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Polarfest 2015 huge success

Pages 4-5

Kelli Luberdal | Ledger

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The Man Who Killed Santa Claus

Santa Claus was killed in 1932 in Mesa, Arizona. Naturally, this tragic event took place during the Great Depression. The horrific occasion was witnessed by hundreds and in fact was the climax of a Christmas parade. Traumatized children broke into uncontrollable sobbing as the tears fell like waterfalls.

In 1932, the Great Depression had cast dark economic clouds across the nation; the rural community of Mesa was hit hard by financial woes and its citizens were in dire straits. Things were so bad that it looked as if the annual Christmas parade would have to be cancelled. That was when the colorful editor of the *Mesa Tribune*, John McPhee, came up with a flamboyant promotional scheme to save the Christmas parade.

McPhee had the notion of beginning the parade beside an open field on the outskirts of town. A small plane would circle overhead and Santa Claus would skydive into town, arriving not by reindeer drawn sled but floating down from the heavens beneath a billowing white canopy. Once he had landed in the open field Santa would unharness to thunderous applause, before triumphantly leading the Christmas parade through town.

This event took place only five years after Lindbergh had crossed the Atlantic and aviation was still considered a risky venture. Merchants, wounded by dismal financial times, were willing to back any



EVERY MAN'S MUSINGS

By Gary Every
Special to the Ledger

plan which might boost lagging Christmas sales. A small plane was rented and a stunt man was found who agreed to undertake the daredevil act, leaping from an airplane armed with only a Santa Claus suit and a parachute.

The morning of the big event, shortly before the parade itself, Santa was nowhere to be found. An anxious McPhee paced and stalled, sending people everywhere in search of the fugitive Santa. It was one of the elves who discovered Santa plastered to a bar stool in a local tavern trying to drink up some courage. The wayward Santa Claus was too intoxicated to stand. Determined not to cancel the flamboyant beginning of the

Continued on page 3

SOUTHEAST VALLEY LEDGER

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"There are numerous countries in the world where the politicians have seized absolute power and muzzled the press. There is no country in the world where the press has seized absolute power and muzzled the politicians"

David Brinkley

SKYDIVING SANTA

Continued from page 2

heavily promoted Christmas extravaganza; McPhee asked the local merchants for volunteers to make the Santa jump. There were no takers. McPhee had to admit that he himself found the task a little daunting.

Desperation forced a desperate plan. McPhee put the Santa Claus suit on a department store dummy. The mannequin would be pushed from the airplane and float down into the field. McPhee, wearing a second Santa Claus suit would be hiding in the tall grass and leap out, greeting the crowd and quickly starting the Christmas parade before anyone could ask questions.

The moment arrived. A sizable crowd gathered on the edge of the field and all grew silent, waiting anxiously, when the sputtering of the approaching aircraft could be heard. Squinting into the sun, the people cheered when the tiny metal airplane carrying Santa Claus could first be seen. The pilot circled low above the crowd, hovering so close above the heads of the astonished spectators that they were able to see the department store dummy wearing the red suit standing in the doorway, his white beard flapping in the breeze. The plane ascended in a gradual spiral and at its peak the mannequin Santa was pushed from the doorway. The static line pulled but the chute failed to open. Santa fell from the sky, dropping,

dropping, dropping to the earth in a red and white blur. As he plummeted to earth, white beard, red cap, and tangled chute waving wildly behind him, the children screamed. Santa landed in the field with a horrific splat. Women fainted.

Without the open parachute to create a wind drift, the pilot had badly miscalculated where the mannequin would land. By the time McPhee had run to where Santa crashed most of the crowd had already started to leave and were trying to comfort their sobbing children. McPhee leapt over the mangled Santa and went "Ta-Da" but no one was watching. The parade went on as scheduled but the most of the crowd went home long before it was over. Those few who remained were quiet. It almost seemed like more of a funeral procession than a parade. McPhee spent most of the next few weeks laying low. Christmas sales did not improve. McPhee continued a long career as a civic leader until his death 40 years later and did not mention the incident often himself. Still, the headline of his obituary could not help but mention the demise "of the man who killed Santa Claus."

Editor's Note: Gary Every is a columnist who writes for the Ledger's sister newspapers, Pinal Nugget and Oracle Towne Crier. We thought our Ledger readers would enjoy this story about a time in Arizona's history.

Obituaries are published free of charge in the Southeast Valley Ledger. If you have an obituary you would like us to print, please email it to info@SEVLedger.com or submit it online at www.SEVLedger.com. You can also request our newspaper through the mortuary or funeral home.

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IT'S THE WEEKEND



Queen Creek Farmers Market

Every Sunday from Oct. 4- March 27 at the Queen Creek Library from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., patrons of the Queen Creek Farmers Market will have the opportunity to purchase Arizona grown fruits and vegetables while browsing goods from local vendors. There will be occasional entertainment, games (Chess, Tic-Tac-Toe, Jenga, Checkers, Cornhole, ect.) and food trucks. For more information please visit on.fb.me/1Lvn2pF.

DECEMBER

10 Florence Copper Coffee Club to Meet

Join Florence Copper on Thursdays at 10 a.m. for the weekly Coffee Club. Enjoy a hot beverage and pastry with other residents of the community as you chat about the Florence Copper Project, the future of Florence, or anything else. Coffee Club meets at the Florence Copper Community Center, located at 130 N. Main St. in Florence.



12 POWWOW comes to Farmers Market

On Saturday, Dec. 12, Produce on Wheels Without Waste will return to the San Tan Valley Farmers Market. Buy 60 pounds of produce for just \$10. And you get to pick it out! Artisan breads will also be available for purchase. The Farmers Market is located at Combs High School, 2505 E. Germann Rd., San Tan Valley. For more information please call 602-684-5489.



12 Queen Creek Christmas Car Show & Toy Drive

The Queen Creek Family Resource Center Hosts the 7th annual Queen Creek Kids Christmas Car Show and Toy Drive. Come out to Desert Mountain Park, 22201 S. Hawes Rd., on Saturday, Dec. 12, 9 a.m.-noon. For more information please visit <http://theamcmachine.com>.



18 All About Packrats at the San Tan Mtn. Park

We think of human pack rats as people who fill their houses with mountains of things that to them are treasures and to others are garbage and junk. But did you know we have a Sonoran desert rodent equivalent? They look like hamsters with tall round ears and adorably huge black eyes with a taste for anything that's bling. Pack rats have a penchant for collecting odd bits of shiny or brightly colored objects for their nests. Join Ranger Tish at the San Tan Mountain Regional Park for this 1-hour program as they explore the odd collections of desert pack rats. Meet in the Nature Center at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 18. No registration is required and the fee is covered with the \$6 per vehicle park entry fee. For more information, visit: <http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/santan/>. The park is located at 6533 W. Phillips Rd., Queen Creek.

Polarfest 2015 successful in new location



Polarfest 2015 had a successful relaunch at its new location, J.O. Combs Middle School. With carnival rides, booths, lots of entertainment and, of course, SNOW, there was truly something for everyone.

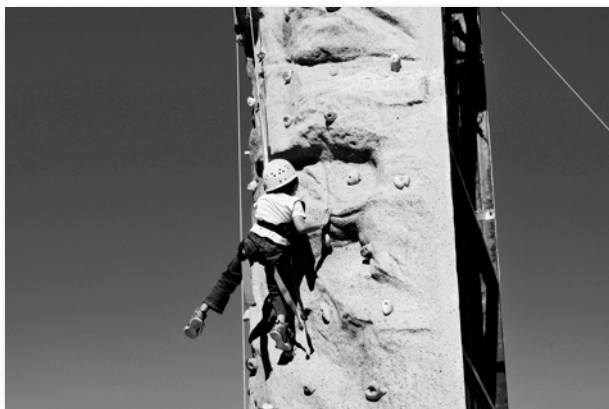
Kelli Luberda | Ledger



A parade of ugly Christmas sweaters.



Natia O Le Pasefika Polynesian Dancers.



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Saults scores 24 in San Tan

By Andrew Luberd
Southeast Valley Ledger

Current *Ledger* Athlete of the Week Nick Saults scored a game-high 24 points in the Sabercats' 71 – 28 season-opening win against Hayden last Tuesday.

Saults, the Cats' senior captain, scored all 24 points in a first half that was dominated by his team, which led at halftime, 51 – 16.

"I was a little nervous, at first," Saults said after the game. "I thought we were a little unprepared, but we came out and completely surprised me and, I think, it surprised (my teammates) too. We found some rhythm and kept going with it."

The Sabercats started the new season after the departure of a number of seniors off last year's roster, including several starters. Saults is the only returning starter amongst a team full of first-time varsity players.

Personnel changes and inexperience have caused head coach Joe Galish to be a little more patient and adjust the style of play he coaches, at least initially, until it can transition to his customary up-and-down the court style.

Still, he was impressed with his team's effort and performance against the Lobos.

"We really work hard on transition offense and defense in practice," Galish said. "We recognize if we lack foot speed it's an IQ-thing at some point and we have to realize how to get back quick or transition from defense to offense as quickly as possible."

The newcomers looked anything but against the Lobos with sophomore guard Sebastian Penaflor finishing with 12 points, five rebounds and nine steals in his first-ever varsity game.

Junior Brandon Ventour, a transfer from New York, finished with 14 points and showed the type of athleticism that has Galish excited.

Ventour has not played much, if any, organized basketball but has very raw and natural ability not often seen at San Tan Foothills. If he can continue to develop, he has a chance to be a very good and potentially great player.

Saults and Jordan Figures are the lone seniors on the team. Their ability to lead and help the younger, less experienced players will go a long way in determining how successful the Cats can be this season.

It was clear in last week's win that Saults is leading by example, even serving as a coach on the floor at times. This team will need that



San Tan's Brandon Ventour (23) goes up for the opening tip in last Tuesday's season opener vs. Hayden.

Kelli Luberd | Ledger

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Foothills' season opener

from him all season in addition to his scoring, rebounding and defense.

"We love Nick and we're proud of him," Galish said about his three-year varsity senior. "Leadership comes in a lot of different ways and Nick won't be a huge, vocal-type leader, but he leads in many other ways."

"He leads by example on the floor, both with the ball in his hand and he'll talk to kids, coach them up," Galish continued. "He's very encouraging, too. You'll never hear him say a negative word to these kids. I think that's what this team needs and we're lucky to have him, quite honestly."

The Cats' started their season off the right way, but Galish acknowledged there's still plenty of work to be done and room for improvement as the season progresses.

"We're really trying to focus on our half-court defense," he said. "We need consistency on half-court defense in man-to-man sets because a lot of our players have not played true man-to-man with help-side drops and switches. We're really working hard in that area, our consistency, and patience on offense."

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 9 vs Superior at 5:30 p.m., Dec. 10-12 in the Pepsi Holiday Tournament, game times TBA, and Dec. 15 at Odyssey Institute at 7 p.m.



San Tan Foothills' head coach Joe Galish looks on during the Sabercats' season opening win against Hayden.



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Bulldogs Pick Up First Win of the Season over Kellis

QUEEN CREEK

Boys' Basketball – After starting the season with four consecutive losses, the Bulldogs picked up their first win of the season last Wednesday, defeating Kellis on the road, 70 – 38. They picked up another road win last Friday at Vista Grande by defeating the Spartans, 55 – 35. Now 2 – 4 on the season, the Bulldogs will finally opened their home season on Tuesday versus Marana Mountain View.

Three Bulldogs scored in double figures in the win against Kellis, including Kade Parks with a game-high 20 points. Frigny Niclasse (18) and Bradley Woods (13) also reached double-digits against the Cougars.

Both Parks and Woods finished with double-doubles after grabbing 13 and



FOUR CORNERS OF SPORTS

By Andrew Luberdia
Southeast Valley Ledger

11 rebounds, respectively. Mike Young added 12 rebounds for the Bulldogs. Woods also had a game-high four steals.

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 11 at Arcadia, Dec. 15 at Camelback. Both games are scheduled for 7 p.m.

Girls' Basketball – After three-straight wins in their own Turkey Shootout, the Bulldogs have now lost three in-a-row, losing to Copper Canyon, Tucson High, and Valley Christian last

week.

Kendyl Payne scored a team-high nine points in the 43 – 34 loss to Copper Canyon last Tuesday. Jayden Kartchner and Alicia Granill added eight and seven points, respectively.

Granill led the Bulldogs with 10 rebounds while Kartchner finished with eight.

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 9 at St.

Continued on page 9

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Nick Saults

SENIOR: SAN TAN FOOTHILLS HIGH SCHOOL
SPORTS: BASEBALL & BASKETBALL

You've played multiple sports during your HS career. Why is basketball your favorite?

Because the other sports are more for fun, traveling and hanging out with my teammates. In basketball, it is the energy and intensity of the sport that really draws me in.

Describe one benefit of being a student-athlete as it relates to life after high school.

Sports build character and other qualities such as leadership, trust and responsibility. It teaches a trait of dependability, which is a huge asset in the real world.

What are your plans after graduation?

Attend college, but I have not yet made a firm decision on where. However, I am keeping my options open in hopes of a basketball scholarship somewhere.

Finish this sentence: "My greatest athletic memory so far at STFHS is...."

Getting a triple double on senior night my sophomore year. It was great moment for me, but even greater for our only senior at the time to leave on good note with an amazing last game for himself. It was my first varsity game where the ball actually felt like it was mine, which helped build confidence through last season and this season.



Nick Saults

What is your favorite sports movie and why?

Does Semi-Pro count? HaHa!! My two favorite things to watch: basketball and comedy. Plus it helps that Will Ferrell was in it; he is my favorite comedian.

Who is one person you'd most like to meet and why?

I would like to meet Russell Westbrook because his ability to get to the rim at will and throw it down is fun to watch. He plays great defense, rebounds, is a good passer, and can shoot a little too. In my opinion, he is one of the best point guards in the NBA. Numbers don't lie.

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FOUR CORNERS OF SPORTS

Continued from page 8

Mary's, Dec. 11 vs. Arcadia, Dec. 15 vs. Perry. All games are scheduled for 7 p.m.

Girls' Soccer – The Bulldogs defeated Higley (3 – 1) and Gila Ridge (2 – 0) to reach the semi-finals of the Desert Ridge Tournament, where they lost to the host Jaguars, 3 – 1.

Juniors Krista Cross and Micah Wilson each score a goal in the win against Gila Ridge. Zaidy Thomas and Lindsay Hunt each had an assist.

Against Higley, sophomore Jillian Lawler scored two goals and Wilson added another. Hunt had two assists against the Knights.

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 11 vs. Desert Ridge at 6 p.m.

COMBS

Boys' Basketball – After four-straight losses, the Coyotes got back on the winning track after a 55 – 41

victory over Vista Grande on Dec. 1.

Senior Andrew Craven was named Player of the Game after scoring seven points, grabbing five rebounds, and drawing a defensive charge.

Clayten McCarthy and sophomore Brian Tucker each scored 13 points to lead the Coyotes to their second win of the season. Cory Pearson finished with eight points and had a team-high seven rebounds.

Upcoming schedule: Dec. 9 vs. Chandler Prep at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 10-12, Copper Cities Globe Basketball Tournament, game times TBD.

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The Bubbly Hostess Serves Eggnog Tea Bread

With the holidays upon us, I thought I would bake a seasonal bread for my family to enjoy.

This has been a surefire hit with my boys for breakfast – and even dessert! The original recipe is out of one of my Pampered Chef cookbooks and calls for chopped maraschino cherries. I'm sure that would be delicious, but given how much my boys love eggnog, I decided to leave them out. This would be perfect to serve on Christmas morning!

I love to hear feedback - please visit my blog at www.bubblyhostess.com. You can also follow The Bubbly Hostess on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, and Twitter.



THE BUBBLY HOSTESS

By Heather Sneed
Special to the Ledger

Eggnog Tea Bread Makes 1 loaf

Recipe adapted from Pampered Chef Celebrate! Family, Friends & Great Food Cookbook

Bread:

2 ¼ cup all-purpose flour
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
¾ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¾ teaspoon salt
1 cup granulated sugar
¾ cup butter or margarine, softened
3 eggs
1 cup eggnog



Glaze:

½ cup powdered sugar
5-6 teaspoons eggnog
¼ cup toasted sliced natural almonds

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Spray bottom of a loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray.

In a small bowl, combine flour, baking powder, nutmeg, and salt; set aside. In a large bowl, beat together granulated sugar and butter on high speed of an electric mixer until mixture is light and fluffy.

On medium speed, add eggs, one at a time, beating until blended. Add one third of the flour mixture, beating on low speed just until combined. Beat in half of the eggnog. Add another one third of the

flour mixture, the remaining eggnog, and then the remaining flour mixture, beating after each addition just until combined. Pour batter into prepared pan.

Bake 1 hour, 15 minutes to 1 hour, 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean and top is golden brown. Cool in pan for 5 minutes. Loosen sides of loaf; remove from pan to a cooling rack and cool completely.

For glaze, mix powdered sugar and eggnog until smooth; drizzle half of mixture over cooled loaf. Sprinkle evenly with almonds. Drizzle remaining glaze over almonds. Cut into slices using a serrated knife.

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