

Written by Nadine Toren

[Television](#) personality and AZfoothills.com columnist [Nadine Toren](#) is scouring the area, finding savvy Valley features, bringing readers “on the scene.” Every day she'll introduce you to [celebrities](#), athletes, and give you an inside look into local events and hot [spots](#). She'll touch on topical issues, and keep AZ fans posted on all the big talkers around town.



This week we're taking a look at A-list [Arizona moms](#) in honor of Mother's Day. Today, meet ABC-15's Andi Barness...also, a hot, hyper-local business owner.

I met Andi Barness at a Valley fundraiser.

She attended with her family in tow—her husband Dean, and three young boys: Brenden, Cole, and Evan.

Something drew me to the tall, bright, green-eyed babe. We introduced ourselves to one another, only to discover we were soul sisters, bonded over traffic.

Let me explain.

Andi calls herself a professional traffic reporter, having kicked off her career talking about crashes on the radio. I am the traffic anchor for the CBS-5 Morning News, so us traffic gals instantly hit it off.

“I always wanted to be famous; I was such a ham. I told my grandmother she would see me on a billboard,” said TV personality and entrepreneur, Andi Barness.

While Barness has not made it on a billboard quite yet, I'm sure we'll one day see her face driving down the 17. That's because she maintains a magnetic spark—one that's led her to reach such great heights.

“Every single thing I've done has got me where I am today. I don't take ‘no’ for an answer,” said Barness.

Barness grew up in Los Angeles, and foresaw fame in her future. After high school, she studied at a radio trade school and landed her first on-air gig in Barstow, California (commonly known as the middle of nowhere).

“I spun country records overnight for \$5 an hour.”

While she wasn't making the big bucks, Barness knew she had to pay her dues. Those midnight-5am shifts paid off...her next stop was Palm Springs.

After radio DJ'ing in the California desert, Barness returned to L.A. That's when she was introduced to the wonderful world of traffic, reporting for a number of So-Cal stations.

“I loved it, but people still didn't know who I was.”

So she turned to the tube, applying to appear on the popular TV program, “Love Connection.”

Now keep in mind, this young 20-something wasn't on the prowl for a potential hubby; instead, she took part in the game-show simply to gain fame.

“I didn't like any of the guys, but had to choose one; his name was Dean.”

Dean Barness, to be exact.

Turns out, Cupid made a love connection and the two hit it off. She says he was so *not* her type—Dean was a quiet guy with his head on straight, while she often flaunted her gift of gab.

“After dating for three years we got married. Chuck Woolery (host of “Love Connection”) came to our Santa Monica wedding.”

The two lived in marital bliss until their calm lives were interrupted by the 1994 Northridge earthquake. Barness was literally shaken up, and feared another big one was coming. Therefore, the dynamic duo ditched California, and headed straight to Arizona.

Hot Valley Mamas: Andi Barness, Entertaining Entrepreneur

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"I love it here. We live in the wonderful community of Scottsdale."

Barness has been in the Phoenix area nearly 17 years, and established herself as a Valley girl doing traffic for a local radio station. Her on-air stint ended when her entrepreneurial spirit kicked in. Barness temporarily surrendered the airwaves to become a business owner.

Dean sold his car to support his wife's latest endeavor: opening a number pottery shops around town.

"I have a very smart husband. He sees where I want to go with something and does it the responsible way."



Their paint-your-own pottery studio was doing quite well, and their personal life was just as good. Andi and Dean gave birth to their first son in 1997, and two little guys later followed in 2000 and 2005.

"I don't take life too seriously and I instill that in my kids. I want my kids to look back and say 'wow, my mom was so much fun.'"

Fun—that's something Andi surely is. The wife, mother, and business woman is also rather ambitious, and knew running pottery shops was only a piece of her path.

The couple sold their studios when Andi landed another traffic radio gig in Phoenix; that's when the doors finally opened for the wonder-woman who craved TV time.

"I happily became the traffic reporter for the ABC-15 morning show. I loved the job, but hated the shift. My biggest struggle was that I wanted to talk about things other than accidents. I wanted to prove I could do more."

However, it was an essential stepping stone for the determined Valley darling.

Barness established herself as a TV personality, but things were put on hold when she got laid off. She was sad, but optimistically moved forward onto her next project, another business she called Doozy of a Deal.

The thought of Doozy came post lay-off. She wanted to create a hyper-local Groupon-like concept that gave back to community she so loved. Therefore, Andi and Dean rolled out the website, www.doozyofadeal.com, offering steals around town. The kicker—every deal purchased benefits local schools.

"So far we've made \$20,000 and that number grows every day. It's so fulfilling promoting local businesses and supporting our community."

In the midst of Doozy's launch, Andi stayed involved in television, taking on freelance hosting opportunities. One thing led to another, and Andi's lucky star finally gave her what she calls the ultimate gift.

"I have this instinct that when I need something, I won't stop until I get it. And now look, I'm on 'Sonoran Living.'"

Yep, now you can watch Andi every morning on ABC-15's daily talk show, "Sonoran Living Live." She's the co-host of the vivacious variety show.

"I love that I can finally show my personality on TV, whether or not you click with me."

But who wouldn't click with the entertaining entrepreneur?

Andi is the epitome of perfecting a balancing act—a loving wife, fun mom, business owner, and TV celeb. She says the key to having it all is a supportive, trustworthy husband who has (and continues) to believe in her every step of the way.

To me, Andi is an inspiration. Her savvy, go-getting spirit is addicting to anyone who has a sincere craving for success. Plus, she remains youthful at heart; doing it all in heels, trendy clothes, and maintaining a posh persona.

"I don't feel like I'm 42, I feel like I'm 22. I should probably try to mature a bit."

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