

Desert Dwellers

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DESERT MISTLETOE

Friend or Foe?

You've seen the dense clumps growing in mesquite and palo verde trees. Desert mistletoe (*Phoradendron californicum*) is a partial parasite that is essentially leafless, with brittle, jointed stems. Although it does have some chlorophyll and is able to photosynthesize, it also takes water and nutrients from its host. Many desert residents have a highly negative view of the mistletoe and are convinced that allowing it to grow will destroy all our desert trees. I have received letters of concern to this effect from Oracle Foothills neighbors.



At the Desert Museum, the botanists often receive comments from visitors about the mistletoe in the trees there. Mark Dimmitt, PhD, Director of Natural Resources at the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, writes, "A heavy infestation of mistletoe can damage or kill the host plant, **but this is uncommon.**" George Montgomery, Botany Curator, says, "We treat desert mistletoe as a part of the natural environment. It attracts phainopeplas, mockingbirds and bluebirds that eat the berries. In cases of extensive infestation or patches in one-of-a-kind trees or high profile trees, we keep it to a minimum".

I asked my friend, Joan Scott, recently retired Arizona Game and Fish Department biologist and neighbor to write a small article on the subject. She and I agree that what makes Oracle Foothills so unique and beautiful is the predominance of natural desert landscape, part of which is desert mistletoe. Her article is below.

I highly recommend KEEPING mistletoe in our yards. Desert mistletoe is an important part of the desert ecosystem. Unfortunately, in urban areas, too many people try to make their yards look like "Disney desert" – pretty to our eyes, but groomed too heavily for wildlife use. Taking mistletoe out of the desert trees is just another example.

The Phainopepla is very dependent on desert mistletoe, especially in winter when it eats the seeds. In winter there are no insects for the Phainopepla to eat, so the mistletoe is important for its survival. In addition, I've watched mockingbirds feeding on the mistletoe berries. Our mockingbirds guard the mistletoe patches in our yard, scaring away other seed eaters, so the mistletoes must be a limited resource. Mourning doves also feed on the berries, and also use the "witches broom" patches as hidden nesting sites. This morning I watched a Gila woodpecker feeding on the berries. I would not want to remove this important resource from my yard, and I would advise neighbors against removing it too. I love hearing the calls of the Phainopepla, mockingbird, and Gila woodpecker, and I don't want them chased away from my neighborhood.

Also, have you noticed the wonderful smell that emanates from

the mistletoe this time of year! No wonder the wildlife love the plant – I do too!



We humans need to find ways to live lightly on the ground. We need to share our land with the wildlife that were here before we were. We don't want to carve out areas of the earth that are suitable only for humans. We need to make sure that our footprint on the ground is also suitable for other species.

Yes, some individual trees – especially in drought or in other difficult situations – can become too heavily infested with mistletoe. Under these situations, sometimes it is appropriate to remove SOME of the mistletoe bunches from a tree, just to give the tree more strength. I never under any circumstances remove all the mistletoe from a tree. The mistletoe is just too important to too many wildlife species. A strong desert tree will have the strength to survive a mistletoe growth. To help a tree have enough strength to have mistletoe and also survive, one might give it some extra water or nutrients.

Already too many people in the neighborhood remove all the mistletoe. Our neighborhood already has too little mistletoe for a natural environment.

Joan Scott

Adios, Raul!

To My Dear Friends,

All good things come to an end sooner or later. And after twenty-six years of a career as a letter carrier it is time to say goodbye to all of you.

I plan to retire on April 30, 2010 after having been your letter carrier for the last twelve years. I have really enjoyed getting to know many of you personally and chatting with you from time to time. Thank you for all your patience, your kindnesses, your thoughtfulness and especially your friendship. I would also like to thank you for inviting me to your yearly gatherings on Yvon Drive.



I don't know who my replacement will be but I'm sure he or she will enjoy the route and the precious customers on the route like I have. Drop me a line or call if you'd like to.

Sincerely,

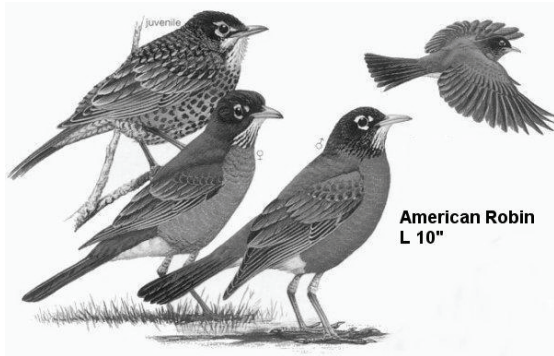
Your friend and letter carrier,

Raul

Raul E. Yubeta
P.O. Box 1034
Oracle, AZ 85623
Cell # 520-487-2318

Our thanks to Raul for all his years of good service. Raul is looking forward to retirement and the chance to spend more time with his family and on his hobby of carpentry. We wish him good health and good times.

Have you seen the robins?



“Bill, Bill. Come see! What are these birds?” Five birds were roosted in the acacia tree right out my dining room window. For the life of me, I could not recognize them. Bill ran for the bird guide.

“Are they ROBINS???”

Sure enough, they were robins – plain ol’ American Robins that everybody knows. But, what are they doing in our back yard? In 20 years of keeping records of birds in our yard, we have only recorded a few individual robins, and only for a day, probably migrating through. Now there were 5 in one tree! Since that day several weeks ago, we’ve seen robins regularly in our yard and around the neighborhood. So, why are the robins here in the Sonoran Desert, where we never see them in other years? Aren’t they supposed to be in mountain forests and on front-yard lawns?

American Robins are common species, actually the most numerous species recorded this year in the national Great Backyard Bird Count. It’s likely the bird first recognized by many young children throughout the U.S. *Everyone* knows what a robin looks like! Except me, of course, who could not recognize it out of its place. Like when you see your bank teller jogging along the river park, out of context it takes a moment to recognize the familiar.

I pulled the bird books from the shelf. Just where are robins found in Arizona, if not normally in my back yard? The experts tell me robins are found in our mountains, and sometimes at the mouths of canyons in “moist” upper Sonoran Desert. The Tucson Bird Count (surveys throughout the Tucson basin each April 15 to May 15) has recorded robins only a few times, always along streams or other water. The Tucson Audubon Society’s Rare Bird Alert shows a number of robin sightings right now, robins in abundance at places like Agua Caliente Park, where there are ponds and grass.

Well, certainly robins have found our neighborhood “suitable” this year, when other years they do not. What is the difference this year? We all know what is different – RAIN!

Last week I was digging in my yard, making a home for a few new plants, and I realized why this year robins may find our neighborhood attractive. Our ground is wet deep down, and I found grubs amongst the rocks and dirt. Robins feed on invertebrates and berries, and we all have seen robins pulling earthworms out of the lawn. Whereas in past dry years a robin would have found it impossible to pry into our hard desert soil, this year a robin can dig around and find a fat grub for dinner.

We can be thankful not only for the rain, but for the changes it brings to the wildlife that visit our yards.

Welcome Mr. Robin. Hope you visit again.

Joan Scott

THE RECYCLE CONTAINER



Here is what you can and cannot put in your recycle container for curbside pickup.

YES

The following recyclables **ARE** accepted:

- Newspapers
 - Brown paper bags
 - Corrugated cardboard, corrugated boxes (remove any plastic materials and flatten to 3'x5' or less)
 - Paperboard and chip board (Cereal boxes, shoe boxes, etc. Remove any plastic liners)
 - Milk cartons and drink boxes
 - Molded fiberboard
 - Magazines and Catalogs
 - Phone Books
 - Printing and Writing Paper
 - Mail (Envelope windows and labels are OK. Remove all other non-paper items)
 - Other Paper (Pamphlets, brochures, file folders, card stock, etc.)
 - Aluminum cans
 - Steel/tin cans (Non-hazardous aerosol cans are OK. Please, no other steel)
 - Glass (food jars and bottles)
- able food trays)**
- **Type 2 HDPE** (Bottles for milk, water, juice, cosmetics, shampoo, dish and laundry detergents and household cleaners. Cereal box liners)
 - **Type 3 PVC** (Rigid packaging applications include blister packs. Flexible packaging uses include bags for bedding and medical, shrink wrap, deli and meat wrap and tamper-resistant)
 - **Type 4 LDPE** (Coatings for paper milk cartons and hot and cold beverage cups. Container lids. Toys, Squeezable bottles like honey and mustard)
 - **Type 5 PP** (Containers for yogurt, margarine, takeout meals, and deli foods. Medicine bottles. Bottle caps and closures. Bottles for catsup and syrup)
 - **Type 6 PS** (Food service items, such as cups, plates, bowls cutlery, hinged takeout containers, meat and poultry trays and rigid food containers, i.e. yogurt. Compact disc cases and aspirin bottles)
 - **Type 7 OTHER** (Three- and five-gallon reusable water bottles, some citrus juice and catsup bottles.)

Plastics - Types 1-7 are now accepted!

- **Type 1 PETE** (Bottles - Soda, water, juice, sports drinks, beer, mouthwash, catsup, salad dressing. Food jars for peanut butter, jelly, jam, pickles. Microwav-

Check the unacceptable list for certain plastics #1 through #7

NO

These items are **NOT** accepted:

- Plastic bags or plastic film packaging
- Tubes, pails or buckets
- Food Waste
- Napkins or paper towels
- Aluminum foil or pie plates
- Tissue or gift wrap
- Pet food bags
- Newspapers in plastic bags or tied with twine
- Yard trimmings or dirt
- Blankets, towels, pillows
- Kitchen utensils
- Appliances
- Furniture, draperies
- Toys or piñatas
- Styrofoam or packing peanuts
- Auto parts
- Electronics
- Light bulbs, window glass or ceramics
- Clothing or shoes
- Diapers
- Tarps or hoses
- Construction material (lumber, dry-wall, etc.)
- Books, photographic paper, tapes, CD's
- Medical supplies (syringes, lancets or other sharp objects)



Non-Acceptable Plastics #1—#7

- Automotive or chemical containers including motor oil and anti-freeze bottles
- Styrofoam containers
- #5, #6, #7 compostable bottles or cups (these will be marked "compostable")
- Pool liners, children's pools
- Electronics housing
- Film such as shrink wrap or Saran wrap
- Plastic bags
- Siding for homes
- Windows made from plastics

A Message from Sarah



Hello to my neighbors,

My name is Sarah and I live on Yvon with my husband and poodle Louis. What you most likely do not know is that two years ago I was diagnosed with breast cancer. In the past two years I have had countless tests, 18 weeks of chemotherapy, followed by a year of secondary infusion, 6 trips to the operating room and now just have 4 more years of oral medication. Now I am trying to let the scars heal and get back to my precancerous life.

What I learned is that I will never get back to my precancerous life. As I move on I find I am a little more aware and involved in the world of cancer. Because of the cancer I have registered to walk the Susan G Koman 3 Day Walk for the Cure. This event, a 60-mile walk, is done over 3 days and is one of the largest fundraisers for the Susan G. Koman fund.

Those of us who are walking not only walk 60 miles, but are also challenged to raise \$2,300.00 for breast cancer research.

I know that I am not the only one in our neighborhood that has been touched by breast cancer, and this is my way of saying breast cancer has to end. My goal is not the walk or the money, but that the next generation of women and men will never have to know the heart break, financial hardship and physical changes of breast cancer.

Please support me by going to the website

www.the3day.org

and make a donation to SARAH HONDRUM fund raising. I look forward to seeing you all as I continue my training walks in the early morning.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sarah Hondrum

PS: For all of the dog walkers that we see in the morning, treatment for human breast cancer does transfer to our dogs, yes dogs do get breast cancer.

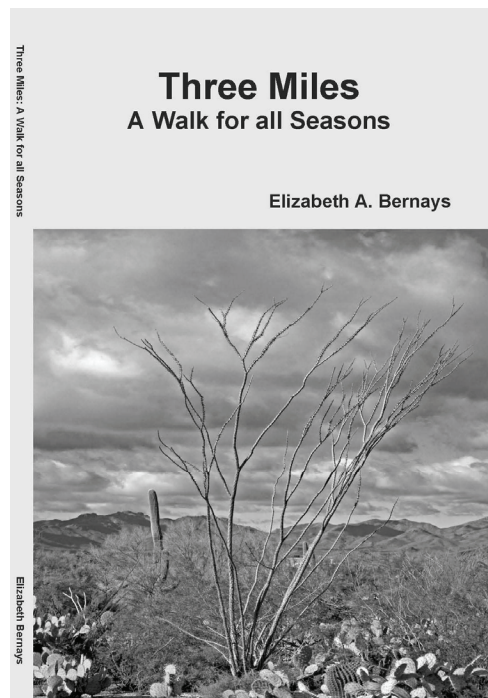
SJH

THREE MILES A New Book About Oracle Foothills

Many of you know that Liz Bernays, a former neighbor, now lives in Patagonia. She was a regular walker in the backstreets of our area, and as a biologist, a keen observer of the plants and animals found here. During 2008 she wrote about the scene through the year and now has a book encapsulating the atmosphere of changing seasons, plants and wildlife, and the environment she called home for 20 years. The book includes 93 color photographs, and all manner of observations, together with thoughts engendered by what she observed here.

The book sells for \$35 but neighbors interested may purchase the book from Liz for \$20, including postage and packing. If you are interested, send a check to her at PO Box 606, Patagonia, AZ 85624, or email her at ebernays@gmail.com for more information. Another book, about pictures in her Tucson home may be seen on her website:

www.elizabethbernays.com



OFNA Financial Report - Fiscal Year 2010

Balance Forward (11/17/09)	\$11633
Income	275
Expenses	765
Current Balance (2/8/10)	\$11143

Membership Report: There are currently **113** member households in OFNA.

Weekly Neighborhood Update

If you want to receive weekly neighborhood updates via e-mail, drop a note to:

caroledeangeli@earthlink.net

All residents are welcome to be on the list.

True Confessions of a Board President

Some time ago Carole DeAngeli asked me for feedback on the OFNA website (www.ofna.org). I responded a few days ago after opening and reading the website for the first time. Yikes, the first time and the web site has been up and running for several years! My exploration confirmed rumors that the website is attractive and informative, not surprising given the quality of this newsletter and the weekly e-letters that Carole writes and distributes. I am moved to confess because I suspect I am not the only one who has not ventured onto the website (www.ofna.org). Like a good new convert, I now think everyone should take the plunge.

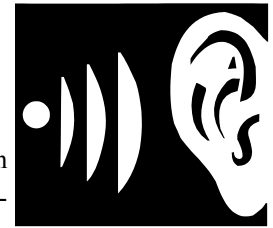
The page on "Neighborhood History" caught my eye. It begins with "A History of Oracle Foothills Estates" by neighbor and author, Bill Broyles. Broyles' piece gives a fascinating bio of neighborhood founder, Nicholas "Nick" William Genematas and his family. Some family members still live among us. Especially interesting for me and my husband was learning that, as a boy, Nick came from Greece to St. Louis where he worked his way up in the restaurant business. Derek and I lived for 40+ years in St. Louis and know well what a great place for restaurants it has always been. Also interesting is the bio of George Diamos, real estate developer of our neighborhood (and a lot else in Tucson) and a rundown of how our streets came to be named. Did you know about Pump Road? Broyles' article is followed by "Dream of Immigrant Genematas Realized" by Vicki Thompson, which first appeared March, 1979 in *The Arizona Territorial*. Read it and find out about the unique features of the original Genematas swimming pool and its link with Pope Leo III.

My interest in our neighborhood history was sparked at the February OFNA board meeting hosted by Leo Roop. Leo circulated an original sales brochure for Oracle Foothills Estates. You can find that on our website also. Learning that Leo moved into his home in the early 1970s sparked my curiosity about others who may have even longer tenures. If you know of such, let me know (cdredmore@aol.com; 319-1319). My plan is for the OFNA board to host a dedication of the plaque in the Triangle Park honoring our founder. It would be nice also to recognize some of you who have lived here the longest, and maybe the newest residents. As the old camp song goes about old and new friends/neighbors, "one is silver and the other gold." Watch for a "save the date" dedication announcement, hopefully for a late April Saturday morning.

At the February board meeting, it was great to have with us guest Neighborhood Watch presenters from nearby neighborhoods, as well as neighborhood non-board members. Hope to see more of you at the May 10th meeting at Marianne Richardson's on 560 E. Canyon View.

Cordially, Carolyn Redmore

ALARMS



Security alarm systems are becoming more common throughout the neighborhood as residents look for ways to protect themselves from being burglarized. When used properly, alarm systems can be of great value to homeowners. There are pitfalls, however, to having such a system in your home. Doors or windows left ajar can trigger an alarm. Motion detectors can be set off by pets or by draperies blowing from an open window, an air conditioner or furnace. Residents, themselves, can accidentally trigger the alarm if not properly set.

In an effort to reduce false alarms, Pima County law makes it a violation to have five (5) or more false alarms in one consecutive 365-day period. These are alarms in which a sheriff's deputy actually responded to the alarm. Pima County code states, ***"A person found responsible for a fifth false alarm in violation of Section 9.13.040 shall be punished by a minimum civil penalty of one hundred twenty-five dollars; a penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars may be imposed."*** The penalty escalates with each subsequent false alarm.

There are also noise ordinances which may apply as well if you have an outside, audible alarm which rings excessively. ***"9.30.040 - Impermissible sound levels. ". . . it shall be unlawful for any person to make or continue, or cause or permit to be made or continued, any excessive, unnecessary or offensive noise which disturbs the peace or quiet of any neighborhood or which causes discomfort or annoyance to any reasonable person of normal sensitivity residing in the area."***

It is the homeowner's responsibility to have a thorough understanding of the alarm settings on your system. This will enable protection while away and reduce the chances of a false alarm. If you have issues with your alarm system generating false alarms, or if you are not comfortable with the settings and function of your system, talk to your security system provider. They should be willing to spend time working with you in your home.

Our Lovely Neighborhood

Don't you just love our neighborhood, with its winding streets that flow with the land? Up and down and around, the way the land was meant to be! It's such a fine neighborhood, one wonders why new subdivisions are not built in this natural way, rather than the scrape and cut pattern of so many newer developments. Why do developers want all streets in straight little rectangles, and why must they scrape the ground flat?

I once posed this question to a person in Pima County Development Services. Her answer surprised me. She said our neighborhood probably could not be built today! Remember that our neighborhood was platted in the 1950's. This was before safety regulations became so restrictive, and our streets might not meet today's codes. Our streets are too curvy – both right and left and up and down – and too narrow to allow adequate site visualization for vehicles.

So, we are lucky to live in this old, beautiful, natural neighborhood. But, with that comes a responsibility for those of us who live here. We need to take care to drive more slowly here than in some areas. We have lots of walkers – who *doesn't* love to walk in this beautiful place! So, when you drive around that corner or cut up that hill, remember that your sight distance is poor and our streets are narrow. If you meet an oncoming car that is passing a walker, the car just might be a bit on your side of the road. In this neighborhood, you can't count on the lane ahead always being clear. Driving slowly give you time to see what may be coming and allows you time to stop more quickly if needed.

Thank you for your driving carefully. And, enjoy our lovely neighborhood!

Joan Scott



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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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OFNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Carolyn Redmore
5646 N. Genematas Dr.
319-1319
cdredmore@aol.com

deyoungd@comcast.net

George Grimm
431 E. Yvon Dr.
888-0621
george@gwgrimm.com

Phil Williams
5705 N. Lady Lane
797-0090
pwilliams@paramountbldgsol.com

Vice President

Karl Oxnam
5609 N. Maria Dr.
623-0147
lifeisgoodx2@yahoo.com

Sharon Laird
155 E. Yvon Dr.
887-0635
slaird228@msn.com

Camille Zachmeier
650 E. Agave Dr.
407-5770
camille@win3realty.com

Secretary /Treasurer

Jay DeAngeli
5459 N. Agave Dr.
690-1107
ejdeangeli@comcast.net

Scott Odom
5250 N. Maria Dr.
888-9187
odoscott@yahoo.com

Standing Committees and Task Assignments

Hospitality

Carole DeAngeli, 690-1107
caroledeangeli@earthlink.net

Membership

Jay DeAngeli

Newsletter Editor

Carole DeAngeli, 690-1107
caroledeangeli@earthlink.net

Neighborhood Watch

Carolyn Hoenig

Website Administrator

Carole DeAngeli

Board Members

Mark Andersen
345 E. Canyon View Dr.
887-2296
mark@markmarie.com

Marianne Richardson
560 E. Canyon View Dr.
742-6186
morich725@hotmail.com

Angelo Dellacona
5701 N. Genematas Dr.
888-1408
acdellacona@q.com

Leo Roop
5625 N. Genematas Dr.
887-7990
leoroop@comcast.net

Don DeYoung
575 E. Canyon View Dr.
888-7932

Tom Scarborough
610 E. Canyon View Dr.
887-6047
scar7227@q.com