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Independent Newspapers/Wendy Miller
Donnie Hayes of Ontario, Canada, above left, and Glenn Person of Mesa discuss some of the cars displayed at an East Valley Senior Rodders meeting in Apache Junction.

Mesa residents in club hosting car show fundraiser

By Wendy Miller
Independent Newspapers

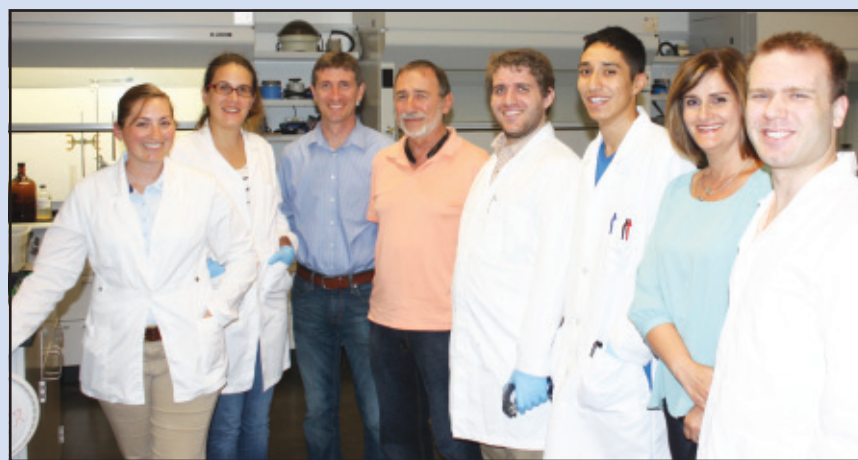
Visitors to downtown Apache Junction on any given Wednesday morning can find a sort of mini car show of classic cars and trucks in the parking lot of The Mirage Sports Grill. The souped-up, super-shined and under-construction vehicles belong to members of the East Valley Senior Rodders, a social organization for men from Mesa, Apache Junction, Gold Canyon, Queen Creek and other nearby communities who live and breathe cars.

Members meet at 9 a.m. Wednesdays in the back room of the sports grill, 725 W. Apache Trail.

Now, the social club is expanding its display of classic vehicles by holding its first car and truck show, which will take place 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 12, at the Apache Junction High School, 2525 S. Ironwood Drive. The rodders hope to raise \$3,000 through food sales, auctions and vehicle entry fees to benefit the Apache Junction Food Bank, 575 N. Idaho Road, No. 701.

Vehicle entry fees are \$10 each in advance and \$15 at the show. Awards will be given. Activities include a silent auction of car parts, a 50/50 drawing, a 21 wheel, bingo and valve cover races.

Show organizers ask spectators to bring cans of non-perishable food for their admission fee. To register a vehicle for the show, call Don at 775-722-7271, Bob at 925-989-9889 or Tom at 231-499-7618.



Special to the Independent/MCC
Above in white lab coats are Mesa Community College students. The professors are Tom Minger, third from left; John Zikopoulos, fourth from left; and Valentina Nedelkova, second from right.

MCC professor's research on desert plant compounds benefits students

In 2012, the National Science Foundation awarded Mesa Community College a grant to study the chemical compounds of native Sonoran Desert plants.

"The grant was to assist with modifying the organic chemistry laboratory curriculum to incorporate more research-based activities using chemicals found in the native plants of the Sonoran Desert as a starting point," **Tim Minger**, organic chemistry professor at Mesa Community College, said in a press release.

"I was fortunate to have the 2014-15 academic year to work on our grant project," said Mr. Minger, who is working with colleagues **Valentina Nedelkova** and **John Zikopoulos**, fellow chemistry professors at MCC, on the NSF research grant. "It was productive."

Mr. Minger continued to develop lab experiments during his sabbatical, following up on lab exercises created as a result of the NSF grant. "One of the things I worked on was an experiment that allows students to investigate the antioxidant properties of chia seed, which is really popular right now and draws student attention," he said. "Our students are doing our new jojoba biodiesel and chia antioxidant experiments every semester now."

The NSF grant also called for MCC's team to develop experiments for the University of New Mexico and University of Colorado using plants native to those regions. In New Mexico the antioxidant properties of chili peppers are forming the basis for a new experiment, and in Colorado students will use spectroscopy to examine a chemical reaction of a compound found in pine needles.

In the New Mexico experiment,

which can also be used at MCC, students will use a commercially available enzyme to perform an organic chemistry reaction. "It's common now to use enzymes for chemical transformations," Mr. Minger explained. "The advantage to using enzymes is you can use them over and over again because they regenerate themselves."

Desert lavender and brittlebush, two other Sonoran desert native plants, were already being used in experiments in the MCC labs. The MCC professors are still investigating plants for possible inclusion in the new labs, including creosote bush, though Mr. Minger called creosote bush complicated. "It takes a long time to develop an experiment that's suitable and practical for undergraduates because of all the different compounds it contains," Mr. Minger explained.

Mr. Minger said he gained more knowledge about natural products in chemistry through his sabbatical work, and has already incorporated those lessons into his lecture classes in organic chemistry. He presented the results of MCC's grant project at the American Chemical Society meeting and at the Two-Year College Chemistry Consortium meeting in March 2015. He also had a paper on the jojoba biodiesel experiment published in the July edition of the Journal of Chemical Education that describes work performed in part by an MCC honors student, Lisa Daconta. (Ms. Daconta has gone on to major in biochemistry at the University of Arizona and is using her research experience to become involved in undergraduate re-

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MEET YOUR Neighbor



Brittney Hay

Meet Your Neighbor is a feature of the *Independent* that introduces readers to a community member. To receive a profile form or to nominate a neighbor, send an e-mail to mesanews@newszap.com.

Name: Brittney Hay

Age: 25

Town/Neighborhood: Higley

When & why I moved here: Mesa holds a special legacy for my family. My mom and grandmother have worked in the title industry in Mesa for as long as I can remember. Today, we three work together at Pioneer Title Agency in Mesa.

What I like most about living here: I love being around family – it's an added bonus that Pioneer is family owned and run.

What I do: As part of the escrow team at Pioneer Title Agency, I assure new home buyers that there's a clear ownership to their home.

What I like most about what I do: Working in a family atmosphere makes all the difference in the world. I get the opportunity to learn and grow in this industry from my family members every day. This also gives customers a sense of security, knowing they are working with people they trust. There's always a familiar face waiting to help a customer.

Changes I'd like to see in this area: There's a lot of new development happening in the area, but I would love to see some new restaurants and shopping. I'm a total foodie and would love to see more restaurant concepts come to life in Mesa.

Favorite community cause & why: We have so much that it is important to me to give back to those in need. As part of our community outreach program, Pioneer employees are empowered to take an active

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Professors

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search at the university.)

The sabbatical findings will benefit students now and in the future. Mr. Minger said, "Students like working with local and native plants they're familiar with. They are more engaged and it enhances their thinking skills, and this is what we hoped to accomplish with the grant.

"We wanted to get them more engaged in the subject, and it's why we decided to use local and native plants," he added. "Using activities that are more inquiry-based and research-oriented will improve their

critical thinking and problem solving skills, and help them learn how research works in the real world. It's rare for community college students to get scientific research opportunities, and this project opens doors for that to interested students."

Mr. Minger said he learned a lot out of the classroom as well during his sabbatical. "It's helped me be a better teacher, and to better relate to the perspective of students," he laughed. "When you're trying to figure things out that you've never seen or done before and experiencing that frustration, you really remember what it's like to learn something for the first time."

"Overall, it refreshed me. I love desert plants, and it's one of the things I like about living in this area. It was the inspiration for this whole project."

Hay

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role in our neighborhoods through donation of our time, proactive financial contributions or direct financial contributions. This Thanksgiving season, I started an initiative to support the Saint Mary's Food Bank Alliance. I placed boxes around our office for staff, customers and others in the community to donate food throughout the month of November.

My family: Single

My interests and hobbies: My ultimate

dream is to hop on a plane and taste the delectable food this world has to offer. My passion for food and travel top the list of my interests.

The trait(s) I admire in others: There's nothing more important in personal character than the ability to be genuine. I appreciate people who can be 100 percent themselves without putting on a mask.

People who inspired me (and how): My mom gave me everything. She inspires me every day as a work alongside her as her co-worker, daughter and best friend. She came from a small upbringing and worked hard to provide me with everything I could ask for and more.



Special to the Independent/Specialist 3rd Class Kenneth Rodriguez Santiago

Mesa resident works on shore bombardment area

Explosive Ordnance Disposal 3rd Class Donald Hathaway, from Mesa, prepares to insert a blasting cap into explosives at a shore bombardment area in San Clemente, California. Sailors from Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 11 are participating with the John C. Stennis Strike Group in a sustainment training exercise to prepare for future deployments.

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