

## NEWSLETTER COLUMN for MAY 2011

Welcome to the merrye olde month of May or so the bards of old styled it. However you choose to think of May, it's a month bursting at the seams with things to do and things about which to ponder.

Let's start with an annual event that takes place at the end of May – Memorial Day. Seen by many as “The Start of Summer” (a.k.a. “It's Time For Vacations!”), Memorial Day is a day set aside for all of us to remember those who have fought for this country and the democracy that we all prize as the best system of government in the world. “The tree of Liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.” (Thomas Jefferson, 1787) Virtually every year of America's 235 years of history has seen the men and women of this county paying the ultimate price of freedom.

Come to Mountain Shadows Cemetery by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup>: your friends and neighbors will be gathered for a memorial service honoring those who have fallen in the service of our country. A fly-over by the Arizona Antique Aircraft Association, led by the indomitable Terry Emig at the appointed hour of 9 o'clock will start the program. I hope to see you there.

Before I share more about things to do, I'd like to talk a bit about the County's FY 2011-12 budget processes. As you may remember, my fellow Supervisors joined me in pledging to keep the property tax rate at \$3.99 in January as we started to craft the budget. They also joined me in pledging to approve no new programs or services unless they were budget-neutral.

When we froze the tax rate, we were immediately faced with a \$5M structural deficit because (on average) assessed values for properties in Pinal County fell by some 16%. Following our direction, County Manager Behring worked with staff and the county's constitutional officers to develop budget reductions – and during the last several months, we have trimmed various departments, programs, and services to arrive at a balanced, reduced budget.

But the journey has not been easy, as you might imagine. In addition to dealing with our structural deficit, we had to accommodate an additional \$6.2M in program and cost shifts from the State of Arizona. Included in that total budgetary burden for Pinal County taxpayers, is a demand for a \$2.6M check from our General Fund to the State's General Fund. I guess they think they need more than you do. We will be adopting our tentative budget next month with the final budget adoption in late June.

Meanwhile back at your calendar, here is a selection of worthwhile events to consider. There's a lot going on during the evening of May 5: the Pinal County law enforcement will be gathered together in Florence to remember those officers of the law (federal, state, county, local, and tribal) who died as they were serving and protecting Pinal County residents. For more information, go to <http://pinalcountyz.gov>.

That same evening, the graduates of the Hispanic Leadership Institute invite everyone to a Cinco de Mayo Art Celebration at the Vista Grande Library (1556 N. Arizola Road) in Casa Grande. For more information, call Jeannie Mason at 520.421.8321.

Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> is the date for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual F.O.R. Maricopa Food Bank golf Tournament. Held at the Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Course (48456 W. Highway 238, Maricopa), the proceeds benefit the Maricopa Food Bank and prizes include a new car, trip to Hawaii, and a large flat screen television. You can register online at <http://FORmaricopa.org>.

Kudos to Casa Grande Councilman Dick Powell who was honored by the Salvation Army in late April for his years of quiet commitment and support of that fine organization and causes that aid those less fortunate. Congratulations, Mr. Powell – it's an honor well deserved!

On Friday May 13<sup>th</sup>, there's a fun event – a Casa Grande Cooler Concert! – in front of a great hangar (3152 Lear Avenue) with all the proceeds going to benefit the CAC Nursing Program and the Casa Grande Food Bank. Suits and ties are forbidden so bring your cooler full of snacks and beverages (don't forget a lawn chair or two), and come ready to tap your toes to the tropical music of Mark Mulligan and Kelly McGuire. Tickets are \$25 a head: for more information email [casagrandecoolerconcert@gmail.com](mailto:casagrandecoolerconcert@gmail.com).

In closing, I'd like to congratulate ALL of the graduates of the Class of 2011: high school, CAC, college, and university graduates wherever you may be. I know that the path to learning thus far has been strenuous, arduous, and fraught with challenge – but as you strive to acquire the tools you'll need to compete in today's (and tomorrow's) global economy, I urge to stay the course. And as you complete the formal steps in your academic achievement, I hope that you'll seriously consider returning to or staying in Pinal County and helping in our efforts to make sure that **this** is the best county in the world to live, work, and raise a family.

Stay engaged, stay interested. Good things are happening in Pinal County!

*David Snider*, District 3  
Pinal County Board of Supervisors