

Las Sendas Up Close

Bringing neighbors closer to their community

December 2014

Cosmos Salon Reveals Holiday Hairstyles

By Dawn Abbey

Always on the cutting edge of what is *in* regarding fashion, Sandra Barbetta reveals what is hot for the cool days of the winter holiday season.

Co-owner with husband Cosmo of Cosmos Salon and Day Spa, Sandra is well-known and sought after in the Valley, as stylist to local news anchors and celebrities because of her unique knack for tapping into the pulse of beauty.

"Right now, Cosmos Salon and Day Spa is previewing beautiful holiday hairstyles that will be an integral part of the female image," Sandra said. "This season, the fashion giants have conjured up a modern fantasy of colors, innovative designs and curious interpretations that are just as unforgettable as the 70s retro hairdos."

Buns, buns, buns—everywhere, as seen on the

your hair texture into consideration," she continued. "Your stylist can help you pick the right bob cut for straight or wavy locks, and show you how a simple bob can be vamped up for those parties and festive events."



Invigorate your image for the holiday season with a new, fun, short hairstyle. "You'll shake up the party with your fresh, sultry look. A short hairstyle is low-maintenance and gives you a chance to create a dazzling different look in just a few minutes," Sandra added. "Dishevel your style by using J Beverly Hills' Finissage, a finishing clay, giving you mass texture. You also can smooth your hair down for a sleek look. Our stylists can show you how."

The holidays also are a great time for you to flaunt that elegant, long-layered haircut. Modish, long-layered hairstyles for this winter illustrate the infinite advantage of tapering.

Accessories also are a trending key to add fun or elegance to your look. Whether it's a modern comb, a sparkly headband or some simple rhinestone twists, these accessories will make your hairstyle look polished and professionally done.

"Caring for your hair in winter also takes some special tricks," Sandra explained. "If your hair is naturally curly, you have to take extra care of your locks to prevent them from looking dry and frizzy. You can have a loose, textured hairstyle, or wear a half up and down, with a few strands loose around the face," she said. "Moroccan Oil is the

best with which to dress the hair when going out. It will smooth and gloss the hair."

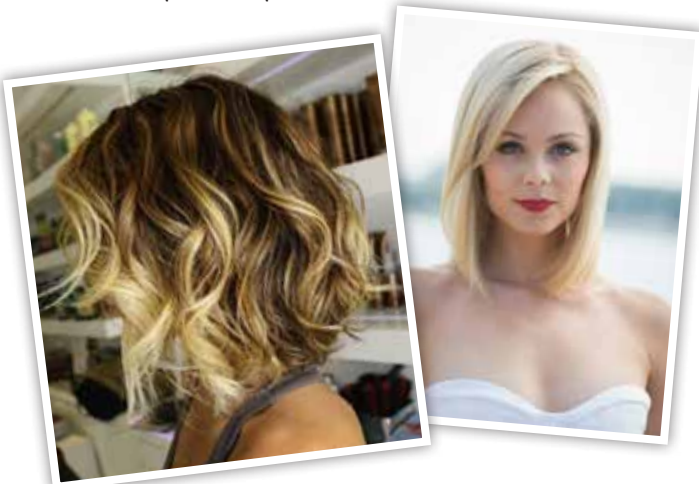
In order to achieve these current winter styles, many factors come in to play—the most important being the right product to achieve your desired look. "This is where your stylist can be invaluable," Sandra stated. "We suggest applying our favorite body booster, Bumble and Bumble's Dry-Spun." Another suggestion is Tigi's Headrush Spray, in their Bed Head collection. It is the perfect finishing tool to set and shine your style.

"Cosmos stylists receive ongoing training in styles and products, and can always give you insider tips on looking your best," Sandra said. "So, stop in to see us this holiday season for a complimentary consultation. We would love to style your hair for your special occasion." ■

For more information, or to make an appointment, call (480) 844-0707. Cosmos Salon and Day Spa is located in the Village at Las Sendas, on the northeast corner of Power and McDowell roads.



runways of Diane Von Furstenberg and Carolina Herrera—high buns, low buns and even top-knot buns. Also coming to comfy and casual alternatives, the designers are on the side of buns and ties. Diversity is the word here, too. The cute ballerina buns were the basic concentration of Roberto Cavalli, Prada and many others. Braids are a classic style, preserving their popularity, and can hold their weight on their own, or can be added to a bun or any other style.



"A classy bob haircut and style continues to be one of the best looks to create a very vogue statement," Sandra said. "It can be layered softly and asymmetrical, or a dynamic blunt cut. Dressed-up evening locks and waves on a bob are a must for the holidays. It is extremely important to take



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*Happy
Holidays*

Cosmos

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Color by Sandy Barbetta / Styled by Dana Chapin

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HEALTH

PATIENT WONDERS WHY SHE HAS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

By Dr. Afroze Ahmad
This is the first of three articles on the why, what and how of high blood pressure.

Dr. Afroze Ahmad is happy to address the questions presented by her patients, and she explains her approach to providing answers in the following article.



planning for her family of five, including husband and three sons in high school.

HERE COMES THE QUESTION
Then, Karen blurted out her question. "Doctor, why do I have high blood pressure? My blood pressure is almost always around 130/80 mm of Hg." She appeared visibly upset. When I inquired as to what has triggered the emotional irritation, she promptly replied "My lifestyle should have protected me from high blood pressure."

QUESTION IS BOTH VALID AND APPROPRIATE
I replied, "Karen, your question is both valid and appropriate. However, to answer your question, we have to revisit several features and issues in your history and lifestyle."

CAUSES OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
Although, the precise cause of high blood pressure has not been established as of yet, there are several causes and factors, which predispose us to high blood pressure. The causes include both mutable and immutable.

The mutable or changeable factors besides being overweight include smoking, excessive snoring, emotional response to stress, absence of physical activity, more than one to two alcohol drinks per day, salt-rich food and use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents such as Motrin, Aleve and Advil.

The immutable or permanent causes of high blood pressure include family history of high blood pressure, hormonal imbalance and kidney disease.

In Karen's case, an in-depth interview did reveal that despite a healthy lifestyle, there were hidden risk factors present. High salt consumption was one, as she was using both canned vegetables and canned broth or bouillon

cubes to prepare her healthy meals. Canned and cured food is rich in salt.

Also, remember, Karen is an avid runner. She shared with me her running leads to generalized aches and pains for which she takes painkillers. Karen took an average of four tablets of anti-inflammatory drugs almost on a daily basis.

By the end of our visit, Karen had opened up and said, "We usually have two cocktails before dinner and two glasses of wine with dinner." During her visit, by simply reflecting and being cognizant of our conversation, Karen was able to uncover her high blood pressure culprits of increased salt consumption, increased alcohol consumption and use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

MORALE OF THE STORY
Lifestyle patterns affect our health, both favorably and adversely. The power and impact of lifestyle changes should not be overlooked. Given Karen's dedication and diligence, she has opted to pursue lifestyle changes by decreasing her salt and alcohol consumption and walking only briskly to avoid both aches and pains and increased use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents.

Karen will follow up with me in 15 weeks to assess her blood pressure response to lifestyle changes. Generally, the effect of lifestyle changes is apparent in 12 weeks. For Karen, the three-week bonus is to cheat a little during the upcoming holidays. ■

Dr. Afroze Ahmad is a cardiologist who cares and listens. She is a multiple board certified cardiologist practicing at Las Sendas Cardiology, located at 3514 N. Power Road, Suite 107. For information, or to make an appointment, please call (480) 361-9949.



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LOCAL BUSINESS

Happy Pets Palace and Playground Offers Premier Doggy Daycare Services



By Jamie Killin

Happy Pets Palace and Playground, located at 1918 E. McKellips Road, will present a special *Holiday Open House Celebration*, on Dec. 11, from 3 to 8 p.m.

The event will feature a dog holiday costume contest, holiday photos, drawings and prizes, as well as tours of the facility. This is your opportunity to meet the staff and learn more about our services. Hors d'oeuvres will also be served.

Anyone attending the open house event quickly will discover Happy Pets Palace and Playground is not your typical doggy daycare and boarding facility. Instead, it is a haven for your pet.

Not only will your pet have the time of their lives playing with the other dogs, you'll have peace of mind that your furry family member is well cared for.

The facility offers climate controlled, indoor space in which the dogs can play, with soothing music to relax and comfort them. The outdoor space features above-ground swimming pools and a doggy playground, as well as plenty of shade to keep dogs shielded from the Arizona sun. For pets making use of our boarding service, there are doggy villas, which come complete with an elevated bed and blanket.

Employees of Happy Pets complete extensive training, so they are able to create the best environment possible for the dogs. They learn dogs' developmental stages, and learn how to recognize dogs' stress factors. Employees also are pet first aid and CPR certified through the American Safety and Health Institute. Happy Pets even hosts these classes, so pet parents can become certified, too.

There also is overnight staff to monitor and ensure the safety of the dogs 24 hours a day. For pet parents, Happy Pets even offers live-stream webcams, so owners can go online and watch their pets while they are playing.

During playtime, dogs are placed in four different groups to ensure they are as happy and as comfortable as possible. These play groups are determined by each dog's play temperament and size, however. Happy Pets employees watch carefully to make sure the groups are working as they should, and dogs are in the best group for them.

For dogs, playing in a safe environment like this can help socialize them, and make them better pets. Puppy Wednesday is offered as a daycare service every week for puppies up to 2 years old.

"It's a great way for puppies to learn how to be good dogs," said Linda Huss, founder and managing member of Happy Pets. "The other dogs will teach the puppy what is appropriate."

To maintain a safe and comfortable environment for all dogs, there is a pre-screening process to ensure none of the dogs at Happy Pets are aggressive or prone to confrontation. ■

For more information on Happy Pets Palace and Playground services and pricing, visit www.HappyPetsPalace.com, or call (480) 319-1960. The facility is located at 1918 E. McKellips Road, near Gilbert Road. Hours of operation are Mondays through Saturdays, from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and Sundays and holidays, from 8 to 10:30 a.m., and 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

UpClose

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E-mail: Publisher@PhillipsWest.com
(480) 748-1127

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Kim Phillips

ADVERTISING
Monica Adair (480) 772-1949
Kim Phillips (480) 748-1127

STAFF WRITERS
Dawn Abbey, Jamie Killin,
AnnElise Makin, Kimberly Searles,
Sharon Wozny

COPY EDITOR
Sandra Van Dyke

DESIGN
Lucky You! Creative, *publication design*
Erin Loukili, Jaclyn Threadgill
www.luckyyoucreative.com
Ramey Newell, *Web site design*
KeenGraphics.net

APOLOGY
Up Close apologizes for the misprint
of the Cosmos ad last month.

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A Closer Look at

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Features Entertainment, Dining & Golf

A Closer Look, Las Sendas Golf Club is a monthly column written for UpClose Publications by Las Sendas Golf Club. In this column, you will get an in-depth look at upcoming entertainment, dining and golf events. Our brand is our mission—to reach out to the community as your pathway to fun, recreation and a pleasurable lifestyle.

NEW AT LAS SENDAS

Private Label Wines

Las Sendas is now offering private label wines, including a selection of Merlot, Cabernet, Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio. Our wines are from Rutherford Wine Company. Rutherford Ranch is a certified organic winery, and all vineyards are sustainably grown. Rutherford takes pride in offering a green product, with an ECO glass bottle, natural cork and labels made from 30 percent recycled paper.

Come and enjoy our new wines at The Patio or The Grille, or purchase for gifts in our Golf Shop.



GOLF RATES

December Green Fee Rates

- Dec. 1 through Dec. 15
- \$99 plus tax weekdays and \$109 plus tax weekends
 - \$69 plus tax after 1:30 p.m.

- Dec. 16 through Jan. 4
- \$89 plus tax, weekdays and \$99 plus tax weekends
 - \$59 plus tax, after 1:30 p.m.

LAS SENDAS GOLF SHOP HOLIDAY SPECIALS

Swing on by the Las Sendas Golf Shop to get your holiday shopping done early this season. We have the golf lover in the family covered, but we think you will be pleasantly surprised at some of the other wonderful gifts available in the shop. Come and see our private label wine with logo wine glasses and our lifestyle and active wear. We have Las Sendas logo blankets, cell phone chargers, sweatshirts, and even a simple hat and T-shirt combo at great prices. Has your teenager been asking for some Oakley sunglasses? Now is the time to fulfill that holiday wish. As our



new motto goes, *Wear Your Pride* in Las Sendas.

We have the latest on the golf equipment market, including the new Ping G30s and Titleist 915s. What golfer wouldn't love to receive a Bushnell yardage finder or watch? Or simply give the greatest gift in golf—Titleist ProV-1 or ProV-1x golf balls. Trust me, if you don't play golf, you will be a huge hit with anyone who does play.

If you just don't know what to buy, our Las Sendas Gift Certificate is the perfect gift to be used for golf, merchandise or in our restaurants (The Patio and The Grille) at Las Sendas.

Make everyone happy this holiday season, and shop local at Las Sendas Golf Club.

DINING

WEEKLY SPECIALS AT THE PATIO AND THE GRILLE

MON.	Monday Night Football	Buckets of Beer \$10
TUES.	Bottle of House Wine with Flatbread	\$19.95
WED.	Wine Down Wednesday	1/2 Price Wine most bottles
THUR.	Prime Rib, Mashed Potatoes, Vegetables (Add Glass of Wine \$3)	\$19.95
FRI.	Chef's Market Fish Dinner	\$19.95
SAT.	Fried Chicken, Biscuit and Honey	\$14.95
SUN.	All-You-Can-Eat Pasta Buffet	\$14.95 Kids (6 - 12) \$8.95

LIVE MUSIC

Join us for dinner and live music on The Patio at Las Sendas. Enjoy our amazing sunsets and views of the Phoenix Valley and city lights. Heaters are available to keep our guests warm and cozy. Reservations can be made on our website, or by calling (480) 396-4000.

DECEMBER HAPPY HOUR

Happy Hour Daily—3 to 5 p.m.
Hours of Operation—6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA

Celebrate New Year's Eve at the Vistas Pavilion. Your evening includes an amazing gourmet dinner, party favors, champagne toast and dancing to live music by True to Life. Please reserve early. Tickets are \$95 per person. Call us at (480) 396-4000, or send an email to events@lassendas.com.

NFL FOOTBALL

Sunday Game Specials

Start your Sunday football game with our 12 HD TVs and our Bloody Mary Bar, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Choose from vodka or gin, juices, olives, celery and all the fixings you could imagine. Ask us about our Breakfast Special, \$10 Buckets of Beer and our Fourth Quarter Chef's Special.

Feel free to stay on after the game for our All-You-Can-Eat Sunday Pasta Buffet, for only \$14.95.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

Plan to bring your family and guests to The Patio or The Grille for breakfast or lunch. We are open seven days a week, and offer a newly expanded breakfast menu. Our menu has a Lighter Side and a Kids Corner. Consider ordering one of our staff favorites, the *Hole in One* Egg Breakfast, a Waffle Breakfast Sandwich, our Skinny Frittata or Las Sendas Pillow Omelets and much more.



LAS SENDAS GOLF ACADEMY

JUNIOR GOLF STICKS PROGRAM

From the first swing, to the first tournament, golf is a fun game to be played throughout your life. At the Las Sendas Junior Golf Sticks Program, our mission is to help kids have fun learning to play golf. This came from the simple realization kids just want to enjoy what they are doing.

This month, we are pleased to feature Sloan Longacre, who has never held a golf club. She attended her first Junior Golf Sticks class, and was able to get a great start to the development of her golf swing. Our *kid-friendly* program is easy to learn. The coaches simplify all segments of the game with clear and fun teaching techniques, from start to finish.

The Junior Golf Sticks Program is designed with a perfect blend of fun, understanding and learning. Our program runs on Fridays, from 4 to 5:30 p.m., through the end of April. The program is for the beginning junior golfer or the more advanced junior golfer ages 5 to 15. Our program has flexible signup, which allows the juniors to choose the Fridays they can attend. It is designed to develop the golf skills and fundamentals in putting, chip-

A CLOSER LOOK AT LAS SENDAS GOLF CLUB (CONTINUED)

ping, pitching, bunker play and full swing. Registration forms are available on our website at www.lassendas.com (instruction/programs), in the Las Sendas Golf Shop, or by emailing Tracy Berman at tberman@lassendas.com. Let's grow, play and learn.

COMMITTED PLAYER MONTHLY PROGRAM
The Fastest, Most Efficient Way to Improve Your Game

This lesson program is similar to the model of the Swedish National Team/Collegiate programs, and includes instruction and structure. This program had great success last winter and this past summer here at Las Sendas. The program includes:

- Once-a-week private lesson.
- Once-a-week, 30-minute private (at least 30 minutes).
- In between sessions—up to another three days per week. If you would like, you receive constant monitoring to make sure your practices are efficient relative to what you are working on in your game.
- All areas of the game are worked on and supervised (swing, pitching, chipping, putting, sand play, on-course swing, on-course strategy and skills).
- Not only does your game improve, but your concepts about all areas of the game, as well as your understanding of the information also improve with each week.

Terry Aarsby, Las Sendas Golf Club

"I am about two weeks into David's monthly lesson program. I have had numerous lessons over the years, and this is the first time I have ever felt like I understand the golf swing. One of the things I am discovering is the fact it takes time to rebuild a golf swing, and the way David is running this program is brilliant. I am learning something new with every lesson, and David makes sure I fully understand it before we move on. I am also finding that it is easier to take these lessons to the course."

For further information, contact David Huffman at davidhuffmangolf@gmail.com, or call (480) 489-7673.



Weekly Group Practice Program

Get your own group of three to five golfers together, and begin your program of fun and camaraderie, as we develop continuity in golf, with structured sessions covering all areas of the game. This program includes:

- A 90-minute session once per week.
- Simple swing skills, which can be improved, and have a huge impact on your full shots.
- All areas of the short game will be worked on throughout the program.
- Technical work, if desired, but lots of skills practice and instruction, which will improve your game.
- On-course practice, learning to recognize your own

- swing tendencies, and how to fix them.
- On-course work, with a focus on the short game and strategy.
- Games and types of practice to help you improve (hopefully, make practice more fun, too).
- Instruction to improve your individual understanding of the game (and your game).
- Included with your team practices, each individual receives two 30-minute private lessons.

Those who participate in the program, and continue with the practices monthly throughout the season, will not only have fun, but you definitely will improve your game. You bring the group, and pick the preferred available time slot.

For further information, contact David Huffman at davidhuffmangolf@gmail.com, or call (480) 489-7673.



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Thursday, Jan. 15, 2015
Western Buffet—6 to 8 p.m.
House of Steel Show—8 to 10 p.m.

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EVENT

Enjoy an Evening at the North Pole

By Sharon Wozny

Santa Claus is coming to town, and going straight to Zaharis Elementary School on Dec. 12, from 5 to 9 p.m for an *Evening at the North Pole*. In addition to being a fund-raising event for the school, "It is a wonderful way to relish the community and feeling of the holidays," said Meridith, a member of the school's PTO. For \$2, children can have their photo with Santa, while sharing their Christmas wishes.

Santa isn't the only attraction for this exciting event. The hardworking PTO of Zaharis Elementary, which, in addition to Meridith, includes Shannon, Marianne and Diane, has organized a holiday boutique, with more than 30 unique vendors. Christmas gifts await you among the varied handcrafted items, jewelry, infused glass, art and homemade treats.

There is something for everyone. Secret shopping, along with free gift-wrapping, is available for the children. They can buy for family members, so everyone has a surprise on Christmas morning. "It is my favorite activity of the year, as the spirit of joyfulness is felt that night," said Shannon.

Come to Zaharis Elementary School, on Dec. 12 to shop, drink hot cocoa, eat dinner, and say hello to Santa before he heads back to the North Pole.

If you are interested in being a vendor, contact Shannon at zptopres@gmail.com, or leave a message at (480) 308-7252. ■



Zaharis Elementary School is located at 9410 E. McKellips Road, in Mesa.

EDUCATION

SDA offers exceptional kindergarten curriculum



By Linda Steiner, MEd, Certified Teacher and Reading Specialist, Mentor

When exploring schools for your kindergartner, look no further than Self Development Academy (SDA), with its quality curriculum, which includes exceptional lesson plans, enrichment and higher-level thinking.

SDA continues to exceed standards and enrich higher levels of learning within the kindergarten program. The school acknowledges the importance of a solid curriculum to prepare children for their academic success. The kindergarten program allows children to begin their educational learning experience in a caring and intellectually stimulating 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 focuses on teaching children the advanced curriculum in a structured and methodical approach. The classroom concentrates on mastery of math, reading and writing. Teachers impart listening and communication skills and higher-level thinking, while also providing a nurturing classroom for social growth.

As a certified 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), as well as 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, and authoring and editing their own books. Mathematical components include number concepts and introduction to addition and subtraction, with daily math facts, fact families, and word problems.

Enrichment programs and specials are a vital component of this program. These programs and specials include music appreciation, technology, art, physical education, and literacy and cultural enrichment. Kindergarten students have a chance to showcase their musical and artistic talents during the school's Winter Program.

This year, SDA integrated the use of technology into the curriculum by purchasing versatile laptops and tablets. At the same time, the students are learning how to use various technological applications. They are accessing programs, serving to reinforce curriculum concepts. Being proficient with the use of technology is essential in the 21st century.

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

SDA is an award-winning public charter school (kindergarten through grade eight), offering an accelerated curriculum to its students. ■

Beginning on Dec. 15, Self Development Academy is accepting enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year. If you would like to learn more about Self Development Academy-Mesa, located at 1709 N. Greenfield Road, or schedule a tour, please contact the school at (480) 641-2640.



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Your pool also deserves presents during the holiday season



By Dawn Abbey

While buying warm, cozy slippers, sweaters and throws for family and friends, also think about warming up your pool with a heat pump. Warm water lets you enjoy swimming all winter, and a heat pump also can be configured with a pool cooler so you can enjoy refreshing water during the hot summer months, as well.

“Tis the season for gift giving, but don’t forget presents for your pool,” said Chris Quam, owner of Arizona Pool Guy Inc. “The best thing about gifts for your pool is the whole family gets to enjoy them.”

“There are all sorts of gift options available to enhance the look and value of your pool,” said Chris, whose company was named *Best of Mesa Best Pool Company 2014*. “We’re always available to come out and create design ideas, and give free estimates for any kind of pool enhancements or repairs you want.”

Some of the features Chris Kringle suggests are:

Deck the falls with LED lights, fa la la la la. While stringing lights on your tree, fireplace and front yard, how about adding colorful LED underwater and fountain lights to your pool area. The festive ambiance will last all through the year for backyard parties and entertaining, and LEDs cost 80 percent less to operate than standard bulbs. You can replace your existing underwater pool lights with those offering a variety of multi-color design combinations, including neon, capable of creating exciting visual effects in the water. Combined with fountains or waterfalls, you can produce your own fantastic Las Vegas-style light show.

Rock or faux rock waterfalls add drama to the pool area. Waterfalls also can be designed in columns, walls, or other architectural features. A simple solution is a raised wall, complete with a sheer descent of water augmented with light. The soft sounds of falling water, with the added interplay of light, combine to create a relaxing background ambiance. Fire pits also can be part of a fountain or stand-alone feature.

If your pool enjoys hosting barbeques or gourmet dinners, why not gift it with an outdoor kitchen, a dining gazebo, or some decorative patio flooring to make it an extension of your home. It becomes a great overflow area for holiday events.

If the kids and grandkids dominate the scene, a pool slide or volleyball net can add to the fun. For younger children, a tough, permanent safety net can be installed, which is easy to remove, but keeps kids safely out of the pool when it’s not in use.

“We can design and install any pool features,” said Chris. ■

For more ideas on gifts to make your pool area a focal point of your home, contact Chris at (480) 699-0607. Arizona Pool Guy Inc. has been serving the neighborhood for more than 10 years.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Consignment Boutique Presents HOLIDAY SALE

Submitted by Sweet Repeats

Sweet Repeats Ladies Consignment Boutique, located at 6039 E. University Drive, is having a holiday sale on Monday, Dec. 15, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

All items will be on sale, with some items marked down as much as 80 percent. The store will be decked in holiday charm. Please join us for storewide discounts, tasty treats and refreshmentas.

At Sweet Repeats, we are passionate about fashion, and we strive to uphold this attitude every day. We have a large selection of designer pre-owned fashions and accessories. If you are looking for a unique accessory or something fantastic for that someone special in your life, Sweet Repeats is your holiday gift solution. We also offer gift certificates.

Whether you are a shopper or a consignor, we are here for you. We will do everything in our power to make your experience at Sweet Repeats wonderful.

We truly appreciate the patronage of our customers over the past year, and we want to thank you all.

Happy holidays, from Sweet Repeats. ■



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EVENT

Give the Gift of Health and Wellness Through Yoga

Submitted by Hot Lotus Yoga

It is the time of year for family, gratitude and the giving of gifts. When it comes to getting gifts for someone you love, choosing the right present can be tricky. For this holiday season, consider giving a loved one the gift of yoga.

Maybe you have a relative, friend or spouse who wants to get motivated to exercise and eat better for the New Year. Some people talk about starting yoga or joining a gym, but they never really make the time or effort. These people might need a little extra motivation. If you give them a gift certificate for a yoga membership, it just might inspire them to begin, providing that little push to make exercise and wellness a priority.

Most likely, once they have tried yoga, they will be hooked. There's nothing better than the way you feel after stepping out of a challenging yoga class. Even after this tough workout, most people feel relaxed, happy and full of energy and vibrancy.

The practice of yoga truly is an amazing gift of health and wellness. Yoga reduces stress and improves brain function. It also provides a great path to weight loss, flexibility, balance and overall fitness. For those you love, what better gift is there?

Hot Lotus Yoga studio features an introductory two-week offer of \$20 for unlimited yoga, which makes the perfect holiday gift. We have classes seven days a week, with various times to accommodate all schedules.

Visit our website at www.hotlotusyogastudio.com for more information.

Happy holidays, from Hot Lotus Yoga. ■



EVENT

CHURCH BRINGS REALITY TO CHRISTMAS SEASON



Submitted by Love of Christ Lutheran Church

Love of Christ Lutheran Church presents its annual Living Nativity Walk, taking place over two nights, on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 12 and 13, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Members of the public are invited to attend this free event to experience the streets of Bethlehem, modeled in costumes and design sets, complete with livestock as it was at the time of the birth of Christ.

"Members of our congregation of all ages volunteer their time to give the public a realistic idea of what it was like to be there at the time of the birth of Christ," said Dianne Oien, event coordinator. "We bring costumes and actual settings to the occasion to give those attending the feeling of the actual experience of that time."

The experience brings as much authenticity as possible for moms and dads and kids of all ages who wish to attend. "We sing about Christmas, we read about it, but this is as close to being there as we can possibly make it," Dianne stated. ■

Love of Christ Lutheran Church is located at 1525 N. Power Road. For more information, call the church at (480) 981-6199.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Orange Patch Too FEATURES SPECIALTY FOODS, CITRUS AND Holiday Décor

By Jamie Killin

Orange Patch Too, a citrus grove, specialty foods store and gift shop, is ready for the holidays, with plenty of Christmas décor and local food items.

The boutique section of this family business is filled with ornaments, seasonal candles, nativity sets and other festive decorations. "It's really very pretty, well worth seeing," said Michelle Smith, who heads Orange Patch Too, along with her sister Katie Hunsaker.

Aside from the seasonal goodies, the gifts boutique sells candles, baby items, clothing and other specialty pieces. "People can get unique Christmas gifts, or pick up something special for themselves," said Michelle.

In the specialty foods market, you will find a variety of local products, including jams, jellies, honey, salsas and chocolates dipped right at Orange Patch Too. You also can pick up treats, such as ice cream or ready-to-make tortilla soup. These products make a great addition to any holiday meal, but are sold in the market all year long.

Orange Patch Too began in the 1980s as a citrus farm, and the citrus still is a huge draw today. During the season, from early December until February, you can even have the hand-selected citrus delivered straight to your door, whether you live locally, in Mesa, or across the country. ■



Orange Patch Too is located at 3825 E. McKellips Road. For more information, visit orangepatchtoo.com, or call (480) 832-0230. Store hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Orange Patch Too is closed on Sunday.

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LOCAL BUSINESS

Consider Whether a Pet Makes a Good Holiday Present

By Dawn Dubelbeis
Owner, Critter Caretakers Pet Sitting

Picture Christmas morning—you can't wait for your little girl to get up, so you can give her the new kitten you bought her, or for your boyfriend to see the dog you've gotten him.

Sure, it's wonderful to see the delight on their faces, and watch as they spend time with the new addition the next week or so. But like most gifts, the newness and excitement wear off.

Pets are a lot of responsibility. This is worth repeating. Pets are a lot of responsibility. Is your child willing to commit to taking care of the new pet? Once your boyfriend has that new dog (who needs a long walk every day), will he have the time to care for it? It's easy to fall in love with a cute furry face (trust me Critter Caretakers' pet sitters do it all the time), but it isn't just a cute furry face.

After the bows are put away and the wrapping paper is cleaned up, after the initial *ooohs, ahhs* and *how adorable*, that new Christmas present now becomes potty training, playing, feeding and watering, as well as litter box cleaning, and exercising. Then, there is obedience training, behavioral training, medical care and shots. Don't forget toys, spaying or neutering, food, bedding and vacation care.

Pets are a huge time and cost commitment. Can you be certain the pet you've chosen is one your gift recipient will want? Maybe your little girl didn't want a black kitten. Perhaps she wanted a white kitten. Now what? Maybe your boyfriend just talked about how much he loves dogs because he had them growing up, but secretly he didn't want the responsibility. What happens to the puppy now?

Truthfully, live pets generally do not make good gift ideas. However, there is a way to give a pet as a gift and have it work out well.

First, make 110 percent certain the gift recipient will want the pet and have the time to care for it. Go over all the responsible pet guardianship means by talking about the above list.

Second, discuss the needs of different breeds of dogs, and make sure it's a good match for what the recipient is able to handle, as far as care, exercise and personality match.

Third, go pick out the pet together, so they are getting a pet they want, not necessarily something you thought was adorable. If you want an actual gift to unwrap on the big day, consider a stuffed animal.

Since your new puppy will need a mid-day potty break visit, consider calling Critter Caretakers to help you potty train your family's new addition.

We want your thoughtful idea to be a big success, and we think the above steps will help. Happy holidays. ■

For more information about Critter Caretakers Pet Sitting, Where Your Pets Are Like Family, call (480) 553-0105, or visit the website at www.crittercaretakers.com.



COMMUNITY

Celebrate Christmas with Special Musical

Submitted by Red Mountain United Methodist Church

For a special way to begin your celebration of the Christmas season, have a heartwarming time watching the enthusiastic children and youth of Red Mountain United Methodist Church perform the musical *We Three Spies*, on Sunday, Dec. 7 at 4 p.m., in the church sanctuary.

The musical, open to people of all ages, begins with the introduction of the *Christmas Intelligence Kids*, a group of ordinary kids who secretly bring holiday cheer to those around them. But three spies, agents E, L, and F, try to stop the Christmas Nativity play being prepared by the group. The role of these three spies is crucial to the plot of the play. They ultimately learn God is in control and is bigger than any obstacle presented to them.

A cookie celebration will follow the performance in Madsen Hall.

Other special Christmas events are:

CHOIR CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION SING GLORIA

Sunday, Dec. 14, at 7:45, 9 and 10:30 a.m.

FAMILY ADVENT FAIR

Wednesday, Dec. 17, at 6 p.m.

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AND HOPE

Sunday, Dec. 21, at 3 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 4, 7 and 9 p.m.

RED MOUNTAIN RINGERS IN CONCERT (HELD AT DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN)

Sunday, Dec. 28, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.

For more information, call (480) 981-3833, or visit the website at www.rmumc.com. Red Mountain United Methodist Church is located at 2936 N. Power Road.



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As an added bonus, you can also enjoy yoga (private sessions and classes), massage, personal training and chiropractic care all onsite through The Life Balance Center. The Life Balance Center, created by Dr. Lisa Gold, is an integrated wellness center onsite at The Las Sendas Office Building.

Don't miss this opportunity to be at the only office building in the area with such stunning views and wide range of amenities.

For more information, contact: LisaGoldGraham@gmail.com, 602-550-9393

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REAL ESTATE

Realtors Share a Delicious Holiday Recipe

By John Karadsheh

As our gift to you, Natascha and I want to share a couple of our favorite recipes you can use to make an easy gourmet dinner this holiday season.

The salad is substantial enough to be a great side dish, and can be made ahead. The lamb chops are one of my favorites, and only require a few minutes on the grill. Add to these a few roasted fingerling potatoes, and you will have a great feast.

Maybe a new home is on your wish list this season. Please know that we will be working and available over the holidays. Don't hesitate to call us to provide you a free market analysis on your existing home, or take you out and show you homes in the Valley.

Wishing you and your family a very happy holiday... John and Natascha Karadsheh



John Karadsheh

JOHN'S GRILLED LAMB CHOPS

Serves 8 to 10
Calls for 5 packages of lamb racks. (Costco usually has these in stock.)



Marinade

- 8 cloves garlic
- 3 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 1/2 cups extra virgin olive oil
- Juice of one lemon
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground pepper

Trim as much fat from the lamb as possible without separating the lamb from the bone. Slice rack into individual

chops. Follow the bones on the backside of the rack. You will see the spot where you can cut between them. Use a sharp knife to get a clean cut.

Place all the lamb chops in 9-by-12 pans, with the bones facing the same direction.

Combine all the marinade ingredients in a blender. Pour marinade over the lamb meat. Cover and marinate overnight.

When ready to serve

Prepare a hot charcoal or gas grill. Remove chops from marinade, and season with salt and pepper. Grill chops for 2 to 3 minutes per side, or until they are medium to medium rare. Platter and garnish with thyme and rosemary sprigs.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH AND ARUGULA SALAD

Serves 8

Salad

- 1 bag prewashed baby arugula
- 3 cups peeled and cubed butternut squash (Trader Joe's has pre-cut butternut squash in packages. Use 2 packages.)
- 2 large beets, roasted and cubed (Trader Joe's has pre-roasted beets in packages. Use 2 packages.)
- 1/2 cup fresh pomegranate seeds
- 3/4 cup crumbled goat cheese (optional)

Dressing

- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup real maple syrup
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1/3 cup olive oil

Roast the butternut squash

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Peel, seed and cube 1 medium butternut squash. Toss squash with 3 tablespoons of olive oil and 1 teaspoon of fine sea salt. Roast on a sheet pan until tender. Note: The butternut squash can be made

up to one day in advance.

To roast the beets

Clean the beets, and pierce several times with a knife. Wrap each beet in aluminum foil, and place on a foil-lined sheet pan. Roast at 375 degrees until beets can be easily pierced with a paring knife. Let beets cool, remove foil, peel and cube. Note: The beets can be made up to one day in advance.



Dressing

Whisk Dijon mustard, maple syrup, lemon juice and olive oil together. Set aside. The dressing can be made two days in advance.

To assemble salad

Use a medium to large platter. Spread arugula on the bottom, top with butternut squash (allowing the arugula to peak out around the sides). Place beets in a stripe across the top of the butternut squash, scatter with pomegranate seeds, and crumbled chèvre, if desired. Can be put on a platter and covered with plastic wrap the morning of your event. Drizzle with dressing when ready to serve.

Enjoy! ■

John Karadsheh is a licensed REALTOR® with Coldwell Banker, Trails and Paths. He also is an Associate Broker, Accredited Buyers Representative, a Certified Residential Specialist and was the number one residential real estate agent in Arizona 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 website at www.BuyAndSellAZ.com.

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7445 E. Eagle Crest Dr. #1051	1,659	Cachet	\$258,000
7229 E. Nance St.	1,760	Trailridge	\$283,000
2839 N. Rowen Cir.	2,451	Silverhawke	\$295,000
3547 N. Barron Cir.	2,150	Rolling Hills	\$310,000
7224 E. Nathan St.	1,584	Trailridge	\$315,000
3055 N. Red Mountain #90	2,451	Ironwood Pass	\$315,900
7426 E. Nance St.	2,356	Grayfox	\$335,000
7356 E. Nora St.	2,126	Grayfox	\$340,000
3060 N. Ridgecrest #129	2,732	Desert Vistas	\$348,900
7629 E. Regina St.	2,150	Rolling Hills	\$352,500
7555 E. Pearl Cir.	2,732	The Terraces	\$387,000
3060 N. Ridgecrest #98	2,732	Desert Vistas	\$390,000
3648 N. Canyon Wash Cir.	2,226	Grayhawk	\$410,000
7559 E. Tasman Cir.	3,330	Pinnacle Point	\$602,500
4048 N. Mirada Cir.	3,074	Stonecliff	\$620,000
4157 N. Highview	3,554	Granite Preserve	\$712,500
4164 N. Stone Peak Cir.	4,542	Granite Preserve	\$780,000
7829 E. Riverdale Cir.	5,022	Rock Canyon II	\$960,000
8443 E. View Crest Cir.	7,603	Diamond Point	\$2,450,000

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

LOCAL BUSINESS

NEW OFFICE BUILDING Offers Unique Views and Amenities

By Lisa Gold

A new office building in Mesa is taking the concept of office suites to a new level. The Las Sendas Office Building executive suites, complete with spectacular panoramic views of the McDowell Mountains and the scenic Las Sendas desert landscapes, will be available for occupancy December 2014. Located next to the Las Sendas Golf Course and Bogey's, these suites offer a receptionist, the use of the conference room and kitchen, phone, high speed Internet, and wireless Internet with your signed lease. Virtual office services also are available, including receptionist, office address, mail receipt, and use of the conference room. For an additional per-service fee, the lessee can choose from scheduling, bookkeeping, payment processing, billing and social media marketing to meet their office needs. The Las Sendas Office Building also features The Life Balance Center, an onsite integrated wellness center created by Dr. Lisa Gold. As an added bonus, the

center offers yoga (private sessions and classes), massage, personal training and chiropractic care. Start your day with a yoga class before work, have a massage at lunch, or end your day with a personal training session—all without leaving your office building. Other options include beginning your day with an early game of golf, going for a hike at lunch, and ending your day with happy hour or dinner at The Patio or The Grille at the Las Sendas Golf Club. These are just a few of the ways you can plan your day when your office is at the Las Sendas Office Building. Currently, only four offices are available. You can choose from two units with scenic views and two interior offices. Don't miss this opportunity to bring your business to the only office building in the area with simply stunning views and an impressive array of amenities. ■ For more information about leasing a suite in the Las Sendas Office Building, or the Life Balance Center, send an email to lisagoldgraham@gmail.com, or call (602) 550-9393.



LOCAL BUSINESS

Local UPS Store Participates IN HOLIDAY DONATION DRIVE

Submitted by The UPS Store

The UPS Store, at Power and McDowell roads, in the Albertson's Shopping Plaza, is collecting donations for Operation Santa Clause. Your local The UPS Store is joining forces with ABC15, Sanderson Dealerships and Clear Channel Radio to sponsor the donation drive. Collections are being accepted now through Dec. 18, and will benefit St. Mary's Food Bank, Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center, Military Assistance Mission and Ronald McDonald Charities of Greater Phoenix. Donations can include new, unwrapped toys, clothing items, packaged

foods and monetary donations. Last year, The UPS Stores and Operation Santa Clause collected more than \$1 million in donations for local charities, and hope to increase the total this year. During the holiday season, The UPS Store will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday; and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., on Saturday. The store will close early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. ■ The UPS Store is located in the Albertson's Shopping Plaza, at 2733 N. Power Road, Suite 102. For more information, call (480) 641-1744.



Happy Holidays!
Fondly, John, Natascha & Christina

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4504 S. Banning Dr. Lot 76	Weston Ranch	.95 Acres	\$200,000
35605 N. Via Tramonto Lot 10	Tramonto	.52 Acres	\$150,000



LOCAL BUSINESS

Local Attorney Brings Building Experience to Legal Practice



Submitted by Bob Willis

When wrongs have occurred, which need to be righted, Bob Willis is an experienced, objective and cost-effective litigator, mediator and arbitrator.

"It brings me a lot of satisfaction to help people who have been wronged to achieve resolution," said Bob. "As an attorney with more than 16 years of complex litigation experience representing both plaintiffs and defendants, I know how to evaluate the benefits and risks of litigation."

Bob handles, among other things, serious personal injury and property damage, wrongful death, products liability, contract disputes and assisted living/care home neglect. However, Bob is best known as a reasonable, no-nonsense, fair and well-seasoned construction defect attorney.

As a licensed residential builder with more than 25 years of hands-on construction experience himself, and as an attorney who spent the first eight years of his legal career defending developers, contractors and subcontractors, and then the last eight years repre-

senting homeowners, homeowners associations and commercial property owners, Bob understands both sides of any construction dispute. This allows Bob to be a highly effective and efficient attorney, and he also can be truly *neutral* when called upon to serve as a mediator or arbitrator.

"One of the reasons I provide free consultations to my homeowner clients is that I like to walk a property with the owner, and give it to them straight," Bob stated. "The reality is very few construction defect cases are clear shot winners. It is important to assess the value and risks of litigation." Bob takes pride in his ability to connect with people. Midwestern born and raised, Bob tells it like it is.

Being part of the East Mesa community is important to Bob. For nearly the past decade, he has coached youth baseball, basketball and soccer for dozens of kids ranging in age from 5 to 19 from the Red Mountain area. "Helping kids stay focused on fitness, sportsmanship and achievement is part of building a strong community," he stated. "I love sports and coaching."

Last year, Bob was a volunteer coaching staff member for the 2013 Red Mountain High School Freshman Baseball Team, and in 2008, he was the Longbow Men's Golf Club match play champion.

Bob's wife Bethany runs a Homevestors real estate business, and sits on the board of directors for her family's Michigan-based assisted living and care home business. Bob's daughter Meredith, a 2012 Red Mountain High School (RMHS) high honors graduate, cheerleader and pom squad member, is now a junior studying at Arizona State University.

Bob's son Drew is a junior at RMHS, working hard academically and physically, to hopefully be a key player on the 2015 RMHS varsity baseball team. ■

For more information, contact Bob at (480) 748-1865, or visit his website at www.bobwillislaw.com. Free consultations are available.

RECIPE

Enjoy this unique candy
RECIPE DURING
THE HOLIDAYS

Submitted by PIEfection

This tasty treat is sure to be a hit as you celebrate the season. Share the recipe with friends and family.



SANTA'S SNOWY SNACKS

1/2 cup peanut butter	7 cups rice cereal or
1/4 cup butter	corn Chex cereal
6 ounces chocolate chips	Powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla	Red and green candy

IN A LARGE MICROWAVE SAFE BOWL

Melt peanut butter and butter together in microwave, heating for 20 seconds at a time, and stirring in between intervals. Add chocolate chips, and stir until melted. Add vanilla, and stir. Add cereal, and stir until it is all covered with the chocolate mixture. Spoon half of it into a gallon size plastic bag, and toss with 1/2 cup powdered sugar, or more as needed to cover all the cereal. Toss until it's all *snowy*, and toss with red and green holiday candies. ■

PIEfection is located near the southwest corner of Power and Brown roads, at 6731 E. Brown Road. To place an order, call (480) 218-PIES (7437). You also can place an order online at www.piefectionaz.com. Store hours are 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The bakery is closed on Sunday.

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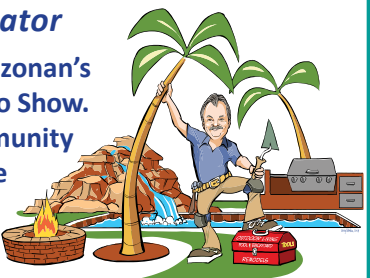
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LOCAL BUSINESS

Be Smart When Installing Christmas Lights

By George Robbins

How many times have you lost power to your outside outlets or garage outlets, only to wonder how to restore power to them or where to start?

GFCI protection is vital to ensure electrical safety, in both residential and commercial properties.

A power interruption, due to a ground fault, provides important protection to people, but can shut down freezers, sump pumps and other necessary equipment if left undetected. Often, however, GFCIs, in garages, basements or large commercial kitchens, may be located in an out-of-the-way place, such as a back corner or storage area, making daily visual checks for tripping unlikely.

With the new smart lock pro slim GFCI, with audible alert if a condition exists causing the GFCI to trip, users will be alerted by the sounding of an audible alarm. This will allow the users to identify and locate the GFCI, and to reset the device, quickly restoring power.

We are getting to that time of year again for Christmas lights and holiday decorations. We can scratch that *honey do* item off the list for you. Call Eagle Services to give you a free estimate to install Christmas lights. We suggest buying LED, so you don't have extension cords hanging all over your house. Also, LED draws very little power. ■

For more information about Eagle Services, and for help with your holiday decorations, call George Robbins, of the Electrical Division, at (480) 703-4272 (cell), or (480) 659-4942 (office). You can also email george@eaglepae.com.



LOCAL BUSINESS

BOERS HOME RENOVATIONS IS PICKY ABOUT QUALITY

By Dawn Abbey

When you are picky about how you want your home renovation project to turn out, you need to choose Boers Home Renovations to do the work.

"I pay attention to quality details, even if it means taking a bit more time and effort. I stick to my estimates, and do it right rather than trying to get it done quickly," said owner Jason Boers.

Jason, who has worked in home renovations and repairs for the past 14 years, decided two years ago to get his Arizona state contractor's license, and operate his own company. He brought in his cousin Shawn Boers, with his 15 years of construction experience, to work with him. "We both learned from the same mentor, and we both have the same attitude about doing everything right," Jason stated.

"We do everything, from completely gutting and redoing the whole inside of a home, to remodeling just one area or a room, such as a kitchen or a bath," he continued. "Together, we handle about 95 percent of the work ourselves, especially the tile and flooring, but we also have a team of high-quality subcontractors we work with who specialize in custom work."

For instance, if someone wants custom-made cabinets or specialty Corian or granite countertops, they have people they can rely on to do it right. "They have to, because they know I am very picky," Jason stated. "We use a longtime family-owned carpet installer, Castle Flooring, and even work with a great roofing company. Also, because my wife Christie and I and our three kids

Shawn Boers



Jason Boers



live in Northeast Mesa, when you live in an area, you want your neighbors to be able to rely on your services."

Homeowners can call on Jason for all kinds of remodel jobs, including kitchens, baths, flooring, cabinetry, closets and even small projects. "We're also good at helping homeowners make the big decisions about what types of flooring, counter-

tops and cabinet styles to choose," Jason said.

Initially, they figure out what colors they prefer and how the homeowner's lifestyle impacts the choices of design, types of materials and usage. "Once I have an idea of what they need and want, I can bring them a selection of samples for flooring, tiles and finishes, along with accents and decorative borders to complement the basic materials," Jason further stated. "That makes it a lot easier for the homeowner to imagine how the finished project will look. Because we've done so many renovations, we already have a working knowledge of what goes well together."

To see some of Jason's quality work, visit his website at boershomerenovations.com or his Facebook page. "We always give complementary appraisals. So, if you have an idea to renovate your kitchen or family room, we'll come out and work out a design and free cost estimate for you," Jason said. "And you know it will be done right." ■

For more information, call Jason Boers at (480) 229-6682, or send an email to boershomereno@gmail.com. Boers Home Renovations is licensed, bonded and insured, ROC#282409.



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ENGLISH CHRISTMAS TRADITION IS SHARED IN THE VALLEY

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

It is the season to be jolly, so I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who reads my articles, and those of you who have offered great feedback or contacted me to help you buy or sell your home.

Most of the time, I have no idea what I am going to write about from one month to the next, but something always comes up that I feel would be great to share. If there are any subjects you would like discussed, or information you would like, please let me know.

QUICK MARKET UPDATE

The holiday season sees a slowdown in sales and less demand. The Mesa market inventory of homes hasn't really changed much. For most of the year, it has ranged from 100 to 108 days of supply, and in November we were at 103 days.

The Mesa median price has dropped from \$197,000, in September, to \$192,500, in October, which is down 2.3 percent. It is up 4 percent from the beginning of the year, however.

Mesa home sales are up 9.4 percent from October 2013. Spring is just around the corner. With the Mesa housing market being stable in 2014, we are looking forward to the spring buying and selling season.

A CHRISTMAS TRADITION - CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

With the Christmas season upon us, instead of talking about the housing market, I want to share one of my family's Christmas traditions.



One English Christmas tradition, which has been around for more than 165 years, is the Christmas crackers. Being from England myself, I've never had a Christmas without them.

When I was at my dentist's office recently, I got the idea for this month's article. We were chatting about Christmas and I mentioned Christmas crackers. None of the girls had heard of them or knew what they were. So, of course, I had to spend the next 30 minutes telling them all about the crackers and what fun they are. Now, all the girls in the office are heading to the stores to start making Christmas crackers part of their family tradition.

So, what are they? Created by Tom Smith, in 1847, the crackers are cardboard tubes covered in brightly colored twisted paper. When the cracker is pulled by two people, each holding one end of the twisted paper, the friction creates a small pop, which is produced by a narrow strip of chemically treated paper. The cardboard tube contains a brightly colored paper hat (which I make everyone wear, whether they want to or not), a small gift and a motto or joke.

Christmas crackers have been a tradition for the English Christmas dinner since their inception. Even the royal family will have a Christmas cracker adorning their Christmas dinner table. Being from England, I had to carry on the tradition for my family here in America. I used to have to get them shipped in from England, but now they can be found everywhere, from Costco, to World Market and Bed Bath and Beyond, as well as many other stores.

You can get very expensive ones, which will have better gifts, or you even can make your own, using a

toilet paper tube and colored paper. Then, you can put your own gifts inside, and even make them specific for each guest, if you are that adventurous.

The crackers are not only a lot of fun, but the jokes usually are so corny you can't help but laugh. They really decorate the dinner table, too, and the kids love the novelty gifts inside. We pull our crackers as soon as we all sit at the table before we eat (watch out for flying gifts), and then go around the table telling the jokes throughout the meal. For us Britts, Christmas just isn't Christmas without them.

So, next time you are at the store and see these brightly colored crackers, buy a box, and start a new family tradition. I would love to hear from anyone who tries them this year.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. ■

Lorraine Ryall is a multimillion-dollar producer and recipient of the Coldwell Banker International President's Circle Award. For more information, call (602) 571-6799, or visit her website at www.Homes2SellAZ.com.



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EVENT

Women's Show Chorus Presents Holiday Show

By Jerri Ramey

If you love to sing and entertain, and you also enjoy exciting harmony, the Chordial-Ares Women's Show Chorus, a women's all-age chorus, is for you.

We are a friendly group of ladies singing four-part harmony for 20 years. One must have a love of music, be able to carry a tune, perform some choreography and attend rehearsals. Our songs include show tunes, novelty numbers, as well as patriotic and gospel numbers. Performances are in February and March, entertaining audiences in RV parks, churches and miscellaneous venues in the East Valley. Come visit, and share your voice with wonderful sounds of harmony while having fun.

Rehearsals take place through April, on Mondays, from 12:30 to 3 p.m., at Our Savior's Epiphany Lutheran Church choir room (no affiliation), located at 1050 W. Superstition Blvd., Apache Junction.

For information regarding singing, attending or scheduling a performance, contact Jerri at (480) 807-0031.

A CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY MUSICAL SHOW (FREE)

This show features Sisters in a Chord—two a cappella choruses—C'est la Vie, a quartet, and an exciting four-part harmony women's show chorus by the Chordial-Aires.

The holiday event takes place on Wednesday, Dec. 17, at 7 p.m., at the LDS Interstake Center, located at 830 E. 2nd Ave., in Mesa. ■



All groups need more voices for the future. So, for information, please contact Doreen at (480) 577-7600, or call Jerri at (480) 807-0031. You also can send Jerri an email at Jerridoreme@aol.com.



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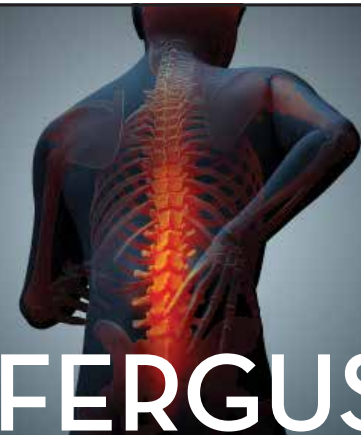
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LOCAL BUSINESS

It Is Important to Be CAR CARE AWARE

Submitted by H and I Automotive
No one can function without a vehicle these days, so follow these simple guidelines to see how easy car maintenance can be.

1. Change the oil every 3,000 miles. Sure, the manufacturers and oil companies say you can go much longer intervals, but they don't have to pay for the repairs. You do. Changing your oil and filter every 3,000 miles will keep the engine cleaner, and also will avoid sludge and containment build-up inside your engine. It also is recommended to have the oil system flushed every 12,000 miles to further extend the life of your engine.
2. Change the other fluids on your car at or before the recommended service schedule found in your owner's manual. Just like the engine oil, these fluids only will protect your car's other systems if maintained properly. Many power steering and transmission repairs can be avoided if the fluid is changed at the proper interval.
3. Do not ignore warning lights. There are multiple warnings, which can appear on the instrument cluster. They can be as simple as a low tire pressure indicator, or as crucial as an engine operating temperature indicator. Never continue to drive a car while the engine is overheating. In any case, always find out why the light is on every time. Just because you see the same light, it doesn't mean it is on for the same reason as the last time.
4. Have your car repaired in a timely manner. Putting off a known needed repair easily can turn into a much larger one if not dealt with proactively. A brake squeal,



which indicates pads need to be replaced, turns into a brake grind, and now there is damage to rotors and calipers. A cooling hose leak can turn into an overheated engine and cause expensive damage. When faced with multiple repairs at once, prioritize them so you do not feel overwhelmed.

5. Always use the same facility, if possible, for all your car service needs. Once you find a place with which you are comfortable, keep going there. It is easier to keep track of your service records when they are in one place, even when all you need is an oil change. A full service facility will give you a report on the condition of your entire vehicle. This will help avoid future surprise repairs.

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Why Us?
Members of both ASID and IFDA, our team plays an active role in the design community. While our fingers are on the pulse of what is current in interior design, it is also our goal to provide our clients with timeless design, great quality pieces, and a wonderful working relationship.

EDUCATION

Hope inspires students at SHARP School



By Laurie Struna
Photos by Tim Hacker

While hope comes in many forms, for the students at SHARP School, it is in the wisdom of a 6-year-old goldenoodle — a therapy dog named Hope — and her handler Pam Reinke. Hope is one of several pet therapy dogs from Gabriel's Angels that visit the school on a rotating schedule several times a month. SHARP is part of Mesa Public Schools, servicing the special education community, from kindergarten through 12th grade. Its students are at different stages in their emotional development, and the dogs are able to connect with the students.

"The dogs teach our students the same things we work on each day, but in a different way," Cathy Weigler, school counselor at SHARP, explained. "The kids respond to the dogs without behaviors because it's all non-verbal. Therefore, learning becomes intrinsic. Students develop relationships with the dogs, fostering trust and unconditional positive regard. During therapy sessions, seven core behaviors are targeted. They are attachment, confidence, self-regulation, affiliation, awareness, tolerance and respect."

The therapy dogs and their handlers meet with groups of 10 or fewer students, for 30 minutes, every other week. The time includes an activity like brushing the dogs, reading stories, listening to the dog's heartbeat, brushing the dog's

teeth, learning pet first aid and other practical skills.

"Students are motivated to do well because they know the dogs are coming back. And they love spending time with the dogs," Cathy stated.

TEACHING STUDENTS ABOUT OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

This past January, Hope was in a car accident and almost died. She pulled through, but lost her left rear leg. Students shed tears and wrestled with emotions when they heard about Hope's accident. They learned about empathy, and expressed their thoughts on hand-written cards.

"Hope would smell the cards from the students," Pam recalled. "She would look at me with that 'When do we get to go back to school?' look she associates with the scent of our visiting bag."

Hope and Pam returned to school three weeks after the accident. With a gentle touch, students ran their fingers through Hope's soft fur with the most love that they could find in their hearts, taking extra care to avoid touching the incision. Curious about the injury, they peppered the handler with questions like, "Will her leg grow back?" or "What did they do with her leg?"

"We explained that her leg was in the place where they put all legs that are broken," Pam said.

Self-identifying with Hope's injuries, the students relayed stories and statements of their own illnesses or issues, bringing them to the forefront. They felt a sense of ownership and responsibility for their pal Hope.

To commemorate the special year, Gabriel's Angels made clay paw imprints for each student.

When asked how pet therapy dogs make a difference in the lives of these students, Pam said, "The last thing I heard when the students were given Hope's paw print was, 'I know that no matter what might happen to me, I can get through it because of what Hope has been through. If she can do all she does with three legs, I can handle anything.'"

For more information about Mesa Public Schools and the therapy dogs, visit the website at www.mpsaz.org.

LOCAL BUSINESS

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Submitted by Ms. Carol's Gymkids

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The new addition to the program is a Saturday morning cheer class, at 11 a.m. New teams are being formed now. Coach Liz is looking for talented kids with spirit who would like to be in cheer. A pair of teams will be formed (beginner and more advanced). Act now, and bring our coupon, from our ad in this paper on page 4, to receive free registration. There are no sign-up fees.

Also new to the program is a toddler (parent and child) gymnastic class, for ages 2 and 3, on Wednesday mornings, at 10 a.m., and on Saturday mornings, at 9 a.m. This developmental class is a wonderful start to fitness, gymnastics and dance for the little ones.

What a great idea to bring the kids to a positive gym like this, with programs designed to build self-esteem, self-confidence, discipline, teamwork and so much more. They will enjoy trampoline bouncing, bar hanging, beam balancing and rope climbing fun. ■

Ms. Carol's Gymkids is located at 116 N. Lindsay Road. For more information, call (480) 777-1033. You also can check out the website at www.MsCarolsGymkids.com.





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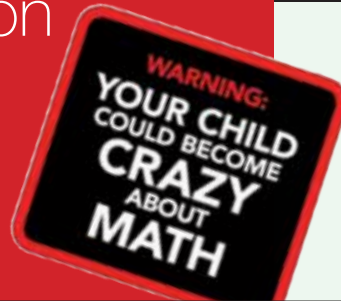
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