



# RECOM

Retired Employees City of Mesa



Volume 3 Issue 10  
October, 2009

RECOMAZ.org



RECOM Executive Board

## Inside This Issue

- *Message From the Board*
- *Speaker*
- *Report s*
- *Meetings*

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

### **Change of Seasons and Activities** – by Lin Adams, RECOM Secretary

It's officially "fall," and although some of you who don't live in the Mesa area anymore probably can't appreciate the significance of that, it's pretty darn important to those of us who have tolerated record numbers of days with 100+ degree temperatures this past summer!! But what does the "fall" season really mean for us? Well, let me share some of the things it means to me.

Let's begin with the basics: opening doors and windows in the morning and evening – and even sometimes during the day!! The problem with doing this is that they've been closed for months, and so you might need to pry them open and get out the dust buster to get all the dust and dirt out of the window tracks. I tend to forget about that because the shutters and blinds are closed for so much of the summer (trying to keep Salt River Project (SRP) from taking my last pennies for air conditioning!), that I never look at the window tracks for months at a time!

The reward of opening doors and windows is obvious – fresh air enters your house – and that's a good thing, unless you have allergy problems! Also, at least theoretically, the house

cools down, so you shouldn't have to turn on the air conditioner as much – again, "no money (ok, less money) for you, SRP!!" ("You have to say that with the same accent as the "no soup for you guy" on the old Seinfeld TV show!!)

Of course, being a former police officer, I must tell you that if you are going to open your doors, you should probably have security screen doors, so you can lock them while open and still stay safe while enjoying the cool air. If you don't open your windows all the way, you can put various locks on them to keep someone out, even while they are open.

For most of you, the hard part is now over, and you can just sit back and enjoy the breeze.



However, for some of us, the real work is just beginning. I live in Gilbert – you know, that little family-friendly town next to Mesa, where alfalfa farming caused it to be known as the “Hay Capital of the World”?? Well, when they plowed all those farms and started building thousands of homes, it brought in lots of money for the Town coffers...and scorpions for the rest of us!!

Now, I know people who live in Gilbert who have never even seen a scorpion up close and personal, and I was one of them until about seven years ago, when I saw my first scorpion crawling up the wall of my home



I had lived in my home for two years then, and had never given one thought to scorpions. Most people my age probably think of the fifties as the good old days, when life was simpler...and I do, too; but I also sometimes think of any time prior to 2002 (when I discovered scorpions) as the good old days.

Those were the days I could walk inside my home without automatically scanning the floors and walls for those beige critters (and had I known I was going to have scorpions, I would never have gotten beige carpet)! Oh, those were the good old days, for sure!

Every year since then, I have had increasing numbers of scorpions and for longer periods of time; I saw my last scorpion of 2008 on November 26 and my first one of 2009 on February 17. You might wonder how I can remember specific dates; well, I see so many, I have to mark “spottings” on a calendar to keep track of them. For the record, I have found **84** total (mostly outside) in 2009.

Am I paranoid about scorpions?? You bet I am!! I have spent hundreds of dollars on “sealing” my home to keep them out (and in the process those that were already inside were sealed in!!) and countless hours “black lighting” my yard several times a week. Thankfully, so far, my neighbors haven’t called the police about the prowler wandering around at 2 AM!

I tried a cat for a while (I know, I know, you cat lovers probably thought that was cruel), but I don’t think the cat found any, and in the process, I found out I was allergic to the cat hair! I have sticky pads in my garage and have caught lots of scorpions that way.

But my surefire answer has been a product a former pest control worker told me about which has worked wonders in helping me to keep some semblance of sanity. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) don’t have a division for scorpions, do they?? OK, then, I’ll tell you my secret –

“Brakleen” brake cleaner!! I just spray the scorpion, watch it do a funky dance for a few seconds, and then it’s a goner!! Since it’s a liquid spray, I advise using it only outdoors, so you don’t get it on your carpet or flooring. At about \$3 a can at WalMart, it’s the best investment in peace of mind I’ve made in a long time!!!

Now, onto other “fall” things. I know for many people, “fall” means football, but for me it means basketball!! After missing the Playoffs last April, the Suns are now ready to try again for that elusive NBA championship!! They’ve gotten rid of Shaq and added some new players, so they should be ready to get back to their old “run and gun” ways! Go Suns!!

Speaking of basketball, I would be remiss if I didn’t mention that the Phoenix Mercury is currently in the WNBA Finals, just two years after winning the WNBA Championship!! I know some of you probably don’t think much of women’s basketball, but let me tell you, they can play – and play well!! If they win the championship, they will be the first professional sports team in Phoenix that has won two championships! So, go Mercury!!

Last, but not least, “fall” means decorating the house and yard for Halloween, one of my favorite holidays, because I get to eat the leftover candy!! Several years ago, my grandchildren lived with me, so Halloween also provided the opportunity to raid their candy bags for the “good stuff” after they went to bed! For me, the “good stuff” means those little boxes of Drops that test the strength of the cement that holds my crowns in place and Snickers bars. Yes, I stole candy from my grandkids!

What I don’t get about Halloween, is that it has become an adult holiday! When did that happen?? Adults now have their own Halloween parties, decorate their homes and yards with elaborate displays, and try to scare the #\$\$%&\* out of kids by wearing scary costumes when the kids come trick or treating to their door!



Is this just another symbol of our reluctance to grow up and become responsible citizens, another excuse to party hardy, or what? I haven’t figured out the obsession yet, but just check any costume store around Halloween, and there are probably as many adults getting them as kids!!

So, this is what “fall” means to me. I hope you enjoy your “fall” season, wherever you are!!

### Speaker

RECOM’s had speakers that informed us about our community, told us about travel bargains, helped us to “do-it-yourself”, told us how to take care of our health and sometimes just plain entertained us.

But for our September meeting Tina Coffman managed the nearly impossible. She gave us hope for and respite from a sad reality of life that some of us are already facing, and others may face at some point in their lives – caring for spouses or relatives who have had a stroke, have Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, or other special needs.



Tina is the Service Coordinator for Sistine Adult Day Care Health Services Inc. She is a nurse and has been in her present position for thirteen years and when she tells you that she loves her job, you believe her!

The day care really is designed to do two things – **care for the person** who is affected with the disease, but also **give respite** to the care giver. Tina pointed out that the caregiver needs a life besides care giving, be that a five-day a week job, one day a week for personal interests or a couple of hours for a nap.

Life changes for the care giver because the person cared for has changed. Usually roles have reversed and the adult child is now the parent, or the formerly equal partner has had to become the parent figure. The responsibility is 24/7. And that’s where the day care center can help.

Having loving, gentle day care relieves the guilt of leaving the patient. Care is available Monday through Friday from 8:00AM-5:00PM, but a caregiver can bring in a loved one for as little as two hours a week. Occasionally, even the hours can be extended to 7:00AM - 5:30PM.

“But he doesn’t want to go! And I feel so guilty!” To that Tina suggests: “Wouldn’t you like to substitute the TV with social interaction, gentle memory games, cards, singing, crafts, bingo, even dancing!” They even play “Jeopardy” and “The Price Is Right”. And patients are never told the answer is wrong. Even if the picture is of Frank Sinatra and not Dean Martin, or they were born in July not September. “The staff’s mantra is: “Go with the flow.”

Occasionally, there are therapy dogs that come in, and that’s always a big hit. For holidays there are decorations to make, and every time (even the tenth time) the comment or memory is as enthusiastically received by the staff as the first.

The staff members who directly work with the patients are Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), trained for physical care and social interactions with patients. And since there’s a nurse at each center, she administers meds, and calls the doctor if necessary.

Each patient has a care plan that includes his or her interests, personality traits – and special needs. Even toileting, incontinence and bathing issues can be handled. And transportation is available too. However, they aren’t equipped to care for patients who are combative, whose meds are not effective or who wander away.

“But it’s expensive and I can’t afford it!” Well, true, it’s not free. The cost is \$10.00 per hour. They can provide care for that cost because they are a not-for-profit company. If the patient qualifies, there may be financial help available from Arizona Long Term Care. If you can’t afford, or don’t need forty hours a week, think about an afternoon when you can get some much needed sleep - without worrying, or going to a movie with a friend- without worrying, or going grocery shopping- without worrying. See a trend? One of the goals of Adult Day Care is **respite for the caregiver**.

Remember I said Tina loves her job? Well, for about twelve years she has not only coordinated services for the patients, but also facilitated a support group for care givers who currently have patients at Sirriner or have previously had patients there.

It’s called “Just for Fun” and that’s just what they do – have fun. They go out to dinner, take a ride on Steamboat Dolly, go to museums, listen to speakers -- and occasionally go to a camp in Showlow -- in the pines. The cost for a weekend is \$34.00 -- and that includes bed and board!

And one more thing. Tina is knowledgeable about resources in the community. So, if you’re a care giver, but don’t need daycare right now, but do need some other resources for your loved one, give her a call or write her an email, she can steer you in the right direction.

Tina Coffman [cgcoffman@Sirrineradhs.org](mailto:cgcoffman@Sirrineradhs.org)



247 N. MacDonald St.  
Mesa, AZ 85201  
480-464-1061



7550 E. Adobe Rd  
Mesa, AZ 85207  
480-641-7644

## Reports:

### Employee Benefits Task Force

**Open enrollment** will be from October 26-November 6. There will be a flyer in the mail shortly. Once again Employee Benefits requests that we sign up online, and yes, there is a button for “No changes”. You can go into the system as often as you like and make changes so don’t wait until the last day. Some of you may have immediately noticed that November 6<sup>th</sup> is a Friday. Yes, enrollments will be accepted **online** on Friday, but please note that there will be **no one in the office on Friday** to answer questions. So if you leave it to the last day and you have questions – you’ll definitely be out of luck. Don’t miss Jody’s presentation at the Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> RECOM meeting at 200 S. Center Street, Bldg 3, Room 128.

**Vision coverage** proposals have been coming in. Jody will go through them by Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, and all those who meet the minimum requirements will be given to the Task Force for evaluation and a recommendation. The recommendations will go to upper management and from there to City Council – all in time for it to take effect by January 1, 2010.

**Seasonal flu shots** are covered by Medicare. If you aren’t on Medicare yet, they are covered by your wellness benefit – provided you still have some money in that fund. This can be at your doctor’s office or the various places like Fry’s, Walgreen’s and so on. H1N1, or swine flu, vaccines aren’t available yet.

**Mobile Onsite Mammograms** will be available at the Employee Health Fair on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> at Hohokam Stadium. **The health fair is for active employees only**, but the mammogram unit will be parked in the parking lot. Retirees can schedule mammograms at the location on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>. There will be no charge to the retiree or the City of Mesa. Blue Cross/Blue Shield is paying the entire cost. To make an appointment, or to see if appointments are still available, call **480-967-3767**.

## Issues

Jo Ferguson was happy to report that House Bill 2171 which would have “authorized” ASRS to invest in the non-profit Science Foundation Arizona is dead. However, House Bill 2008 reestablishes the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fund (which funded the Science Foundation AZ) and appropriates \$27 million to it for fiscal year 2010-2011 from the general fund. The Governor signed it on Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>. The question arises: “If the general fund doesn’t have the money, will the legislature revive bill 2171 with a new bill number, of course? Jo is following the legislative trail, but they don’t make it easy!

Also, House Bill 2118 was passed and it basically says that people can’t return to their old jobs within a certain amount of time and collect both pension and salary for the same job they did before retirement. Became effective September 30, 2009.

## Programs

### Special Event

RECOM is hosting its second Pre-Retirement Program in October. Peggy Haney, registration chair, says the registrations are flowing in, so much so that it was decided to limit seats to employees rather than employees and spouses. The Conference Center auditorium has a limit of 135 seats. The City is once again providing the meeting space free of charge.

### Monthly Meetings:

Don Miller solicits your suggestions for speakers for next year. In December we have our annual holiday party at our regular meeting time and place.

### Deferred Compensation Committee:

Inoest has advised that Great West drop Black Rock Bond Fund from the City of Mesa’s deferred comp portfolio. It will be replaced with J.D. Morgan High Yield Bond Fund. People who were invested in this fund will be notified by letter of this change. The next meeting of the committee will be in early November.

# FOR THE OCTOBER 21<sup>st</sup> MEETING ONLY

## Meetings

Meetings are held at 9:00AM on the third Wednesday of the month in the Community Room of the Fire Station on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Mesa Drive.

## Upcoming Meetings:

October 21<sup>st</sup>:

**Speaker:**  
**Jody Topping**  
**City of Mesa Benefits Office**

**Topic:**  
**Healthcare Plan Changes for 2010**

**November 18<sup>th</sup>** – Speaker to be Announced  
The November meeting will be held at the usual location in the Community Room of the Fire Station.

**December 16<sup>th</sup>** – Holiday Celebration

## One-time location change

**200 S. Center Street  
Building #3**

**Enter the parking lot from Macdonald.  
There will be signs for you to follow.**

## Look for the Balloons.

**Here's a map to get you there.**

