

PINAL COUNTY LIFESTYLE – DECEMBER 2009

Here we are – more or less all together at the end of another year. As always there's lots on which to ponder: Arizona's economy and the state budget (such as it is), the national/global economy, health care reform, unemployment and the prospects for attracting and/or creating jobs here in Pinal County, our environment (global warming, air quality and PM₁₀ dust, water resources), will the Suns and Cardinals make the playoffs, who will be in which office after next year's elections, and so on.

You'll notice that I didn't include anything about the number of shopping days left 'til Christmas. Now I know that this matters a great deal to our local merchants. However, inasmuch as the overall economic picture continues to stagger and recovery is often a state of mind, I'm not sure how robust the commercial side of this holiday season is going to be. That's not to say that I won't personally be out there doing what I can to shop locally and share some holiday cheer. But my giving will be more thoughtful, utilitarian, and include donations to some of our local organizations that help those less fortunate.

This brings me to a plea on behalf of those selfless groups of citizen volunteers who labor all year long to give a hand up to the growing number of folks who haven't weathered this economic crisis. Our area food banks are being deluged by demands for food boxes and they are running out of non-perishable food items. They are busier than ever and in some instances the folks that were donors and volunteers in previous years are now standing in those lines for assistance. The hot meal program that the Seeds of Hope operates is a busier-than-ever place. The medical clinic that Dr. Doug Parkin and his wife Alice have opened in Stanfield just a month or so ago is already seeing lots and lots of patients for reasons that have nothing to do with either the seasonal or H1N1 flu.

Casa Grande's VFW Post 1677 organized a food drive in late October that netted just under a half a ton of food items for the St. Vincent de Paul store – but again, that was over a month ago and the supplies are already gone. Various other organizations, including of course the venerable Salvation Army, are mobilized to solicit contributions in aid of these challenged populations. The bottom line: the need is great (perhaps greater now than in recent memory) and until the economy recovers, we are our brothers and sisters keepers. Please join me in enlarging the circle of giving for the holidays to include our Pinal village and community's folks in need because who knows? We could be the ones in need next week, next month, or next year.

As long as I'm waxing philosophical this month, I'd like to share an experience I recently had. ASU's Morrison Institute occasionally organizes an event wherein a small number of people are invited to hear and participate in an intimate and off-the-record discussion with policy makers from all venues and levels. This last session was an incredible two hour interaction with former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Listening to her talk about her time on the Supreme Court and the process that led to that nomination and confirmation as well as various other issues of today made me so very proud of the fact that we, her fellow residents of Arizona, share a state with her. One issue that's clearly a passion for Justice O'Connor is the need to restore civil discourse to today's society. Her donation of the house that she and husband John built to the people of Arizona and the determination that it serve (again) as a place for dialog, meaningful interchanges of

opinions and points of view, and exploration of ways to reach accord is emblematic of this marvelous intellect that grew up on a ranch in rural Arizona. I will always cherish that magical time I had to listen and talk with her.

And so in closing, may you all enjoy the blessings of the season. May you and yours have cause to celebrate and rededicate yourselves to doing good deeds and prospering in the New Year.

David Snider

Supervisor, Pinal County District 3