

**Tucson Mountains Association Newsletter and Ballot - September  
2007**

**TMA Potluck Picnic and Annual Meeting**

**Saturday, October 13th, 4:00 p.m.**

**Christopher Columbus Park - Ramada # 3**

(Please note new location: Ramada #3 is on the west side of the lake, just south of where the picnic has been held the past few years. Follow the signs from the main entrance to the park, north of Sweetwater Drive.)

Please bring a dish to share and a chair. TMA will provide barbequed chicken, bread, soft drinks, paper plates and eating utensils. TMA has purchased a beer permit for the picnic. Remember - no glass is permitted in the park.

Members may bring neighbors and guests for a \$5.00 per person fee.

*Please pass this on to a new member.*

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**Painted Hills Cluster Housing Development**

We regret to report that at its July meeting, the Design Review Committee (“DRC”) approved Land Baron Investments’ second proposed plan for this cluster housing development. The planned development of the Painted Hills, off Gates Pass Road at the entranceway to the Tucson Mountains, includes town houses, clustered houses and a few “estates” of an acre or so apiece; but at least the higher slopes will remain undeveloped. The DRC had the authority, but failed, to require more environmentally sensitive planning, as a condition of granting a right to cluster homes on smaller lots than the existing one-acre zoning would have permitted. TMA had asked them to demand better wildlife corridors and to eliminate plans to blade two dense stands of mature saguaros. We feel the DRC was overly complacent about the extent of the destruction of wildlife that the approved proposal

will almost certainly cause. Many of those involved came away questioning the composition of the DRC, and we have asked the Board of Supervisors to examine this.

The developer responded appropriately, but to a limited degree, to the objections expressed last winter by TMA and the Gates Pass Area Neighborhood Association, and to suggestions from the DRC. They did alter their original proposals to reduce the overall number of proposed housing units from 284 to 260 (although the DRC had suggested no more than 240 in January, and County staff recommended 204). They also agreed to move the clustered homes a bit further from Anklam and Gates Pass Roads; and to increase the wildlife corridors somewhat and slightly decrease the number of mature saguaros they will destroy. They agreed to include a trail that the County Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation had proposed, and to create a bicycle path along Anklam Road. But we feel that these concessions did not go far enough, and the County had every right to demand greater protection of the Painted Hills.

TMA supported the concept of cluster development for the Painted Hills, in the spirit expressed in the Zoning Code: it is intended to allow denser development in one portion of an area under development, in order to allow for greater preservation of open space in other areas, and to permit innovative land use planning, so as to protect natural resources. But this proposal does not meet the stated goals. It is unnecessary to destroy two substantial areas of dense saguaro stands which are slated to be bladed, for example, and truly creative planning could avoid such a result. The County's own staff, like TMA, recommended that the DRC continue the matter and ask the developer to further reduce the easily foreseeable harm. TMA pointed out that the wildlife corridors as proposed are truly inadequate, and that reasonable modifications could correct this potentially devastating problem. These are essential corridors between the Tucson Mountains and the Santa Cruz River, without which many animals may perish. TMA pointed out that only mature saguaros provide food and shelter for wildlife, and not the far younger replacements that the developer proposes to offer, after blading two highly sensitive areas. But the DRC, by a vote of 6 to 3, agreed to the proposed plat despite community objection and the recommendations of County staff. The DRC accepted the small concessions the developer had made after the January proposal was rejected, ignoring the unnecessary and avoidable harm to wildlife diversity in our Tucson Mountains.

One citizen appealed the decision to the Pima County Planning & Zoning Commission. But the County Attorney advised the Commission that it did not have jurisdiction to hear the appeal, because of an anomaly in the Zoning Code. The Code allows only the developer, and no other affected party, to take an appeal of a DRC decision regarding a cluster development proposal. The Planning & Zoning Commission asked County staff to propose an amendment to the Code to correct this obvious defect, but that will not assist with this case. The Board of Supervisors also directed staff to correct this problem, at its hearing on September 4. TMA asked the Board of Supervisors to review the composition of the DRC. We feel that the decision to approve this cluster development, as proposed, actually disregards provisions of the Zoning Code as well as the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. It is disheartening, to say the least, to see our County approve a development plan that ignores these goals.

### **Trail Construction to Begin at Sweetwater Preserve**

According to Pima County Department of Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation Director Rafael Payan, construction should begin this month on the trails in the Sweetwater Preserve. Many of us were delighted to hear about the plans for trails and trailheads, last May, when the Department held a public meeting to present them. Many of the eroded “wildcat” trails will be closed off, to better preserve existing plant life, while improvements are planned for a few main routes through this new park. No motorized vehicles will be permitted.

As of this time, dogs will be permitted to use the trails, so long as their owners keep them on leash and clean up after them. According to Parks and Recreation Manager Steve Anderson, the County prohibited dogs on the Yetman Trail in Tucson Mountain Park because of problems with owners who failed to clean up after them, and refused to keep them on leash.

Horses will also be welcome on these trails. A staging area is planned off Tortolita Road, as well as a trailhead. The trail through the Sweetwater Preserve is expected to be continuous with a hiking and equestrian trail to the east, shown on the proposed plat plan for the new 188-acre Sweetwater Canyon development, which will also be open to the public.

### **Wastewater Treatment Odor Mitigation**

The Pima County Wastewater Management Department has made substantial progress towards mitigating the noxious odors that have plagued the Westside for many years. Unfortunately, one of the most significant parts of the mitigation plan, which was to have been completed by July, 2007, remains in limbo. A “bio-tower” had been recommended, which would redirect down through carbon filters the flow of gases that currently rise and are released into the surrounding air untreated. Archeological findings led to the requirement to re-engineer the project, and increased the cost dramatically.

It will be important to let the Board of Supervisors know that we want odor control measures to be part of the overall funding and management for Wastewater treatment generally, now and into the future. The disgusting odors of the past few years resulted from a “band-aid” approach to odor control. We need odor control to be part of the planning and implementation of wastewater treatment generally. Most of the human waste from throughout Pima County is being shipped to the Roger Road treatment plant, near our homes, and inadequate measures have been taken for decades, to contain the fumes this material gave off. This is blatantly unfair. All users of the sewers should be paying for appropriate and healthy processing of this waste, including treatment that does not disproportionately burden residents of the Westside, many of whom do not even have access to the sewer system.

**Tucson Mountains Association - Ballot for Election 2007**

**Check the space after the name of the person running for office,  
or write in a candidate:**

**Board Members: Choose five (6) In alphabetical  
order:**

**Peter Chesson** \_\_\_\_\_  
**or write in** \_\_\_\_\_

**Debbie Hicks** \_\_\_\_\_  
**or write in** \_\_\_\_\_

**Liz Kelley** \_\_\_\_\_  
**or write in** \_\_\_\_\_

**Kurt Luscombe** \_\_\_\_\_  
**or write in** \_\_\_\_\_

**Judith Meyer** \_\_\_\_\_  
**or write in** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pamela Ridgway** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Or write in** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return your ballot to TMA, P.O. Box 86117, Tucson,  
AZ 85754**

**Or bring to the picnic by 6:00 P.M. on October 13, at Columbus  
Park**

**Ramada # 3**

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**Comments? Issues of Concern? Would you like to be a Board  
member?**

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### Candidates for Board Member

*(Please note: under our new By-Laws, approved by the membership last year, the new Board will meet in January and select one member to be president. Thus, the membership selects the Board members and they, in turn, select officers from among them. You may vote for up to six Board members.)*

#### **Peter Chesson**

I moved to the Tucson Mountains two years ago, but I have been visiting for two decades. Indeed, I have been conducting ecological research in southern Arizona since 1986. My long-term goal was always to live in the Tucson Mountains. I achieved that goal after the University of Arizona made me a Professor of Ecology in 2005. Before taking up residence in Tucson, I was a tenured ecology professor successively at Ohio State University, the Australian National University, and the University of California, Davis. In addition to my job at the U of A, I am the Ecology Editor of the scientific journal *Theoretical Population Biology*, and I serve on National Science Foundation advisory panels on ecology and population biology. In my spare time, I enjoy hiking and growing native plants.

Since I moved to Tucson, I have been an active member of TMA, writing letters to the county, meeting county officials, and giving presentations at county meetings. I have applied my ecological expertise to advocating for preservation of the extraordinary landscape that we call the Tucson Mountains. For the last year, I have been serving on the TMA board in an appointed capacity, replacing former Board member Nicole Brule-Fisher, who had resigned for personal reasons.

The Tucson Mountains are a natural asset for the entire region, but they are constantly threatened by development. Our challenge is to protect as much as possible in reserves and to ensure sensible development of the rest so that it remains compatible with wildlife conservation and protection of scenic assets. I bring to this challenge my professional expertise in ecology, and a strong commitment to this wonderful area.

#### **Debbie Hicks**

My love of Arizona originates from my time as an undergraduate and graduate student: I have a B.S. degree in Natural Resource Management from ASU and an MBA from Thunderbird. My career focus has been in natural resource management in both the public and private sector. I worked for the Department of Fish and Game in Anchorage, Alaska during the 1980's and then as VP of Finance for Saltwater Inc., an Alaskan company that hires and deploys fisheries biologists.

I moved to Arizona in 2001, and became an active member of the TMA in 2003 and a board member in 2004. During most of 2007 I have served as President, until the press of business required me to step down from that role.

During my tenure on the TMA Board, I was involved in the grassroots campaign that resulted in the creation of the Sweetwater Preserve. I also worked on the Silverbell Action Coalition that encouraged local authorities to provide adequate and thoughtful, long-term planning for growth along the Silverbell Corridor. The Coalition also tried to ensure that as much of the delicate desert ecosystem as possible is maintained despite development.

I am passionate about the Sonoran Desert and committed to work for the preservation of the character and diversity of the beautiful, natural environment that makes this part of Tucson such a wonderful place to live. I would be pleased to serve another term on the TMA Board.

### **Liz Kelley**

My name is Maria Elizabeth "Liz" Kelley. I have been a resident of the Tucson Mountains for over two decades. My husband Bill and I have built two houses in the Camino del Cerro - Tortolita area. We built a house in 1984, then after a short hiatus in Wiley, Texas, we built our second house just down the street from the first one. We love the Tucson Mountains so much; we knew exactly where we wanted to build again.

I am a retired educator. I taught for both the Sunnyside and Tucson Unified School Districts. I now find myself with some extra time, and feel this the right time to work with a fantastic organization such as TMA.

The Kelly family hikes in the Tucson Mountains regularly. I myself have 30 years of extensive hiking throughout Arizona with my family and my teacher friends. Nature and the great outdoors are a source of great enjoyment to me. I believe that I can assist our TMA board members to reach and realize our TMA goals and objectives.

I believe that everybody needs to step up and take responsibility for the beautification, protection, and care of our environment that we all love so very much.

### **Kurt Luscombe**

My name is Kurt Luscombe. I have lived in Tucson since 1970 and in the Tucson Mountains since 2002. I own a local concrete contracting business.

I was an active member of TMA, and had worked with members of the Board on one particular matter. When the Board asked me to consider serving out the unexpired term of Deb Hicks, who had been elected President, I did not hesitate. I have been pleased to work with them and would be delighted to continue.

I believe we have an irreplaceable and precious resource in the Tucson Mountains and their foothills. This is one of the few areas of land nearby to the urban area that has remained in a somewhat natural state for animals, plants and people. The TMA mission seeks both to preserve quality of life in the Tucson Mountains and also to protect the natural environment.

I would be honored to continue to serve on the TMA Board and do what I can to help preserve the Tucson Mountains for all.

### **Judith D. Meyer**

I arrived in Tucson only in 2004, as a visitor, but my response to this desert environment was instantly joyful, and I chose to relocate here almost as soon as I arrived. Over the course of the past three years my love of the Tucson Mountains and my joy at living here has continually increased.

I have served on the Board of TMA for the past two years, and for the past year as vice president and then acting president. It has been an honor and a privilege to work with my fellow Board members to further the mission of TMA. I am a lawyer, although not currently practicing law. So I have been asked, chiefly, to represent TMA in written and oral advocacy, at hearings before the County's various boards and commissions. This has given me an opportunity to gain in-depth experience with some of our members and the issues that affect their lives in the Tucson Mountains. In addition, I have recruited other new board members in an effort to develop a broader range of skills and experience for our Board and our organization, and I have assisted existing board members in various functions from newsletter writing.

I would be delighted to continue my service to the organization as a member of the Board and hope you will have the confidence in me to give me your vote.

### **Pamela Ridgway**

I bring over 27 years of professional business experience in sales and marketing, with a strong background in relationship building with companies such as American Honda, Thrifty Car Rental and other Fortune 500 companies. I owned a successful printing organization, Marathon Press, for thirteen years in Southern California. In 1997 I sold that business and relocated to the Pacific Northwest. I joined a high profile technology start up company, ImageX, which I successfully promoted across a wide range of early adopters. I then accepted the position of VP of Sales and Marketing with Software 21, one of the premier ERP software development companies in its market space. I believe one of my greatest strengths is my ability to identify and promote the unique skills and contributions of team members I works with.

I have now relocated to the Tucson Mountains, and I have developed a great love for our Sonoran Desert environment. While learning more about the proposed plans for the Painted Hills area, I met several of the TMA Board members, attended a Board meeting, and learned about this organization's mission, work and current strengths and weaknesses. I was asked to consider joining the Board, and did not hesitate. I have held board positions on several non-profit boards in Washington State. With a passion for the visual & performing arts, I was a member of the Kirkland Performance Center for 6 years and I am a past board member of Standing Ovation. I was also a member of the Susan G. Komen Foundation Board of Directors for 3 years. I hope to be able to further the mission of TMA as a member of its Board.

I enjoy hiking, playing tennis and playing with my two newly adopted dogs, Coco Chanel and Buddy.