

THE NEW SSHOA NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 3

November 2007

Neighborhood Improvement Project - Update

Geoffrey Mann, President

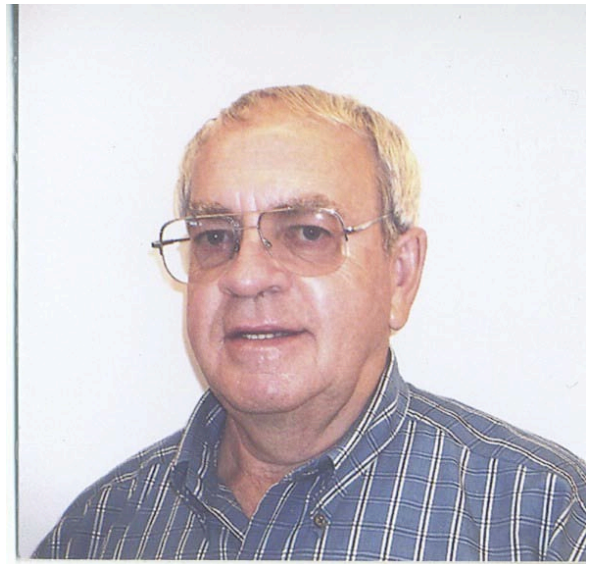
In my newsletter article of last month, I told you of our intended entry gate improvements under the first phase of our Neighborhood Improvement Project. Significant changes have already been completed as of this writing to both gated areas. At the "Creek" gate, the entry walls have been repaired and restuccoed, now just needing a couple of coats of paint. The wall sign denoting "Sycamore Creek" has been properly reaffixed to the wall since it had been previously damaged. The entire area in front of the gate has been cleared of weeds and debris and finished off with decorative rock and an additional tree. And while they are not yet working, decorative lighting and electrical wiring leading to lighting for a planned new stone entry sign out by Sahuarita Road have been installed.

At the "Springs" gate, many of the same items completed at the "Creek" gate have been accomplished here. The whole

continued on page 2

Welcome Gary Rawie

Linda Elling



Please welcome **Gary Rawie** as our newest ACC Committee member. Gary comes to us with experience having served as a HOA board member and officer while living in Alaska, where prior to retirement, he and his wife, Dorothy, owned and operated a year round resort. They have been residents of Sycamore Creek since 2005 and previously lived at Heritage Highlands, in Marana, for three years. Gary and Dorothy spent 23 years in Alaska, and during that time, Gary also worked

continued on page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Neighborhood Improvement Project - Update
- 1 Welcome Gary Rawie
- 2 Community Affairs Committee Report
- 2 Board Of Directors Meeting Highlights
- 3 The Mesquite Tree Girdler
- 3 Sycamore Springs Skies for November
- 4 Calendar Of Events
- 4 Financial Happenings

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continued from page 1

area within the cattle fencing was weeded and cleared and covered with decorative rock. In addition, a new school bus waiting area on the east side of the entry has been improved and is offering a safer and more comfortable place for the kids. All real estate "for sale" signs were moved to a designated area at the west side of the entrance and are placed in tubing planted in the ground giving a more organized and aesthetic manner in which our homes are marketed at the entrance. Approximately 15 lights were added to make for a more aesthetic and safe approach for night vehicle traffic, and as with the "Creek" gate, a new stone entry sign is planned close to Sahuarita Road to help visitors find the appropriate gate.

So other than finishing up some lighting and installing the two planned stone entry signs, we are pretty much finished with this the first phase of our entry gate improvements. In our second phase of entry gate improvements, we would like to install some more plants at both gates. Hopefully, we can add that sometime in 2008.

Community Affairs Committee Report

Linda Elling

Community Garage Sale Report

There were eight homes that participated in the Community Garage Sale last month and from all reports there were lots of shoppers and everyone had a good sale. We will probably do this again in 2009.

Holiday Fun with the Corona de Tucson Fire Department – Saturday, December 8 at 11:00am

If you haven't put this event on your calendar, take a minute now to mark the date! The Corona de Tucson Fire Department will be here with one of their fire trucks. There will be holiday candy bags for everyone and a chance to talk with the firemen. Location: East end of Sycamore Springs Trail in the cul-de-sac. Please bring a toy or food to donate. Hope to see you all there!

Annual Holiday Dinner – Friday, December 14 at 6:30pm

Be looking for your invitation to this annual holiday event being delivered later this month. Location: John and Pam Thompson, 9091 E Shorefield Springs Place. Please RSVP to 762-8109. The Community Affairs group has a great holiday menu planned this year, so please come, join friends and neighbors and help us celebrate.

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Annual Home Decorating Contest – Judging: December 23


Only five weeks until Christmas! And it's time to think about Christmas lights and holiday home decorating. The Community Affairs judges will be traveling around the community the evening of December 23 to judge the outdoor displays, so please make sure your lights are on that evening. Prizes will be awarded to the top three houses.

Board of Directors Meeting October 15, 2007 - Highlights

Mario Vassallo


- President Geoff Mann said that:
 - Gate entry improvements were underway
 - Work was to be completed in a few weeks
 - New gate signs to be erected close to road will take longer
 - Email communication should be kind and respectful; board and committee members are all volunteers
- Community Affairs Chair Linda Elling announced that:
 - The community garage sale was being held on Saturday October 20
 - Plans are being made for the Holiday Party and the Corona De Tucson Fire Dept. Food and Toy Drive
- Gary Rawie was elected on to the ACC
- Mailbox Replacement Project:
 - There were 21 responses to the questionnaire
 - Vast majority were in favor of upgrading
 - 12 residents were interested in upgrading
 - Work will start in November
- Webmaster Bob Dahms:
 - 3 items advertised on website were sold
 - Website received about 70 hits per month
 - Proposes that website ads should also appear in newsletter
 - 61 residences are now on our HOA email distribution list.

Helen DeYesso
REALTOR®



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The Mesquite Tree Girdler

James Thomas

I have been asked to write about our native plants for the benefit of association members. Normally, I would begin with cacti, but because of an infestation on one of our common trees, I shall address this first.

We live in a state that has one of the richest diversity of insects in the U.S. and, beginning about two months ago an insect, the Mesquite Tree Girdler (*Oncideres Rhodostict*) began showing up in large numbers in southern Arizona. The "Girdler" has always been here and I have seen damage in previous years, but not like this year! Dying foliage can be seen at the branch tips of many trees.

The trees affected are the native mesquites, the Chilean varieties and the Acacias. The Mesquite Tree Girdler travels only a few hundred yards in their lifetime. They mate, lay their eggs on tree branches, and then they "girdle" the branch so it falls to the ground with the eggs attached. The following year, the eggs hatch and the process begins again. Branches up to five feet long can be lopped off in this manner, which is especially damaging to the smaller trees.

The Tree Girdler has almost no predators. Birds ignore them and many insecticides have little effect. A systemic Insecticide such as Di-Syston (available at Ace Hardware) when applied just before the monsoon season may be beneficial. However, it is important not to over apply pesticides in the desert as they remain in the soil for a long while. Girdlers are also drawn to bright light, so one could turn off outdoor lighting in September or change to amber colored lighting.

By far, the best way to reduce next year's hatch is to pick up the fallen branches, and break off the girdled branches still remaining on the tree. The branches can be burned in an outdoor fire pit or bagged and tossed in the trash for pick up. If you live near one of the common areas, you might want to clean up that area also so the pests don't find their way back into your yard. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions, 762-8025.

Kay Dahms
Tour Guide

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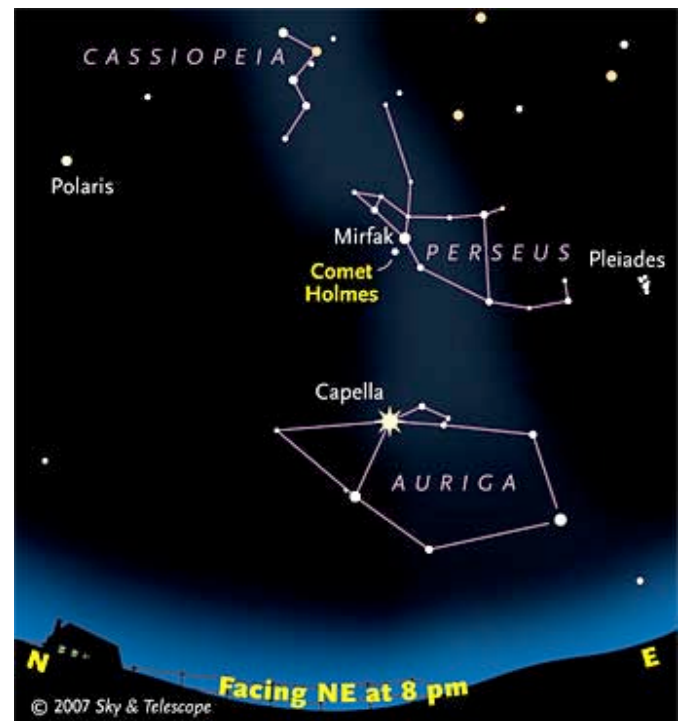
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for an insurance company and later, as a partner for Professional Adjusters of Alaska. Gary says he accepted this position primarily because he was asked by one of our HOA board members. He also says, "I feel that all residents should volunteer to assist their community association in some capacity when they can." Gary enjoys golfing, computer work, music, and gardening. He and Dorothy are members of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society and both enjoy traveling in their 5th wheel.

Sycamore Springs Skies for November

Tom Andrews

The most significant thing that is visible in the evening sky in Sycamore Springs this month is the comet "17/P Holmes". This comet, which was originally discovered in 1892 by Edwin Holmes and since then had been difficult to observe without a moderate-sized telescope, suddenly brightened over a million-fold on October 24, and is now fairly easily visible to the naked eye and covers an area of the sky almost as large as the full moon. Astronomers are not certain what caused the sudden increase in brightness of the comet but some are proposing that it was some sort of explosion within the nucleus of the comet which ejected large amounts of gas and dust from the nucleus and was subsequently made visible by radiation from the sun.



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Street Number and Name
City, State 98765-4321

BUILD RATE
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO.
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Mailing Address
Street Number and Name
City, State 98765-4321

Financial Happenings

Tom Andrews

In addition to being a significant enhancement of the appearance of both entrances to our neighborhood, the completion of the improvement projects for the two Sycamore Springs and Sycamore Creek gates was also a significant financial event, as we expended slightly over \$12,000 in the completion of the those two projects. While there are still some remaining minor tasks left to perform to complete both projects, the bulk of the expensive portions of each job, such as the purchase and spreading of the decorative rock and gravel, have been completed, and therefore both projects are largely completed from a financial point of view. In order to accomplish these projects as close to the same timeframe as possible, we basically moved some funds forward from our projected 2008 budget (where we had been tentatively budgeting for some gate enhancement work). When the funds for the gate upgrades are added to the funds for the culvert reinforcement work we completed this summer, we have spent over \$18,000 in facility upgrades in this one year. Because of this, there will be a very limited amount of funds available for gate and other neighborhood improvements other than required maintenance in next year's budget.

The second significant financial issue is the fine-tuning of the 2008 budget for our Association. The Sycamore Springs Board of Directors will be voting their final approval of the budget shortly. In a nutshell, the total budget will approach \$65,000, of which \$30,000 will be our annual allocation to the "reserve account" which are those funds set aside for major maintenance of our facilities, such as road sealing and resurfacing. Beyond that allocation, the budget allows for normal expenditures for such items as gate maintenance, minor landscaping maintenance around the gate areas, a small amount of funds for our community affairs committee, and so forth.

The last financial item of significance this month is our impending rollover of our expiring \$60,000 CD into two new CDs; one for \$20,000 with a six-month maturity, and a second for approximately \$40,000 with a 24 month maturity. It appears at the present time that both these CDs will have an interest rate of approximately 4.74% and their purchase will take us one step closer to having a "Ladder" strategy in place for our investments, whereby we will have one or more \$40,000 CDs expiring every year at about the same time (as was discussed in last month's article). This approach should maximize both our flexibility in terms of having funds available in a reasonably short time period, and also being able to take maximum advantage of fluctuations in the prevailing interest rates without "chasing" interest rates on a short-term basis

The comet is visible through *Sycamore Springs Skies - continued* most of the evening and night by looking to the north east in the area of the constellation Perseus. Although the comet can be seen with the naked eye as a faint fuzzy patch, it is more rewarding to view it through a pair of binoculars, through which it is clearly seen as a sort of glowing cotton ball in the sky. Because of the position of the comet relative to the earth and the earth's position relative to the sun, there is virtually no tail visible at this time although in the past two weeks, a slight elongation of the fuzzy patch has begun to develop and may eventually become a more conventional "tail". For more specific directions about exactly where to search for the comet, please refer to the diagram which is included with this article. More importantly, look for the comet as early in the month as possible, since later in the month it will be more difficult to view because of the light of the increasingly full moon.

Don't miss this opportunity to view this extremely unusual comet which many astronomers have called the strangest astronomical event to have occurred in a generation or more.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER 8, 2007

HOLIDAY FUN WITH THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

TIME: 11:00AM

DECEMBER 14, 2007

ANNUAL HOLIDAY DINNER

THOMPSONS - 9091 E. SHOLEFIELD SPRINGS PL. TIME: 6:30PM

DECEMBER 17, 2007

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

PLACE: AMERICAN LEGION TIME: 7:00PM

DECEMBER 23, 2007

ANNUAL HOME DECORATING CONTEST JUDGING