

WELLSPRING NEWS



Summer 2024

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

Tucson, Arizona

From the President

Dear Friends of Agua Caliente Park,

Now that we are well into what I call crispy summer, I appreciate the coolness of our Park Oasis even more. What could be more relaxing than gazing at the ponds and listening to summer sounds: cicadas, birds, frogs and toads, children running around playing, and families and friends talking with each other in the shade the park offers.

It's been a busy spring for FOAC and the County. The County has been re-organizing their Environmental Departments and established a new Conservation Lands and Resources Department. Agua Caliente Park, being a Natural Resources Park, will be under this new division. This change should be seamless to most of us, but you'll probably notice some changes in signage.

Your memberships and donations support the County's incredible Environmental Education Team and we have taken on a couple of our own education related projects this past year. For the County, we helped fund the speaker series, many school programs at the park, Living River of Words, and teacher workshops. We purchased equipment for the Ranch House Gallery, folding chairs, and even a wildlife acoustic meter so we can contribute to community science projects and 'hear' which bats, birds, and even amphibians inhabit our park.

The FOAC Board has two committees to help support high school kids working on projects related to the environment: the SARSEF Committee and the Scholarship Committee. This was our second year participating in the Southern Arizona Regional Science and Engineering Fair, reviewing the work of students and awarding prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place as well as three Honorable Mentions. We are also delighted to award \$5,000 in scholarships to three High School Seniors as they continue their post High School Education. Seven students submitted applications and after carefully reviewing these applications, the scholarship committee met and awarded three scholarships (see more details on page 2). We have been so impressed by the vision and creativity of these young people – it reminds us of how amazing we can be and reassures us that our future will be in good hands.

Over the longer term, we are working with the County to assess the structural integrity and potential uses for the Bunkhouse and Caretaker's Cottage. Hopefully these structures can be open for general and special use over the next several years. The County and FOAC continue to think about what activities aligning with our designation as a Natural Resources Parks could be offered. We welcome your thoughts, too!

Pam Rossetter, FOAC President

FOAC Scholarship Awards

We are delighted to announce the recipients of the 2024 Friends of Agua Caliente Scholarship: Samantha Miranda from Sahuarita High School, Alyssa Thompson from Tanque Verde High School, and Christopher Duenas from Sabino High School.

This scholarship, totaling \$5,000, was aimed at supporting outstanding graduating high school seniors in their first year of higher education. Applicants were required to submit an essay detailing their background, future plans, and interest in Agua Caliente Park, its mission, and its goals. Additionally, applicants described how the scholarship would aid them on their educational journey. Each applicant also provided two letters of recommendation.

Congratulations to Samantha, Alyssa and Christopher. We are very pleased to support you as you begin this new chapter in your educational journey.

Thank you to our members for their generous contributions, without which, we would not be able to provide this exciting community support!

**Sylvia Olberding,
Scholarship Committee Chair**

Membership

Join Friends of Agua Caliente!

Thank you to all of our loyal supporters. If you have not yet renewed, please consider supporting FOAC. We will be mailing out our 2025 requests in October. Our ability to support the Park with funding and items they cannot normally purchase is tremendous and we owe it all to you. As of June 1, 2024, we have 330 supporters for the 2023-2024 year and through your generosity, we have raised \$31,508. This includes 267 renewals (64% renewal rate) and 63 new supporters. FOAC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and donations are tax deductible. Membership is \$15 for an Individual, \$25 for a Family, \$50 for Organizations, and Donations of any amount are appreciated. Please send name, address, and email along with a check to Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc., PO Box 32005, Tucson, AZ 85751-2005. You can also securely support FOAC with PayPal or Credit Card from our website.

Your dedication to the Park and FOAC is greatly appreciated.

Jim Knoll, Membership

FOAC Website: <https://friendsofaguacaliente.org>

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Desert Garden

Matching Funds Challenge

Last year we asked for your help to restore the area that suffered a lightning strike in September 2022. The fire destroyed a grove of palm trees, many mesquites, and the open grass area between the entrance road and the stream. FOAC agreed to help raise funding, and thanks to our community giving back to this special place, FOAC wrote a check for \$40,000 to help pay for the restoration.

Many native plants providing habitat for pollinators and other wildlife have been planted. A walkway and gathering space have also been added. Fewer mesquites survived the fire than we had hoped, so the county will be planting more trees soon. We look forward to watching this new garden grow and mature. Thank you!

Summer Skywatcher

As many of you know, the Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association (TAAA) has some great astronomy events at Agua Caliente Park. Although they take the summer off due to the Monsoon, there are still lots of exciting night sky wonders to see with or without a telescope.

If you can get to a dark sky without any city lights, look high overhead for the summer Milky Way arching across the sky. What you are seeing are the stars and dust of the next arm of our galaxy in towards the center. Our galaxy is shaped like a CD or DVD with several arms curving out of the center and around the galaxy. We live on one arm called the local or Orion Arm. The next arm towards the center is what you are seeing

arching across the sky. It will begin in the south emanating from the center of our galaxy and extend all the way toward the north to the W or M of Cassiopeia. To find the center, look toward the south for what we call the Tea Pot asterism. It will look like an old-fashioned Tea Pot low on the horizon toward the south. This asterism is part of the constellation Sagittarius. If you envision steam coming out of the spout, that is the center of our galaxy. To the right of the Tea Pot is another great constellation of Scorpius. It will look like

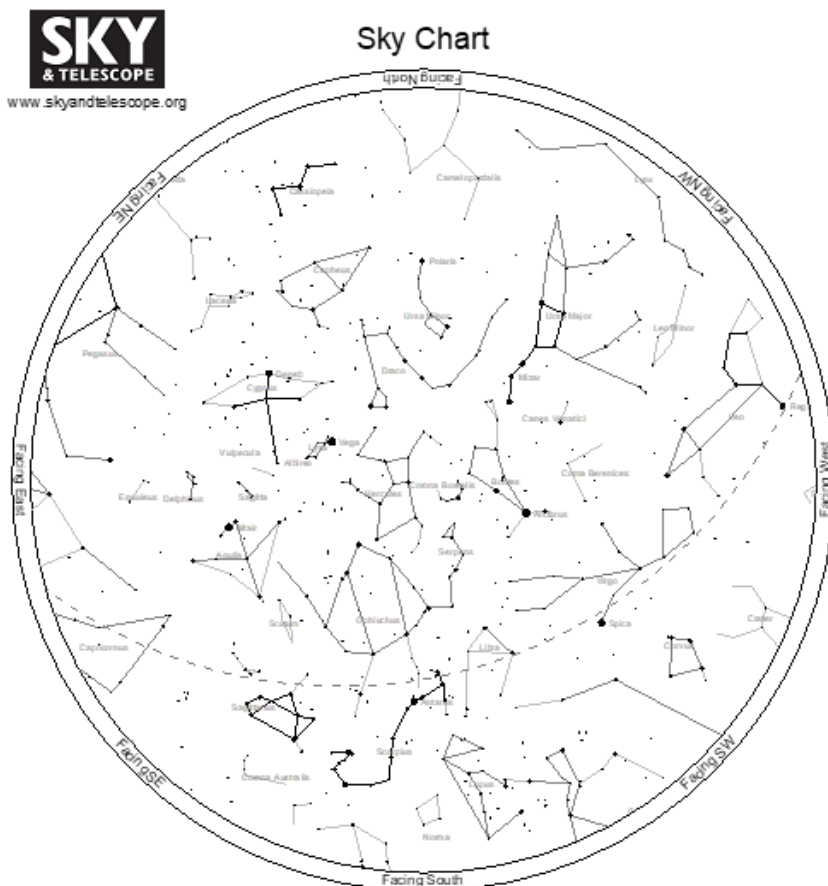
a scorpion. The reddish star Antares is called the heart of the scorpion. If you have a telescope or pair of binoculars, there are many wonderful objects to view as you look into the center of our galaxy in both these constellations. Just scan the sky or use an app or planisphere to find a particular object to observe. You can print out your own

chart at: <https://skyandtelescope.org/interactive-sky-chart/>.

TAAA also has a Library Telescope program. They have donated several small tabletop telescopes to Pima and Cochise County libraries. Patrons can check out these telescopes just like a book for three weeks. Here is the link to their Library Scope Webpage which

also shows the Library locations: <https://tucsonastronomy.org/community-services/librarianscope-program/>.

Star Parties at Agua Caliente Park will return this Fall. The events will be posted on the TAAA website calendar about 3 months in advance and some are subject to registration: <https://tucsonastronomy.org/events-calendar/>. Scheduled events (subject to change) include September 7 and November 8.



Jim Knoll

Friends of Agua Caliente, Inc.

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Tucson, AZ 85751-2005

Social Media

Looking for information on Agua Caliente Park events, the history of the park, or learning about what you might see at the park? Check out our Facebook page, our website and our YouTube channel:

<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofaguacaliente>

<https://friendsofaguacaliente.org/>

<https://www.youtube.com/@friendsofaguacaliente9557>

Each month on Facebook we share Pima County National Resources Parks and Recreation's online and in person nature events including those located at the park. There are historical tours and lectures as well! You'll also learn about the art exhibits showing in the Ranch House Gallery.

Each month we highlight flora and fauna at the park, share beautiful landscape photos and share improvements to the park made possible in part through donations from people like you (renovations, park benches, the main pond bridge, and drinking fountains to name a few).

You too can share your experiences at the park by sending your photos through Facebook Messenger or email to:

TinaBaker@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org

We will share your photos to social media with credit to the photographer.

Tina Baker
Social Media

Electronic Newsletter - Sending the newsletter electronically saves *FOAC* postage and you receive it in color. If you did not receive an electronic version and would like to be placed on the electronic distribution, please send an email to:

info@FriendsOfAguaCaliente.Org. We do not release our database to anyone.