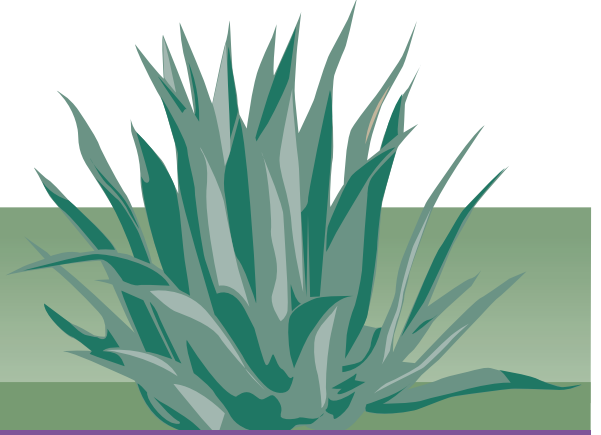


# Northeast Mesa Up Close



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## Desert Botanical Garden IS A MUST-SEE EXPERIENCE

By Kimberly Alvarado

Now that we're finally able to get back outdoors, we've got a must-see experience for you to explore, and this one isn't too far from home.

Whether it's just you and a friend, members of your family, or holiday visitors looking to engage in the beauty of Arizona, Desert Botanical Garden, located in Papago Park, at 1201 N. Galvin Parkway, in Phoenix, is a great choice for a pleasant outdoor activity. The garden is bursting with beauty and exciting activities this month. Here's a sneak peek of what you can expect during your November visit to this unique desert sanctuary:

### THE LEAF BLOOM

Marvel at a stunning display of more than 1,000 hand-made ceramic leaves. Each piece is intricately designed, making it a delight for nature lovers. You'll find it hard to pick just one favorite.



### MUSIC IN THE GARDEN

Enjoy an unforgettable evening with the *Music in The Garden* concert series. Set against the vibrant backdrop of the garden, these Friday evening concerts feature jazz, blues, and contemporary music. Be sure to check the website Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, Arizona | DBG for the performance schedule and get ready for a night of magic under the stars.

### LIGHT BLOOM

Experience the garden in a whole new light with *Light Bloom*. This installation transforms the desert landscape using mesmerizing geometric light displays. It's a visual treat you won't want to miss!

### EXPLORE THE TRAILS

Wander through a variety of trails at your own pace. Each trail has a unique view with different plants for you to enjoy. You'll want to have your camera ready for some remarkable Arizona photo backdrops.

### GUIDED TOURS

Join *The Happiness Tour*, where your guide will introduce you to six tranquil locations within the garden. Docent tours



will give you an appreciation for the beauty and plants of the desert, as you learn how desert plants thrive and survive in our climate.

### GARDENING CLASSES

For those looking to create their own garden sanctuary at home, these classes will provide tips and tricks to make your home garden a beautiful retreat.

### DINING OPTIONS

- **Gertrude's Restaurant:** Enjoy Contemporary American cuisine with breathtaking views of lush desert botanicals. Gertrude's is perfect for brunch, lunch, dinner, or cocktails.
- **Patio Café:** The more casual option, ideal for families. Enjoy salad, sandwiches, and a kid-friendly menu.

We only scratched the surface of what's blooming at the Desert Botanical Garden. From nature enthusiasts to casual explorers of all ages, there's something for everyone. The garden is waiting to charm you with its natural beauty and activities.

Visit their website for a complete list of programs and events, along with pricing options and ways to get involved in the garden experience. Once you've had the opportunity to explore, you'll more fully appreciate the Sonoran sanctuary we call home. ■

For more information, visit [dbg.org](http://dbg.org) or call (480) 941-1225.



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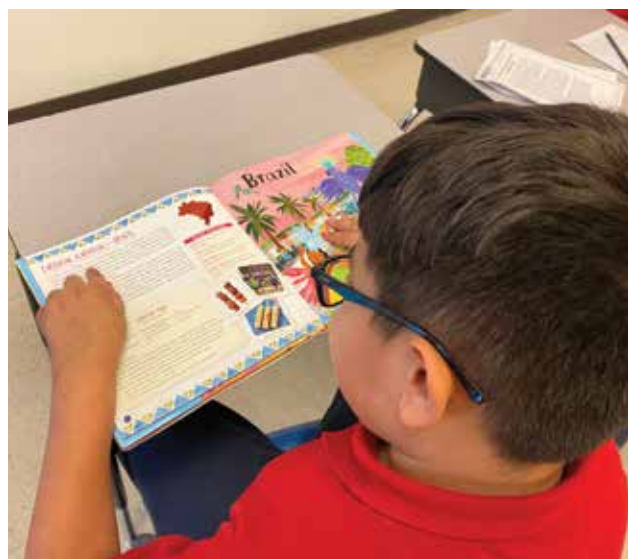
# World Culture Fair at Self Development Academy

By Tici Smith, Middle School Language Arts Teacher, Self Development Academy

School events focusing on international and cultural themes celebrate diversity and promote an appreciation of multiculturalism. Self Development Academy-Mesa (SDA-Mesa) is celebrating such a culturally rich event, called the *World Culture Fair*, on Thursday, Dec. 12. This international festival will present various cultural traditions from all around the world in the form of arts, dance, and cuisine, helping our families develop an appreciation of different ethnicities and cultures. The staff and children have worked hard in planning and preparing and are anxiously awaiting the presentation of their celebration of diversity.

**SIGNIFICANCE IN EDUCATION**

Alain Dehaze, CEO of Adecco, said, "Diversity requires commitment. Achieving superior performance diversity can produce further action – most notably, a commitment to developing an inclusive culture. People need not just to be different, they need to be fully involved and feel their voices are heard." Since its inception, SDA has participated in this diversity discussion. From our parents



and students to our teachers and staff, people with various ethnicities, cultures, and languages have passed through our doors in many capacities.

Celebrating cultural festivals inspires the school community to promote diversity and inclusivity. By actively participating in cultural festivals, students and the school community develop respect, empathy, and recognition of other ethnicities and foster a sense of global citizenship.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE FESTIVAL**

This year, SDA celebrates those differences with our World Culture Fair in December. Each class has the task of selecting a country from their assigned region of the world and creating an experience for our community. The world's regions include parts of Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America, and the Pacific Islands, representing the diverse population of SDA.

Culture consists of many aspects that will bring a variety of learning experiences for our students. The students will have the opportunity to perform traditional songs and dances from around the world. Charles Davis said, "To understand the culture, study the dance. To understand the dance, study the people." The heart of a people is reflected in their music, and while unique, it has overarching themes that students can connect with in their own lives.

In addition, James Beard stated that, "Food is our common ground, a universal experience." By helping students share food from their culture and experience the food of other cultures, we create lasting connections that bond us all together. Sharing a meal is considered the basis of hospitality around the world. Students will be asked to prepare sample dishes from their assigned cultures sharing the exotic aromas, tastes, and textures.

Moreover, visual arts record a country's culture and history. Researching and recreating famous art pieces and styles will expose students to different aspects of learning. We hope to inspire their creativity as they explore ancient art forms.

SDA has always valued the variety of rich ethnic backgrounds of our students. During our World Culture Fair, we want to create a world tour experience with our families that appeals to the senses with the rich scents of various foods and spices to the variety of color palettes and textures in art and clothing. This will be a whirlwind trip around the world for one night.

We look forward to you attending our World Culture Fair on Dec. 12. ■



To learn more about Self Development Preschool, please contact (480) 396-3522. For the accelerated K-8 program, Self Development Academy, call Self Development Academy at (480) 641-2640.

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**LOCAL BUSINESS**

# Ten Tips to Stay Fit and Fabulous for the Holidays

By *Gina Van Luven, Owner, Prime IV Hydration & Wellness – Red Mountain Gateway*

**W**ith all the holiday festivities comes a lot of extra food, sugar, and alcohol, and less time for physical activity, making it challenging to maintain your weight and health. Sugar and alcohol suppress your immune system by making white blood cells (your fighters) sluggish and unable to do their job. It's like having an army with no weapons.

No need to worry, though, because I have the following 10 tips to help you make better choices and up your game this holiday season:

- 1. Eat a healthy snack or meal prior to going to a party.** Most party food isn't exactly healthy. Eating something healthy prior provides much-needed nutrition and helps fill you up, so that you are less inclined to overindulge on unhealthy food.
- 2. Drink a full glass of water before every alcoholic beverage.** Alcohol dehydrates the body, creating cravings for sugar. Drinking water in between alcoholic beverages helps you stay hydrated and slows the pace of alcohol consumption.
- 3. Put smaller portions on your plate.** It may not seem like a lot when you first start; but, by choosing only a tablespoon or even teaspoon of each dish, you'll end up with exactly what you need without overindulging. This way, you get to try everything without going overboard. Be sure to use this same concept with your sweets!
- 4. Pace yourself.** Instead of scarfing down everything on your plate as quickly as possible, take the time to savor each selection. Also, wait at least 10 minutes before going back for more. This allows your body time to send a message to your brain that you've been eating and helps curb your appetite.
- 5. Get moving.** Be sure to get some sort of physical activity daily. You don't have to spend an hour at the gym. Simply go for a quick walk, do some jumping

jacks, or take a few trips up and down the stairs. Physical activity helps boost your metabolism and burn those extra calories.

- 6. Manage stress.** This can be challenging during this busy time of year. But excess stress has a negative impact on immune function. Try taking a minute several times a day to do some deep breathing, which can help your nervous system to reset.
- 7. Optimize your vitamin D.** First, get tested! Optimal levels are between 60-80 ng/ml. If you are lower than 60, consider taking a D3 (cholecalciferol) with K2 (MK-7) supplement. D3 helps regulate immune function and fight infection. K2 helps move calcium to your bones versus staying in the arteries where it can cause damage.
- 8. Increase your vitamin C.** This antioxidant plays a key role in both your adaptive and innate immune system by stimulating white blood cells. Vitamin C has been shown to both prevent and shorten the duration of the cold and flu.
- 9. Start taking zinc.** This essential mineral aids in the development of immune cells like T-cells and macrophages.
- 10. Consider adding these other nutrients:** Acetylcysteine to support lymphocyte production, glutathione to help protect cells and regulate inflammation, and vitamin B6, which helps your body produce antibodies.

The holidays don't have to be your nemesis when it comes to your health and well-being. With a little bit of strategy, you can take control of your choices and stay fit and fabulous this holiday season! ■

*For information about how you can get the aforementioned nutrients via IV or injection therapy, please call us at (480) 992-4202 or go to [primeiveastmesa.com](http://primeiveastmesa.com). Prime IV Hydration & Wellness – Red Mountain Gateway is located at 2025 N. Power Road in Suite 106.*



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**|| SPIRITUALITY**



## The True Meaning of Christmas in Secular Symbols

By *Judy A. Knox*,  
*Charis Christian Church*

**W**hen you hear the word Christmas, what pops into your mind? Jesus in the manger or Santa Claus and reindeer? Festive decorations, jingle bells, and jaunty tunes, or sacred, contemplative songs? Should we feel guilty if we enjoy the secular side of Christmas?

Some people fear that secular Christmas traditions and symbols may delete the true meaning of Christmas. After all, what do trees and candy canes or a fat old man in a red suit have to do with the birth of the Christ child? And does our focus on gifts really point us to the first Christmas, the one we read about in the *Bible*?

These are good questions, and some of the answers may surprise you. I know I have been amazed to discover that most of our seemingly secular Christmas traditions and objects are actually physical representations of heavenly realities.

For example, did you know that chopping down an evergreen tree for a Christmas tree represents the death of Christ, and putting it back up represents His resurrection? The wreaths we hang are never-ending circles that represent eternity. The gifts we share with loved ones represent the gold, frankincense, and myrrh the wise men brought to the Christ child (Matthew 2:11) and remind us that God gave us His

perfect gift, His Son, to take away our sins and give us everlasting life (John 3:16). When we used to open Christmas gifts with our family, my husband would always take a few minutes to point out what the gift giving was based on.

Festive lights symbolize Jesus, the Light of the world (John 8:12). Candy canes were first made to represent the crooks on a shepherd's staff, commemorating the shepherds who went into Bethlehem to see the baby Jesus. There are many more examples. A Google search will reveal some that may surprise you.

Of course, we have distorted or misused many symbols, making their meanings less obvious, but once we're aware of the connection between the worldly symbols and the true meaning of Christmas, we can share this information with friends and family — especially when they express concern about all the secularism they see. If we take some time to learn about the symbolism, then everywhere we look we'll see reminders of what the real Christmas is all about. This knowledge can help us spread the *good news* — that Jesus the Messiah has come, as promised for thousands of years, to bring us new life. ■

*If you would like to learn more about this new life that Jesus came to give us, come visit us at Charis Christian Church, 4811 E. Julep St., Suite 101, in Mesa.*

**|| EVENT**

## East Valley Children's Theatre spreads joy with musical production

Submitted by *Elizabeth Schaible*, *East Valley Children's Theatre*  
Photos by *Emily Penrod*

**T**his holiday season, East Valley Children's Theatre (EVCT) is spreading festive joy with its musical production of *Elf Jr.*, running Dec. 5 to 15 at the Mesa Arts Center, where EVCT is a founding resident company.

EVCT is bringing a fresh vision to this stage adaptation — real snow will fall on stage during the final scene, bringing a touch of winter wonder to Arizona audiences. Director Joel Cranson adds a unique twist to this beloved holiday tale by setting the entire story inside the whimsical snow globe Buddy receives from Santa.

This imaginative setting transforms the familiar story set in New York, creating a dreamlike world where holiday cheer and the anticipation of a *White Christmas* come to life as audiences experience *Elf Jr.* in a whole new light.

"This production goes beyond simply capturing the magic of the holidays — we immerse audiences in a world like they've never seen before," Joel said. "With dazzling dances, heartfelt songs, and a setting that's as magical as Buddy's adventure itself, this show is truly a one-of-a-kind holiday experience."

Featuring a book by Thomas Meehan and Bob Martin, music by Matthew Sklar, and lyrics by Chad Beguelin, this family-friendly tale reminds audiences of the importance of spreading kindness within the community and the magic of the holiday season.



Tickets are \$21 and can be purchased in person or online at [evct.org](http://evct.org). Performances are at 7 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays, on Saturdays at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., and at 2 p.m. on Sundays. Contact the EVCT office at (480) 756-3828 to learn more.

**ABOUT ELF JR.:**

Buddy, a young orphan, accidentally stows away in Santa's bag and is raised at the North Pole, unaware that he's human. When his size and lack of toy-making skills reveal the truth, Buddy sets off on a journey to New York City to find his birth father, discover his true identity, and spread Christmas cheer.

**ABOUT EVCT**

EVCT is a professional, quality, nonprofit 501(c)3 community organization where children can grow and develop into successful and fulfilled adults. We are managed by an all-volunteer board of directors and staffed by professionals with educational and theatrical experience. Kids can take acting classes, join troupes, participate in acting camps, and audition for performances. ■

To donate or learn more, visit [evct.org](http://evct.org).

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## LOCAL BUSINESS

# Twelve Reasons Every Adult Should Strength Train

Submitted by *The Exercise Coach*®

During the past few years, more and more studies have shown that sensible strength training produces many health and fitness benefits. Key researchers have provided a wealth of data on the positive physiological responses to basic programs of strength exercise. Consider these 12 reasons to strength train:

**1. AVOID MUSCLE LOSS**

Adults who do not strength train lose between 5 and 7 pounds of muscle every decade (Forbes, 1976; Evans & Rosenberg, 1972). Although endurance exercise improves our cardiovascular fitness, it does not prevent the loss of muscle tissue. Only strength exercise maintains our muscle mass and strength throughout our mid-life years.

**2. AVOID METABOLIC RATE REDUCTION**

Because muscle is very active tissue, muscle loss is accompanied by a reduction in our resting metabolism. Information from Keyes et al. (1973) and Evans and Rosenberg (1992) indicate that the average adult experiences a two to five percent reduction in metabolic rate every decade of life. Because regular strength exercise prevents muscle loss, it also prevents the accompanying decrease in resting metabolic rate.

**3. INCREASE MUSCLE MASS**

Because most adults do not perform strength exercise, they need to first replace the muscle tissue that has been lost through inactivity. Fortunately, research (Westcott, 1995) shows that a standard strength training program can increase muscle mass by about 3 pounds over an eight-week training period. This is the typical training response for men and women who do 25 minutes of strength exercise three days a week.

**4. INCREASE METABOLIC RATE**

Research reveals that adding 3 pounds of muscle increases our resting metabolic rate by seven percent, and our daily calorie requirements by 15 percent (Campbell et al., 1994). At rest, a pound of muscle requires 35 calories per day for tissue maintenance, and during exercise muscle energy utilization increases

dramatically. Adults who replace muscle through sensible strength exercise use more calories all day long, thereby reducing the likelihood of fat accumulation.

**5. REDUCE BODY FAT**

Campbell and his co-workers (1994) found that strength exercise produced 4 pounds of fat loss after three months of training, even though the subjects were eating 15 percent more calories a day. That is, a basic strength training program resulted in 3 pounds more muscle, 4 pounds less fat, and 370 more calories per day food intake.

**6. INCREASE BONE MINERAL DENSITY**

The effects of progressive resistance exercise are similar for muscle tissue and bone tissue. The same training stimulus that increases muscle myoproteins also increases bone osteoproteins and mineral content. Menkes (1993) has demonstrated significant increases in the bone mineral density of the upper femur after four months of strength exercise.

**7. IMPROVE GLUCOSE METABOLISM**

Hurley (1994) has reported a 23 percent increase in glucose uptake after four months of strength training. Because poor glucose metabolism is associated with adult onset diabetes, improved glucose metabolism is an important benefit of regular strength exercise.

**8. INCREASE GASTROINTESTINAL TRANSIT TIME**

A study by Koffler (1992) showed a 56 percent increase in gastrointestinal transit time (transit time is faster) after three months of strength training. This is significant due to the fact that delayed gastrointestinal transit time is related to a higher risk of colon cancer.

**9. REDUCE RESTING BLOOD PRESSURE**

Strength training alone has been shown to reduce resting blood pressure significantly (Harris & Holly, 1987). Our study (Westcott, 1995) has revealed that combining strength and aerobic exercise is an even more effective means of improving blood pressure readings. After two months of combined exercise, our program participants dropped their systolic blood pressure by 5 Hg and their diastolic blood pressure by 3 Hg.

**10. IMPROVE BLOOD LIPID LEVELS**

Although the effect of strength training on blood lipid levels needs further research, at least two studies (Stone et al., 1982; Hurley et al., 1988) have revealed improved blood lipid profiles after several weeks of strength exercise. It is important to note that improvements in blood lipid levels are similar for both endurance and strength exercise (Hurley, 1994).

**11. REDUCE LOW BACK PAIN**

Years of research on strength training and back pain conducted at the University of Florida Medical School have shown that strong low-back muscles are less likely to be injured than weaker low-back muscles. A recent study by Risch (1993) found that low-back patients had significantly less back pain after 10 weeks of specific (full-range) strength exercise for the lumbar spine muscles. Because 80 percent of Americans experience low-back problems, it is advisable for all adults to strengthen their low-back muscles properly.

**12. REDUCE ARTHRITIC PAIN**

According to a recent edition of the *Tufts University Diet and Nutrition Letter* (1994), sensible strength training eases the pain of osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. This is good news, because most men and women who suffer from arthritis pain need strength exercise to develop stronger muscles, bones, and connective tissue.

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There are 12 physiological reasons to perform regular strength exercise. On a more basic level, it is important to understand that proper strength training may help us to look better, feel better, and function better. Remember that our skeletal muscles serve as the engine, chassis, and shock absorbers of our bodies. Consequently, strength training is an effective means of increasing our physical capacity, improving our athletic performance, reducing our injury risk, and improving our self-confidence. ■

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Need a little relaxing music to kick-start your holiday shopping? Drop by this weekend – or any weekend this month – for an ‘order off the menu’ brunch accompanied by live tunes. There’s no better way to get into the festive spirit than with a specially prepared meal and some great music. The weekend brunch runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Reservations are recommended, but not required.

We’re also thrilled to introduce new team members Alan Torrance and Nate Burnett to the Las Sendas professional lineup. These assistant food and beverage directors are hard at work preparing a New Year’s Eve dinner to remember at The Patio & Grille. With live music scheduled from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m., plan to attend this four-course delectable dinner before ringing in 2025.



## THE VISTAS PAVILION AT LAS SENDAS

This is a reminder to order your prime rib takeout dinner for Christmas Eve this year – it’s perfect for a small, intimate gathering of family and friends. The meal serves 5 to 7 people. The cost is \$350 plus tax. Call to make your reservation today at (480) 396-4000 ext. 222 or send an email to cshaw@lassendas.com.

## START 2025 AS A LAS SENDAS WINE CLUB MEMBER

Want to give the gift of Wine Club Membership for Christmas? Memberships are available now – red or white? Sweet or dry? Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot?

“Wine enthusiasts face many tough decisions, but deciding to join our Wine Club is pretty easy,” says Carla Shaw, events and catering director at Las Sendas Golf Club. “If you regularly attend Las Sendas Golf Club’s Wine Dinners and want wholesale plus five percent pricing on wine bottle purchases, this program is for you!” she added. Call Carla for the details at (480) 396-4000 ext. 222.

There is a special date, 1-25-2025, still available for booking a special event. If you’re into numbers, this might be a perfect date for a wedding. Carla can help book, plan, and prepare your special event in the new year.

February Wine Dinner date is confirmed! Feb. 28, 2025, has been chosen to highlight Silver Oak Wines, with Grgich Wines following on March 21 as a confirmed Wine Dinner night. Mark your calendars and check online at [www.lassendas.com](http://www.lassendas.com) for information on all upcoming Wine Dinner dates.

## THE PRO SHOP

After sinking that last putt on the pristine greens, swing by The Pro Shop to uncover the latest treasures, just in time for the holidays. With the arrival of new merchandise, you’re sure to find the perfect gift for a special someone on your list. Explore a variety of unique finds – from stylish golf apparel and activewear to monogrammed glassware, cozy candles, trending shoes, hat and eye wear – there’s something for every outdoor enthusiast. ■



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\$2,000 Initiation Fee + Yearly Fee of \$1,200  
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### Non Member Yearly Family Pass

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- Cash it out, which is subject to potential tax consequences.

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REAL ESTATE

# British Christmas Lingo and Traditions

By Lorraine Ryall, Associate Broker, CDPE, CSSN, CNE  
KOR Properties



‘T’is the season to be jolly — my favorite time of the year! I want to take this opportunity to thank all my wonderful clients and everyone who reads my articles.

**QUICK MARKET UPDATE**

With 34 percent more inventory than this time last year, some areas are leaning toward a buyers’ market — but don’t be fooled. The increase in inventory isn’t because more homes are on the market; it’s due to a decline in demand. Many buyers have been sitting on the sidelines, waiting for the election to be over and interest rates to drop.

The good news (for sellers) is that despite higher supply and lower demand, prices have continued to climb. In Mesa, the median sales price was \$469,950 in January 2024, and as of Nov. 19, it’s \$509,000, an 8.3 percent increase.

We expect it to be a strong spring market, especially if rates drop, but even if they don’t all those buyers sitting on the sidelines are expected to jump back in, bringing demand back up and keeping prices strong.

If you’re thinking about buying, now could be the perfect time to make your move.

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS**

Merry Christmas is a more traditional Christmas greeting but over the years ‘Happy Christmas’ is the more common method of wishing holiday merriment in the UK and Ireland. Historically there was ‘moral suspicion’ around Merry Christmas as it implied boisterousness and drinking. Whereas Happy Christmas is more sedate and sober. The Queen herself wishes her subjects a Happy Christmas in her yearly *Christmas Address*. As with most things these days, it’s a to each, his own’ type of thing. But most people in the UK say Happy Christmas.

**FATHER CHRISTMAS**

The UK says Father Christmas not Santa Clause. Father Christmas is the traditional English name for the personification of Christmas. Although now known as a Christmas gift-bringer, and typically considered to be synonymous with Santa Clause, he was originally part of a much older and unrelated English folklore tradition dating back to the fifth and sixth centuries when Britain was under Saxon rule. Father Christmas was associated with Saxon Father Time, also known as King Winter or King Frost. People would welcome King Winter into their homes, where he would sit by the fire and be given food and drink.

**CHRIMBO/CRIMBLE**

Chrimbo is a British slang word for Christmas that originates in 1925 (though it sounds like something a Chav would say). John Lennon also used the version Crimble in a Beatles song about Christmas. The Beatles notably taped a special “Happy Crimble” greeting for fan club members in 1963.

**CHRISTMAS PUDDING**

Christmas Pudding has its origins in medieval England and is sometimes known as plum pudding or just “pudd”. Despite the name “plum pudding,” the pudding contains no actual plums due to the pre-Victorian use of the word “plums” as a term for raisins. The pudding is composed of many dried fruits held together by egg and suet, sometimes moistened by treacle or molasses and flavoured with cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, ginger, and other spices.



The traditional pudding has 13 ingredients to represent Jesus and his disciples. When conventionally prepared on Advent’s first Sunday, family members each give the dense pudding a taxing stir for good luck, and a coin might be dropped into the batter, which someone will get to keep. The pudding is aged for a month, months, or even a year; the high alcohol content of the pudding prevents it from spoiling during this time.



**ROYAL FAMILY’S CHRISTMAS PUDDING RECIPE**

- 250g raisins
- 250g currants
- 185g sultanas
- 150g mixed peel
- 250g suet or vegetarian suet
- 250g breadcrumbs
- 90g flour
- 12g mixed spice
- 2 whole eggs
- 180g demerara sugar
- 275ml beer
- 40ml dark rum
- 40ml brandy

Makes 2 x 1kg puddings.

1. First, combine all the dry ingredients and stir them up. Add the eggs and liquid, stir it all up.
2. Grease your pudding basins. Press the cake mix into the basins.
3. Cover with a circle of parchment paper. Cover basins with muslin or foil, and place puddings into a deep saucepan.
4. Fill with water up to 3/4 of pudding basin height. Cover with foil.
5. Steam for six hours, refilling water if necessary.
6. Once cooled, wrap puddings well and keep in a cool, dry and dark place until Christmas.
7. On Christmas Day, reheat your pudding in a bain-marie for three to four hours.
8. Remove from the basin using a rounded knife or palette knife, flip out onto a plate, garnish or flambé and serve with brandy sauce and cream.

Wishing you and your family a Happy Christmas and a New Year filled with happiness, good health, and success in all your endeavors. ■

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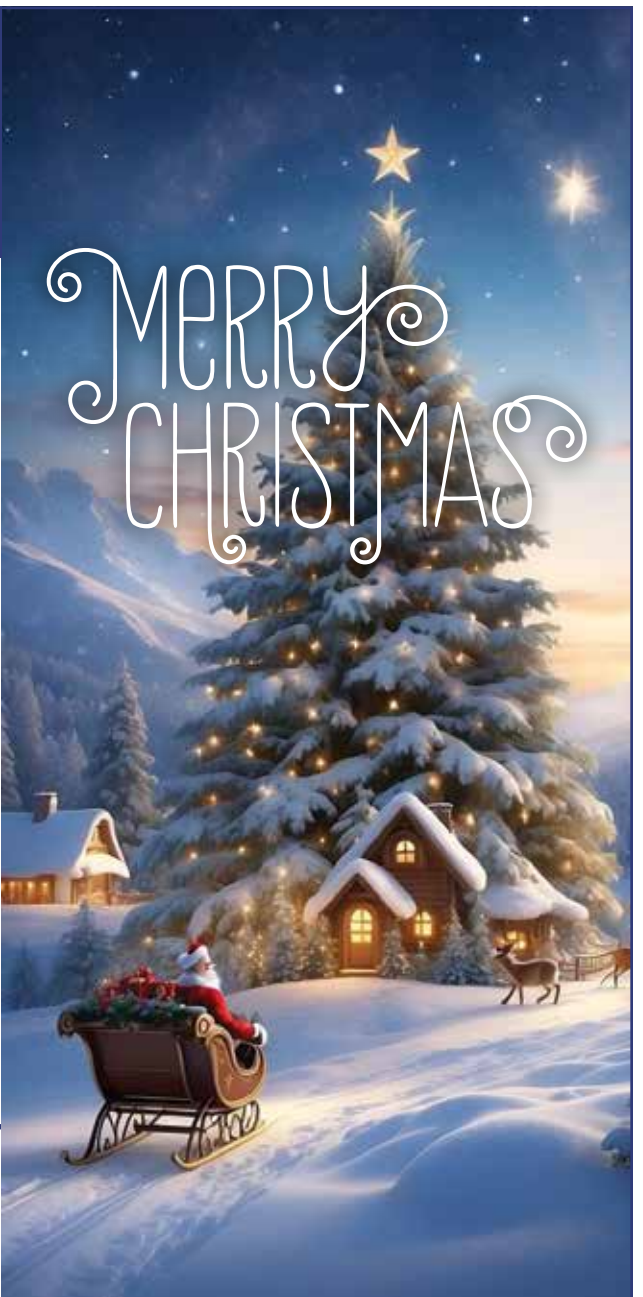
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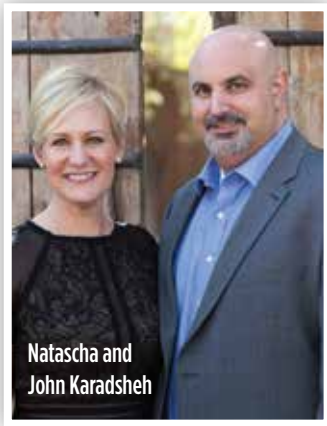
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REAL ESTATE

# What to Buy Your House for Christmas!

By Natascha Ovando-Karadsheh, Las Sendas Resident and Associate Broker/Owner at KOR Properties



Our homes shelter us throughout the year, providing us with protection from the elements, a safe space to raise our families, and a place to store our possessions. So, it seems only fitting that we also spoil our homes a little at the holidays. Here are 10 great gifts that any home would love!

1. The D-Link Water Leak Sensor and Alarm is a modular system that is easy to install and provides a great way for you to monitor water sources throughout your home. Place the sensors in water heater pans, behind washing machines, and under sinks and they will help you catch a leak before it results in costly water damage. \$80 on Amazon.
2. Make a statement and reduce dust and dirt in your home by gifting your home a new front door mat. Frontgate.com has great monogrammed and holiday doormats starting at \$100. Less expensive options can be found at Target and Lowe's.
3. Like many of you, we have a freezer in our garage. One summer day our freezer door was left open and by the time we noticed, we lost everything inside. That night we ordered the AMIR, Wireless Indoor Outdoor Refrigerator/Freezer Thermometer with Alarm. If a refrigerator or freezer door is left open or the temperatures begin to rise, an alarm goes off so you can jump to the rescue. \$19 on Amazon.

4. Programmable thermostats like an Ecobee or Nest will help you more efficiently use your heat and AC, and you can get a rebate from Salt River Project just for having one installed. SRP is offering a \$50 rebate on the installation of each programmable thermostat and additional credits are available if you enroll in their "Bring Your Own Thermostat" Program. From \$130 on Amazon and other sites.
5. Houses (and people) look better at night with mood lighting. Pick up some dimmer switches and install them in your primary living spaces. You will be surprised how much this will enhance the cozy vibe of your space. From \$15 at Home Depot and Amazon.



6. Houses need to breathe, so don't forget to open the windows when the weather is nice. You may also want to buy your house an air purifier such as a Levoit, Molekule, or Dyson. In the winter, when the air is dry, also consider adding a humidifier. From \$100 on Amazon.
7. Did you know that the IRS allows for a \$1,200 tax credit for energy efficient home improvements? The IRS also allows a \$2,000 per year credit for the installation of new qualified heat pumps and water heaters. See irs.gov for all the details.
8. Now is the time of year to plant and, before your holiday company arrives, freshen up your yard. Plants are an inexpensive way to add great curb appeal and make your home look fresh again. From \$10 at Home Depot, Lowe's, and local nurseries.
9. Show your neighbors and your house some love and decorate your home for the holidays. Holiday lights, a wreath on the door, or even a blow-up snowman will help to get everyone in the spirit. Decorating will make your house happier and put a smile on the faces of those driving by.
10. Fill your home with people over the holidays! As realtors, we can tell you that homes take on the energy of the people inside, so fill your home with your favorite friends and family. Entertaining doesn't have to be difficult – host a potluck, a pizza and wine night, or just serve hot cocoa and cookies. This is the perfect time of year to meet new neighbors, reconnect with old friends, and get back to old-fashioned togetherness!

Wishing you and your family the Merriest Christmas and the Happiest Holiday Season! ■

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8441 E Culver St	1,962	County Island	\$675,000
2430 N Sossaman Rd	1,677	County Island	\$683,000
7332 E Glencove St	2,406	Meadow View Estates	\$750,000
9950 E Elmwood St	2,434	County Island	\$765,000
6361 E Orion St	3,000	Mesa Desert Heights	\$800,000
3101 N Winthrop	2,479	Lehi Crossing	\$800,000
3845 N Shannon	2,656	Reserve At Red Rock	\$822,500
5846 E Redmont Dr	2,613	Reserve At Red Rock	\$850,000
1919 N Bernard Cir	2,039	Mountain Bridge	\$860,000
8419 E Jensen St	2,568	Mountain Bridge	\$966,500
8914 E Norwood Cir	2,993	Madrid	\$987,700
4132 E Hackamore Cir	3,359	Estates Groves	\$1,004,800
4137 E McLellan Rd	3,021	Estates Groves	\$1,026,000
1037 N Omaha Cir	3,740	Mahogany	\$1,062,500
1061 N Omaha Cir	4,376	Mahogany	\$1,100,000
5902 E Star Valley St	3,207	Reserve At Red Rock	\$1,254,928
3950 E McLellan Rd #7	3,381	Crossroads Estates	\$1,344,500
3950 E McLellan Rd #14	3,327	Crossroads Estates	\$1,425,000
3546 E Norwood Cir	5,156	Hermosa Groves North	\$1,511,400

Information gathered from the Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service is deemed reliable, but not guaranteed. Sales Information Provided By John Karadsheh, ABR, CRS, DESIGNATED BROKER KOR Properties www.KORproperties.com



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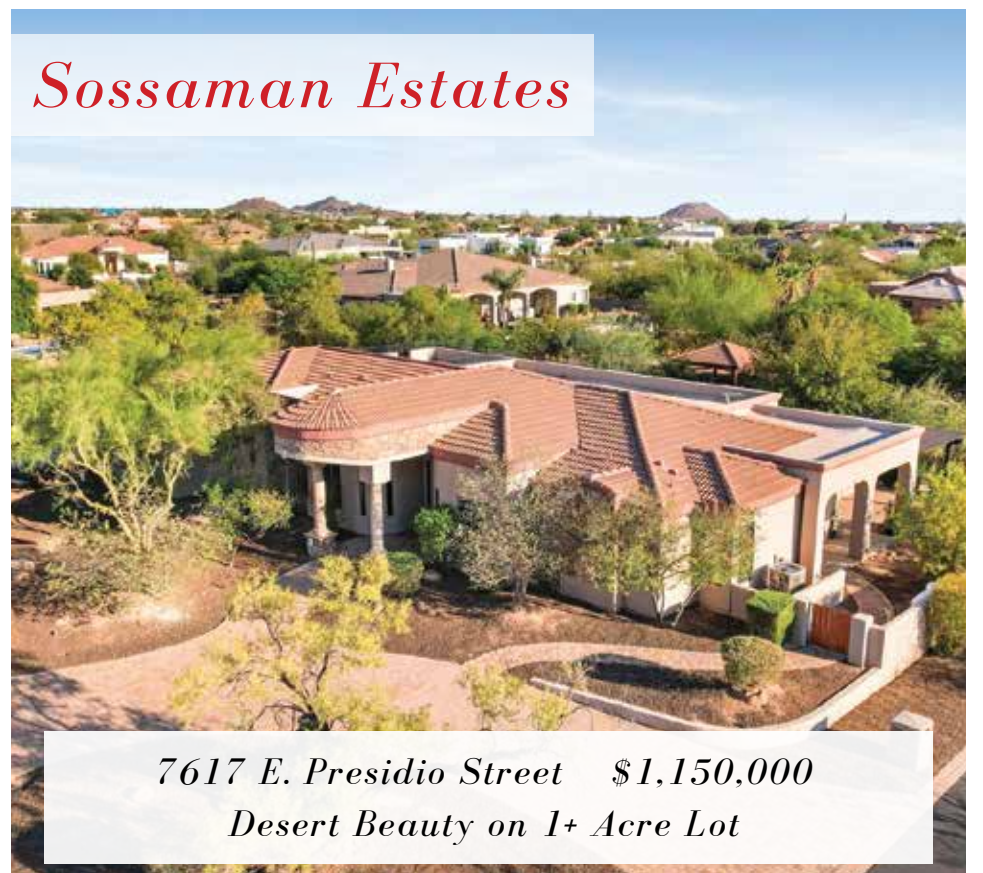
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EDUCATION

# EMPOWERING EDUCATION

## The Impact of Teaming at Mesa Public Schools

By Laurie Struna

Mesa Public Schools is implementing a team-based teaching approach, moving away from the isolated, single-teacher model, in partnership with the Arizona State University (ASU) Next Education Workforce initiative. This effort enhances student learning and supports teachers' professional development by fostering collaborative and integrated practices.

### THE ESSENCE OF TEAM TEACHING

Teaming emphasizes partnership, enabling teachers to co-plan and craft instruction within a flexible, responsive setting. Educators can draw on their strengths, organize adaptable groupings, and infuse the classroom with diverse expertise, ensuring students benefit from a well-rounded team tailored to their needs.

Superintendent Dr. Andi Fourlis highlights the flexibility of team structures within schools, including innovations like installing see-through connecting doors for shared classrooms or integrating resources such as therapy dogs and industry mentors.

"Teaming has increased teacher retention, boosted morale, and enhanced student support," Dr. Andi says. "We see greater engagement, fewer teacher absences, and improved learning experiences. We are building long-term instructional teams that enrich teaching and learning."

### BUILDING EFFECTIVE TEAMS

Developing effective teaching teams is a gradual process that requires careful planning and support. Strong team dynamics depend on compatibility and communication, fostering a supportive professional community for both students and teachers.

More than 40 schools are in the early stages of building educator teams. Around 20 of these schools have at least one team and are working to deepen and refine their team-teaching practices. While some schools have fully implemented this model school-wide, others are still expanding their teaming efforts.

### IMPACT ON STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS

Krista Adams, district leadership coach for the Next Education Workforce at Mesa Public Schools, emphasizes that the teaming model helps foster stronger student-teacher relationships, offering a greater sense of support and belonging. At a recent project showcase, two students shared their experiences transitioning into a teaming environment. One said, "I feel like I can get help more easily here." Another added, "The teachers are always talking to each other, and I can just go and talk to them," highlighting the collaborative and accessible atmosphere created by the team-based approach.

Krista explains, "This strategy fosters personalized learning, elevates student engagement, and reduces discipline issues. It also benefits teachers by providing new educators with mentorship and opportunities to learn from seasoned colleagues."

### INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

This work has gained international recognition. In October, Zaharis and Hermosa Vista elementary schools showcased the district's model to 40 visiting educators from the Netherlands. The tour highlighted efforts to empower educators, students, and parents. One participant noted her favorite part: "Happy teachers."

### A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE ON TEAMING

Krista shares an insightful quote from a Hermosa Vista kindergarten teacher: "It's not that teaming is easy; it's just easier to do harder things."

While the work involved in this approach is challenging, it feels lighter and more manageable, contributing to the happiness of teachers who feel supported in their roles.

Krista shares, "Teaming doesn't make the job effortless. Some may initially think, 'This is a lot more work.' Building a successful team requires effort, but the benefits of collaboration far outweigh the challenges." ■

For more information, visit [mpsaz.org](http://mpsaz.org).

FINANCES

# Consider year-end financial moves

Submitted by  
Linda Drake,  
Edward Jones  
Financial Advisor



Once again, it's the busy holiday season. Still, try to take the time to consider some financial moves before we turn the calendar to 2025.

First, review your investment portfolio to ensure it is performing as expected and still fits your goals, risk tolerance, and time horizon.

Next, if you can afford it, consider adding to your 401(k) and health savings account. And if you have a flexible spending account, you'll want to spend any unused funds before the year ends, or else risk losing them.

If you have children, consider opening a 529 education savings plan, which allows for tax-free withdrawals for qualified education expenses.

Here's another suggestion: Contribute to an emergency fund to help cover six months of living expenses or unexpected costs such as a major home or car repair.

And if you're 73 or older, make sure you take the required withdrawals from your traditional IRA so you can avoid penalties.

Finally, review your estate plans, especially if you've recently experienced changes in your family situation, such as marriage, remarriage, or the birth of a child.

These moves may prove helpful — not only for 2024 but in the years to come. ■

This content was provided by Edward Jones for use by Linda Drake, your Edward Jones financial advisor, at (480) 985-2651. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

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**LOCAL BUSINESS**

# Eco-Friendly Tips for a Gratitude-Filled Home

Submitted by *Carnation Home Cleaning*

**A**s the owner of Carnation Home Cleaning, I know how important it is to prepare your home for the upcoming holiday season. The holidays are a time to gather with family and friends, reflect on what we're grateful for, and enjoy the warmth and comfort of home.

But as we get ready for the season, it's also the perfect time to embrace eco-friendly cleaning and organizing habits that leave our homes looking great while being kind to the environment. Here are some simple tips to help you with your holiday cleanup while keeping things eco-conscious.

**START FRESH WITH MINIMAL WASTE**

Before the holidays arrive, declutter your home. Instead of tossing unwanted items, consider donating them to local charities or thrift stores. You can also recycle or upcycle items that can be repurposed for another use. A clean, organized space will make the holiday preparations more manageable and help create a peaceful, clutter-free environment for your guests.

**GREEN CLEANING FOR A HEALTHY HOME**

We all want our homes to sparkle for the holidays, but that doesn't mean we need to rely on harsh chemicals. You can easily switch to natural, non-toxic cleaning products like vinegar, baking soda, and essential oils. These eco-friendly alternatives are safer for your family and pets and help reduce the chemical impact on the environment.

**PREPPING THE KITCHEN**

The kitchen is the heart of the home, especially during the holiday season. It's where delicious meals are prepared but can also be a source of unnecessary waste. Replace disposable paper towels with reusable microfiber cloths, which are great for wiping down counters and appliances.

**POST-FESTIVITIES CLEANUP**

Once the festivities are over, it's time to tackle the cleanup. Start by sorting through leftovers — store what you can in reusable containers and consider composting any food scraps. If you hosted a large gathering, chances are there's plenty of cleanup ahead, so use natural cleaning solutions to tackle dirty dishes, countertops, and floors. Recycle any glass, paper, or cardboard from packaging and encourage guests to take leftovers home in reusable containers.

**ECO-FRIENDLY DÉCOR AND AMBIANCE**

Creating a warm and inviting home for your holiday gathering doesn't have to mean buying more plastic decorations. Instead, choose natural, sustainable décor like plants, dried flowers, or pinecones. Not only are these items beautiful, but they're also compostable when the season ends. ■

*Ready to get your home holiday-ready the eco-friendly way? Visit our website at [carnationhomecleaninginc.com](http://carnationhomecleaninginc.com) to get a free estimate and see how we can help you create a clean, welcoming space for your family and friends this season.*

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DISCOVER ARIZONA

# Light Up Your Spirit This Season

By Kimberly Alvarado

Many of us enjoy the twinkling lights displayed throughout homes and businesses during the holiday season. There's a special kind of joy lights bring, a glow that touches the hearts of all ages. And regardless of your beliefs and traditions, lights have a unique way of bringing us together. Have you ever pondered how the tradition of lights began?

Christmas lights are more than just decorations; they're symbols of hope and warmth in the darkest season. The tradition dates back to when candles were used to illuminate Christmas trees, representing the light of Christ. Today they remind us of childhood excitement, and the joy of giving and receiving.

Get out there and get into the season! Here are just a few local light displays, including walk-through events, drive-through shows, and festive holiday settings to illuminate your holiday this year.



**DOWNTOWN MESA**

An annual event through Jan. 6 includes a winter wonderland ice rink, a giant Christmas tree, live music, a holiday sunset market, and festive movies.

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**GREAT WOLF LODGE: SNOWLAND**

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**PHOENIX ZOO: ZOOLIGHTS**

Immerse yourself in a winter wonderland at the Valley's favorite holiday tradition, ZooLights. Get in the holiday spirit as millions of twinkling lights transform the zoo into a dazzling spectacle, guiding you through the illuminated pathways alongside animal habitats and zoo trails. Don't miss the brand-new light show, featuring vibrant visuals and mesmerizing music. Warm up with delicious treats and sip on delicious hot cocoa as you take in the festive atmosphere.

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- Sat. 14th Dave Clark
- Sun. 15th Eric Miller
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COMMUNITY

# New tennis professional building A QUALITY PROGRAM IN MESA

By Sergio Nunez

Greetings to all my new East Valley tennis friends — those whom I've met and others whom I look forward to meeting! My name is Sergio Nunez and I am the new tennis professional at Las Sendas. I relocated to Mesa recently with a vision and desire to build a high-quality tennis program here in the East Valley.



Sergio Nunez

South Florida, creating a fun group-training atmosphere with just the right level of competition.

I especially enjoy developing youth players, whether they're looking to elevate their game for competition or simply nurture their love for tennis. My goal is to help them build self-confidence

in all areas of life through

sports and fitness. In fact, one of

my current students, a 14-year-old, was recently admitted and has started playing on the Brophy High School team.

I love bringing out the best in each player through a mix of individualized drills and competitive point play. I have many fun and demanding drills to help maximize your game! While on the court, my passion and enthusiasm for coaching will not go unnoticed.

When I'm not on the court, I enjoy playing disc golf, watching the Diamondbacks, and cheering for my favorite teams — the Miami Heat and the Las Vegas Raiders. My fiancé, Alexandra, and I recently welcomed our first child, Maximiliana, and we're settling into family life in Mesa. ■

*If you're interested in improving your tennis skills and competitive strategies or have a family member who wishes to start or continue this journey, I'd appreciate hearing from you. You can reach me at Coachsergionunez@gmail.com.*



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**COMMUNITY**

# Red Mountain Ranch Social Club FALL RECAP AND YEAR-END ACTIVITIES

By Cathy Barthel  
Photos by David Bender

As this year, the 20th anniversary of Red Mountain Ranch Social Club, winds down members entered the fall season by participating in many fun and entertaining activities.

As cooler weather arrived in October, our members anticipated the third annual BBQ and Halloween Costume Party hosted by Allyn Bransby in her spacious backyard. Guests enjoyed a dinner of brisket, pulled pork, smoked turkey breast, baked beans, coleslaw, and cornbread, followed by a dessert of warm peach cobbler.

The pleasant evening temperatures, the twinkling stars in the night sky, the splashing of the fountain, and the soft illumination of the candlelit tables scattered throughout the garden provided an enchanting backdrop to friends gathering and having a good time.

During the party, prizes were awarded in three categories: Best Costume: Vianey Yurkovich as Cleopatra, Scariest Costume: Dottie Ivankoe as the Wicked Witch of the West, and Funniest Costume: Betty Day in a cleverly-contrived showerhead, rod, and clear vinyl curtain revealing a silk-screened bikini-clad figure.

Witches, skeletons, angels, demons, chefs, Batman, CatWoman, gypsies, cowboys, Hawaiian tourists, baseball fans sporting team jerseys, toga-clad Romans, and 70s inspired rock musicians were some of the inspired costumes – reflecting a fun-loving and festive feeling. Truly, a memorable evening under the stars.

In November, we sponsored the annual Red Mountain Ranch Garage Sale, the only HOA sanctioned garage sale in our community. Participation in the sale, which took place on Nov. 8 and 9, was a great way for our neighbors to clean out those closets, free up valuable space, and turn those no longer needed items into holiday spending money. A special thank you to Vianey Yurkovich, who was this year's garage sale chairperson.



During our November member meeting, we continued our tradition of honoring our Veterans. Once again Bill Quehrn gave a presentation saluting our war heroes and heroines. Ron Balsley led the group to military songs. A highlight of the meeting was recognizing our member veterans, as each was presented with a thank you card and special gift.

Plans are underway for the yearly holiday party, to be held at the Red Mountain Ranch Country Club on Dec. 12. This year's menu includes winter berry salad, carved board turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans almandine, and a holiday dessert. This year's party will surely spark the holiday spirit in us all.

Looking to the future, on Jan. 9, we will hear from Mesa City Council member, Alicia Goforth, and on Feb. 13, Haylie Smith, from the City of Mesa Parks and Recreation Department, who both will join us for our monthly member meeting, which occurs on the second Thursday of the month from September to May.

Are you thinking of joining? Membership is easy and can be accomplished with a few clicks of your mouse. Visit RMRSC.com, and for a nominal fee you can join the group. It is not a requirement to live in Red Mountain Ranch and, in fact, we have many members living in surrounding communities, including in nearby Las Sendas.

With so much happening in our community, a key advantage social club members enjoy is picking and choosing activities that are of personal interest. For example, if you enjoy playing games our monthly Game

Night may be right for you. Others love getting together for our monthly Ladies Luncheons or the bi-monthly Men's Breakfast.

Additionally, we have a monthly member meeting with an invited speaker, who brings interesting information on topics from healthcare to community services. Our events and activities committee arranges outings for those who enjoy theater, musical entertainment, and field trips to historical and art-themed museums. This December we will see *A Christmas Carol* at the Hale Theater.

We plan many parties throughout the year, often hosted by members; besides the popular BBQ and Halloween Costume Party mentioned above, we enjoy getting together to celebrate Valentine's Day with a Chocolate Faire, and sipping on mint juleps and placing bets at our annual Kentucky Derby Party.

We also have many amazing volunteer opportunities for members. Our group is very civic-minded and has plenty to offer those who want to give back. We love adding new members to our more than 200 memberships. We grew by 20 members in 2024. Once your membership begins, you'll find many things you'll want to do, and you may find that you'll want to do it all!

Lastly, it is a major undertaking to bring our members so many interesting and enjoyable activities each year. We are fueled by volunteers who care for their neighbors and look for entertaining and interesting ways to bring people together.

A special thanks this year to member Allyn Bransby, who chaired the 2024 RMRSC 20th Anniversary Celebration and brought members several opportunities to observe this special milestone. ■

We welcome new members; membership is not limited to Red Mountain Ranch residents. An up-to-date list of Social Club activities and a link to join the club can be found on our RMRSC website: RMRSC.com.

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HEALTH *Over 50*

# Did I choose the right Medicare Plan?

By Lynne Jones, Licensed Sales Representative, Tapestry Insurance



With all of the commercials and all of the advertisements over the past two months, many people felt like they needed to make a change with their Medicare plan.

During annual enrollment, I spend quite a bit of time with people checking to see if they are on the best plan for them. Often, after a lot of comparisons, we find that they are already on the plan that will work best for them.

There are often many positives and some negatives about each plan, and finding the right balance is the key to feeling satisfied with your Medicare plan choice.

If you did not get the opportunity to have someone personally talk with you and walk you through your choices, it may not be too late. There are other enrollment times that may provide you with another option to check your plan.

Having someone provide guidance to help you understand the options can be advantageous and I am happy to help.

If you are about to retire or are turning 65 in the next six months and would like to explore your options, please call me to make an appointment.

If you have a plan and are not sure it is the right one for you, we can talk. Please reach out to me either by phone or via email. ■

Call Lynne Jones, a licensed salesperson, at (480) 212-2246 or email me at [jonesdvp@yahoo.com](mailto:jonesdvp@yahoo.com).

LOCAL BUSINESS

# ON-PREMISES SIGNS A GOOD RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR SMALL BUSINESS

## Why On-Premises Signs Mean Good Business

Submitted by Arizona Commercial Signs

The adage “A business with no sign is the sign of no business” is not far off the mark. Signs are an important part of a good marketing strategy. According to an International Sign Association study, adding signs to your brick-and-mortar premises can increase profits, improving sales by up to 10 percent.

### COST-EFFECTIVE MARKETING INVESTMENT

On-premises signage is a marketing investment that can last for years, making it a particularly good return on investment. Compared to pay-per-impression advertising such as social media, radio, television, or print, the cost of a sign can be extremely cost-effective. A commercial business sign is one of the few types of advertising that, once paid for and installed, provides all important impressions of your business 24 hours a day 365 days a year without any additional costs except for occasional maintenance.



### CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Signs engage customers on a visual and subconscious level. Surveys have revealed that for consumers, signage plays a key role in the perception formed about the business. An attractive, well-designed sign can promote that important first impression, foster brand recognition, and create a positive opinion about your business.

- Almost 85 percent of consumers in a recent survey indicated bright and colorful signs attracted their attention.
- In the same International Sign Association survey, just over 79 percent of shoppers linked the quality of the sign to the quality of the business.

- 76 percent of consumer respondents have entered a shop they have never visited before based on their impressions of the sign.

### FINDING YOUR BUSINESS

- 58 percent of customers who participated in the study stated they discovered businesses through on-premises signage.
- 54 percent of American consumers failed to find a business because a sign was too small or unclear.

### INCREASED SALES

In a Sign Research Foundation study, 50 percent of businesses have reported that adding an additional sign or updating a sign increased their sales more than a larger building, longer hours, or location longevity. The study also found the type of sign impacted the number of sales transactions. ■

For more information on a sign for your building, visit [arizonacommercialsigns.com](http://arizonacommercialsigns.com) or call (480) 921-9900.

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- Have you received a letter showing that your plan's rates have changed more than you would have liked?
- Would you like personalized help exploring your Medicare options?

You are not alone. This time of year is very confusing for most people that are on a Medicare plan.

**Call me today for help navigating Annual Enrollment this year!**

**Lynne Jones**  
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## LOCAL BUSINESS

# CONSTANT CONTRAST

By *Tim Beaubien, Hava Java Mesa*

**M**y wife Barb is dropping me off at Sky Harbor to make a routine trip back to Michigan. Almost said "back home." But Mesa is our home now.

About now I start doing what I call Michigan math. Let's see it's 9:30 a.m. here in AZ, we are 3 hours behind. Which means it's 12:30 p.m. in Michigan, which means I could have that 2 o'clock wine at that bar over there. Yep, that's my math!

Many know that I still have to go back to Michigan during the summer months. Still have a motorcycle business that needs to go away. Also, my daughter Kelly has her equestrian business at our equestrian facility that we jointly own, which needs constant repairs and rebuilds. But one day back around horses and it's just like I remember. I love it. There is an old cowboy adage: *Horses are only scared of two things, things that move and things that don't move.*

My son Stephen is also there and also in the coffee business. He works for... oh wait better not say (but it rhymes with bar trucks).

It's great to see our friends, and yes, it's still hot, yes, we still love the coffee business, and yes of course we miss you guys.

I never really leave AZ though. I constantly think about Barb, Hava Java, our staff, our customers, and our new friends. But there is something about being back at the farm; there is a peaceful balance there. It's hard work, but it's working with your hands. Which I'm pretty good at. I did metal fabrication for many years and that led into my division manager position at a very large material handling



Barb and Tim Beaubien

company. Paid well but sucked my soul dry.

However, back at the farm I get to work with my hands and be a cowboy again. At least for one to two weeks a month for a while. I know here in Mesa a lot of people are snowbirds and go back home to escape the heat.

But I was never that smart with retirement. I go back to fix, build, and occasionally reflect on my life. Which is in constant contrast with these two worlds. One is a fast-paced coffee business located in a great neighborhood in Mesa that Barb and I are always looking to improve and get to the next level, and one is in the middle of a farming community in Mid-state Michigan.

No amount of planning for these Michigan trips seems to work out. I get there thinking I'm going to finally repair that one side of the barn, only to have Kelly say, "Aah dad, remember how the wash rack for the horses was a little weak. Well one of the horses bolted and took the rack with him." OK, new wash rack this trip.

I love both worlds. They seem to keep me in balance. To quote one of the *Godfather* movies, "This is the life we've chosen."

Believe me, there was no big plan here. I got to a point and said, "Jesus take the wheel." I just let it happen. And I got two great worlds.

So don't be scared of a little contrast in your life. Embrace it! John Lennon said, "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans." ■

*Hava Java Mesa is located at the northeast corner of Power and McDowell roads in The Village at Las Sendas, 2849 N. Power Road, Suite 103, in Mesa.*

## LOCAL BUSINESS

## Landscape Design Requires Thoughtful Planning

By *Frank Weinberg, Landscape Designer*

**F**runk, a semi-retired landscape designer in the Mesa area, always suggests homeowners should, "Plant with a plan."

Let's start with homeowners of a newly purchased home, whether it be a brand-new home with bare ground, or a resale home with established landscaping, both plant material and hardscape.

The homeowners of a brand-new home, with no landscaping, will first need to see if the H.O.A. has a list of requirements for both plant materials and hardscape. Hardscaping would include walkways, ground cover, irrigation systems, lighting, extended patios, additional walls, etc. You should also check to see what the requirements are, including when the landscaping is required to be in place.

Homeowners of a resale home, who don't have an H.O.A. to guide them, would benefit from having some type of working plan too, of course. That plan should include which materials need to be taken out and what should be added to make the outdoors more appealing.

When the homeowner's have achieved the above, it is a great time to have a third party, such as a landscape designer, to review your plan of ideas. The landscape designer should then take your ideas and some of their own and develop a sketched plan which, in turn, could work well for you.

In further articles, Frank will discuss what makes a good design plan and how to bid work out to landscape companies. ■

*If you would like to chat with Frank about your landscape design needs, call (480) 236-0383.*

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**New Year's Eve Menu**

<p><b>STARTER</b></p> <p>Choice of soup:  <b>Lobster Bisque</b> or <b>Tuscan Soup</b></p>	<p><b>CHOICE OF THIRD COURSE</b></p> <p><b>Smoked Prime Rib.</b>        Rosemary Goat Cheese Mashed Potatoes, Haricot Vert</p>
<p><b>SECOND COURSE</b></p> <p><b>Greek Salad</b>        Romaine, Feta, Red Onion, Olives, Sun Dried Tomatoes, Balsamic Vinaigrette</p>	<p><b>Blackberry Relish Pan Seared Duck.</b> Sweet Potato Mash, Mezquite Miso Honey Brussels Sprouts</p> <p><b>8 oz Fillet.</b> Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Shiitake Mushrooms, Asparagus &amp; Veal Demi</p> <p><b>8 oz Smoked Cold Water Lobster Tail.</b> Rosemary Lemon Garlic Butter Sauce, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Asparagus</p> <p><b>Smoked Pulled Pork Mac N Cheese.</b> Pappardelle, Smoked Pork, Green Chillies, Breadcrumbs.</p> <p><i>*Add on to any entrée an 8 oz Smoked Lobster tail for \$38</i></p>
<p><b>DESSERT</b></p> <p><b>New York Cheesecake</b> or <b>Key Lime Pie</b></p>	

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