

President's Message

Despite the continuing pandemic chaos, we have lots to report on about our neighborhood enhancements and planning activities. There are also a few articles that highlight the joy of interacting with wildlife in the neighborhood. From early years, people have been drawn to this area because of its rural character. Neighbors respect and value the flora and fauna of our desert enclave.

Neighborhood Meetings

Our last two neighborhood meetings (May 29th and August 21st) via Zoom were a great success. For those of you who missed them, visit our website at <https://rillitobendna.org/past-meetings.html>.

Our meetings are now scheduled quarterly, 1-3 p.m., on the 3rd Saturday. Dates are as follows:

November 20, 2021*

February 19, 2022, May 21, 2022, August 20, 2022, November 19, 2022*

*Annual RBNA Meeting

Meeting locations will be posted on our website and sent by email. We encourage you to sign up to get emails from us. We only send emails specific to our neighborhood and do not share the email list with anyone outside the RBNA Board. To sign up, go to our home page at <https://rillitobendna.org>.

Board of Directors

As a City of Tucson recognized neighborhood association, one of our responsibilities is to elect Board members at our annual meeting. We are always looking for new members, so please consider getting involved in the neighborhood or submitting your name for a Board position. Contact us at rbna@rillitobendna.org.

Neighborhood Enhancement

We continue to pursue ways we can increase safety, manage stormwater, create habitats and beautify our neighborhood. Here are a few initiatives with other stories in the newsletter:

Prince Road

Larry Bird is leading a neighborhood coalition with representatives from Winterhaven, Richland Heights East and Rillito Bend to improve our section of Prince Road—Country Club to Campbell Avenue—for pedestrian access, transit/bus shelters, landscaping and drainage. The City's MOVETucson transportation plan has placed our project into Tier 2 behind Tier 1 projects. Prince Road section west of Campbell to Romero is a Tier 1 and must be funded and completed first. Proving our section of Prince Road has greater needs and should be a Tier 1 project has not been successful, but we continue to lobby the Ward 3 Council Office and the City's Transportation Department.

Prince Rd./Cactus Blvd. Intersection

We are waiting for an update from the City on the proposed HAWK crossing (High-Intensity Activated cross-Walk) for the Treat Avenue Bicycle Boulevard. We will send out an email and post it on our website when we hear. In the meantime, you can get more information on our website at <https://rillitobendna.org/our-vision.html#bicycle>.

Cactus Blvd.

Though our grant application with Tucson Clean & Beautiful to address landscaping and stormwater drainage at the heritage mesquite tree bosque on Cactus was declined, the Ward 3 Council Office is trying to assist us with this project. In the meantime, Estelle Stern-Eilers is working with Watershed Management Group and a volunteer team to make some "rain garden" improvements in the tree basin.

Stephen Brigham, RBNA President

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Annual RBNA Meeting

November 20, 2021, 1-3 p.m., location TBD

Annual Ice Cream Social

November 7, 2021, 2-4 p.m.,
The Hitching Post Ranch
at Gentleman's Acres



Communications

Though our annual newsletter reaches everyone, there are other ways to communicate:

Visit our website, <https://rillitobendna.org>, for lots of information about our neighborhood.

Sign up to get our emails, by going to <https://rillitobendna.org> landing page. We don't share your information to anyone outside the Board.

Email us at rbna@rillitobendna.org.

Sign up to Nextdoor, a private online network in Tucson, as a way to communicate with neighbors and receive information from others as well as from the City. Go to: www.nextdoor.com. **TIP:** when setting up your profile, select only our neighborhood if you want to avoid many extraneous emails.

Attend our Meetings, held quarterly. See President's Message.

Mural Notecards Available

We are offering notecards of our Neighborhood Mural again. Stay tuned (by checking our website or signing up for our email announcements.)



Volunteering with Project Hope in Shiprock, NM

In December, I was fortunate to spend 10 days at Northern Navajo Medical Center in Shiprock, New Mexico as a volunteer with Project Hope. I worked in the "car clinic," checking on children with mild symptoms and obtaining nasal swabs from people of all ages for Covid testing. I was so impressed with how well organized the Nation and the medical center were in their response, and by some of my remarkable fellow volunteers. While my part in the effort was small, it was a phenomenal (but very chilly) experience.

Kathryn Bowen, MD
Meadow View

Roadside Ponds Become Home to Spadefoots

Before the Rillito River was confined to the engineered flood protection embankments, washes flowed more freely in our neighborhood. The recent rains—a historical record for July—have reminded us of those days as our rights-of-way filled with stormwater. These pockets of water are a reminder that we have opportunities to capture more stormwater for landscaping, replenishing the aquifer and for creating habitats for our riparian critters.

One such critter is the spadefoot, *Sacchiopus couchi* or Couch's spadefoot. The name derives from the sickle-shaped "spade" on their hind legs used to burrow into the dirt. During the monsoons, spadefoots emerge (sensing the low frequency sounds—not water), and they have no time to waste. Their bleating calls start the mating process; up to 3000 eggs are laid in shallow pools and in 15 hours, tadpoles are born. And before the pools dry up, they must metamorphose into spadefoots, a process that can take 9-14 days. Life is tough.

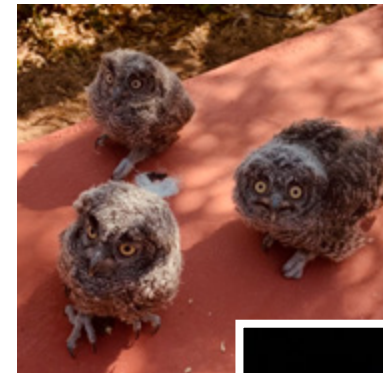


Thanks to Tamzin Sugiyama, 100s of Spadefoot tadpoles were spotted in a roadside pool along Allen. Here, Lindy Brigham, Susan Anderson and Bob Fernandez are watching/photographing the activity. In another pool on Cactus, more were found, some of which were becoming spadefoots!

Owlets in the 'Hood

In the year of Covid, Kestrel nesting boxes were installed in the park and neighborhood yards by Mike Shaw of HawkWatch International who is studying the decline of Kestrels in the region. To our delight, Western Screech Owls took up residence in several of the boxes. From eggs to hatching to feeding to leaving the nest, it was thrilling to have a ringside view of nature's process. Several neighbors had the privilege to help Mike band the nesting pairs and chicks. The owlets hung around after leaving the nest until they were safely on their own. Let's hope we witness this cycle again. Thank you, Mike Shaw!

For more information or if you are interested in a nesting box, contact Mike Shaw at mshaw@hawkwatch.org.



Placid posing by screech owl chicks
Photos by Murray DeArmond and Dan Slater



Rio Vista: Master Planning Update

Our work with the Ward 3 office is about to pay off: Parks and Recreation will be starting work on updating Rio Vista's Master Plan. We have been in discussions with Ward 3 office to assure that a specialist in natural resource parks be involved. By signing up to our email list or by checking in on our website—there is a page devoted to Rio Vista—one can follow the progress.

Allen Road Plants are Lovin' the Rain

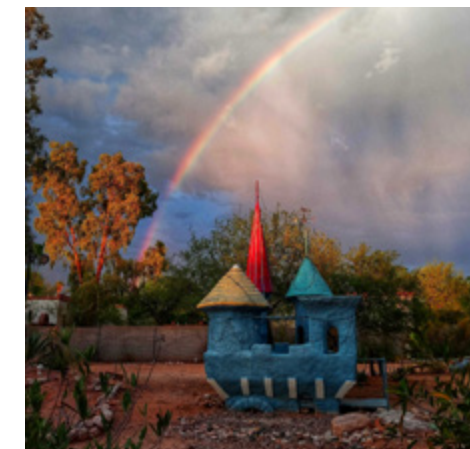
A merry band of neighbors gathered last October to bring some natural beauty to Allen Road between Arbodela and Cactus. Where there had been an expanse of bare dirt, walkers now see bunnies and butterflies.

How have the plants fared? Teams of neighbors supplied water. Some ran hoses from their homes so that others could fill buckets (with holes drilled in the bottom) placed at each plant. Two small Ironwood trees were lost to winter cold; their replacements have been planted farther from the wall so they will receive more sun. A few shrubs also died; but others like Brittlebush and Jojoba have flourished. We hope to fill the holes with more of the thriving varieties in the fall.

Keep watch for an announcement of a work day after the weather cools. In the meantime, take a walk along Allen and enjoy our green and flowering creation!

Paula Datsko
Meadow View

Looking west along Allen showing the thriving plants and one of the rock dams
Photo by Estelle Stern-Eilers



Enjoy exclusive use of Valley of the Moon during SAFE PLACE reunions.
Photo by Autum Provateare

Valley of the Moon

Over the past year, Union Pacific Foundation funding has allowed Valley of the Moon to implement multiple measures to reduce risk of Covid transmission to offer free family outings to Covid-vulnerable folks. Grants from Arizona Commission on the Arts and Arts Foundation of Tucson and Southern Arizona got us through an otherwise lean year.

Upcoming events include a 1900s Romani Family circus; Haunted Ruins and the Polka Doo Hex, an original interactive play; movie night showing a science fiction movie filmed at Valley of the Moon with the filmmaker; Elf Workshop featuring the historic Steinfeld Store elves; Queen Astara's Fairy Lights; new walking tours and In Their Own Words: Native American Voices featuring childhood stories using tribal languages.

Neighbors are encouraged to volunteer at Valley of the Moon to promote kindness, protect our historic structures and create community events. All this and more can be explored at www.tucsonvalleyofthemoon.com.

History Corner

Clays Alley: An Early Homebuilder in the Neighborhood

His name was Henry Clay Cox, and he was Assistant Librarian at the UofA. In 1933, he purchased property on Prince and built a small, mud adobe home. Shortly thereafter, he built another home next door and made a narrow road to gain access to the house. His wife suggested Clay as the name of the road, and thus the road became Clays Alley. Henry Clay Cox built at least one more adobe home while living here, and several other homes nearby were similarly fashioned. He built the mud bricks with a wooden form molding five bricks at a time because that was the amount of neighborhood soil that filled his wheelbarrow. I first met him in 1976, at his home out near Kinney Road and Ajo Way. It was a blistering hot day in late May. Though by this time he was well up in years, Mr. Cox was outside forming adobe bricks for a project, five bricks at a time.

Murray DeArmond





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- Lisa Fabrizio
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- John Kovacik
- Cass Peel
- Estelle Stern-Eilers
- John O'Hare
- Shirley Foerster

Who To Call

Important Contacts for the City of Tucson

Suspicious activity, police emergency	911
Police non-emergency	520-791-4444
tucsonaz.gov/police	
Community Service Officer (CSO) Renet Martin	520-837-7428
Renet.Martin@Tucsonaz.gov	
Cars parked in City's right-of-way	520-791-5071
Garbage cans left out at the curb	520-791-3171
Graffiti removal hotline	520-792-2489
Junk vehicles, excessive yard sales, weeds	520-791-5843
Mosquitoes	520-724-7908
Pima Animal Care Center	520-243-5900
Potholes	520-791-3154
Shopping cart pick-up	1-800-THE-CART
Ward 3 Office	520-791-4711
Water main break	520-791-4133

Pima County Covid Information:

<https://webcms.pima.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=541069>

Glass recycling now at Rio Vista Park

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The City of Tucson has paid for the printing and distribution of this newsletter. Thank you, Tucson!
