

SanTanSun News

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Relentlessly local coverage of Southern Chandler and our neighboring communities



New gun law worries restaurant, bar owners

by Miriam Van Scott

A new law allowing Arizonans to bring loaded firearms into restaurants and bars takes effect Sept. 30, causing concern among area business owners. House Bill 113 – dubbed The Restaurant Gun Law – lets anyone with a valid concealed weapon carry permit take a handgun into Arizona's 5,900-plus eating and drinking establishments. The law is seen as a bad move by proprietors who worry about what the legislation will mean to their businesses.



STSN photo

NO GUNS ALLOWED: A number of Southern Chandler restaurants are posting "no guns allowed" signs on their doors, following the passage of a new law that allows concealed weapons into bars and eateries.

"I don't like this new law whatsoever," says Kristina Grako, owner of Sideline Grill at Alma School and Queen Creek in Southern Chandler. "We're a family place, but we do have people who come for the bar, and it's very scary mixing alcohol and loaded weapons. All it takes is one person to cause a problem."

Her concerns are echoed by State Sen. Jay Tibshraeny, who fought against the bill since it was first proposed years ago.

"The National Rifle Association (NRA) and other gun rights' supporters tried to get this legislation passed for three years, and I consistently opposed it," says Tibshraeny. "I vigorously opposed it because it's flawed, and I don't think it's wise. Alcohol and firearms do not mix."

Tibshraeny notes that he supports the rights of gun owners to protect and defend themselves. But, he finds this law problematic.

"I'm an advocate of Second Amendment rights," explains Tibshraeny, "but this just steps over the line."

See **'Loaded'** Page 8



"PROST!": Celebrate Oktoberfest with SanTan Brewing Company and other vendors in historic downtown Chandler from noon to 11 p.m. Sat. Sept. 26. Story on Page 42.

Finding fall in the desert

by Miriam Van Scott

The only evidence that it's autumn in the SanTan area is the date on the calendar, but elsewhere in Arizona, signs of fall are everywhere. Leaves are changing color, orchards are fragrant and ripe for picking, and birds, elk and bear are busily preparing for the coming winter.

A short drive northeast is Rim Country, which includes Payson, Pine, Strawberry, Star Valley and Christopher Creek. Despite its close proximity to Phoenix, Rim Country is a world away in terms of climate, terrain and wildlife. The region's cool weather and abundant outdoor activities offer a refreshing respite for East Valley visitors looking for a fall getaway.



Submitted photo

GLORIOUS GOLD: Leaves are turning fall colors at Hidden Meadow Ranch in northeastern Arizona, outside of Greer.

See **Finding fall** Page 10

Aloha charm makes Kona Ice a hit

by Sharon Schnakenburg

"Living in Hawaii, it really changes you," says Dan Wicks, a 20-year island resident who moved to Chandler's Sun River neighborhood two years ago. "Hawaii makes you realize that the most important things in life aren't really things at all. The Hawaiian way is just taking care of one another."

The great aloha state also inspired him when it came time to try his hand at entrepreneurship.

"I had shaved ice in Hawaii quite a bit. Shaved ice was just a staple there," Wicks recalls. "But then we came here and I was craving it. When I was researching businesses, I saw that



STSN photo

ALOHA SPIRIT: Dan Wicks of Sun River serves Hawaiian shaved ice to a couple of area children from his Kona Ice truck.

opportunity and thought, 'Wow, this is great.'"

So, Kona Ice of Chandler was born, featuring Arizona's only Kona Ice mobile shaved ice truck. The business is co-owned by Joe Murphy of Sun Groves, who is married to the cousin of Wicks' wife. Their passion: delivering cool edibles to cheer area children, providing door-to-door service, and giving back to the community in grand Hawaiian style.

What's inside?

Enough edibles to serve 1,500 people are packed inside the colorful, eye-catching, tropical Kona Ice truck. It carries a few ice cream treats but specializes in shaved ice, vended in 8-, 16- and 24-ounce cups for \$2, \$3 and \$4, and spanning 26 different juice flavorings.

See **Aloha charm** Page 12

Downtown Ocotillo bridge open

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Hip mamas shop Tailored for Two

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New comedy class rates, dates

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Clip it!

Coupons Inside
SAVE MONEY

Clip it!
Center spread

Gardening season in bloom

Dilly's Dell: fresh for less

Celebrate Hispanic heritage in Chandler

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"Rim Country is perfect for families coming up from the Valley," says John Stanton, manager of the Rim Country Regional Chamber of Commerce. "We're 90 minutes and a half tank of gas away, and we have something for everyone."

Stanton notes this is a perfect time of year to visit the area since fall foliage is at its peak, and Rim Country also has many family-friendly events on its calendar. The offerings include ongoing programs like a farmers' market in Payson and "shop-hops" in nearby Pine as well as larger events.

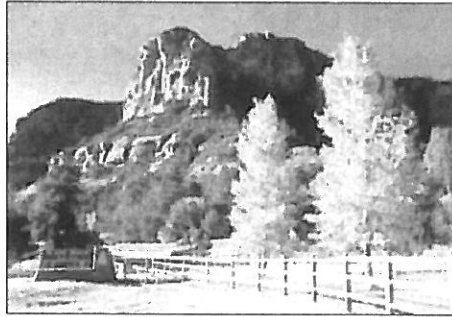
"The Heritage Festival is Sept. 26 and 27 at Green Valley Park in Payson," says Stanton. "There will be three 1800s-era villages people can visit – a pioneer town, a ranch and a Native American community – that celebrate Payson's cultural history. And of course we'll have singing, games, great food. And, admission is free."

Other autumn events include a rock and mineral show in October and a quilting exposition in November featuring 120 quilts.

For visitors looking to stay longer, Rim Country boasts a wide variety of accommodations. The Ranch at Fossil Creek in Strawberry offers llama hikes and tours of its goat dairy operation. Payson's Pine Victorian Inn provides luxurious rooms with spectacular mountain views. And nearby Kohl's Ranch offers a cowpoke version of bed and breakfast aptly named Bunk and Chow.

Majestic White Mountains

Further to the northeast are the towns of Greer, Pinetop, Show Low, Alpine, Whiteriver and Eagar, nestled deep among the aspens in Arizona's White Mountains. The lush, unspoiled region's elevation tops 8,600 feet and is a favorite among those who enjoy fishing, hiking and horseback riding, as well as nature lovers interested in bird watching or outdoor photography.



STSN photo

LEAF PEEPERS: Get out and see the fall colors around the state.

"The aspens are just beginning to get that yellow tinge," says Bruce Sitko, manager of education and information programs for the Arizona Game and Fish Department's (AZGF) Pinetop office. "By mid-October, the colors will be full blown. As it gets cooler and the leaves change, we'll also be seeing migratory birds, water fowl and hummingbirds in the area. There are a number of different habitats clustered together where people can see a variety of species."

Sitko says the region is well-known for its trout fishing and that many area streams and tributaries are stocked each week throughout the season.

"This time of year, you want to fish at as high an elevation as possible," suggests Sitko. "Places like Luna Lake, Alpine Lake, the Black River, Little Colorado River. And there's some great camping around those places too."

Nature lovers are encouraged to hike the trails and visit the AZGF information centers throughout the region. Sitko especially recommends visitors tour the Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area just southeast of Eagar, where during early autumn, elk gather and call

to each other in the green meadows below Escudilla Mountain.

"If you go out just before dawn or dusk, you can hear them bugling," says Sitko. "It's an incredible sight and sound."

Rustic luxury

Visitors who prefer luxury accommodations to camping will find an array of hotels, ranches and upscale cabins in the White Mountains to make their stay even more memorable.

"The changing of the seasons here is wonderful," says Amy Fairbanks, reservationist with Hidden Meadow Ranch in Greer, a luxury accommodation surrounded by national forest and recently featured on the television series "Great Escapes." "We have cool temperatures and the leaves are gorgeous – lots of beautiful golds and reds and yellows. It's a great way to experience autumn."

From Hidden Meadow's sumptuous cabins, guests can view an extensive display of natural wonders from the fall foliage to the woodland critters that make their home in the expansive forest.

"We routinely see bald eagles by the lake and elk grazing in the meadows here in the evenings," Fairbanks says. "We even see some black bears from time to time."

For more information on Rim Country, visit www.rimcountrychamber.com or call 928-474-4515. To learn more about the White Mountains, check out www.azwhitemountains.net. Visit AZGF's website at www.azgfd.gov/outdoor_recreation/WildlifeViewingAreas.shtml for more information on White Mountain nature trails and visitor centers.

Miriam Van Scott of Kerby Estates is a freelance writer and Chandler transplant from the Washington, D.C. area. She can be reached at Miriam@SanTanSun.com.

CFD teaches emergency preparedness

In recognition of National Preparedness Month in September, two free emergency planning training courses are offered to the community by the Chandler Fire Department.

Holistic Urgent Response Team facilitator training is held from 9 a.m. to noon Sat., Sept. 19 at the Chandler Fire Training Facility located at 3550 S. Dobson Rd. The program teaches the "Are You Ready? An In-Depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness" course developed by the Federal Emergency Management Administration. Focus is on how to develop, practice


and maintain emergency plans that reflect what must be done before, during and after a disaster to protect people and their property. Included is information on how to assemble a disaster supplies kit that contains the food, water and other supplies in sufficient quantity for individuals and their families to survive.

The Chandler Fire Department also offers a Community Emergency Response Team course beginning Wed., Sept. 23 and continuing from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Thursday evenings through Nov. 5 at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church at 3450 W. Ray

Rd. Students in this course learn how to treat minor injuries, turn off gas leaks, report terrorist threats and more.

Both courses are free and open to all adults. To register for either course, call 480-782-2116 or email certadmin@chandleraz.gov.

For more emergency planning info, visit www.chandleraz.gov/fire or www.chandlercert.org.




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BEFORE



AFTER




You Can't Even See Them!

COMBS ROAD INDUSTRIAL PARK

In the heart of the newest and upcoming developments in Queen Creek, we have space for all your commercial and industrial business needs. Located at 2769 E. Combs Road in Pinal County, East of Gantzel and Combs Intersection, three minutes from the new Banner Hospital.

The "Park" consists of EIGHT 50x100 INSULATED NEWLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDINGS, with C1 ZONING. There have been numerous inquiries and interest to lease these units because of the rare opportunity to lease buildings of this size, with this type of zoning. Contracts are being signed and negotiations are in progress. Interested parties have the opportunity to lease all or part of the units.



For Leasing Information, Interested Parties May Contact Owner/Agents:
Marc Poulsen • 480.694.3475 or Shannon Poulsen • 480.694.8559