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## 1. Editorial: John Vannucci IT'S ABOUT TIME !

On Monday August 1, 2016, the Town Council only had two General Agenda Items to review. It appeared that it would be a relatively short evening. Just like a sudden desert haboob, much of the audience was not directly aware of what was about to crash down upon the Stooze Council. A large group of Westside residents, led by former Councilman Terry Smith, finally had enough of being treated like a piñata and stood up one by one and challenged the Town and threatened law suits against the Town AND each councilman/woman personally.

The issue that brought so many angry citizens to Council, was the fact that these folks have run out of well- water and have been suffering and neglected, by this and previous councils, for the past seven plus years.

They had been promised for more than seven years, that the Town would supply them with town water. They have been lied to repeatedly by these councils throughout this time period. They had been promised water by Town Manager Usama Abujbarah, Mayor Francia, and Council members, and most importantly, by the developer of Cahava Springs, Mark Stapp.

Earlier this year, when Mr. Stapp was allowed, by this council, to create his own 'Revitalization District' to help finance his construction needs, he once again made a false promise that he would

pay for the completion of the water line to his subdivision and make available water to those residents by September 30, 2016; of course it was another lie.

Over the years, the Town has used the excuse that they can't force Mr. Stapp to do anything because this line is on his property... the usual Council cop out.

The attorneys for these citizens should sue the Town, and have the Town use condemnation and/or eminent domain to take control of this pipeline. (Usama used condemnation to get control of the old Cave Creek water company.... clearly a precedent.)

Secondly, Mr. Stapp should be forced to make good his agreed promise or we, the Town, should revoke all of Stapp's building agreements, as well as revoke the authorization for the Revitalization District.

There is one worrisome problem that the suing attorneys should know about. The Council is considering or is about to approve Loaning Stapp the money to complete the water line he promised to pay for. It is worrisome, because Mr. Stapp has proven himself to be untrustworthy. The money will disappear and the project will be lost, just like his prior subdivisions and ventures.

IT'S ABOUT TIME that Council people be directly responsible for their actions, or in this case, inaction. It's the first time I've seen the Council actually pay attention to this serious issue.



John Vannucci, The Fiscal Conservative Creeker

## 2. John Vannucci, "Kudos to the Roadhouse Bar and Grill election Forum"- Part Deux

On Tuesday July 26th the Roadhouse Restaurant hosted a Candidate Forum for the citizens of Cave Creek. We want to thank our hosts Mr. Jim O'Toole (Candidate for Council), Mark Bradshaw and the wonderful staff of this establishment.

We also want to thank the citizens who braved the very hot temperatures for three long hours. We thank them for their questions and we were very pleased with their interest and engagement on many of the town issues. The crowd, estimated at about 75 citizens filled the patio and many were standing.

This crowd bested the 'Sonoran Snooz' Forum of June 27th by 5 times the audience. The Sorchych-free candidates who chose not to attend 'HIS' forum were not afraid to answer citizens questions, we simply chose not to recognize or give credibility to the Puppet-master, Don Sorchych, he is irrelevant.



There were eleven (11) candidates on the stage, myself included. Many town issue questions were asked. Questions about the Towns Debt, its Budget(16.5 million), its Revenue challenges, Water issues, Special events(tourism), Open space and especially the upcoming vote on the 2017 General Plan. It was interesting to see the audiences reaction to the

upcoming General Plan vote. These were questions directly from the audience, NOT selected and 'vetted' by Don Sorchych.

When the 'Sorchych Slate Candidates' were asked whether or not they supported the 2017 General Plan, their responses were predictable, maintaining the party line, "The G.P. is the best ever, Our Debt is manageable, Our Budget is the best etc. etc. The candidates supporting the G.P. received silence from the audience. The Sorchych -Free candidates that opposed THIS G.P. received cheers and applause from the audience. This reaction was a strong indication that the audience understood that THIS General Plan is a plan to destroy our Desert Rural, western heritage.

Thanks again to Jim , Mark and staff, also thanks to Roberta, Ron McGee and Pauline for their efforts. August 30th is Primary Election Day, stay engaged and please vote.

**John Vannucci, The Fiscal Conservative Creeker and Candidate for Town Council**

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### **3. Water 'Rate Study Group'**

#### **CAVE CREEK TOWN MANAGER'S RATE STUDY GROUP 8/1/16**

During the May 16<sup>th</sup> 2016 Town Council meeting, the Water Advisory Committee (WAC) made a presentation outlining their future direction and priorities. One area of study outlined that was authorized by the Town Council was to develop a process to conduct a study of our utility rates. It is recognized that water and sewer rates are a very sensitive topic. This document is intended to spell out why this study is important, the process that will be employed, the benefits of this process and what we hope to achieve.

##### **WHY A RATE STUDY?**

Over the past three years the WAC, working with Town Staff, has come up with several initiatives that will make our utility more reliable, save money over the long term and put the town in a better position to manage this critical resource during a time a serious drought. While a few of the initiatives have been pursued and completed, many of the initiatives with the greatest impact have not been pursued due to budget cuts effecting staff and resources. These include but are not limited to:

1) A comprehensive Preventive Maintenance (PM) program. If done correctly, this program can save us tens of thousands of dollars a year by not needing to perform emergency repairs and paying for new equipment versus the lower cost routine maintenance.

2) Benchmarking our utilities operation and maintenance (O&M) and overhead costs versus like utilities to see if we are spending too much or too little. Are we deferring maintenance due to inadequate budget dollars potentially leading to major problems down the road?

3) Looking at technology and equipment that could save the utility tens of thousands of dollars a year or more in power costs.

4) Pursuing projects that can help the Town be prepared for the impact of the drought on our water supply.

The exercise of going thru a rate study will help us better understand where we are financially and operationally as a utility and help us develop a range of rate and policy options the Council can use to direct the utility into the future.

### **THE RATE STUDY PROCESS**

The Town Manager's Group will be comprised of three Town Staff members. They will be the Town Manager, Finance Manager and Utilities Manager. There will be four citizens on the committee. They are, Paul Eelkema, a retired education professional and member of the Cave Creek Board of Adjustment, Tony Geiger, WAC Chairman with over 30 years of experience working on construction projects with water and waste water utilities, Bob Morris, a retired Fortune 50 executive with vast experience in engineering and financial analysis and Dr. Kerry Smith, a professor of Economics and a Sustainability Scientist with expertise in Water Resource Management and Utility Regulation

The first order of business for the Group will be to develop the Request for Proposals (RFP) that will be advertised to hire a Rate Study Consultant. It is critical that significant work be done on the front end of the process. To ensure the best possible outcome, the Group will develop a rigorously detailed scope of work with specific deliverables required from the chosen Consultant. The WAC will submit a list of priorities to the Rate Study Group to add an extra layer of "eyes" on the process. This way we maximize our chances of getting a fair bid that meets our needs and eliminates the need for any potentially expensive extras after the contract is signed.

The Rate Study Group will meet at least two times prior to the issuance of the RFP. Meetings will be conducted during the day and will be open to the public. Once the RFP is complete, it will be reviewed by the WAC prior to issuance. The public will have opportunities to provide input along the way by attending Rate Study and WAC meetings as well as contacting Group members or Town Staff.

The Rate Study Group will remain in place throughout the entire process and will be present at all review meetings, presentations and interactions with the Rate Study Consultant. Additional Group meetings will be scheduled as required to inform the public of milestones reached and when new information is available.

The final product developed by the Rate Study Consultant will be reviewed by the WAC prior to presentation to the Council.

**BENEFITS OF THIS APPROACH** -Transparency – All Rate Study Group and WAC meetings will be open to the public. All stake holders will be able to see and understand where we are financially and operationally with our utilities and what options and corresponding tradeoffs we have available to us.

Better Control over the Rate Study Consultant – This process will make it much more likely we get the specific assistance we need in evaluating our utility and rates versus standard consultant boilerplate. We have a unique utility with unique challenges. The approach outlined will help ensure we avoid some of the less than satisfactory outcomes we have had with prior consultants.

De-Politicizes the Process – Utility rates are a very sensitive topic. We have attempted to create a process that allows us to generate the facts of our utilities' financial and operational situation. The Group will seek to develop information that the vast majority of stake holders can agree is accurate. This information will be used to compile a range of policy and rate options along with corresponding tradeoffs. The Council can then use this information to chart the future direction of our utilities.

## **WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE**

The process is designed to enable the Town to end up with a detailed understanding of where we stand with our utilities from an operational and financial stand point. We will have benchmarked our utility to better understand how we stack up against other utilities in key metrics including but not limited to O&M expenses, overhead and deferred maintenance.

Once we have a better understanding of where we are we will then be able to build a range of detailed policy and rate options that the Council can use to address current challenges and plan for the future of our Town's water supply and waste water operations.

**Tony Geiger, Chairman**

**Cave Creek Water Advisory Committee (amended to "Rate Study Group")**

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## **4. Follow up: First Meeting of Water 'Rate Study Group'. BEFORE WE HIRE THE EXPERT.**

**Sara Vannucci, Editor**

The meeting had a somewhat tense beginning. To spare persons/personalities, there was a clear separation of engineers versus bean counters. The result was a strong disagreement of the amount and TYPE of participation by engineers/citizens' participation versus accounting participation in the very early stage of quantifying and evaluation of the hands-on hardware-software that would guide the Town in setting standards on several fronts. Before the town hires an outside expert to evaluate our financial needs in purchasing, training and planning water needs, the goal was to utilize volunteer experts with this experience. The Town Manager did a fine job in mediating these different expectations, and an amicable meeting of the minds, more or less, was reached.

**The end game is to evaluate the services and materials needed at the most beneficial purchase price.** The town is blessed with many fine professionals who will save us money.

**Second, we must involve ALL of the citizens.** We must make this readable. We must make this timely, before preventable expenses are incurred. We have a modest amount of money to spend on staff, software, and broken equipment. More detail than we can put here will be made available to all citizens who care to download the reports and images.

**How can citizens see the information?** ALL interested citizens may attend the meetings, just as they are welcome at the WAC meetings, as advisors. The citizens may give input at either type of meetings, as well as

directing emails to Chairman Tony Geiger. Citizens who want to respond to the whole public may direct those to me, by email at [creekerlady@gmail.com](mailto:creekerlady@gmail.com).

Otherwise, look for a link on the Town Website under “**Finance**” (where budgets and financials are linked), which will have a **targeted link just to this project**. Reg Monachino (citizen-candidate and Kerry Smith, citizen-group member, both submitted sample documents and information as a ‘starter sample’ to begin shaping the discussion for the next meeting, based on their previous similar work projects.

**The next WAC meeting is Wednesday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 PM**

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**5. Notice of Public Hearing for Thursday August 18<sup>th</sup>, at 7 PM, in Town Hall**, for rezoning of 3.72 acres from Desert Rural to MR, Multi-Family Residential. Concerns NE Corner of East Cave Creek Road and North Galloway Drive. Call Ian Cordwell or Luke Kautzman for copies or information.

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**6. Origin of the \$400 per acre value of the “open land” annexation parcels**

**Editor’s Background Note: This is in conclusion of multiple discussions over recent years with resident Stan Toal, appraiser, concerning the origin of the \$400 per acre value of the “open land” annexation parcels. It had been alleged by some sources to have been appraised at that time by Stan Toal. The following is the final info available to us, and should clear the air on the matter. Sara Vannucci, Editor**

**From: Stanley Toal <[tolstn@gmail.com](mailto:tolstn@gmail.com)>**

**Date: Fri, Jul 29, 2016 at 1:59 PM**

**Subject: Cave Creek Conservation Lands**

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“I hope this e-mail finds you well. I read your statement in John’s blog *{Desert Foothills Chronicle}* and would like to respectfully correct you. I only provided Usama names of competent appraisers to value the State Trust land designated for conservation. This is a unique area in appraisal. ASLD and I in particular did not provide nor discuss the instructions to be given to the Town’s appraiser i.e., grazing. In fact, this would not be the Department’s instructions nor would it be my recommendation to the Commissioner. Usama and I did discuss early on (pre-annexation) the valuation methodology for appraising State Trust land to be acquired at auction for conservation purposes and Department’s compliance with the Enabling Act.

If you want to, you can go to the ASLD records and request to view the appraisals of conservation lands sold to Phoenix, Scottsdale, Flagstaff, and Tucson. The two most recent and of interest to the Town are Scottsdale and Flagstaff. You will find that the instructions to the appraisers and the premise of the Highest and Best Use are not consistent with Usama’s instructions to the Town’s appraiser. I never knew why Usama wanted an appraisal of the land in the first place as it would be irrelevant to the Land Department. I would never undermine my duty as the Chief Appraiser and

would have recused myself, as I did with the valuation of the lands sold to the Town for its wastewater treatment plant.

Further, I had nothing to personally gain from the conservation of State Trust lands. My property is burdened by the Desert Foothills Land Trust (DFLT) easement and looks across to developed parcels. There is a view though of Maricopa County's park preserve. The State Trust lands are not near my property. I do, however, support preservation efforts by DFLT and the Town. Finally, I wish the Town would focus on its ability to fix the roads and comply with its flood management obligations as the Town has missed its opportunity to acquire the land at a more reasonable price.

I have not been pleased with the Town talk and no action and am glad that the Town Engineer department has a change in staff. I will provide you with any details you would like except I cannot provide you my opinion of the price as that would be in violation of my license as well as my current position at HUD. I am also limited in time due to work and caregiving. Best; Stan"



## Wild At Heart Wish List 2016



*Wild At Heart is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation and preservation of Arizona's native wildlife through the rescue and rehabilitation of injured and orphaned birds of prey, relocation of displaced raptors, public education and habitat enhancement programs.*

**Dear Neighbors, please make some time for the injured birds in our neighborhoods. Can you help?**

**The Chronicle continues to offer a free 3 time advertisement for any contribution of cash, materials, or volunteering confirmed by Sam Fox at the office. Or, call us at the Chronicle to have something picked up. 480-231-3549**

**Thank you for asking about volunteer opportunities with Wild At Heart. \*New volunteers are always welcome here. Included below is some information about volunteering at Wild At Heart (WAH). If you have any questions or want to set up your initial visit, please fill out the**



application and email to [info@wildatheartowls.org](mailto:info@wildatheartowls.org). **PLEASE schedule** a time to come out as we cannot accommodate walk-in appointments.

**Time commitment:** We understand that life can be very hectic so here at WAH we are very flexible with volunteer time. We do ask that volunteers pick a schedule they can commit to. **All volunteer shifts are a 2- 4 hour minimum.** We ask that our volunteers let us know if they will be unable to come on their scheduled day.

**Training:** There is no extensive training period here at WAH. We can get you started right away and train on-the-job.

Cash donations are always needed to help with food and medical supplies. Any assistance you can offer is greatly appreciated! Remember, all donations are tax deductible.

Please call Bob at 602-989-1955 or 480-595-5047. Thank you for helping to preserve Arizona's wildlife.  
Thank You!!! Sam & Bob Fox - Wild At Heart

[www.wildatheartowls.org](http://www.wildatheartowls.org)

Wildlife Rehabilitation - Educational Programs - Habitat Enhancement - (480) 595-5047  
31840 N. 45th Street, Cave Creek, Arizona 85331 - Non-profit - Tax I.D. # EIN 86-0770883

Phone: 480-231-3549 Email me if you want to ask about volunteer service. Sara V.

**GOLD  
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THRIFT SHOP**

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& Gold Mine Too!

6502 E. Cave Creek Road, Cave Creek

Stop by to shop or donate

Wednesday - Saturday

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Jeff Hill is a real estate agent with HomeSmart, the largest Real Estate brokerage in Arizona. Jeff is also one of HomeSmart's top producing agents.



Jeff Hill, Realtor®

Direct: 602.694.4333  
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Fax: 602.733.5671  
[jeff@jeffdhill.com](mailto:jeff@jeffdhill.com)  
[www.jeffdhill.com](http://www.jeffdhill.com)

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GROUP



A Phoenix native that knows the Valley well, you can count on Jeff to treat you with professionalism whether you're buying or selling. Jeff loves the outdoors and likes to spend time with his bride



of 33 years, Mimi, traveling, hiking and fly-fishing. They have lived in the quiet bedroom community of Cave Creek for the last 22 years.

Listening to clients' needs is essential for Jeff, and you can be assured you will feel comfortable and at ease when discussing your real estate goals with him.

If you're thinking of selling, you owe it to yourself to get Jeff's professional advise on how to sell your home for the highest price the market will allow.

If you want an agent who's dedicated to bringing excellence to your next real estate transaction, call Jeff Hill at 602-694-4333. Shop Local!

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**Herbert Hitchon, Carefree - Summer Storm**



**Karina's House Cleaning  
House & Apartments & Moving**

**KARINA ALMANZA  
602-716-1483**

## **About the Desert Foothills Chronicle & Chronicle Arts *expanded* Journal.**

We have resumed weekly issues, generally issued midweek, after Cave Creek Council meetings, usually scheduled for Mondays. We have a substantially increased readership, adding businesses and other nonprofits who are readers now. Advertisers are welcome.

The Chronicle welcomes photographs and information intended for sharing on our website and newsletters. By submitting these images, the artist and end reader agree that this use is a limited license for personal enjoyment and social sharing, but no commercial re-use of the image/material is intended or permitted without the written permission of the original artist. The Chronicle disclaims any ownership rights in any submission.

Looking for old issues of the Chronicle? We are current with storage of previous Newsletters. Go to [www.desertfoothillschronicle.com](http://www.desertfoothillschronicle.com). You will find many of the research and longer news information, such as water stories and documents, stored in "documents" or under a researcher/writer's name. We will be combining art and news in similar articles until late summer when the art world is more active. Artist issues are listed separately, and will continue to be separate on alternate weeks.

**The Desert Foothills Chronicle, Inc, is an AZ nonprofit organization  
[www.DesertFoothillsChronicle.org](http://www.DesertFoothillsChronicle.org) Letters to the Editor are welcome-  
creekerlady@gmail.com**

**Visit Other News Sites:**

**[www.carefreetruth.com](http://www.carefreetruth.com) for CarefreeTown info & Events**

**Janelle Smith-Haff - [www.cavecreektownhallblog.com](http://www.cavecreektownhallblog.com); [janelle@cavecreektownhallblog.com](mailto:janelle@cavecreektownhallblog.com)**

**[www.Sonorantruth.org](http://www.Sonorantruth.org)**