



www.cityofelmirage.org

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623-972-8116

## Celebrate the season at Third Thursday Holiday Celebration

Start the season off in style at Third Thursday "Holiday Celebration" on December 16 at El Mirage Civic & Cultural Center.

Experience the magic as El Mirage Road is transformed into a starry wonderland of twinkling luminaries lighting the way to the Civic & Cultural Center where visitors will find artists and artisans selling one-of-a-kind holiday gifts, live entertainment, and sumptuous holiday treats.

Carolers will perform and guests will be invited to join in a community sing-along. Santa will make his annual appearance with both professional and

"bring your own camera" photo opportunities.

The Artist in Residence Gallery will exhibit "Landscapes of the Mind" — the intuitive visionary works of collage artist, Kathleen D. Cone. The Studio Gallery will exhibit a myriad of artists and mediums presented by WHAM (West Valley Arts Movement).

The community is invited to join in the celebration by making their own gingerbread creation and displaying it in a gingerbread village at the First Annual Third Thursday Gingerbread House Competition. All types of design are



Join the First Annual Gingerbread House Competition and win a \$200 shopping spree.

welcome. Visitors to Third Thursday will be invited to vote for their favorite. The winner will receive a \$200 gift certificate, just in time for holiday shopping.

Third Thursday Holiday Celebration takes place on December 16 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Civic & Cultural Center, 14010 N. El Mirage Road just north of Thunderbird Road next to Bill Gentry Park. Admission and parking are free.

For more information on the Holiday Celebration and Gingerbread Competition, or to obtain a booth application to sell your holiday arts/crafts/food, visit [www.artsmoveelmirage.com](http://www.artsmoveelmirage.com)



Jody's Heavenly Scones & Bakes features a wide variety of scones, muffins and mini-muffins.

### Culinary Entrepreneurs Kitchen welcomes two new businesses

The holidays are right around the corner, and two new El Mirage businesses are getting in the spirit of the season with solutions that satisfy families and save precious time during the busiest months of the year.

#### Jody's Heavenly Scones & Bakes

Baking is an art and Jody Keinanen has been blessed with a passion and a gift for baking. "I made my first coffee cake, on my own, at the age of seven," said Keinanen. "Unfortunately I forgot the sugar and even our chickens wouldn't eat it."

Fortunately, Keinanen did learn from her mistakes and never bakes without double checking all ingredients before baking.

Keinanen learned to bake by watching her mother as she effortlessly created delicious baked goods without any modern kitchen equipment. "When you learn to bake delicacies in an old wood stove, with a broken temperature gauge, you develop your judgment concerning heat, time and looks to be in tune with your efforts to create mouthwatering, scrumptious baked goods" said Keinanen.

Keinanen concentrates her baking to Scones and Muffins. Scones and Muffins are unique because they can be made in many varieties of flavors that compliment other tastes and smells. They can be sweet and flavorful or savory and

MORE CULINARY ON PAGE 6

## Landscapes of the Mind on exhibit at El Mirage Gallery

Collage artist Kathleen Cone's "Landscapes of the Mind" exhibit will open on Thursday, December 16 at El Mirage Art Gallery.

Cone's work expresses the trials and tribulations of her own life. The known and unknown world. Concepts of multiple dimension, lack of time within space and the earliest of primitive meaning, romance, and divinity. It is clear, that the body of her work is an attempt to make sense of the world around her and existence itself.

Art being a form of communication, her work asks the questions that we as humans all ask about ~ loss, love, who we are and where we come from, our hopes, dreams and aspirations.

What sets the work of artist Kathleen D. Cone apart is her ability to intuitively perceive and create a continuum of

seemingly unrelated images into multiple realities that take on meaning otherwise not held individually. And, to capture the essence of what it truly means to be alive, human and mortal.

Legacy plays a strong role in her desire to maintain the integrity of her work within the span of her own lifetime, and thus her work relates both to the 20th and 21st Centuries as a crossover between memories of the past and visions of the future.

"I think it must be said that her attention to detail and the quality of her work places her in a category of her own when it comes to the art of collage," said Gallery Curator Thomas Schultz.

An artist reception will be held on Thursday, December 16, 6 to 9 p.m. at the Artist in Residence Studio/Gallery, El Mirage Civic & Cultural Center,



String Theory by artist Kathleen Cone.

14010 N. El Mirage Road just north of Thunderbird Road next to Bill Gentry Park. "Landscapes of the Mind"

will be on display Dec. 16, 2010 through Jan. 15, 2011. For additional information visit [www.artsmoveelmirage.com](http://www.artsmoveelmirage.com)

## Meet the New City Council

Incoming Mayor Lana Mook and Council members Jim McPhetres, Joe Ramirez, and John Palladino will be sworn into office at the regular meeting of the City Council on Thursday, December 9 at 6PM. A reception to honor outgoing Mayor Michele Kern and Council members, Roger Cleveland, Ben Lewis, and Adam Super and welcome the incoming mayor and councilmembers will be held at the Senior Center immediately following the council meeting. The public is invited to attend. Light refreshments will be served.

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## Police Department offers holiday safety tips

With the holiday's right around the corner, residents need to start thinking about the steps to ensure a safe holiday shopping experience.

The El Mirage Police Department recommends the following safety advice:

### Vehicle/parking lot safety

■ Secure personal belongings and valuables in the trunk of your vehicle. Items such as cellular phones, lap top computers and handbags should be kept out of sight.

■ Lock your car door and

secure the windows and trunk.

■ Hide items such as gifts in the trunk of your vehicle or cover with a blanket if it is viewable through a back window.

■ Park in a well-lighted area and be aware of your surroundings.

■ Have your keys out and ready before you get to your vehicle.

■ Try to remember where you parked your vehicle so you can walk directly to your vehicle and not have to wander the parking lot with your hands full of gifts or groceries.

### Shopping Safety

■ Never set your packages, purse, or wallet down and unattended in a shopping cart.

■ Anyone carrying a purse should carry it tucked tightly under their arm and wallets should be carried in the front pocket.

■ Try not to carry large amount of cash in your purse or wallet.

■ Shopping in pairs will minimize you risk

of being a victim.

■ Secure your credit card receipts. Someone gaining access to your credit card number could be the first step in having your identity stolen.

■ Don't throw away receipts. Keep them in a folder or file them away in a safe place until they can be properly shredded.

■ Use ATM machines that are located in a well-lighted and safe environment.

■ Avoid using ATM's that are located in malls. Pickpockets normally work these areas looking for people withdrawing large amounts of cash.

■ Educate your children about what to do if they get separated from you while shopping.

■ If you see suspicious activity or become a victim of a crime, report it immediately to the store manager or the police.

The men and women of the El Mirage Police Department would like to wish you and your family a safe and Happy Holiday Season!



McGruff the Crime Fighting Dog promoted neighborhood safety at Family Fall Fest.

## G.A.I.N. event and Family Fall Fest a huge success

The El Mirage Police Department held its first G.A.I.N. event in conjunction with the City of El Mirage and Dysart Elementary School PTO.

G.A.I.N. or Getting Arizona Involved in Neighborhoods encourages residents to get together in their respective communities to promote safety, neighborhood communication and celebrate the successes of crime prevention through community involvement.

The Family Fall Fest event included a police motorcycle display, special appearances from McGruff, the Crime Fighting Dog and "Duke", the El Mirage Police K9 and his handler.

The El Mirage Police Department set up an informational table in order to share safety tips and provide Child Fingerprint Kits, sticker badges, coloring books, and Halloween Safety bags to promote safe trick-or-treating to hundreds of children who visited the table.

### City of El Mirage: Frequently Used Numbers

#### City of El Mirage

Building Safety 623-933-8318  
Business License 623-876-2965  
City Clerk's Office 623-876-2925  
City Hall 623-972-8116  
Municipal Court 623-815-2186  
Police Non-Emergency 623-933-1341  
Senior Center 623-876-4232

#### Animal Control

Dead Animals 623-933-8318  
Maricopa County 602-506-7387  
Stray Dogs 623-933-1341

#### Utilities

APS-Electric Service 602-371-7171  
Parks and Sons-Trash Service 623-974-4791  
Southwest Gas- 800-873-2440  
Water Service-City of El Mirage 623-933-1228

#### Other

Assessor's Appraisers (Maricopa County) 602-993-0098  
Dial-A-Ride (El Mirage) 623-876-4223  
Dysart Unified School District 623-876-7000  
Flood Control District (Maricopa County) 602-506-1501  
Graffiti Hotline 623-876-4611  
Post Office 800-275-8777  
Landfill (Glendale) 623-930-2191  
Library (El Mirage) 602-652-3382  
Liquor Licensing (Arizona) 602-542-5141  
Post Office (El Mirage) 623-575-7344  
Ramada Rental (Gateway Park) 623-933-1228  
Street Lights Out - Call APS 623-371-7171  
Voter Registration 602-506-3535



# POLICE BLOTTER

News from the El Mirage Police Department



## Police responds to Vehicle Burglaries

El Mirage Police Officers respond to vehicle burglaries on a daily basis. From January 1 through October 31, 2010, 180 vehicle burglary reports were made to the El Mirage Police Department. These incidents result in a loss of personal property and vehicle damage, but are often avoidable. You can decrease your chances of becoming a victim of burglary by following a few simple steps:

- Clean out that garage! Donate items that are stored in your garage. These items may be of use for someone in need, and allows you to move your vehicle into the garage and off the street. Eliminating access to a vehicle is the key to reducing vehicle burglaries.
- Remove valuables from your vehicle! When parking in unsecured areas, remove valuable items from the interior of your vehicle. Never keep checkbooks, paystubs, social security numbers or vehicle titles in your cars. When shopping at more than one location, move items to your trunk

- so that they are out of sight.
- Lock your doors and windows! 58% of vehicle burglaries reported in El Mirage between January 1 - October 31, 2010 occurred through an open or unlocked vehicle door or window.
- When shopping at night, park in well lighted areas and keep your keys in your hand! If an emergency arises, you may be able to press the panic button on your key fob, enter your vehicle quickly, or defend yourself by using your keys in your closed fist with portions of the key's point protruding through the spaces in your fingers.
- Be alert! Looking around and being aware of your surroundings gives you the edge! Take control of your environment and minimize the opportunity for you to become a victim.

Making small changes, such as the ones above, will decrease your chances of becoming a victim, making for a safer El Mirage,

### Contact Us

14405 N. Palm St.  
623-933-1341

[www.cityofelmirage.org/police](http://www.cityofelmirage.org/police)  
[askacop@cityofelmirage.org](mailto:askacop@cityofelmirage.org)



## Toy Drive

The El Mirage Police Department is sponsoring a Christmas toy drive to benefit needy children in El Mirage. You can help by donating new, unwrapped toys.

Donations will be accepted at the following locations November 22 - December 15:

**El Mirage Police Department,**  
14405 N Palm St

**El Mirage City Hall,**  
2145 NW Grand Ave.

**Walmart Supercenter,**  
12900 W Thunderbird Rd

**Pueblo El Mirage, Main Office,**  
11201 N El Mirage Rd



The Police Department Christmas Toy Drive helps needy children in El Mirage.

For additional information, contact Monica Rios, [mrrios@cityofelmirage.org](mailto:mrrios@cityofelmirage.org), 623-433-9536.

## El Mirage Police Department Commendations

The El Mirage Police Department recognizes employees through a formal awards process. These award recipients' have been nominated by peers or supervisors for acts that extend beyond their normal range of duties.

Volunteer Bill Criteser received the "Employee of the Quarter" for the First Quarter in FY2010, for his continuing dedication to the department and citizens. The El Mirage Police Department requires their volunteers to work eight hours a month and Bill continues to volunteer an average of 40 hours a month. Congratulations!

Officers Doug Jones, Karyn Mucci and Kim Walden were nominated for the Elks Club Enrique Camerana Award and

the El Mirage Police Department's Certificate of Recognition. Their nomination stems from a traffic stop in March, 2010 that ended in the recovery of 44 lbs of marijuana and a stolen handgun.

Detective Sergeant Dave Wilson, Detective Mike

Henige, Detective Dave Swingle and Crime Scene Specialist Kim Tisdall were nominated for the Elks Club Fire/Law and Order Award and the El Mirage Police Department's Unit Award for their involvement in the Walgreen's ATM burglary investigation in 2009.

## Civic & Cultural Center courtyard gets a beauty makeover

After years of wear and tear from Mother Nature and thousands of visitors, the El Mirage Civic & Cultural Center received a much-needed facelift thanks to many generous product donations and a team of dedicated volunteers.

The courtyard renovation was completed just in time to welcome guests to the November Third Thursday Arts & Music Festival on the Plaza.

New power and lighting have been added to the area to create improved visibility for these and other outdoor events. Vibrant low-water-use plants grace the fronts of the Senior Center, Court, Artists Gallery and Studios, and provide much needed color and beauty to the area. New decorative rock has been added to finish off the surface areas. A lovely cactus garden now graces the front of the Senior Center!

The plants were selected for their low water use and easy maintenance, and lighting is by compact fluorescent bulbs which are low energy use -- all in keeping with the new El

**Special thanks go out to:**

<b>Raymond Flores (donated trenching services for electric lines)</b> RNK Custom Home Remodeling, LLC 602-525-8850	<b>623-780-1098</b>
<b>Asbed Khosdeghian (donated labor and material for electric wiring)</b> Good News Construction, LLC 623-882-3570	<b>Mike Scully (provided landscaping rock at below cost)</b> Valley Crest Landscape Maintenance, Inc. 602-276-5900
<b>Mark Canchola (donated electrical conduit)</b> Universal Electric Inc.	<b>And our volunteers from Reveal Church of the Vineyard in Surprise who planted 198 plants and spread 100 tons of granite!</b> 623-444-4629 info@revealvineyard.com

Mirage General Plan focus on sustainability.

"The City has many people to thank for making this transformation happen," said City Building Official Mary

Dickson. "We received easily \$12,500 worth of work between donations of materials, volunteer labor and just tremendous deals from the contractors," said Dickson.

## EL MIRAGE HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Need help purchasing a home? The El Mirage Homebuyer Assistance Program is a federally funded program that provides down payment and/or closing costs assistance to purchase a house in El Mirage.

A homebuyer may qualify if all of the following are met:

- Haven't owned a home in the last 3 years
- Intend to occupy the home as the primary residence
- The annual household income is not over 80% of



Downpayment and closing cost assistance is available to help you purchase a home in El Mirage.

the area medium income based on family size (example: \$48,000 for a family of three)

- Have the financial ability to obtain a mortgage loan

- Must contribute a minimum of \$1,000 towards down payment and/or closing costs

Applications are available at City Hall.

Monthly homebuyer assistance informational seminars are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm in the El Mirage Senior Center, 14010 N El Mirage Road, El Mirage. The next seminar is scheduled for December 14, 2010. Seating is limited; please call 623-933-8318 to reserve a seat.

## Main street water line replacement completed

The Main Street Waterline Replacement Project is complete. "This area of the water system was in poor condition and needed to be replaced to meet current service demands and fire service requirements," Public Works Director Lance Calvert said.

The existing 6" asbestos cement water line on Main Street from Thunderbird Road to Myer Lane has been replaced with a new 12" ductile iron pipe which will distribute large volumes of water for fire flow and distribution to the immediate area. The

existing 4" water lines on Ash Street, Valentine Street, Tonya Street and 'M' Lane between Main Street and 'A' Street were also replaced with 8" ductile iron pipe. This will also improve fire service in the area. All services affected were replaced including new meters.

Due to the poor condition of the existing roadway, the project also included the removal and replacement of the pavement on Main Street and slurry sealing of Valentine Street, Tonya Street and 'M' Lane.

"The City has been

committed to maintaining a quality water system meeting both water quality and fire system needs including the replacement of existing waterlines when appropriate as the lines age and become obsolete," said Calvert. "A majority of the project cost was funded by a Community Development Block Grant minimizing the local project cost share."

The replacement project was completed with minimum interruption of service to residents as the project was carried out in sections to minimize inconvenience to

the community. This project will reduce the number of main breaks and also reduce maintenance cost, street damage and water loss. Residents' patience and cooperation due to the dust and noise from equipment, detours and temporary road closures was greatly appreciated.

The Public Works Department would like to thank the residents for their understanding throughout construction and the project contractor, Carson Construction, Inc. for the work they did on this project.

## Bottled water versus tap water: You decide

Bottled water has become the drink of choice of most Americans and is big business worldwide with sales of up to \$100 billion per year. Bottled water is safe and convenient to drink but costs 200 or more times the cost of regular tap water.

Bottled water advertisements often depict pristine pools of spring water, alpine streams and icy water from ancient glaciers. The fact is bottled water is largely just tap water in convenient bottles. Some bottled water has a nutrient label which informs the reader that there is nothing in the water. The nutrient label shows that it is fat free, sugar free and has no calories. However, the United States and the FDA does not require the actual mineral content to be included on the nutrient label. There are many complex mineral contents,

such as iron and magnesium, in water that gives the water its taste. The European market uses the mineral content to sell higher priced imported mineral water. In addition, all water has some type of dissolved salts that are naturally occurring including sodium, calcium and potassium. Because the salts are naturally occurring and not added to the water it is not required to be indicated on the nutrient label.

Not only is bottled water more costly than tap water, it creates over a million tons of plastic waste per year. Nearly eighty percent of all plastic water bottles are not recycled. According to the Pacific Institute it takes up to 17 million gallons of oil per year to produce the billions of plastic bottles for water. The bottled water industry in 2006 contributed 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide into the

atmosphere in manufacturing bottles.

How would you like to drink a glass of water, knowing where it comes from, the actual content, how it is produced, and causes no environmental impact while costing much less than bottled water? The answer is simple, all you have to do is turn on your water tap in your home.

The tap water in El Mirage is regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency according to the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. Drinking water in the United States is some of the safest and cleanest water in the world. Drinking water regulations limit the amounts of metals, organics, and other contaminants which can enter the water supply. Every year the City of El Mirage publishes an annual water quality report

**MORE WATER ON 9**

## CULINARY: Entrepreneurs, From Page 1

lightly spicy. They are great with tea, milk, or coffee and make a great snack. Savory scones are a delightful accompaniment for soups, salads, or dinner. Scones can be enhanced with down home country flavors or exotic flavors of places like India, Mediterranean, or Latin America.

It is especially true that the flavor and texture are what make Jody's "Heavenly Scones" unique and superior to other scones on the market. Savoring these

scones becomes a pleasing experience and a great addition to any occasion. For example, for a football sporting event try Southwest Scone with tailgate chili and barbeque. For Thanksgiving or Christmas have the festive pumpkin or orange cranberry scones. The mini scones are a perfect size to accompany meals and enhance the theme of any occasion.

Jody's Heavenly Scones and Bakes also offer muffins and mini muffins. "The

main benefit over mass marketed cupcakes is that the flavors and texture I have developed are far superior," said Keinman. Muffins can be created for any occasion and theme. For children's birthday parties mini muffins are great, they are cute, bite sized, and are not as wasteful as large cakes or cupcakes.

Jody's Heavenly Scones and Bakes offer delicious flavors for any palate and makes great holiday gifts. Special party trays can be

custom ordered to meet your needs.

For questions or orders call Jody at: 623-332-7707.

### Living the Dream Catering

Living The Dream Private Catering was created in August 2010 by Kat Wenker and Bradley Stevenson to create meals using the freshest ingredients to showcase the true flavors of food. "We want to wow our clients and exceed their



**Chef Jody Keinanen offers guests her delectable holiday scones.**

expectations at every event that we do," said Wenker.

Wenker and Stevenson are opening an office in the Creative Industries Incubator in El Mirage, and will be utilizing the Culinary Entrepreneur Kitchen for Living the Dream Private Catering..

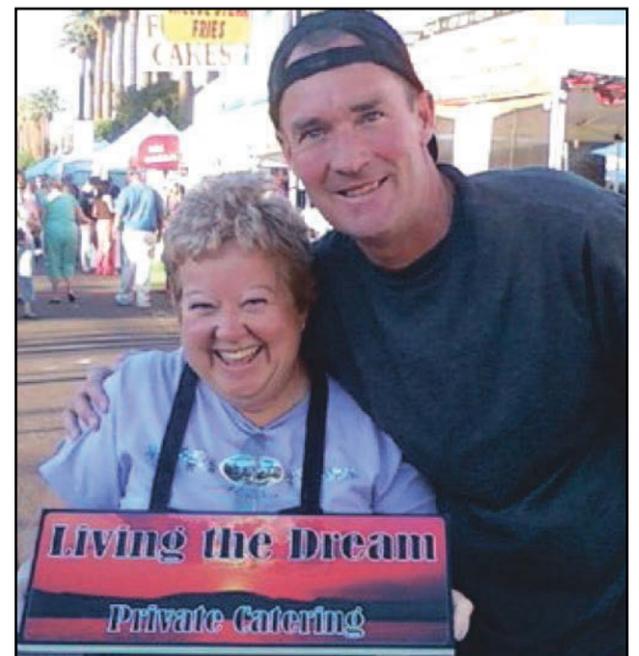
Kat Wenker has lived in the valley for over 20 years and most of that time has been in the food service industry. She has over 30 years in the business starting out as a dishwasher and working her way to general manager, learning all aspects of the business. She was the Chef at the Officers' Club at Luke A.F.B. for over 12 years before moving on to help open up Hoot & Howl in Goodyear, AZ She then went on to work at Driver's Sport Grill in Avondale as the Kitchen Manager. After a short break from the business she went on to work for Lonestar Steakhouse as the front-of-the-house Manager. After four years there she went to work for Omaha Steakhouse as a bartender learning a totally new aspect of the restaurant business. For the last year and a half

she was General Manager of Bayrischer German restaurant in Surprise.

Bradley Stevenson was originally born in San Diego, California. He also has over 30 years in the food service industry. He was the youngest General Manager of the Tony Romas' Franchise in Carlsbad, California. He migrated to the valley 12 years ago to open up Ruby Tuesdays in Peoria. He then ventured on the Lonestar Steakhouse where he met Kat. They formed a deep friendship because they both have the same work ethics and both have always wanted to have their own business. They both moved on to the Omaha Steakhouse together and also on to Bayrischer Hof together.

In August of 2010 they were ready to pursue their goals and Living The Dream was born. Living The Dream Private Catering has a very significant meaning to both of the owners and it inspires and empowers them to pursue "Living The Dream".

Please visit their website for more information at [www.ltdcatering.com](http://www.ltdcatering.com)



**Kat Wenker and Bradley Stevenson are "Living the Dream" of owning their own catering company.**



## Stormwater pollution solutions

Urban storm water runoff is a major source of water pollution and impacts the environment as it flows during rain storms. Storm water can transport contaminants like pet waste, pesticides, fertilizers, pool chemicals, oil and grease, antifreeze, soil sediment, yard waste, cigarette butts and other types of litter. The runoff travels down roadways into the City storm drains and flows into area drainage washes to the Agua Fria

River while also soaking into the groundwater which is the City's source of drinking water.

To keep this pollution from getting into our natural waterways, residents can help by doing simple items like properly disposing of pet waste and litter in refuse containers. Most household lawn and garden products like weed killers, insect killers, and fertilizers need to be stored in waterproof containers and disposed of properly. Pool chemicals, salt for water softeners, and a wide variety of other household chemical products should also be properly stored and disposed to prevent these items from polluting the environment and the groundwater. It is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions on the application and proper disposal of all chemical products.

Oil stains on your driveway and outdoor spills

of antifreeze, brake fluid, and other automotive fluids are easily carried away by storm water. An oily sheen on storm runoff from your driveway is an indicator of oil pollution. A drip pan, carpet scraps or matting can be used to catch drips. Routine maintenance can prevent your car from leaking and help identify potential problems. If you change your own oil it is important to be careful to avoid spills. Use an absorbent for any leaks from your car, sweep your driveway and dispose of the oil properly. Used oil can be disposed of at a number of locations as listed on the Parks and Sons hazardous waste website [http://parksandsons.com/Hazardous\\_Waste.html](http://parksandsons.com/Hazardous_Waste.html). It is illegal to dump used oil, antifreeze, or gasoline down a storm drain, sewer manhole, in a ditch, or on the ground. These items need to be properly disposed.

One gallon of used oil can contaminate a million

gallons of fresh water.

It is important to use trash receptacles at the public parks and parking lots. Trash and debris such as soda cans, plastic bags, plastic bottles, and newspapers can wash in to a storm drain blocking proper storm water flow and causing unsightly conditions.

Following these guidelines, the residents of El Mirage can protect the environment and make a difference in our health by preventing storm water pollution.

For additional information on where to dispose of or recycle used household chemicals and automotive fluids visit the website [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com). For plastic, metals, glass and paper/cardboard the City of El Mirage has a commingled recycling drop off center located at the south side of Gentry Park along Thunderbird Road just west of El Mirage Road.

### Thomas Schultz Photography is open for business

Award winning photographer and El Mirage artist-in-residence Thomas Schultz announced that he is ready to accept clients.

Thomas' "anything but ordinary" style of photography expresses his desire to capture and create storytelling photography that encapsulates your

milestone events as they unfold. His love for creative expression, dynamic action and artistic photojournalism combines to enable his photos to retell your story perfectly 100 years from now.

Call the studio at 407-442-9633 today to schedule your session.

## Going Green to Save Green: Less means more this holiday season

According to Use Less Stuff ([www.use-less-stuff.com](http://www.use-less-stuff.com)), our trash output rises by 25 percent between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day — it all adds up to an additional one million tons a week to our landfills.

Our wasteful ways are more frightening than the Ghost of Christmas-Past.

Each year, 50 million Christmas trees are chopped down for the holiday season,

and then thrown to the curb to be added to the landfills like any other trash.

We use 300,000 trees to produce the 2.7 billion cards mailed each holiday season; that's enough paper to fill a football field 10 stories high. We use an additional 50,000 trees-worth of paper to wrap our gifts, and we fasten them with 38,000 miles of ribbon — enough to tie a bow around

the Earth!

Then there's the family feast. At least 28 billion pounds of edible food are thrown away during the holiday season. If every American throws away just one bite of turkey with gravy, 8 million pounds of food is wasted. One uneaten tablespoon of mashed potatoes adds an additional 16 million pounds of waste, and one discarded spoonful of cranberry

sauce amounts to more than 14 million pounds.

And all those gifts. If Mother Nature could talk, she would probably ask that we all just stop shopping so much.

If everyone cuts back just a little this year, it would make a huge difference on the environment and our pocketbooks.

Cut back on gift-giving? Bah, humbug, right? Not so. The first step in reducing Santa's carbon footprint is to get educated, so here is some eco-friendly suggestions that

## Walmart goes green!

Back in 2005 Walmart made a pledge to reduce their impact on the environment. Our very own Walmart is leading the way for all Arizona Walmart stores by going green! Over 2,500 photovoltaic panels have been put in place on the roof of the store. These panels will generate 500Kw of electricity more than enough to supply over 50% of the required power for the store. All Walmart stores in the Arizona and California will eventually install the photovoltaic panels but El Mirage was the first!

Solar City installed the panels which took over two weeks to arrange on the roof and connect each panel to the next. A shut down of all the power to the store took place one evening and the panels were connected to the electric grid of Arizona Public Service. The panels generate the power and an

inverter converts the direct current (DC) of electricity into an alternating current (AC) which is what typically runs in buildings and houses. Alternating currents can flow in either direction- into the store or out to the grid. The power not used by the store goes back into the APS 'grid' and will be used by others.

Plans were submitted in September and reviewed by Building Safety and Fire for safety, electric and code related items. Paul Schechter, building inspector, inspected each panel's connection for grounding and bonding. Fire Chief Munding made sure proper spacing was provided between the panels so fire personnel could walk around the roof safely in case of an emergency response.

So next time you are in Walmart, let them know that you are proud that the El Mirage store was the first in Arizona to go green!

**MORE GREEN ON 11**

## WATER: Bottled versus tap water, From Page 5

that shows where the water comes from, how it is produced, and what it contains.

Most people say they do not like the taste of tap water due to the fact that it has been disinfected with chlorine. The chlorine protects the drinking water making it safe to drink. Common refrigerator and faucet charcoal filters can be purchased to remove the

chlorine taste if you prefer. Left in an open air container in the refrigerator, chlorine will also naturally dissipate after 24 hours.

Using the City's current rate structure, one gallon of drinking water at our highest rate costs \$0.0036. Compare that to a gallon of bottled water. Drinking one sixteen ounce container of tap water

per day per year would cost about a dollar compared over \$360 for bottled water. To calculate your own cost of bottled water you can use the website [www.newdream.org/water/calculator.php](http://www.newdream.org/water/calculator.php). For more information on bottled water and tap water check out the EPA website [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov) and the Pacific Institute web site [www.pacinst.org](http://www.pacinst.org).



## GREEN: Holiday, From Page 9

will help you consume wisely and still bring lots of cheer to your holiday celebrations.

### Cut Back on Spending

■ Institute the practice of giving a gift of your talent. A song or a poem written specially for the recipient is a priceless gift.

■ Collaborate with family members to create a family recipe book you can give to everyone in your clan. Self-publish the cookbook through online sites like Lulu ([www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)) and Blurb ([www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com))

■ Reprint a favorite family photo and have it framed.

■ Research your family history and create a family tree.

■ Make a "Greatest Hits" album for everyone on your list. Find songs that will evoke special memories for your friends and family.

■ Make cookies, cakes or breads and give them in decorative containers along with your favorite recipes.

■ Make your own soap, paper, or candles using sites like the DIY Network (Do It Yourself Network <http://www.diynetwork.com>)

### Give the Gift of Time

■ Set up a recurring lunch date or phone call. Note the dates and times on a 2010 calendar. Perfect for elderly friends or relatives.

■ A monthly care basket is a terrific gift for those who spend most of the year in separate places. Over the holidays send them their first basket of muffins or banana bread for January, and then each month of the year send something new to go with the theme of that month.

■ Transfer your gift-giving energy towards buying toys for local kids through Toys for Tots ([www.toysfortots.org](http://www.toysfortots.org)), or stocking your local food pantry ([www.vvfb.org](http://www.vvfb.org)).

■ Personalize coupons for a car wash, babysitting, a massage, or preparing and serving someone's favorite dinner.

### Encourage Green

■ Give an elderly relative a basketful of energy-saving compact fluorescent lights, along with an offer to change out the bulbs.

■ Buy renewable energy credits to help offset the environmental costs of our energy needs by funding renewable energy sources, like wind and solar power, elsewhere on the grid. Visit TaraPass [www.terrapass.com](http://www.terrapass.com)

■ Give a membership to a non-profit organization. JustGive.org allows you to donate online to thousands of charities.

■ Free a friend from annoying junk mail while saving trees and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. 41 Pounds Service will handle everything for you. ([www.41pounds.org](http://www.41pounds.org))

■ Give an annual membership to a local food co-op that will deliver locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Need more inspiration and information? The Center for a New American Dream website is jam packed with practical tips that will help you reduce stress and increase your personal fulfillment this holiday season. Their new "green" Alternative Gift Registry makes it possible to celebrate any occasion with a less-material focus. [www.alternativegiftregistry.org](http://www.alternativegiftregistry.org)

## Gateway Park Wins Award

Gateway Park in El Mirage received an honorable mention in the category of Attractions, Destinations and Entertainment at the 19th Annual WESTMARC Best of the West Awards. Councilman Roy Delgado and Public Works Director Lance Calvert accepted the award for the City of El Mirage.

El Mirage is the gateway to the rapidly growing Northwest Valley of metropolitan Phoenix. The City began experiencing a transformation that has taken it beyond its humble, agricultural beginnings to the vibrant, diverse suburb it is today. Gateway Park stands as a model of such transformation in El Mirage.

Gateway Park offers innovative and unique features:

- The First Skate Plaza in the State of Arizona
- Two Outdoor Basketball Courts with State-of-the-Art Breakaway Rims and Plexiglas Backboards
- Large, Spacious Multi-Purpose Fields
- Splash Plaza
- Large Event Pavilion, several picnic armadas, and a passive recreation green belt
- One-half Mile Multi-use Path
- Concession/Commercial Facility
- Off-leash Dog Park for both small and large dogs

Thanks to a bond initiative overwhelmingly approved by voters, grant assistance from the Arizona Heritage Foundation, and a land donation from the John F. Long Foundation, Gateway Park became a reality.

# EL MIRAGE BRANCH LIBRARY

## DECEMBER PROGRAMS

All Maricopa County Library District Libraries are closed Friday, December 24 for Christmas Day & Friday, December 31 for New Year's Day

### **CHILDREN**

#### **POTTERY PAINTING: CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS**

December 2 (Thursday) 3:30 pm

Ages 8-16. Paint and decorate a ceramic Christmas ornament to take home. All supplies provided. Program provided by Mississippi Mud Paintin' Parties. Registration needed. Community Room. Maricopa County Library District's El Mirage Branch Library, 14011 N. 1st Ave., El Mirage, 602.652.3000 [www.mclnaz.org](http://www.mclnaz.org).

**MRS. SANTA CLAUSE:** December 7 (Tuesday) 11 a.m.

Gather for a special holiday story time! You'll be treated to a lively reading of a wintry book! Jan Sandwich has delighted tens of thousands of children with her special style of storytelling, Holiday magic and songs. Community Room. Maricopa County Library District's El Mirage Branch Library, 14011 N. 1st Ave., El Mirage, 602.652.3000 [www.mclnaz.org](http://www.mclnaz.org).

#### **FALLING LEAVES STORY**

TIME: December 14; 10 a.m.

Ages 1-5 and their caregivers. Join us for fun books and silly songs. Community Room. Maricopa County Library District's El Mirage Branch Library, 14011 N. 1st Ave., El Mirage, 602.652.3000 [www.mclnaz.org](http://www.mclnaz.org).

### **ADULTS**

#### **BASIC COMPUTER**

#### **CLASS EN ESPANOL**

December 8 (Wednesday) 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

For new computer users, no experience needed! Learn the parts of a computer, how to use a mouse and keyboard and how to open and close windows. No registration needed, but space is limited. Community Room. Maricopa County Library District's El Mirage Branch Library, 14011 N. 1st Ave., El Mirage, 602.652.3000 [www.mclnaz.org](http://www.mclnaz.org).

#### **FRIENDS OF THE EL MIRAGE LIBRARY**

December 9 (Thursday) 6 p.m.

Join the Friends of the El Mirage Library and help plan the next book sale. Community Room. Maricopa County Library District's El Mirage Branch Library, 14011 N. 1st Ave., El Mirage, 602.652.3000 [www.mclnaz.org](http://www.mclnaz.org).

