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December 2020

SleepWerx Improves Lives with Quality Sleep Solutions

By Jamie Killin

Poor quality sleep is alarmingly common, with approximately 70 million people suffering from an undiagnosed sleep disorder such as insomnia, sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome.

These sleep disorders can lead to daytime sleepiness, excessive fatigue, snoring, and even more serious conditions like high blood pressure and heart disease.

Terry L. Penner, owner of SleepWerx and a double board-certified nurse practitioner with more than four decades of experience in the medical industry, dedicates her practice to helping people overcome these issues and achieve better sleep.

"I spent a lot of time in neurosurgery and neurological sub-specialties, including sleep medicine," Terry said. "Quality sleep is just so important, so interesting and poor sleep affects so many people, and it became my passion to stay in sleep. There's so many people that need help."

Many people write off the symptoms of a serious sleep disorder as normal — feeling tired throughout the day, feeling more irritable or forgetful, or snoring so loudly their partner complains. But Terry warns that these can be signs of poor-quality sleep that when left untreated, can lead to serious health consequences.

"A lot of people are embarrassed to say that they snore, or they make light of it saying, 'Oh my husband snores so loud he could bring the paint off the walls,' but



Terry L. Penner



don't be embarrassed about that," said Terry. "It's not a matter of snoring as an aesthetic feature, it's a matter of a possible sleep disorder that can cause high blood pressure and heart disease."

Terry's priority is providing a *patients first* experience to diagnose these issues immediately, in a comfortable and quiet office where patients feel at home and welcome.

SleepWerx offers in-office or telemedicine appointments, and scheduling within 48 hours. When patients arrive for their consultation appointment, they'll discuss their symptoms with Terry, they will go over a detailed sleep history and Terry will complete a brief physical exam. They will usually complete an in-home sleep test that same night.

Patients will then follow-up with Terry in the office or through telemedicine to discuss results and treatment plan options. In many cases, patients start to feel better as soon as a week into treatment.

Some people will require a referral, others can self-refer. SleepWerx offers financial options, including acceptance of all insurance providers and even offers cash packages for those who would like to pay with cash. Packages are available at 40 percent off for veterans, law enforcement, farmers and ranchers, first responders, and teachers.

For everyone, including those without sleep disorders, Terry recommends establishing a bedtime routine to relax and *wind down* the brain, and prepare the body for sleep each evening. She recommends going to bed and waking up at the same time each day, and reserving the bed for sleeping and intimacy only.

This month, SleepWerx will be helping Mesa families in need get the rest they deserve by collecting *SleepStuff*, including new unopened pillows, blankets, sheets, throw blankets, pillowcases, PJs, slippers, and teddy bears. Those who would like to donate can do so by dropping items off at the SleepWerx office. ■

SleepWerx is located at 3514 N. Power Road, Suite 127, in the Selina Ashworth building. For more information, visit mysleepwerx.com, or call (480) 571-8460.

Merry Main Street brings joy to Downtown Mesa

By Councilmember David Luna, Mesa District 5

The holiday season is upon us and safe, family-friendly festivities can be found here locally. For the sixth consecutive year, Merry Main Street will bring holiday revelry to Downtown Mesa. The spectacular celebration of the season kicked off on Nov. 27 and will run through Jan. 2, 2021.

MESA'S CHRISTMAS TREE

Mesa's Christmas Tree glows each night of Merry Main Street. This 40-foot tall, or nearly four story, tree is the City's official Christmas tree. Check it out on Macdonald Street, north of Main Street, and experience the magic of the season. Take a few photos while you're there either by the tree or at one of the *sELFie* Stations located within Santa's *sELFie* Village!

WINTER WONDERLAND ICE RINK

Merry Main Street will again feature the Winter Wonderland Ice Rink with more than 5,000 square feet of skateable ice just outside City Plaza. The area around the ice rink will be adorned with vintage holiday decorations not used in Downtown Mesa since 1967. The Winter Wonderland Ice Rink is a great way to enjoy the



amazing winter weather while skating under the stars.

However, out of an abundance of caution for the health and safety of our guests and staff, visitors will need to prepare for a skating experience that is very different from previous winters. To provide a safe and healthy environment for all patrons, tickets must be pre-purchased for a specific day and time with a maximum allotted limit of 50 skaters at one time.

VISITS WITH SANTA

Free, safe, and healthy visits with Santa will take place Fridays and Saturdays, beginning on Nov. 28 and ending on Dec. 19. To provide a safe and healthy environment, Santa will be inside his magical snow globe with kids of all ages sitting in front. Bring your cell phone or camera for pictures.

I hope that you join me in Downtown Mesa as we celebrate this festive time in a safe and healthy manner. For additional information and to obtain tickets for the Winter Wonderland Ice Rink, visit merrymainst.com. ■

As always, if I can be of service to you or if you wish to speak with me, I can be reached via email at district5@mesaaz.gov, or by phone at (480) 644-3771.

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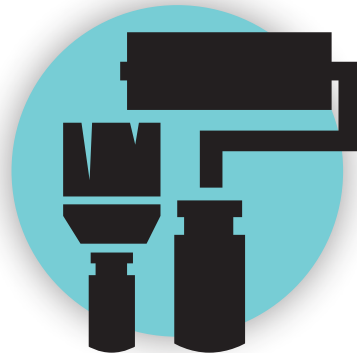
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E-mail: Publisher@PhillipsWest.com

(480) 748-1127

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Kim Phillips

ADVERTISING

Monica Adair (480) 772-1949

Kim Phillips (480) 748-1127

STAFF WRITERS

Dawn Abbey, Kimberly Alvarado

Jamie Killin

COPY EDITOR

Randall Clarke

DESIGN

Lucky You! Creative, publication design

Erin Suwvan, Jaclyn Threadgill

www.luckyyoucreative.com

Keen Visual Media, website design

Ramey Newell

www.keenvisualmedia.com

CONTRIBUTORS

John Karadsheh, Nancy Nemitz, Lorraine Ryall

www.UpCloseAZ.com

HEALTH

Prolotherapy for Pain Works Well

By Cynthia Hayes, NMD

When I was in college in the early 1980s, I would run down the stairs, two at a time. I did it because it was fun, but one day, I missed a step and fell, injuring my ankle. It was badly sprained. I hobbled around on crutches for several weeks and my ankle healed with time.

Fast forward 30 years — as time had passed, I noticed that there was pain again in my ankle. I hadn't done anything to re-injure it, but I had aged. I found myself hobbling around with pain and stiffness in my right ankle. I would have good and bad days, but it seemed that with time the bad days came more often than the good ones.

I started medical school in 2011 when I was in my 50s. I was fortunate to be assigned to shadow a doctor who did prolotherapy. I watched as he gave this treatment to several patients who were in pain. The patients who were coming back for second or third treatments all said that they had seen improvement in their pain.

So, I tried it. I asked for the prolotherapy injections in my right ankle. Guess what? The pain in my ankle decreased after the first treatment. After the second, I was out of pain. There was no longer any stiffness.

I decided that I had to learn how to do these treatments so that I could help other people regain a better quality of life. I studied under a doctor who is an expert for several years to learn how to administer prolotherapy injections.

Prolotherapy is a treatment that stimulates your body's ability to heal, to strengthen, and repair injured and painful joints, ligaments, and tendons. It can help with musculoskeletal pain.

When ligaments and tendons are stretched and torn, the joint they are holding becomes destabilized and this destabilization can lead to pain. Prolotherapy injections are directed to these painful areas and they cause a mild inflammatory response. The body works to repair the area. It builds ligament and tendon fibers which help



Cynthia Hayes, NMD



Dr. Laura Markison

to strengthen the weakened structure. Additional treatments continue the process to allow the body to repair the area.

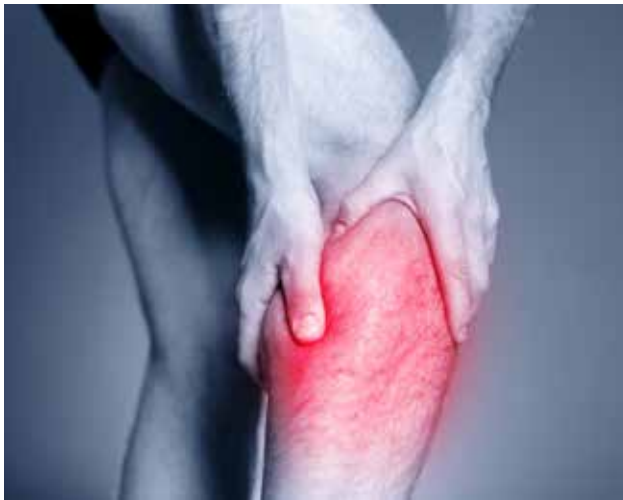
Prolotherapy can be used to treat pain in the neck, mid back, and low back, including sacroiliac joint instability. It can help with knee pain, meniscal tears, wrist,

hand and finger pain, elbow and shoulder pain, foot pain and of course, ankle pain.

Prolotherapy can help with degenerative disc disease and osteoarthritis. The treatment basically can be used to address musculoskeletal pain. Treatments are scheduled every three to six weeks and a patient generally gets four to six treatments.

The success of the treatments depends on the health of the patient and the injury that is being treated. Generally, studies have shown that treatments are 85 to 95 percent successful. ■

Are you in pain? Come into Mesa Naturopathic to see what can be done to help regain quality of life. Call and schedule your appointment today at (480) 306-8111. Check out our website at mesadr.com.



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Sleep Apnea is a life-long diagnosis that needs to be well-managed to be successful with treatment. Sleep apnea is a common sleep disorder where people have pauses in breathing while sleeping. Pauses can last from a few seconds to minutes and may cause a choking or gasping sensation while breathing during sleep.



Terry L. Penner MS, ANP-C, ACNP-BC

The most common type of sleep apnea is Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) which remains largely undiagnosed and untreated. Untreated sleep apnea increases the risk of high blood pressure, heart attack, abnormal heart rhythms, stroke, diabetes and obesity, and it causes changes in mood, and daytime function.

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Laura Markison, NMD
Cynthia Hayes, NMD

EDUCATION

We are Forever Grateful to Our Teachers

By Sami Majeed, JD, Chief of Schools, Self Development Academy

Parents have been facing real challenges in juggling their children's education while working to provide for their families. Parents ponder... how do I educate my child if they can't go to school and how do I provide for their safety if they can't stay at home? Parents certainly deserve their own thank you.

Meanwhile, during the pandemic, parents and other adults have developed a deep appreciation of our teachers. Teachers are living promises of a future full of hope and dreams. They connect their students' insatiable brains with the best science, literature, math, and art. Bit by evolving bit, they ensure that each moment is better than the last, each day better than yesterday —each person their own better angel.

During this pandemic, teachers are a panacea to our panic. We take for granted that we will heal — physically and emotionally. We confidently rest our scattered minds about the general health of our society because we trust the excellence of first responders. While we don't verbalize it, that very trust comes from a breathtaking amount of reverence and deference we give to our teachers.

We don't verbalize it. We really should though. The pandemic has been hard on our teachers. Teachers have two extremely important jobs: they not only teach children but they serve as their guardians during the day. Never before has this duality been as apparent as now when parents struggle with educating their student at home without teachers who teach online, or finding a place for their child to be when their teacher is teaching online.

It started with spring break and COVID turned it into spring broken. The students never returned back to school after their week off, overwhelming parents who needed someone to save the day. Enter our modern hero, donning a pashmina cardigan instead of cape: the teacher.

This was not an easy or even understood job. Technology did not exist for teachers really. Google scrambled to keep up with demand. Teachers had to create their own online curriculum, learn an online education



Mr. Zach Ms. Melody Ms. Lauren

platform, and then combine the two, hoping that their students would be able to adjust better. This was not an easy task.

A third-grade teacher at Self Development Academy, Jamie Smith, emphasized, "It was so abrupt, and the teachers had to adapt to the online platform quickly. I felt like a student myself having to learn google classroom."

It is important to note that when Mrs. Smith uses the phrase *learn google classroom*, she is not referring to a single program that she, and the rest of the teachers needed to learn. In fact, she is actually referring to many, many different tasks, programs, skills, and communication platforms.

One learns *google classroom* the same way that one learns the complete physics of the universe. This is to say, learning *google classroom* is an amalgam of an infinite number of small, difficult, unfamiliar tasks. *How do I record and edit video? How do I convert physical material to digital format? How do I get it to students? How do I even know what to do? How do I post grades? How do I create quizzes?*

Mrs. Oliver, who has been with SDA for nearly two decades, emotes, "I cried for a full day, thinking that I'd never get *google classroom*."

Mrs. Smith reflects, "I had a few crying moments as others did. It was a big adjustment for everyone."

Researching for this article reminded me of how lucky Self Development Academy (SDA) has been in

teacher retention. At SDA, an advanced K-8 charter school where I work, we do our best to deliver all that our teachers deserve.

A popular teacher at the Phoenix campus, Ms. Lauren White, discloses that, "When I go home every day, I feel as though I hadn't done enough. I feel frustrated with myself because I know how much better they can do and I can do."

One of SDA's master teachers, Mrs. Annmarie Rivera, our Mesa's 4th/5th grade teacher, shares a common refrain, paraphrasing: "Do I have enough to attend to their needs? What if my kids get sick?"

We do not take for granted how fortunate we are to have the teachers we have at our schools. I'll be frank, there are many times, I too, like Phoenix math teacher Ms. White, have been plagued by the question, "What could I have done better?" "How could I help my teachers?"

What I realized though is that what makes SDA effective is also what makes us unable to do everything we would like to do for our teachers. The drastic, abrupt change was ubiquitously the most brutal pang.

Still, seven months later, I wonder how could I have met the needs of our justifiably inconsolable parents needing online teachers to safely teach their children with our justifiably inconsolable teachers needing someone to slowly train them before moving fully online.

There are no good solutions. There are only good people.

The year 2020 is about confronting hard, persistent, systematic problems: health care, criminal justice, and disaster preparedness. We have certainly been thoroughly educated in the axiom that *no one's actions are perfectly good*. We all emanate consequences. The world ripples with the composite of our choices and at the end of our life our good can be best seen in the future we have helped build.

That is easy for teachers. Teachers have a unique role. Success is passion interlocked with ability. Ask any school teacher, and they will tell you that their job is really about interlocking passion with ability.

Thank you, teachers, everywhere. ■

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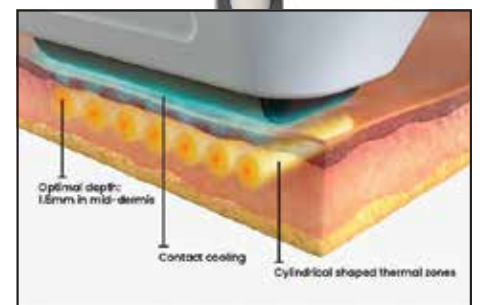
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EDUCATION

Make Learning for Success Your New Year's Resolution

REGISTER NOW FOR NEW JOB SKILLS AND EDUCATIONAL GOALS

By Joan K. Westlake, Mesa Community College

Start the New Year on a path to success by registering to learn a new job skill, or get on track for a whole new career at Mesa Community College (MCC). Offering flexibility in scheduling for students as well as safety, spring semester classes are available online and in virtual learning formats.

Classes start Jan. 16 with additional Flex Start classes beginning in February and March. Enroll now, conveniently from wherever you access the internet, to secure the classes on the days and times you want.

Earn qualifications to advance in your job with classes such as managerial accounting, business communications, supply chain management, industrial safety, Excel or Adobe Photoshop.

If you are looking to enter or upskill your position in the Information Technology field, you'll find the MCC Downtown Center's East Valley IT Institute courses are ideal for working professionals.

Or perhaps feed your spirit with a fun class like creative writing, outdoor adventure skills, forensic anthropology, hip hop, American Indian History, or whatever sparks your interest.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) has always been a hallmark of the MCC Red Mountain curriculum. Science studies include health care programs that offer certificates and training to quickly move into



careers such as emergency medical technician (EMT), dental hygienist and nurse assisting. In partnership with MCC's sister institution, Gateway Community College, phlebotomy training is now available as well.

LEARN YOUR WAY

MCC spring class formats are online or via a virtual face-to-face known as Live Online. A few classes requiring an in-person lab are held on campus or in a hybrid combo of on-campus and online. Find details about the class types at mesacc.edu/class-formats.

If you have an appointment or on-campus class, you are required to wear a face covering or mask, display a college ID badge or a photo ID, and maintain recommended physical distancing of 6 feet or more where possible. Health, safety and cleaning protocols exceed federal and state recommendations.

Strategies are being employed to ensure safe distancing on campus. For example, one nurse assisting class has 18 students in the Live Online lecture with the on-campus class divided into two classes of nine students for each of the in-person labs, allowing ample room among attendees. Students are thriving in these new class formats. The first nurse assisting class learning during the pandemic just graduated with 100 percent passing the state exams.

STUDENT SERVICES

Register for classes online. Please don't come to campus to register unless you have an appointment. MCC student enrollment and support services are available via web, chat and phone. Visit mesacc.edu/students/virtual-services for more information.

Due to COVID-19 safety measures, our campuses are open only to students attending on-campus classes and those with an appointment, as well as MCC staff. Drive-by pickup is available for services such as the Library and the Mesa Market free student food pantry. ■

COMMUNITY

Bilotti Lodge Presents RECOGNITION AWARD

Submitted by Marianne De Palma

Only one award is presented per year to recognize the outstanding support of a member of the Albert Bilotti Lodge.

This year's recipient, Ross Salerno, owner of Salerno's Restaurant, partnered with the Albert Bilotti Lodge several times in a community-based program to serve hot, fresh meals to families in need.

Working together, Salerno's and the Bilotti Lodge achieved its goal of expanding outreach and serving many people in the process.

Ross Salerno has consistently provided membership support to the Lodge and also helped the Lodge celebrate their 35th anniversary two years ago, turning over Salerno's Restaurant for the event and providing many additional perks for the celebration.

Salerno's Restaurant was established in 1966 in Chicago, and when Ross moved to Arizona in 2004, he established Salerno's Restaurant in Gilbert. It is a family-owned restaurant with three generations of history and involvement, preparing and serving their own family recipes! ■

The Albert Bilotti Lodge #2540 is a local chapter of the Sons and Daughters of Italy in America, established in 1983 in Mesa with members from cities throughout the East Valley. Membership is open to all — Italians, Italian-Americans and anyone who enjoys Italian culture (and food!). For more information, email bilottilodge@yahoo.com, or call (480) 830-2998. Grazie!



Ross Salerno standing next to a photo of his parents, whose recipes are featured in his menu.

Enroll Now for Spring 2021



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REAL ESTATE

The History of The Rockefeller Center Christmas Trees

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

Christmas is my favorite time of the year and this year is no exception.

Each year, my husband, Rick, goes hunting for a week and that has always been my time to decorate the house. He used to go right after Thanksgiving, but this year he went hunting at the end of October, and so, even though it was super early, that was the week that Christmas came to the Ryall house this year.

I have to say though, this year it didn't seem too early. With everyone spending so much time cooped up at home, having the house twinkling with lights and decorations, listening to Christmas music and watching Christmas movies weeks before Thanksgiving just seemed like the perfect thing to do. And I might even leave those decorations up past New Year's this year too!

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who reads my articles, to those of you who have become my clients and friends over the past years, and to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

MARKET UPDATE

"When you pair the number of listings currently active (7,824 in greater Phoenix) with the number of listings under contract (12,586 in greater Phoenix), it becomes readily apparent that our current market trends will not be changing anytime soon. Homes are selling quickly and sellers are getting their asking price, in many cases more than they are asking.

The momentum of our current market will propel our current trends into 2021. While current market conditions cannot continue indefinitely, there are no foreseeable changes in sight. In other words, the beat goes on."

- Tom Ruff ARMLS

Mesa Statistics - October 2020			
YEAR	Active Listings	Under Contract	Median Sales Price
2017	1248	895	\$220,000
2018	1320	826	\$249,450
2019	889	830	\$277,700
2020	665	1157	\$320,000

ROCKEFELLER CENTER CHRISTMAS TREE

The Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree has served as a beacon of hope and prosperity for millions each holiday season since its humble beginnings amid the Great Depression.



In December 1931, the United States and the majority of the world were feeling the effects of the Great Depression. While trying to survive and provide in the wake of the 1929 stock market crash — when every penny counted — a group of construction workers in New York City pooled their money together to make a purchase.

It wasn't food. It wasn't clothes. It wasn't fuel. Instead, they bought a Christmas tree to stand on the site of Rockefeller Center, which was just starting to be constructed in Midtown Manhattan. The 20-foot-high (6 meters) balsam fir, adorned with homemade garlands from the workers' families, served as a symbol of hope and optimism during the dire financial and economic times.

Since then, the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree has been a yearly tradition. The tree was "from the beginning... a gathering place and reflection of what was happening in the world around it."

World War II ushered in simple, patriotic decorations including red, white and blue unlit globes and painted wooden stars. In 1942, instead of one large tree, three more modest trees were raised, each decorated in one of the flag's colors. From 1944 until the war's end in 1945, the tree went unlit due to blackout regulations.

After the war, the year of darkness was left behind, as six ultraviolet light projectors were employed to make it appear as though the tree's 700 fluorescent globes were glowing in the dark. By the 1950s, workers began using scaffolding to decorate the tree, as larger trees were accommodated. Before the decade was over, the decorating process called for 20 workers and nine days.

1951 marked the first time that NBC televised the tree lighting with a special on *The Kate Smith Show*. In 1969, artist Valerie Clarebout's towering wire herald angels were added to the Channel Gardens in front of the tree near Fifth Avenue. Valerie created the 12 sculptures using 75 points of metal wire each.

The 1971 tree, a 65-footer from East Montpelier, Vt., was the first to be mulched and recycled. It was turned into 30 three-bushel bags of mulch for the nature trails of Upper Manhattan.

Though the tree typically makes its journey on a truck bed, in 1998 it was flown in from Richfield, Ohio, on the world's largest transport plane. 1999 saw Rockefeller Center's tallest tree, a 100-foot (30 m) spruce from Killingworth, Conn.

In 2001, following the Sept. 11 attacks, the tree was again decorated in hues of red, white and blue. In 2007, the tree went *green*, converting to energy-efficient lighting with LEDs. The LEDs use 1,200 fewer kilowatts of electricity per day, enough to power a 2000-square-foot home for a month. Also since 2007, each year after display, the tree has been milled into lumber and donated to Habitat for Humanity for use in house construction. ■

Lorraine is a Multi-Million Dollar producing agent, has been a full-time Realtor for over 12 years, is an Associate Broker of KOR Properties, a Certified Negotiation Specialist, and is on the Professional Standards Board. You can reach Lorraine at (602) 571-6799.



Sticky Toffee Pudding Recipe

INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 1 stick of butter (4 ounce)
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 6 ounces pitted dates (about 7 dates preferably Medjool)
- 3/4 cup water
- 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 pinch of salt
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter (softened)
- 3/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Vanilla ice cream or lightly sweetened whipped cream (for serving)

Step 1

In a medium saucepan, combine 1 1/4 cups of the cream with the butter, corn syrup and sugar; bring to a boil. Cook over moderately low heat, stirring frequently, until a deep amber caramel forms, about 40 minutes. Carefully whisk in the remaining 1 1/4 cups of cream. Strain the sauce through a sieve into a bowl.

Step 2

In a small saucepan, simmer the dates in the water over moderately low heat until the water is nearly absorbed and the dates are soft, about 15 minutes. Transfer the dates and any liquid to a food processor and puree until very smooth.

Step 3

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly butter six 1/2-cup ramekins. In a small bowl, whisk the flour with the baking powder, baking soda and salt. In a medium bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the butter with the brown sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg and vanilla, then beat in the date puree. At low speed, beat in the dry ingredients. Spoon the batter into the ramekins and smooth the tops. Bake for 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the centers comes out clean; let cool slightly.

Step 4

Using a small serrated knife, trim the tops of the cakes level with the rims of the ramekins. Unmold the cakes and invert them onto a wire rack. Slice each cake in half horizontally. Wipe out the ramekins and spoon 1 tablespoon of the toffee sauce into each. Return the bottom layers of the cakes to the ramekins, cut side up. Spoon another tablespoon of the toffee sauce into the ramekins and top with the remaining cake layers. Spoon another tablespoon of the toffee sauce over the cakes and spread evenly. Place the ramekins on a baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes, or until the toffee is bubbling around the edges.

Step 5

Let the puddings cool for 5 minutes, then run a thin-bladed knife around the insides of the ramekins; invert each pudding onto a dessert plate. Rewarm the remaining toffee sauce and spoon some around the puddings. Serve with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.



REAL ESTATE

Ten Ways to Make the Holidays FUN AND MEANINGFUL THIS YEAR

By John and Natascha Karadsheb, Designated Broker, Associate Broker and Owners, KOR Properties

With travel curtailed and parties cancelled, this is a perfect year to pivot and do all the things you haven't had time to do in past Decembers. Here are some ideas to make the most of this holiday season!



John and Natascha Karadsheb

1. Driveway Holiday Happy Hour

Now that the weather is nice again, invite your neighbors to join you for a socially-distanced happy hour on the driveway. Bring your inflatable Santa or Frosty the Snowman along to make it feel festive.

2. Fireside Fridays

December offers some of the best cool nights of the year. Light your outside firepit and grab some hot dogs and marshmallows for roasting. Turn on the Christmas music and enjoy a cozy night outside. Also combinable with the driveway happy hour!

3. Old Fashioned Cookie Baking

When we grew up, we all used to bake and share Christmas cookies. From pizelles to spritz cookies and divinity to peanut brittle, special sweets — made only once a year — are what made the holidays feel extra special. This is a great year to pull out those old recipes and make some nostalgic treats to drop off for friends and loved ones.

4. Sort and Upgrade Your Holiday Décor

Take the time to finally sort those old ornaments and update your holiday décor (while eating the Christmas cookies you just baked!). This might be the year to send your grown kids some of their favorite ornaments, upgrade that artificial tree that only has half the lights working, or try some DIY Christmas décor projects.

5. Have A Creative Holiday Date Night

Missing your holiday party date night? Get creative and try a taco crawl. Check out reviews and make a list of the best taco shops in the Valley. Drive around town and sample tacos at each one. Rate them and report back to friends on where to find the best tacos in the Valley. This idea can work for donuts, French fries, burgers, fried chicken sandwiches, or anything else you love to eat. This is also a fun night out for kids.

6. Wrap It Up in Style

Forget gift bags and check out Pinterest for some unique and creative ways to wrap gifts. Make your own gift tags, coordinate your paper and ribbon, and add fun accessories to your packages to make them extra special.

7. Celebrate Christmases Past

Dig through your old photo albums, scan pictures and make a Christmas album on Shutterfly to send to family and friends who can't be together over the holidays. A thoughtful gift!

8. Write Christmas Cards

Instead of just posting on Facebook, take the time to actually write cards to family and friends. Maybe even send a copy of a photo from a past Christmas you spent together. Everyone could use a little surprise snail mail this year.

9. Help Those in Need

Connect with local charities and donate to help others. Feeling ambitious? Expand your efforts and organize a neighborhood food or toy drive.

10. Be Merry!

2020 has been such a challenging year for everyone. Do your part and share Christmas cheer! Find a way to do a small act of kindness each day: drop off a treat to a friend or neighbor, pay for the person's drink behind you in the Starbucks line, leave a basket of treats at the front door for delivery drivers, compliment someone, wear a Santa hat all month, take in your neighbor's trash can, or thank the cashier at your local grocery store. Bring joy to others and you will gain twice as much in return!

Wishing you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season! ■

John and Natascha Karadsheb are co-owners of KOR Properties, a boutique real estate brokerage serving the Valley of the Sun, and the creators and founding sponsors of Mesa Food Truck Fridays.

John has been a Multi-Million Dollar producing agent for over 17 years and is an Accredited Buyers Representative (ABR) and Certified Residential Specialist (CRS), and is the Chairman on the Arizona Regional MLS Rules & Policies Committee.

Natascha is an Associate Broker of KOR Properties, a Multi-Million Dollar Producer, Past-Chair of the City of Mesa Economic Development Advisory Board and the founder of the Falcon Business Alliance.

You can reach John at (602) 615-0843 and Natascha at (602) 909-4995, or visit their website: KORProperties.com.

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3026 E Mallory St	2,210	Vista Mesa	\$450,000
4242 E Hale St	2,413	Valencia Park Estates	\$500,000
2459 E Laurel St	2,250	Citrus Hightlands	\$515,000
2957 E Fountain St	2,915	Mountain View Highlands	\$525,000
3944 E Ellis St	2,690	Trovita Estates	\$535,000
2225 E Nora St	2,968	Village View Estates	\$570,000
3054 E Hale St	4,473	Mesa Northgrove	\$604,610
4104 E Encanto St	3,085	Summit at Montecito	\$622,000
3011 N Gilbert Rd	3,500	County Island	\$650,000
1508 N Alta Mesa Dr #126	2,589	Alta Mesa	\$655,000
4324 E Fox Cir	3,734	Eastview Estates	\$660,000
1508 N Alta Mesa Dr #121	2,753	Alta Mesa	\$695,000
2341 N Lemon Cir	3,083	Spyglass Estates	\$699,995
2111 E Calle Maderas St	5,283	Las Maderas	\$750,000
3413 E Indigo Cir	3,415	Arboleda	\$750,000
3554 E Menlo Cir	4,391	Hermosa Groves North	\$775,000
3741 E Leland St	3,131	Spyglass Estates	\$786,000
3324 E Jacaranda Cir	4,286	Arboleda	\$795,500
4122 E Mclellan Rd #9	4,908	Highgrove Estates	\$874,715
3729 E Encanto St	5,054	Trovita Estates	\$875,000
4222 E Mclellan Cir #13	4,200	Park Avenue	\$955,000
3222 E Hope Cir	4,585	Legacy	\$1,199,900
3937 E Menlo Cir	4,772	Vista Estancia	\$1,230,000
3928 E Minton Cir	7,146	Vista Estancia	\$1,246,000
3761 E Jaeger St	5,245	Estates at Mandarin Grove	\$1,324,606
3712 E Nance Cir	4,333	Ladyhawke Estates	\$1,350,000

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EDUCATION

Four Mesa Schools Earn A+ School of Excellence Award

Submitted by Mesa Public Schools
Falcon Hill photo by Samantha Chow
Mountain View photo by Tim Hacker

Four Mesa schools have been named among the best K-12 public schools in the state. These outstanding schools are winners of the 2020 A+ School of Excellence™ awards from the Arizona Educational Foundation:

- Falcon Hill Elementary School — Dr. Lisa McCray Cannon, principal
- Highland Arts Elementary School — Christy Cuddy, principal
- Mesa High School — Kirk Thomas, principal
- Mountain View High School — Greg Milbrandt, principal

“We are excited and proud to receive the A+ distinction,” Dr. Lisa McCray Cannon shares. “We believed we could create a school where our students were excited to come each day and learn, and we did. The Falcon Hill community is committed to ensuring every student’s success. Dedication and a laser focus on what’s best for our students is what makes the Hill a special place to learn and work.”

Since 1983, the foundation has honored A+ Schools of Excellence™ to give recognition to remarkable Arizona public schools. Schools submit applications that document demographic information,



current programs and practices, parent and community involvement, leadership, and commitment to excellence, equity, service and high achievement. Trained judges select A+ Schools of Excellence™ after conducting site visits throughout the state.

“We are thrilled to be receiving the A+ School of Excellence award from the Arizona Educational Foundation once again,” Greg Milbrandt says. “We have amazing teachers and staff who instill excellence in education every day, and our incredible students and families make Toro Nation a wonderful community.”

Each of this year’s 44 award-winning schools receives \$500 and an A+ School of Excellence™ banner. Schools will hold the A+ title for four years. The district’s current A+ Schools include Crismon, Emerson, Field, Irving, Ishikawa, Jefferson, Lincoln, Mendoza, Pomeroy, Sirrine, Washington and Zaharis elementary schools; Stapley Junior High School; and Red Mountain High School.

Our Promise: Every student in Mesa Public Schools is known by name, served by strength and need, and graduates ready for college, career and community. ■

To learn more about Mesa Public Schools, visit our website — mpsaz.org.



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CONSIDER AN EDUCATION SAVINGS 529 ACCOUNT

By Scott Johnson, CFP®, AIF®, CPFA

I have eight children and three grandchildren, so I am keenly aware of the present and future projected costs of a college education.



Scott Johnson

Most parents and grandparents want their progeny to receive the benefits of a good education so that children can learn the skills which will allow them to become productive members of society as adults. However, to afford the potential cost of a college education, it’s important to start saving early in a child’s life.

The most efficient type of account to save for future education related expenses is hands down a tax-advantaged 529 college savings account. Almost every state sponsors their own 529 plan, but you don’t need to use your state’s plan, and it pays to shop. We recommend that our clients use the Utah 529 plan (my529.org) because of low fees and excellent investment options. You do not need to pay an advisor to manage money in a 529 account.

An Arizona couple filing jointly can receive up to \$4,000 in annual AZ tax credits for funding a 529 account. Money

invested in a 529 grows tax free and comes out tax free as long as the money is used for any educational related expense (i.e., tuition, room and board, a computer, supplies, transportation, etc.).

529 accounts can also be an important estate planning tool. Under the current gift tax exemption, a married couple can fund a 529 account up to \$30,000 per child each year. A special provision also allows you to pre-fund up to 5 years’ worth of your exemption (\$150,000) in one lump sum.

Consider funding a 529 for a newborn and inviting parents and grandparents to make an investment in that child’s future. ■

Scott Johnson is the CEO of DecisionPoint Financial, LLC. He is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and an Accredited Investment Fiduciary. He and his firm provide comprehensive financial planning and investment management services to individuals and institutions. Scott can be reached at (480) 553-6249 or scott@dpplanners.com. Visit decisionpointfinancial.com.

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LOCAL BUSINESS

Window to Design Suggests COMFORT IN COLOR

By Kimberly Alvarado

This year has been anything but traditional. Chances are there have been many changes in your routine this year — some of them not-so-comfortable. Maybe you're feeling a little overwhelmed with it all. Maybe your mood has taken a hit.

Suddenly, it's time for the holidays and you find yourself scraping up the courage to be jolly. And while our homes continue to be our refuge during the storm of 2020, decorating our surroundings for the season may not feel exciting, yet could be most essential for our well-being, now more than ever.

Window to Design suggests using color for improving mood and your living space this season. Owner Linda Palm expresses the importance of utilizing color palettes that are desirable to you to promote positive energy within your home. Whether it's holiday décor or window treatments, use colors that are tasteful to you.

"People shouldn't be afraid to use color," Linda suggests. "For so long the general idea of color for window coverings was neutral. Homeowners tend to think more of resale than personal preference, but new homeowners often make changes to suit their own tastes anyway," she adds. "Moving forward, it's time to thrive in an atmosphere that is meaningful to you."

The same holds true when it comes to holiday decorating throughout your home. Simple elements of colors that you love could certainly boost your focus on better days ahead.

Maybe your personality is more contemporary and would be enhanced with the colors of cream and black. If sophistication calls your name, consider touches of blue and gold. Maybe the traditional holiday embellishments of



Linda Palm

red and green conflict too much with your existing décor? Possibly you'd be more relaxed at home with a serene, close-to-nature look of all emerald green and white.

Believe in the magic of the season by creating your own winter wonderland with all white accents. If you've been missing out on elements of fun this year, pink and green may be calling your name. Are you feeling better already? Color really can make a positive difference in the way we feel.

According to Smithsonian author, Eric Schulze, people tend to like colors they associate with objects they love or consider to be good things. For instance, they like red because it's the color of strawberries or red lips, or cherries. These positive influences can affect mood or actions when it comes to choosing a sweater, buying a product, or decorating a home for the holidays.

Steve Palmer, a professor at University of California, Berkeley, said that a very saturated blue is the most favored color cross-culturally because it is associated with things that are almost all good — a deep, clean lake, a clear sky or a beautiful sapphire gemstone. The element of color is important to our well-being, yet often overlooked.

Window to Design can assist with a color transition in your home through consultation, and special pricing, this month. Consider this unique gift idea, designed to promote positivity in the mood of its recipient.

It's been a non-traditional year. Whatever it takes, the stylish minimalist or covering every inch of the house, traditional or unexpected colors, find ways to make your personal space comfortable and uplifting to round out the final days of this year. ■



To speak with Linda to learn more about her Window to Design store, you can contact her at (480) 207-6450, or visit her website — windowtodesign.com, or instagram.com/windowtodesign.

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LOCAL BUSINESS

TAKEOUT TUESDAY OR ANY DAY at Sam & Luca Rustic Kitchen

By Dawn Abbey
Takeout has become a popular alternative for eating out these days, and although safely spaced indoor and patio dining are popular at Sam & Luca Rustic Kitchen, their takeout business is booming. And no wonder — the food is spectacular and every Tuesday all takeout menu items are discounted 20 percent. Curbside pickup is also available. We decided to try the celebrated *Takeout Tuesday*, and having not yet experienced the restaurant, we were glad we did.

When we arrived around 4 p.m., there was already brisk takeout activity going on. It was really hard to choose from all the tempting offerings like Chicken Marsala, Shrimp Scampi, as well as a variety of pasta dishes, so we decided on four popular entrees and two desserts. We just had to have that Tiramisu!

Arriving home, the entrees were still perfect dining temperature, so we dug in. First tried was the Grilled Shrimp Risotto. Perfectly grilled butterflied shrimp with a light garlic butter sauce sat atop creamy risotto mixed with corn, sautéed bits of Roma tomatoes and artichoke, and



topped with a variety of fresh snipped herbs and lemon zest. It was delicious. Next, we went for the Spinach Ravioli. Tender, good-sized pasta puffs generously filled with cheeses and chopped spinach floated in a yummy white cream sauce. Eggplant Parmesan is always my favorite go-to at Italian-style restaurants and I can honestly say Sam & Luca's version is the best I've ever tasted. Melt in your mouth layers of eggplant and mozzarella and parmesan cheeses were surrounded by the most delicious hand-breaded crust of bread crumbs, herbs and parmesan. An amazingly flavorful marinara sauce laced with garlic and olive oil was more than enough to share with the side of capellini.

Sam & Luca's Chef Rosalio Tarin has more than 30 years' experience in Italian cuisine, creating at Tomaso's in Phoenix and Tommy V's in Scottsdale. He prides himself on every entrée being made from scratch. He is also known in the business for his Bolognese Sauce and rightly so.

To try it out, we ordered the Lasagna. It was a lot like my Italian Nana used to make with tender layers of pasta

topped with ricotta and mozzarella and maybe a pinch of nutmeg. Covering the entire dish was the famed Bolognese. The hearty tomato sauce loaded with ground beef, pork and veal, sautéed with minced garlic, carrot and onion, is so hearty and tasty you could almost eat it as a meal itself. We had to wait awhile after all that before tackling the desserts, but they were both worth the wait. The Salted Caramel Cheesecake was a velvety mouthful of creamy cheesecake and graham cracker crust all smothered in a not-too-sweet salted caramel sauce. And the Tiramisu? As good as any I've had. The rum and coffee-soaked cake was soft and moist, layered with creamy mascarpone custard and whipped cream and plated with a chocolate drizzle. A fantastic finale to a great dinner.

If you are looking for a great-tasting family takeout meal, Sam & Luca also has several combo dinners that can serve four to six. A choice of Pasta and Meatballs, Lasagna, or Chicken Parmesan all come with Caesar Salad and Fresh-Baked Bread.

Sam & Luca is small and quaint, with an open kitchen. Diners can watch their meal being prepared while sampling some of the four red and four white wines available on tap, and eight craft beers on draft. A large selection of wine is also available by the bottle. Their mixology includes a Limoncello Martini and an Italian Margherita with Amaretto. Enjoy Happy Hour specials from 3 to 6 p.m.

Lunch and dinner are served inside or on the patio. Owner Sam Arikat invites you to come out and enjoy their establishment. "We also do catering," he said. ■

Sam & Luca Rustic Kitchen is located at 1959 S. Power Road in Mesa. Check out their menus at samandlucaaz.com. Hours are: Tuesday to Thursday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; and Saturday, 3 to 10 p.m. For information or reservations, call (480) 659-6716.



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HEALTH

Over 50

What Do All These Medicare Commercials Mean?

Submitted by Tapestry Insurance

I cannot tell you how many calls I have received this month from people who have seen the endless Medicare commercials on TV and want to know what they are missing, or what do they mean by, "Some Medicare Advantage plans may even help pay your Part B premium."

While not illegal, these commercials are very misleading.

A very small percentage of the Medicare beneficiaries qualify for this benefit. It is based completely on income and is subsidized by our state Medicaid programs — AHCCCS. The commer-



Lynne Jones

cials use this as a hook to get you to call and then they attempt to enroll you in a Medicare plan without considering your location, your medications, your doctors, or any other factors that should be considered in picking a plan.

I met with a lady the other day who called the number, was switched to a plan she had never heard of and one that her doctor did not accept. Thankfully, we are still in open enrollment and I was able to get her on a plan that worked better for her needs.

Please don't call the number on the television, but instead call a local, licensed agent that can sit with you, ask you questions and help you pick a plan that fits your needs and lifestyle.

As a Medicare health plan agent, I am paid by the insurance companies, so you don't pay any out-of-pocket fees for my help. I won't pressure you, just simply provide information, present options, and let you choose what is best for your situation.

Someone asked me which plan is best. Quite honestly, it depends on what is best for each individual. ■

For help with your Medicare insurance needs, please contact Lynne Jones at (480) 212-2246, or email jonesdvp@yahoo.com.



FINANCES

Over 50

Consider These Year-End Financial Moves

Submitted by Brent D. Hoskinson and Linda Drake

We're nearing the end of 2020, but you've still got time to make some year-end financial moves.

For starters, add to your IRA. You actually have until April 15 to contribute to your IRA for the 2020 tax year, but the sooner you put the money in, the quicker it can work for you.

Also, if your employer allows it, put in a little extra to your 401(k) or similar retirement plan.

If you're 72 or older, you don't have to take withdrawals from your IRA or 401(k) that would normally be required by year-end, due to the economic stimulus

legislation. If you don't need the money, you can let your retirement accounts continue growing on a tax-deferred basis.

Here's another suggestion: Review your investment mix to see if it's still appropriate for your goals and risk tolerance.

Finally, see your tax advisor. You might be able to make some investment-related moves that can improve your tax situation.

Taking these steps can help you close out 2020 on a positive note – and start 2021 on the right foot. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.



ARE MEDICARE PLAN CHANGES TOO CONFUSING?

Some Medicare plans are prone to change more than others each year. Let me help take some of the confusion out of choosing a plan for 2021 and beyond.

- 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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Happy Holidays
During this holiday season, we wish you all the best.

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LOCAL BUSINESS

GSC Therapy Announces OPENING OF NEW OFFICE

Submitted by GSC Therapy

GSC Therapy and Sports & Orthopedic Specialists are excited to announce they will be opening a multi-specialty clinic at the end of December.

Their new office will be located at 6239 E. Brown Road, Suite 112, in Mesa, near the Red Mountain Ranch and Las Sendas communities.

GSC Therapy is a 25-year-old therapy practice offering patients a warm, comfortable environment. Highly skilled OT and PT staff develop customized therapy programs for all types of medical conditions, including non-surgical and post-surgical orthopedic issues, balance, neuropathy, back and neck issues, and more.

GSC Therapy has the Alter G anti-gravity treadmill available, allowing patients the ability to rehabilitate with up to 80 percent weight reduction for better comfort and faster healing.

In addition to skilled therapy programs, GSC Therapy offers a low-cost monthly program, where anyone can access skilled providers for services such as taping,

stretching, cupping before or after exercise or sporting events, or just when needed.

This new location will also be the home of Sports & Orthopedic Specialists (SOS). Established in 2007, SOS has been treating patients throughout the Valley, as well as the southern half of the state, from their main Gilbert office. They have developed a loyal following of patients from Northeast Mesa and are excited to re-establish an office in this area.

Sports & Orthopedic Specialists treat a wide gamut of musculoskeletal injuries from elite athletes to weekend warriors to industrial injuries. They have been at the leading front of utilizing in-office diagnostic ultrasound to replace expensive and time-consuming testing.

SOS surgeons employ a variety of minimally invasive and arthroscopic techniques. Areas of special focus include treatment of broken bones, sprains/strains, joint replacements, arthritis, as well as all areas of athletic injuries including shoulder, elbow, knee, hip, and ankle injuries.

The third dimension of the new office includes Spectrum Sports and Training for those seeking a better personal training experience. Skilled therapy staff will evaluate and then work with you to develop a custom, safe program to restore general conditioning, provide sport specific training, or achieve weight loss or balance improvement in a non-gym environment.

GSC Therapy, Sports and Orthopedic Specialists, and Spectrum Sports and Training are excited about serving the Northeast Mesa area. Look for upcoming information about their new location and grand opening in late December! ■

For additional information, please visit the GSC Therapy website at gsctherapy.com, or call (480) 855-8866. Visit the SOS website at sosportsmed.com, or call the office at (480) 222-5601.



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||| SPIRITUALITY

Christmas is a favorite time of year

By Pastor Paul Frank, Hosanna Lutheran Church

My favorite time of the year has arrived. I love this time of year for many reasons. We have perfect temperatures again. Political rivalries are at least on a simmer. Commercials are about fun stuff again. And the focus of the world turns toward holidays and celebrations.

We enjoyed Thanksgiving, a time to intentionally express appreciation to God, the giver of every blessing. And now we look toward Christmas. The tree is up, lights get hung, music turns nostalgic, and the movies are fantastic.

But this year I hear people literally saying what some of those Christmas specials have warned us of — we will have to cancel Christmas. Isn't that what Santa said when the storm was coming and there was no one to guide his

In any case, I can tell you this: no one will ever really be able to cancel Christmas. Oh, you might refrain from gatherings, avoid church services (but you can sure join us at Hosanna), or visit family and friends via Zoom. Your activities might change. But Christmas has already come.

You see, for centuries God promised a Savior who would come to win forgiveness for our sins, to renew our lives, and to open for us an eternal heavenly home. And then, the Bible says, "When the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law." (Galatians 3:4-5)

Jesus was born as the heaven-sent Savior nearly 2,000 years ago. He lived out His mission for our salvation and gave to us the greatest Christmas gift ever given — New



sleigh that night? Other Christmas specials also warn us that if things get bad enough then, "We will have to cancel Christmas."

I hear people actually saying such a thing this year out of fear and/or caution. We might not be able to have large family gatherings and company Christmas parties. Maybe even — dare I say it — maybe even the shopping has to be canceled.

Seriously? Well, I'm pretty sure some shopping, some gatherings, and a gift exchange will still happen at our home. I hope it does in yours too.

Life. God came to walk among us, to redeem us, and to welcome us into His heavenly home.

Christmas has already come. So, whether you gather in large groups or just relax alone, Christmas can never really be canceled. Because of Christ, your salvation has already been won.

Merry Christmas! ■

To learn more about Hosanna Lutheran Church, visit hosanna-lcms.com. We are located at 9601 E. Brown Road, Mesa.

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