

# THE NEW SSHOA NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 2

October 2007

## Neighborhood Improvement Project

Geoffrey Mann, President

The Sycamore Springs/Creek Board of Directors has decided to implement a Neighborhood Improvement Project ("NIP") to upgrade a portion of the association's existing amenities and to incorporate additional ones in the future. The first phase of the NIP will be to better the association's entry gates (I will touch on some of the improvements in the text below). Future phases may include an association information board; a children's play area with related improvements such as a community picnic area and park; the beautification of the association's main entry streets; etc. These projects are related to amenities of the association rather than infrastructure improvements such as the completion of the first two phases of our erosion control program.

As mentioned earlier, phase 1 of the NIP will be the improvement of the gated entryway areas of Sycamore

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## Welcome Michelle Rouch

Linda Elling



Michelle has accepted a position on the ACC (Architectural Control Committee) and has already been busy reviewing Design Modifications. Michelle, husband Fotios, and their son Spiro moved to Sycamore Springs in 2004. She works as a Senior Systems Engineer for the Department of Defense. Always busy, she coaches her son's soccer team and is an aviation artist. She is a member of the American Society of Aviation Artists, Tucson Museum of Arts, Pima Air and Space Museum and International Association of Astronomical Artists. Lately, she has been busy creating the Aviation, Aerospace, and Astronomy Art Show featuring young high school artists (please see previous newsletter). Thanks, Michelle for serving on this important committee.

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## Announcement

Neighbors,

**This Thanksgiving week, I will be retiring from 30 years in the USAF. I will have many friends and family in town for the event. I'm looking for a motor home or 5th wheel to park on my property for extra sleeping space. If you can lend or rent me yours, please email me at [kpickeringaz@msn.com](mailto:kpickeringaz@msn.com).**

**Karen Pickering  
9335 E. Sycamore Springs Trail**

Springs and Sycamore Creek. They will be upgraded this coming fall to better represent their communities while making them safer and more useful.

Lighted stone entry signs highlighting each community's gate will be installed helping visitors find the correct gate. Additional trees and ornamental plants will be added where appropriate/needed with additional areas receiving weeding and decorative rock treatments. Decorative lighting will be placed to accentuate each entry's upgraded landscaping and to make it easier to find either gate while approaching them by vehicle at night. Broken curbing and other inoperable/obsolete items will be replaced or repaired. Real estate broker "For Sale" signs will be restricted to portions of the western side of each entryway limiting their negative impact whereas allowing for better driver visibility while entering Sahuarita Rd. Metal anchoring sleeves will be installed in the designated sign area to/from which realtors will be able to easily add or remove their signs. Additionally, these sleeves will make for a more uniform sign placement while offering an all weather friendly anchoring.

With the restriction of real estate broker signs to the west side, comes the opportunity for a defined "school bus stop area" at the eastern side of each entry area devoid of non-related items which could be considered hazardous. Each school bus stop area will be planned and built for increased safety and will better accommodate the children.

These preliminary changes and improvements should foster a better image of our community by those considering living here; give more community pride to those who currently do live here; and help keep our little ones safe while waiting for their trip to school. Subsequent improvements may help our community develop a feeling of "community" since we will have places to mingle and meet each other during times of family recreation.

## **Community Affairs Committee Report**

Linda Elling

### **Community Garage Sale – October 20, 2007**

Anyone interested in participating in this garage sale, please contact Linda Elling (762-1387 or [Linda-elling@cox.net](mailto:Linda-elling@cox.net)). Gates to Sycamore Creek and Sycamore Springs will be open from 7:00 am until 4:30 pm. We will put signs along Sahuarita Road and advertise the sale in the Arizona Daily Star. We will also be giving out balloons for mailboxes so buyers can locate the sales. We are asking a \$5 donation to help off set the cost of advertising.

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## **Holiday Fun with the Corona de Tucson Fire Department**

On December 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am, the Corona de Tucson Fire Department will be in our community to help kick off the Holiday season. All kids, young and old: "You don't want to miss this!" They will bring one of their fire trucks to explore and Community Affairs will be handing out Holiday treats. Location: East end of Sycamore Springs Trail in the cul-de-sac. The Fire Department holds a food and toy drive this time of year and we ask that you bring either canned food or a toy to donate. Hope to see you all there!

The annual Holiday Dinner scheduled for December 14, will take place at the home of John and Pam Thompson, 9091 E Scholefield Springs Place. Thanks to John and Pam for hosting this great event. Invitations will be going out to everyone in late November.

## **Board of Directors Meeting September 17, 2007 Highlights**

**Mario Vassallo**

- President Geoff Mann reported that the Remington Group and Canoa Homes did some "cost effective" construction not always in the best interest of home purchasers. For example, some driveways may be on another's property without either party knowing. Geoffrey asked all homeowners to understand this and be neighborly, making sure any improvements done in the future are done only on their own property.
- Treasurer Tom Andrews presented a proposed budget for 2008 and summarized how things look. Tom said the \$13,000 yearly contribution from the developer will stop and thus decrease revenue. He said part of this could be made up by reducing the amount transferred to the Reserve Account. Joe Nastav mentioned some options for reducing the management fee, such as going financial only. Joe will submit a list of options and their costs.
- Community Affairs Committee chair Linda Elling announced that the holiday party was to be held on December 14 at 6:30 PM at Pam & John Thompson's home. The flier will go out in November. A Christmas fundraiser for the fire department will be held on December 8, late morning, at the cul-de-sac on Sycamore Springs Place. A garage sale will possibly be organized late in October. The holiday decoration contest will take place the last weekend before Christmas. An art show and wine & cheese tasting party is being planned for April of next year.

## Financial stuff...

Tom Andrews, Treasurer

About three weeks ago, we received the first update to the "Reserve Study" which was originally performed in November, 2003, for the Remington Group, Sycamore Springs' Developer, and which was used by that group to set the annual association assessment. The SSHA Board recently elected to have the study updated by the original consultant, RDA Analysis, Inc., of Tempe, Arizona, in order to confirm that the amount of money being set aside for ongoing and future maintenance of the roads, gates, etc., was correct in light of changing costs of materials and maintenance services (if you recall in the last newsletter, I mentioned that our reserves have to be managed and replenished so as to be sufficient to pay for some fairly large expenses many years in the future...for example, resurfacing all the roads as much as 20 years from now...). The good news is that we are within 1% of being "fully funded" to be able to do the projected maintenance and repairs at the projected times needed, and at the costs projected. Assuming we continue on this course, there should be no need for any large one-time assessments for these repairs, and only 'normal' inflation-generated increases in our annual assessment. The board will be using the results of this study update, plus changes in some of our *fixed* costs like insurance and county license fees, as well as a few one-time expenses such as erosion control improvements and gate enhancement expenses, to finalize the 2008 SSHA budget.

The other upcoming financial event is the maturation of one of our larger Certificates of Deposit (CDs) in November 2007. The proceeds from this CD, which will be approximately \$61,5000, will probably be split between a two-year CD for approximately \$40,000 and maturing in fall, 2009, and a six-month CD for approximately \$20,000, maturing in April, 2008 (at the same time that another, \$20,000 CD matures). Then, we will take the proceeds of those two CDs, and will probably invest them in another two-year CD for \$40,000, maturing in 2010. The eventual result of all this maneuvering will be to establish a "laddered" investment portfolio, with CDs maturing roughly every year for a period of four years. This will provide us with security as well as flexibility and is a strategy recommended for organizations such as ours by a number of financial experts. Naturally, we will search the market for the best rates of return commensurate with the financial stability of the issuing institution, for each CD we purchase.

## Mailbox Replacement Questionnaire

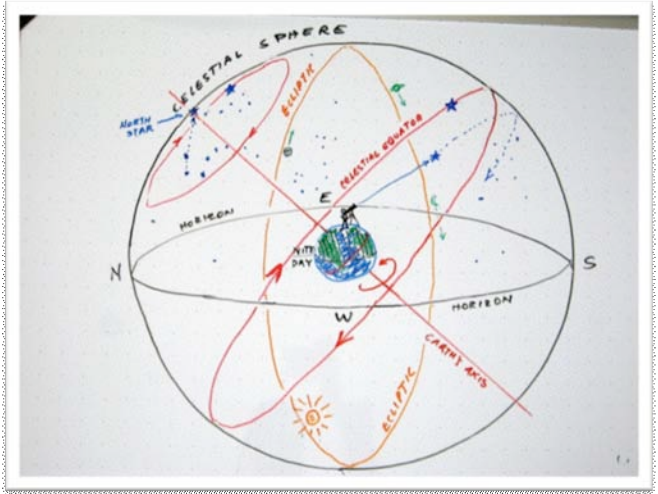
We received a total of 20 responses. An overwhelming majority of over 89% are in favor of residents upgrading their mailboxes. Due to lack of space, a full report will be provided in our next newsletter.

## Sycamore Springs Skies

Tom Andrews

This month we will begin a (hopefully) regular discussion of things to see and to understand about the night skies in Sycamore Springs. Having talked to many of our residents over the past five years, and having shared telescopes with a few, I am well aware that several of you (like my wife Jewel and I) moved to Sycamore Springs at least partly because of our distance from the lights of Tucson, the exceptionally dark skies of Southern Arizona, and the optimal telescope viewing our neighborhood offers. I hope others of you who own telescopes will also participate in writing this column and perhaps we can even get a few "Star parties" organized.

For those of you who do not yet own telescopes, or are not at all familiar with things Astronomical (but would like to learn...) I thought a basic discussion of how the night sky is laid out, and how things move across it would be useful. This discussion will refer to the diagram below:



What we see of the sky at night (or during the day, for that matter) is called the *Celestial Sphere*. It is the "dome" against which the moon, stars, planets, meteors, etc., are visible. The stars, especially, are usually considered to be stationary on the celestial sphere, and thus they move with the sphere (or sky) as the earth rotates on its axis. Note the axis on which that sphere or "dome" appears to rotate is the same axis on which the earth rotates, and thus it points to the same place as the north pole of the earth. Also, similar to the earth's equator, the celestial sphere has a *Celestial Equator* which stretches across the sky (and, indeed, all the way around the sky). Since Tucson is located at approximately 32 degrees North Latitude, or approximately 1/3 of the way from the earth's Equator to the North Pole, the point overhead on the celestial sphere at any one time is also approximately 1/3 of the way from the celestial equator to the celestial North Pole. As the earth (and thus, the celestial sphere) rotates, the stars move across the sky parallel to the celestial equator, and rise and set as they cross the *Horizon*. If a star or other object is close enough to the celestial north pole, (actually, within

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Return Address  
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

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### OCTOBER 15, 2007

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

PLACE: AMERICAN LEGION TIME: 7:00PM

### OCTOBER 20, 2007

COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

### NOVEMBER 6, 2007

BOOK CLUB MEETING. TIME: 11AM CALL 762-1387 FOR INFO.

### NOVEMBER 19, 2007

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

PLACE: AMERICAN LEGION TIME: 7:00PM

### DECEMBER 8, 2007

HOLIDAY FUN WITH THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

TIME: 11:00AM

### DECEMBER 14, 2007

ANNUAL HOLIDAY DINNER

THOMPSONS – 9091 E. SCHOLEFIELD SPRINGS PL. TIME: 6:30PM

*Sycamore Springs Skies - continued*

about 32 degrees of it) that object does NOT cross the horizon to rise or set, but simply rotates around the *celestial north pole*, making circles in the northern sky around that point.

The moon and most of the planets *revolve* around the sun on the same plane as each other, and this plane is called the *Ecliptic*. Since the earth's axis is not exactly perpendicular to the Ecliptic, the moon and planets do not move through the sky (long term) on paths parallel to the celestial equator, but on a path (*the Ecliptic*) which meanders north, then south of the celestial equator, depending on the season. Of course, in the short term (during the course of a single evening, for example) the moon and planets appear to be moving across the sky parallel to the celestial equator, just as the stars do, but since the moon and planets are revolving around the sun as well, they gradually move along the ecliptic, and can be seen at different points in the sky over the course of a month, over many months, or even years.

With a little study of the diagram accompanying this article, and some time watching the night sky, these comments should start making sense, and should help one understand why the objects in the night sky move as they do. In future articles, we will talk about those objects and the ways to enjoy observing them.

## Brief summary of the Save the Scenic Santa Ritas Public Forum

*DuVal Auditorium, Tucson - Sept. 7, 2007*

Over 75 concerned citizens came out on Friday night, Sept. 7, to learn about the current mining threats in Pima and Santa Cruz Counties. Hosted by Save the Scenic Santa Ritas, the forum gave citizens the opportunity to hear from elected public officials and local activists. A question and answer session followed the talks. Speakers were, in order of appearance, Natalie Luna, press secretary for Congressman Grijalva; Ron Barber, Tucson District

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Director for Congresswoman Giffords; Pima County Supervisor Richard Elias, District 5 and President of the Board; Pima County Supervisor Ray Carroll, District 4; Roger Featherstone, Southwest Circuit Rider, Earthworks; and Lainie Levick, member of the Board of Save the Scenic Santa Ritas. The statements from our elected officials showed their support for protecting our precious recreational, water and scenic resources in Southern Arizona. All stressed the need for the public to show their concern by getting involved. Many of the questions from the audience were about the impacts to our water resources from the proposed mining activities. For more information on the current mining proposals, potential impacts, and how you can get involved, go to [www.ScenicSantaRitas.org](http://www.ScenicSantaRitas.org).