





ROCK CONCERTS

by R. J. Brenner

The term “rock and roll” was popularized by disc jockey Alan Freed, in 1951, but it’s likely rock concerts were performed in Arizona as early as 900 years ago. The instruments played then we now call bell rocks.

Bell rocks, also referred to as ringing rocks and lithophonic rocks, are boulders that resonate like bells when struck. They are worldwide phenomena—existing at sites in Australia, Namibia, Sudan, Mongolia, India, England, Scotland, Mexico, and the US—that have been scientifically studied since at least the early 1900s. In the US, bell rocks have been identified in Montana, Arizona, and Pennsylvania, which is home to Ringing Rocks Park, the most well known of the US sites.

Arizona’s bell rocks, of which there are multiple sites, were first documented in a 1986 report published by archaeologist Henry Wallace. They were also the topic of a 1993 report written by Ken Hedges, an anthropologist and editor of the journal *American Indian Rock Art*.

“The lion’s share of Arizona’s bell rocks date from the Hohokam Early Classic Period, around AD 1100–1250,” says Peter Boyle, PhD, an independent researcher working under the auspices of the Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society (AAHS).

“Ancient peoples may have used the rocks as a sort of alarm system or may have used them in sacred or ceremonial rituals,” says Boyle. “At locations with large numbers of bell rocks, it is likely ancient peoples gathered and played them similarly to how musical instruments are played today.”

An AAHS-sponsored study of a site northwest of Tucson was conducted between January 2014 and spring 2018. The volunteer research team was led by Boyle and Janine Hernbrode, an

“NO ONE TRULY UNDERSTANDS WHY ONE ROCK RINGS AND ANOTHER DOESN’T.”

The strike zones of the large bell rock in the foreground are the lighter-colored, worn-down portions located along the rock’s upper edge. The center upper edge and the far-right upper edge were frequently struck. A petroglyph of a snake is located on the small boulder just above the right end of the bell rock.



This very large bell rock has very extensive signs of wear, indicating the bell rock was “played” often. This boulder produced an especially loud and resonant sound and could have been played by one person or two or more people at once.

THE FLOWER WORLD IS A SPIRITUAL PLACE EVOKED IN DREAMS AND VISIONS THAT MAY BE EXPERIENCED IN THE CONSCIOUS WORLD THROUGH SONGS, PRAYERS, AND HARD WORK.

independent rock-art researcher. More than 120 bell rocks were discovered on the two-section site, located on public and private lands.

“The rocks show signs of ‘use wear’ and patination,” says Boyle. “Use wear” refers to visible evidence on the rock surface indicating that the rock was used by humans who likely struck it with another, smaller rock. These dints, originally light-colored, darken over

time, during a process called patination.

“So, the dints tell us that the rocks were struck by humans, and the relatively dark patination of the dints tells us they were used in ancient times,” Boyle explains.

Although bell-rock sites around the world hold different sorts of rocks, most bell rocks are volcanic—formed by magma—often fine-grained phonolite, an uncommon type of rock with a lower silica content. The bell rocks at the recent AAHS study site are volcanic felsic rock, containing large amounts of feldspar and quartz. The site’s rocks come in a variety of sizes, the largest of which weigh about 5,000 pounds, the smallest weigh about 100 pounds, and the average weigh about 1,000 pounds.

“No one truly understands why one rock rings and another doesn’t,” says Boyle.

Like any object that resonates to produce a sound—a tuning fork, wine glass, or chime—no matter what it is struck with, the object will emit a consistently specific pitch. So, too, do bell rocks.

“To prevent damaging the bell rocks, we were very careful to strike the rocks only with a wooden mallet,” Boyle notes.

So what do the rocks sound like?

In an eight-acre site in Pennsylvania’s Upper Black Eddy near the Delaware River, the majority of bell rocks produce a sound in the tone of B flat. Interestingly, the rocks at the recently studied Arizona site possess a pitch range of three octaves.

“This range is comparable to [that of] many modern musical instruments,” says Boyle.

Each of the two sections surveyed by the recent AAHS project is about 10 acres. Rocks are scattered over hill-sides and clustered around a central open space, similar in structure to a theater-in-the-round. This suggests the Hohokam people might have gathered in the center, and when the rocks were struck, a form of ancient surround sound could have resulted.

The gatherings may have been an early form of participatory music in which a core of skilled musicians created a rhythm into which others joined, in a sort of communal jam session. Based on usage patterns and distribution, some bell rocks may have been played by more than one person, or one person may have played more than one rock. The euphonic sounds travel for a considerable distance.

According to Boyle, the low end of the sounds produced can be compared to that of ringing cowbells, with the high end similar to that of the high

notes of a piano. In this study, the sound produced by each bell rock was recorded on an iPhone; the frequency and corresponding pitch of each was determined using an iPhone app. The frequencies recorded ranged from 350 hertz to a little over 3,000 hertz, with a median of about 1,150 hertz. The closest corresponding pitches (notes) are, respectively, E4, D6, and F sharp 7/G flat 7, so the range begins just above middle C (C4) and includes most of the right-hand side of a piano keyboard.

The earliest forms of music date to about 43,000 years ago and have been found across all civilizations and cultures. Researchers have worked to understand why music is so ubiquitous. Boyle, a behavioral neuroscientist by profession, notes, "Scientific research has shown that a portion of the human brain specifically responds to music." Massachusetts Institute of Technology neuroscientists identified a neural population in the human auditory cortex that responds only to sounds typically categorized as music.

In most bell-rock locations, ancient rock-art is found in close proximity to the bell rocks. The bell rocks at the Tucson-area site are distributed

among more numerous boulders bearing petroglyphs, and all are situated suitably for ceremonial gatherings. In March 2015, at the conclusion of the survey conducted on the first (public) section of the study site, 1,888 petroglyphs were documented. Also identified were 69 grinding features, 82 bell rocks, and 34 surface artifacts. Sometimes, stones used to strike the bell rocks were discovered nearby.

According to Hernbrode, petroglyphs are present on half the boulders that exhibit wear consistent with use as bell rocks. "Because we found no correlation between the petroglyph motifs and their placement on the bell rocks, we could not predict whether a boulder would ring based on the images displayed," she explains.

Many petroglyphs at the site reflect "Flower World" imagery like that previously found and studied at the Sutherland Wash Rock Art District, on the west face of the Santa Catalina Mountains. In a 2013 article written by Hernbrode and Boyle and published in *American Indian Rock Art*, the Flower World is described as an ancient and widespread belief system practiced among Uto-Aztec language speak-

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ers and certain neighboring groups, including the Puebloan peoples and the O'odham. At least 30 present-day tribes, ranging from Panama to the San Francisco area, are among those who practice Flower World beliefs.

The Flower World is a spiritual place evoked in dreams and visions that may be experienced in the conscious world through songs, prayers, and hard work. The Flower World's metaphorical imagery is characterized by colorful sunrises and sunsets, flowers, iridescent birds, dancing butterflies, rainbows, the sound of bells, and sparkling crystals. Research conducted by Jane Hill, PhD, and Kelley Hays-Gilpin, PhD, identified cultural materials, in addition to songs, that were consistent with Flower World beliefs. Once the cultural illustrations of those materials were recognized, it was possible to identify those same motifs in petroglyphs.

Flower World petroglyphs found at the site northwest of Tucson suggest that the Flower World belief system may have been a component of the culture of the Hohokam who lived in that area as well as of the Hohokam who had occupied the Sutherland site.

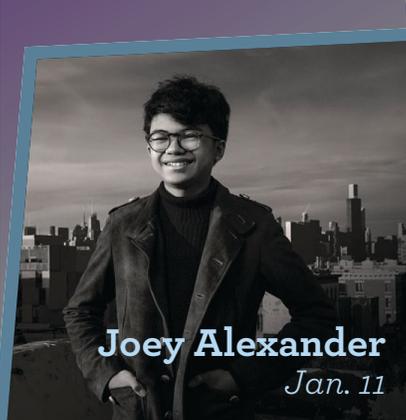
"Petroglyphs provide a hint of what these ancient people believed and are an indication that the Flower World has a deep history in this area for the ancestral O'odham, also known as the Hohokam," says Hernbrode.

Petroglyphs in the second (private) section of the study site date from archaic times to the Hohokam's Classic period (AD 1100s-1400s). Across the two-section site, a total of 11,200 petroglyphs were documented, quite possibly the largest collection of petroglyphs in Arizona.

To preserve the archaeological integrity of the northwest Tucson-area site, those involved with the project prefer that this article not reveal the site's exact location. For more information about this study and the organization's mission and projects, contact the Arizona Archaeological and History Association at az-arch-and-hist.org. For information about preservation archaeology in the Tucson area, contact Archaeology Southwest at archaeologysouthwest.org.

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R. J. Brenner is a local freelance writer. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.



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**JUST THE TICKET
continued**

show at the Rialto is to come to our box office in person. We charge a \$1 fee per ticket, in the box office, which is significantly less than most venues around the country.” People who can’t make it to the box office can call, or visit rialtotheatre.com. Patrons also can buy tickets at Bookmans locations to most of the Rialto shows.

“Stubhub and Vivid Seats are both huge resellers, and we don’t ever recommend buying [Rialto] tickets from them. New resellers pop up all the time and it’s hard to keep track of them all,” says Hubbs.

The Rialto uses Ticketfly as its licensed ticketing provider. Ticketfly was hacked at the end of May 2018 and shut down for a few days while the system was restored. “Ticketfly is up and working and we’re right back to business as usual,” advises Hubbs.

Your ticket return and exchange options can vary depending on the type of ticket, as well as on where you purchased it. Often, season ticket subscribers enjoy a number of privileges. Such is the case at Arizona Theatre Company, which offers a convenient ticket-exchange process to its subscribers. But if patrons can’t attend an ATC show during its run, they should consider donating their tickets back to ATC so the tickets can be resold, suggests Sue DeBenedette, the theater’s marketing director.

Ticket prices to events at Fox Tucson Theatre generally include a \$2 facility fee per ticket, which goes to the Fox Tucson Theatre Foundation’s building fund. If there are additional fees, they are listed separately from the ticket price. The Fox’s ticketing policy states that tickets are not transferable or redeemable for cash. The theatre discourages patrons from buying tickets for its shows anywhere but at foxtucson.com. Donors to the Fox Theatre at the \$250 level or higher are able to exchange tickets to any other show on the schedule, provided they give at least 48 hours’ notice.

All the preceding venues/organizations advise buyers to purchase tickets through a trusted website or to call or visit the venue’s/organization’s box office. Avoid buying tickets from a ticket broker or scalper, and consider joining your favorite theater’s foundation and/or donating to the theater to receive extra perks. Stay informed, plan ahead, and enjoy the show.

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Linda Brewer is a local freelance writer. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.



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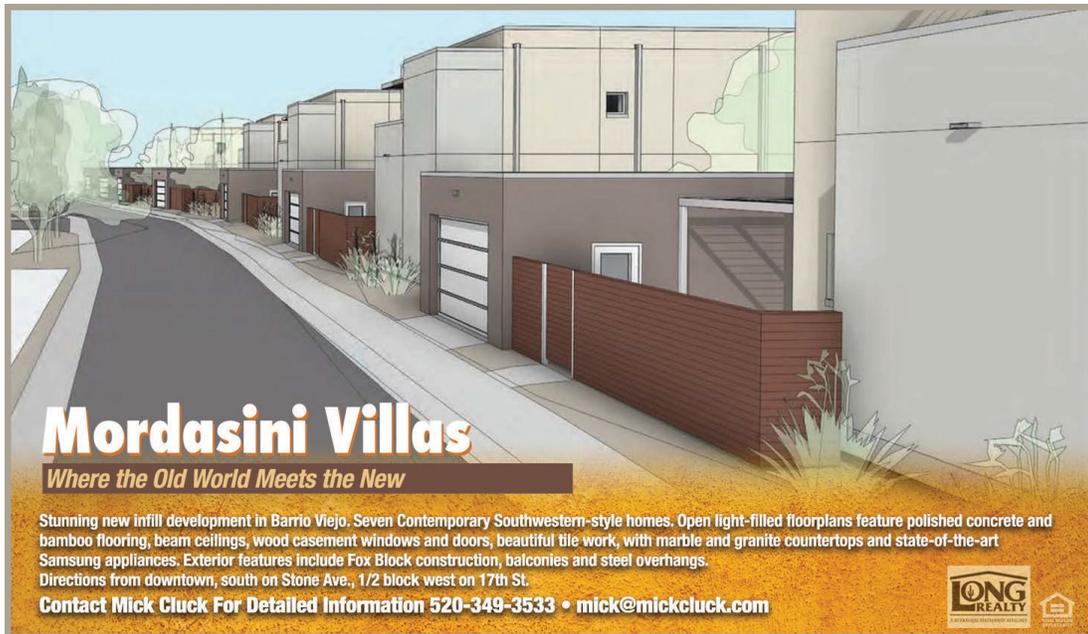
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ATTENTION TO DETAIL cont.



Italian designer Alessandro Mendini was tasked by Alberto Alessi to design the "world's best egg pan." The two-handed Tegamino (which also has an attractive lid) is the result.

of traditional Sicilian motifs in a bold palette, in its "Sicily is my love" collaboration with Smeg.

Even one of the most familiar brands, Thermos, has jazzed up its solid-hue offerings with a colorful collection of beverage and food containers with lively color and patterns in a co-branding with Patina Vie.

Warm metallics remain popular, just as they are in interiors. In cookware, handsome teamings—like Staub's black-matte cast iron with gold knobs—spell elegance. Copper cookware (both smooth and hammered) is making a comeback and also is being used as contrast—for example, for tops and knobs on Gotham Steel's air fryer. To celebrate the 100th birthday of design legend Achille Castiglioni, Alessi produced a limited edition (999) of his 1995 footed fruit bowl in gleaming copper with stainless-steel colander. In a burnished finish, copper lends a quiet, elegant touch to a salt and pepper

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Of course, balancing all the bright silicone and shiny metallics is wood, from light to dark finishes, with a variety of handsome utensils, cutting and cheese boards, and trivets.

A growing number of utilitarian products are getting style points because of their form, as well as their color. The Dutch company Brabantia is known for clean lines—especially its simple, tall cylinders for holding trash—in a range of appealing colors. Its newest model is a standout (literally), on straight black legs. Available in red and yellow, as well as a warm gray and black, it's advertised with the tag line "Make Waste Beautiful."

Some inspirations come from existing popular products. Debra Walker, for example, eyed the Keurig coffeemaker and daydreamed about how cool it would be to create a cocktail equivalent. That's how Bibo Barmaid was launched. A packet, a liquor, and a touch of a lever are all you need for faves like mai tais, rum punch, and margaritas—an easy way to pass Mixology 101.

DL

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The Dutch manufacturer Brabantia declares it wants to "make waste beautiful," and it certainly elevates the trash can, with ergonomic benefits. This one, made of steel and plastic, has black adjustable legs and a red body (also available in yellow, gray, and black). Available in two sizes, just under 3 gallons and about 6 gallons in capacity. The soft-touch open and close make for easy disposal.



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Open Sesame

by Judith Baigent King



I remember traveling through Egypt a number of years ago and coming upon a field of sesame seeds about ready for harvest. Wanting to see the crop closer, I stopped the car and got out to investigate the sesame stems with their pods of seeds, marveling at how small the pods were and the acres of crops needed to meet the country's very healthy appetite for tahini. I was awakened from my wandering thoughts by an irate farmer running toward me waving his staff—obviously thinking I was compromising his crop.

Since Babylonian and Assyrian times there have been mentions of sesame, a seed of many colors, the most popular being the creamy off-white. This drought-tolerant, wheat-like crop has seeds protected by a capsule that bursts open when the seeds are fully ripe and dry. Any immature seeds present are sent to be made into sesame oil, which has been used as a healing oil for centuries. Alcohol extracts of sesame leaves have been found to have antimicrobial properties.

Sesame oil is used extensively in cooking throughout India, Asia, Japan, and the Middle East. Tanzania is the largest producer, manufacturing mainly pale-yellow cold-pressed oil. The oil from India is golden, and many Asian oils are a flavorful dark brown because the seeds are roasted before the oil is extracted.

In the Middle East, a bowl of tahini—toasted, hulled sesame seeds ground with some oil—is placed on the table along with a basket of flat bread,

much like chips and salsa are served. Sometimes, garlic is added, or sumac is sprinkled on top.

Black tahini is made from hulled black sesame seeds and is most often used in Asian desserts.

Make **hummus** quickly in a food processor, using a can of drained and rinsed garbanzo beans (chickpeas), 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, 2 tablespoons each of fresh lemon juice and tahini paste, 1 to 2 medium peeled cloves of garlic, and 1/2 teaspoon each of ground coriander and cumin. Taste for salt.

Change the flavor by puréeing in a peeled, roasted red pepper; parsley; chives; and tarragon or by substituting roasted carrots, beets, canned artichokes, or black or white beans for the garbanzo beans.

For a **Southwestern twist**, make a well in the center of regular hummus for some guacamole, and a well in the guacamole for some salsa. Garnish with a pile of cilantro leaves, and serve with a mixture of pita and tortilla chips.

Baba ghanoush is a traditional Middle Eastern appetizer. Roast a large eggplant at 400 degrees for 40 minutes until it is very soft. Peel and discard the skin, mix the flesh with 2 cloves mashed garlic, 1 1/2 tablespoons tahini, the juice of 1/2 a lemon, 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes, and salt to taste. Serve drizzled with olive oil and garnished with chopped parsley. Use pita or any flat bread to scoop.

For **breakfast**, toast a thick slice of your favorite whole-grain bread, spread with 1/4 cup ricotta cheese mixed with

3/4 teaspoon each of honey and tahini. Top with 1/2 a sliced ripe pear, roughly chopped walnuts, and a drizzle of tahini.

Make **tahini freezer fudge** by combining 1 cup tahini with 4 tablespoons each of cocoa powder, melted coconut oil, and honey. Stir in 1 teaspoon vanilla extract. Taste for sweetness, adding more honey if needed. Pour into an 8 x 5 parchment-lined pan, sprinkle with coarse sea salt, and freeze until ready to be cut and eaten.

Sesame-tahini cinnamon truffles are vegan and gluten-free. Put 4 ounces chopped vegan dark chocolate into a heatproof bowl. In a small saucepan bring to a simmer 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 3 tablespoons almond or coconut milk, and 1/4 cup agave syrup. Stir in 1 tablespoon tahini. The mixture should thicken and become shiny and smooth. Pour it over the chocolate, stirring to combine when the chocolate has melted. Cool to room temperature, then refrigerate until firm enough to scoop into small balls. Roll the balls in toasted sesame seeds and refrigerate them until ready to serve. Buy seeds already toasted, or gently toast them in a dry frying pan, shaking the pan often until they are golden brown.

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Judith Baigent King owned *Culinary Concepts in Tucson* for 16 years. She is also the author of the cookbook *Culinary Concepts*. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.

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Wine Wise

Understanding Bitter

by Dale Stephen Sparks

Don't look now but taste receptors are evolving, and you cannot taste the same level of bitterness as your ancestors did just 300 generations ago (give or take).

Taste receptor cells in taste buds of the tongue can detect five basic qualities: sweet, salty, sour, umami (savory), and bitter. Two classes of taste receptors (protein molecules that receive chemical signals from outside a cell) have been identified, called T1R and T2R, and the latter class is responsible for sensing bitter. The family of genes and pseudogenes that encode for these proteins are found on chromosomes 5, 7, and 12.

Many plant toxins taste bitter, so the ability to detect bitter was an essential survival tool for early plant-eating peoples. Then, about 1.5 million years ago or so, humans started cooking with fire and eating meat, easing humanity's reliance on bitter detection. Evolutionary biologists have characterized the development of this family of genes in humans and other mammals and shown that the ability to detect bitter tastes evolved before the human migration out of Africa. Like all genes, these continue to evolve in the present day.

Why the continuing interest in taste receptors that sense bitter? No one actually likes bitter flavors, right? Wrong. In his brilliant book *A History of the World in Six Glasses*, Tom Standage links the history of world powers and population centers to beverages: beer in Mesopotamia and Egypt, wine in Greece and Rome, rum and coffee from European colonies, tea that fueled the British Empire, and, of course, Coca-Cola in the US. Today these beverages are universal and can be found in almost any corner of the globe, and all are mostly bitter. The coca extract (originally); caffeine; carbonic, citric, and phosphoric acids in Coke are all bitter, just masked by sugar.

But significant bitter components are found not only in the world's favorite beverages but in many of our favor-

ite foods, as well. Chocolate, tobacco, virtually any green vegetable, citrus, tomatoes, onions, garlic, cinnamon, nutmeg, clove, pepper, cumin, turmeric, and many other spices are very bitter. Mushrooms, truffles, nuts, seeds (sesame), some vegetable oils, soy sauce, olives, and mustard all have bitterness as a significant, even primary, component. Browning, smoking, or grilling meat adds bitterness to it. The nearly universally appealing flavors of honey, maple syrup, and vanilla all have significant bitter components masked by sweetness. Fermenting milk (to make yogurt or cheese) adds bitterness. This list just scratches the surface, but how many people have not had something on this list of food and beverages within the past 24 hours?

Of the five identified and generally agreed upon perceptible flavors, research shows that humans are most sensitive to bitter over the other four qualities of taste. It strikes the palate after the others but lingers much longer and is perceptible at lower concentrations.

And that brings me to wine. "I just don't want anything 'bitter'" a guest would say to me when ordering wine—after drinking an extra-dry martini with extra olives—to pair with a balsamic-dressed arugula, pine nut, and goat-cheese salad. This was when I had to decipher what the guest wanted instead of what he or she was asking for. The most sublime wines, of course, balance bitter, sweet, acid (we do not use the term "sour" when talking about wine), and umami (a Japanese word that creates confusion among sommeliers). Salts, like crystallized potassium bitartrate, are present, but sodium chloride (table salt) is exceptionally rare in wine.

"Flavanoid phenolics" is the technical term for most of the bitter components in all wine, but tannin in red wine is the most obvious one. The astringent tannins, primarily from stems, skins, and seeds of grapes, are exceptionally bitter in young red wines but soften

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and asparagus (which contains asparagusic acid), are nearly impossible to enhance with wine, so we hope for neutral pairings or maybe do none at all.

Bitter, despite its bad rap, is your friend. Embrace it! Find its place in the balance of your next glass of wine, and you'll be a step closer to a better understanding of your palate and wine.

DL

Dale Stephen Sparks has worked in the wine industry for more than two decades, as a sommelier in Tucson, a wholesale distributor in the Arizona market, and now as a national importer. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.

over time as tannin polymers form and precipitate out as sediment. Ideally, one catches the wine in a state of balance, with enough remaining astringency/bitterness to balance the fruit and acid.

Aging in oak is another source of bitterness in wine, especially because oak staves for barrels are generally charred to one degree or another. Cheaper oak barrels can be too "green." The species of oak used makes a difference, as well.

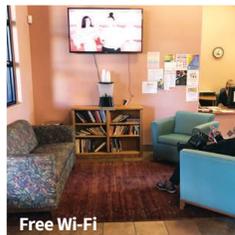
Although the intrinsic nature of wine is the primary source of its bitter flavors, the food with which a wine is paired can also enhance or diminish the perception of bitterness. Savory dishes with bitter components are a sommelier's dream for pairing. Sautéed mushrooms (any variety but always with nutmeg) and virtually any red wine on the planet go together beautifully. Extreme bitterness and pairing is a tricky task, however. Some foods, like dark chocolate, artichokes (which contain cynarine, or hydroxycinnamic acid),



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L'Art Pour L'Art

Blue Organism, mixed media

folded, and marked. Central wire filaments are fused with tiny white glass particles, resembling the anthers of a flower. This concoction sits canted in an open tree bole that was harvested by the artist.

To achieve the complexities of her pieces, Okada fuses the science of amperages with imagination. *Green Organism* could be divined as an otherworldly thistle. Okada layered leaves of thin paper, cradled by shaped copper, and added an appendage finished off with a spike of lampworked glass. In *Blue Organism*, glass bubbles push through deliberately formed holes in the suspended tangles of this hanging piece. To achieve this effect, the artist heats the raised copper vessel until it glows orange. Only then can glass be blown into the form, hot enough to adhere, yet cool enough to take shape.

"Basically, my pieces are about co-existence, how we can live in harmony with nature. Each individual material speaks its own beauty, and I'm orchestrating those individual beauties into one piece," she explains. "My art is also about me coming to America—the language, culture, and historical differences."

A middle child, Okada was raised on the island of Hokkaido, Japan, where her parents moved to start a dairy farm in order to be self-sustaining. "My parents were a little bit like hippies. Their art was creating their environment. We had no other family there, so we were the manpower. We had cows, pigs, chickens, goats, geese, ducks, dogs, and cats. I was always outside, digging and playing in the mud," she says.

But inside was a different matter. Okada, who is now the parent of a young girl, was bullied at school. At the age of 17, she decided to come to America, alone. "Because I was under 18, I had to have a host family. I didn't know them ahead of time, but I was so happy to come here," says Okada, who landed in Portland, Oregon.

Momoko Okada: Organic Fusion

by Beth Surdut

Organic, tactile, whispering of earth and sea, Momoko Okada's sculptural mixed-media constructions are exquisitely tactile, substantial and delicate, rooted and flowing.

"Root" is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as an underlying support: basis; the essential core: heart; close relationship with an environment: tie. Okada's series *Radix* (Latin for "root") was prompted by the intricacies of banyan trees she saw while traveling in Ghana. This species of fig is epiphytic, known for aerial root systems that grow down to the ground and form what appears to be a forest, yet are one tree. These impressive natural creations sparked her signature approach to "organisms," as well as tables and groupings of blown glass, wire, and copper that Okada describes as "spirits."

The glass-tipped copper wire tendrils of the sculpture *Red Organism* reach upward amidst a dense downward flow emanating from copper sheeting that has been "raised," by a technique that involves a process of heating and cooling the metal so it can be stretched, hammered, and formed.

Although metal, the red-patinated organism looks like leather, reminiscent of a pomegranate skin manipulated by age and sun. The edges are stippled with electroformed nodules, the body purposely dimpled,

Red Organism, mixed media



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Radix Table, mixed media

During her undergraduate years studying metalsmithing and mixed-media art at Southern Illinois University, Okada opted for an exchange year in England at the Surrey Institute of Art & Design. During that year, she traveled to Ghana, where she backpacked over a period of six weeks, learning dance and traditional drumming. She also holds an MFA in 3D studies, including jewelry,

from Bowling Green State University, in Ohio.

Okada returned to Japan to earn an MFA in Japanese metalsmithing, at Kanazawa College of Art. She became adept in the art of Nunome (“woven texture”) an ancient traditional exacting metal-inlay technique of applying gold and silver foil. Her poetic series of

continued on page 71

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L'ART POUR L'ART
continued



Wind (incense holder), mixed media

incense burners—*Wind, Bird, Flower, Moon*—won Okada a place in the book *500 Metal Vessels: Contemporary Explorations of Containment*. She studied with Kazuo Kashima, a fifth-generation master. As seems to be the case around the world, the number of practitioners of labor-intensive arts is dwindling. Moving back to Oregon, in 2015, Okada, with the advantage of being bilingual, developed a successful Kickstarter campaign to create a video for English-speakers, featuring Kashima demonstrating his technique. Her stated mission regarding the video and teaching is “to act as a bridge and spread the use of Japanese metalsmithing techniques throughout the World.”

Nunome requires tiny tools, including hammers especially crafted for the purpose. Since the tools are not available in the United States, Okada decided to become a supplier. She interviewed three blacksmiths and found one who passed muster.

With a strong knowledge base of traditional technique, Okada has grown her distinctive style of mixed-media sculpture and jewelry that is separate from Nunome. The artist, new to Tucson, describes the pieces she creates as “my own digested images.” We look forward to seeing how the desert melds into her work.

To see more of Okada’s sculpture and jewelry, visit okadamomoko.com.

DL

Beth Surdut is a nature illustrator and NPR essayist based in Tucson. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.



Nurturing Spirits, mixed media



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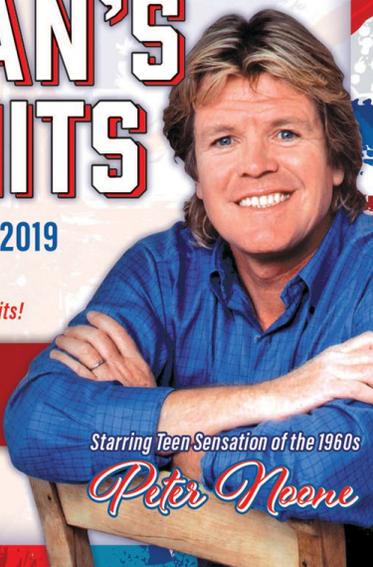
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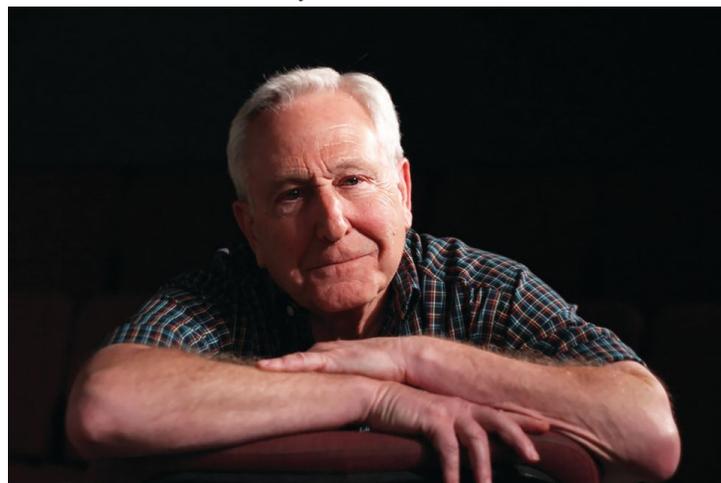
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A Life in Sports, A Cat on the Roof

by Patrick Baliani



Ryan Faggan

Bill Epstein delivers a solo performance in *My Life in Sports*, at The Scoundrel & Scamp Theatre.

Who's on first? Local playwright and actor Bill Epstein delivers his solo performance piece, *My Life in Sports*, at **The Scoundrel & Scamp Theatre**, directed by Scoundrel and Scamp cofounder Bryan Rafael Falcón. In three parts—"Tryouts," "Home Plate," and "Infinite Fatigue Factor," *My Life in Sports*, says Epstein, is "a coming-of age story, a cautionary tale, and a love story ... a dramatic memoir about the romance of men and sports, about the games we play with love and family, masculinity and identity, death and desire."

Epstein adopts the sports he knew growing up as metaphors and a backdrop to personal recollections, life yearnings, love and loss, the construction of self. The playwright notes that "sports are a powerful and influential narrative formation, one of the crucial ways that American men construct identity."

"At the Scoundrel and Scamp," says Falcón, "our mission is to explore deep and provocative questions regarding self, tribe, life, death, and what it ultimately means to be human. We've put on many lenses, and now, for *My Life in Sports*, we embrace an exploration of the life of one boy growing up in America." He adds, "It also doesn't hurt that the play is witty, smart, and insightful."

Staged in the Studio space of the Scoundrel & Scamp, an intimate 30-seat black box theater, Epstein's memoir places him in immediate contact with his audience. "There is a beautiful simplicity to the art of solo storytelling," says Falcón. "The solo performance needs to be truthful, direct, and

compelling. Anything artificial or half-baked in the presentation will stand out awkwardly, because the audience, as partner[s] with the performer, will know deflection when they sense it."

"Acting as my own ghostwriter," says Epstein, "I body forth the muscle memory of a mid- and late-twentieth-century American boyhood and manhood in which participating in sports leads not to that rarest and oddest of things, a celebrity career in the popular culture (from which, it seems to me, we have less and less to learn), but to the most common and instructive (and yet, in a world dominated by the mass media of global capitalism, perhaps the most elusive, certainly the most endangered) thing of all, the ordinary practice of everyday life."

Scoundrel & Scamp's sound designer, Tyler Berg, creates the aural backdrop of the work inspired by Epstein's specifications—that the design elements reside "beneath and around the narration [as] splintered passages of music and song—a rather elaborate visual and aural representation of the fragmented memories."

Adds Falcón: "We are embracing soundscapes, to create a landscape of memory that will transport our audiences from decade to decade of our narrator's life."

"I hope that, ultimately, the fragmented memories evoked by *My Life in Sports* will cohere for you, as they did for me," concludes Epstein, "into a personal, emotionally honest, one-man performance piece about the romance of men and sports, about love and death and coming back to life, about how I became



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a man, and about how, as the sun's shadow creeps inexorably across the field, I am learning to live with myself." At the recently renovated The Historic Y, 738 N. Fifth Ave. Jan. 17-27. (scoundreland-scamp.org or 448-3300)

When Tennessee Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* first played on Broadway in 1955, audiences were stunned by the Southern family tangles of Maggie, Brick, Big Daddy, and Big Mama. With typical tepidity, Hollywood released a movie version of the play, starring Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman, extracting its core of homosexual repression and cushioning the story's ending to the point of ridiculousness. **Roadrunner Theatre Company** presents the truer, steamier grit of one of Williams's great plays, directed by Mark Lugheit, with Sara Jackson and Robert Anthony Peters as Maggie the Cat and Brick Pollitt, respectively.

"I love vivid characters, bold conflict, and great writing," says Lugheit. "This play has all three—in spades. The characters have a hunger that is palpable. ... What director wouldn't salivate at the chance to let those characters

live out their struggles on stage? And to do so in Tennessee Williams' gorgeous Southern-poetic prose?"

The Roadrunner cast is up to the task. "Sara Jackson is a natural for the role," says Lugheit, "as anyone who's seen our poster or ads will immediately understand. Her talent is immense. She's a graduate of the UA theater program and the Bennett Theatre Lab's three-year intensive Stanislavsky program, where she starred as the psychiatrist in its recent *Agnes of God*. And Robert Anthony Peters is one of the special treasures of the Tucson performing-arts community, with over a dozen feature films to his credit, including national releases, like *Steve Jobs*, and more than a dozen major stage roles with some of Tucson's best companies."

Williams considered *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* his favorite of the many plays he'd written, for two reasons: in writing the character of Big Daddy, Williams felt he had reached the furthest beyond himself; and the entire play takes place in real time, without a moment's lapse

continued on page 79



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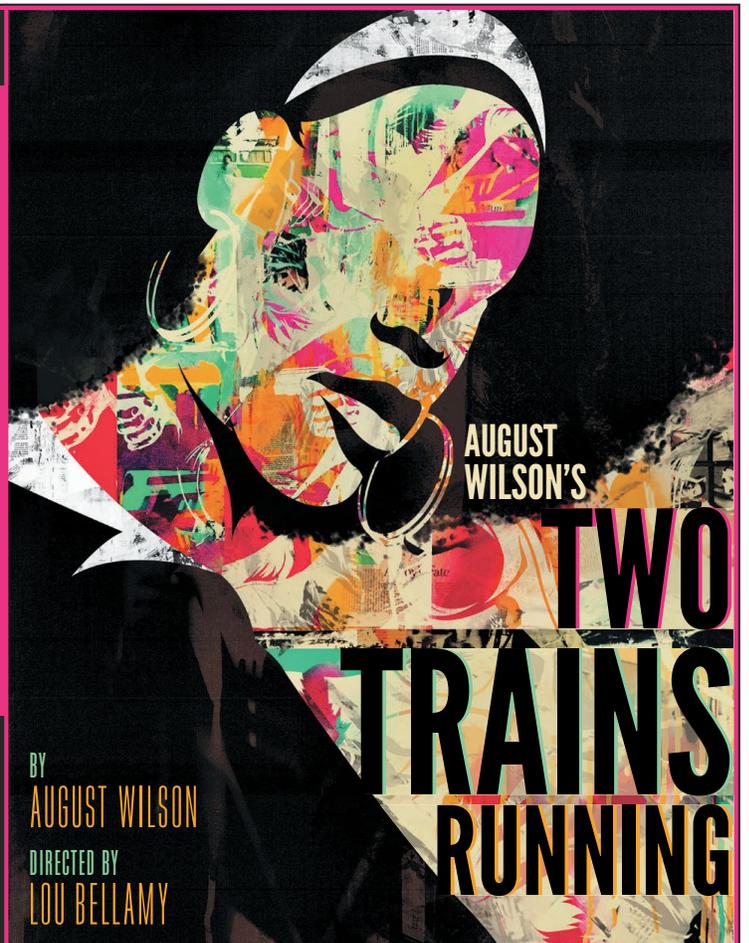
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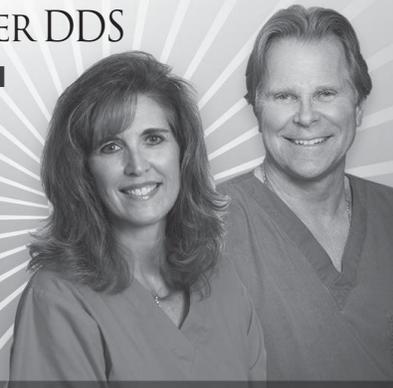
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Heart of the Matter

Aboard the Adventure Bus

by Dyana Z. Furmansky



Photos: Angela Salmon

Nancie and JJ welcome the Adventure Bus.

Of nine riders on the Handmaker Adventure Bus one breezy morning last April, six cannot remember where they are going or what they are going to do when they get there. I remind my seatmate that our destination is the Roahrig Horse Ranch, an hour's drive from Tucson. She sounds surprised. "I didn't think anybody would let me do this, because I couldn't do this," she says, seeming pleased.

When we arrive at the ranch, a Clydesdale named JJ juts his gigantic forequarters inside the bus, toward the driver. "Look at that fat!" shouts an astonished passenger when she sees the horse. The big man sitting behind us, who has been saying how much he loves horses, does not seem to recognize this thing. He plays a few bars on his harmonica. It is always with him, and he panics when he cannot fish it from his pocket fast enough.

Rancher Nancie Roahrig guides JJ out of the bus so we can exit. The Adventure Bus participants' ages range from 62 to 88. The passengers are a prominent biopathologist, a lawyer/banker, an engineer, a builder/TV repairman, a hairdresser, an elementary-

school teacher, and the man who plays the harmonica. They repeatedly mount and dismount gentle JJ, ride in a cart the miniature horse Dillon pulls, and pet and groom the animals.

"We are lucky; we are so lucky," singsongs Angela Salmon, the Adventure Bus's effervescent coordinator, who videos the proceedings to show everyone later, by which time they will have forgotten how much fun they had.

On our way back to Handmaker, a senior-living community, I sing Beatles songs. Though these adventurers are in the same age group as mine, they don't remember the Beatles. They smile broadly. One woman pops up and down in her seat and vocalizes syllables, which are good ways to join along.

"What I love about being with people who have memory loss is that they really live in the moment," says volunteer Bruce Pitz, who has been assisting Salmon on Adventure Bus outings for five years. "There is so much joy here."

The mission of Handmaker's Adventure Bus is to create as many joy-filled moments to live in as possible, for people diagnosed with dementia due to Alzheimer's disease and other types of



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Harv helps groom a miniature horse.

dementia or memory loss. The bus is “now the only thing of its kind in the country,” says Adrienne ‘Bunny’ Drell, who learned about a similar bus-based program for the elderly in Chicago, which is no longer provided. Eleven years ago Drell’s husband, Frank Nitikman, was diagnosed with frontotemporal degeneration, an incurable and untreatable brain disease. Drell, who underwrites a portion of the Adventure Bus, established it in the memory of her husband’s parents, who had been Handmaker residents. Nitikman rode the Adventure Bus until his cognitive decline became too severe.

Conceived as an outreach program, the Tucson bus serves patients who are living at home or in an extended-care facility other than the Handmaker Assisted Living Center. Salmon carefully organizes and lovingly supervises each week’s adventure, rotating the itinerary among more than 30 Tucson-area destinations each year. She also interviews all potential participants, who are usually accepted if they are in the earlier stages of dementia, are ambulatory and not hostile, and as space permits. Salmon explains that openings are frequent

owing to inevitable physical and cognitive declines of the riders.

Each day’s adventure costs \$80—less than a day of in-home care and a lot more stimulating. Lunch at a different restaurant each time is included. Salmon orders ahead and supervises closely to make sure the meal goes smoothly.

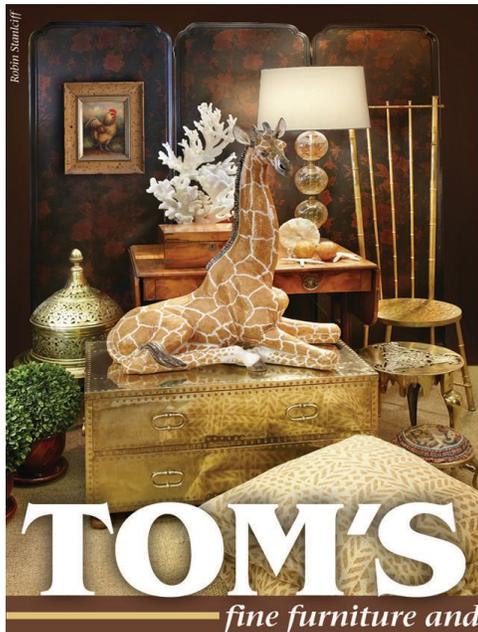
As important as providing novelty is for persons with memory-loss, administering it in planned microbursts is equally beneficial for caregivers who desperately need a scheduled respite. “You don’t have much of a life when someone in your family has dementia,” says Louise, whose husband, Arlen, is a gregarious Adventure Bus regular. “I plan to keep Arlen at home as long as I can,” Louise says. His outings give her the break she needs, “and he comes home happier than when he left,” she says. “Without it, I am afraid he would just die.”

The prospect of dementia is terrifying. A doctor’s making the diagnosis can be easy compared with a person’s deciding to go for an evaluation and then accepting its findings. The Adventure Bus’s palliative journeys can be available to many who have gone that far. The day I ride as a guest I observe what living in the moment can do for people who can live in only one at a time.

For more information about the program, visit handmaker.org/care-options/assisted-living/adventure-bus, or call Handmaker at 881-2323.

DL

Dyana Z. Furmansky is a local freelance writer. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.



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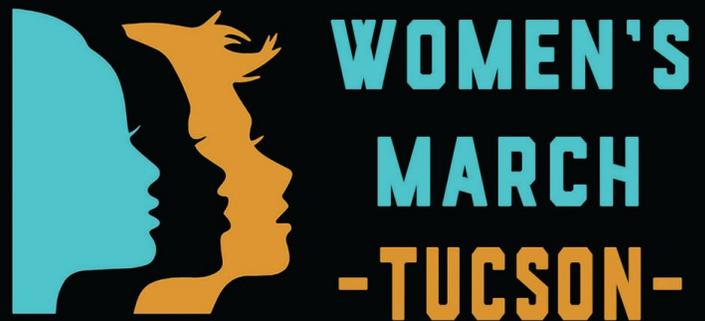
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District 16 Report Card

Chances Are the Holidays Threw Students' Sleep Habits Out of Whack

by David Hatfield



When Catalina Foothills School District students return to their classrooms on January 7 after the two-week winter vacation holiday, some are likely to show up tired. So tired, in fact, they may put their heads down on their desks and fall asleep. Or ask to go to the nurse's office, where they will sleep—"like zombies," as Charlotte Ackerman puts it.

This isn't a phenomenon unique to students in CFSD. But it is an issue the district is looking to address in a partnership with University of Arizona researchers that, it is hoped, will lead to a curriculum that could be rolled out nationwide. Ackerman, CFSD's teacher leader for science and engineering practices, has led the district's participation in the project, in which research over the past two years focused on the quantity, consistency, and quality of sleep among 4th- and 5th-grade students.

Ackerman says that consistency in going to sleep and waking at regular times seems to play a major role in a student's ability to function. Yet, very few students—sometimes just two or three out of an entire class—kept to within an hour of a regular time for going to sleep and waking up. And though individual needs vary, students in that age group require 9 to 11 hours of sleep.

Over a long holiday period such as winter break students stay up later and wake up later, and although they may try to return to an earlier sleep time the Sunday night before returning to school, they are likely to wake up on Monday morning tired and not refreshed, Ackerman says.

Over the course of a week, most students vary their sleep times by two to

three hours, according to the research, resulting in what has been called "social jet lag," she says.

The catalyst for the study was a chance meeting between Ackerman and Dr. Stuart Quan at a memorial service a few years ago. At the time, Dr. Quan headed the UA College of Medicine's Sleep Lab, and much of his work dealt with sleep as it relates to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Ackerman, at the time, was teaching a robotics class to 2nd-graders that started at 8:10 a.m. on Mondays. She noticed many of the students seemed to be dragging themselves into the classroom. Other teachers shared that they, too, saw similar behaviors, including students' falling asleep. The nurse spoke of students who fell asleep in her office.

As Ackerman continued to pursue the issue, activity tracking devices such as Fitbit were becoming popular. A school parent, Janet Roveda, who is a UA professor of electrical and computer engineering, approached Ackerman about the possibility of developing a proposal for a National Science Foundation ITEST (Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers) grant.

It took several years but a team including Quan, who is now an endowed professor of sleep medicine at Harvard Medical School, in Boston; Roveda; Ackerman; and Michelle Perfect, a UA psychology professor in the Department of Education, successfully won a \$1.2 million grant to pursue a study to focus on the sleep habits of 4th- and 5th-grade students as they approach adolescence.

During the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years students at Canyon View and Ventana Vista elementary schools participated in the study, using sophisticated sleep watches that, among other things, measured blue light, which could track participants' use of electronic devices, including their waking up to play games.

"The games themselves aren't necessarily bad, but if they interrupt sleep, that can be an issue," Ackerman says.

Students also were asked to keep

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For additional information, you may call CHILD FIND at 928-679-8106 or visit the Arizona Department of Education Child Find website at <https://www.azed.gov/ess/azfind/>

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track of their activities in a diary. As with any scientific study, there was a control group.

Some of the findings of the research were that there seems to be a correlation between earning better grades and getting the proper amount of sleep, that students involved in physical activities had less but more consistent sleep, and that quality of sleep was not necessarily an issue.

No matter when participants went to sleep, they had quality sleep. Most of the research indicates the focus should be on consistency and quantity of sleep.

This year, the data are being reviewed and developed into a curriculum. Ackerman admits she's not quite sure how that will develop and what it will entail. "There are a lot of players and moving parts, with software tools being developed to support the instruction," she says.

School Board Meetings

Three of the five members of the CFSD school board will begin new four-year terms when the first meeting convenes January 8, but the faces won't change, as Amy Bhola, Amy Krauss,

and Carole Siegler faced no challengers in the November election and were automatically declared the winners. Bhola and Krauss are beginning their second terms, and Siegler is beginning her 22nd year on the board.

The board's second meeting of the month is scheduled for January 22. Both will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the Professional Development Center at Valley View Early Learning Center, 3435 E. Sunrise Drive. The entrance to the Board Room is on the north side of the campus. Agendas for school board meetings are posted online at cfsd16.org. From the home page, click on the "About Us" tab and go to "Governing Board," where notices and agendas are posted at the bottom of the page. To reach the school district's administration offices regarding school board meetings, call 209-7537.

DL

David Hatfield is a local freelance writer. His three children graduated from CFSD, and he has served on the Catalina Foothills School Board. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.

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- "Show and Tell" sessions are one hour long, followed by a thirty-minute tour of the school.
- K-Plus Registration forms will be available to all families at the Kindergarten Show and Tell sessions. Resident K-Plus applicants will be processed for two weeks from the date of the school's first Show and Tell session, then all other K-Plus applicants will be processed in the order received.

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District 16 From The Super

Not Satisfied With the Status Quo

by Mary Kamerzell, Supt. Catalina Foothills School District

Two-thirds of the variance in student achievement levels is attributable to the teacher. That is why our Catalina Foothills School District (CFSD) strategic agenda includes a significant allocation of resources to professional learning focused on instructional strategies, classroom management, and curriculum and assessment design. The quality of the teacher really matters.

The other third of the student achievement variance has to do with leadership at the school level. Research confirms that the knowledge and skill of the school principal influence student learning. We believe it is unlikely that students will soar academically unless their school is led by a capable principal.

Researchers Tim Waters, Bob Marzano, and Brian McNulty of Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) performed a meta-analysis of 70 leadership studies, from a total of more than 5,000, that used quantitative data about student achievement as the dependent variable, and teacher perceptions about leadership as the independent variable. Data were obtained from 2,894 US schools educating 1.4 million students and employing 14,000 teachers.

Several findings specific to leadership responsibilities and practices surfaced from the 2003 McREL study. One was the effect size of general leadership. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty concluded that the average correlation between principal leadership behavior and school achievement is .25. This means that an increase of one standard deviation in principal leadership ability is associated with a 10-percentile point gain in school achievement. Thus, for a school with an average student achievement at the 50th percentile, adding a principal who uses the relevant leadership strategies can bump the mean student achievement to 60 percent.

An important finding of the study was that there are 21 leadership responsibilities and practices with statistically significant effects on achievement. Among them are knowledge of curriculum, instruction, assessment; intellectual stimulation (ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices by making the discussion of these a

regular aspect of the school's culture); monitoring the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning; flexibility (adapts leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent); fostering shared beliefs and a sense of community; providing teachers with professional development and materials necessary to do their jobs; and establishing a set of standard operating procedures and routines.

Another finding was that leaders perceived as strong do not always have a positive effect on student achievement. It is possible that the focus of change at the school is on things that don't matter much to raising student achievement. A place to begin to focus change that influences student learning is a guaranteed and viable curriculum with challenging goals for improvement and effective feedback.

An effective principal is one who holds strong professional beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning and is willing to challenge the status quo. This leader is knowledgeable about curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and monitors and evaluates teaching. The effective principal portrays a positive attitude about the ability of the staff to accomplish substantial things, even something they think might be beyond their reach. He is flexible. She adapts the leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation.

If we are going to get the most out of our schools in the 21st century, in which expectations for student learning are high, we need principals who are skillful in leading change to get to the next level of achievement. In CFSD, all our principals lead change through their School Improvement Plan. The plan builds on progress to date in the areas of the district's strategic plan, Envision21: Deep Learning. Those areas are reducing the gap between current and desired student achievement, raising the engagement of students with their learning, and partnering with families and community. We are never satisfied with the status quo.

DL

Mary Kamerzell is superintendent of Catalina Foothills Unified School District. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.

CURTAIN GOING UP cont.

between its three acts. Plays are rarely written this way today, in part because it's darn hard to do, let alone do very well. Williams does it supremely. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* runs Jan. 11–Feb. 3, at 8892 E. Tanque Verde Road. (roadrunnertheatrecompany.org or 207-2491)

Live Theatre Workshop presents Sarah Ruhl's hearty farce, *Stage Kiss*, depicting actors falling in love on and off the stage. Jan. 10–Feb. 16. (livetheatreworkshop.org or 327-4242)

The Rogue Theatre is poised to present its 10th Shakespeare production. *Much Ado About Nothing*, first produced circa 1598, has been popular ever since. Though the female lead, Beatrice, is warned, "Thou wilt never get thee a husband if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue," she nevertheless wages "merry war" with Benedick in dazzling repartee throughout. Jan. 10–27. (therogue theatre.org or 551-2053)

Invisible Theatre showcases the Arizona premiere of *Zero Hour*, written and performed by playwright and actor Jim Brochu, about the legendary comedic genius Zero Mostel, set during the 1950s in the artist's painting studio on West 28th Street. Jan. 12–13, at Berger Performing Arts Center. (invisibletheatre.com or 882-9721)

August Wilson's *Two Trains Running* is part of his epic "Pittsburgh Cycle" of plays, dramatizing the plight of African Americans throughout the 20th century—an astonishing body of work, with one play set in every decade of the century. This one is set in 1969 as racial tensions are rising and the civil rights

movement is reverberating in Pittsburgh's Hill District. Interestingly, the play takes place as if adjacent to "history," in the relatively calm confines of Memphis Lee's diner, a local hangout slated to be demolished. *Two Trains Running* is an exquisite, beautiful play, directed by the longtime director of many of Wilson's plays, Lou Bellamy. Jan. 19–Feb. 9, at Arizona Theatre Company, Temple of Music and Art. (arizonatheatre.org or 622-2823)

Winding Road Theater Ensemble delivers Aaron Posner's contemporary reshuffling of Chekhov's *The Seagull*, irreverently titled *Stupid F#!*ing Bird*, depicting the aspirations and heartbreaks of young as well as mature artists embroiled in the crisscross of their relationships and struggles to create new drama. Jan. 31–Feb. 17, at the Cabaret Theatre Temple of Music and Art. (windingroadtheater.org or 401-3626)

As always, **The Gaslight Theatre** keeps on trucking, continuing with *Scrooge: a Gaslight Musical*, through Jan. 6, then ushering in its new year with *The Belle of Tombstone*, playing Jan. 10–Mar. 31. (thegaslighttheatre.com or 886-9428)

DL

Patrick Baliani is a Tucson playwright and professor of interdisciplinary studies at the University of Arizona Honors College. Email theatre news to him at curtain@desertleaf.com. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.

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For February 2018 issue is Jan. 10

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JANUARY

MADARAS GALLERY presents **Animal Month**. Animals have been a consistent passion throughout the life of local Tucson artist Diana Madaras. Come see an amazing collection of animal artwork & gifts featuring cows, birds, dogs, horses, desert wildlife, and more! Madaras Gallery, 3035 N. Swan Rd. 615-3001, www.madaras.com

SONORAN PLEIN AIR PAINTERS 'Mini-Max at the Murphey Gallery' Juried Show at St. Philip's Murphey Gallery, 4440 N. Campbell Ave. continues thru January 11. A percentage of the sales will go toward St Philip's charities.

5: DOWNTOWN ART WALK 1-9p.m. Visit Steinfeld Warehouse Community Art Center, 101 W. 6th Street. 12 studios plus Moonlite Creation Gallery & Studio hosting several artists. Open 11a.m.-6p.m., Weds. through Sunday.

12: TUCSON AREA IRIS SOCIETY MEETING Murphy Wilmot Library (small room), 530 N. Wilmot Rd. at 1p.m. 594-5420. Greg Starr, nurseryman, author of *Cool Plants for Hot Gardens*, and *Agaves* will take us on a visual journey to Madagascar with its great diversity of plant and animal life! Contacts: greg@starr-nursery.com, irisgrowinaz@gmail.com or www.tucsoniris.org

13: DESERT WONDERLAND ART SHOW Desert Wonderland Art Show at Cactus Wren Artisans, 9a.m.-2p.m., 2740 S Kinney Rd., 437-9103 with 65 local artists. www.cactuswrenartisans.net

16: SOUTHERN ARIZONA CHAPTER of CALPERS Retirees' next meeting is on January 16 at 11:30a.m. at Mimi's Café in the Tucson Mall, corner of Oracle and Wetmore Roads. The speaker's topic is: "How the new tax law affects seniors". For additional information call our Webmaster at **510-862-5298**.

19: TOAD CONSERVATION FUNDRAISER Join The Biodiversity Group for an art-biology themed charity event to save the last population of an endangered Andean toad! Metal Arts Village, Jan. 19, 6-9p.m. Free. www.biodiversitygroup.org

20: SOUTHERN ARIZONA SENIOR PRIDE presents *The Lavender Scare* (Cold War purge of homosexuals from government and ignition of movement for LGBTQ+ rights) with filmmaker Josh Howard in person. Narration by Glenn Close. Sunday, January 20, from 3-5p.m. at The Loft Cinema, 3233 E. Speedway Blvd. Free admission. 312-8923 or <https://soazseniorpride.org>

24: "BREAST CANCER 101" presented by Dr. Leigh A Neumayer, Professor and Chair, Department of Surgery, Margaret E. And Fenton L. Maynard Endowed Chair in Breast Cancer Research at Banner University Medicine. Thursday, January 24 at 10:30a.m. Lecture and Luncheon at 11a.m. Hacienda Del Sol Guest Ranch Resort. Presented by Friends of Banner University Medicine. \$35. **299-0184**

27-2/10: AMERICAN INDIAN ARTS EXPOSITION Authentic crafts and art from 80 tribal nations. Demonstrations, dancers, food, music. FREE. Quality Flamingo Ballroom, 1300 N. Stone Ave. Everyone welcome! 248-5849, www.usaindianinfo.com

FEBRUARY

2-3: ART TRAILS STUDIO TOUR Saturday & Sunday, Feb. 2-3, 10a.m.-4p.m. Some 24 artists and 3 galleries in west / northwest Tucson welcome your visit. This is your chance to talk to the artists and find out how they create their work. Details & map at www.arttrails.org or in the January Zócalo.

ONGOING

THE SOUTHERN ARIZONA WATERCOLOR GUILD presents "The Annual Show" January 8- February 3 at the SAWG Gallery 5420 E. Broadway, #240, in the Plaza at Williams Centre, Tucson. Open Tuesday-Sunday, 11a.m.-4p.m. The reception is Thursday, Jan. 17, 5-7p.m. All are welcome. www.southernazwatercolorguild.com

ART CLASSES at the Southern Arizona Arts Guild Gallery. A variety of classes are offered each month and usually last about two hours. Students always leave with a finished piece. Classes include jewelry making, fiber arts, painting & more! All classes take place in the gallery and are limited to no more than 8 people. The SAAG Gallery is located in the Casas Adobes Plaza at 7119 N. Oracle Road. To check out this month's classes, visit www.southernarizonaartsguild.com. If you would like to teach at the Gallery, please call Marnie Ehlers at 390-6627.

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The deadline for the February 2019 issue is January 10.



Town Crier

The \$100 Club

by David Kleinman

My Saturday morning tranquility was interrupted by my wife's exclamation that we were out of toilet paper. Apparently, the 128-megaroll package we purchased last year was finally depleted. Before I could make a rude but poignant comment, she declared I needed to make a trip to the "\$100 club." Her announcement that I was going shopping was not the problem, nor was the inevitability that I would overspend an issue. Rather, it was the understanding that my entire morning was now no longer mine, for no one can make a quick trip to the \$100 club. Let me tell you why.

As you approach the parking lot of the \$100 club you are faced with your first dilemma, finding a parking space. You have three choices: First, you can try for a parking space close to the entrance. This will entail repeatedly cruising the aisles like a panther stalking its prey. You are looking for a shopper who has a space close to the front, has already loaded his or her purchases into the car, and will be backing out soon—a kind of perfect storm on the lined asphalt. Get there too quickly, and you back up traffic in the lane, and people begin honking at you; get there too late, and the snowbird from Minnesota gets the spot. Timing is everything. The second choice is an ever-available spot in the north 40. From here you can't see the store, but you know you are in the right place because the abandoned shopping carts have the store logo on them. They also have 3 inches of dust on them and a family of crows living in them because the store employees never come out this far. Your third choice is to say the heck with it, buy an overpriced four-pack of toilet paper at the convenience store, and make it home in time to enjoy the remainder of the day.

Once you are inside the \$100 club, the idea that you can go directly to the item you need, load it in the cart, go to the register, and pay for it is dashed on the rocky shores of the realization that you can't even find the item.

I am absolutely certain toilet pa-

per was in the aisle next to the paper plates the last time I was here. However, when I get there, the aisle now contains beach towels, fun noodles, and snorkeling gear. A quick search of adjacent aisles does not reveal toilet paper, but I do get to sample artichoke hearts seasoned with Saigon cinnamon. After visiting seven other food-sampling stations I am reminded of the toilet paper by the grumbling noise in my intestines. Further unproductive searches lead me to the customer service counter, where I am informed toilet paper is now in the automotive section outside the store, on the other side of the parking lot. Makes perfect sense to me.

Toilet paper is in the cart, but so are 20 other items I have no recollection of placing there. How did this happen? My first reaction is to believe I have inadvertently taken someone else's cart, but who else would be silly enough to go out to the automotive section for toilet paper. Perusing the cart, I have vague memories of a few of the items. Motor oil, garden hose, multipack of socks, potato chips, and toothpaste all seem normal, although I'm not entirely sure these items don't already appear in my home. No, it's the others that worry me: a complete collection of Don Knotts films and a two-pack of artichoke hearts in Saigon cinnamon. I hate artichoke hearts.

After having assured the four cellphone company representatives that I do not need to change my carrier or increase my cloud storage space (really, I can increase the size of the clouds?); the solar water representative that I live in Tucson, so the water in my pipes is hot whether I want it to be or not; and the air conditioning representative that my house is indeed cool enough (a bald-faced lie), I begin weaving my way toward the checkout lines.

Now, this may seem like an ordinary statement, but those of you who have been to the \$100 club on free food-sample day know my pain. The 20-foot aisles, which normally are completely clear, today look like Interstate 5 through downtown Los Angeles. It's shopping-cart bumper cars without

the bumpers. Five minor collisions later and a heartfelt apology to the woman whose foot I ran over, I make it to the checkout lines.

Elated, I move toward the registers, and here is where I get to play a game that always brightens my day. I call it the "how I can slow down any checkout line in the world by just getting in that line" game. I come to a stop on the outside of the 20 lanes of registers and take a few minutes to observe not only the efficiency of the checkout clerks but also the carts of the shoppers in line. Even the fastest register-clerk can be stymied by the shopper with 51 items in the cart, four questions about similar items, and at least two things that have no tags on them.

After careful inspection I spy a quick-fingered clerk rapidly emptying the cart of a man with only eight items. Behind him in line is a woman with a screaming infant whose cart contains four boxes of diapers and six bottles of wine (kinda makes sense). Behind her, a man holds a single box of Pop-Tarts. I swoop in for the kill and get in line behind Pop-Tart man. My predictions are flawless as our line rapidly outpaces the other lines, and I am hurtled up to the register conveyor belt, where I unload my cart. As I place the last item from my cart on the belt, thus ensuring my commitment to stay in this line, I hear Pop-Tart man say to the clerk, "I ordered a box of the limited-edition bubble gum-flavored Pop-Tarts from the New Jersey store. Can you check and see if they have come in?" Once again I lose at my own game.

But there is a happy ending to the story. I escape the \$100 club in a record time of 2 hours and 37 minutes, at a cost of only \$134.65. My wife has a year's supply of toilet paper, as well as a new garden hose. I have the better part of my day to enjoy and three \$1.50 hot dogs to be eaten before I get home and my wife can see them.

DL

David Kleinman is a local freelance writer. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.

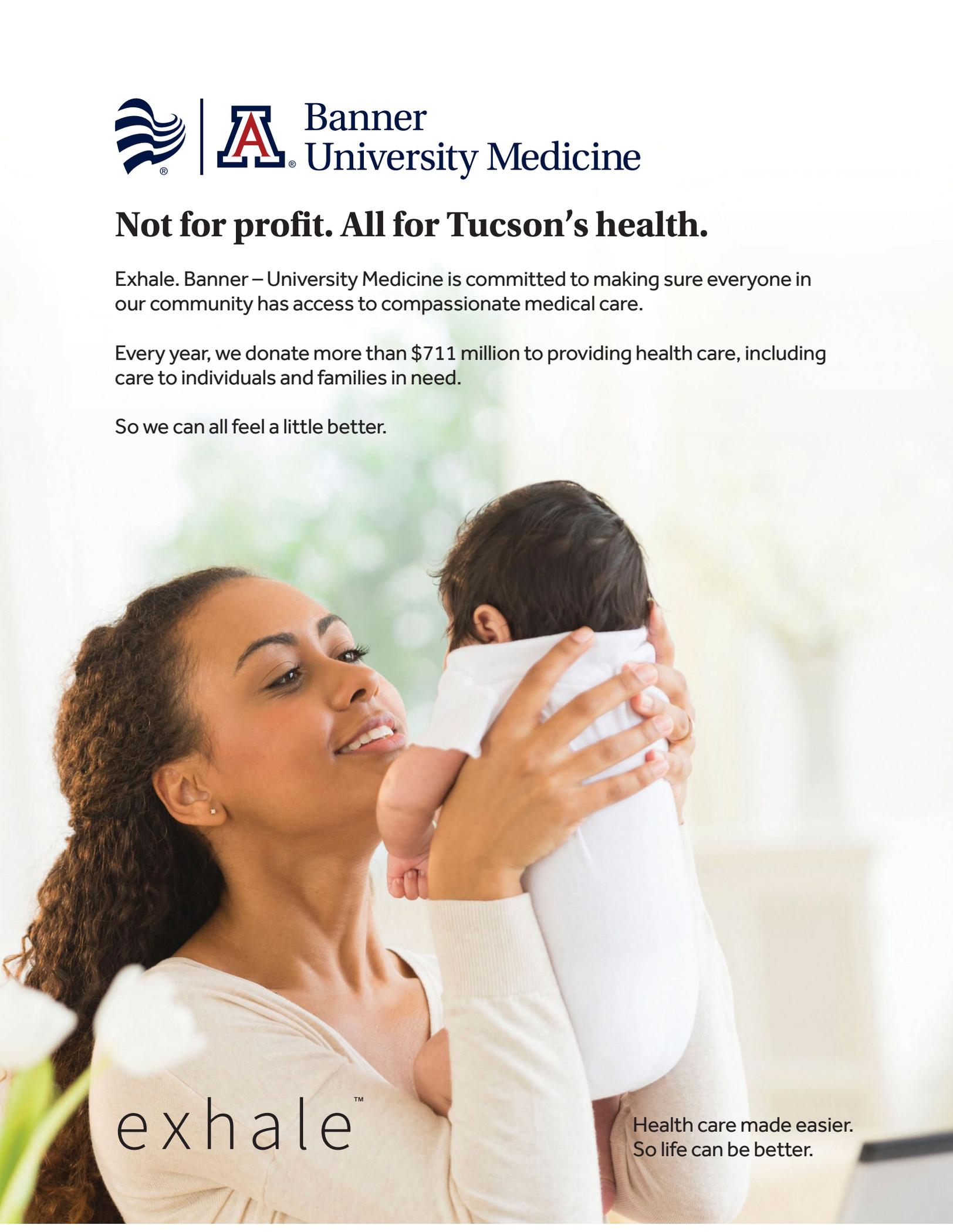


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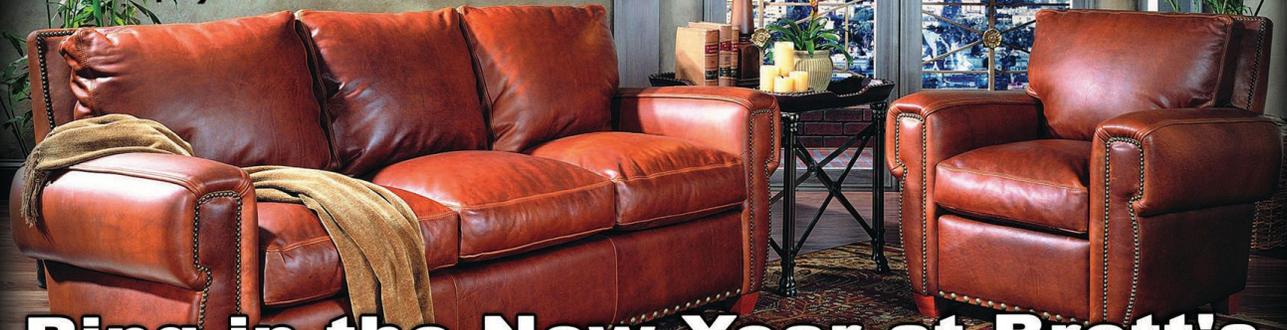
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