

CASA MIA NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER

www.neighborhoodlink.com/mesa/

January 2007

Edited by Michelle Ortiz
mitchy1441@aol.com - 480-227-1832
Published & Printed by Don Brown
Don_R_Brown@yahoo.com - 602-432-4810



Hello Friends and Neighbors of Casa Mia, Happy New Year to you all. The end of last year was filled with many positive changes in our neighborhood. In October we reinstituted our Neighborhood Committee, with great interest. At each meeting, we have met with city employees, officials and other helpers to our cause. We have all begun to grow as a community, rather than just individuals living in the same space. We've all begun to know each other and find that others around us care. Our neighborhood is looking better with each passing month and that's our ultimate goal. This is thanks to all of you who care about our subdivision.

This year, we will work even harder to make our visions a reality. We have so many residents who are ready to volunteer and be active in our committee. Their commitment to making Casa Mia a neighborhood to envy will make us all proud to come home as we turn off of E Baseline Rd. For those of you who have not yet gotten involved for various reasons, I ask you to come to a meeting. What we are trying to do benefits all who live here by creating a safer, nicer and more valuable place to live. This value is past on to you, the homeowner, when you appraise your home and see the equity that has been created as a result of the continued improvements in our neighborhood. It doesn't take much to get involved. Even if you cannot attend, by simply taking care of the exterior of your home you are helping your neighbors and yourself. Tidying your front lawn, adding a small flower bed, painting worn out window sills are all small, inexpensive ways to make your home look good and they all add value. Offer to help an elderly neighbor mow their lawn or clean out their carport. Form a small block watch on your street to deter crime. Small gestures bring large returns and we will become a better subdivision, one gesture at a time.

PLANT DONATIONS As you are cleaning your front and back yards, if anyone has runners or saplings on your drought tolerant plants, I am still looking for donations for our curbsides. Sadly, no one else has volunteered to do one and the task of purchasing all of the shrubs will be too large for me to take over on my own.

MONEY DONATIONS Our subdivision has 350 homes and change is not an expensive thing, but neither is it free from any expense. Just think, if each home in the subdivision donated just \$5.00 each month! It's such a small amount to sacrifice. It's one large coffee at Starbucks. How many things can we do with \$1,750. per month? What if you gave just a dollar? We could buy 17 shrubs and trees to line three streets with. We could purchase half a street's worth of gravel or one street's worth of landscape fabric. We could do anything that we put our minds, and money to.

This week I met with leaders from two other neighborhood committees in Mesa, whose members donate various amounts per meeting. They have told me that most who attend understand and appreciate the results that come from their donations. They use the funds for everything from refreshments at the meetings, to printing their letters, to block parties and landscaping their neighborhoods. They do not have home owners associations, just volunteers in a committee like ours. One of the neighborhoods has a much

smaller committee, as they only have 119 homes in their subdivision, yet they get a lot done through the kindness and generosity of their neighbors. I hope that we can soon work together in this way. I will have a donation sheet, once again, at the next meeting.

YARD SALES According to City Code Compliance, there is a limit of three yard sales that one home can have per year. This is a state regulation for operating a business (for tax purposes). This issue was brought up at our last meeting in December. A few residents complained that some houses seem to have a yard sale every weekend. The city office states that this is not a legal practice. The larger problem is that those who have the sales post signs on boxes or other unconventional materials and they begin to collect at the corner. The same is happening with the "for sale" signs. Selling items would be far more effective in the classifieds, as the information is too hard to read on a sign on the corner. These signs are adding to the negative stigma that we are trying to avoid. Caring residents have gone out to the corner to clean up after those who use it, removing tape from the poles and trash left behind. Perhaps when we'd like to have a sale, we can all go to WalMart and purchase the same type of sign to post on the corner. If we all do this, it might help improve the thoughts of passersby to our neighborhood. If you notice, when passing by a newer subdivision, you don't see this clutter of signs at their entrance. Let's try to care more about our appearance and perhaps more people will want to come into our neighborhood to purchase what you are trying to sell. Makes sense, huh?

SUB-COMMITTEES Are you a great baker or artsy-crafty? Would you like to organize a party, bake sale or fundraiser, a welcoming committee? Do you have other ideas for a committee or want to form a block watch on your street? Come to the meeting with your ideas and/or call or email me at the contact info. below. We are looking to form sub-committees to handle different tasks for our neighborhood. Also, if you are willing to help pass out flyers, please DEFINITELY let me know. Any help would be so appreciated. And, once again, thank you to the volunteer committee who worked on E Baseline. It still looks pretty good! And since we're talking about E Baseline....

PAINTING OF THE E BASELINE PERIMETER FENCE

We are looking to paint the fence that borders our subdivision on E Baseline Rd. I want everyone to be made aware of this plan, as it will mean a lot to our subdivision. Casa Mia is in need of a serious face-lift. This is the first important step in creating a beautiful neighborhood. As with anything we do here, your voice matters. If any homeowner who lives on E Jacob, bordering that back wall, has opposition to the painting of our perimeter fence, please contact Don or myself. The fence will be painted free of charge, by committee volunteers with paint provided by the City Paint Reuse Program. It will be done in a neutral tan color and we will retain paint for any graffiti that might follow. This will be a win, win for these homeowners, and the entire neighborhood. This will help us achieve the look of a beautiful, normal subdivision. The next step, once this is done, will be our neighborhood signs.

FRONT CURBS AND CURBSIDES I received a letter asking about using curbs for walkways, and school bus

stops. I addressed this concern to Paul Medlock of Code Compliance. The person inquiring is not able to attend our meetings so she asked that I address this in the newsletter. Perhaps some do not know, but the area at the front curb and sides of the homes that face the street are City of Mesa rights of way. This area is maintained by the homeowner, but belongs to the city. Because it is a direct extension of your property, you can beautify this area; clean it, plant in it if you wish. Yet if the city needed it, they could do what they wished in that area. The definitive lines where private and public property end varies between the county and city map, but Paul says that most homes have established this area correctly and only a few homes have extended beyond that area. What this also means, is that people can walk on this area and you cannot prevent this, so long as they are not destroying your property. It is not a "walkway" because there is no sidewalk, but an easement has been created by the simple repeated use of those who do not wish to walk in the street. Safety is more important than trampling a few flowers in front of my fence. As for the bus stops, they have the right to stop on any city street.

This resident did have a great idea to institute covered waiting areas for the kids to wait and considering how sunny it can get, we should put our heads together on this one.

There was also a concern about the utility easement between the homes on Javelina and Jacob, on the east side of S 80th Place. It extends out about four homes' length and is dirt with growing weeds and a utility box at the end. I must say that I only recently discovered this alleyway and was very disturbed by it. I have taken steps to resolve this issue and will have more answers at the meeting. Thank you, Marcella, for making us aware of this area.

COUNCILMAN SCOTT SOMERS TO ATTEND This month's meeting will be our best yet. I have spoken to Scott Somers, our District 6 Councilman. He is a great guy who wants to talk to all of us about what we want to do in our neighborhood. This will be a great forum to discuss the problems that we've faced in the past, and what we might gain from the city. He will be bringing some folks from Neighborhood Services to address our questions and highlight key programs available to us. He will also be explaining a new program being instituted by the City of Mesa called the "Building Strong Neighborhoods" Initiative. The goal of this program is to conduct one neighborhood project in each district during the next year, and increase that to two per year thereafter. He will be looking to see if our list of needs can fit into a District 6 project. Come meet your councilman, he works for all of us.

EXPERIMENTAL NEW MEETING DAY I have been requested to try a new day for our meeting. This request came from a resident who was told by several other residents that the day that we meet is not good for them, because of work. So, per request, our next meeting will be held on Saturday evening. I hope that all who normally attend will be able to make this new venue and that those who previously could not, find this day and time better for them.

Light in the Desert Church
7930 E Baseline Rd
Saturday, 2-3-2007, 6:30 PM
Refreshments will be served.

