

OCTOBER
 NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Lost Treasures
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AJHS Volleyball Peaking

Apache Junction Gold Canyon
 Superstition Mountain Country

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Inside The News

Who Is Conserving Superstition Foothills?

SALT and the Pinal County OSTC are two pieces of the local conservation puzzle

By Charlie & Becky Goff
Special to the News

There are currently multiple efforts aimed at conserving open space in lands south of the Superstition Wilderness Area, often referred to as the Superstition Foothills. The groups undertaking this work include the Superstition Area Land Trust (SALT), the Pinal County Open Space & Trails Department, and the Open Space & Trails Committee (OSTC) of the Pinal Partnership. Who are these entities and what are the relationships between them?

SALT is a non-profit with its own Board of Directors and its own mission: "...To conserve the natural Sonoran Desert open spaces surrounding the Superstition Wilderness Area for this and future generations." It has developed and maintained trails with multiple partners (Silly Mountain with Apache Junction; Lost Goldmine Trail with Pinal County and Tonto National Forest), and conducted educational programs for some 23 years while pursuing its larger conservation goal.

The Pinal County Open Space & Trails Department was created in 2013, as called for in Pinal County's Open Space & Trails Master Plan. The Department is actively pursuing development of



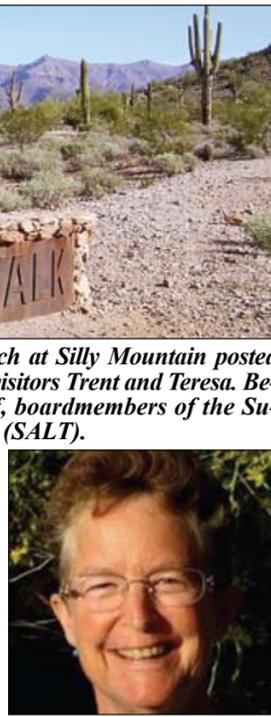
Above: Botanical walk bench at Silly Mountain posted online by Canadian winter visitors Trent and Teresa. Below: Charlie & Becky Goff, boardmembers of the Superstition Area Land Trust (SALT).

a number of Pinal County Regional Parks, the first of which (Peralta Park) will be in SALT's "target" area near Peralta Road and a bit south of the Superstition Wilderness Area.

The Pinal Partnership is a county-wide non-profit whose mission is to "...Improve research, planning, and coordination of private and public efforts related to infrastructure, natural resources and community development in Pinal County." It has its own Board of Directors, representing business, government, development, tribal, and other groups in and/or serving Pinal County.

The OSTC is one of several committees of the Pinal Partnership. The OSTC works to find collaborative ways to assist the county in implementing its Open Space and Trails Master Plan. It is open to anyone committed to the forego-

ing approach: e.g. citizens, businesses, agencies, governments, conservation organizations, tribes, land owners, ranchers, and farmers. Cyndi Ruehl, former SALT Board member and current Executive Director, chaired the OSTC from 2008-2015—and remains on the committee. Charlie and Becky Goff presently co-chair OSTC (along with Jana Baldwin), and also serve on SALT's Board.



Trails Department and Citizen's Advisory Commission. Without such awareness, appreciation and involvement, the rapid urbanization in our county may randomly destroy many of our special and important places.

Development of materials and planning has been a summer-long process, while the actual on-the-ground campaign will run from October 2015 through March 2016. Organizations and groups throughout Pinal County are being asked to host OSTC Ambassadors for a thirty-minute presentation and question session—preferably as part of their regular meeting. Representatives will also be present at as many fairs, shows, and public events as possible for discussion and answering questions.

At heart, the success of all these groups and the Education Campaign will depend on the support and interest of the public—of people like those of you reading this article. Thinking about becoming involved? Check out the organizations' websites to learn more or to become a volunteer. Attend an OSTC presentation, or suggest that your group host an Ambassador. And above all, get out and have fun in the open spaces these organizations pledge to conserve.



Farber Celebrates 30 Years

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Time Out



see Sports, page A-8

Paws 4 Life: 70 'Dog Years' Old



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CCJH Adds Honor Students

55 Students inducted into National Junior Honor Society

By Dana Hawman
Special to the News

On Wednesday, September 2, 2015, a simple ceremony marked something quite extraordinary: the induction of 55 students from Cactus Canyon Middle School (Apache Junction Unified School District) into the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS). These students, representing more than 15% of the 8th grade class, each had to qualify with a grade average of 90% or higher and submit an essay telling why they qualify and what they will do for service in the community. They also had to supply a letter of recommendation from an adult.

The National Junior Honor Society was founded in 1929 to recognize outstanding middle level students. More than just an honor roll, NJHS serves to honor those students who have demonstrated excel-



Above: Students gathered in the Cactus Canyon Junior High School gymnasium on Wednesday, September 2, waiting for induction ceremonies to begin. Left (left to right): Zach Langenbach, Michael Jada, and Talon Izbicki are among 55 8th grade students who were recently inducted into the National Junior Honor Society at Cactus Canyon Junior High.

lence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship, and character. "We are looking forward to a great year of community service, academic achievement, fundraising, teamwork, and leadership training," stated NJHS

co-sponsor and Cactus Canyon teacher Tammy Howard. Paige Reesor also co-sponsors NJHS at Cactus Canyon.

Students inducted for 2015-16 are: Alexandra Alvarez

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AJ Mounted Rangers Donate \$5,000 To Boys & Girls Club



AJ Mounted Rangers Duty Officer Allison Strathearn presented a \$5,000 check to Boys & Girls Club Branch Manager Tim Sicocan on September 23 at the Apache Junction Club. The Ranger's goal is to help local youth. Along with some of the club's members are Rangers Robert Clark and James Hutchinson in back and John Seaman in front on the right.

AJ's Citizen Leadership Institute

Register online for Nov. 4 start

Registration is now open to participate in the 18th annual Citizen Leadership Institute. Registration is open to residents and those who work or volunteer in the city of Apache Junction.

Classes start on Wednesday November 4th, 2015 at 6:30pm. The institute meets twice a month through March 2016. The majority of the classes will be held at the Apache Junction Multi-generational Center at 1035 N Idaho Rd. There will be a few classes held off site. To get the specifics please go to ajcity.net/cli to download a full schedule and register for the Institute.

One of the goals of the CLI is to give interested citizens an orientation for serving as possible future members on a City Board or Commission as well as being well informed members of the



Heather Patel, grants administrator with the city, presents at the Leadership Institute.

community. "The City is powerful in shaping our own destiny and future within the guidelines that have been set, and I think the more people we have that are familiar with the process, the better off our community is going to be," said Mayor John Insalaco. "...there's a need to have somewhat of a training ground or class... so

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The News Kidcast

Clear and sunny with highs near 100. Overnight lows in the low 70s.

This week's Weather "Artoonist"

Vylet Smith

Age 5

Desert Vista Elementary



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