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Sunday, October 5, 2025

Inside Today



NEIGHBORS 16

SUSD teachers complain as enrollment dips.



BUSINESS 27

Scottsdale teacher's book looks at skills college kids need.

NEIGHBORS 27
BUSINESS 33
CLASSIFIEDS 39

Legal battle brews in 'Axon law' case

BY TOM SCANLON
Progress Managing Editor

Two sides have been battling behind-the-scenes and in the court of public opinion for nearly a year.

Now, the fight is official, with lawyers set to face off over "the Axon bill" at Maricopa

County Superior Court.

One side claims this is a frivolous, unwarranted attack on the state's attempt to keep a huge corporation and expand affordable housing.

The other insists this is a battle to protect the rights of citizens – in this case, the final say on a massive apartment project.

But by waiting until almost the last minute to file a legal challenge, the side opposed to the Axon bill allowed it to become "the Axon law."

Indeed, though a judge could ultimately demand a freeze, there is nothing to stop the

SEE AXON PAGE 8

The Parque steps up to bat

BY TOM SCANLON
Progress Managing Editor

It's not quite the same as taking on the CrackerJax automated batting machines, but the Parque is stepping up to the plate.

On Sept. 18, George Kurtz and company submitted their third revised plan in six months.

On the western edge of the Scottsdale Airpark area, the Parque succeeded where Axon and Banner Health stumbled.

As they are in the Scottsdale Airport vicinity and under flight paths, all three corporations were required to start their development journeys at the Scottsdale Airport Advisory Commission.

SEE PARQUE PAGE 14



Knowledge Flow

Saguaro High School's Sisters in STEM organization, plus volunteers from the school's award-winning Robotics team and others, hosted a Sept. 27 event designed to inspire and encourage elementary and middle school students – especially girls – to explore and engage in science, technology, engineering and math. Saguaro High freshman Fernanda Morales explained electrical currents to a younger student. It could be said she was conducting the flow of knowledge, from one generation to the next. (Annalee Hull/ Staff photographer)



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Scottsdale author addressing a job market problem

PROGRESS NEWS STAFF

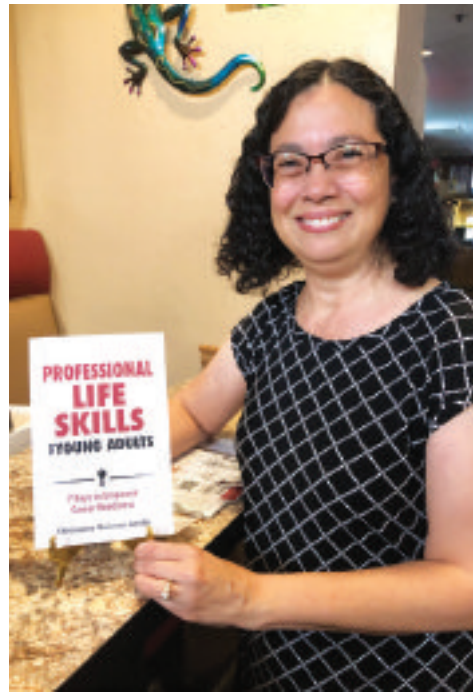
Scottsdale resident Christianne Meneses Jacobs notes that a recent survey showed that three-quarters of business managers were dissatisfied with recent college grad hires and 90% think they need formal etiquette training.

So Meneses Jacob, who teaches Spanish and English to Paradise Valley School District seventh and eighth graders, decided to do something to turn those stats around.

She's published a book, "Professional Life Skills for Young Adults - 7 Keys to Empower Career Readiness," that offers "offers practical guidance to guide young adults to become polished, professional, and career-ready."

"From job search to preparing for interviews to knowing what a dress code entails to how to communicate with coworkers, mastering these and other professional skills are important to empower career readiness," she said.

The only problem, schools rarely teach



Christianne Meneses Jacob, a Scottsdale resident and Paradise Valley teacher, hopes to better prepare college grads for the working world. (Courtesy of Christianne Meses Jacob)

them, so many college grads enter the workforce unprepared for an education on them in the "school of hard knocks."

Meneses Jacob said she's packed her slim book "with the practical knowledge, insights and advice needed to excel as a young adult in the workplace, whether you are in college, recently graduated, or in the beginning stages of your professional journey."

Those skills include "establishing good digital citizenship habits and handling financial responsibility" as part of her guide to a "foundation for long-term success."

A native of Nicaragua who also lived with her husband and two daughters in Scottsdale for 23 years, Meneses Jacob said two occurrences in her life prompted her to write the book.

One was the "career and Life Links" course she taught as an elective and the other involved her older daughter going to college.

Following her daughter's enrollment, Meneses Jacob joined a social media group

of parents of young adults and saw most parents had similar complaints.

They felt colleges are not teaching kids how to get a job or even how to start trying to get one, how to write a successful resume and other skills needed to transition from the classroom to the office.

"The parents expressed frustration that their children had graduated from college but could not find jobs," she recalled.

So she began digging, finding out that surveys consistently showed a feeling among managers that they applicants they were seeing generally weren't up to the task.

"As an educator, these statistics were concerning and I decided that I could help young adults solve the problem," she said. "My daughters are young adults and these are the skills I needed to teach them. So I decided to put all of those lessons into a book.

Meneses Jacobs said the pandemic dis-

SEE **SKILLS** PAGE 31

Authors will gather soon in N. Scottsdale

BY SRIANTHI PERERA
Progress Contributor

For the fourth year in a row, North Scottsdale readers will have a chance to meet authors at the Desert Foothills Book Festival, presented by the Holland Center and Desert Foothills Library on Oct. 18.

Over 100 authors from across Arizona will gather to display and sell their work, with proceeds going toward the library's youth literacy programs.

"We want to support the Arizona author community, but beyond that, our mission is to celebrate the importance of reading," said Caren Cantrell, author and founding member.

"The festival exists to promote literacy and a love of reading among chil-



Caren Cantrell, left, and Hayley Rose are authors and founding members of the Desert Foothills Book Festival. (Courtesy of Caren Cantrell)



dren and adults by creating an interactive and inclusive venue for readers and writers to connect."

Hayley Rose, also an author/founding member, said, "A lot of planning has gone into the festival to make sure the day runs smoothly and that authors are happy and supported, and attendees have a good time."

Genres on display run the gamut from creative children's picture books to dark fantasy fiction, and from practical self-help to marine science.

Among the authors in attendance will be Susan Magestro, a 35-year criminologist who has turned to writing crime fiction; fantasy author C.K. Donnelly, winner of 18 literary awards

SEE **AUTHORS** PAGE 32

AUTHORS FROM PAGE 27

for her Kinderra Saga series; Art Blum, whose collection of books, including The Complete Works of Art, is about real-life reflections in captivating snippets; and angel communicator and Ivory LaNoue, host of The Angel Room Podcast.

Mirla Raz, a retired speech pathologist in Scottsdale, is looking forward to meeting those who may be interested in her bestselling practical books on speech therapy.

"The 'r,' 's' and 'l' sounds are the most frequently misarticulated by children," said Raz, who has over 40 years of experience working with children.

A child of Polish Jewish Holocaust survivors, she has also written a memoir, "The Birds Sang Eulogies," which recounts the harrowing experiences of her parents during WWII as they struggled to survive the Nazis attempted extermination.

Nahid Sewell, of Iranian heritage, has also written a difficult book set during the autocratic Shah of Iran's

reign in the mid-20th century.

The Scottsdale residents has authored four books on technology and will talk about her first novel in a trilogy, "The Ruby Tear Catcher," a traumatic story of an oppressed woman in Iran before and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"It's to help them understand that the Middle Eastern people, and people who come from other parts of the world, who adhere to a different religion, they're no different than you and I," she said. "At the core, we're all the same."

Tempe author Tony Fuentes will also attend with the aim of meeting and creating fans for his dark fantasy and urban fantasy books that he writes together with his best friend, CS Kading.

Pre-pandemic, Fuentes was ghost writing book blurbs. Then, he and Kading began writing and publishing novels.

Their first three novels were epic affairs of 150,000 words each, but readers asked for shorter consumption and less wear-and-tear on the wrists, so they pared down the subsequent ones.

The pair write a book a year, and also a side story in the "same world" as a monthly serial in a newsletter.

The word "prolific" comes to mind, but Fuentes said the words to describe him should be "workaholic" or even "slightly crazy." He has a day job in human resources administration in a large corporation that keeps him grounded.

He added that authors fare better at book festivals rather than at the hugely popular themed conventions.

A book festival for North Scottsdale took time to evolve.

With festivals in Mesa and Tucson serving the south and events in Payson and Prescott serving the north, a group of authors felt the Greater Phoenix, Scottsdale, Cave Creek and Carefree were missing a valuable opportunity to meet and engage with local authors.

Cantrell, Rose, Rita Goldner and Barbara Renner were soon joined by Stephanie Barton, Patricia Brusha and Trish Dolasinski, who felt the same. Six months after they met, the inaugural festival took place in June 2022.

"None of us had ever organized a

book festival before," said Cantrell, the author of nine children's picture books and a middle-grade novel. "We relied heavily on the generosity of Connie Cockrell, the organizer of the Payson Book Festival."

In 2022, the Scottsdale festival featured 60 authors and attracted an attendance of about 200. Last year it had 95 authors participating and over 400 attendees. This year, organizers expect attendance to exceed 500.

Rose, a Scottsdale author with several bestselling children's books to her credit, suggests attendees should meander among the tables.

"Talk to the authors, even the ones who write in genres you usually don't read," she said. "There are some fascinating stories out there and you might just discover your new favorite author."

Do they measure the festival's success just by the numbers?

"I think success is about spreading inspiration and opening the minds and hearts of others through connection and a love of reading," Rose said.

Details: desertfoothillsbookfestival.com. 🐾

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