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# THE NEW SSHOA NEWSLETTER

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## Mailbox Replacement Project

Mario Vassallo

About two years ago, past President Brent Bonnet started working on a project for community members who wished to upgrade their wooden-pole mailbox to a more upscale one, identical to the ones built by Custom-By-Design and Ducati. When Brent left our community, the project was still a work-in-progress. During one of our recent board meetings, a few neighbors wanted to see this project resurrected and I decided to work on it. I made a few announcements through our newsletter and email and, so far have about eleven homeowners who are interested in this project.

A few homeowners have their reservations regarding the project. These homeowners are concerned about the “breaking of the design coordination” and the lack of uniformity this project will create if implemented, especially to areas such as the front part of the Sycamore Springs side. The Architectural Control

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## Al Johnson – A tribute

Tom Andrews



On June 1, 2007 Al Johnson resigned as president of the board of directors for personal reasons. Al was succeeded as president by Geoff Mann, Vice President.

Al Johnson first became involved with the operation of Sycamore Springs HOA in late 2002, when he joined the Advisory Committee that was established to advise the developer on issues of interest to the Sycamore Springs residents at that time (and which became the precursor to the SSHOA Board of Directors). Since then, he has served as chairman of the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) and, beginning in 2006, as a Board member, contractor supervisor, and chief weed sprayer. In spring of 2007, Al was re-elected to the board and was elected President of the Board by the other members.

Through his many years of involvement with our association, Al has been tireless in his efforts to support and improve our community. Under his leadership, the ACC reviewed countless construction and modification proposals, resolved conflicts between neighbors, and implemented the new RV/Utility Vehicle storage guidelines. As President, Al set the Association on a course of respecting individual residents' rights, while adhering to our Bylaws and Design Guidelines for the betterment of our community as a whole. In addition to his official responsibilities, Al voluntarily “rode herd” on our landscaping, street sweeping and gate maintenance contracts, investigated complaints, and helped out wherever it was needed.

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Committee has decided to address this issue with the whole community to present facts and opinions regarding this issue. We would like you to respond to the questionnaire that you'll get as a separate attachment so that the ACC will have a better idea of what homeowners think about this project.

These are a few pointers that the ACC would like you to consider before responding to our questionnaire:

1. Homes in our neighborhood were built by at least three different building companies. When designing our homes, conformity and uniformity was definitely not on their agenda. In particular, we now have at least two different kinds of mailboxes – wooden-poled and concrete.
2. We have one set of design guidelines that apply to the whole neighborhood. Our design guidelines do not distinguish between different sections of our neighborhood. This makes the work of the ACC easier to handle and eliminates a lot of polemics and division in our community.
3. If the ACC receives a design modification request from a resident to upgrade his/her mailbox to a concrete one, the ACC cannot possibly deny such an application.
4. Having streets with different kind of mailboxes is not an ideal situation. However, this situation already exists on Sycamore Springs Trail. On Sycamore Ridge Trail, the vast majority of mailboxes are wooden-poled. However there is at least one concrete mailbox and one metal mailbox at the south end of the trail.

The ACC is currently putting this project on hold until we receive your feedback through our questionnaire. Please send us your responses by September 17, 2007, by email at [Mario\\_vassallo@yahoo.com](mailto:Mario_vassallo@yahoo.com) or by regular mail at 16300 S. Sycamore Ridge Trail, Vail, AZ 85641.

## Community Affairs Committee Report

Linda Elling

The Community Affairs committee met in August to discuss events planned for the remainder of 2007 and discuss new activities for 2008.

Everyone please mark your calendars for the annual 2007 Holiday Party scheduled for December 14, 2007. Last year's party was a huge success with more than 50 people attending. The food was "fabulous" and everyone had a great time. This year's dinner theme is Italian and the committee is already busy planning a gourmet meal. We hope all will attend this year's party and help celebrate the holiday season with friends and neighbors.

The annual Holiday Home Decorating contest is also being

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planned. This years judging will take place just before

Christmas Day so there will be plenty of time to decorate. Prizes will again be awarded to the top three homes.

The committee would also like to plan something for the children in the neighborhood around Christmas time. We have some ideas but would sure like some input on possible activities. Send ideas to [Linda-elling@cox.net](mailto:Linda-elling@cox.net)

Events for 2008 will include the annual Chili Feed at the March HOA meeting, the annual community clean up to be held in the Spring, and of course, the Holiday Party. Other ideas we working on for 2008 are another "Art show" with local Tucson artists and "community garden tour".

**Our committee meets once a month to plan and organize events and we all have a great time working on projects that benefit the community. Anyone interested in helping with community activities can contact [Linda-elling@cox.net](mailto:Linda-elling@cox.net)**

## Board of Directors Meeting August 20, 2007 Highlights

Mario Vassallo

- President Geoff Mann reported that the HOA had just spent \$6600 to complete the second phase of the Erosion Control project. This consisted of work done to clean, open and fortify about seven culverts owned by the association. He expressed his disappointment that vehicles were still speeding on community streets. The HOA had conducted a speeding study about a year ago which identified a small percentage of speeding violations. He said that if the current speeding habits of some homeowners persist, he will feel inclined to revisit the issue. Geoff also mentioned that he is looking into designing a new entrance arrangement to improve the School Bus Stop areas.
- Treasurer Tom Andrews announced that a new two-year CD has just been purchased. The CD was for \$40,000 at an interest rate of 5.05% APR. His plan is to use a "ladder" approach with CDs, the association owning about four two-year term CDs maturing at regular times throughout the year.
- Architectural control Committee chair Mario Vassallo reported that during the previous two months, the ACC approved eight new Design modification Requests and two are pending.
- Community Affairs Committee chair Linda Elling announced that Joyce Thomas was now the new committee treasurer. A Holiday Party is being planned for December 14. A Christmas Home Decoration Contest, with prizes, will be run again this year.

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*BOD meeting highlights - continued from page 2*

## Dollars and Sense

Tom Andrews, Treasurer

Through July and August, other than normal expenses, the Association spent \$6,532.27 on "Phase II" of our erosion control plan, which was to install concrete and rock around 8 culverts in our neighborhood to prevent undercutting of our roads. Through the personal management of the project by our president, Geoff Mann, we completed the job for substantially less than if we had hired a general contractor to manage the work.

In July, we purchased a two year CD with Compass Bank yielding 5.05% with the proceeds of \$42,022.38 from an expiring two-year CD from the same institution. Our plan is to reinvest our other CDs as they expire in such a way that by 2009, we will have four groups of four-year CDs, with one expiring each year, for a four-year cycle called "laddering" in the financial world. This technique gives us the greatest flexibility to take advantage of market rate opportunities and maximize our Reserve Account income while minimizing risk. As of July 31, 2007, our Reserve Account funds totaled \$159,751.34.

We have initiated discussions with RDA Inc., to update our "Reserve Study" to current-day costs and financial conditions. This Reserve Study is the planning document which analyzes our roads and other Association-owned facilities, calculates future maintenance requirements and costs, and helps us decide how much money we should be setting aside each year to be able to perform such major projects as road resealing and, eventually, resurfacing, when they are needed (for example, the study projects that our roads will need to be resurfaced in 2026 at a cost of \$489,008!). The current study was completed in November, 2003, and it is time to update it to present-day prices to re-verify that we are collecting and setting aside sufficient funds to avoid the need for any unexpected assessments on our selves or our successors.

## Aviation, Aerospace, and Astronomy Art Show

Plan to visit the Pima Air & Space Museum now through the end September to see the Aviation, Aerospace, and Astronomy Art Show. On display will be artwork created by students in the art department at Sahuarita High School. Under the guidance of Sycamore Springs resident, Michelle Rouch of Artwork by Rouch, the project was designed to motivate students in gaining knowledge of Tucson's history in Aviation, Aerospace, and Astronomy. The show will be moved to Kitt Peak Observatory for the remainder of 2007 and at various other locations in Tucson in 2008.

*Al Johnson - continued from page 1*

Al Johnson retired in 2006 as a Sergeant with the Tucson Police Department. Since then, in addition to his work with our association, he has kept busy with his "best friends"... Vader and now AJ; with metalworking, and now with his newest toy, a Kubota diesel tractor. Al wishes to inform residents that he is now available for brush clearing, general landscape work, and other earth moving projects, all for a reasonable fee!

## New member on the HOA Board of Directors

Linda Elling



Please welcome Barbara Still as the new Director-at-Large HOA board member. Barbara brings knowledge and experience to our HOA having served on two other HOA Boards as President and Treasurer for more than 12 years. Barbara moved to Tucson in 1999 from Seattle, WA where she worked as a United Air Lines Flight Attendant for several years. Having survived a major airline crash, she changed careers and went to work for Nordstrom's and spent 18 years in the cosmetic department. Barbara moved into Sycamore Springs in the March of 2003 making her one of our longest residents. She has served on the Community Affairs Committee since it's beginning in 2004 and has volunteered on numerous community projects. Her vision for this term is to work at upgrading both the Sycamore Springs and Sycamore Creek gate areas. With all her experience, Barbara will certainly provide good leadership and guidance.

**Anyone interested in participating in a fall (October) garage sale, please call or email Linda Elling (762-1387). To sponsor a community wide sale, we should have at least 10 families.**

## A Joint Venture - "Count me in"

Over the past few years many folks in the neighborhood have volunteered their time to help maintain/improve our great quality of life here in Sycamore Springs and Sycamore Creek. They have served as HOA Board members, volunteered on various committees, provided expertise and assistance on many community projects. Clearly, we all benefit from this volunteer effort and everyone deserves a big Thank You.

Residents currently serving our community include:

### **HOA Board of Directors:**

Geoff Mann, Sam Santistevan, Mario Vassallo, Tom Andrews, and Barbara Still

### **ACC Committee:**

Mario Vassallo, Geoff Mann, Michelle Rouch

### **Community Affairs Committee:**

Linda Elling, Barbara Still, Joyce Thomas, Alison Mead, Brenda Hann. Honorary members: Mary Argueta, Christine Leach

**Web Master/Designer:** Bob Dahms

### **Landscape Committee:**

James Thomas, Sam Santistevan

### **Newsletter:**

Mario Vassallo, Linda Elling

**The HOA can always use more volunteers to help with various projects. There are two positions open on the ACC Committee at this time, and the HOA board will be electing new members next year. So if you have a little extra time, when the call comes, say, "count me in".**

- Joe Nastav, our property manager, presented a preliminary 2008 budget draft to treasurer Tom Andrews. Tom will be presenting his own draft to the board at the next meeting.
- Barbara Still was elected to the Board of Directors as an at-large member to fill in the vacancy created by the resignation of Al Johnson.
- Michelle Rouch was elected as a member of the Architectural Control Committee

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER 17, 2007

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

PLACE: AMERICAN LEGION TIME: 7:00PM

### OCTOBER 15, 2007

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

PLACE: AMERICAN LEGION TIME: 7:00PM

### NOVEMBER 19, 2007

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

PLACE: AMERICAN LEGION TIME: 7:00PM

### DECEMBER 14, 2007

HOLIDAY PARTY

PLACE: TBA TIME: TBA

Return Address

Street Number and Name

City, State 98765-4321

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Mailing Address

Street Number and Name

City, State 98765-4321

BUILD RATE  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO.  
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