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December 2021

Pacino's Italian Restaurant CELEBRATES NEWYEAR'S EVE VEGAS-STYLE

By Dawn Abbey

Pacino's Italian Restaurant brings Las Vegas to Mesa for a New Year's Eve extravaganza. Guest impersonators featuring Heidi Thompson as *Cher* direct from *Legends in Concert* on the Strip, as well as *Elton John* and *Bill Medley* of the Righteous Brothers, are known to *wow* audiences with their authentic performances.

Pacino's is offering two dinner shows, Early Bird from 5 to 7:30 p.m. and the Late Show from 8 p.m. to midnight. Each show includes tantalizing four-course meals with salad, a choice of two appetizers and several entrées, as well as Pacino's famous Tiramisu for dessert, plus a champagne toast.

Price for the Early Show is \$125 per person and presents impersonations with *Cher* and *Bill Medley*. At the Late Show, all three acts will perform, and dinner guests will have the chance to win more than \$1,000 in Cher and Elton John memorabilia prizes. Late Show price is \$139 per person. Seating is limited to 55 guests per show, and owner Frank Spaccarelli said the Late Show is more than half sold out already.

Credit card reservations are plus tax and gratuity and are non-refundable. For information or to make reservations, call (480) 985-0114.

CHRISTMAS EVE FEAST OF THE FISHES

For those nostalgic for the traditional Italian Christmas Eve Feast of the Fishes, Pacino's is celebrating an all-seafood evening until 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 24. Everything from a variety of seafood appetizers to entrées will be featured. Reservations are recommended. ■

Pacino's Italian Restaurant is located at The Village at Las Sendas, 2831 N. Power Road in Mesa. For information or reservations, call (480) 985-0114.

From Las Vegas 'Legends in Concert

(ith Top celebrity Impersonator guests Cher, Elton John and Bill Me

Sam & Luca Rustic Kitchen Offers Holiday Meals and Best-Loved Italian Favorites

By Jamie Killin

S am & Luca Rustic Kitchen is offering families great dining options for the holidays — from its full menu of Italian food favorites on Christmas Eve to a special three-course prix fixe menu for New Year's Eve.

The New Year's Eve menu will be offered at \$70 per person with a choice of three salads, one of more than half a dozen entrée options, and any of the eatery's decadent desserts.

Guests who haven't visited for a while will also be



greeted by a refreshed dining area.

"We did a facelift on the interior this summer," said owner Dennis Shaw. "We painted, we put all new artwork up, we lightened it up and brightened it up."

The patio is also open for outdoor dining with heaters, making it perfect for winter dinners outdoors.

Best-loved menu items such as the lasagna and Pappardelle Bolognese have remained favorites of Sam & Luca regulars thanks to consistency provided by executive chef Rosallio Tarin and the rest of the team — many of whom have been with the restaurant since it opened threeand-a-half years ago.

The eatery is also well-known for its house made limoncello and sangria as well as being one of the only places in Mesa with wines on tap, offering eight different "After more than three years, I'll be at the restaurant full-time and I'm looking forward to seeing everybody every night," said Dennis. "I'm really excited for that."

Sam & Luca Rustic Kitchen is located at 1959 S. Power Road in Mesa. For more information, or to make a reservation, visit samandlucaaz.com. The eatery strongly recommends reservations to ensure a table.



high-quality wines at the perfect temperature.

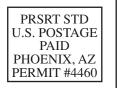
"Having the wines on tap means they're fresh and always the perfect temperature," said Dennis. "It's amazing. When people try them, they love them. It's really one of the best ways to serve wine."

While many of the things that customers have loved the best are remaining the same, they can look forward to an updated menu in early 2022, complete with an expanded, more diverse wine menu introducing California wines and some new Italian varieties.

Another exciting change is that Dennis will be leaving his previous position at Las Sendas Golf Club to be at the restaurant full-time.



POSTAL PATRON ECRWSS



In This Issue

PlumbSmart3	Mesa Public Schools 13
Main Street Harvest4	RMR Social Club14
Las Sendas Golf Club5	Concert Series15
Stretch Zone6	Over 50 Up Close16
Real Estate	Service Directory19



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Published by

Phillips West blishing | Design | Writing | Photography

Mesa, AZ 85215

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(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 Erin Suwwan Jaclyn Threadgill www.luckyyoucreative.com

CONTRIBUTORS John Karadsheh, Lorraine Ryall

www.UpCloseAZ.com

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LOCAL BUSINESS

PlumbSmart Grows by Giving Back

By Jamie Killin

PlumbSmart owner Wayne Decker has learned a lot during his 40 years in the service business, one of the most important being the need to give back to the community and take care of others.

"There are so many people who get a surprise \$400 or \$500 plumbing bill where it's a week's check, or a chunk of it that they just can't afford," he said. "To be able to help them take care of the service allows us to be a blessing to people." When COVID-19

hit, his company provided more than 200 free emergency air conditioning and plumbing services to families affected financially by the pandemic.

"The beauty of it is it takes so much humility for someone to take advantage of that gesture when those who called really needed it," said Wayne.

This generous philosophy toward service starts with Wayne and has been adopted by the whole team. Recently, when an elderly, disabled woman couldn't afford a new water heater, a member of the PlumbSmart team asked if he could install one for her for free, and the team quickly agreed.

Wayne and Karry Decker

"They showed up at her home with a new free water heater and installed it for free," the woman's friend Charlotte recounted. "The plumbing technician even donated his time. With all of the negative that we see, it was not only refreshing but a blessing to see a company truly care."

It's become such a part of the company's culture that Wayne hadn't even been aware of the good deed until he read the glowing review.

"I am so proud of my guys," he said. "They're my

people who buy into what I know is a winning formula for doing business."

This strategy has done well for PlumbSmart, which has continued to grow dramatically year-after-year, even through the pandemic.

This year, for the third year in a row, PlumbSmart was also voted *Best East Valley Plumber* by the residents of Mesa, Gilbert, and Chandler in

the East Valley Tribune's annual Best of the Best survey.

Wayne attributes this to one thing — fair prices 40 to 50 percent below PlumbSmart's major competitors. He shares that 87 percent of all complaints about plumbers are about the price, and when he founded PlumbSmart he set out to change the situation.

"All of our trucks say, 'Plumbers Charge Too Much," Wayne said. "The irony of that was extraordinary to the public because it basically says what they know." To ensure fair pricing, the

PlumbSmart team asks their clients three times if they feel good about the price they've been quoted for their job — which ensures that they do. They ask when they give the estimate, when they are paying for

the service, and a final call from the office. They'll even quote for homeowners who may be

using a different company to help assure them they have a fair price.

"Those struggling financially still have plumbing situations and we've got to take care of them," Wayne said. "I want people to know that we're a safe zone. We're a plumbing and air conditioning safe zone."

PlumbSmart is located at 3010 E. Main Street, Building 1 in Mesa. To learn more, call (480) 654-8865 or visit itsjustplumbsmart.com.

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LOCAL BUSINESS

Main Street Harvest **Hosts Holiday Market**

By Jamie Killin

ain Street Harvest, a local community grocery store in Downtown Mesa, is hosting its second annual holiday market from Tuesday, Dec. 21 to Thursday, Dec. 23, complete with 77 vendors selling

everything from gifts to local foods.

"At our winter market we have tons of food and things people need for their Christmas meals," said store manager Lacey Stapleton."My favorite is the local produce and meat. It's the highest quality you can find. The produce is hyper local and almost all of our produce vendors are in Mesa."



Proof Bread, which owns Main Street Harvest, will also have their breads available for holiday pre-order.

Gift items include gourmet cookies, macramé, pottery, jewelry, art pieces, soaps and more – all perfect for last minute gifts.

"With supply chain issues it's hard to get things in stores, so it's all the more reason to shop local this season," said Lacey.

Attendees can also enter raffles for prizes and take photos in front of a holiday-themed backdrop. There will also be a kids' crafting area. The event is free to attend with free parking in the back.

For more information on the holiday market and Main Street Harvest, visit www.mainstharvest.com, or follow Instagram at @mainstharvest.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Tis' the Season for Peppermint

Amanda Sha

By Kimberly Alvarado

any of us enjoy the familiar scent and flavor of peppermint in some form, especially during the winter months. For decades, even centuries, peppermint has been associated with a variety of health benefits. Today it remains high in rank on the proverbial definition list of the holiday season.

Maybe you'll make a batch of the popular chocolatey-peppermint bark for a neighbor, or frequent the drive-thru at your favorite coffee shop for a minty latte fix.

Whether you're defusing it throughout the kitchen from the glow of a candle or embellishing a festive tree with the red and white striped candy canes, there is something about its charisma that brings comfort and a little added joy to the end of each calendar year.

LITTLE FACTS ABOUT PEPPERMINT

Peppermint (Mentha piperita) is a hybrid mint, a cross between water mint and spearmint. It is thought to have originated in Northern Africa and the Mediterranean. Its usage for medicinal purposes dates back to 1550 BC, where Egyptian medical text lists it as a calming agent for stomach pain.

Besides the present-day nostalgia that surrounds the traditional candy cane, peppermint in oil form remains a natural cleanser that has antiseptic and antibacterial agents. Its cooling effect can soothe irritation and inflammations of the skin.

In oil form it can be applied topically or diffused for inhalation and the mint is known for its capability of reducing itching, easing muscle discomforts, and

reducing the symptoms of a headache.

Amanda Shaw at Mystic Skin is incorporating peppermint into skincare sessions for her clients this month. She knows that stress and dry winter can have adverse effects on the skin, so monthly

care is recommended. Consider treating yourself, or gifting someone on your list, with a featured facial

Amanda has named the Peppermint Patty. This calming, super-hydrating treatment consists of a chocolate mask with hints of peppermint scents to help set the tone for the drier days ahead. She will also be utilizing a good oil plane (derma plane) with facial oil this winter.

"This helps get rid of the dead skin and allows for better product absorption," Amanda said.

Winter facials will be finished with a hydrating serum, a creamy SPF, and lip balm. Her advice for maintaining that glowing feeling this winter is to use skincare products correctly and consistently while maintaining a healthy diet, including drinking plenty of water.

As the hustle and bustle of the season touch each of us, even estheticians this time of the year, Amanda hopes to take time from her busy schedule to spend time with each of her parents before a house full of family arrives for Christmas.

"I'm really excited to see everyone, gather together again, and make new memories this year," she said. Just as important, she is planning to carve out a little time for herself to engage in meditation to keep her stress levels low and her mental health on track during this busy holiday season.

Mystic Skin Esthetics and Reiki is located at 3654 N. Power Road, Building 5, Suite 133, Salon 21. Call Amanda Shaw to schedule an appointment at (480) 818-2625.







WE ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR DINING AND GOLF

BRING BACK THE OLD-FASHIONED HOLIDAYS

By Dawn Abbey

emember Christmas Eves gone by with the whole family, opening gifts around the tree and joining together in a festive holiday meal? The Vistas Pavilion at Las Sendas brings back this nostalgic time without you having to do the preparation.

Reserve now to have our gourmet chefs create a threecourse Christmas Eve Prime Rib Take-Out Dinner with all the trimmings. The meal serves five to seven guests for \$350 plus tax and may be picked up between 3 and 5 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 24.

We have limited bookings for this meal, so please call early to make your reservation, suggests Director of Catering Sales, Carla Shaw. Call (480) 396-4000, Ext. 222, or email cshaw@lassendas.com.

The holidays are a traditional time for romance and engagements. If a sparkling ring is a part of your holiday trove, it's not too early to start thinking about booking the best wedding venue – The Vistas Pavilion. Spectacular views and sunsets, romantic ceremonial settings, unique gourmet catering, and a creative staff make all your dreams a reality for you and your guests. Choose what you want from a variety of packages.

The New Year is also the time to envision upcoming celebrations for 2022. We are here to assist you in all phases of planning weddings, rehearsal dinners, birthday parties, bar/bat mitzvahs, bridal showers, baby showers, anniversary parties, retirement parties, and all types of celebrations and milestones, said Carla. Call (480) 396- 4000, Ext .222, or email cshaw@lassendas.com.

In addition, we will be hosting upcoming member events. The first member event, the Ladies Club



Season Opener, took place in November and we are looking forward to many more. Check lassendas.com for more upcoming events, wine dinners, and specials.

RELAX ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Running around the whole week before Christmas? Down to the wire on Christmas Eve? Take time to relax and enjoy the evening by making reservations now at The Patio & Grille, for a three-course prix fixe dinner served from 4 to 7 p.m. Enjoy live music, which is now extended from 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Call (480) 396-4000, Ext. 220, for reservations.

LAS SENDAS CLOSED ON CHRISTMAS DAY

All Las Sendas venues, including the golf course, will be closed on Christmas Day to allow our employees to enjoy the holiday with their families. Everything reopens as usual Sunday, Dec. 26.

CELEBRATE NEW YEAR'S EVE

Ring in 2022 with a festive four-course prix fixe dinner served from 5 to 10 p.m. at The Patio & Grille for \$99 plus tax and gratuity per person. Includes salad and your choice from two starters, four delicious entrées, and two decadent desserts. Live entertainment will highlight the evening from 8 p.m. to midnight. Call (602) 734-5524 for reservations.

GIVE GIFTS OF GOLF

"Happy Holidays. The golf course is beautiful, and the Las Sendas Pro Shop is full of all the best gift ideas for everyone on your list. Some of the more popular items include Theraguns, Las Sendas rocks glass and decanter sets, and athleisure wear from VOURI," said Director of Golf Michael Field.

For those of you taking advantage of our fantastic golf course, be sure to book your tee time well in advance. These next few months are expected to be the busiest our Phoenix metro area has ever seen, Michael warned. You can book tee times at our lowest rates up to 30 days in advance at lassendas.com.

Don't forget about our Back Nine and Breakfast. We have early morning tee times daily for nine holes, which includes breakfast at the Las Sendas Grille, where you can sit down and order your favorite items off the menu. We hope all of you enjoy the holidays. "Be safe and have fun," said Michael.





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Las Sendas Golf Club

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LOCAL BUSINESS **Stretching Improves Your**

Submitted by Stretch Zone, Longbow Thy do we dread our yearly check-ups and any other doctor's appointments? Is it the cold and stale office, the notso-friendly waiting room, or is it the 20-minute visit that turns into a two-hour long excursion?

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If we have all learned something during this pandemic, it's that we each could take a little more time and effort to take care of ourselves. Stretching with us can do just that.

Stretching is pertinent to improving quality of life, and maintaining flexibility can help to prevent injury. One-on-one practitioner stretching is not just for the professional athlete. Our programs are personal and tailored to each client to meet health and wellness goals and needs.

Here at Stretch Zone, we have accredited neuromuscular therapists — or stretch practitioners — who use specific protocols to target problem areas and relieve tension. With our equipment, we can isolate specific muscle groups; that in turn helps us to stretch you correctly and safely without straining

other muscles in the process. One-on-one stretching is personal and allows us to do the work for you so we can get the full integrity of each stretch.

Whether it's common low back pain, the work stress you hold in your shoulders, or sciatic pain, we have a protocol for you. Our practitioners are credentialed through the national certification board for therapeutic massage and body work. After assessing your natural range of motion and locating your problem areas, we create a personalized 12-week program and adapt it as you progress.

Sessions range from \$35 to \$65, with less expensive greater frequency plans available. Stretch Zone accepts HSA and FSA accounts. The health benefits that follow our programs here at Stretch Zone far outweigh the price.

Well, what are you waiting for? Come on down to Stretch Zone and set up your first complimentary stretch. We guarantee you'll leave feeling better than ever and wanting to get back on the table for another session!

Stretch Zone, Longbow is located at 3204 N. Recker Road, Suite 104. Schedule your session by calling (480) 590-1133. For more information, go to stretchzone.com.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Tuscany Custom Flooring OFFERS PERSONALIZED SERV

By Jamie Killin

¬or most people, their home is their when it comes to renovations, quality work and smart design decisions are key.

Shelly Schrater, owner of Tuscany Custom Flooring, grew up in the industry watching her father's efforts in home construction. Through her work experiences in real estate and commercial renovations, she found her passion in helping families perfect their homes.

"I've been around construction pretty much my whole life," she shared. "My father designed and built homes throughout his career as an architect, and I've always had an eye for design."

She first had a flooring company in Northern California in the 1980s, but later moved to Arizona with her husband to raise her son and enjoy a slower pace of life. In 2002, she got her license in the state and founded Tuscany Custom Flooring, excited to start working in her passion once again.

"I don't even feel like it's work," Shelly said. "I love doing what I do, and I feel very fortunate. I love going into someone's home and being there for the whole project."

Tuscany Custom Flooring provides a wide variety of renovations, including new flooring, custom showers, countertop replacements, painting, and more. Shelly also helps clients identify how they can best upgrade their home — from small changes such as backsplashes to large renovations like new flooring or cost-effective enhancements like painting old cabinets for a fresh look.

She begins each project by speaking with her potential client on the phone,



looking at photos of the space, and then putting together ideas and bringing samples to the home. Unlike a traditional contractor, she uses her design expertise and practical real estate knowledge to provide recommendations. Then she brings the best samples directly to the client's home, providing peace of mind and ease.

"I care about every project, and I try to provide personal service while overseeing everything we do," she said. "I think I bring together a whole package as far as helping a person formulate what they want to do then seeing it through to the end. I think a lot of my clients love that."

Shelly and her team also carefully manage their client load to ensure quality craftsmanship, a smooth experience for the client, and a happy work environment for the team.

"I work with wonderful people, and I want to keep working with them for years, so I respect them and let them know how much they mean to me," she said. "I get to enjoy what I do because of the people who do the work with me." \blacksquare

To schedule a consultation with Tuscany Custom Flooring, call or text Shelly at (480) 329-5509, or email tuscanyllc@cox.net.

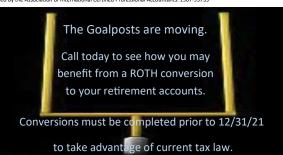


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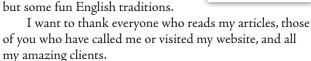
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REAL ESTATE

Boxing Day — An English Tradition

By Lorraine Ryall Associate Broker, CDPE, CSSN, CNE **KOR** Properties I ollowing my own 10 years of tradition of writing articles in this publication (I cannot believe it has been that long), there is no real estate talk in December



Boxing Day is a day steeped in tradition in England and was always my family's day to celebrate Christmas together. We would spend Christmas Day with our in-laws and on Boxing Day, our family would get together at my sister's house for leftover turkey, bubble and squeak (see recipe below), and the traditional English Christmas dessert of mince pies. Not only was it a great way to use up all the Christmas dinner leftovers, but it made getting together with family and friends so much easier over Christmas with two days to celebrate instead of just one.



WHEN IS BOXING DAY? Boxing Day is Dec. 26 and like Christmas Day, it is a public holiday in England.

WHAT IS BOXING DAY?

It originated in the United Kingdom and is celebrated in a number of countries that previously formed part of the



British Empire.

There are many theories as to the origin of Boxing Day however, they all include the giving of a Christmas Box.

GIFT FOR TRADESMEN

In Britain, it was a custom for tradesmen to collect Christmas Boxes of money or presents on the first weekday after Christmas as thanks for good service throughout the year. This is mentioned in Samuel Pepys' diary entry for Dec. 19, 1663.

TO PROTECT SHIPS

During the age of great exploration, when great sailing ships were setting off to discover new land, a Christmas Box was used for good luck. It was a small container placed on each ship while it was still in port. A priest would place it there, and to ensure a safe return crewmen would drop money into the box. It was then sealed and kept on board for the entire voyage.

If the ship came home safely, the box was handed over to the priest in exchange for the saying of a Mass of thanks for the success of the voyage. The priest would keep the box sealed until Christmas, when he would open it to share the contents with the poor.

TO HELP THE POOR

An Alms Box was placed in every church on Christmas Day and worshippers would place a gift for the poor of the parish. These boxes were opened the day after Christmas.

Good King Wenceslas is a popular Christmas carol that tells a story of Good King Wenceslas braving harsh winter

weather to give alms to a poor peasant on the Feast of Stephen, the second day of Christmas, Dec. 26.

THE SERVANTS' CHRISTMAS DAY

Servants of the wealthy were allowed the next day to visit their families since they would have had to serve their masters on Christmas Day. The employers would give each servant a box to take home, containing gifts, bonuses, and sometimes leftover food.

TRADITIONAL BUBBLE AND SQUEAK

This is the ultimate for leftover mash and vegetables, and trust me, it is so good.

- Olive oil
- Two tablespoons unsalted butter
- Leftover mash potatoes
- Leftover cooked vegetables, such as carrots, rutabaga, turnips, parsnips, brussels sprouts, cabbage, or anything



you have left over. Halve brussels sprouts and slice larger vegetables.

Place non-stick frying pan on medium heat with one tablespoon of oil and the butter (or any leftover drippings if you have them). Add in the fresh herb leaves and let them crisp up for a minute, then add the potatoes and veggies. Pat down to form a flat, even layer. Season well with sea salt and black pepper. Cook about 20 minutes, flip halfway through until both sides are golden and crispy.

You can serve bubble and squeak as a side dish, on its own, or add fried eggs to it. No matter how you eat it, it's a delicious way to use up all your leftover veggies you would normally throw away.

From my family to yours – Merry Christmas!

Lorraine is a Multi-Million Dollar producing agent, has been a full-time Realtor for over 13 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.

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EDUCATION

Self Development Academy Students **DEFY NATIONWIDE LEARNING LOSSES**

By Sami Majeed, J.D., Chief of Schools, Self Development Academy

"A t Self Development Academy, I have been given many opportunities including the opportunity to start middle school at age 10. I have been able to learn at my own level. I sometimes do not even realize that I am learning material that people at other schools do not see until high school or college because I have been learning content two grade levels above my own since I was seven years old. I now have an opportunity to go to high school and take college courses earlier than other people," said Nia Jebaraj, a 7th grader.

Educators, leaders, parents, and students knew that the year lost to the pandemic would include learning losses — *significant losses*. The Brookings Institute, a think tank, studied the learning losses over time. The picture they paint is *grim*.

The think tank used the word to editorialize, providing emotionally evocative adjectives to data. Yet, the 50 percent drop in math, and an almost equally significant drop in reading, cannot be described in words other than *grim* or *bleak*.

Grim indeed. But not ubiquitous. We will share what we see at Self Development Academy (SDA) and more importantly, what we are doing to lessen the loss of learning. Fortunately, we escaped the gravity of falling test scores as reported by many sources, including *The Washington Post*.

The lost year to COVID was not repeated at SDA, not just because of our staff, but also because of our students. It is a matter of two simple principles: reciprocal kindness and classroom-led discussions facilitated by the teacher. I guess what we are saying is that there is an instinct that no matter how dire our world can be, children's guiding psychology development will always tend toward goodness and self-development. Simply, *it is the human will to be wise*. SDA is run by learned researchers. When COVID demonstrated pockmarks in our system, an audit of our program was in order. We concluded soon after that two programs would work best based on agency and kindness.

With agency, the teacher is a facilitator, the classroom is a symphony, and the students are motivated to become critical and creative thinkers. And by emphasizing kindness, our program slowly retrains students to exhibit self-regulated behavior, reinforced positively by peers who provide compliments to their classmates for displaying the very behavior.

PART I: THE PEER PROGRAM (POSITIVELY ENHANCED EDUCATION THROUGH RECIPROCITY)

We noticed immediately an important similarity between last year and this year — demeanor. Children this year were displaying all the same chair poses they did last year at home. The current year's behavior in-person or COVID year behavior remotely was similar: not tracking the speaker, legs not on the floor, and iteratively tapping pencils.

Children spent an entire year learning that they were able to determine what they were going to do during the day. With less engaging material, there were fewer reasons to pay attention to academic learning.

How are we fixing this at SDA? Combining basic psychological principles of peer identity reinforcement, positive reinforcement, and reciprocity, we came up with a game plan where peers celebrate each other's behavior changes, with the goal of a perfect learning environment. It is called our PEER Program (Positively Enhanced Education through Reciprocity).

PART 2: THE CLASSROOM AS A SYMPHONY

At SDA, we desire brilliant discussions in our classrooms. For that, we need dynamic, probing teachers who see the classroom as a symphony, each instrument as an ability level, bringing up the lower performing students to



introduce concepts, and higher performing to answer the difficult questions. Such an environment is not found in elementary schools but is ubiquitous in law schools and graduate schools.

If you see children as instruments in the classroom, the classroom as a symphony, and the teacher as a conductor, such a metaphoric mental framework enables what psychologists call the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD). ZPD is a term developed by a transformative psychologist whose theory states that the best type of learning is done when the teacher is far enough away to allow the child to learn and think but close enough in case it is impossible.

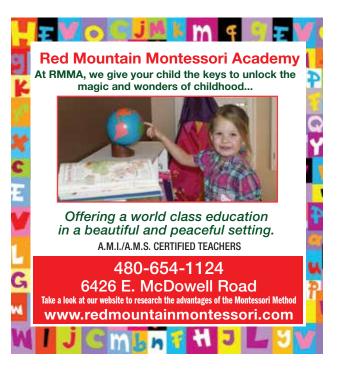
We make learning fun and engaging as evidenced by students' tendency to raise their hands and excitedly standing up with their raised hands. The more engaged children are, the higher their bodies go in elevation.

This year, at SDA, we are seeing student learning growth greater than previous years. Our kindergarten students are already reading fluently and with expression in Ms. Haschke's class. Our full class of 6th-grade students are motivated to take on the challenge of Algebra I, and some of our 8th-grade students are enjoying Algebra II.

Our students are eager to learn and gain knowledge. Thanks to SDA's two programs: kids complimenting each other and handing over learning to children while making sure teachers are there to push, prod, and probe to the penultimate.

Yes, it was a pandemic year last year. Yet, the environment at SDA is an exception. Students' learning rest on what ultimately makes for a happy human being — Agency and Kindness.

Self Development Academy is now enrolling for the school year 2022-2023. For more information about Self Development Academy, please call (480) 641-2640 or visit our website: selfdevelopmentacademy.com.









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VERY VEGGIE FRITTATA 10 Onions, spinach, mushrooms, cheddar

MAMA'S FRITTATA 10 Potatoes, onions, peppers HAWAIIAN FRENCH TOAST 9 Topped with strawberries and bananas

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SALAD 14 Atlantic salmon grilled on top of mixed field of greens APPLE GORGONZOLA SALAD 11 Fresh baby arugula, green apples, candied pecans

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> DA BURGER 11 6 oz ground beef patty, bacon, fried egg

ALL AMERICAN BURGER 11 6 oz ground beef patty, lettuce,

6 oz ground beef patty, lettuce, tomato, onion, cheddar

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ZEPPOLES 5 Fried dough coated with powdered sugar

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SPICY BLOODY MARY 8

V8 juice, sriracha, splash of olive juice with spicy salt rim

CUCUMBER BLOODY MARY 8

Cucumber vodka, Bloody Mary mix, garnished with cucumber, cheese,

PINEAPPLE LIME MARGARITA 8

Fresh lime juice rim, Jose Quervo Silver, lime juice, pineapple juice

SEABREEZE 7 Cranberry juice well vodka,

grapefruit juice

PEACH OR STRAWBERRY BELLINI 7 Peach or strawberry puree with

prosecco

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*Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish, or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness. tomato

BLOOD ORANGE MIMOSA 7

Blood orange juice and champagne

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Gin, grapefruit juice and simple syrup

MANMOSA 8

Blue Moon and orange juice



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REAL ESTATE

Why Zillow Valuations Were Never Right in the First Place

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

G iven the market intensity of this year, it seems like a good time to talk about market value and how it is determined.

Let's start with a quick exercise. If we asked you what the price per cart was at Costco,



John and Natascha Karadsheh

could you answer the question? Would \$500 per cart be a deal or a rip off? You might say it depends on what is in the cart. Is the cart filled with meat or macaroni? Wine or grapes? Televisions or tortillas?

During March of 2020, a cart full of toilet paper might have been worth more than a cart full of movie tickets. We all know the price of anything is dependent not only on the item itself, but also on the perception of the value of that item in the marketplace — which is determined by supply, demand, mood, and motivation.

When Zillow started with property valuations years ago, we saw that their values were wildly inaccurate two identical houses next door to one another could be hundreds of thousands of dollars apart in price. In fact, in 2016, it was no surprise when Zillow CEO Spencer Rascoff sold his own home for 40 percent less than the Zestimate.

Today, Zillow reports that 99 percent of their Zestimates are within 20 percent of the sales price. Sounds pretty good, right? Let's break that down for a moment on a \$500,000 property that is a range of \$100k on either side. In all our years in the business, we have yet to meet a buyer or seller who is good with that spread.

Value is based on the eye of the beholder, and, over the past few years, everyone has used Zillow so frequently that they started to believe what they saw on the screen. We, the viewers — who found Zillow particularly addictive in an increasing market — gave Zillow credibility through our clicks and views. Many homeowners trusted the Zillow values so much that they sold their homes to iBuyers and investors based on a Zestimate, leaving enormous amounts of money on the table in the hottest market of all time. No appraisals were conducted so there were no checks or balances. The investors knew sellers would believe Zillow and so they structured their offers accordingly and made a nice profit along the way.

Real estate is a business of nuances. Selling a house is not like selling anything else. Many people think value is only based on the obvious factors: location, number of bedrooms, square footage, garage size, etc. But value is also based on a huge number of less quantifiable factors that can positively *or* negatively impact the price of a home, including compass orientation, cabinet color, proximity to a freeway, condition of the neighbor's house, cleanliness, a political sign in the front yard, light fixtures, pet friendliness, baseboard size, smell, neighborhood amenities, Instagrammable vignettes, or simply the *feeling*. Buyers will buy or reject a property based on these factors alone.

The other great nuance is the state of the market. How many buyers are looking on a given week and how motivated are they? Did interest rates increase or decrease? Was the home overpriced or underpriced to start? How many other comparable homes are on the market?

And what about the personal state of the buyer or seller? Do they have to sell? Are they being transferred? Are they getting married or getting divorced? Are finances motivating a purchase or sale? These factors can all impact price to varying degrees.

Market value also depends on national trends and confidence. In 2019, no one wanted a home office, home gym, or home theater. By the middle of 2020, buyers wanted two home offices, room for a Peloton, and a second family room for their kids. Homes that had those features received a premium, but maybe in a year or two they won't any longer.

Similarly, chatter about an impending housing and/ or stock market crash impacts confidence and market strength, independent of actual market conditions. National elections, state laws, tax codes, gas prices, weather, forest fires, job opportunities, and politics can all impact value.



So, given all these nuances, there is no way a Zestimate will ever be *right*.

Our family has been representing buyers, sellers, and investors for over 40 years. Every day we analyze the many nuances of real estate, talk to buyers, talk to sellers, talk to other Realtors, measure market conditions, see inventory, sense trends, compare market cycles, read articles, evaluate broader economic conditions and, of course, analyze relevant data to help our clients find opportunities in the marketplace. In our business, it's an art and not an algorithm.

Wishing you and your families a very Happy Holiday season and a healthy and happy New Year!

John and Natascha Karadsheh 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 19 years and is an Accredited Buyers Representative (ABR) and Certified Residential Specialist (CRS), a member of the Arizona Regional MLS Rules & Policies Committee & Appeals Committee, and the West and Southeast Realtors of the Valley Professional Standards Committee.

Natascha is an Associate Broker, a Multi-Million Dollar Producer, Founder of Mesa Food Truck Fridays, Member and Past-Chair of the City of Mesa Economic Development Advisory Board, and serves on the Board of Directors of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council.

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



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7329 E Mallory Cir	1,762	Grayfox	\$530,000
3055 N Red Mountain #142	1,571	Ironwood Pass	\$540,000
6921 E Scarlet Cir	1,926	Cobblestone	\$550,000
7430 E Oasis Cir	1,821	Silverhawke	\$575,000
2729 N Raven	2,475	Trailridge	\$600,000
3060 N Ridgecrest #76	2,732	Desert Vistas	\$620,000
3060 N Ridgecrest #189	2,731	Desert Vistas	\$629,777
7363 E Nance St	3,200	Grayfox	\$670,000
6916 E Quince St	2,206	Sanctuary	\$749,900
8225 E Teton St	2,322	Stonecliff	\$811,000
3430 N Mountain Ridge #16	3,655	Sonoran Heights	\$935,000
3861 N Pinnacle Hills Cir	3,542	Pinnacle Hills	\$1,000,000
8052 E Sienna St	3,365	Echo Canyon	\$1,035,000
3241 N Piedra Cir	4,663	Rock Canyon	\$1,325,000

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LOCAL BUSINESS

Smart Shades are a Smart Move

Submitted by Linda Palm, Window to Design

doday's smart-home technology is evolving quickly, with smart control available for everything from door locks and lights to refrigerators and shades. Yes, shades.

Why even consider smart window shades for your home? Think about these benefits: added convenience, while enhancing security and privacy, energy efficiency, and protecting furniture and flooring from harsh UV rays. Plus, the window shades are cordless, making them a safer option if you have small children or pets.



Motorized operating systems such as PowerView[®] Automation from Hunter Douglas let you raise and lower your smart shades with the press of a button, tap on a mobile device, or with your voice.

Have large windows or sliding-glass doors? Hunter Douglas offers smart vertical window treatments, for times when you want complete coverage over those windows or doors.

Luminette[®] Privacy Sheers, for example, combine a sheer fabric for light where you want it, with vertical fabric vanes to preserve your privacy.

For the best approach to energy efficiency, look to smart cellular shades, like Duette Honeycomb Shades.

Over time, the sun's rays can damage furniture, flooring, and even fine artwork. One solution for protecting interiors is Designer Screen Shades from Hunter Douglas, which block UV rays while maintaining your view of the outdoors.

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.





EDUCATION

KEEP LEARNING ALIVE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

By Laurie Struna Photos by Tim Hacker Mesa Public Schools

he holidays are busy and provide students and their families time to take a well-deserved break from regular routines. During seasonal breaks and vacations, it's important to keep students' brains active and alert, so they are ready to return to school and ready to pick up where they left off.

Kim Freehan, director of early learning at Mesa Public Schools, shares keeping young learners engaged

doesn't mean sitting down for hours of homework, it means participating in activities to make young children think.

"Teachers have noticed a decline in children's fine motor skills the past several years," Kim says. "Fine motor skills are the activities that build strong muscles in the hands and wrists. These muscles work together so children

can be more independent, allowing children to write, draw and cut, and open a package of food, button a shirt, or put a straw in drink containers."

Children's brains grow the fastest during the first five years of their lives, and they are built to learn new things. Research shows that every time we learn something new, our brains make new physical connections between the brain cells — or neurons — in our brains.



Looking for ways to engage your young learner? Here are some tips from Kim:

- Construct holiday decorations, or cards using a variety of tools like chalk, pens, and pencils.
- Make holiday decorations by stringing beads, macaroni, and sections of straws.
- Let young learners help with mealtime including tasks like stirring, shaking, chopping, cutting, and mixing ingredients.
- Open and close containers with lids, jars, plastic containers, and kitchen storage containers.
- Enjoy spending time together working on puzzles or playing games.
- Read aloud to your child every day. Reading uses more complex vocabulary and provides opportunities to discuss new vocabulary with your child.
- Sing together, because it introduces and reinforces new vocabulary.
- + Let your child select their favorite books and songs.
- Narrate your adventures in the store or car, and talk about what your child is doing.

For more information regarding early learning programs, please visit mpsaz.org/earlylearning.

Craig Bolier, our Agent from Allstate Insurance, has provided us with high quality and excellence in insurance services. We transferred all our coverage over from another office and he was very detailed in his review which included home, auto, RV, rental properties, and ATV policies. He was able to identify coverage gaps in order to mitigate our exposure to potential risk. I would highly recommend Craig Bolier as your insurance Agent, 5 STARS!" –Tannis McBean

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Red Mountain Ranch Social Club Engages in Fall Adventures

By Robin Hagenstad, Red Mountain Ranch Social Club Secretary Photos by David Bender

s we welcome the cooler fall temperatures in Arizona, the Red Mountain Ranch Social Club has jumped into a season of exciting, fun, and educational activities.

The popular *Game Night* kicked off in September. Social club members John and Jan Pond coordinate and host this event on the first Thursday of each month. After enjoying dinner at the Red Mountain Ranch Country Club Grill, a large group of members play games, including Bunco and Bingo.

At the October meeting, the guest speaker was Mr. Jason Gitkin, aviation community relations and event manager for Sky Harbor International Airport. His presentation was very engaging and informative. He covered the history of the airport and expansion projects in progress, and airport safety precautions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jason highlighted the airport's Navigator Program, which includes friendly dogs. The program is designed to assist and support travelers during their time at the airport. Sky Harbor is rated as one of the friendliest airports thanks to the efforts and hard work by the airport staff and volunteers, Jason said.

The social club held their annual Halloween Party at the Red Mountain Ranch Country Club. The event was planned and coordinated by members Mic Bagby and Katrina Shadkhost. The Halloween decor of skeletons, ghosts, spiderwebs, skulls, and candles transformed the country club dining room into a dramatic and spooky environment. Attendees enjoyed a delicious dinner of pasta and salad catered by the country club chef.

A costume parade was accomplished by all attendees participating in a conga line to the tune of *Monster Mash*! Numerous prizes were awarded for the creative costumes the social club members were sporting for the party. Martha Stephens was rewarded with the Funniest Women's costume prize by bringing to life a replica of an adorable toy doll. Betty Day won Best Women's costume



for her very cute bumble bee outfit.

Robert Tavassolia tied with John Pond for Best Men's costume. Robert portrayed Priest Guido Sarducci and John Pond was attired as King Arthur. Bill Schmidt, dressed as Ozzy Osbourne, was awarded the Funniest Men's costume.

The overall Best of Show prize was bestowed on Marsha and Peter Wooley for their clever outfits as the COVID virus. Following the costume contest, the party guests enjoyed dancing the night away to popular live music provided by John Burak.

A group of members met for a delicious dinner at Cafe Euro and then attended the play *Harvey* at the Hale Theatre in Gilbert. The theatre performance was charming, and it is always much more fun to enjoy dinner and a play with a group of friends.

The Veterans Day program at the November meeting was developed and presented by member Warren Stephens. Warren gave a dynamic educational and enlightening lecture regarding the history and importance of Veterans Day.

The social club has 20 members who have served in the military. Following the educational presentation, Warren acknowledged each veteran individually. He shared their record of service, along with personal stories and experiences that occurred during their military service. Each veteran was recognized and awarded with a beautiful certificate and a gift card to Red, White and Brew. The program was heartwarming and a poignant reminder of our sincere appreciation of those who have served our country. Social club members are looking forward to celebrating the holiday season together with plans in place for

a Christmas party at Painted Mountain Golf Resort and a New Year's Eve party to ring in the New Year. Would you like to make new friends? Explore fascinating locations and museums in Arizona? Attend concerts or theatre productions with a fun group? Participate in activities such as themed parties or game

night? You choose which activities you want to attend. Interested? Then it is time for you to join the Red Mountain Ranch Social Club. The dues are only \$12 per year. In this intergenerational club the members range in age from the 30s to 90s. You do not need to reside in Red Mountain Ranch to join.■

The mission of RMRSC is, "to promote the social and cultural growth of its members; to engage in educational outreach; to encourage mental and physical health; and to facilitate community involvement for the benefit of society."

For further information and membership information regarding the Red Mountain Ranch Social Club, go to the website rmrsc.com. The Red Mountain Ranch Social Club meets the second Thursday of the month except during the summer months. The meetings are from 9:30 to 11 a.m. and include time for social interaction and an entertaining, educational program. Guests are welcome to attend meetings and do not need to pre-register. The meetings are held at the Red Mountain Ranch Country Club conference room, 6425 E. Teton Circle, Mesa.

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EVENTS

Local Church Holding Friday **NIGHT CONCERT SERIES**

Submitted by Red Mountain United Methodist Church

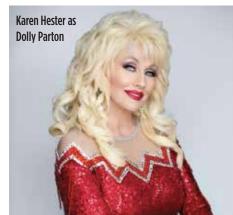
ed Mountain United Methodist Church presents an exciting new concert series in 2022 to support the church's community outreach ministry, enrich the church's cultural life, and provide fundraising for church and youth programs.

The Friday Night Concert Series, presented in conjunction with JR McAlexander's Showtune Productions, will provide friends and families with a unique evening of entertainment.

The concert series consists of four separate events throughout January, February, and March 2022 and will take place at the Red Mountain United Methodist Church, 2936 N. Power Road, Mesa.

The exciting concerts scheduled include:

• Friday, Jan. 7 at 7 p.m. ROCKIN' REWIND: Six decades of top rock hits with colorful costumes, live rock band, and five dynamite singers.



- Friday, Feb. 4 at 7 p.m. Karen Hester as DOLLY PARTON: Starring on E Networks Clash of The Cover Bands, Karen is the ultimate Dolly Parton tribute throughout North America.
- Friday, Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. **BEST OF BROADWAY:** Featuring four powerhouse singers and a 10-piece orchestra, hear your Broadway favorites from Jersey Boys, Abba, Cats, Phantom, Sound of Music, Chicago, West Side Story, and Hair.
- Friday, March 25 at 7 p.m. YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND, Songs of Carole King and James Taylor: Features Kristen Drathman and Kyle Sorrell, a live six-piece band, backup singers, and all the great hits such as One Fine Day, Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow, So Far Away, It's Too Late, Natural Woman, Carolina in My Mind, How Sweet It Is, You've Got a Friend and many more.

Tickets are available online at rmumc.com or showtuneproductions.com. You may also purchase tickets in-person at the Red Mountain United Methodist Church office from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday beginning Dec. 6. Individual tickets are \$25, or subscriptions to all four performances are \$22 each.

Red Mountain United Methodist Church is a welcoming, diverse, intergenerational community, transformed by God's grace, reaching out in mission.



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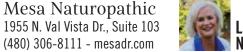
Mesa Naturopathic introduces Amy Maul, Laser Certified Licensed Aesthetician.



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Red Mountain Campus

16 December 2021 Up Close



HEALTH

Juer 50

Rules of Contact with Medicare

Submitted by Tapestry Insurance

Did you know that people representing Medicare plans aren't allowed to come to your home uninvited to sell or endorse anything?

They cannot call you unless you're already a member of the plan. If you're a member, the agent who helped you join can call you.



Also, they cannot require you to speak to a sales agent to get information about the plan.

As I have mentioned, my husband is turning 65 in January of next year. He has received numerous telephone calls from people claiming to want to help him with Medicare.

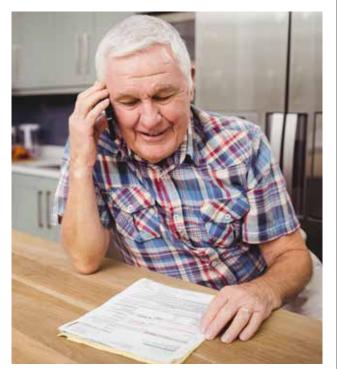
As a licensed agent, I know the rules of contact and told him that it was illegal for anyone to call him without his permission. They acted like they were from Medicare. This was false and you should be aware that Medicare will not call you unless you have requested a phone appointment.

Please be aware that you should not be contacted by phone by an agent unless you have called first or filled out a permission-to-contact form. With the intense amount of marketing going on right now for Medicare, I thought it would be good to let you know what the rules of contact are.

If you have questions or are interested in having

assistance with your Medicare choices, please call me for a consultation. I am a firm believer in having someone local come and sit with you and help you make the right choice.

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



FINANCES

Retirees fear becoming a burden

Over 50

Submitted by Brent D. Hoskinson and Linda Drake

ere's something to think about: 72 percent of retirees say that one of their biggest fears is becoming a burden on their families, according to an *Edward Jones/Age Wave* study. Fortunately, there's much you can do to avoid this fate.

For starters, contribute as much as you can afford to your health savings account, IRA, 401(k) and other retirement accounts. And devote a reasonable part of your portfolio to investments that offer growth potential.

Another suggestion: Prepare yourself for the possible costs of long-term care, which can be enormous. You may never need to enter a nursing home or use the services of a home health aide, but you won't want to risk having your family assume these expenses. A financial professional can suggest an appropriate protection strategy.

Finally, make sure your estate plans include key documents, such as a financial power of attorney and a health care directive.

Taking these and other steps can help ease the worries of burdening your loved ones – and that's a liberating feeling. ■

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



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

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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

and the second second



Brent D. Hoskinson, AAMS[®] Financial Advisor

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Linda Drake, AAMS® Financial Advisor

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Medicare options?

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Dr. Rashid is a board certified dermatologist, cosmetic and Mohs micrographic surgeon.



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DR. RASHID IS A MEMBER OF: American Academy of Dermatology American Osteopathic Association American Society of Mohs Surgery can Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery The American Academy of

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Fast 30 - 40 min treatment - This quick full face and neck treatment is more comfortable, easy to perform and can actually be done during a lunch break

(IUB) technology generates heat at this exact depth in the mid-dermis. Additionally, there is an integrated cooling mechanism that protects the uppermost skin layer from burning.

The impacted treatment zones stimulate a healing response, called neo-collagenases, which increases and regenerates the collagen in the skin, leading to the reduction in fine lines and wrinkles.

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New Year's Eve Menu

STARTER

Choice of Lobster Bisque or Roasted Butternut Squash soup.

SECOND COURSE

Sweet Kale Winter Salad. Mixed Field Greens and Kale tossed in a sweet red wine vinegar dressing, topped with Goat Cheese, Candied Walnuts, and Strawberry slices.



Prime Rib, roasted fingerling potatoes, carrots and broccolini.

CHOICE OF THIRD COURSE

potatoes, carrots and broccolini. Served with Creamy Horseradish sauce and Au Jus.

Seared Halibut, sautéed couscous with a white wine cream sauce, topped with a charred lemon twist.

Roasted Peking Chicken halves: Half a chicken served Peking style over a bed of roasted fingerling potatoes and sautéed broccolini.

6oz Filet, Yukon mashed potatoes, Sautéed Asparagus and carrots.

Two 5oz Cold Water Lobster, served with mashed potatoes and fresh vegetables.

Add on to any entrée a 5oz **Lobster tail** for \$30

DESSERT

Spiced Berry Puff Pastry, Cinnamon Apple Tart.

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SLICED PRIME RIB: \$42/plate 16oz portion of roasted prime rib served over herb roasted fingerling potatoes and buttered baby carrots.

PAN SEARED HALIBUT: \$38/plate Pan seared Halibut served with a white whine butter sauce over a bed of sautéed kale and chard, fingerling potatoes.

DESSERT

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