



Maricopa

THE MAGAZINE

Vol. 5 Issue 1

5 *Spring
landscaping
tips for a
cooler summer*

CITIZEN BROWN

Statesman helps shape city with experience

Arts alive

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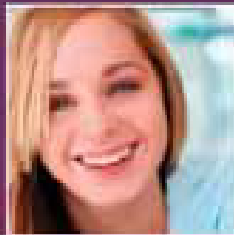
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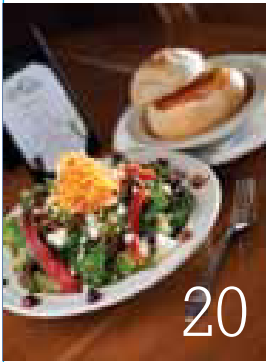
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Contents

VOL. 5 ISSUE 1

DEPARTMENTS



- 4 Editor's letter
- 6 Events calendar
- 8 Community gallery
- 10 Observations
- 12 Business showcase
- 16 Home and garden
- 18 Pets
- 20 Food and dining
- 26 Volunteers
- 48 Ad index



COVER STORY

38 Arts alive

World-class musicians, composers and artists call Maricopa home. These artists bring with them new cultural and regional experiences as well as the need to express them, generally perform on a more sophisticated and complex stage.



FEATURES

28 Up, up and away

Champion sailplane pilot and owner of Arizona Soaring is bringing international attention to Maricopa.

34 Citizen Brown

A lifetime of political involvement is helping Maricopa City Councilman Marvin Brown shape the city he calls home.



ON THE COVER: Photographer Jake Johnson took this image of local violinist Genevieve Ehrbright in a field in Maricopa. Hair and make-up by Carla Neal and Anita Turner at CNC Barber Shop and Spa, 19756 N. John Wayne Parkway in Maricopa.

By April 1, 2010, Maricopa residents need to stand up, be heard, and let everyone know that

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Did you also know that:

- The enumeration of persons in the United States is mandated by the US Constitution; Census data is used to redistrict federal, state, and county legislative districts; this could mean two new Congressional districts for Arizona and stronger representation at the federal level
- Census affects funding in our community; more than \$400 billion per year in federal funding distributions and state shared revenue funds are allocated to communities for neighborhood improvements, public health, education, and transportation based on Census data
- Census information helps communities like Maricopa form decisions on planning, building new roads, schools, and community facilities and is also a top resource for private investment decisions
- Census information is confidential - by law, it cannot be shared with local, county or state law enforcement or any other federal agency including the IRS, FBI or Homeland Security
- Census forms are now just ten simple questions - fill it out, mail it in, and you are done

We have come a long way from the 2000 Census population of 1,040! Help Maricopa prove to the nation what we all know to be true, and ensure we get the resources the community deserves.



Members of the Maricopa Complete Count Committee; left to right: Eddie Rodriguez, Joyce Hollis, Judy Babcock, Helen Brown, Carol Reedy, and Paul Jepson; front: Branda Campbell

"The most rewarding thing is knowing my efforts will help ensure that a complete count of Maricopa residents will get us full monetary and representative benefits."

-Judy Babcock



IT'S IN OUR HANDS

"I don't believe there is a more valuable civic duty that you can perform. An accurate census count is critical to Maricopa's future."

-Joyce Hollis



More information: www.2010census.gov



I am a trumpet player. I haven't played seriously since Nixon was president, but don't confuse me with the facts.

The point I want to make is this: Even though it's been many years since my 'chops' buzzed consistently into a silver mouthpiece (you brass players know this musical vernacular well), I still consider myself a musician. And to me, that's as good a rationalization for embracing the arts as one can find.

You don't grow out of your love of music, of artistic appreciation, of creating or composing. It's a lifetime passion that burns in all of us in some form or another.

Most recently, as I've become a parent, I've had to quell my love of jazz to gain an appreciation for the musical compositions found in *Dora The Explorer* and *Blue's Clues*, or the creative plot turns and catchy dialogue found in *SpongeBob Squarepants* and the *Backyardigans*.

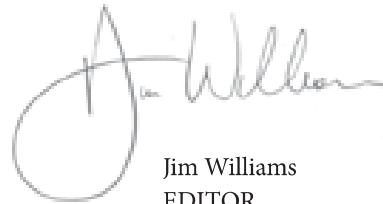
The paintings that hang on the walls of my home no longer have complete autonomy, but share with other artistic sensibilities, such as the rainbow Crayon etchings and washable marker drawings from my 2-year-old (washable?...I think not).

The cover story in the Spring issue of *InMaricopa The Magazine* celebrates several incredible local artists who live among us. These are people you see buying groceries and at the hardware store. They look no different than you or me. The fact that they have an international following or that they've sold thousands of CDs only means that they've aspired to take their artistic passions to a higher level.

If their stories inspire you to renew an interest in painting or sculpting, to pick up an instrument or take piano lessons, then it's done its job.

The arts in a community define us collectively and individually. They weave into the fabric of a community and elevate interest and spur creativity. Here in Maricopa, the artistic tapestry is vivid and varied, and leaves us wanting more.

For my part, I've oiled the valves of my trumpet and I'm set to play. Any takers? 



Jim Williams
EDITOR



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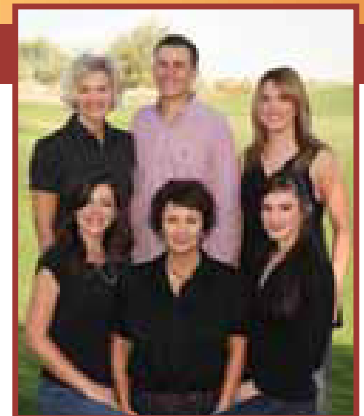
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Publisher
SCOTT BARTLE

Editor
JIM WILLIAMS

Copy Editor
JOYCE HOLLIS

Writers
JOE GIUMETTE
ANDREA MARKOWITZ
BECKY PAPP
EILEEN PROCTOR
MICHAEL K. RICH
JIM WILLIAMS

Photographers
JAKE JOHNSON
SARAH HEWITT
PETE RENDEK
MICHAEL K. RICH
JIM WILLIAMS

Art Director
CARL BEZUIDENHOUT

Operations Manager
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Operations Consultant
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Customer Service Coordinator
CYNTHIA HAMMOND

Events
KATHY DEBEVEC

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85239.com, LLC
dba *InMaricopa The Magazine*
19756 N. John Wayne Parkway, Suite 100
P.O. Box 1018
Maricopa, AZ 85139

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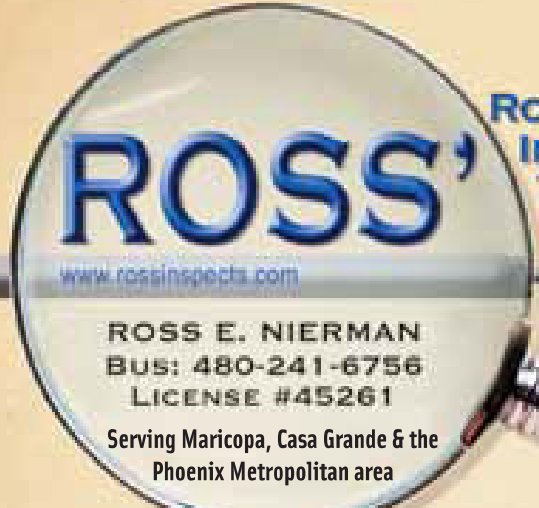
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Events Calendar

FLICKS FOR FOOD

March 27

AAM, one of Arizona's largest HOA management companies, is celebrating its 20th anniversary in property management by giving back to the community in the form of a movie in the park, a 50/50 drawing, a silent auction and hot dogs for donations.

The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. on the Glennwilde soccer field, 18635 N. Alan Stephens Parkway. Entry is two non-perishable food items per person, which will be donated to the F.O.R. Maricopa food bank. Bring chairs and/or blankets to view the movie, which starts at 7:30 p.m.

For further information, contact Pamela Hilliard at 602-906-4928 or by e-mail at philliard@aamaz.com.

EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA

April 3

Community of Hope Church will host its annual Easter egg hunt on Saturday, April 3, from



10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at Pacana Park on Porter Road. Hunts will start every 20 minutes for children in various age groups. Games and refreshments will be provided, and the Easter Bunny will be on hand to take photos with children.

AGAINST ABUSE SEEDS OF CHANGE GALA

April 10

The 5th annual Against Abuse, Inc. Seeds of Change Gala will be held from 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino Resort's event center, 15406 Mari-

copa Road. The evening will feature a reception and both silent and live auctions, as well as dinner and dancing.

This year's "Going Wild" Gala will help break ground on Maricopa's domestic violence shelter for women and children. For information, to sponsor or donate, contact Torri Anderson at 520-568-3665 or via e-mail at tanderson@onmbb.com. Tickets, which are available this year online at SeedsOfChangeGala.org, are \$75 per person. Live auctions items can also be previewed on this site.

SALSA FESTIVAL

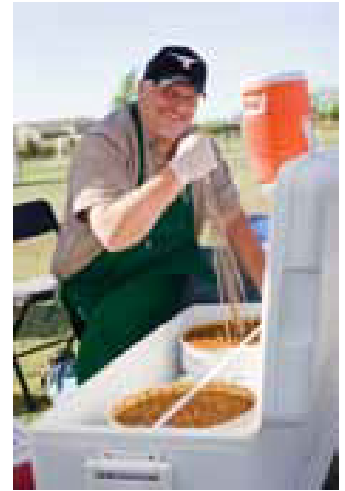
April 24

The 6th annual Maricopa Salsa Festival is scheduled for 5 to 9 p.m. on Saturday, April 24, at Pacana Park. More than 8,000 residents are expected to participate in an evening of free family entertainment, including bands and kids' activities.

One contestant will win \$1,000 for best overall salsa, and winners in the best mild, hot and most unusual salsas

will take home \$500 each.

Registration for the salsa competition and food vendor booths are available by calling Brenda Campbell at 520-316-6963. Non-food vendor registration can be completed at MaricopaChamber.com.



Jake Johnson



For a complete list of community events, or to post one of your own, visit www.InMaricopa.com.



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Community Gallery



Our Lady of Grace Carnival & Festival

Thousands of people turned out for this annual festival in January celebrating Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church's conversion from a mission to a parish. Money raised during the three-day event will be used to help fund the construction of a new church and school campus.

Photos by Jake Johnson

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Observations

By Sarah Hewitt



Maricopa resident **Sarah Hewitt** snapped this photo at about 4 p.m. on Jan. 23 after a massive winter storm had rolled through Maricopa. "The funny thing about these pictures is that I took them with my cell phone and I wasn't even looking at where the camera was pointing. I just hit the 'take picture' button over and over. I was just amazed at how beautiful the clouds were after the storms were over."

 If you have a photo you'd like to share with *InMaricopa The Magazine* readers, send a high-resolution image and information about the photo to Photos@InMaricopa.com.

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Jonathan Nixon brings several decades of film and television industry experience to his directing and producing role with XPmedia in Maricopa.

Jim Williams

Lights, camera...Maricopa

Christian-based media company looking to turn Maricopa into an entertainment hub

By Jim Williams

Eleven actors descended on Maricopa in January. They came, literally, from all over the planet — Australia, South Africa, England, New Zealand, Canada — a group of artists with diverse personalities, backgrounds and cultural idiosyncrasies.

They were drawn to Maricopa with a desire to learn the nuances of the acting profession, from what takes place in front of the camera to the industry behind the lens and the lights. But yet, a higher pur-

pose brought them to this quaint desert hamlet...a strong belief in Christian values and the teachings of God.

SENDING A STRONG MESSAGE

The idea that Maricopa could be the next big multi-media entertainment hub of the country might seem farfetched to some. However, for Patricia King, founder of XPmedia, a parent ministry of Extreme Prophetic, which began in Maricopa in 2004, it's God's calling to share a Christian

message through media.

King is the host of Extreme Prophetic Television and a nationally known Christian speaker, author and motivator. Through her vision and passion, she has inspired many entertainment industry professionals — directors, producers, writers and actors — to leave Hollywood for the more pastoral digs of Maricopa. Here, decades of professional training have been brought to bear to start XP Acting, a school to train and prepare actors for careers in movies, television,

commercials and voice-overs. The goal of the school is give actors all skills and tools needed to break into and succeed in every aspect of the entertainment industry.

XPmedia is building a \$1 million dollar media center, which will house studios, production facilities, editing bays and administrative offices. Paulette Reed, operations manager for XPmedia, hopes to break ground this summer and have the facility operational by the end of the year.

"We're so excited about our new building and state-of-the-art studio," Reed said. "We love Maricopa. How wonderful to watch a city bloom in the desert."

ACTING 101

Actors who take the eight-week Acting 101 classes are totally immersed in how to perform in front of the camera. Students study acting techniques, role playing and improvisational performance; they even read actual scripts from television shows, all while being filmed. Plus, they're instructed on the practical aspects of working in the industry, which include creating a portfolios, headshots and tips for getting an agent. They're trained on how to approach an audition and how to maintain the confidence needed to be successful.

The acting school is not yet a year old, but on a sunny day in Maricopa, three of the 11 actors who traveled to Maricopa for the winter session of Acting 101 wanted to talk about how the school is changing their lives.

"Being a Christian-based school, it's about finding people who believe in the same things, who have a passion for acting and for Christ," said David Oh, a 19-year-old from Auckland, New Zealand. "It's helping us take our talents to the next level. It's set the foundation to strengthen me. We're going into an industry where you face rejection a lot of the time. This training helps give me the confidence to accept criticism and not let it tear me down."

Micah Hunsberger, 20, grew up watching movies and always wanted to be an actor, but many of the films the Pennsylvania native has seen don't

"The first time we went to Oasis was an amazing experience; everyone welcomed us with open arms. We wanted a church where we would feel comfortable and we certainly found that at Oasis. We encountered God in a new way. We made a decision to follow Jesus and our lives will never be the same. Coming to Oasis last year is probably the best decision we've ever made. Getting our family back on track and making our kids happy seeing us together, seeing our kids excited about God and church, serving God together ... we couldn't ask for more!" - *Christian Cerda*



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represent his values. “I came here because I wanted to be an actor so I can play parts that I agree with, but also have the capacity to be successful and award-winning,” Hunsberger said.

“I just feel like movies really connect with people because they’re visual and they bring you in emotionally,” said Carmen Rose, a 19-year-old from Colorado. “I just love watching a good movie and walking away inspired, or just wanting to live better or be better and believe in something strongly. And so, I would love to be part of films that encourage and inspire people.”

Oh agrees. “We want to show real life, to play characters who are real, but we want to think that our work can be greater than just an hour to two of entertainment.”

TRAINING DAYS

King has assembled an experienced staff of industry professionals to show would-be actors the ropes. Among them is Missy Barber, who trained at the New York Film Academy located at Universal Studios, and has worked for years in film, television and theater. She has written for theater productions and been a voice actor for radio, commercials, television and audio books. “We give them the tools,” Barber said. “When they leave here, they’re ready to take the next step in their professional lives.”

Joining Barber as an acting instructor is Scott Lairson. Lairson has worked as a casting director in Hollywood for years. “I spent almost 15 years in LA in casting,” Lairson said. “I had amazing experiences, and worked with great directors and producers. But I’m happy to be here.”

Lairson cast for Emmy Award-winning *NYPD Blue* and various Steven Bochco productions such as *Brooklyn South*, *City of Angels*, *Philly* and *Blind Justice*. Lairson also worked on *Desperate Housewives*, *The Ghost Whisperer* and feature and independent films.

“The thing that is so cool about Scott and Missy is that they don’t just teach us, but look after us personally,” Rose said. “In our classes, they treat us as individuals, as real people. And that means a great deal to me.”

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The man behind the camera at XP is Jonathan Nixon, a transplanted Australian who brings more than 20 years experience in the film and television industry as a director, producer, cinematographer, editor, camera operator and production assistant. Some of Nixon's film credits include *Baby Geniuses*, *Red Serpent*, *Derailed* and *Prozac Nation*. He also teaches film and television production for the UCLA Extension Film School. He is currently developing a series of television specials involving modern day prophets.

Nixon has collaborated with some of the marquee names in the entertainment industry, but working in Los Angeles wore him down. "You start to get jaded," Nixon said. "The clients out there, whether it be television or commercials or even movie projects, they're so nervous. They have this idea that there's only so much business to go around. It was a very closed environment and after a while you get very tired of having to play the game."

So, Nixon, like many of the professionals on the XP team, packed up and headed to Maricopa. "I'm glad to be out of the rat race," he said.

Nixon runs also runs XPmedia's Boot Camp, an intensive two-day curriculum covering all aspects of production including camera operation, lighting, sound, editing and directing. "It's a great overview," Nixon said. "A lot of the students are Christians who feel led into media and feel like they

should be doing something but don't know where to start. So this class gives them a good foundation."

Nixon feels Maricopa will be the stage for extraordinary experiences. "All of us, we have years of experience, and we were all drawn to this community. I think God is doing something here in Maricopa." 



Upcoming XPmedia classes, events

XP Acting Full-Time School:

April 26 to June 26

XP Acting IOI 3-Day Intensive:

April 29 to May 1

XP Screenwriting Workshop:

May 21 to 22

XP Media Boot Camp:

June 4 to 5

Also, XPmedia will host the **Phoenix International Christian Film Festival,**

Aug. 23-28, at the Fiesta Resort in Tempe. For more information, go to ChristianFilmFest.org.



Coming attraction

The XP Media Center, which is slated to be complete by December, looks to be a point of pride for city of Maricopa. Here's a closer look at the state-of-the-art facility.

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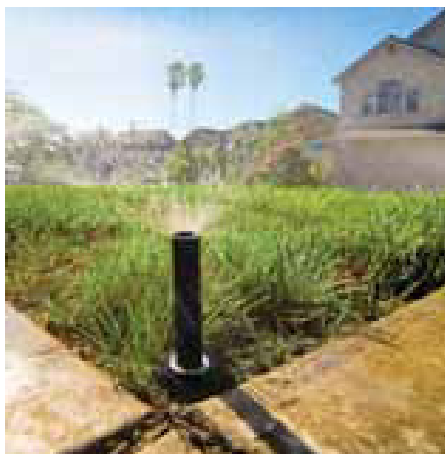
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Five spring landscaping tips for a cooler summer

Local pros share ways to save you money and keep you chillin' in the sun

By Jim Williams



Maricopa is situated smack in the middle of a desert. In fact, it's the Sonoran Desert, one of the largest and hottest in North America. OK, this probably isn't a news flash for anyone. We all know how hot it can get during the summer months. But there are simple ways to take the edge off harsh summer temperatures, and even save you money. Check out these tips from local experts:

1 Look to the west. Plant trees and shrubs on western exposures, said Dan Dawn, owner of Arroyo Vista Landscape and Design. "On those long summer days, you have sunlight coming from the west side, which is where most of our heat is coming from," Dawn said. "So by planting trees and bushes on those western exposures, it cuts down the amount of heat that's emanated on the house." Trees, shrubs and groundcover plants can also shade the ground and pavement around the home, which reduces heat radiation


and cools the air before it reaches your home's walls and windows, which will help reduce your cooling bills.

2 Dethatch your lawn. "This is a good way to save water and green up your yard for summertime use," Dawn said. Dawn recommends setting your mower to the lowest setting and cutting your lawn nearly to the dirt. "You have a lot of dead remnants from your winter lawn," he said. "In order for it to get good water efficiency, you have to cut out all that dead thatch. Then you fertilize it, you water it and it grows back beautifully."

3 Install a water misting system. No one wants to hibernate in the summer just because it's hot outside. Kirk Ladine, owner of Kirkscape, says a misting system is one of the easiest and most economical ways to lower the temperature of your back yard. "This is something that most anyone can do themselves by picking up a few things at the store,"

Ladine said. But it's not just about cooling. Water mist systems also provide efficient humidification, and help dissipate the dust and odor in the air.

4 Inspect your irrigation system. Water is precious in the desert...and also expensive. "Physically, turn the water on, walk around and do visual inspections of the yard to make sure that there are no obvious leaks or overspray areas," Dawn said. "That would your lawn area and your drip system." Dawn also advises homeowners to check their irrigation timers so that you're not overwatering or watering at the wrong time of the day. "You should do your watering at night. This cuts down on the amount of water use, and you don't have as much evaporation."

5 Plant a 6- to 8-foot deciduous tree near windows. Ladine said a tree this size will provide you with immediate shade, which can help cut energy cost. If you shade your air conditioning unit, you'll also save money on your electric bill; as much as 10 percent, according to statistics from U.S. Department of Energy. 

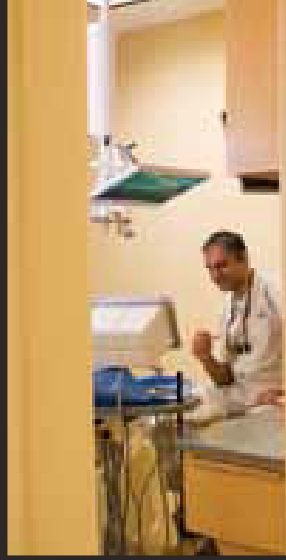
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Moving can be really ‘ruff’ on Rover

Tips for easing your pet’s stress level when you move

By Eileen Proctor

Are you moving? If so, it’s an exciting time. A new house to decorate, new neighbors to meet, a new neighborhood to explore! But wait...before all that fun begins, there’s the dreaded, seemingly endless task of packing and transporting your family and possessions.

If you’re cracking under the stress of moving, just imagine how your furry family members must feel. Confusion and disruption. Hustling and bustling. Missed meals and reduced cuddle time. Unfamiliar people ‘invading’ their home. Fear of abandonment. It’s enough to make a grown dog cry!

The key to relocating pets is to help them feel secure before and during the move, then resuming their routine as quickly as possible afterwards. The following pointers — supplemented with a lot of patience, understanding and love — should help two-legged and four-leggeds alike settle in safely and sanely.

BEFORE MOVING DAY

- Maintain your pet’s feeding, sleeping, play and exercise routines for as long as possible.
- Take him for “sniff and explore” visits to the new home and surroundings.
- Acclimate your pet to spending time in a suitably-sized transport carrier or crate.
- Then, on moving day:
- Reduce the potential for escape, as well as the anxiety caused by unfamiliar moving men and the day’s frantic flurry of



activity, by securing your dogs in a safe and quiet location such as their crate or the bathroom. Be sure to post a large “DO NOT ENTER” sign on the door and specifically inform everyone that the room is off limits.

- For maximum safety and stress relief, consider temporary relocation of your pets to a trusted relative, neighbor, sitter, or dog daycare facility.
- Prepare your new home by placing your pet’s favorite bowls, bedding and toys in the same relative areas as they were in your old home.
- When the movers have left, make sure that all the doors and windows are secured before releasing your dogs into the new house.

ONCE YOU’VE SETTLED IN

- Resume your pet’s feeding, sleeping, play and exercise routines as quickly as possible.
- Purchase and affix a new ID tag, bearing revised contact information, to his collar. If your dog is micro-chipped, be

sure to also provide your new address and contact information to the registry.

- Introduce your pet to the new neighbors, mail carrier, and other people who may regularly interact with him.
- Select a new veterinarian and transfer all health records, if necessary. It’s also a good idea to search out the nearest 24-hour emergency veterinarian office... just in case.

When all the dust and excitement has settled, be sure to give your fur kids a big hug, an extra biscuit, and a heartfelt promise that it will be a long, long time before you even think about moving again! 🐾



Top Dog Eileen Proctor is a nationally renowned speaker, author, media personality, animal welfare advocate and award-winning entrepreneur committed

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*Jake Johnson*

Dining at The Duke

The Silver Spur Grill dishes up great views, culinary excellence

By *Becky Papp*

It's the kind of establishment at which John Wayne would have felt right at home...warm, friendly and with delicious, uncomplicated dining fare.

Located at The Duke at Rancho El Dorado, the Silver Spur Grill opened seven years ago. At that time, the building wasn't complete, and they were serving from a trailer. But the grill grew as Maricopa expanded, and today the Silver Spur is one of Maricopa's most popular dining destinations, boasting a beautiful view from a 70-seat eatery that overlooks the golf course.

"The patio is just awesome," said Susan Miller, the restaurant's food and beverage manager. "There are views of the Estrella Mountains, overlooking the 18th hole. We are not just a golf course here. We have so much more."

Community-oriented dining and entertainment is the focus of the new management, Ahwatukee Golf Properties, which took over the grill in March last year.

But it's the food that keeps people coming back. Some of the featured dishes are the grilled sweet chili salmon, an 8 oz.

filet served with sautéed vegetables and choice of potato and chicken parmesan, a tender, breaded chicken breast smothered in marinara sauce with melted mozzarella on a bed of penne pasta. Diners might also want to try the blackened shrimp and scallops, which include mushrooms, spinach and crushed red pepper in a light tomato cream sauce over fettuccine.

For steak lovers, there's the Cowboy, a 12 oz. top sirloin, and the Cattleman, a 12 oz. rib eye. Both come with your choice of potato. Popular sandwiches include the Santa Rosa Steak Sandwich with sliced

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Jake Johnson

chili-glazed top sirloin smothered with caramelized onions, sautéed bell peppers and provolone cheese served on a fresh deli roll; and the Duke Club, which piles turkey, bacon, and honey glazed ham, along with cheddar cheese, lettuce and tomato served on hearty 7-grain bread.

The Silver Spur offers a full breakfast, lunch and dinner menu. Breakfast is served seven days a week, Monday through Friday from 8 to 11:30 a.m., 7 to 11:30 a.m. on Saturdays and 7 a.m. to noon on Sundays.

Lunch is served seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday the grill is open for dinner from 5 to 9 p.m., and features a \$9.99 plate

special. Friday's special is fish fry, and Saturday night is prime rib. Kids under 10 always eat free with the purchase of an adult entrée.

The full menu and serving times are available at TheDukeGolf.com.

Rounding out the Silver Spur experience is the customer service. "Many of our servers have been here from Day One, seven years ago," Miller said. "And people like our food, atmosphere, the excellent staff and our affordability. We are also here if people need a place to have a meeting or other event."

Bottom line, Miller said: "It's a great place to meet." 

Right: The signature Silver Spur salad.
Opposite page: The chicken sandwich with onion rings.

The Silver Spur Recipe

Signature Silver Spur salsa

Fresh greens with goat cheese crumbles, roasted red pepper, grapes, caramelized walnuts, julienne carrots and jicama tossed in a balsamic vinaigrette dressing. Diced grilled chicken tops off this salad.

Silver Spur house dressing

Makes one and a quarter gallons of dressing.

- 1 qt. balsamic vinegar
- 1 qt. olive oil
- 2 qt. salad oil
- 1 lb. brown sugar
- 2 yellow onions
- 2 cups parmesan cheese
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 2 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. black pepper

Chop onion and garlic until fine. Chop parmesan cheese until fine. Soften brown sugar in microwave. Mix in mixer. Pour balsamic vinegar into mixing bowl. Slowly add olive oil and salad oil to emulsify. Do not refrigerate.

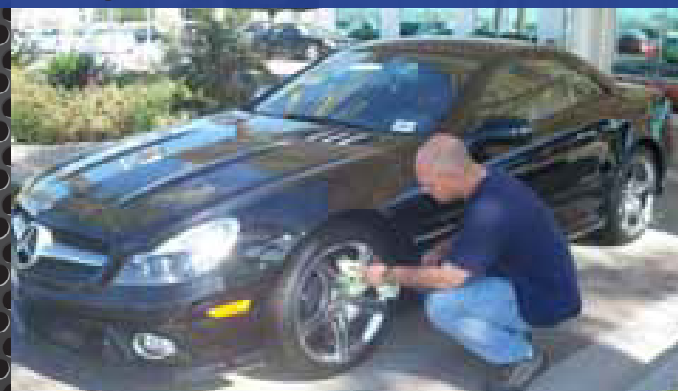


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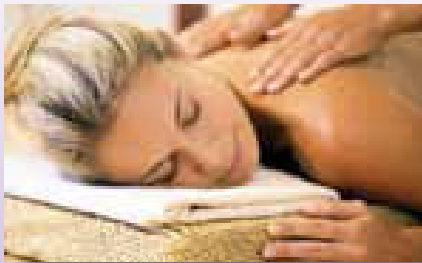
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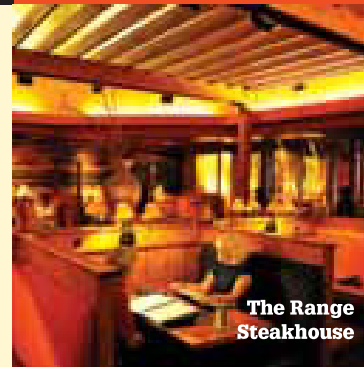
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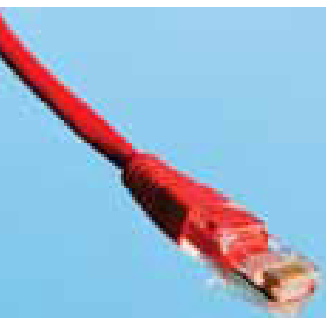
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In the line of duty

Maricopa Police Volunteer of the Year Al Suckerman sets bar high for community service

By Becky Papp

Pay it forward, do what's right and make a difference. These are not just empty phrases on a page for Maricopa resident Al Suckerman. With more than 20 years of volunteering experience, Suckerman is dedicated to giving back to his community.

Suckerman was named Maricopa Police Volunteer of the Year at the State of the City address on Feb. 9. "I am proud of the department and proud to be part of it," Suckerman said.

Cofounder of the volunteer unit at Maricopa Police Department, Suckerman has given more than 2,000 hours of his time in the last year to the Volunteers in Police Service organization. Part of a national program, the Volunteers in Police Service provides victims' assistance and citizens' patrol assistance to the Maricopa Police Department.

Suckerman has a long history of volunteerism that was instilled in him by his parents. In high school, he lived next door to a family that participated in Special Olympics and it piqued his interest in the organization. "I loved seeing their medals and how proud they were," Suckerman said. That first impression and Suckerman's own sense of dedication led to a 20-year stint on the state board of directors of the Special Olympics chapter in Minnesota, where he lived before coming to Arizona.

The list of organizations Suckerman has aided include Homeward Bound, Boy Scouts of America, American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society. He has also served on the boards of several sports-based foundations, raising money for non-profit causes.



Michael K. Rich

Al Suckerman is given the Maricopa Police Department's Volunteer of the Year award by Mayor Anthony Smith.

"It's not in my nature to just exist in a community. This is a big part of who I am and what I do."

— Al Suckerman

While maintaining an active community presence, Suckerman works full time as a financial advisor. He moved to Maricopa in 2004 and has enjoyed watching the city's growth. He is on the Rancho El Dorado Ho-

meowner's Association board.

"It's not in my nature to just exist in a community," Suckerman said. "This is a big part of who I am and what I do."

"Al has been around since the volunteer program was established," said Maricopa Police Sgt. Stephen Judd. "He was eager to get it started; he jumped in with both feet."

Judd said Suckerman's contribution is invaluable to the department. "He works alongside patrol officers every day, and he's just a tremendous asset," Judd said. "He's definitely a big part of the Maricopa Police Department family. He's a joy to be around."

While Suckerman's dedication to the Maricopa Police Department is a labor of love for him, it also has a measurable

benefit for the city and its citizens. The thousands of hours worked by Suckerman and all the volunteers save the cost of those man-hours for the department. Even though there is no budget for the police volunteers, they are available every day, 24 hours a day.

"I am giving back to people I have tremendous respect for, and I am thankful for what they do." 

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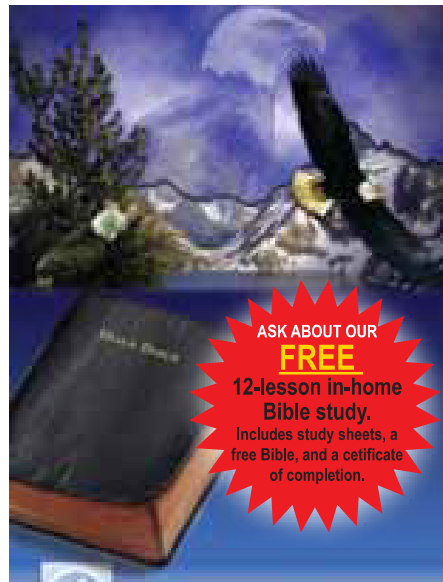
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Maricopa looks much different when gliding silently above at several thousand feet. This photo was taken by Pete Rendek, a pilot who trained at Arizona Soaring. He mounted a camera on the wing to get this unusual perspective.





UP, UP , AND AWAY

SOARING SCHOOL, CHAMPION
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ATTENTION TO MARICOPA

BY MICHAEL K. RICH

JASON STEPHENS SOARS QUIETLY THROUGH the ice blue sky; he is flanked on his left wing by a majestic red-tailed hawk, while an anxious vulture lurks overhead.

“It is unbelievable to see these birds in their element,” Stephens said. “There is nothing else like it.”

Stephens suddenly pushes the nose of his craft downward, and the speed on the instrumentation panel increases, 50...60...70 mph. The ground seems to stretch upward to meet the plummeting sailplane. As the pilot continues his quick descent, he abruptly pulls up on the flight stick, executing a tight roll.

Sailing to the top

It’s maneuvers like the one described above that have made Stephens, 35, one of the top aerobatic sailplane pilots in the United States and attract hundreds of people to Maricopa wanting to learn the sport or brush up on their skills at his Maricopa sailplane school.

“We have people come from around the world to learn at our sailplane school,” Stephens said. “There is a good chance if you see someone in Maricopa from a foreign country, they are in town taking lesson.”

The Estrella Sailport, which houses Stephens’ Arizona Soaring school, lies on a large tract of state land just a few minutes northwest of Maricopa. The sailport features a bunkhouse that can sleep 10 people, a main office, eating area and a hangar with 20 sailplanes.

Yet, the lessons begin on a nearly mile-long portion of black top stretching west to east and backdrop by the picturesque Estrella Mountains.



Pete Rendek

Getting airborne

On the runway, the engine of a small, fixed-wing aircraft roars to life; a taut steel cable connects the propeller-powered plane to a dual-cockpit fiberglass sailplane, sporting a 60-foot wingspan.

The engine revs louder as the fixed-wing starts to edge down the runway with the elegant sailplane in tow. The plane reaches a speed of nearly 70 mph before lifting off, soaring to an altitude of more than 3,000 feet.

“I have gone as high as 18,000 feet and the world record is 50,000 feet,” Stephens said. “It gets cold when you are that high.”

The ride up only takes five minutes, but it is the trip down where the true lesson begins.

The two-person sailplane has dual controls that allow the training pilot to instruct the student on how to work the rudders, flight stick and other instrumentation.

“Typically the first time up, a person won’t take the controls, but if they want to, we let them,” Stephens said. “It is not uncommon for people to have a negative experience their first time flying; we want to make sure they have a good time here.”

What is a sailplane?

A sailplane, or glider, is an aircraft without an engine. Sailplanes are made out of a variety of materials, such as wood and fabric; however, most modern craft are constructed from fiberglass and other composite materials. Sailplanes are comprised of the following basic components: the fuselage with the cockpit where the pilot resides; the empennage with the vertical and horizontal

tails and rudder; the elevator; and the wings. One measure of performance in sailplanes is the glide ratio. A ratio of 30:1 means that in smooth air a glider can travel forward 30 meters while only losing 1 meter of altitude.

Sailplane history

The first heavier-than-air man-carrying aircrafts were Sir George Cayley’s series of gliders, which achieved brief flights in 1849. Santos Dumont,

Otto Lillenthal, Percy Pilcher, John J. Montgomery, and the Wright Brothers are other pioneers who built gliders in their aim to develop aviation. After World War I gliders were built for sporting purposes in Germany and in the United States. Germany’s strong links to gliding were to a large degree due to post-WWI regulations forbidding the construction and flight of motorized planes in Germany, so the country’s

aircraft enthusiasts often turned to gliders and were actively encouraged by the government.

The sporting use of gliders rapidly evolved in the 1930s and is now the main application. As their performance improved, gliders began to be used to fly cross-country and now regularly fly hundreds or even thousands of kilometers in a day if the weather is suitable.



Pete Rendek

Clockwise from above: Two sailplanes sit on the runway at Estrella Sailport. A glider rides the currents on a clear blue day. Betty Horvath originally opened the sailport in April 1969. Jason Stephens, owner of Arizona Soaring, has won multiple aerobatic sailplane championships.



Jim Williams



Pete Rendek



Jim Williams

Get into the loop

Clients of Arizona Soaring, the country's largest glider school, can take simple glider lessons, aerobatic lessons or a combination of both.

"In our aerobatics training, we teach how to do loops, tail spins and other tricks," Stephens said. "It can be an intense ride with speeds reaching up to 150 mph. Typically a ride lasts about 20 to 40 minutes; however, since our location is in such proximity to the mountains it creates a lot of good updrafts, which make it possible to extend the rides even further."

To find these updrafts and thermal currents, streams of rising air that are formed on the ground through the warming of the surface by sunlight, glider pilots often follow dust clouds because they indicate the existence of different types of lifts.

"Thermals can help a pilot climb to as high as 12,000 feet, where he revels in the cool air," he said.

With the quick speeds Stephens said altitude is often lost faster, which results in a shorter ride. But even on the quickest rides, one can easily see far-away landmarks such as Mount Lemon and Picacho Peak.

"The views are spectacular and the rides are smooth," Stephens said. "Soaring is the purest and most enjoyable form of flight."

License to fly

While it can take several months for novice pilots to get their license, almost 80 percent of the people coming to the sailport already have logged significant airtime, Stephens said.

"I would say 75 to 80 percent of the people who come for lessons are already pilots."

Chicago resident John Breitbrat is one of those customers.

Breitbrat, an aficionado of all forms of air travel, came to Arizona Soaring to earn his sailplane license. "This is one of the most talked-about locations in the country, and one of the best places to get a license," he said.



Jim Williams

While the Chicago resident has logged more than 65 hours in a helicopter and is a licensed airplane pilot, he said flying in a sailplane is just a more natural feeling. "You listen and feel," he said. "Flying a sailplane is about paying attention to your environment."

It took Breitbrat three days to earn his sailplane license, which Stephens said is a typical timeline for existing pilots.

One of the reasons for the smooth transition is that a sailplane is very similar to a propeller driven aircraft, Stephen said.

Bruce Waddell, a certified flight instructor at Arizona Soaring, certifies 30 to 40 pilots each year. Waddell has been flying gliders for 30 years.

"It's an intimate experience," he said. "There's really nothing else like it."

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Waddell said he has no fear while up in the motorless sailplane. "I'm as comfortable as I would be sitting in my chair watching television."

History in the air

Stephens went for his first glider ride in 1987, when his family moved to Arizona to purchase Estrella Sailport from its former owner, Les Horvath.

"We moved from Alaska, and living up there we always had airplanes," Stephens said. "If you want to do anything fun in Alaska, you have to have a plane."

Horvath, a native of Budapest, was the man who originally brought aerobatic sailplane flying to the states. He won multiple national and world titles. "He was the greatest sailplane pilot ever," Stephens said.

Horvath and his wife, Betty, originally opened the sailport April 1, 1969.


"I told him he was crazy at the time; there was only a dirt road going to the site, but it was his dream," Betty said.

Les would remain on with the business after the sale, teaching Stephens everything he knew about the sport and helping to transform him into a decorated sailplane pilot himself.

"I have won nationals (titles) three times and participated in two world events," Stephens said.

However, even with his facility at the disposal, he said he is not able to log the amount of flight hours needed to compete at the highest level. "I only get about 20 to 30 practice flights in before a competition, while most competitors log 100 to 200," he said.

The sailport is open for lessons 363 days a year, and the front desk is still manned by Betty, who split from her husband several years ago.

"I have seen generations of my family learn to fly here, they will have to cart me out of this place. I love it." 

Glider flight controls

Foot pedals: A left and right foot pedal controls the plane's rudder, which moves the craft right and left.

Stick: Movement in a left or right direction controls the flap on the wings and helps to execute smooth turns.

Movement in an up or down direction causes the elevator on the tail of the plane to move, sending the plane upward or downward and in turn controlling speed.

Demonstration Rides

Basic ride: \$104.95

Stephens call this a nice mellow 20 min. in a training glider.

High Performance: \$134.95

A 20 min. first-class experience in a sport-touring glider.

High Performance

Deluxe: \$184.95

The ultimate 40 min. soaring experience over the Estrella Mountains.

Aerobatic Ride: \$159.95

Stephens says this is "for the wild side in all of us!" It's 15 min. of G-pulling fun, he says.

Aerobatic Deluxe: \$209.95

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- Exit 164 (Queen Creek Rd)
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- Follow Maricopa Rd approx. 15 miles
- Turn right on Hwy 238 West
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Citizen Brown

A lifetime of political involvement is helping Marvin Brown shape the city he calls home

By Andrea Markowitz • Photos by Jake Johnson

AT AGE 10, MARICOPA CITY Councilman Marvin L. Brown was already fascinated by what he refers to as the political “movers and shakers who determine our fate.” By the time he was 17, he was one of them.

Brown’s extensive, impressive political career began with campaigning for city council candidates in his native Detroit, Mich., followed by campaigning for city prosecutor, statewide attorney general, lieutenant governor, and eventually gubernatorial, congressional and presidential candidates.

Brown was also a Detroit precinct delegate for 24 years, a delegate for Adlai Stevenson in 1956 and John F. Kennedy in 1964, and Michigan’s campaign co-chair for Robert Kennedy in 1968.

“Bobby’s assassination ended a dream for many of us who felt very strongly that

his wealth freed him from being unduly influenced by lobbyists, and that his openness and social consciousness would lead to the expansion of civil rights,” Brown said.

Expanding economic growth

Nowadays, Brown talks about expansion of another kind — economic growth in the city of Maricopa. He acknowledges that some people would like to see Maricopa, which he describes as a “city with a small-town flavor,” stay the way it is. Others would like it to become busier and more active. A city dweller his entire life, Brown’s vision for Maricopa falls in the latter camp. “It’s never going to become a Tucson or Phoenix, but it can become a very exciting city to live in.”

Brown also wants to make Maricopa a very exciting city to work in. Noting that most of Maricopa’s working population commutes to other cities, he said one of his goals as councilman is to help bring in

sustainable jobs. To that end, he envisions building hospitals, cinemas, bowling alleys and other recreational venues, a city complex and “a real downtown.” He said he’d like to see anchors that say: ‘I’m in downtown Maricopa now.’ “However long that takes, I commit myself to making it happen.”

From Brown’s perspective, Maricopa already has one exciting component in place — its citizens. “I’m very much impressed with their vitality,” he said. “We are a very friendly people, and many of the young people are effervescent and enthusiastic.” He also feels Maricopa’s citizens are intelligent.

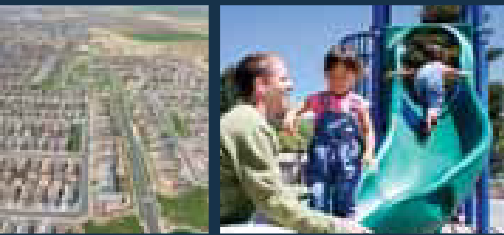
He believes the present economy combined with Arizona’s state-level economic policies will hold back Maricopa from beginning to fulfill its economic growth potential in the near future.

“We have a very conservative state government that’s not doing positive things for the state,” Brown said, citing





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Marvin Brown holds a photo of Robert Kennedy. He was Kennedy’s co-campaign chair in Michigan in 1968.

recent decisions to eliminate state jobs and agencies and to cut funding for schools and state parks, as well as past policies that relied mainly on development for economic growth rather than encouraging a diversification of industries.

Brown is in a position to represent the city’s economic interests from multiple perspectives — as council representative to the Industrial Development Authority Board and Pinal County Augmentation Authority, and as liaison to the Gila River and Ak-Chin Indian communities.

Influences and governing

Although he didn’t plan to run for office when he moved to Maricopa with his wife, Helen, in 2006, it didn’t take long for Brown to become deeply involved in helping to shape the city’s future. That’s not surprising, given his long personal history of advancing social, economic and political causes.

“My parents (Mary Jane and Jacque Brown) were active in government and discussed politics in front of my brother (James) and me,” Brown said. In the fifth grade, Brown looked forward to the classes in which students read news tabloids and discussed current events. He still devours news, regularly reading newspapers — *The Arizona Republic* and Internet versions

of the *Detroit News*, *Free Press*, *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Sun Times* — and magazines — *Mother Jones*, *The Economist*, *Time*, *The Atlantic*, *Esquire* and *GQ*. He also reads books about politics, as well as biographies and histories.

Brown’s educational background includes advanced urban studies at the University of Wisconsin and a building certificate through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

His leadership roles in Detroit included: chairman of the board for the Detroit Non-Profit Housing Corporation, Michigan Unemployment Agency and Lafayette Park Kiwanis Club; president of the board for the Traveler’s Aide Society of Detroit; executive director of Urban Investments for Coman Corporation; and a board member for the Bank of Lansing. Brown also lived in Washington, D.C. from 1980-1983, where he was director of the city’s program for the National Urban Coalition.

Right at home

To relax, Brown enjoys listening to his extensive classical music and jazz collection and to his wife playing the piano. He also loves to travel in the U.S. and abroad.

Brown takes pride in governing as a nonpartisan, never hiding the fact that he’s a Democrat who has voted for and supported Republicans. “Socially, I’m a liberal, but I also realize expenditures should be made with the bottom line and return in mind,” Brown said. His broad-based political appeal won him a seat on the city council.

He has no illusions about the economically challenging road ahead for Maricopa, noting that so far, the city has had little luck competing with other cities vying for the same resources and businesses. Brown said it’s his “dream and passion that the city of Maricopa could very easily compete with every city in the Valley.”

This isn’t an election year for Brown, but he promises to make good decisions based on sound judgment and to be prudent in the expenditure of public funds in pursuit of this goal:

“As long as I serve [the people of Maricopa] I want to do the very best I can to serve them well.”

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THE ARTS ARE ALIVE AND WELL, AND LIVING IN MARICOPA

WORLD-CLASS MUSICIANS, COMPOSERS
AND ARTISTS CALL MARICOPA HOME



BY JOE GIUMETTE
PHOTOS BY JAKE JOHNSON



Clockwise from above: The tools of artist David Wilhelm, and the artist himself at work. One of Gary Zaimont's paintings called "Warthog." A trio of Maricopa musicians, Genevieve Ehrbright, Mary Mullarky and Judith Lang Zaimont.





T

HE GRAY STORM CLOUDS ROLL IN the sky outside the living room of Judith Lang Zaimont's home as the wispy branches of a few palo verde trees sway offbeat to the strains of Beethoven, Rachmaninoff and one of Zaimont's own compositions. A visitor sits quietly as three women perform on piano, violin and cello on a Friday afternoon, their play interrupted occasionally by the performers' comments on tempo, volume and mood.

Seated at a well-worn easel, several dark-hued Conte crayons in one hand, David Wilhelmsen slowly strokes the special paper that bears an image of a familiar Maricopa landmark: the 120-year-old Union Pacific water tower. He adds a faint line here, a slight smudge there, and pauses to ponder the next move. His wife, seated nearby, responds to her e-mail on a laptop.

His corpulent fingers dance across the double keyboard of his 1948 Hammond Model B organ as Papa John DeFrancesco provides his guest with a short example of his jazz artistry. He sits astride the bench, comfortable as any cowhand in a saddle, framed against a wall of publicity stills, posters of long-ago concerts, and montages of sheet music, ads, compact discs and other ephemera. An aging saxophone sits proudly upright next to the organ, a now-silent member of the duo.

In a chilly yet sunlit house, unoccupied with either family or furniture, a wiry man in jeans and a hoodie too large for his modest frame, gently pats a table-sized plank of cherry wood, whose surface bears the reliefs of a nearly finished woodcut he is carving. The visitor can see the image clearly; it is identical (in reverse) to the one on a piece of chipboard in the next room. There are several versions of the same pose — a woman seated in a chair — in different sizes and combinations of color, one on paper, another in photographic form, still others in black and white.

These scenes all took place recently in Maricopa, the same community that burst forth from the cotton fields, pecan groves and scrubby farms to become — just a few years ago — Arizona's fastest-growing city. Art, widely defined, has always existed here, of course, but it took a far more basic form than it does now. There



were those finger paintings from school, the canvas and sketchbooks kept in the closet during the week and labored over by Sunday painters, working in oil and watercolor, a prized family quilt, the photo album with cracked and faded prints of much more than family members, the guitar under the bed with a missing "C" string. And maybe an old Brownie, now forgotten in a closet that was once used to record holidays and special events in a small railroad town.

Art in Maricopa today may still take those same forms, but the city's new residents, bringing with them new cultural and regional experiences and gifts, as well as the need to express them, generally perform on a more sophisticated and complex stage. Many are highly trained professionals who are recognized by fans and honored by their peers.

They are of all ages, and they all make their homes in Maricopa.

The six individuals described above are probably only a small example of the complete roster of talented artists and performers who call Maricopa home, but only time and opportunity — and maybe this year's census — will let us know how large that demographic slice might really be.

"We formed this group only a few weeks ago," said Zaimont, whose talents were explored on these pages in July of 2007. "So far, we're meeting every Friday afternoon to rehearse." She poured fresh coffee and offered cookies while her guests and fellow musicians



Genevieve Ehrbright

arrived separately: Mary Mullarky, a winter visitor from Garden Grove, Calif., and a professional cellist, and then, a few minutes later, Genevieve Ehrbright, a Rancho El Dorado neighbor who lives just down the block and a violinist and music teacher.

Zaimont talked enthusiastically about expanding the chamber music circle (“I hate the term ‘society,’” Zaimont said, “it sounds so stuffy.”) to eight, 12 or more musicians. She said she relies mainly on the Internet to find and meet fellow artists.

But Zaimont’s time is carefully apportioned. She is a world-renowned composer, pianist, author and speaker who is much in demand. She will be in Budapest and Bratislava this month to record a new work, “Chroma — Northern Lights,” partially funded by the Arizona Commission on the Arts. And she and husband Gary Zaimont — a retired music professor and full time painter — have just completed their first collaborative effort, a DVD featuring four of her works and dozens of his drawings and paintings. “We were intrigued by the challenge,” Zaimont said. “How does today’s artist engage the Internet? That force cannot be ignored.”

Zaimont has definite views on the role of arts in today’s society. “The arts are a prime factor in the personality of a city,” she said.

Mullarky, who has played the cello as a professional and amateur for more than 50 years, now plays with the Orange Coast

College Orchestra, whose roster includes professionals, students and “community members, like myself,” she said. An educator in public schools for 30 years, Mullarky now sells real estate part time and keeps busy with her husband, Joseph, and their eight grandchildren. “We have a step-daughter in San Jose, (Calif.), a daughter in Queen Creek, and a son right here in Maricopa,” Mullarky said. The Mullarkys are winter visitors.

Ehrbright was born in Sukhumi, a city slightly larger than Maricopa, in a disputed part of Georgia on the Black Sea. Civil war in the region in the 1990s saw Ehrbright and other members of her family move to St. Petersburg, where she graduated from the Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory. She moved to the United States in 1988 and eventually met her husband, Chris, a dentist in Casa Grande. The Ehrbrights and their two children (4 and 2 years old) have made Maricopa their home since 2006.

“I have taught piano and violin for eight years in Arizona,” Ehrbright said. For the past three years, Ehrbright has enjoyed planning and performing in Christmas recitals in her home.



At the Province home of Donna and Dave Wilhelmsen, the warm furnishings and soft lighting ward off the chill of the desert evening as the New York-born production manager for a Tempe sign company talks about his avocation, painting in acrylics and drawing with Conte crayons, sticks in mainly shades of gray, black and brown that are fashioned of clay and a cellulose binder. Wilhelmsen began drawing and painting before he was 5, under the steady guidance of his father, also an artist.

Pursuing a career as a commercial artist, Wilhelmsen graduated from the School of Visual Arts in New York City.

“I was a magazine and book illustrator for a while, before I started my own sign business in New York,” Wilhelmsen said. When he and Donna visited the Valley in 1993, they decided to move here soon after. Later, they sold their first Arizona home in Scottsdale and moved to Province in 2006. The couple spends their free time with their friends, three children and their spouses, and their grandchildren, who often are featured in Wilhelmsen’s drawings.

Wilhelmsen was recently commissioned by the city of Maricopa for a two-month exhibit of about 12 of his works featuring familiar landmarks in the area called “Maricopa: My Home Town.” It will be on display at the Maricopa City Library throughout April and May

Most, if not all, of Wilhelmsen’s Conte works are on an expensive printmaking paper, a French import. “Art has to last,” Wilhelmsen said, “and this paper and the crayons I use are the ideal blend for longevity.”

Occasionally, though, Wilhelmsen turns to acrylics to give his creations more color and texture. A favorite surface for these paints are ceramic tiles, and Wilhelmsen has turned a few walls into murals in his own home. Many of his works seem to favor portraiture, with models alone or in combination, and landscapes,





Mary Mullarky

often focusing on lakes and streams. Both convey a fantasy or dreamlike quality, and the monotonous of Conte blacks and grays assist in establishing that feel.

Wilhelmsen has had his work on display at a Scottsdale gallery and at a one-man show last fall at Arizona State University's Kerr Cultural Center, to benefit the Phoenix Rescue Mission, but he is a veteran of many other such shows and exhibits in New York and Arizona, and has the awards to prove it.

Wilhelmsen is an active member of the East Valley Artists Guild, which meets at the Sundust Gallery in downtown Mesa. "We have 50 hardcore members," he said, "but there is a current roster of more than 300 artists." Members occasionally critique each other's work at special meetings "announced in advance, so if someone has too thin a skin, they can opt out," he chuckled.



A short walk away from the home of Judith and Gary Zaimont in Rancho El Dorado stands the home of John DeFrancesco, his wife Laurene, and their lap dog, Jazz. Only a devoted fan of jazz organ music would know right away that the elderly gentleman greeting



a visitor at the door is an icon in that genre: "Papa John" DeFrancesco, a Niagara Falls-born musician whose family musical dynasty started with his father, Joe, and includes Papa John's two sons, Joey and John. Cheryle, their daughter, seems to have favored journalism over music, but still learned to play the saxophone. Papa John's father, whose saxophone now graces the DeFrancesco music room, was a musician equally at home with most musical instruments. He spent eight years with the Dorsey Brothers swing band.

And son Joey has been hailed as "America's top jazz organist" for the past seven years. Son John, now with Boeing, and a former faculty member of the renowned Berklee School of Music in Boston, is an accomplished jazz and blues guitarist, and has joined his father and other musicians on albums recorded for High Note and Savant records. One of Papa John's notable CDs titled "Big Shot," was ranked No. 2 in radio play in the U.S. recently. It contains a cut, "Maricopa," that was inspired by Papa John's new hometown. He and Laurene moved here from Philadelphia in 2005, after visiting friends who live in Ahwatukee. Occasionally, his fans will find Papa John entertaining during Sunday brunch at Bobby C's popular jazz club on Washington Street at 12th Street in downtown Phoenix.

Most of the songs Papa John records and plays nowadays are his own compositions.

For 28 years of his life, however, Papa John balanced his musical career with work as an electrical supervisor with Amtrak.

Starting out at the age of 6 on bugle and trumpet, Papa John's performing career would see him playing with such icons as Jimmy Smith, Cab Calloway, George Benson, Jack McDuff, Jimmy McGriff and David "Fathead" Newman, among countless others.

By the time he was 13, Papa John started playing professionally, joining bands formed by and with his friends at the time. The father of one of his friends owned a club, and the teenagers earned about five dollars for each gig. A few years later, however, Papa John formed a group called Johnny D and the Kings. The band, complete with matching ivory blazers bearing crests, played wherever there was an audience willing to listen, including on local radio and TV stations.

At the age of 16, Papa John met Laurene, who was barely 13. "We were both at the beach — not together — and I somehow knew I was going to ask her to marry me."

After an encounter with the late Jimmy Smith, at the time America's foremost jazz organist, Papa John decided he would try that instrument. Actually, Laurene bought him his first organ — a spinet — in 1963 and he soon graduated to the Hammond B-3, the same instrument favored by most artists who play jazz organ. He learned to play both instruments without formal training. While starting a family, Papa John played in Atlantic City, Buffalo, Toronto, New York, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, "and too many other places to count." He even had gigs in Italy, France and Spain.

The DeFrancescos keep busy with his music and their expanding families, but Papa John has one new goal: to see a local jazz or blues festival get launched in Maricopa. "I'd like to play a role in that," he said.

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In a one-story home in Maricopa Meadows, Gary Zaimont works all day long on his various projects. They are in various media, with a special bias for acrylic paints. Here lies a series of prints that have been posterized on a computer. Over there, a woodcut. Taped to another wall, a series of photo prints in various hues and tones. Many of the paintings Zaimont has finished are oversized, running to five, six or seven feet by four or five feet. Specially designed racks had to be constructed and installed in one of the bedrooms of the house Zaimont uses as his studio. "It was a bit cumbersome, stacking these up against the wall," Zaimont said. "Now, when I want to refer to a particular work, I just slide it out of the rack." A builder's scaffold sits in another room, so Zaimont can reach the upper edges of another large work.

Why this obsession with large paintings? "You can go," he spreads his arms wide, his fingers reaching to the ceiling, "like this..." The effect does have its dramatic component; an observer cannot mistake what he or she is seeing.

When Zaimont, who admits he is fascinated by animals, first visited the Phoenix Zoo, he took photos of many of the park's inhabitants. They appeared later in a series of paintings known as "Beasts." Here is an almost-life-size interpretation of a rhinoceros, another of two apes, a colorful painting of an ostrich, and on brown paper, taped to a bedroom wall, a stunning color work of a warthog. A closer scan of this work, however, reveals what the viewer first believes is watercolor or acrylic paint is actually thousands of pieces of paper, many ripped from the pages of magazines, painstakingly assembled together in a mosaic of color and form.

The finished paintings do not adorn the walls. What seems to be more important to this artist is the work in progress, the process of creation, not the final effort. This prolific artist — he has catalogued nearly 1,500 separate creations — has never had a show; his works have never appeared in public. He has no agent, business manager or gallery owner urging him on. He spends most weekdays alone in his studio, experimenting with colors and materials, looking for new and different ways to form images. And yet, he is apparently pleased to have company and to engage in serious conversation about his methods, his purpose, his craft.

Amid the paints, canvases, chemicals, brushes, rags and other supplies common to an artist's studio, on part of a kitchen counter sits an electronic keyboard, a piece of a typically complex Bach fugue on its easel. Zaimont, a retired professor of music, admits to spending his breaks sometimes practicing Bach, striving to "master" one of the Old Master's creations.

Every Tuesday morning, a woman visits the Zaimont studio and sits in a chair. She wears different outfits every week, and Zaimont gives her little or no direction. Her visage — sometimes realistic, at other times abstract or expressionist — stares out at the visitor from different walls, nooks and rooms of the house. It is as if the artist is exploring the model's soul, searching for something he has yet to find.

When asked about this pattern of experimentation and repetition, Zaimont referred to Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), the Japanese landscapist whose many paintings of Mount Fuji were




immortalized in a series of prints called "One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji," considered to be the masterpiece among his picture books. Zaimont reached for an art book to show examples of Hokusai's prints. "Actually," Zaimont said, "Mount Fuji seems relatively dull," this a reference to its symmetry as, basically, a pile of volcanic rock.

On another wall, taped carefully in a group, are a series of photos, some of them colorized, of the familiar Maricopa water tower. They are accompanied by some wide-angle shots of the railroad's intersection with John Wayne Parkway, cropped, enlarged and arranged in no particular pattern. These will be the basis for some work that has yet to take shape.

Is Zaimont concerned about a serious critic's reaction to his works, even after he is gone?

"The best art was always popular until the middle class and the business class thought they needed critics to tell them what was good," Zaimont said. "Then critics needed to champion something to make their name and reputation.

"The idea that if something is popular it can't be good is nonsense — although things can be good and not popular." 

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The Arizona Storage Company.....19	Machado's Landscaping 48
Asha's Place.....27	Maricopa/Ahwatukee Foot & Ankle
Ashley Furniture HomeStore.....IFC	Specialists.....19
Auto Recycling Mall.....19	Maricopa Auto Detail & Car Wash23
AZ-Tech Radiology.....5	Maricopa Back & Neck24
BBQ Oasis.....10	Maricopa Broadband25
Brighton Collision Center24	Maricopa Chamber of Commerce.....13
Cadence Homes.....10	Maricopa Drivers Education27
Casa Grande Regional Medical Center.....13	Maricopa Education Foundation..... BC
Church of Celebration 8	Maricopa Handyman Services.....10
City of Maricopa.....3	Maricopa Mountain Plumbing10
City of Maricopa.....33	NAPA24
Cobblestone Dental Center17	Oasis Life Church13
Comfort Keepers.....14	Pinal County Federal Credit Union.....47
Committee to Elect Edward Farrell14	Premier Orthodontics..... 4
Data Doctors.....22	Presidential Pools..... 11
DC Dental Group.....1	Pride Asset Management36
The Duke at Rancho El Dorado.....21	Rawhide.....21
Eagle Summit Ministries.....27	Ross' Inspection Technologies.....5
El Dorado Holdings.....45	Sapphire Technology 8
Elite Shutters & Blinds15	Serendipity Salon47
Harrah's Ak-Chin..... IBC	Shell Rapid Lube 6
InMaricopa.com.....37	Cheryl Sikma27
Journey United Methodist Church.....21	Spooner Physical Therapy47
K'Bella Skin Care24	

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– *Sophomore Tiffany Brown, Maricopa High School*



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