

The Blenman Elm Neighborhood Association Newsletter

Blenman Elm Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 42092, Tucson, Arizona 85733

Spring 2016

Blenman Elm Neighborhood Home & Garden Tour 2016



photo credit – Vince Vasquez

Sunday April 10, 2016

12:30-5:00 PM

Tickets \$10 at GSP 2331 E. Adams St.

Buy your tickets starting at 12:15 PM on Sunday April 10 at **Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 2331 E. Adams St.** for the Blenman Elm Home & Garden Tour.

The ticket price includes a \$1 donation to Ben's Bells, whose mission is to "inspire, educate, and motivate people to realize the impact of intentional kindness." Learn more:

<https://bensbells.org>.

The tour will feature seven to eight historic homes, one business recently renovated and the original SS Peter & Paul Catholic Church (now part of the school). We will also offer music at a couple of locations.

Food trucks will be present from 12pm to 3pm.

The first 20 guests who request will get a free tree courtesy of TEP. Trees for Tucson is now part of TEP's Trees for You.

This is our big biennial fundraiser. Bring your friends and encourage all to come for an afternoon celebrating our neighborhood.

Blenman Elm Yahoo Group Listserv

Are you interested in joining the Blenman Elm Yahoo Group? Send an e-mail to Joe Spitale at jnspitale@yahoo.com. You will be sent an e-mail invitation to join the group. When posting messages, remember that messages go to all group members. Rants and uncivil messages are not acceptable. Please refrain from political commentary.

Backyard Chickens Legalized!

Residents in urban areas of Tucson have kept chickens in their backyards for many years. The City has allowed this, as long as there is a 50' setback from the coop to the property line. That setback requirement made most urban chickens illegal, and if someone complained to the City, the chickens were removed. This occurred very infrequently. Most people have been free to keep their animals, although people have lost their animals as a result of conflicts with neighbors.

Last December the City Council approved a revision to the Land Use Code that changed the requirements and legalized most backyard chickens, while setting standards to ensure that neighbors' rights are protected. The new rules allow 2 chickens for every 1000 square feet of property. There are also limits on ducks, turkeys and miniature goats. Larger farm animals are not permitted in residential zones.

Small animal shelters—no larger than 6 ft high and 16 sq ft—are now permitted on the property line as long as they are 20 ft from a neighbor's house. Larger shelters must be set back 2/3 of the height of the structure. Since backyard structures are limited to 12 ft, the largest setback required is 8 ft, while keeping 20 ft from a neighbor's house.

All residents who keep chickens or other small farm animals continue to be required to observe the neighborhood preservation ordinances regarding noise, odor, sanitation, etc. as well as the animal protection ordinances, which outline humane treatment.

The new rules also now permit you to sell eggs or fruit and vegetables grown at home to your neighbors.

If you have any questions about urban agriculture rules, please contact BENA resident Merrill Eisenberg. 327-5390.

Blenman Elm Tiles for your house

The teal blue, pink and white tiles celebrating both the Blenman Elm Historic District and the Blenman Elm Walking Friendly Neighborhood are now scattered throughout the neighborhood. The tiles are designed by BENA Honorary Board Member, State Senator Steve Farley. We take orders only once a year. If you would like to have a tile for your property, place your order by June 15. Call 795-7310 or email benapresident@gmail.com



Sample historic tile



Sample non-historic tile

The tiles cost \$60 and are customized to your home's address and location.

The Blenman Elm Coyote Family

One of the reasons Linda and I like living in Blenman Elm is that although it is an urban area—it does provide many chances to see Arizona's wildlife. In the last 28 years we have seen 123 species of birds, various coyotes, javelina, rock squirrels, cottontails, and many lizards in our yard and certainly missed a few of our wild visitors. We've watched Cooper's Hawks and Great Horned Owls raise their young in various pine trees, but last summer and fall we had our most amazing wildlife adventure in B E—over a period of 6 months we watched a pair of coyotes raise a large family of pups in the center of Tucson.



Their original den was in the Potter Place mansion which was torn down in May. The coyotes moved the pups a few blocks south of the Arizona Inn for about two weeks—which was when we first saw them. At that point there were 9 pups that resembled small Chihuahuas. They left that den and for a short time we lost track of them, but in a few days we saw they had returned to Potter Place where they generally stayed through out the summer and fall. We got up at sunrise almost everyday and went over to check on what they were doing that day. Usually we saw them playing in groups of 2, 3 or 4—practicing the skills needed to be adult coyotes. They wrestled a lot with each other, chewed on each others ears and tails, tried to catch quail and dove with little success (often seemed puzzled when the birds flew up into the trees), and occasionally gave chase to rabbits.



They surprised us with their curiosity. They found a large, stuffed tiger that someone had thrown away and played endless, chase games with it. The old irrigation electrical connections tantalized them and they took repeated turns trying to rip them out of their outlets in the ground. They climbed on walls and jumped on jasmine bushes that they used as trampolines. After rains they repeatedly tried to dig a deep hole in the center of the bladed area—we could only surmise it had a wonderful smell. We never knew how they realized their parents were coming back with food, but within seconds they would all converge on the parent who would regurgitate whatever had been caught—the few times

we could tell it seemed to be rabbits or quail. Once the female was surrounded by 7 offspring all at once and they finished the food she gave them in less than a minute. The surveyors had marked some of the trees with tape. One day we watched two of the pups reach high on the trunk and pull on the plastic tape around the trunk—it took them about 10 minutes of persistent work, but in the end they pulled off their trophy and went running away with it.



Playing with the stuffed tiger

We watched them for hours and took hundreds of photographs, but in the end we were frustrated by what little we really knew about them. We only rarely saw all of the pups together at one time, but gradually their numbers dwindled. Initially we know there were 9, but later we never saw more than 7 together at one time and often we would see only one or two on a given day. But as soon as we thought only 3 or 4 were still surviving we would see 5 or 6 or 7 the next day. Their markings were very similar and difficult for us to tell apart. One limped badly for about 10 days, but then seemed to heal and we think recover, but still lagged behind its siblings. Yet weeks later we think we saw her in our part of B E about half a mile from her original den. We saw them eating date fruit on the ground and once one was eating part of a rabbit (?) that it had probably killed, but we didn't see them hunting very often. Maybe they did it at night, because they seemed to put on weight fairly well. The adults stayed in the area after we stopped seeing the pups, which by then were almost fully grown—perhaps they told them in a canine way that it was time to move on. We saw a pup and an adult for the last time together in mid December almost half a year after we first started watching them. We think that most of the pups survived to adulthood and dispersed into other areas. We would guess that 5-6 of the pups survived—better than is the case for most non urban coyotes—hopefully they will find their own mates and form dens somewhere in the city.





Coyote photos credit Mort Womack

We watched the coyotes through the chain link fence that surrounds the development that is replacing Potter Place mansion. The adults kept their distance, but didn't pay us too much attention. The pups would occasionally come very close to the fence to check us out and as long as we didn't move they would eye us for a while or go about their business, but quick movements—getting out the camera for instance—might cause them to run off. They never acted like they were begging or looking for food—just curious. We were pleased that they didn't appear to have anyone feeding them—that's usually the situation when a coyote gets into trouble with people. The coyote gets into trouble, but it is really a person feeding them that has caused the problem. A few times we came face to face on the roads in that area. They usually ran away, but a few times we just stood still and they just went around us about 10 feet away. We saw a few dog walkers in the area and twice we saw the adult male shadow a man and his dog until they were out of the area the pups were using—he was protective, and he was there checking out for potential threats from dogs. We were pleasantly surprised at how many people told us they had seen the coyotes and were just as interested in them as we were—though not so crazy perhaps as to be out watching the sunrise with the coyotes at 5:30 daily. Almost everyone we spoke to seem to realize what an unusual gift it was to have coyotes in the middle of B E. We have watched grizzly bears in Alaska and wolverines in Montana, but the Potter Place coyote den will always be one of our best wildlife adventures.

- Mort Womack and Linda Phelan

Welcome Packets:

Miriam Pattison has a system for gathering good materials for neighbors new to the neighborhood. Included is a welcoming letter and many informative pamphlets. Jackie Kinman has joined Miriam in getting the packets out. If you would like a packet or a packet for a neighbor, please email benapresident@gmail.com.

The printing of the Blenman Elm Neighborhood Spring 2016 Newsletter is supported by the Blenman Elm Neighborhood Assoc. Hand distribution is courtesy of many volunteers in the neighborhood. Thank you

Banner University Medical Center update

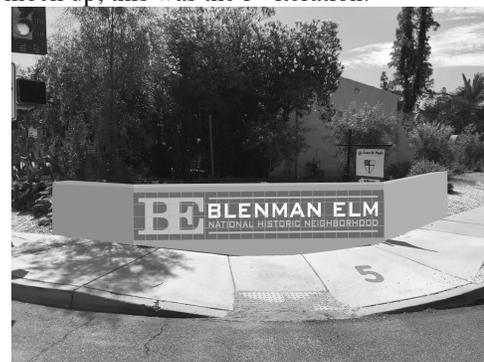
With the rezoning to allow the building of a new hospital to the west of the Diamond Children's Center, Banner is starting the site preparation and relocation of underground utilities. Leaders from the neighborhoods adjacent are meeting quarterly with Banner to keep up with construction issues and impacts. Banner has a webcam:

<https://www.workzonecam.com/projects/dprconstruction/bumct/bumcttowerexpansion> and also will have a website www.bumct-expansion.com

In addition Alice is forwarding to the Blenman Elm Yahoo group the newsletters that are coming from both the UA Facilities Design Construction Dept. and Banner. Construction vehicles will use Cherry from Speedway to reach the sites. The Elm St./Ring Road west of Campbell intersection is too narrow for construction vehicles. The new hospital building will be 9 stories, and engineered for 2 additional floors for the future. For now the helicopter landing area will remain on top of Diamond Children's Center with the direct elevator connection to the ER.

Banner will enhance the entrance to the neighborhood at Elm and Campbell.

Banner UMC plans to totally remake Elm St. west of Campbell into the main entrance into the hospital complex. As such, they recognize that they need to design the efficient movement of traffic onto and off of Campbell at the Elm St. light. Elm Street east of Campbell will remain residential scale and narrow. BENA and Catalina Vista are planning entrance enhancements through monuments and signage to remind drivers that this really is a residential area. As part of the good will for the project Banner is paying for the enhancements: Included on the SE corner of Campbell at Elm will be a low wall with Steve Farley's tile design based upon the BENA Historic Neighborhood street signs. Catalina Vista will be installing lettering on the existing wall on the NE corner and on a new monument on the median at Kramer/Elm. The BENA Board worked with Steve Farley to select the mock up; this was the 5th iteration:



In addition, Banner paid for enhancements to the Arizona Inn crosswalk. We are grateful for the investment in our neighborhood.

Cat Owners, please note:

Keep your cats indoors, for their safety and the safety of local wildlife.

Casa Seton Update

The platting process is about complete. Starting in the first part of March, site work is underway. Part of the process includes the widening of the Potter Place single lane entrance between the two pillars north of Elm St. The developer is removing the west pillar to accommodate both ingress and egress for safety. Please be careful in the area, whether you are driving, walking or bicycling. There is now a project link on the Miramonte Homes website. Follow the link on the home page to Casa Seton for the latest construction update: <http://www.miramontehomes.com>.

Update on the Palm Shadows property

The proposal for the high rise above a grocery store at ground level on the NW corner of Speedway and Campbell is on hold.

Did you know? That in 2015 Blenman Elm was only 34% owner occupied down from 49% in 2000?

There are 221 of 1805 residences vacant up from 122 in 2000. This data from 2000, 2010 censuses and 2015 update was developed by Drachman Institute provided by BENA resident (and Industrial Development Authority Director) Marilyn Robinson. The trends for BENA as well as Sam Hughes, Catalina Vista and Jefferson Park follow the trends for the City as a whole on owner occupancy (down), rental occupied (up), and vacancies (up). In 2000, BENA and Sam Hughes were close to 50% owner occupied. That stable base of home ownership has been eroding steadily. The 2015 data shows that both Sam Hughes and BENA are now over 50% rentals, although not as high as the Jefferson Park Neighborhood's 67%. The City as a whole was 46% renter occupied in the 2015 data.

What to do with this information? We need to be promoting home ownership at every turn. We have nice homes that people should want to live in. Some investors have chosen to sit on their properties, leaving the homes vacant. The Palo Verde neighborhood (east of Country Club) is seeing some rental properties return to owner occupied. There may be federal grants coming through the IDA that will promote home ownership by providing down payments for people and properties meeting specified criteria.

Tucson Boulevard Clean Up

BENA's third Saturday clean up volunteers have done a good job making Tucson Blvd. between Grant and Speedway look spiffier. We thank our volunteers, Teresa, Vince, Leo, Linda, Mort, Alan, Cliff, Alice, Lucinda, Craig, Jackie and Joanna. We also thank our neighbors in Catalina Vista who keep the cactus frontage clipped and litter picked up on the west side of Tucson Blvd. As we go into spring we will be meeting at 7:00 AM on the third Saturday of the month. We also thank Tucson Clean and Beautiful that supplies us with safety vests, litter grabbers and bags. In return we report hazards, graffiti and potholes to the City. Want to help? contact Alice Roe, benapresident@gmail.com

Litter pick up: Anybody walking can pick up as you go. Please wear gloves for your protection and tie your bag of debris before putting into the trash. Our alley bins make it easy to get rid of the stuff we pick up.

Potholes? Report them to TDOT: 791-3154

Oh, Dog Walkers, Attention:

We are so grateful when you do pick up after your dog, that we hesitate to mention the "problem" of disposal. Best: be prepared to carry it back to your own trash can. Next best: Pop into an alley with the big green trash barrels and dispose of your tied bag of waste. Neighbors are not thrilled with your dog's waste in their individual trash barrel.

Garbage & Recycling Barrels

- Garbage or recycling container damaged, need a new one?
 - Don't really use your large garbage container, would like a smaller one?
 - Could you use a second recycling container?
- Contact Environmental Services at 791-3171

Brush and Bulky reminder

Did you miss the February 29 Brush and Bulky pick up? You can get rid of stuff by calling 791-3171 to arrange a special pick up (cost). The next Brush and Bulky pick up will be August 29, 2016. Please do not place your stuff out more than 2 weeks before the pick up.

Aircraft Noise Complaints

For helicopters headed to the hospital, call Banner UMC Security 694-6533. Remember that the usual flight path may be violated for local wind conditions or the patient's condition.

For military aircraft, call Davis Monthan 228-5091. Check out the D-M Community Initiatives website: <http://www.dm.af.mil/units/communityliaison.asp>

BENA Representatives for 2015-2016

Officers: President	Alice Roe	795-7310
Vice President	Steve Morrison	881-8330
Treasurer	Merrill Eisenberg	
Secretary	Linda Phelan	325-4470
Board Members:		
Leo Burkhart	Lisa Orozco	Teresa Vasquez
Jackie Kinman	Miriam Pattison	Vince Vasquez
Alan Myklebust	Shirley Pitts	Alex Wilson
Craig Orozco	Joe Spitale	
Honorary Board Member	Steve Farley	

BENA Board Meetings are usually held at 7:00 PM on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Arizona Inn, September to May. Occasionally, the board meeting date and/or place is changed due to scheduling difficulties. Residents are invited to attend. You may reach your board members at BENA, P.O. Box 42092, Tucson AZ 85733, or email benapresident@gmail.com

Want to support your neighborhood association?

Become a member! Send your 2015-2016 membership dues of \$10.00 per household to Treasurer, BENA, P.O. Box 42092, Tucson AZ 85733

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Membership dues ensure that you will receive your newsletter via first class mail.