

SKY VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

April 2017 NEWSLETTER

Contact us at <http://SkyValleyHOA.org>, at info@SkyValleyHOA.org,
at P.O. Box 1002, Thousand Palms, CA 92276-1002,
or at 760-671-0582.



April Calendar of Events

Saturday 1 st	<i>April Fool's Day – Have Fun!</i>
Tuesday 4 th 6 pm	SVET Meets – Call Bill Hall at 760-329-9593 for time, place
Monday 10 th	Sunset, through 18 th Sunset: <i>Passover</i>
Sunday 16 th	<i>Easter Sunday</i>
Saturday 22 nd	<i>Earth Day</i>
Friday 28 th	<i>Arbor Day</i>
Tuesdays 3:45-4:30 pm	<i>Bookmobile at Community Center</i>



HOMEOWNERS REPORT

MARCH MEETING:

Homeowners met on March 16 at the Community Center. Fourteen members attended, counting two new members who signed up at the meeting. This being St. Paddy's eve, we enjoyed tasty green and white frosted cookies, some shaped like shamrocks, and coffee. Thanks to **Fran Noche** for these munchies.

Dues Received: As of this meeting, 72% of our households have renewed. The April Newsletter will be marked "Your Last Newsletter" for the holdouts.

Status of Flyers and Saturation Mailers: **Steve Fischer** was unable to attend, so we did not get a status report. We agreed that he already has permission to post flyers, and that we would not consider another mailer until September..

Unpermitted Building in Sky Valley: **Jim Sullivan** reported on an egregious case of unpermitted building. A resident has built out an electrified claim shack into a 2000 sq. ft. home, with no permits at all. The site is in the East Deception Flood Plain, where building codes are particularly stringent. The builder has been at this now for several years. Code enforcement has cited him repeatedly to no avail, and the Board of Supervisors is finally convening a Nuisance Abatement Hearing to consider ordering the building razed. It is virtually unheard of for a permit case to advance to this level.

continued...

CORRECTION

The March meeting agenda incorrectly dated the next meeting as May 16. The correct date is May 18. We do apologize for that error!

Homeowners is adamant that it is not an enforcer of CCRs, as is a typical “Homeowners Association” attached to a development. Our purpose is to *prevent urbanization*, not to make our neighbors toe the line. However, there are limits to our tolerance, and this person has not only created a potential danger to himself and others, he has flaunted his responsibility to pay his share of the taxes and fees that keep our community maintained and safe. These taxes and fees are based on property values, and those values are based on building permits.

Therefore, we resolved that:

Due to the extreme nature of this specific case, the Sky Valley Homeowners Association supports the County’s efforts to resolve it, and designates Noel Ragsdale as our spokesperson before the Board of Supervisors for this issue.

Rash of Burglaries: The Sheriff has reported that Sky Valley had two residential burglaries in January, and six in February. We urge anyone who has any information whatsoever to pass it on to the Sheriff, as only those with access to all reports can detect patterns to investigate. Members have circulated a flyer with crude pictures of one suspect in the hope that someone may recognize him. (You got this flyer with your last *Newsletter*.)

Community Council Review: We briefly reviewed items discussed at the Council meeting on March 14 (see page 3). There was little actual news, but members did express dissatisfaction with the lack of any progress toward protecting Sky Valley horses. If any government entity is to break through the current impasse, it should be the low desert, where summer heat is extreme.

Election: Our biennial election of officers and executive committee is due. The executive committee will bring nominations to the September meeting, and we will vote at the November meeting. During the summer, the executive committee will be approaching various members and asking them to volunteer. *Please give some thought to serving.*

Lost and Found Bulletin Board: **Kitty Pallesen**, of *Kitty’s Animal Rescue*, has asked us to consider putting up such a board somewhere in Sky Valley, where she and others can post information about lost and found pets. The Community Center seems the only reasonable place

to do this. Their Board of Directors will almost surely give permission, but we’ll need to find another spot on the front of the building, construct a board to fit, and label it “Animal Lost and Found Only,” or something similar. *Who will undertake this worthwhile project? Contact us through the channels on the masthead on the front page.*

Next Meeting: May 18, 7pm, at the Community Center on Hot Springs Road. **Rick and Janice Cox** will bring seasonal munchies.

Related Burglaries?

We hear that one burglar left a black painted table at one site, presumably to make room to carry more valuable booty.

If anyone has lost such a table, call **Officer Henson** (badge #5271) at 760-836-1600. Or email

thenson@riversidesheriff.org.

Either way, say that you have information to add to case #0170570007.

Establishing that multiple burglaries were committed by the same perp can really help an investigation.

Sky Cues

Observations of a Desert Dweller

quail roosters crowing
welcome dawn breaking the east
glorious valley

Mathu Zephyr

COMMUNITY CENTER REPORT



New Lighting: Thanks to a Riverside County Board of Supervisors Community Improvement Designation (CID) grant, the Center auditorium has brand-new LED lighting. CID money can't be used for operational expenses, but this improvement should lower the Center's expenses in the future. Thanks to the late **Supervisor Benoit**, electrical contractor **Lou Murdica**, and Center Treasurer **Noel Ragsdale** for driving this project through to completion.

The new lighting (above, right) is much better dispersed than the old (left). It lights the room very well, and it's pleasing to the eye. You don't notice it at all, which means it's doing a great job.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL REPORT

The Council met on Tuesday, March 14, for the first time since the death of **Supervisor John Benoit**. Some items of note:

- **New Supervisor Selection** is still going on in **Governor Brown's** office. It is thought that the candidate list is now down to two, but it's anybody's guess when a decision will be made. For now, **Rita Massie** will again be our liaison.
- **Tour de Palm Springs** is now back to *Palm Springs*, from *Palm Desert*. So our hope that Dillon Road might not be used next year is dashed. Some of us learned for the first time that the 2016 tour was cancelled due to weather. Maybe that's why we heard no complaints.
- **Community Cleanup:** The event on February 4 collected over 51 tons of refuse, including 337 tires! Burrtec also held a shredding event on March 4, but apparently, nobody knew about it. Someone will tell Burrtec to advertise these things in the future.
- **The Expected Horse Ordinance** seems to be a lost cause. The effort was never to enact a new ordinance, but to expand the existing ordinance on Animal Cruelty to include horses. This met opposition when it was revealed that no other government entity has ever done this, and that the "horse industry" might consider it meddling.
- **Polling Place Change:** The Community Center is trying to get our polling place, currently the Fire Station, moved back to the Center, where we voted for many years before Sky Valley became briefly a mail-in district. **Sam Tosti**, who served at the poll in November, reported that the Fire Station is woefully inadequate as a polling place, and that using the Center would solve multiple problems. Apparently, there are questions about the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) status of the Center, though it's not clear that ADA compliance is a requirement for a polling place. The Center Board of Directors is now addressing the issue.



by Neil Ludlam
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LIVING IN SKY VALLEY

Springtime a la Carte

OK, I admit it; that title doesn't have a lot to do with this column. It's just that when I think of Springtime, I think of O. Henry's heart-warming short story with that title. If you don't remember it, check it out at <https://americanliterature.com/author/o-henry/short-story/springtime-a-la-carte>.

But back to the real story at hand. Spring is here, and with it, our first crop of desert wildflowers. I admit that we don't have the luxurious "super bloom" that I saw on the CBS News' coverage of Springtime in the Anza Borrego Park, but we're doing fine, and we're just getting started.

This Spring's bloom is the best in several years, as the drought-busting rains foreshadowed. It's nothing like that year ten or fifteen years ago when the wildflowers came in October and stayed all winter, but it's still a welcome sight.

Anyway, I took a couple of days in March and wandered about in Sky Valley snapping pics of what looked pretty, and I show you some of them here. The dominant color was yellow, since the big bloomers, Brittlebush and Creosote, are yellow bloomers. Low growers are also yellow, along with white, pink, and violet. By the time you read this, Indigo and the Palo Verdes should be in bloom – material for next issue!

If I've misidentified anything, please let me know so I can issue a correction. I want to learn, and I always welcome feedback!



Brittlebush is probably the most conspicuous bloomer in most of Sky Valley.



It can dominate a landscape.



And there are *thousands* of baby Brittles, promising, rain permitting, a bright 2018.



Second place goes to Creosote Bush. It's not all that showy, but it's big and obvious.

**Craig Allen
Farrier**



760-251-3938
760-567-1772
caacraig@gmail.com



The dominant low-grower is probably Desert Dandelion.



It can dominate a landscape, too.



I think this is Parachute Plant. It's often found mixed in with Desert Dandelion.



We don't have a lot of Sage in Sky Valley. From across this wash, I couldn't tell if this one is blooming, or just putting out fresh spring leaves.



Cheesebush has pretty white flowers,



but from a distance they almost disappear.



Likewise, Sweetbush is fine closeup,



But not so special from a distance.



Rhatani is a minimal bloomer right now. We'll watch it.



Sand Verbena adds a bit of pink or purple.



Is this Phacelia? Can you say?



Heliotrope, I think.



Our Red Barrell Cactus is native, unlike the Mexican Golden Barrells found in nurseries.



Up against the hills to our north, Beavertail Cactus is more common. This one is in Wide Canyon.



Desert Popcorn is a lovely groundcover, until its seedpods dry out and it becomes a noisome pestilence.



2017 started as a great year for red pygmy weed. It sprang up everywhere, more than it has for many years.



But unless we get more rain soon, Red Pygmy will not fulfill its promise. It needs to get fat and succulent, and develop into its green phase. These sprigs are about an inch and a half high.




There seems to be less of the Arizona Lupine this year than usual. Maybe it's just too early. We'll look again next month.




What is this white-blooming vine that's growing on my wire fence?



Burro Bush flowers are mostly green, but they are flowers, so we'll include them.



SKY VALLEY REAL ESTATE

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Letters

We like to get feedback from readers. Please send us letters to the contacts on the masthead on page 1.

From **Eddy Konno**:

The kangaroo rat found in Sky Valley is the Merriam's kangaroo rat (Dipodomys merriami). I have also found the banner tailed kangaroo rat (Dipodomys spectabilis) down valley near Dos Palmas. The endangered Stephans' kangaroo rat (Dipodomys stephensi) is found in Western Riverside County and portions of San Diego County west of the Peninsular ranges. The endangered San Bernardino kangaroo rat (Dipodomys merriami parvus) is a subspecies of Merriam's kangaroo rat, also found in Western Riverside County.

Thanks, Eddy. This answers the questions in last month's article on Kangaroo Rats in Sky Valley.

From **Richard Martin**:

I am a new member of the HOA. I bought my Sky Valley Property in 2004 and have wanted to get to know as many of my neighbors as I can. Being a Realtor, I take many photos. I now own a drone and can take beautiful aerial shots. If any of the residents would like free aerial shots of their property, I would be delighted to provide them.

I am also a Notary Public, and will be happy to notarize for members for no charge at one of our meetings. Just contact me to make arrangements.

Richard Martin 760-578-8472 or rickymartinrealtor@gmail.com

Welcome aboard, Richard, and thanks for your offers!

SKY VALLEY HAPPENINGS

April Birthdays

2 nd – Tania Kidd	18 th – Brad Ballen
2 nd – Buddy Buerke	26 th – Steve Fischer
5 th – Shawn Karimi	28 th – Chris Vance
5 th – Pamela Ballen	29 th – Mathu Zephyr
11 th – Julie Casserly	30 th – Emil Boyd
14 th – Clayton Loudon	



Desert Popcorn –
God's Rock Garden?

Happy Birthday to All

THE LYRIDS METEOR SHOWER peaks the night of April 22nd and the morning of the 23rd. It's not a great shower, yielding only about twenty events per hour, but there'll be little competition from the moon this year, so viewing should be good. As almost always, watch after midnight if you can.



CHARITY IN TROUBLE: We are sad to hear that *Well in the Desert*, the charity lead by Homeowner **Arlene Rosenberg**, is not completely at ease at its new home in Northern Palm Springs. Neighbors have been complaining that *Well*, which feeds and cares for the homeless and other disadvantaged, is bringing undesirables into the neighborhood. Arlene, we hope that this issue resolves itself quickly, and in your favor. *Well's* work must go on.

About This Newsletter

Newsletter Editor
Neil Ludlam

The *Newsletter*, the official organ of the *Sky Valley Homeowners Association*, is published monthly except for a combined July/August issue. It has a circulation of about 85 copies.

HOA Officers:

President
(open)

We solicit articles and news items from our membership or our friends. We print business-card-size ads, at a rate of \$25 (\$40 for non-members) for 11 issues. We reserve the right to refuse any ad, and those that we print may not represent the opinions of the Association.

Vice President
Fran Noche

Secretary
Neil Ludlam

The *Sky Valley Homeowners Association* is not a typical HOA like you'd find in a gated community. We're an informal, unincorporated group of about 120 members, that doesn't answer to any organization. Our Purpose is

Treasurer
Barbara Brunner

"To preserve Sky Valley's rural and peaceful way of life and to prevent urbanization"

Executive Committee
Alba Rosada
Maria Van Arnam
Ona Holmgren
Buddy Buerke
Steve Fischer

Join us! We hold General Membership meetings third Thursdays of odd-numbered months, except for July, at 7 pm at the Sky Valley Community Center. We welcome visitors and new members. But don't worry if you're not the type that attends meetings. We stay in touch through this *Newsletter*.

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