

# WELLSPRING NEWS

## Summer 2013

Published by the Friends of Agua Caliente (FOAC), Inc.

Tucson, Arizona

### From the President:

Dear Friends,

Summer is definitely here as is evidenced by the 100 + degree temperatures and the devastating impact to the water level at Agua Caliente Park. As many of you know, the main pond has dropped



Photo by Susan Knoll

significantly. The stream is not currently flowing and, although Pima County is pumping well water to augment the main pond, it is insufficient to counteract the water loss. We attribute this to the continuing drought and dropping water table as well as the significant amount of palm trees and cattails that use the water. FOAC has expressed our concern to Pima County Natural Resources Parks & Recreation (NRPR) and asked if there are any plans to help mitigate the water loss. We have also offered our help in anyway possible. NRPR has yet to initiate a specific planning process but has had several work sessions to explore options and cost estimates. Some of the serious environmental issues the Park faces include: Stabilizing

the pond system by adjusting vegetation density or species composition; renovation of the main pond would need to include a liner to minimize water loss; and exploration of the use of reclaimed water. NRPR plans to host an informational meeting early August at the Park. Check the FOAC website for meeting date/time update and to view the NRPR letter. We'll keep you informed as the summer progresses.

As many of you are aware, the bridge to the island in the main pond was removed last year by Pima County NRPR because it had become a safety hazard. FOAC had ear-marked \$6,348.04 for the bridge. Although we intend to keep this project as a hopeful endeavor, we will move these funds into our "unrestricted" category next year.



Photo by Susan Knoll

We are also approaching our 20-year anniversary of *the Friends of Agua Caliente* (see article by Pete Filiatrault) and we would like to express our gratitude to everyone that has supported FOAC over the years!

Jim Knoll

### FOAC Support to NRPR

Your generous support to *the Friends of Agua Caliente* allows us to support Pima County Natural Resources Parks and Recreation (NRPR) in areas they cannot easily fund.

FOAC provided funds for two

new decorative sign bases that should be installed in the Park this summer.

We also purchased

four additional picnic tables and



will purchase an additional bench and parts to repair

another bench. We continue to provide funding for speakers supporting the Sunday Lecture series. Those lectures should begin again this Fall, so check our website for updates. FOAC will also purchase 36 new binoculars to replace some aging ones and 60 new compasses for the programs sponsored by NRPR Environmental Education. All this is supported with our fantastic group of members and donors. Thank You!!

Jim Knoll



## From the Bunkhouse: Friends of Agua Caliente

As we approach our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this coming November, I thought you might be interested in how *the Friends of Agua Caliente* started. As many of you know, I lived on the Agua Caliente Ranch for 9 years with my family. My family was worried what might happen to the Ranch after we sold it. I followed what was happening on the Ranch until Pima County purchased the property in 1984. I talked with the people who were running the Ranch during the mid to late 80's. In 1987 I believe, the County held public hearings about having a bond issue to fund the rehabilitation of the Ranch buildings. The bond issue passed, but no funds were ever used and no one could tell me or anyone else what happened to the funds.

In late September 1993, my wife and I were in San Jose visiting our daughter. We received a call from our daughter in Tucson that it was in the paper that the County was going to start demolishing all the buildings on the Ranch starting

October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1993. Naturally, I was very upset. We arrived back in Tucson on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and found that the County had delayed making a final decision on the demolition until the next Board Meeting. I immediately wrote a letter to all the Supervisors asking for a 90-day stay to allow time to form a private non-profit corporation to preserve the Ranch in its present condition.

About the same time, I received a call from Jorga Riggerbach who was writing a book "*Agua Caliente Chronicles*" on the history of the people who settled in the Tanque Verde Valley. As the Ranch was in the valley, Jorga wanted to interview me. We discussed the Ranch and what the County wanted to do. We decided to attend the next Board meeting and oppose the County's plans. When we got there, we met Sandy Sarah and Linda Wood, who both lived very near the Ranch and decided to join forces to fight the County plans. There were a few others there who also opposed the

County's plans.

We attended every board meeting where the Park was discussed and finally won over several Board members. Ed Moore, Chairman of the Board, had his Secretary type up a basic set of Incorporation papers which Jorga, Sandy, Linda, and I signed. We then filed them with the Corporation Commission and *the Friends of Agua Caliente* was born on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of November 1993. The rest is history. Our first set Officers were Peter Filiatrault – President, Sandy Sarah as vice President, Linda Wood as Secretary, and Jorga Riggerbach as Treasurer. Sandy and Pete still serve on the Board. This is how *the Friends of Agua Caliente* began.

Pete Filiatrault  
"The Ghost of the Agua Caliente Ranch"



Photo by Susan Knoll

### Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc. Board of Directors

Standing Committee Chairpersons annotated in ( ) below the name

Jim Knoll, <b>President</b> (Newsletter, Website, Membership)	jimknoll@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org
Maura Brackett, <b>Vice President</b> (Fundraising)	maurabackett@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org
Lynda Nash, <b>Secretary</b> (Fundraising)	lyndanash@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org
Peggy Denny, <b>Treasurer</b> (Website)	peggydenny@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org
Pete Filiatrault (Co-Founder)	petefiliatrault@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org
Chuck Ford (County Liaison)	chuckford@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org
Judy Gray	judygray@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org
Vaughn Johnson	vaughnjohnson@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org
Joyce Roughton	joyceroughton@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org
Sandy Sarah (Co-Founder)	sandysarah@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org
Linwood Smith	linwoodsmith@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.org
Richard Watts (Emeritus)	

### Volunteer your Time & Talents

Do you like to interact with other people and me, the Great Blue Heron? Would you like to learn more about nature and the environment? How about supporting the many gems we have right here in Tucson?

If you would like to volunteer at Agua Caliente Park or any of the other Pima County Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Parks, call (520) 615-7855.



Photo by Susan Knoll

## Nature Corner

### GREAT HORNED OWL



Photo by Susan Knoll

“The Tiger of the Air”. Also called the “Cat Owl”. This owl can take a full-grown cat or a fighting skunk. They have no sense of smell. They weigh between 3 and 5 Lbs., are between 18 and 25 inches in length with a wingspan between 49 and 62 inches. Tufts slant

outward. Their right ear opening is slightly higher than their left ear. This gives it maximum reception of sound from its prey.

Its eyes are large and bright yellow. Coloring is mottled brown plumage with white under its chin. There is terrible power in the beak and in the talons of this great owl. As soon as the talons pierce the flesh & skeleton of rabbits, Red Tail Hawk or Marsh Hawk, the powerful beak comes into play, ripping the wings in mid-air.

Nesting is normally in January & February. Sometimes the eggs freeze and they must start all over again.

Some Indians believe the Great Horned Owl escorts our spirit to the great beyond. Clearly, this owl commands the air!!

Judy Gray  
Naturalist  
FOAC Board Member



Photo by Susan Knoll

### Harris's Hawk Nest at Agua Caliente Park.

Two chicks resting while Mom distracts the photographer! The Harris's Hawk usually hunts in pairs or trios. Their favorite food is birds and small mammals.

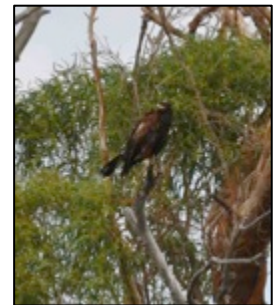


Photo by Susan Knoll

## Membership in the Friends of Agua Caliente

### Join Friends of Agua Caliente

We are approaching the end of another membership year and once again, I want to thank all our loyal supporters of *the Friends of Agua Caliente* and the Park! Our ability to support NRPR with funding and items they cannot normally accomplish within their budget cycle is tremendous and we owe it all to you. Our membership and donor year is October through the following September. As of July 1st, 2013 we have a total of 188 supporters (combination of member and donor). Your generosity has raised \$8,688, more than \$1,000 over last year's total.

It is not too late to join *FOAC* or renew your support. We would love to have you on our team. We also have several openings on the

Board of Directors if you would like to help shape the future of Agua Caliente Park.

*The Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc.* is a 501 (c) (3) Non-Profit Corporation, therefore all donations are tax deductible. Membership is based on the following schedule:

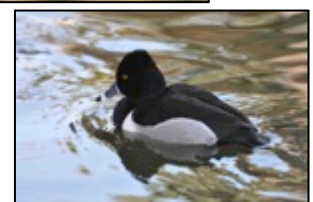
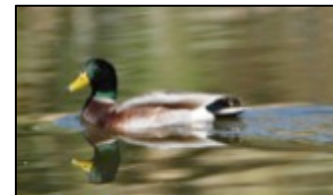
Individual	\$15
Family	\$25
Organization	\$50
Donation (any amount appreciated)	

Please send name, address, phone number, and email along with a check to: Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc., PO Box 32005, Tucson, AZ 85751-2005 or contact Jim Knoll at the email address listed on page 2. Additional membership information is also on the *FOAC* website listed at the bottom of

the newsletter.

Your dedication to the Park and *FOAC* is greatly appreciated. We hope you will choose to become involved in *the Friends of Agua Caliente* and Agua Caliente Park. If there is anything we can do, let us know. We can't do what we do without great members and donors!

*Jim Knoll*



Photos by Susan Knoll

## Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc.

P.O. Box 32005

Tucson, AZ 85751 - 2005

### Tucson Audubon at Agua Caliente Park

The Audubon Nature Shop inside the Ranch House at Agua Caliente Park offers books, optics, natural history items, children's books and games, birding essential items, and jewelry. Proceeds benefit Tucson Audubon programs. Nature Shop volunteers provide a wealth of information to visitors to the shop. For the summer, the shop is only open Thursday from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM. Join the weekly Pima County Wake Up with the Birds bird walk on Thursday mornings. Visit the shop afterwards and receive a 10% discount on all items. In October, the shop will return to its Thursday, Friday, and Saturday schedule.

Available in the shop is Tucson Audubon's updated edition of *Finding Birds in Southeast Arizona*, which brings together all the latest information on finding birds in

southeast Arizona. This is your best source of detailed information that will help in planning bird watching adventures throughout southeast Arizona.

In August, join the fun at the third annual Tucson Bird & Wildlife Festival and get to know our friendly local birding and conservation community and the dazzling array of watchable wildlife experiences accessible from Tucson! Proceeds from this event support Tucson Audubon's work to protect birds and the places they live and your participation illustrates value of our region's spectacular biodiversity. For more information on the festival visit [tucsonaudubon.org/festhome](http://tucsonaudubon.org/festhome).

We look forward to your visits to our shop. The shop is a great place for gifts and to visit for out of town visitors.

*Liz Harrison*  
Nature Shop Volunteer

### Facebook

FOAC is on Facebook. Follow us to stay abreast on late breaking and current events. To find FOAC, search "Friends of Agua Caliente Tucson" within Facebook, access us from our FOAC website, or scan the QR Code.



### Website

FOAC website can be accessed by scanning the QR code here. The web address is also located on the bottom of page 2 & 3 of the newsletter.



### Postcards

FOAC sells Agua Caliente Postcards at the Audubon Shop in the Ranch



House. We appreciate your support of the Friends of Agua Caliente.