



The Polaris Beacon



Star Valley Estates Newsletter

October 2010

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A publication of the Star Valley Estates Home Owners Association

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Next Meeting

Thursday, October 14, 2010
6:30 pm
Ryan Airfield Conf. Room

Meeting Schedule Set for Remainder of 2010 and for Entire 2011 Please Mark your Calendar

At the August Board Meeting the following schedule was set for 2010 and for 2011. Normal starting time of 6:30 pm may vary and will be announced prior to each meeting:

2010: October 14
November 12

2011: January 13 March 10
May 12 July 14
September 8 November 10

Open Board Position Filled

The resignation of President Brian Scott not only opened a board position to be filled, but also required a reassignment of officers. The vacant board position was filled at the August meeting by Dan Harper, one of the longest-time residents of Star Valley.

Dave Blankenbaker was elected President and

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Dan Harper was elected Vice President.

The following offices remain unchanged:
Secretary – Jimmie Williamson
Treasurer – Marc Borom

Pledge From Our New President.

Why an HOA?

HOA's were established because of the desire of some people to live in a close nit community with common areas (properties), which provide amenities, the likes of which they could not afford on their own. Examples of common areas are: swimming pools, (which we do not have) play grounds for the kids, (which we do not have) community centers, (which we do not have) tennis courts, (which we do not have) basketball courts, (which we do not have) rec rooms, (which we do not have) private gated community, (which we do not have) private streets and sidewalks, (which we do not have) dog runs, (which we do not have) a park, (which we do not have) supplied landscaping, (which we do not have) painting and outdoor

maintenance, (which we do not have). For this they pay a monthly fee for all the great things that their neighborhood provides.

The common area for the Star Valley HOA is nothing but a hole in the ground, which we are not allowed to alter or to enter. Who would want to? It's a drainage ditch. Talk about a white elephant, we got one. In a nut shell the function of our HOA is to maintain our "hole-in-the-ground", and to pay our hard earned money to a management company to write letters to homeowners about weeds. That's it, folks. Paying someone to annoy you, doesn't make any sense to me.

I pledge to you as a resident of Star Valley and President of this HOA that I will do everything in my power to persuade the board, residents and everyone involved that Star Valley neither needs nor wants either a hole in the ground or an HOA.

Regards,
Dave Blankenbaker
President Star Valley HOA
October 7, 2010

Weed Issues:
News and a Different Approach

Star Valley Estates received significant rain during the last month, and the weeds joyously responded. The change is in the response of the board. The board recognized that monsoon rains result in a burst in the weed population and also recognizes that homeowners are smart enough to know that weeds are growing in their front yards. During a property inspection in September approximately 20% of the lots in Star Valley Estates received "friendly reminders of the presence of weeds" instead of "nastygrams". There were no threats of fines in the friendly reminder.

The result appears to have been positive. Homeowners have been seen addressing their weed issues.

A copy of the **Friendly Reminder** is given at the end of this article so that homeowners with weed-free lots can view the present approach:

Weeds Along the Basin Lots

There has been considerable controversy at board meetings concerning who or what entity is responsibility for weed control along the basin lots abutting Ironstone and Brightwater. Here is what has happened. Dr. Borom contacted Pima County Road Maintenance and learned that the County is responsible for weed control along County drainage ditches – e.g. all along the entire length of the east side of Ironstone. The county established a workorder for weed cleanup, but *warned that the cleanup would not take high priority.*

In the meantime, the board contracted with a landscaper recommended by Cadden to have the tumbleweeds removed along the roadside border of lot 61 and 151. (cost \$50.00). The board then contracted with Lantz Weed Control (\$150.00) to have the roadside border along lots 61, 151 and 152 treated with both weed preventer and weed killer.

Following this effort, county workers finally arrived and removed weeds not only from the east and west sides of the entire length of Ironstone, but also from the roadside border along the basin fence on the south side of Brightwater.

In the future, patience might be the best order of business when it comes to weed control.

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**Friendly Reminder**

The Board wishes to remind you that residents are required to maintain their lots. We understand in our busy lives we forget or do not have the time to keep up with everything, but it is important to keep the appearance of your property in a pleasant manner in order to keep our property values up.

**You have weeds on your lot that need to be removed**

The Association is trying to keep the community attractive and safe by enforcing the Covenants. If there is a problem with compliance, please call Cindy Borquez at 520-297-0797.

Violation observed: 0X/0X/10

If you have taken care of the violation please disregard this notice.

Star Valley Estates HOA Board of Directors

## Basin Issues

Cadden recently received a tax bill for the two lots that were transferred to Broadway Realty and Trust through a quitclaim deed. The deed had been successfully filed with the Records Office, but the County is behind in updating property ownership. Cadden returned the bill to the county with a note that the lots no longer belong to our HOA.

## Home Repairs and Improvements

This is a new section in the hopes of generating interest in sharing projects among the Do-It-Yourself crowd in Star Valley Estates.

### Water Softener Installation

If you already have a water softener in your home, read no further. If you are considering purchasing a water softener, here are some thoughts on why one should consider buying and installing something that is going to consume more water. The water in our community is not extremely hard (162 mg/l or ~ 10 grains/gal), but it does carry mineral content that will clog faucet outlets and showerheads and contribute to soap scum deposits in showers, tubs, sinks and dishwashers. The hard water culprit is **SOAP SCUM**.

Soap scum is the result of minerals that negate the grease and fat removal properties of soap. Soap is a sodium salt of an organic acid. That is, it has a water-soluble end (the one that contains sodium) and a long-chain organic end that binds with fats and grease. This combination allows soap to carry grease deposits away by rinsing with water. If the wash-water contains elements whose compounds have a low solubility in water, they will exchange with the sodium in the soap molecule and render it insoluble in water. The exchange produces the deposit known as soap scum.

The role of water softeners is to remove the elements with low solubility in water by replacing them with sodium. The result is water that creates NO soap scum. Reduction in soap scum reduces the base for formation of mold in shower stalls.

Softened water yields brighter clothes, softer hair, almost clog-free faucet strainers and showerheads, and cleaner bodies – all with lower detergent use.

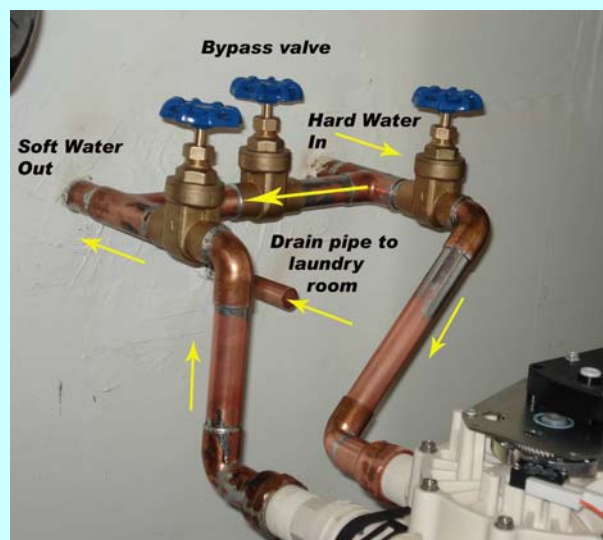
There are some downsides. Softened water contains increased sodium and should not be drunk in quantity. Regeneration cycles will result in an increase in water consumption of around 200 gallons per month – depending on water usage.

Most, if not all, homes built in Star Valley were constructed with a softwater loop in the garage. The softwater loop is the U-shaped copper pipe protruding from the garage wall on the house side of the garage. The blind-ended, smaller copper pipe located in the center of the U-shaped loop is the drain for the recharge cycle.

If one hooks up the water softener to these connections, soft water will be supplied to all water outlets inside the home except for the cold-water outlet in the kitchen sink and the water supply to the refrigerator. Drinking water should be obtained from the cold-water outlets in the kitchen. Soft water will, however, be supplied to the kitchen dishwasher. All outside spigots will remain hard water.

Do not invest in a “salt-free” water softener. They have been found to be hoaxes.

In hooking up your water softener, I advise that you not use the supplied, plastic, by-pass valve. Instead, hard-plumb in a set of copper by-pass valves. You will not regret it. Here is what the project will look like near completion.



The project is not difficult, if one has some rudimentary knowledge of soldering copper plumbing.

Here are some cautions during installation of your water softener:

- 1) Make sure the hard water enters on the right side of the U-loop.
- 2) Verify that the exhaust end of the recharge drain is not blocked by a plug in the drain. The consequences of not removing the plug will be a flood inside the house at the first recharge

If you would like to discuss this in more detail, email me at [polarisbeacon@earthlink.net](mailto:polarisbeacon@earthlink.net)

## Home project Number 2 – Water Usage

Many, if not all, Star Valley Estate residents have irrigation systems. Do you know exactly how much water you are using at each irrigation station? This is important information when you are trying to balance your water usage. It also comes in handy, if there is a leak in your system.

Unfortunately (as in my case), the presence of a leak may not be found until you get an extremely high water bill. Tucson Water has a neat way of both notifying a customer of high water usage and, at the same time, imposing a penalty. The cost of water is based on a step function scale. The scale is as follows, and a leak can be very expensive:

- 1<sup>st</sup> 15 Ccf @ \$1.54/Ccf
- 2<sup>nd</sup> 15 Ccf @ \$5.75/Ccf
- 3<sup>rd</sup> 15 Ccf @ \$8.14/Ccf

(100 cubic feet of water [Ccf] = 748 Gallons)

When one has a water leak, how can it be located? You can use the crude method of just walking around your property and looking for wet spots - not very efficient, and the leak may only exist during an irrigation cycle.

A better method is to use the water meter located in the metal covered box near the road.

The meter reads water usage in units of tenths of a gallon. The minor units are down to one hundredth of a gallon (1.28 ounces) – a pretty fine measurement.

First check the meter when there is no water running in the house, and all drip systems are off. If the meter is turning at all, there is a leak somewhere. It could be a broken pipe underground, or in the valving of the drip system. A continuous, 24 hr/day leak can add up, even if it is minor.

If the meter is not running, try turning on the drip stations one at a time and monitoring the flow of each one. Here is when you need to know the normal flow. Without knowledge of the normal flow, one cannot determine whether a leak exists unless the flow is enormous.

Determine the normal flow of each of your drip systems before any leak is suspected. Turn on a station. Allow an initial time for the pipes to fill prior to taking a measurement. To measure the flow, simply measure the time required for the meter to move through 0.1 gallons. Convert the number to gals/min. Do this for every drip station.

These numbers are your reference values. With prior knowledge of these numbers, you will be able to determine which station contains the leak. Finding the specific location of the leak in your drip system will be either obvious or a tedious search.

Back to the worst case in which the meter still turns even when there is no water running in the house, and all drip systems are off. If the drip systems were installed with shutoff valves ahead of the station valves, the problem is simplified. Turn off the drip system shutoff valves. If the meter stops turning, the problem is a leaky station valve. Find it and replace it.

Be diligent. Conserve water.

Flush toilets only when necessary.

In California during a drought, the catch phrase was:

If it's brown, flush it down.

If it's yellow, let it mellow.

**Star Valley Estates  
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Star Valley Estates Newsletter

October, 2010

**Notice:Next Board Meeting**

Thursday, October 14, 2010; 6:30 PM

Conference Room  
Tucson Airport Authority Building  
Ryan Field  
Near intersection of Valencia and Ajo

**Input from Homeowners is requested.**

Homeowners – This is your Newsletter.

Your input is requested. If you have an item of interest to the community, please send it to the editor either in WORD format, or just as email text to the email address shown in the title header.

Let your feelings and input be heard.

Please report any evidence of criminal activity. Details will be kept confidential.

**This is YOUR NEWSLETTER**

Looking forward to hearing from each of you.

The Editor