, Dec. 7, at 7:30 p.m.; and Saturday, Dec. 8, at 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., at Mountain View High School, 2700 E. Brown Road. Tickets are \$13 for adults, \$12 for students and

seniors, and \$11 for children under 12, and are available now at Campbell's Dance Studio, 2820 E. University Drive, Suite 106.

In addition, Campbell's studio students will be performing a holiday show, this year entitled *Christmas Traditions and Treasures*, on Thursday, Dec. 20, at 6:30 p.m., at Mountain View High School. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for students and seniors, and \$6 for those under 12. ■

For more information, visit www.campbellsdance.com, or call (480) 830-3450.

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LOCAL BUSINESS

UNIQUE GIFTS ARE RIGHT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

By Dawn Abbey

Time is short to pick up those last-minute gifts for the holidays, but we all want to find that something special for those who mean a lot to us.

"Unique gifts are our specialty at Sarah's Hallmark," said owner Dee Babicke. "Right in the neighborhood, our store elves can help you fill your list, or give you some great gift ideas."

Because Sarah's Hallmark is a Gold Crown store, shoppers will find exclusive Gold Crown merchandise not available at other Hallmark outlets, such as *Grab-N-Gabs*, the *Children's Angel Choir* and the *Until We Hug Again* recordable bunny and bear, all brand new this year. "But walk through our doors, and you'll see it's much more than just a Hallmark store. We offer a large variety of gift items for all ages and tastes."

Every year, there is an item many folks start looking for even before the holidays. This year, *Elf on the Shelf* is one, and it is quickly becoming a tradition among young families. "*Elf on the Shelf* is a keepsake gift set, which includes an elf and a hardcover book telling the story of how Santa makes his naughty and nice list," said Dee. "Children can register their elf online and receive a letter from Santa." The *Elf on the Shelf: An Elf's Story* also has been made into an animated holiday special, which will air on CBS-TV on Friday, Dec. 14.

Also popular now are the interactive *Story Buddies* and books, also only available at Gold Crown retailers. Interactive books bring the story to life as the *Story Buddy* chimes in when certain words or phrases are read aloud. *Jingle*, the husky dog, came out last year to rave reviews, and this year brings *Bell*, his girlfriend. Several other stuffed pets come with their own story books, such as Scooby Doo, Nugget the Puppy and Abigail Bunny.

"Our huge Vera Bradley section is hot with women and girls of all ages, both for gifts and for themselves," Dee explained. Updated patterns and styles include new items appealing to coeds and tweens, such as backpacks, lunch satchels, and iPad and reader covers, along with luggage items and the well-loved assortment of handbags and accessories.

"For those who love to decorate, we feature scores of beautifully crafted, new and traditional collectibles," said Dee.

"Annalee Dolls have been around for more than 75 years, in a variety of Christmas characters ranging from palm-size to those designed to stand on the floor. Each is unique, but you can always tell an Annalee by the smile."

Started in the 1960s, Byers' Choice Carolers are featured in the most traditional of Christmas décor. Jim Shore's Americana folk art Santas, angels and Nativity sets also are on many wish lists.

"Gifting a holiday village can start a wonderful tradition for a new family," Dee suggested. Founded in 1976, Department 56 lighted village buildings and accessories come in many styles. These detail-oriented scenes can create a throwback to simpler times of Christmas-past, or display contemporary Disney or Snoopy characters.

And, of course, there are Hallmark's renowned Keepsake Ornaments, full of detail and created in styles for old and young. Especially popular are *Count Down* ornaments, which mark the days until Christmas with special messages.

Spending a few minutes perusing the shelves at



Sarah's Hallmark may save you hours of shopping time. Then you can wrap and mail right from the store's post office. ■

Sarah's Hallmark is located at 1112 N. Higley Road. Holiday hours are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. The postal station is available

from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays, and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Last pick-up time is 3:45 p.m. weekdays and 4 p.m. on Saturday. For more information, call (480) 981-8828.



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DINING

O'Neill's Place Rewards

The A on Your Report Card

Submitted by O'Neill's Place

The year is coming to an end, as is the school semester. In anticipation, O'Neill's Place would like to congratulate all students and recognize their hard work, commitment and achievement by offering the *Meal for an A Program*. Students, simply bring in your report cards, from the second quarter of school, with at least one grade of A. This will entitle you to a free kid's meal, or for those a bit older, a free dessert. Sure, as moms and dads, we hope for more than one A, but as long as our children continue to strive to be their best, we are proud parents, and O'Neill's Place is proud of them, too. O'Neill's Place will be continuing this *Meal for an A Program* for the remaining school year. So, kids simply bring their report cards to O'Neill's when received in the mail, and they present them to the staff before ordering their food. O'Neill's Place proudly will serve these students for free. Now, we have something for the grown-ups. O'Neill's Place will be continuing its many promotions, such as Monday Madness (\$8 burger and a beer), Thursday is Monday (also \$8 burger and a beer), Craft Night, and we now will be continuing Saturday Prime Rib. This is meaty 12-ounce Prime Rib, with potatoes and sautéed vegetables...



perhaps even a house shot of fireball with Paul. Just added this past week are seasonal beers from San Tan Brewery. Brewed locally in Chandler, we will be serving the different seasonal beers offered by San Tan Brewery. On tap now is *Rail Slide*. Additionally, the O'Neill's welcome back our winter visitors. We look forward to seeing them for food, spirits and festivities. We will be publishing a new happy hour menu in mid-December, and hope to have an enhanced new menu early next year. Paul and Beth O'Neill would like to say thank you to all our patrons and welcome those who have yet to visit O'Neill's Place. The O'Neill family and the staff at O'Neill's Place wishes everyone a healthy, happy and safe holiday season. "Throughout the year, we sometimes forget what it's all about," said Paul. "It's all about family." ■

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. For more information, call (480) 832-8989. Come in thirsty!

UpClose
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COMMUNITY

Manage Your Waste Stream OVER THE HOLIDAYS

Submitted by City of Mesa

With the holidays in full swing, it can only mean one thing—holiday parties, gift buying and eating one too many cookies. All we can say about eating too many holiday goodies is to come up with a good exercise plan. However, we do have some specific tips on how you can manage the excess waste generated during this time of year.

Use reusable bags—The next time you go grocery shopping to pick up items for your holiday feasts and social gatherings, don't forget to take your reusable grocery bags. Not only can you fit more items into each bag, you also will reduce your use of disposable plastic bags. However, if you forget your reusable bags, please remember to recycle your plastic bags at your local grocery store or favorite retailer. Plastic bags are not accepted in Mesa's blue barrel, as they can become entangled in the machines and slow down the sorting process.

Bonus tip: If you are only buying one or two items, consider skipping the bag altogether.

Buy items with recycled packaging—Not only is it important to buy items that come in recyclable packaging, but also in packaging accepted in your recycling program. As an example, when buying a carton of eggs, it is better to buy eggs that come in a paper carton versus a Styrofoam one. While both are recyclable, only the paper carton is accepted in Mesa's blue barrel. Styrofoam is not accepted, as there is no local buyer for this material.

Buy items with reduced packaging—Try to avoid buying items encased in excess packaging. Many manufacturers now are realizing minimal packaging is not only good for the environment, but also helps them reduce their operating costs.

Recycle—Don't forget to maximize the use of your blue

recycle barrel. Acceptable materials placed into this container will be recycled and kept out of the landfill. If you find you have large boxes or a temporary surge of excess recyclables, don't forget to use the City of Mesa's public recycling drop-off center. The 24-hour drop-off site is located at the East Mesa Service Center, 6935 E. Decatur St. Large bins are available for residents to recycle their cardboard, and blue barrels are available for everything else.

Reminder: Items placed into the blue barrel should be loose, dry and relatively clean. Please do not bag your recyclables, which can slow down the sorting process.

For more information about Mesa's recycling programs, visit www.mesarecycles.org, or call City of Mesa Customer Service at (480) 644-2221. Residents also may send in their trash and recycling questions to waste.info@mesaaz.gov.

Exactly how much more waste do Mesa residents generate due to the holidays?

In 2011, Mesa residents sent 2,075 tons of trash to the landfill, and recycled 617 tons of material per week on an average basis. However, during the week after Christmas and the week after New Year's, the average increased to 2,326 tons of trash and 810 tons of recyclable material per week. Therefore, for the two holiday weeks, trash levels increased 12 percent, and recycling activity increased 31 percent more than the average week.

Thinking ahead...

After the holidays, don't forget to recycle your Christmas tree. Visit www.mesarecycles.org for recycling options. ■



LOCAL BUSINESS

The UPS Store ACCEPTING DONATIONS

By Kim Phillips

The UPS Store participates every year in the Toys for Tots and Operation Santa Claus charity drives. This year is no different as several groups are in need of help, including St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, Phoenix Children's Hospital, The Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center, and Military Assistance Mission Arizona as well as the Toys for Tots Literacy Program.

Steve Moog, at The UPS Store at Power and McDowell roads, is accepting donations of cash or new books, and also a new unwrapped toy, new children's clothing, or packaged food. The charity drive runs until Dec. 20. ■

More information can be found at theupsstorelocal.com/3690.

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Milk & Juice Cartons
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Metal Cans
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Paper
Includes office paper, junk mail, phone books, newspaper, paper bags & magazines

Items should be relatively clean, dry and loose when placed in the blue barrel.
Styrofoam and plastic bags are currently not accepted.

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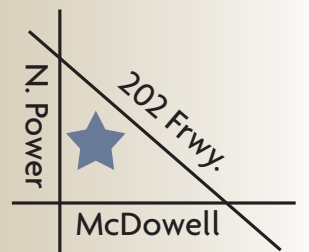
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LOCAL BUSINESS

Sweet Repeats Consignment Boutique
WELCOMES BACK ALL WINTER VISITORS

Submitted by Sweet Repeats
Consignment Boutique

With many new items and, as usual, tons of great finds, Sweet Repeats Consignment Boutique is ready to welcome winter visitors into the store.

"Our store is brimming with racks of blouses/tops, jeans, jackets, dresses, skirts, shoes and oh, yes, those wonderful handbags we are lucky to get," said Connie Hooper, owner of Sweet Repeats. "Many of my consignors have been cleaning out their closets, and we are truly benefiting from all the wonderful items they no longer need!" Because Sweet Repeats only accepts better department store labels, shoppers find only the absolute, one-of-a-kind deals.

Sweet Repeats is for the savvy shoppers who love to update their wardrobes regularly. The boutique only accepts designer and better department store labels in like new condition, freshly laundered or dry cleaned and, of course, in season.

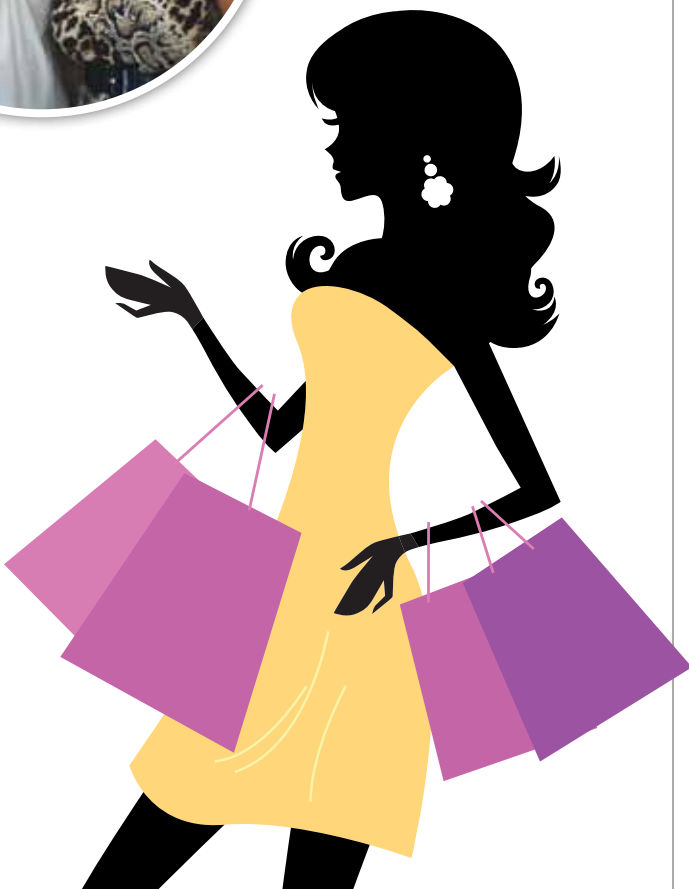
Currently, Sweet Repeats is accepting fall items. Consignments are accepted Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Consignors can choose to use their credit for in-store purchases, or take in cash or check. After 90 days, all consigned items are donated, and many go to Hope Women's Center and Sunshine Acres Children's Home.

The summer was slow and hot, but nothing stopped many regular local shoppers from coming in from time to time. "We do appreciate our local shoppers," Connie said, "and want them to know we value their business."

Once again, Sweet Repeats welcomes back all winter visitors. "We have missed you," the store owner said, "and hope your summer was great!" ■



Sweet Repeats is an upscale ladies consignment boutique, located at 6039 E. University Drive, on the south-east corner of Recker Road and University Drive. Store hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. You also can call (480) 275-2480.



LOCAL BUSINESS

Breadsmith Offers A Tale
OF LOVE FOR CHRISTMAS

Submitted by Breadsmith

This Christmas, in keeping with the 12 Days of Christmas tradition, Breadsmith will again offer Panettone, made fresh every day, from Dec. 11 through Dec. 24.

Breadsmith will be open on Christmas Eve. "Although we are normally closed on Mondays, we will be open on Monday, Dec. 24," said Greg Farr, owner of Breadsmith. "We want to ensure our customers have the fresh baked items that help make their holidays special."

"The origin of Panettone has several different stories," Greg said. "I am including my favorite."

In 15th century Milan, a nobleman falconer named Ughetto Atellani fell in love with Adalgisa, the daughter of a poor baker named Toni. To win her over, the nobleman disguised himself as a baker and invented a rich bread in which he added butter, eggs, raisins, candied lemon and orange peel to the flour and yeast. (Breadsmith adds apples, apricots, cranberries and almonds.)

The Duke of Milan, Ludovico il Moro Sforza (1452-1508), agreed to the marriage, which was held in a local church. Among the guests was Leonardo da Vinci, whose signature is contained in the church records as an honored guest. This resulted in the launch of the new cake-like bread Pan del Ton, or Toni's bread.

Breadsmith is located at The Village at Las Sendas, on the northeast corner of Power and McDowell roads. ■

For more information, including store hours, menus and other information, visit the Web site at www.breadsmith.com. Click on the Mesa location.



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COLDWELL BANKER

TRAILS AND PATHS PREMIER PROPERTIES

MLS

Sales over \$250,000 for the Month of October 2012

John Karadsheh

Address	Square Feet	Community	Sold Price	Short Sale or REO*
7754 E. Coronado Rd.	2,936	County Island	\$275,000	X
9635 E. Gary St.	2,655	Saguaro Mountain	\$281,000	
1420 N. Bernard	2,488	Sierra Estates	\$286,120	
9312 E. Golden Cir.	3,315	Ellsworth Heights	\$289,900	
9418 E. Halifax St.	2,202	Sierra Estates	\$292,000	
8645 E. Ivy St.	1,731	Mountain Bridge	\$296,000	
2112 N. Vista Del Sol	2,989	Estates at Desert Shadows	\$315,000	X
3416 E. Fairbrook St.	3,077	The Groves	\$319,000	
9365 E. Ingram Cir.	1,994	Mountain Bridge	\$320,600	
1527 N. Steele	2,862	Grandview Estates	\$334,500	
4529 E. Enrose St.	2,885	The Groves	\$353,000	
2863 E. Mallory St.	4,212	Vista Mesa	\$355,000	
2235 E. Minton St.	3,547	Village Grove Estates	\$365,000	
2045 N. Gentry	4,627	Orange Blossom Estates	\$389,000	
8856 E. Nora Cir.	3,850	Madrid	\$467,000	
5345 E. McLellan Rd. #35	3,658	Alta Mesa Estates	\$485,000	
3846 E. Ivy St.	4,316	The Groves	\$560,000	X
1905 N. Val Vista Dr.	6,121	County Island	\$562,000	X
2104 N. Maple St.	4,500	Valencia Estates	\$605,000	
3409 E. Ivyglen Cir.	6,000	Arboleda	\$660,000	

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

LAS SENDAS HISTORY PROJECT PRESENTS ECLECTIC FINDS

By AnnElise Makin

It's done—the book is off the press. *Las Sendas: The Dreamers, the Builders, the Community* will be presented to the public at a launch party at the Trailhead Members Club on Dec. 6.

Finally, a smart little book on local history has come to fruition. Janet Patrick, Katherine Karpinsky and their team researched every aspect of the Las Sendas history. Their project was 20 months in the making, until the team of 11 volunteer researchers pulled their finds together in a book.

"Very little had been written about Las Sendas and its surrounding area," Janet said. Only one Mesa Historical Society publica-

tion, *Las Sendas, Where the River Meets the Valley*, by Dr. Ben Furlong, has described the geology, native culture and early settle-

ment of this area. Janet, Katherine and their team thought there was a lot more to say about their home turf. So, they picked up from where the Furlong publication left off. "We wanted to capture the concept of what drew people out here into the desert," Katherine recalled.

Soon, Janet compiled information from articles, passport documents, ship lists, as well as census and public land records. Katherine set out to collect interviews with former landowners and developers.

All involved in the Las Sendas History Project are confidently hoping this book will elevate community pride even more. ■

ARIZONA CENTENNIAL YEAR 2012 BOOK LAUNCH AND RECEPTION

Las Sendas: The Dreamers, the Builders, the Community
♦ Thursday, Dec. 6, 2012, 4 to 7 p.m.
♦ At the Trailhead Members Club

The Las Sendas History Project team will present their book, and will be available for questions on the project. The exhibit also will include supporting history materials and a slide show of Las Sendas today.

The collected research, as well as all the proceeds from the book, will go to the Mesa Historical Society and Museum. All the helpers worked at their own expense to generate a community project by and for the community.

Project team members included William Bryan, Shirley Duclos, Kalley Karpinsky, Katherine Karpinsky, Janet Patrick, Dick Patrick, William Puffer, Charlie Ralls, B. Sullivan, Tony Vacca and Mickey Veich.

Thank you to all community members for their contributions.

For further information, or to order a copy of the book, contact Janet Patrick at dickp44406@aol.com.



LOCAL BUSINESS

PIEFECTION PIE SHOP has your favorite holiday pies

By Kim Phillips

Piefection Pie Shop, the newest scratch bakery and one-of-a-kind pie shop in the Valley, has your favorite holiday pies, including the December special, Apple Cranberry Crumb.

"We use Granny Smith apples, with cinnamon and freshly ground nutmeg, as well as whole cranberries," said Cheryl Standage, shop co-owner and entrepreneur. "The crumb is the traditional French crumb topping, with real butter," she added.

Another specialty pie for December will be the Pumpkin Cheesecake, which also was the special of the month for November. "Because the pie was so hugely popular, we decided to carry over through the month of December," commented Cheryl.

Cheryl has had a passion for food from a very young age. "I constantly observed my mother and my grandmother cooking and baking," she said, "and I developed a relentless desire to not only follow their example, but to always do it with quality ingredients to create the most fabulous food possible."

Piefection now features whole pies to go, in 30 different varieties, with everything made in-house daily. Among the favorites are coconut cream, banana cream, chocolate cream, lemon meringue, harvest pumpkin, country apple, peach, cherry and triple berry.

In addition to whole pies, Piefection makes chicken and turkey pot pies to either take and bake or baked off and ready to eat. The store also offers homemade rolls. "Everybody who tastes them just

keeps coming back," Cheryl chuckled. "Our rolls are soft and yummy. They are just delicious."

According to this pie shop owner, everything is made from scratch. "We use no preservatives or additives," Cheryl said of Piefection's many creations, "and only the finest ingredients around—freshly ground nutmeg, real butter, real whipping cream—and we scour the country to find only the best quality...peaches from Georgia, cherries from Michigan, and wild blueberries from Maine. Our chocolate only comes from Belgium...Callebaut, the best."

Piefection is co-owned by local Mesa residents, William and Cheryl Standage and Derek and Summer Kennedy. ■

Call Piefection Pie Shop at (480) 218-7437 to order your holiday pies. Piefection Pie Shop is located at 6731 E. Brown Road, on the southwest corner of Power and Brown roads. The shop is open Monday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Learn more at piefectionaz.com, and visit the Facebook page at facebook.com/PiefectionPieShop.



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EDUCATION

Desert Rose Preschool AT LAS SENDAS

By Rose Buttitta, Preschool Teacher

The children are having a good time as they learn about the holidays and the true spirit of giving.

THANKING AND GIVING

November was a very memorable month. The children learned about all the different things for which to be thankful, such as parents, food, clothing, housing, pets, toys and much more. They made turkey magnets, cards and decorations for our annual Thanksgiving feast. All the children cooked for the feast. They brought and helped cut vegetables to put in our vegetable soup. We made 12 pumpkin pies and lots of cornbread for all to share.

On Nov. 15, we had our Thanksgiving feast, attended by more than 80 hungry, thankful parents and children. The children took home decorations and a special card with the child's handprint. We finished off with the children singing songs and sharing what they are thankful for.

The children of Desert Rose Preschool at Las Sendas donated three large bags of snacks to the Sunshine Acres Children's Home for the children who are less fortunate.



HOLIDAY GIVING

In December, the children will learn about Christmas. We will be making lots of Christmas decorations and gifts for the parents. The children will have a visit from Santa, and they also will have pictures taken with him. On Friday, Dec. 21, we will have our cookie exchanges for all classes. Everyone will bring two-dozen cookies to school. We will exchange one dozen and share the other dozen at school. Coffee, tea and juice will be provided. Children will present their presents to their parents at this time. There will be no classes from Friday, Dec. 24 to Monday Jan. 7, 2013.

Desert Rose Preschool at Las Sendas is located at the Trailhead Members Club. It is a private preschool for Las Sendas children only. It operates year round, with classes for ages 3 to 5. It offers half-day sessions, plus the Lunch Bunch, until 1 p.m., and full-day sessions until 3 p.m. We currently are full, with a waiting list. Registration for next fall will be held in March. If you have any questions, please call (480) 654-4223, or send an e-mail to jbuttitta@cox.net.. ■

COMMUNITY

LOCAL COMMUNITY BENEFITS From National Make A Difference Day

Submitted by Boulder Mountain Ward

While the weekend before Halloween is usually filled with preparations for spook-tacular thrills and chills and some tricks and treats, one neighborhood organization planned a community service project instead, in conjunction with national *Make A Difference Day*.

About 100 members of the Boulder Mountain Ward, a local congregation from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, met to complete a series of projects benefiting two local schools, specifically, Cambridge Academy and Zaharis Elementary School.

On Friday, Oct. 26, many teens assisted in the Zaharis Elementary annual carnival, hosting booths and monitoring bounce houses and carnival rides. The next morning, Saturday, Oct. 27, about 60 members met to clean the school grounds, picking up trash left from the festivities the night before. Simultaneously, about 40 members met at Cambridge Academy for some service involving painting, tree trimming and weeding, as well as general landscape maintenance.

All service was performed free of charge, and was executed by families whose members ranged in age from

toddlers to seniors.

Ann Adams, the local coordinator for the project, was pleased with the show of support. "I believe in service," she stated. "I truly believe charity starts at home. It is in our own home community that we are most gratified with our service."

Ann added that the gaps in the community are "bridged when we come together" to make a difference in our own neighborhoods. "Lives change through service," she said.

The Boulder Mountain Ward is planning an annual community service project in conjunction with the national *Make A Difference Day*, the largest annual day of service, where an estimated 3 million volunteers participated across the country this year alone.

If you would like to participate in next year's event, or if you have suggestions for future neighborhood or community service, please contact Gaelen Anderson at (480) 296-5343. ■



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LOCAL BUSINESS

AAA GOLD EXCHANGE OFFERS THE BEST PRICE for gold, silver and diamonds

By Kim Phillips

For some extra cash this holiday season, visit AAA Gold Exchange with your broken, new or used jewelry, gold and silver coins, diamonds, or those silver platters you did not use for Thanksgiving. "We work with integrity," said Brian Meyer, co-owner of the recently opened AAA Gold Exchange, at Power and Brown roads, in Mesa. "We are very honest and very fair," he added. Brian, who shares ownership in the exchange with his sister, Michele, and father, Mike, said the store's recent expansion into Northeast Mesa is due to a considerable amount of referrals from past customers. "Our marketing dollars go to you, so you go out and tell everybody about us," he explained.

Residing in the Valley since 1963, the Meyer family has become experts in the field of exchanging precious metals and diamonds for cash. "We want to treat you right and pay you well," Brian emphasized.

He said trading in your gold and silver is easy at AAA Gold Exchange. The recently opened office is clean and comfortable, and is located in a safe setting. Brian and Michele typically are there every day, and offer free estimates with no pressure. "Prices are at an all time high," Brian shared. "There is no reason to hold onto your broken jewelry."

In comparison to retail jewelry stores, Brian said the exchange is unique, as there is no overhead. "This is all we do," he explained. "We don't sell jewelry or keep an inventory."

Brian and Michele both agreed they are experts in the field, and Mike is GIA certified with the Gemological Institute of America.

"We know exactly what we are doing," said Brian. In addition, the Meyer family has built a good relationship with the refinery, and,

as a result, is able to offer better deals to the customer. "We are paid the best prices at the refinery, so we are able to pass on those savings to you," he continued. "The money we save goes back into your pocket."

Michele said there are no gimmicks when it comes to selling your gold, silver, platinum or diamonds. The exchange has several testimonials to reference, including one from Kathy, from Phoenix. "Fast and easy process to get instant money for my gold and silver," said Kathy. "Thank you for explaining the entire process to me. I left comfortable and very confident that I chose the best place to sell my jewelry."

"People are happy," commented Michele. "They do tell their friends and family. We get positive feedback."

Walk-ins are welcome, and no appointment is necessary at AAA Gold Exchange. Free appraisals are available. ■

For more information, visit AAAGoldExchange.com, or call (480) 247-6876. The Northeast Mesa office is located at 1152 N. Power Road, Suite 102, in Mesa. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. AAA Gold Exchange is family owned and operated, with 35 locations, including four in the Valley.



SPORTS

Charlie Beljan wins his FIRST U.S. PGA TOUR TITLE

By Dawn Abbey

Charlie Beljan won his first U.S. PGA Tour golf title on Nov. 11, by shooting a 3-under par 69 at the Children's Miracle Network Hospital Classic in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

Charlie's wife, Merisa, holding their 7-week-old son, Graham, greeted the champion on the course after his inaugural win. Both of their mothers were also there.

The 28-year-old Mesa resident began his career at Alta Mesa Golf Club, where his mother, Ann Beljan, presently is general manager. His win earned him \$846,000 and a place on the PGA Tour for the next two years. Charlie was also nominated as a 2012 Rookie of the Year.

The outcome was unclear Friday, Nov. 9, when Charlie experienced chest pains and was taken to a local hospital. After checking him out, doctors concluded an overabundance of adrenaline had led to the symptoms, which are often the result of anxiety or a panic attack. Charlie overcame, and was back on the course Saturday, winning the tournament the next day, despite still feeling quite ill, he was quoted as saying.

Charlie has suffered several previous such attacks during the past year, according to news reports.

During an after-play interview, Charlie made the following comments: "I believe that everything happens for a reason ... as long as you believe in yourself and keep on fighting ... that's what I did on Friday ... I literally fought for my life ... there's no giving up ... you never know what's going to happen in this game or the game of life, you just keep plugging away ... you do the best you can." ■



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LOCAL BUSINESS

Fire Hot Landscaping IS FIRE HOT

By Kim Phillips

Mesa resident Joe Goveia and his two sons, Trevor and Dylan, said recently, “When your yard is the emergency, call the pros!” Trevor and Dylan are the co-owners of Fire Hot Landscaping, along with Joe. Joe, the proud father, believes Trevor and Dylan are the fire fighters of the future. Trevor has attended East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT), and studied fire science. His brother, Dylan, is following in his footsteps.

In the meantime, the brothers have to earn a living. So, Trevor, Dylan, and dad, Joe, started Fire Hot Landscaping a few months ago. “We give you an honest day for honest pay,” said Joe recently. He is confident he and his family can provide reliable service. “This family is honest and hardworking,” Joe added.

“The main goal of Trevor and Dylan, both Red Mountain High football players, is to become fire fighters and protect and serve their community,” said Joe. “My sons have thousands of hours performing community service, as they volunteer at the fire department, as well as serve in the Mesa Cadets, Mesa Explorers, and as EMTs for Pop Warner football,” he continued.

According to Joe, Trevor and Dylan started this business with their father to put themselves through college. “And also to pursue their lifelong dreams,” he emphasized.

Joe and his family have been residents of Mesa for 25 years. The family arrived here from Chicago, Ill. Trevor and Dylan both have attended Red Mountain High School, and Trevor graduated from an EVIT Fire Fighting program. Julie Goveia, wife and mother, is the owner of Goveia’s Hair and Nail Salon, in Scottsdale.

Fire Hot Landscaping offers lawn maintenance, as well as tree trimming, yard cleanup, sprinkler systems, winter lawns, and seasonal lighting. “No job is too big or too small for the Goveia boys,” said Joe.

During the month of December, Fire Hot Landscaping offers to install seasonal lights outside your home. Call for an estimate at (480) 380-0030. ■



DINING

IL FORNO OWNERS Respect Quality

By Dawn Abbey

Il Forno Italian restaurant recently was acquired by new owners and partners, Mat Tran and Chef Giorgiono Vignali. Chef Giorgiono has been chef of the restaurant since its inception, and intends to keep the same high quality of home-made recipes and ingredients for which Il Forno has become known.

Sicilian-born Giorgiono came to the Valley nine years ago, and apprenticed under a master chef at an Italian restaurant in Scottsdale. “My mentor told me that to be a good chef, you must make sure every dish coming out of your kitchen is right and looks perfect, and that is a standard I continue in honor of him,” Giorgiono said.

“He puts pride in every dish,” said Mat, “and we intend to keep our pricing decent, so customers get their money’s worth, as well as enjoyment from their meal.”

How Mat and Giorgiono formed their partnership was somewhat serendipitous. Last February, Mat was laid off from his job after 12 years as an IT engineer with a local company. His job was on-site assistance to IT customers. “I love dealing with people, and I just didn’t know what I would do next,” he said.

Mat’s wife, Tracy, owns Pho Nhat, an

authentic Vietnamese restaurant in Tempe. So, Mat was familiar with the restaurant business. Giorgiono happened to be dating his wife’s sister. One night, when they were all together, Giorgiono suggested, “Why don’t you try helping people in another field—like helping people to get something good to eat?”

The idea blossomed, and Mat and Giorgiono now own and operate Il Forno together. Giorgiono is the chef, and Mat takes care of the business side, and, of course, frequently moves through the

restaurant to chat with patrons and make sure diners are enjoying a good meal.

In addition to made-from-scratch raviolis, pasta and bread, homemade mozzarella and Italian sausage, Il Forno offers a variety of pasta dishes and

Italian-inspired entrées, wood-fired pizza, sandwiches and salads, as well as a complete bar. ■

Il Forno is located on the west side of The Home Depot shopping center, at Power and McKellips roads, near Dunkin Donuts and Sports Clips. Hours are Monday through Thursday, from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. For orders or information, call (480) 807-0888.



Giorgiono and Mat



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COMMUNITY

THIS ARTIST FALLS HEAD-OVER-HEEL IN LOVE WITH GOURDS

By AnnElise Makin

Barbann Watkins, your Las Sendas neighbor, has a flair for decorating natural vessels with intricate designs as she carves, dyes, and burns patterns into gourds—with amazing results.

"I start from seeing what is there before making the gourd into anything," Barbann explained. Her artistic vision emulates and enhances the innate quality of her object. "I always try to let the beauty of the gourd shine through," she said.

For this fall and holiday season, Barbann has decorated at least 300 gourds to take to art shows. Her works filled the dining table and a substantial shelf. Themes ranged from flowers, animals and Southwest images, to geometric and seasonal designs.

Previously, in Portland, Ore., Barbann had mastered the art of carving lifelike birds out of tupelo wood, down to the smallest feather. These birds, however, were quite pricey, because they took so many hours to craft.

A year ago, Barbann fell in love with the gourds. At the time, she was burning intricate designs onto wooden boxes, which her husband Bill helped her build. "Why don't you try your art on gourds?" a customer asked her, giving her a contact number.

So, out with the boxes, in with the gourds. Barbann orders them from California, Kentucky, and even from an Amish farmer in Pennsylvania. For this artist, who likes to integrate natural shapes and colors, each gourd feels like a revelation.

"I am fascinated by gourds," Barbann said. "I love them." The process is not easy, though. Gourds take at least a year to dry. And when she cleans out the potentially moldy inside mess, she always wears protective gear.

"Gourds have a long tradition in human history," she explained. "They were used for keeping water or other liquids, served as eating vessels, and in pre-air-conditioning days, people used to hang them from the ceiling with water inside for cooling."

In Barbann's skilled hands, each one-of-a-kind gourd becomes a little masterpiece. With power tools,

carving utensils and a wood burner, she fashions luminaries, birdhouses or eye-catching modern sculptures out of them, big or small, any pattern or color.

"Gourds are an ideal material for birdhouses," Barbann discovered. About a dozen were hanging on a portable lattice in her living room. A birdhouse looked like a beehive, another imitated a Russian doll, and yet another resembled an Indian teepee.

"I keep my gourds plain," she stated. "Many people decorate them too much." With morning glories winding around the bulge, or a gecko climbing up its neck, these gourds ranged from old-time to whimsical. Each design was precisely executed.

"Birdhouses are the only objects I will use paint on," the artist continued. For all other color accents, she uses dyes, which cover but don't conceal the characteristics of the gourd. To make the birdhouses more weatherproof, she coats them with polyurethane.

The whole Watkins family is into the arts. Barbann and Bill, who have lived in Las Sendas for 11 years, have established a good teamwork for the art shows, with Bill joking, "I just go there to look pretty."

Bill helps Barbann with transport, set up of the display and layout of electrical. Their daughter, Michelle Watkins, often joins them with her delicate resin-silver jewelry, which encases natural flowers. This precious metal clay is entirely recovered from silver-gelatin films.

With the holidays around the corner, Barbann has cranked up production. The excitement of new designs wakes her up early in the morning. "This is more than a part-time job," she said. "It is what I do before anyone is up." ■

If you would like to view Barbann's work, in her Mountain Gate home in Las Sendas, call her for an appointment at (480) 807-7778, or send an e-mail to bwatkins777@hotmail.com.



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