

Veterans Day Parade exemplifies community pride, veteran camaraderie

By Staff Sgt. Tina Villalobos,
301st Public Affairs Detachment,
Mesa, Ariz.

Yuma is a military friendly community and it goes out of its way each year at Veterans Day to hold a gala parade.

Parade attendees this year represented every branch of service, and included veterans from several different wars; including WWII, Vietnam, and those in the Middle East. The citizens of Yuma turned out in full force to honor these men and women.

“This is the third time my wife and I have attended this event,” said Col. Randy Murray, YPG commander. “It is great to see many of the same



Led by YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser, members of U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's Airborne Test Force gets a rousing welcome from the crowd at Yuma's annual Veterans Day Parade in November. Following them is a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle pulling a M119 105 mm howitzer. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

people year after year and the patriotism that the city shows.”

Yuma Proving Ground's troops appreciated the city's efforts as well as the attendance of its citizens.

“I have never seen anything like the turn-out here in Yuma today,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser. “We're clustered in one small area right

now, waiting for the parade to begin, and people have been thanking us for our service all morning. It's great to talk to a bunch of old veterans;

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Baseball stadium remembers Vietnam War hero

By Chuck Wullenjohn

Everyone who lived through the 1960s and early 70s well remembers the cultural revolution our nation underwent in which many long-held beliefs were questioned and

contested, sometimes bitterly. Support for the military was a major issue, centered upon whether American forces should be involved in combat operations in far away Vietnam.

Some supported the war while others maintained it was an immoral waste of manpower, money and effort. Wherever people stood on the issue, all can agree it was a time of discord, a troubled period many on

both sides of the divide today do not recall fondly.

America's military commitment in Vietnam grew to over 500,000, many of whom were draftees

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Several public
YPG events
coming soon!

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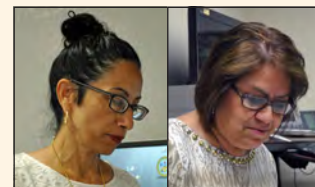
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serving two year enlistments. On returning home, many experienced unwelcoming stares and words of derision hurled their way. Some were spit at and called baby killers.

In an attempt to rectify the problems of the past, people in Somerton recently came together to recognize one of their Vietnam War hometown heroes, a man who was awarded the Silver Star for heroism while serving as a platoon sergeant in Vietnam for only one month before being killed by a landmine. That man was 20 year old Joe Cardenas, a 1966 graduate of Yuma's Kofa High School.

One of his teachers remembers him as "a clean-cut fellow who liked boy scouting and was active in school activities." In high school he placed football and basketball, and records show he intended to attend college.

A crowd of over 100 people gathered in early November at a city-operated Somerton ballpark, one where Cardenas played as a young little leaguer. Seated on bleachers beneath a sunny blue sky, the crowd listened as speakers reminisced about his growing-up years and the positive impact he had on others during his short 20 year life. Cardenas was

a well-liked, friendly individual, a person we all would have enjoyed knowing.

After Cardenas was killed in 1968, Soldiers from Yuma Proving Ground delivered to his parents the awards he had earned. In 2016, YPG's Soldiers were again quick to react when they received the invitation to participate in the ballpark dedication ceremony by presenting the colors.

"This event means a great deal to me," said Sgt. 1st Class Dawit Gebregiorgis. "We didn't appropriately recognize the sacrifices of Vietnam War veterans as a nation, and now we're making up for it."

Gebregiorgis is a strong believer in the value of community outreach events, for he says building positive relationships is critical for the Army. But to him, however, the ballpark event meant even more.

"This isn't just any event," he explained at the ceremony. "Staff Sgt. Cardenas is a Soldier for life and won't be forgotten."

He believes being a member of the YPG color guard is a prestigious position. "It's the best of the best," Gebregiorgis said. "Our guys jump at the chance of being in the color guard. When we ask for volunteers, the hands go up quick."

YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser believes America owes a great debt to its military



A Yuma Proving Ground color guard consisting of (from left) Sgt. Brandon Hunter, Sgt. Joshua Martinez, Staff Sgt. Aaron Ahn, Staff Sgt. Cliff Warner, and Sgt. Sean Gilchrist helped dedicate a Somerton, Ariz. baseball field to Staff Sgt. Joe Cardenas, who was killed in action in Vietnam in 1968. (Photos by Chuck Wullenjohn)

veterans of all services. He also has high praise for the members of the proving ground's color guard, who gave up their own personal weekend time to participate.

"When I asked for volunteers, there was no lag in response, for they wanted to execute it properly," he said. "Today's event is somewhat somber, but we're Soldiers sworn to defend the U.S. Constitution, and

this includes sacrificing everything. YPG's Soldiers are selfless and dedicated, and I'm proud of them."

Staff Sgt. Cliff Warner, one of the members of the color guard who has volunteered many times in the past, said he was proud to participate. "Whenever asked to take part in the color guard in past years, Soldiers have always stepped forward. We've never had to say no."



Silver Star recipient Cardenas, a Kofa High School graduate, served as a platoon sergeant in Vietnam for only one month before being killed by a landmine in 1968. "We didn't appropriately recognize the sacrifices of Vietnam War veterans as a nation, and now we're making up for it," said Sgt. 1st Class Dawit Gebregiorgis.

THE OUTPOST

The Outpost is an unofficial publication authorized under provisions of AR 360-1. The Outpost is published every two weeks by the Public Affairs Office, Yuma Proving Ground. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Army. This newspaper uses material credited to ATEC and ARNEWS. While contributions are solicited, the PAO reserves the right to edit all submitted materials and make corrections, changes or deletions to conform with the policy of this newspaper.



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Several public YPG events coming soon!

By **Chuck Wullenjohn**

Yuma has entered its busy winter season, with tens of thousands of vacationers from other areas of the country here to enjoy the desert's moderate weather. YPG's community outreach calendar is also at its busiest, with a number of events coming up before Christmas:

Library presentations Nov. 30th and Dec. 13th:

Two free YPG public presentations are coming soon to a library near you. The first is speaker Bill Heidner, heritage center director, making public presentations at the Yuma Main and Foothills libraries on Wednesday, Nov. 30th. The topic is, "From Patton to Victory – Dynamic Army Training in the Southwest Helps Bring World War II Victory." The Yuma Main library presentation is at 10 a.m. The Foothills library presentation is at 3 p.m. Admission is free. There is no cost – just come!

Another day of library presentations will be offered Tuesday Dec. 13th. Speaker Mark Schauer, public affairs specialist, will present, "UFO? Cold War Frost in the Yuma Desert." The presentation will discuss UFO sightings during the 1950s by YPG Soldiers. The Yuma Main library presentation is at 10 a.m. The Foothills library presentation is at 3 p.m. Admission is free.

City of Yuma Military Appreciation Day Dec. 3rd:

The Yuma community will celebrate the military's long history

in Southwest Arizona with a gala celebration on Madison Avenue in front of the Sanguinetti House Museum in downtown Yuma on Saturday, Dec. 3rd. There will be lots of free exhibits and entertainers throughout the day. YPG's exhibit will include a M119A2 105 mm howitzer, a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle, and two table displays of vintage Army helmets and reproductions of weapons from the 1910s to the present day. Presentations will also be made by three YPG speakers in the garden behind the Sanguinetti House – Bill Heidner, Mark Schauer and Chuck Wullenjohn. Admission is free.

Army Band Concert Dec 7th:

YPG has arranged for the 62nd Army Band to play two FREE concerts of holiday music on Wednesday, December 7, at 2 and 7 p.m. The theme is, "A very swinging Christmas – holiday classics with a big band flair."

The concerts will take place in the 640 seat historic confines of the 1913 Yuma Theater located at 254 Main Street.

You must have tickets in order to attend and only a few remain. For the public, they are available at the Yuma Art Center, 254 Main Street. Tickets are limited to two per person and you must pick them up yourself. The phone number for the Yuma Art Center is 373-5202.

YPG employees can obtain their tickets at the proving ground Public Affairs Office.



Public affairs specialist Mark Schauer lets youngsters try on vintage Army helmets during last year's Military Appreciation Day in downtown Yuma. This year's event is on Saturday, Dec. 3, followed four days later by a special Army Band concert at the Historic Yuma Theater remembering the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. (Photo by Chuck Wullenjohn)

More YPG community outreach events are scheduled to take place in

2017. In the meantime, have a safe and fun holiday season!

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A view without a point Life without a smartphone

By Teri Womack

Technology is a wonderful thing and gives us immediate access to all types of information. With smartphones, everything you need is available right at your fingertips. Until it isn't....

After being dropped on a multitude of hard surfaces including tile, concrete, wood, and parking lot pavement, as well as taking a swim in both the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans, my smartphone literally, finally reached its breaking point. I knew it was coming after parts that make up the phone started falling off.

I felt like the Grinch had stolen my Christmas! No texting, no tweeting, no Facebook or Instagram! No clock, calculator, or online shopping! And most importantly, how was I going to keep up my gold member status without my Starbucks app! I was deprived of iTunes, GPS, and Google maps! I envisioned being

lost and driving around in circles with not even a song to jam to while finding my way. (Funny thing, I didn't really miss making phone calls, because apparently I don't use my phone much for that).

But, before it totally quit, things got strange. On its own, my phone placed repeated FaceTime calls to friends, hanging up, and calling

call was answered on the other end. (Hopefully, nobody took any screen shots). It randomly sent texts, some with questionable language to people I have never met and now hope

It shared and posted random things to not only my Facebook page, but to my embarrassment, to other friend's pages too. One night, while I was sleeping, it took 578 photos of the inside of my purse. All I can hope is that it didn't access my bank account and sent anyone money, because I'm going to need that back...

So, now I'm sporting a brand new pink smartphone. I would have selected a protective case made out of the same material they use to make black boxes that survive airplane crashes

and a rubber screen protector that would send my phone bouncing back into my hands if I dropped it. Sadly, no such option was available, though the Verizon representative got a kick out of my suggestion for an upgrade.

Instead, I'll have to settle for the valuable and expensive lesson I learned and a vow to take better care of this one.

But first, I have to delete those 578 photos...



I never do meet, especially in a dark alley!

On one very, very long drive to work, it randomly played about 30 seconds of every single one of Barry Manilow's Greatest Hits although I do have to admit that his Copacabana song is really a catchy little song.

right back again.

I can't imagine the horrified look on my face when the

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Reliable shelter or not?

Proving a tent holds-up in the real-world tropics

By Mark Schauer

Soldiers deployed to tropical environments face a continuous fight against daunting environmental elements, from insects and fungi to rain and high humidity.

In a harsh jungle, a tent might be the only respite from the elements a Soldier can hope for. But how will high heat and a salt-rich atmosphere contribute to rapidly-growing jungle molds and fungi? How will an item fare in acidic jungle mud, surrounded by insects that eat anything organic and seek warm areas to nest? In a tropical environment, even the tiny failure of a seam could allow moisture into a tent, followed quickly by mold and



Test officer Julio Villegas (right) shows Army Test and Evaluation Command commander Maj. Gen. Daniel Karbler an airbeam shelter undergoing a long-term exposure test at U.S. Army Tropic Regions Test Center. The tent has no metal frame or poles, relying instead on load-bearing inflatable beams made of a strong fabric compound. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

other microorganisms.

Since January of this year, testers at U.S. Army Tropic Regions Test Center (TRTC) have been conducting an environmental exposure test on an airbeam shelter for U.S. Army Natick Soldier Systems Center. Slated to last until at least 2018 and possibly 2019, the length of time will exceed the manufacturer's anticipated life expectancy of the tent in a bid to discover how long the item can endure under harsh tropical conditions.

"The customer is looking for any kind of degradation of materials caused by biological growth on the material," said Julio Villegas, test officer. "It could be fungi, algae, any kind of biological aggressor."

For the test, four personnel carried the approximately 160 pound package into a jungle test site, clearing a spot amidst a thick growth of fast-growing tropical fronds and vines. They spread out the 22 foot by 48 foot fabric and staked down the corners, then attached it to an air compressor to inflate. The tent has no metal frame or poles, relying instead on load-bearing inflatable beams made of a strong fabric compound. Since it has multiple inflatable air chambers, the tent can absorb rips or punctures without collapsing.

Once erected, it was thoroughly observed on a monthly basis, then deflated, struck, and re-inflated bimonthly, all while carefully monitoring any potential degradation. Samples are taken of any biological material on the tent, and existing areas with growth are monitored and measured for changes.

"We collect air samplings both outside and inside of the tent," said Villegas. "The customer wants



In a harsh jungle, even the tiny failure of a seam could allow moisture into a tent, followed quickly by mold and other microorganisms. "The customer is looking for any kind of degradation of materials caused by biological growth on the material," said Julio Villegas, test officer. "It could be fungi, algae, any kind of biological aggressor."

to know what kind of spores or microorganisms in the air could be responsible for growth on the fabric."

The tents are being tested in more than one location to assess their durability in multiple tropic microclimates. Testing is critical to avoid unexpected operational problems with the functionality of equipment: dense jungle vegetation can sometimes interfere with

chemical biological detectors, for example, and extreme moisture can degrade body armor and even rifle cartridges.

"The only true evaluation of a product is to put it in the natural environment, where multiple factors interact simultaneously," said Ernest Hugh, TRTC director. "When faced with combat, you have to place a reliable piece of equipment in the warfighter's quiver."

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VETERANS DAY

FROM PAGE 1

especially people you have common ties with, such as having served in the same units or service. It is pretty inspiring to see the community support and the interaction among veterans.”

Some Soldiers follow a legacy of family service that makes Veterans Day all the more significant.

“In my family, someone has served in every generation,” said Sgt. Sean Gilchrist, test parachutist. “Coming from a military family, Veterans Day is a very big deal for me. I called my dad this morning and let him know I was thinking of him. He served in Desert Storm.”

Commemorating Veterans Day allows the common bond of service to enhance comradery among all veterans of every generation.

Sgt. 1st Class Steven Fief, test parachutist, reflected on the

transcending reach of Veterans Day, “It is a great day to recognize veterans, past present and future, and to show support for everyone still serving; it gives us the opportunity to thank those that have served before us, and to encourage future generations to serve.”

David and Jean Stelzer, of Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., travel to Yuma each year during the winter and have made a tradition of acting as drivers for the YPG commander during the Veterans Day parade. Their convertible is transformed into a patriotic show piece, and the couple looks forward to the task.

“I’m a Vietnam veteran,” said David. “I was in Vietnam from 1963 to 1965. We met Col. Murray at dinner several years ago at the American Legion where we volunteered to drive him during the parade. We’d like to continue the tradition, even after he leaves—we love it!”

President Obama’s 2016 Veterans



YPG commander Col. Randy Murray and wife Deborah thoroughly enjoyed participating in the parade for the third time. “It is great to see many of the same people year after year and the patriotism that the city shows,” he said. (Photo by Chuck Wullenjohn)

Day proclamation highlighted the importance of caring for veterans as they return home.

“The example our nation’s veterans set throughout their lives is a testament to the drive

and perseverance that define the American character,” he said. “Let us uphold our obligations to these heroic individuals and never forget those who paid the ultimate price for our liberty.”

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YPG Chaplain Maj. Steven Smith and wife Sue greet the military-friendly spectators at the parade. Following the parade, Chaplain Smith gave invocations at both American Legion Post #19's 11th Hour Ceremony and at a christening of a scale model of the USS Arizona. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

YPG cornerstone contributors share elements of success

By Staff Sgt. Tina Villalobos, 301st Public Affairs Detachment, Mesa, Ariz.

Internal fortitude and work ethic learned from childhood influences, as well as a spirit of teamwork and collaboration, have fueled the successful careers of Minerva Peters, chief of staff; and Tina Manns, chief of manpower and force management, at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground.

As driven, accomplished employees, both have a ‘take control and make it happen—no excuses’ approach when it comes to their circle of influence.

“It is okay to have some challenges in your life,” said Manns. “It is how you face those challenges that is important. Take ownership of what you have control of to make a difference. For those challenges you cannot control, it is okay to ask for help.”

Peters, who has grown in her federal career from a GS-05 to a GS-15, also offered sage advice for career growth which echoes ownership and accountability, suggesting employees consider, “What can I do in this job right now, and do it right and do it well?”

Peters attributes her ability to work successfully with a wide variety of people, as well as her ability to help the organization and its people through professional challenges, among the traits that make her a good fit in her current position, and a significant factor in her climb to GS-15.

“I work primarily for the YPG commander and technical director,” said Peters. “It’s really keeping the front offices running well, making sure that the staff directorates are aware of what the commander



Minerva Peters, YPG chief of staff, attributes her ability to work successfully with a wide variety of people and help the organization through professional challenges as the keys to her success. “I honestly do believe that one of the things I learned growing up in a family of 11 children was the value of cooperation,” she said. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Tina Villalobos)

expects from them; trying to field some of the questions that the commander has, and trying to get him answers ahead of time, as well as managing the people that respond directly to the YPG commander.”

Peters added that she relies most on her strong analytical skills in her daily work.

“What is the problem? What do we need to resolve it? Who are the players? Let’s break it down before we find out what the solution is—rather than just

jumping to a solution,” she said. “This comes from my past 25 years of work experience before getting into more of the management side.”

When Manns started her Army career in the mid-1980s, she was a single parent with three small children—it was not a path not for the faint of heart. As if these challenges were not enough, Manns also elected to earn her bachelor’s and two master’s degrees during her two decades as a troop, before retiring at the rank of Sgt. Maj.

“When I was 21,

uneducated with three children, I just knew I had to do something and not give up,” said Manns. “I am driven by a sense of ownership, the desire to succeed, and setting a good example for my kids. I accepted the challenges the Army presented during my career. I sought out those I admired and who were ‘squared away’ and wanted to emulate them.”

Always a Soldier, Manns carried the Army values instilled in to her civilian career and personal life. Explaining that she appreciates the feeling that she is giving back and still serving while being part of something she believes in. Although she was never explicitly told to work hard, the expectation came through examples set by her father and grandparents, as well as their cultural teachings of collaboration and a strong work ethic.

“My father and my grandfather never came out and said to me that hard work would get you places,” said Manns. “The fact that they worked hard and provided for our family was what was instilled in me.”

Reflecting on cultural influences during her upbringing, Peters acknowledged that she learned a great deal about working with different personality types who may have competing goals and reaching collaboration.

“I honestly do believe that one of the things I learned growing up in a family of 11 children was the value of cooperation,” said Peters. “Growing up in a very large Hispanic family, we needed to learn to cooperate with each other; otherwise it was going to be complete chaos. That is a cultural influence that I think really helped me moving forward in my career.”



Tina Manns, chief of manpower and force management, earned a bachelor’s and two master’s degrees while in uniform. My father’s advice to me was to always be fair to your Soldiers; and my grandfather told me to stay in and retire,” she said. “It seems simplistic, but there were many long talks in between that shaped me and encouraged me.”

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Self-harm and cutting

Submitted by Paul J. Kilanski,
Family Advocacy Program Manager

Self-harm is when people hurt their bodies as a way of dealing with painful feelings and emotions. It is also called self-injury.

There are many reasons why people hurt themselves. Some people hurt themselves to relieve emotional pain or stress. Emotional pain can be caused by fights with parents or friends, physical or sexual abuse, eating disorders, work or school problems, or loneliness.

There are different ways people harm themselves. These include cutting, burning, scratching, hitting themselves, punching walls or other hard surfaces, preventing wounds from healing, banging their heads or choking themselves. They are not trying to kill themselves but are trying to relieve emotional pain. It is very important for people who self-harm to get help. The same feelings that lead to self-harm can cause people to become suicidal in the future.

Self-harm may lead to infections or permanent scars. In some cases, people may accidentally kill themselves. Some people also become dependent on self-harm. They cannot stop even when they really want to.

People keep self-harm a secret. They may hide self-harm for many reasons. Some people feel guilty and ashamed about what they have done to their bodies. Others fear

they will be labeled “crazy” or sent away for treatment. Most people who hurt themselves are just struggling with tough feelings and situations.

Some people are also dealing with depression or anxiety.

It is important for them to talk with a doctor or a therapist before things get worse.

How does someone stop hurting themselves? The best way to stop is to tell someone and ask for help. You can get help from a professional such as a therapist. If you do not have a therapist, ask a parent, teacher, coach, counselor, doctor or nurse to

help you find one. Talk to others when you are in pain. No one can handle all of life’s problems on their own. Find other ways to deal with pain besides hurting yourself. Call a friend and talk about your feelings. Distract yourself by going for a walk. Exercise to relieve stress. Draw or write in a journal to express your strong emotions. Listen to or play music that makes you happy. This can help change your mood.

If you know have a friend that is hurting themselves, talk to them and let them know that you care. People who self-harm often feel guilty about what they are doing. Knowing that someone cares can make a difference. Make sure a family member, doctor or therapist is aware of what is going on. You may need to tell someone what your friend is doing. Offer to be a safe person to talk to when your friend is thinking about hurting themselves.



Safety Corner

15 turkey fryer safety tips

It’s hard to beat the speed of deep-frying a turkey—or the irresistible flavor and juiciness that result. But turkey fryers have the potential to cause fire and serious injury, which is why organizations like Underwriters Laboratories and the National Fire Protection Association advise against using them.

If you plan to deep-fry your holiday bird, be sure you know how to safely use the fryer, and take these precautions to protect yourself, your guests and your home:

1. Keep outdoor fryers off decks, out of garages and a safe distance away from trees and other structures.
2. Make sure the turkey is thawed and dry before cooking. Ice or water that mixes into the hot oil can cause flare-ups.
3. Watch the weather. Never operate a fryer outdoors in the rain or snow.
4. Place the fryer on a level surface, and avoid moving it once it’s in use.
5. Leave two feet between the tank and the burner when using a propane-powered fryer.
6. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions to avoid overfilling. Oil can ignite when it makes contact with the burner.
7. Choose a smaller turkey for frying. A bird that’s eight to 10 pounds is best; pass on turkeys over 12 pounds.
8. Never leave fryers unattended.
9. Purchase a fryer with temperature controls, and watch the oil temperature carefully. Cooking oil that is heated beyond

its smoke point can catch fire. If you notice the oil is smoking, turn the fryer off.

10. Turn off the burner before lowering the turkey into the oil. Once the turkey is submerged, turn the burner on.

11. Wear goggles to shield your eyes, use oven mitts to protect your hands and arms and keep a grease-rated fire extinguisher close by.

12. Skip the stuffing when frying turkey, and avoid water-based marinades.

13. Keep children and pets away from the fryer at all times.

14. Once finished, carefully remove the pot from the burner, place it on a level surface and cover to let the oil cool overnight before disposing.

15. Opt for an oil-less fryer. This uses infrared heat, rather than oil, to cook the turkey.



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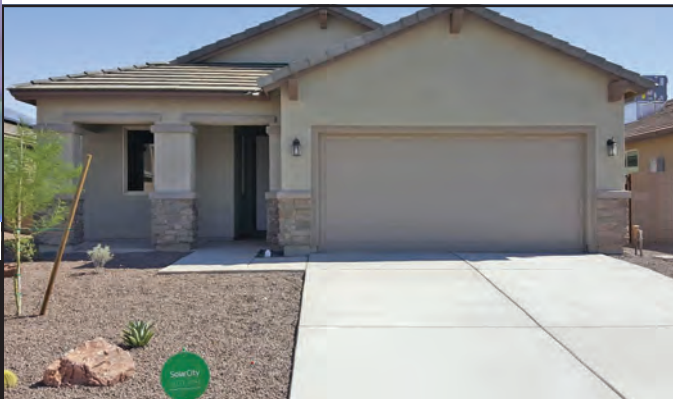


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