



# PAUL CUNNINGHAM

WARD 2

February 9, 2018

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## PAUL'S NOTE

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Saguaro National Park is considering a fee increase and has been soliciting for public comments for several weeks. As of January 23rd, the park had received 59 comments.

The proposed increases include:

- weekly vehicle - \$15 to \$20
- weekly per person from \$5 to \$10
- weekly motorcycle from \$10 to \$15
- Saguaro National Park annual pass from \$35 to \$40.

If approved the increases would go into effect on May 1, 2108. The increase would provide approximately \$80,000 in addi-

tional funds for the maintenance and operation of the park with 100% of the funds raised remaining in the park. The majority of the funds would be used to maintain the park's trails. Saguaro National Park currently collects about \$500,000 in fee revenue annually.

There is still time to comment. You can go to <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?documentID=85036>

Saguaro has a first rate staff of rangers and other personnel, but there is also a lot of work at the park

done by people from our community.

In 2017, 736 volunteers worked at the park doing everything from greeting visitors (at the visitor center or on the trails), digging up invasive species or helping out with research. In all, those volunteers gave 32,261 hours of work in the park last year. That's the equivalent of 15 full-time employees.

There are a number of ways to volunteer at Saguaro or in any of our national parks (we have some of the best ones here in Arizona). The Student Conservation Association ([www.thesca.org](http://www.thesca.org)) has

## PAUL'S NOTE (CONTINUED)

the Community Volunteer Ambassador program for young adults while The Mission Continues (<https://missioncontinues.org/>) will be starting a new program called Patriots in the Parks for veterans. Saguaro National Park has a special web page for volunteer opportunities at <https://www.nps.gov/sagu/getinvolved/volunteer.htm>

One crucial volunteer opportunity at Saguaro comes on the second Saturday of every month (except for the Summer): Buffelgrass pulls.

I've written about Buffelgrass before and the devastation this invasive weed causes for our desert. Buffelgrass crowds out our native plants (including saguaros) and provides fuel for wildfires in a way that our native plant species do not. Left unchecked, buffelgrass would render our diverse and beautiful Sonoran Desert an unrecognizable wasteland. That's not good for our economy, and, more importantly, not good for those of us that love this place.

Taking on buffelgrass is simple, but labor intensive. That's why every second Saturday between September and May, Saguaro asks for volunteers to pull this plant out of the ground.

Volunteers gather on the second Saturday of the month to join park resource managers in hiking out to areas infested with buffelgrass and removing it. Research has shown that this difficult work is important to restoring the natural Sonoran Desert landscape.

For more information, you can call the park at 520 733-5187.

Of course, Saguaro is not the only place in our region with buffelgrass because, well, invasive species don't respect park boundaries, city limits or property lines. There are a number of community groups who are working right now to get rid of buffelgrass.

From now until March 9, the Desert Museum, Buffelgrass Coordination Center, Sky Island Alliance, Tucson Clean and Beautiful and a number of other community groups are having Beat Back Buffelgrass month. There are a number of opportunities to volunteer all over Southern Arizona. The Desert Museum is maintaining a list at their website: <https://www.desertmuseum.org/buffelgrass/bbbdsitelist.php>

Remember that Old Fort Lowell Day is Saturday. Come on out to Fort Lowell Park between 12 and 4.

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## FORT LOWELL DAY/LA REUNIÓN DE EL FUERTE

The 38th annual celebration of historical Fort Lowell and the neighborhood will be on Saturday, February 10, 2018 from noon to 4 pm. It will take place at Fort Lowell Park, Fort Lowell Museum, El Fuerte Community and the Historic San Pedro Chapel.

Activities include Cavalry Drills & Regimental Band Concert; Children's Games & Activities; Guided & Self-Guided Tours of Historical Sites in Old Fort Lowell & Community of El Fuerte; 19th Century Medical Lecture & Surgical Reenactment; Hohokam Pre-Historic Archaeological Discoveries; Vintage Baseball Games in the Park; A Bus Tour of Historical Buildings at TMC

There will be a shuttle van available.

Everything is FREE

Parking is available at Fort Lowell Park and the Gregory School.

More information can be found at [www.oldfortlowellneighborhood.org](http://www.oldfortlowellneighborhood.org)

The event is sponsored by the Old Fort Lowell Neighborhood Association.

## VITA TAX HELP

We can no longer offer tax forms at the Ward 2 office, but we have been referring people to the United Way's VITA program. The VITA program's east side location is at Abounding Grace Lutheran Church, 2450 S Kolb Road. They are open for walk-ins Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays between 9 am and 1 pm until April 14.

VITA asks that you bring the following:

### **Required:**

Both spouses, if filing jointly

Picture ID for taxpayer (and spouse, if filing jointly)

Social security card (or acceptable alternative - see below) for each person listed on the return

Proof of income, like W2s and 1099s

Documentation of expenses

If anyone in the household is insured through the Marketplace, Form 1095-A and dependents' proof of income

### **Recommended:**

Account and routing numbers for direct deposit of refunds

Prior year tax return

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## CAROL WEST SENIOR CENTER

**AARP Tax Aid:** Mondays & Wednesdays, 9 am—12 pm (Main Building)

**Elder Circle Group:** Monday, February 12th 1:00 P.M.-2:00 P.M. This social group meets once a month to discuss a variety of topics in room 102. Daily Fee is required.

**Valentines Ballroom Dance:** Tuesday, February 13th 1:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M. In the Aerobics Room \$3.00 (At the door).

**Sabino Canyon Hiking Trip:** Wednesday, February 14th Cost: \$1.00 (Bring your own lunch) Trip leaves at: 10:30 A.M. Back around: 2:00 P.M. Space is limited!

**Movie Day:** Wednesday, February 28th The Mountain Between Us (PG-13) Start time: 12:30 P.M. Cost: \$1.00 - Refreshments served

*The Carol West Senior Addition at Udall features multipurpose rooms, lounge area with TV, computer adult learning center and pool tables. It is located at Udall Park and is open from 9 am to 4 pm Monday thru Friday.*

## PARKS PROGRAMS

**Activity Guide:** Tucson Parks and Recreation's Activity Guide for spring 2018 has arrived, and copies are available for pick up at all Parks and Recreation facilities. It can be viewed on-line at: [www.tucsonaz.gov/parks](http://www.tucsonaz.gov/parks).

The Activity Guide contains complete information on leisure classes, KIDCO after-school, aquatics, sports programs, registration, and the Discount Program. Registration dates are as follows:

The deadline for session 2 is March 13

All leisure class listings are online a [www.EZEEreg.com](http://www.EZEEreg.com). Please see the Activity Guide for more information on registration and deadlines. Whether you enjoy being active in slow-pitch softball leagues, want to design amazing jewelry, or get healthy and fit, there truly is something for everyone at Tucson Parks and Recreation. For questions or more information on registration or programs, contact Registration Services at 791-4877.

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Remember to like  
Paul on Facebook!

Please bring these items to the Ward 2 Office  
for the following charities:

**THE COMMUNITY FOOD BANK—Non Perishable  
Items**

**DIAPER BANK OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA—  
Infant/Child/Adult Diapers**

**TIHAN - Personal Care Items for Individuals  
and Families in Need**

**LIONS CLUB—Eye Glasses**

**DANCING IN THE STREETS ARIZONA—Ballet/  
Dance Equipment**

**CASA MARIA—Plastic bags**

**SR. JOSE WOMEN'S SHELTER—Summer items  
and clothing, athletic shoes, back packs, tote**

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## MAYOR AND COUNCIL

The next Mayor and Council meeting will be on **Tuesday, February 20**. Regular Session starts at 5:30 pm following an afternoon study session. There is always a short call to the audience before the business portion of the meeting. Council chambers are located downtown at 255 W Alameda.

The agendas for the meetings are posted online at <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/clerks/mcdocs>

