

The Springs **Chat** March 2017

A newsletter by and for the residents of The Springs at Santa Rita

The Springs at Santa Rita, 951 West Via Rio Fuerte, Green Valley, AZ 85614

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As I look out at the mountains, there are white clouds, rain clouds, rainbows and sunshine all in the same view. Diversity at its best. Spring is coming and the flowers are starting to bloom. Color at its best. At this time of year, we have garage sales, potlucks, picnics, and meetings on our schedules. I would like you to add one to the list – Volunteer Recognition Day – and it is on March 25th. Details are found below, but I want to emphasize its importance. Our community thrives because of volunteers. Our community is economically stable, in part, due to our volunteers. Our community is a good place to live because so many folks volunteer in a variety of ways. Recognition is not why people give of their time, but it is so appropriate to say thanks to them from The

Springs community. Please join us in acknowledging the important work so many folks do to make this a wonderful community in which to live. Thank You! Rebecca Keenan, Editor

What's Happening ???

Garage Sale: March 18 from 7-11 a.m.

Meet & Greet: March 4 from 3-5 p.m.

Fiesta Deck - Bring a beverage and a snack.

Board Meeting: March 21 at 9:30 a.m.

Perry Park Picnic: March 12 at 1 p.m.

Bring your lunch stuff, something to grill, something to share.

HOA Potluck: March 9 at 5 p.m.

Anza Room. Bring your dinner stuff & beverage, a dish to share: A-F Main Dish, G-O Dessert, P-Z Salad.

Volunteer Recognition: March 25 from 3-5 p.m.

Anza Room. Happy Hour. Just bring your volunteer self for some fun and we will take care of the rest.



OUT AND ABOUT BY SALLY BRYAN



Lunch at Hacienda del Sol was a real treat! I was in a group of 20 and we were given a tour and a review of the history before lunch. The Hacienda del Sol has been a Tucson landmark since 1929, located on 34 acres in the beautiful Santa Catalina Foothills.

From 1929-1948, this desert dwelling was a home away from home for “girls only”. Families with the names of Pillsbury, Vanderbilt, Kellogg, Maxwell, Westinghouse, Spaulding and Campbell sent their daughters to Hacienda del Sol for a college preparatory curriculum and a taste of western outdoor activities.

After the war, and when the school was no longer running, Hacienda del Sol became a private guest ranch and a favorite getaway for Katherine Hepburn, Spencer Tracy, John Wayne, Clark Gable, and Howard Hughes. The guest ranch changed hands several times over the following years, until it fell into the loving hands of a group of Tucson residents in 1995. It has been beautifully restored and maintained through their efforts and labors of love.

If you want to read more about this historic landmark, go to www.haciendadelSol.com. Guest room rates and dining menus are also available on the website.

When you make your reservation for lunch or dinner, try to save time for a tour or at least a walk around the grounds and see some of the historic photos displayed throughout.

After our tour of the grounds and seeing a guest room, we went to the gorgeous dining room for lunch, which was impressive. I ordered the Quinoa Salad, with almonds, butternut squash, apples, pepita seeds, arugula and goat cheese tossed in a light vinaigrette for \$14. Several others raved about the Bacon Burger they ordered, which came with fries or a green salad. Others enjoyed the Chicken Salad with napa cabbage, carrots, peppers, mixed greens, tomatoes and grilled chicken tossed in a sesame vinaigrette. Many of us took home leftovers, as the servings were generous. Only one in our group ordered dessert, which the rest of us regretted after we saw it and had a taste. It was a fantastic fruit cobbler with a shortbread crust, cinnamon ice cream and salted caramel. I would definitely order dessert next time.



Clearly this is not your run-of-the-mill lunch or dinner place, but wonderful for a special occasion!

It is an easy drive, about 45 minutes north on I-19 and I-10, exit at 77 and follow it as it turns north. Turn right into East River Road and travel to Hacienda del Sol Road. Go left and travel north to 5501 Hacienda del Sol. Treat yourself and someone you love!

LED LIGHT BULBS

Your light bulb committee along with the ARC has decided to begin using LED bulbs instead of incandescents to replace burned-out bulbs in the fixtures that illuminate our addresses. These bulbs cost at least four times more per bulb than what we use currently, but should last up to 6.6 times longer. They will also use less energy. Also, less of your light bulb committee's energy will be needed to replace bulbs! Our supply of incandescent bulbs will be used up first, and then we will gradually begin using the LED bulbs as the others burn out. They will look more yellow and less orange than the ones that light up our addresses now.



Please continue to keep an eye on your light bulb sensors. If your light is on during the day, your sensor may be dirty or painted over, or it may need replacement. We replace your bulbs, but maintenance of fixtures and sensors is up to property owners. For help with lighting problems, you can contact Vic Bignall at 520/399-2870, who is among several Springs residents with the electrical know-how to trouble-shoot and fix problems. While these LED bulbs are substantially more expensive, we are hoping to realize cost savings over time through use of fewer bulbs. LED bulbs are better for the environment too. Your cooperation with maintenance will help make this a reality and keep our community safe and attractive.

If you have questions, please contact me at patricia.sills1@cox.net or 520/207-8233

THANK YOU, Patsy Sills, Chairperson, Light Bulb Committee



The Springs Chat is your newsletter, and it contributes to the vitality and culture of our community. The Newsletter Committee invites your contributions, and your suggestions: Juanita Kauffman (community and board news), Sally Bryan (neighbors and activities), Jeannie McGaughey (home sales and Chat delivery), Pat Strnad (pets and recipes), Pat Keenan (local color and news of the weird), Laurie Boyett (food), Neysa Dickey (proofreader), and Rebecca Keenan (editor). Thespringschat@gmail.com.



Pet Profile by Pat Strnad

Hi, as Jack Nicholson has said, “I’m ba-ack.” Do you remember my story from a few years ago? Well, I’m here for my “encore,” as aging stars sometimes do.

To refresh your memories, I’m a Yorkeepoo and my name is still Zazu (after Zazu Pitts, the comedic character actress of years gone by). As my punster Dad likes to say, she might have been related to Olive (pits, of course – you can groan now).

Although I come from a talented family: my dad, Frank Strnad, (a retired TV producer/director among other jobs) who is in the National Television Broadcasters Hall of Fame, and my mom (a former math teacher) who now writes for some paper called “The Chat,” I made fame all on my own.

Actually, I was discovered here in Green Valley while my mom and I were sitting on our front porch, with me wagging my tail at all passers-by and looking cute, as always. One, another Chat writer, approached and asked if she could feature me and, as my agent, Mom said yes. That was about 3 years ago when I was 8. Thus, it’s time for my encore.

I’m only available to appear here from January through April. Then it’s back to my vast estate in Strongsville, Ohio, where, in my wooded backyard, I have much more freedom and some privacy. However, I have to chase away squirrels, birds, and sometimes deer. I hear they are called Groupies and are always trying to see a star. People say that comes with the territory, so I accept it. Besides, all that exercise is how I keep my great shape. My admirers are always commenting on how much younger I act and look.



While you’re reading this, I’ll be staying at The Pooch Palace while Mom and Dad are traveling. There’ll be other canines there, too, that I can share some of my experiences and tips with. I love giving back to my protégés. If you see Marilyn out walking us in the neighborhood, I’m the sleek silver and tan cute one. But for now, “Th-that-that’s All Folks!!!”



Photo by Laurie Boyett

A letter to the Springs Community

We are Don & Nancy Kelly and we live on Avenida De Los Solmos across from Perry Park. We first came to the Springs 4 years ago. We rented for 2 years before purchasing our home on Solmos. When we first came to The Springs we were curious; all these homes have the same architectural features and they are all painted the same color? We went online and looked up the Covenants and found the Architectural Guidelines. What we discovered is that The Springs is designed as a unique architectural statement following the design forms of Native American architecture and that our homes are designed to be part of that overall composition and fit into the Sonoran Desert. We love living in The Springs and appreciate that our neighborhood is an architectural statement.

(Don & Nancy Kelly Letter continued) The Design Philosophy portion of the Architectural Guidelines states that: "It is the responsibility of the homeowners and the Architectural Committee to enforce the integrity of the community through the careful maintenance of its residences." We commend the work that the ARC has done now and over the past 20 years to maintain the unique look and feel of The Springs as it was originally designed.

Key elements of the original Design Philosophy are: "Simple architectural statements; Continuity of architectural forms, materials and textures; Harmony between the home and the site; Color and landscape coordination."

"To realize these key elements the following consideration should be embraced:

1. The homeowners acknowledge and agree that the guidelines are understood, are reasonable, and benefit the community.
2. A spirit of cooperation and community pride should be strived for between the homeowner and the Architectural Committee."

"The Architectural Committee was established and guidelines were formulated to guarantee The Springs would maintain its architectural spirit and value. The guidelines are comprised of design philosophy submittal procedures and standards."

When we purchased our homes in The Springs it was incumbent on each of us to understand that we were buying into a community that is governed by Covenants. In essence we all voted for the unique look and feel of The Springs with our pocketbooks when we chose our homes here. We looked at many homes in the Green Valley before we purchased and we kept coming back to The Springs. We feel that the architectural features and consistent color in The Springs contributes to the friendly community atmosphere here. Homes in The Springs are sought after and generally sell quickly when they come on the market. New homeowners among us also purchased their homes based on the unique look and feel of The Springs. There are many neighborhoods and homes in Green Valley to choose from. We all chose to live in The Springs. Individuality can be expressed through the color of doors, gates, screen doors, artwork mounted on our homes, yard art, and in other ways.

Currently a small group of residents are proposing to change the exterior paint color allowed here in The Springs. Adding different colors to this neighborhood will fundamentally and forever change the unique architectural statement of The Springs. What influence this change will have on the value of our homes in the future is unknown.

Homes in The Springs are uniquely designed. Our townhomes have a common front wall between two homes. Many townhomes in other neighborhoods don't have a common front wall; there is an offset between the two homes. Painting these types of homes two different colors doesn't create an obvious line between the homes. If additional exterior colors are added, we are going to have inconsistent colors side by side with distinct vertical line down the center between townhomes as we walk or drive down the street.



Picture walking down your street and seeing one townhome green beside a townhome painted red. Imagine returning to your Springs home for the winter to discover that the townhome adjoining yours and the stucco walls have been painted red. We believe that this will be a detriment to our neighborhood and it diminishes the Native American architectural statement that is The Springs.

(Don & Nancy Kelly Letter continued) We have talked to a number of people about the current color of our homes and only two people thought adding color options was a good idea. The others were adamantly opposed to changing the current color scheme.

Changing the intent of the design of our neighborhood is something that should reflect what the majority of the homeowners want, not a select few. The self-appointed color change group represents the wants of only a few people, not the majority of homeowners. All of the homeowners in The Springs are entitled to input on a decision as important as changing the color of our home. We have confidence in the Board and the ARC to navigate this topic, and follow established processes and seek input from the whole Springs community.

If you have comments about changing The Springs paint colors, we can be reached at springscolors@comcast.net Please include just your address number in the subject line. You can comment on each property you own, if you own more than one. We will share the information we receive with The Springs Board and the ARC. If you don't have access to email please write your house number and thoughts on a piece of paper, address it to ARC and drop it into the HOA mailbox at the gatehouse.

Thanks for your time and consideration. Don & Nancy Kelly



Expanded Paint Palette Update

As of today, February 21, the opportunity for a choice in exterior paint color for our homes continues to move forward. Over the past month, the committee has worked with a Color Consultant/Designer from Sherwin Williams who has worked with many HOA's representing over 30,000 homeowners in the Tucson area. With her help, we have taken into consideration the size of The Springs, the style of our homes, and the desire to have a 'soft' paint palette. We have chosen eight options, one of them being the ability to keep our current color. We have met with the head of the ARC

Committee and discussed a variety of items pertaining to the possibility of change.

Earlier today we made our presentation to the Board at the monthly Springs Board Meeting. The Board was open to our thoughts, as well as the thoughts and concerns of many others who spoke on the subject, both for and against. After discussing what the process to continue to move forward would be, we will be meeting with the full ARC Committee within the week. After that meeting, we hope to meet with the Board to discuss the next steps.

It continues to be our goal not to make any demands regarding this, but to give the Springs Community the opportunity to have a voice in this matter. Living in a democratic society, it is our hope to bring this to some form of vote, and let the majority of the residents make the decision.

As always, constructive comments are welcome. Lyle Weber lweber605@gmail.com

Editor's Note: The ARC will meet March 16th at 3 PM with the proponents of the change in palette for a half hour and, following that, will meet with the proponents of the status quo, giving each group the opportunity to present their case. Following those meetings (which will be sequential, not combined) the ARC will take whatever time it needs to make its decision. When it has reached its decision, it will notify the respective parties. The party that does not prevail has the right to appeal the ARC decision to the board.

ARC trying to protect the value and desirability of your property by enforcing Community Documents BY TED BOYETT



Photo by Laurie Boyett

There are several major issues the ARC (Architectural Review Committee) will be addressing over the next few months. Due to the new charge to the ARC, in addition to architectural concerns, the committee is now responsible for enforcing any violation of community standards by homeowners. We ask for your understanding, patience, and support as we strive to accomplish this responsibility both fairly and equitably. These are issues that you, the homeowner, have brought to our attention numerous times and with vigor. The areas we will be working on include:

- 1) Improper businesses operating out of residences:** "...the business cannot be apparent or detectable (to other homeowners or their renters) by sight, sound, or smell from outside the dwelling." [CC&R 10.5.3.1] There are several other regulations that apply.
- 2) Illegal parking:** "Prohibited Vehicles. No boats, campers, commercial trucks (one was grandfathered as an exception years ago), trailers, motor homes, recreational, motor cycles, mopeds and other vehicles, other than passenger cars and pickup trucks (collectively, "Prohibited Vehicles") shall be parked or placed permanently on the streets, lots or driveways in the property." [CC&R 10.26.2] There are several other regulations that apply.

3) Age Restrictions: To comply with provisions of the Fair Housing Act "at least one Person per Dwelling must be fifty-five (55) years of age or older." [CC&R 2.1] Exceptions can be made in special circumstances for individuals over forty-five 45 years of age – but must be requested and approval is not guaranteed. "No Minor (less than eighteen (18) years of age) shall reside in any Dwelling Unit for more than three (3) months during any twelve (12) month period. [CC&R 2.4]

Enforcement of these items will be based on detection to include but not limited to obvious infraction, observations during biannual and monthly compliance walk arounds, or due to investigations initiated by neighbor requests. The ARC is not looking to make things difficult; rather, we want to maintain the quality of life for all residents at the level required by common courtesy and our community standards and documents. In the introduction of the Amended and restated Declarations of Covenants, Conditions, Restrictions and Easements for "The Springs at Santa Rita" (Age Restricted: 55+ community), approved February 2009 it states:

"NOW THEREFORE, the Owners hereby declare that the Property shall be held, sold and conveyed subject to the following easements, restrictions, covenants, assessments, liens, reservations and conditions, which are for the purpose of establishing a general plan of development and of protecting the value and desirability of the Property, and which shall run with the Property, shall be binding upon all persons having or acquiring any right, title or interest therein, and shall inure to the benefit of, be binding upon and enforceable by all Owners, the Association and their successors and assigns in interest."

We seek your understanding, your support and your assistance in carrying out this duty.



Meet Your Neighbors by Sally Bryan



John and Karen Kangas are a delightful addition to our Springs community. They purchased their home here two years ago, after having visited Green Valley several times over a ten year period. As a child, John Kangas grew up next door to another Springs owner, Tom Pozinski. They've been friends since childhood and that led the Kangases to visit, and eventually purchase a home here. Though John and Karen knew there were many communities from which to choose here in Green Valley, they had come to love the people in The Springs and the lovely recreational center, so they knew they wanted to make their home here.

While John and Karen are AZ residents and this is their primary home, they also enjoy summer fun at a family home on Lake John in Annandale, MN. The family purchased a pontoon boat recently so they hope to enjoy many beautiful sunsets.

John enlisted in the Army for three years out of high school and spent a year in Vietnam as a 19-year old-combat engineer in 1969. He finished his three years of service on a Friday and began attending St. Cloud State University the following Monday. This is one focused fellow!!! He was several years older than many of the incoming college freshmen, but found a like-minded group of other GI students who were also attending after finishing their military duty.

Karen's father was an avid collector of Native American artifacts and they've decorated their home with some of his treasures. Karen's mom was a canoe outfitter and her dad worked for the U.S. Forest Service in the Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota. Karen's parents retirement home was on the Gunflint Trail on Popular Lake. The area is remote and the only way in or out is by canoe. John has fond memories of cross-country skiing and also hunting in that area. In later years, Karen's parents moved to Apache Junction, AZ where her dad continued to collect artifacts.

John and Karen have been married for 36 years. They've been retired for 3 and 4 years respectively. Twenty-five years



of John's career was spent in Sales Management with a petrochemical business in Chicago. He and Karen lived in St. Charles, IL where they raised their son and daughter. Karen also worked as a Learning Resource Coordinator at Anderson Elementary School in St. Charles.

While living in St. Charles, Karen and John volunteered for 15 years at a homeless shelter in Aurora, IL. In addition to cooking and serving meals, Karen registered residents for sleeping rooms. John spent time listening to and talking with homeless Vietnam veterans, as his experiences uniquely suited him to be able to relate to their stories.

John enjoys working out at The Springs Fitness Center and Karen can often be found swimming or sunbathing at The Springs pool. Karen is an avid reader and enjoys cooking. John says she is a GREAT cook. Her latest creations have been "hot stuff" with abundant chilis and Mexican flavors.

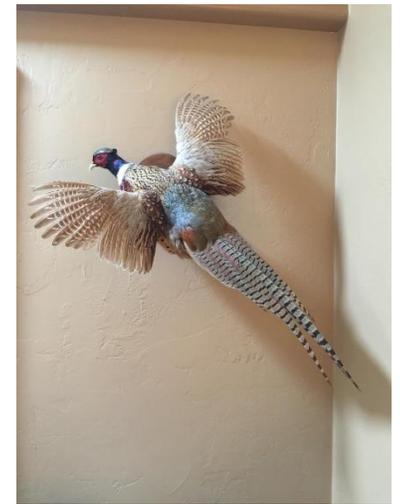


John likes hunting pheasants and fishing when back in MN. He is also a member of the GVR Hunting & Fishing Club here in GV.

John and Karen are attending new member classes at Desert Hills Lutheran Church here in Green Valley, and are looking forward to serving at Crossroads Nogales Mission and the Community Food Bank.

In addition to John's childhood friend, Tom Polzinski, living in the Springs, John's sister Karen Smith and her husband, David, purchased a home across the street from the Kangases in February. The "Karen's" are best friends. I'll be featuring an interview with Karen and Dave Smith in next month's issue of the Chat.

Be sure to reach out and get to know this friendly couple who is a great addition to our positive SPRINGS community.



FOOD CITY

BY LAURIE BOYETT

Adventurous shoppers take note! For true bargains, fresh produce and amazing new foods, try FOOD CITY. There are five of them located 15-22 miles from The Springs. My husband and I have shopped three times at the one in Tucson's Spectrum Mall, 1251 W. Irvington Rd. It is located across the parking lot from Home Depot and right next to Target.

Their ads are posted online and are worth perusing if you are headed in that direction. The week of Feb.15-22 (Wed. to Wed.) we found gala apples at 2 lbs. for 98 cents and jalapeño peppers (for my husband) were 25

cents/lb.

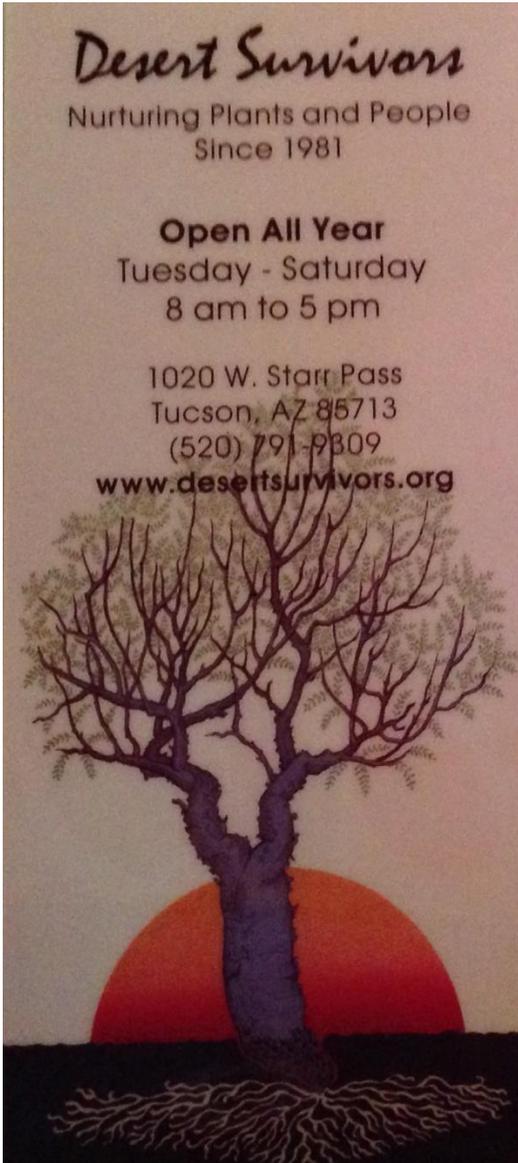
Every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday there are further specials. That week they included 4 avocados for \$1.00, 4 green peppers for \$1.00, and 4 cucumbers for \$1.00. On Wednesdays only there were more specials including bananas 33 cents/lb., tomatoes 33 cents/lb., and celery 33 cents per bunch.

We noticed a prepared foods counter with a place to eat and a long line of folks waiting to place their orders. That week the advertised special was the chili relleno plate with rice, beans, tortillas and salsa for \$4.99. There were many entrees and sides to choose from.

Besides great prices and fresh produce, we enjoy the fun of looking at produce we have never seen in Rhode Island. We always buy a few just for fun.

That day we bought 10 oz. of QUESO PANELA (\$2.49). It turned out to be a whole milk cheese that was similar to feta, but softer and milder. We also bought a 9.9 oz. bag of TAKIS (\$2.00). Made in Mexico, these were rolled up mini tortilla chips with a spicy coating. A nice change from Triscuits or Wheat Thins.

Another favorite of ours are the gigantic Mexican mangoes. At \$1.00/lb., it is a great buy. Once you have eaten your fill with fresh pieces, the rest can be frozen and used in smoothies. Be adventurous. Try Food City. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did.



DESERT SURVIVORS INC. BY PAT KEENAN

Desert Survivors Inc. (DSI) is a nursery that specializes in plants that are native to the Sonoran Desert. It is a fascinating place to visit with a variety of unique species on their 4-acre site.

At first glance, I was not especially interested. The nursery is a sun-baked, no-frills operation. It does not have fountains, scented candles, or even roses. But what they do have are plants - plants native to southern Arizona and that thrive in Green Valley. There are over 650 plant species, most of which are grown from seed and on-site.

Oh, and another thing about DSI. It provides employment for adults with disabilities. The nursery was started in 1981 by Dr. Joseph Patterson, a psychologist. He worked with young institutionalized adults with disabilities. Dr. Patterson felt many of his patients would benefit from meaningful jobs that provide dignity and purpose to their lives. So he started what he called "horticultural therapy with calming and grounding effects from working with organic soils."

The plants are organized in small groups with hand-written signs identifying them. The staff looked like real gardeners, wearing jeans and appearing a bit grubby. They were very friendly and helpful. They advised me about which plants attracted birds and butterflies and which had flowers that smelled good. They even knew which plants your desert tortoise would prefer.

DSI is also heading up a project to bring back heirloom fruit trees. At the Tumacacori National Historical Park they replanted the orchard with figs and pomegranates similar to those Juan Bautista de Anza himself may have snacked on.

The prices seemed reasonable to me. They varied with whether the plant came in a 1-, 5-, or 15-gallon black plastic pot. I picked up a couple of Fremont wolfberry plants that will grow to five-foot shrubs, attracting hummingbirds galore. Only 8 bucks apiece.

Anyone who knows me is probably amazed that I am writing about a plant nursery. I have trouble getting the hair to grow on Mr. Potato Head. Anyhow, it all started out as a snowbird friend and I tried to get from one venue to the next at the Rock and Gem Show. Of course, we got turned around and ended up in front of Desert Survivors Inc. So we went in. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

DSI is located in Tucson just north of the I-10 and I-19 junction. Exit at Star Pass and go west a short distance. Contact information is above. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all proceeds from sales benefit their adult services.



From Your Architectural Review Committee – Talk to Your Neighbors

BY TED BOYETT



During this last month there were several situations that arose requiring me to interact with residents of The Springs while responding to questions and concerns of homeowners about violations of Community Standards and appropriate application of our regulations. What might have been an adversarial encounter turned into a pleasant experience and I hope I made friends with several interesting individuals. After all, we are a community.

One of the things that became strikingly apparent was the reluctance and even worry about even politely mentioning items or conditions that were in violation of our standards that bothered us about our neighbors. My experience was that the neighbor was unaware of the violation of rules and how it might impact others. Also expressed was the desire that they would have preferred their neighbor to have spoken with them first and it seemed to me they were equally desirous to establish friendships. Now, I know this is not always going to be the case. But we can use what might potentially seem to be a confrontation into a wonderful opportunity to expand our circle of friends.

You might ask what the violations or questions were concerning. They were about paint colors; visible trash cans 24/7; rocks, trash cans and vehicles overhanging sidewalks that cause obstacles for our mobility-challenged neighbors; and signs.

Actually, talking to your neighbors about problems makes you a good neighbor. See something, say something, but do it politely and tactfully.

ARC Relaxes No-Feeding Bird Ban

Several years ago, pigeons became a big issue and we are hearing complaints once again. Pigeon urine is highly acidic and damages roofs and air conditioning units. Dried droppings can become an air-borne pathogen that is especially hazardous to the elderly and immuno-compromised persons. Seeds and suet dropping to the ground attract rats and other rodents which, in turn attract snakes.

That is one of the reasons why feeding wildlife was prohibited in the original CC&R. “There shall be no feeding, capturing, trapping, or killing of wildlife within the Property (The Springs).” [CC&R 10.3.7]

The ARC has relaxed this regulation to permit feeding hummingbirds with liquid food as there seems to be little downside to this enjoyable activity.



Something to remember....

- 1. The Block Captains will be delivering phone directories to your homes in mid-March. They will also include an important “information update sheet” which should be filled in and returned to your Block Captain. They will then turn it in to the HOA.**

Some more things to remember.....

- 2. Jim Owens, Grounds Committee Chair, needs someone to look after the entrance fountain. Can you help him with this? 925-457-6826**
- 3. The Garage Sale is coming up March 18th. It is open from 7-11am. Juanita Kauffman is in charge. To get signed up, contact her at 520-625-1509 or at samtootsie@aol.com . Please include your name, street address, phone number, and items of interest.**
- 4. Snowbirds, you can save on your sewer charges by contacting <http://dot.pima.gov/wwm/apps/sewerbillingsuspension/>. You will need your account number and approximate departure and return dates. Phone: 520-724-6609.**
- 5. There was so much information for this edition of the Chat that we didn't have room for recipes or street name silliness or SHOUTS from satisfied homeowners about what they like. We will try to restart those in the next issue.**

Classified Ads



Cruising the Danube

An advertisement by Susan Beck-Brown

Since my first riverboat cruise a few years ago, I tell anyone who'll listen that it is the best way to experience a destination: luxurious accommodations, incredibly attentive staff, fabulous tours (which are all included in the trip price), gourmet meals. I've been on four European riverboat cruises, and today I will tell you about the Danube.

Our cruise began in Budapest, Hungary. I still get excited whenever I see the ad on television, usually after Masterpiece Theatre on PBS, of a riverboat

passing by a magnificent red-domed building, because that was us: we had just departed from Budapest and were passing by the Hungarian National Parliament, whose steps lead all the way down to the river bank! What a spectacular sight. That same evening we stood on deck and watched the landscape change into gently sloped terrain as we entered the Wachau Valley, a UNESCO world heritage site. Every afternoon our tour director would give us a run-down of the following day's adventures. Each morning we would wake to the sound of gentle chimes, reminding us of the departure times of that day's tours. In the evenings, following a fabulous dinner, we were entertained by regional artists.

I find it almost impossible to decide what my favorite part of the trip was. Was it visiting Durnstein, the little Austrian town in whose castle Richard Lionheart was held captive while returning from the Crusades? Or was it Vienna, where we attended an evening concert, in a palace, of all Mozart and Strauss music? Was it being able to wake up each morning at a new location and just walk off the ship and be there? Or was it the evening entertainment: the Slovenia National Orchestra one evening, an oompah band another, a lecture on Richard Lionheart, or our waltz lessons? Perhaps it was the incredible attentiveness of the crew, and the fabulous meals our chef prepared each day, always reflective of the region we were currently visiting. Maybe it was just sitting on deck, sipping a local brew, and watching Europe go by! If you would like to experience a riverboat cruise firsthand, please think of me. I work from home for By the Sea Travel and would love to give you more information on riverboat cruising. **Susan Beck-Brown 520-396-4601**



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