



Friends of Carefree, with Saturday's chilly 34° I think we can agree that winter has finally arrived in Carefree. Bundle up! Maricopa County advises that another cold front will settle in this week after the current precipitation passes through today.

Regrettably, and for a variety of unforeseen circumstances, I missed the opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best in the New Year. I will now offer you my sincere wish for a healthy, happy, and prosperous new year as well as in the years ahead.

Two quick things before I dig into the meat of this edition:

This took me be surprise - The US Postal Service has announced a rate increases effective January 4th First Class letter rates increase by 2¢ to 68¢. Check with the PO for other changes.

When I hear criticism directed toward the efforts by the CarefreePark non-profit, and Wendy Mattes, *to secure **accessible** Open Space for preservation and enjoyment for all Carefree residents*, I have to wonder what has prompted it. A good friend always reminds me of one indisputable truth, "follow the money." Could it be that the board members of the Desert Foothills Land Trust are worried about losing donations that might flow to CarefreePark instead? Something to think about.

An important phase of the General Plan process wrapped up December 1st. Thank all of you who took the time to stay engaged and to add your comments on the draft.

Unfortunately, at the start of this new year the General Plan has taken center stage again, sort of. The Carefree voice of vitriol and hatred has reawakened to fuel dissent and perpetrate a gross

misrepresentation of the actual **truth**. The ‘Carefree “*Truth*” email on New Years Day exposed it’s rotten core along with a serious violation of Carefree’s Code of Conduct, most likely by someone in our Town government.

A letter from the State Land Trust [SLT] was received by the Town of Carefree on 12/28/23 regarding the section of the General Plan Draft dealing with the land use specified for the 48 acres across from Sky Ranch. It was addressed to the Mayor, the 6 other council members, town administrator Gary Neiss, and the Planning Director/Zoning Administrator Stacey Bridge-Denzak – **a total of only 9 individuals**.

One of those 9 individuals, or the individual who stamped in the letter Received on 12/28/2023 (possibly the town clerk) took it upon themselves, either directly or through a covert 3rd party, to notify Lyn Hitchon - in violation of their oath. In a manner only a narcissistic sociopath could manage, Lyn Hitchon almost immediately (well, within an hour) submitted a Public Records Request [PRR] for a copy of the letter that only **9** individuals received. Subsequently, on New Year’s day Hitchon released her “Carefree Truth, Issue #1069”.

A resident who had received a copy of the Hitchon email was stunned by the audacity of that violation. That individual submitted a PRR asking for a copy of SLT letter, time and date of receipt, and a copy of the PRR submitted by Lyn Hitchon, along with the time and date of that request.

At the January town council meeting, [Tuesday 01/02/2024], a number of concerned residents spoke during call to the public to express their dismay over the code of conduct violation and the serious breach in trust that was now obvious to anyone other than Hitchon sycophants. The breach demonstrated a complete lack of respect for the mayor who earlier in the meeting was relegated to play second fiddle to Hitchon’s unauthorized disclosure. It was most certainly not her place to preempt the mayor. Perhaps she craved attention or a small measure of relevance.

A special thanks goes out to Mr. John Mattes who uncovered this grievous offense and outlined the specifics during call to the public. I sincerely hope he is successful in exposing the leaker.

Not content to let her gross complicity in this transgression, overreach, and disrespect go, Lyn Hitchon had the audacity to release a follow up email on January 5th, Carefree Truth, Issue #1071", in which she trashed those who spoke about and/or exposed her transgression. Calling the concerned residents "*Fanatics*". Her claim that she was notified by 'one of her readers' rings hollow at best, since the mayor, most (if not all) council members and certainly her friends on staff are among 'her readers'. If the individual who facilitated the leak of that information to Hitchon had a modicum of self-respect they would step up and admit it. If not, and if they are eventually outed, they should be terminated immediately or asked to resign from the council [in one case, possibly for a second time].

I could go on, but I would much rather allow a number of Hitchon's so-called "*Fanatics*" to have their say. I will identify them as such, to protect them from the typical personal attacks launched in Carefree Truth. Those attacks are directed toward anyone who speaks out against subjects supported by Hitchon and especially toward anyone with the backbone to call out Hitchon lies. There is an ample history that Hitchon has used a Private Investigator (her own admission!) in an attempt to dig up dirt on those she wishes to attack. Just ask Mike Farrar or Peter Sample.

Okay, enough from me, I think you get the picture. What follows are comments I have received this past week from concerned residents.

FANATIC 1 - Dear Ms. Hitchon of the infamous Carefree Truth newsletter. Your newsletter is an outlet to spread gossip and to foster hatred among residents. Why do you have a personal vendetta against a group of residents who are trying to raise money to create a park in Carefree for everyone to enjoy? The topography is ideal for those of us that are aging or are new to mountain biking. It gives us a safe place to walk and to ride our bikes without the

dangers of traffic. The land is relatively flat, therefore it is very forgiving to our aging joints. And, because we are so close to downtown, if we did need help, Rural Metro could be with us in minutes unlike other more remote hiking areas where hikers get lost or dehydrated and are unable to get help in time. Perhaps you would not ever use this park, but your repeated attempts to cast a negative light on this park and the people who are trying to create it only reflects badly on you, not on the people who are so generously donating their time and their money to give this gift to Carefree.

FANATIC 2 - Lyn, before calling people fanatics let's get a few things straight. The letter was received at Carefree City Hall and emailed ONLY to Town Council Members and Town Staff at 2:30pm on December 28th. You sent an email to our Town Clerk, Kandace French, at 3:36pm on December 28th...just an hour later. So, either one of our Town Council members, Town Staff or their spouses contacted you within just minutes of receiving that email and told you to request a copy of the letter. That is a violation of the code of conduct and completely undermines any trust Mayor Crane has tried to rebuild between residents and the Town Council. Before you republished the State Land letter on January 1 with your negative commentary did you check with Mayor Crane to see if he would have appreciated the opportunity to first explain it to residents at the January 2 Town Council meeting - NO, you did not. Would you have done that if Former Mayor Peterson was still in office, or do you have so little respect for Mayor Crane you could not wait to undermine him even more? It appears you thrive in a divisive community. Any attempt Mayor Crane makes to create a more united community you go out of your way to destroy.

FANATIC 3 - Get your facts straight Lyn....you are the one spreading malicious misinformation. You wrote, "according to the State, the clause in the draft of the updated Carefree General Plan that addresses changing the land use designation of the 48 acres of State Trust Land is illegal and it was important information (for Carefree Truth) to share with the Carefree voters whose votes are required in order to adopt the new General Plan".

FACT - It is not illegal to change the land designation. One phone call to our General Plan consultant Matt Klyszeiko to confirm whether what you were claiming is true could have saved you from the embarrassment of once again misleading your readers with false information". There is no law that allows the State Land Trust to mandate how a local jurisdiction designates their future land uses. With what you have written to your readers you have just accused our very experienced consultant with Michael Baker Inc. of trying to do something unlawful.

You have undermined Mayor Crane, accused our consultant of attempting to do something illegal and you have misled your readers....keep it up Lyn, you are showing who you really are. If anyone keeps reading or believing your lies, they are only doing so because they are as mean spirited as you are.

Fanatic 4 - Ms. Hitchon,

You describe our beautiful Upper Sonoran Desert as “scrub desert land.” I wonder why you still live here? Clearly you don’t appreciate the incomparable beauty which surrounds us. You also obviously don’t like most of your fellow Carefree residents because you have made it your life mission to write toxic and nasty things about us.

We all know you are not a hiker. But many of us are. And many of us want to save the 48-acres from the never-ending development which is creeping towards and one day will swallow up Carefree. We want an accessible open space where we can walk our dogs or hike or sit on a bench and appreciate the beautiful desert. Carefree does not have an open space park, nor are there plans for it. We have to drive to Scottsdale or to Cave Creek. Why can’t you be supportive of this effort? Why do you need to try to destroy what good people are working hard to accomplish?

Do you ever think about your legacy, Lyn? What do you want to be remembered for? Will people say that Lyn Hitchon was a kind person who tried to make her community a little better? I highly doubt it, because that would certainly be a Carefree Un-Truth.

Fanatic #5 - Lyn Hitchon writes that the 48 acres of State Trust land “is not conducive to peace and tranquility, nor is it conducive to safety for kids or dogs running around and playing” by making it a park. She believes that million-dollar homes should be built next to the “busy arterial road and near the airport” instead of protecting this open space for generations of Carefree residents and visitors to enjoy. I doubt Lyn Hitchon has ever visited the 48 acres of Sonoran desert land to discover the beauty of its native vegetation and the thriving wildlife habitat, as shown below.



Fanatic #6 - Lyn, since you are so well versed in hiking, please provide directions for us to get to the land owned by the Town on the north side so we can hike there.

Of course, we “care to look”, and since you are the expert on what land is beautiful, what is ugly, what deserves to be saved, and what deserves to be destroyed, please give us directions on how to get to this more beautiful land, where to park, how long the trails are, etc., so that we can all go and hike there tomorrow.

P.S. And surely a hiking expert would know that little kids and dogs do not run around loose on a hiking trail....

Fanatic #7 - To whom it may concern:

The letter from the SLT was only addressed to the Mayor, the Town Council Members, the Town Administrator, and the Planning & Zoning Director. This is obvious in the screen shot provided in the Carefree Truth newsletter. The author wrote that "The letter from the State Land Trust and the accompanying photo of the parcel was emailed to me by one of my readers." Since the SLT letter recipients were specifically identified, and no others were listed, it seems that one of the original recipients of the SLT letter shared it with the newsletter's author. The fact that a private Carefree resident was given the news which then ended up in the Carefree Truth newsletter, before the Mayor announced it publicly in the 1/2/24 Town Council meeting, was a bit odd and it seemed like it was done to purposefully undermine the efforts of Carefree

Park to save the land, which is a grassroots effort of those who believe in open space preservation of the last accessible land in Carefree, from development. I kindly request that the author of Carefree Truth not make claims that cannot 100% be verified as being true, such as "We have noticed that no members of this group, who do nothing but criticize everything that happens in Carefree, never make an appearance at any of the many celebratory events in the Garden, such as Veterans Day, the Christmas Tree Lighting, Chanukah, etc." How does the author know that we haven't gone to these events? I did go to the Christmas Tree Lightning and watched the Cactus Kickers (they were delightful!). Many of us attend the monthly Town Council meetings, participate in meetings such as the Planning & Zoning and the Economic Development, go to the Farmer's Market on Fridays, and have even run for open Town positions. Does that sound like people who are not interested in the future of Carefree or who don't support the Town??

One more thing, the Carefree Desert Garden is just that, a garden!! It is a lovely botanical garden, but if you actually read the names on the plant placards, you would see that they are from Mexico, Texas, Arizona, etc. It is not currently filled with truly local flora and fauna. Carefree Park will be a natural, open space preserve that will maintain the existing habitat for not only the wildlife that live there but also the plants and trees that are unique to the Sonoran Desert ecosystem. Please remember that we have the same mission as the DFLT, which is to save and protect the unique and delicate Sonoran Desert, in perpetuity. Carefree is a small community and a special town; let's work together to create something positive for its legacy and for the benefit of all its residents and visitors alike!

Fanatic #8 - The author of Carefree Truth can easily be identified as a liar. The date stamp shows the STATE LAND letter was opened by someone at Town Hall and emailed to the Town Council members at 2.30pm on December 28. It was not emailed to random "carefree truth" readers. It was emailed ONLY to the 7 Town Council Member and Stacey Bridge-Denzak and Gary Neiss. It could have also been the Town Clerk or Secretary that let Lyn Hitchon know.

1 hour and 6 minutes later (3:36pm December 28), Lyn Hitchon sends an email to Kandace and asks her to give her a copy of the letter. The only physical way possible for Lyn to know to make that request is if one of those 9 people called or forwarded the information to Lyn and told her to request the letter (or of course the original person that opened the letter and emailed it to the 9 individuals). And that is a breach of code of conduct or more serious if it was a staff member like the Town Clery or the Town Secretary. And if that individual transferred the info to their personal email address before sending it to Lyn as she references ("The email address was not one from Carefree Town Hall") then that person clearly knows they should not have done it because they

didn't want to forward it to Lyn under their Town email address which could easily be traced and requested by a public information request. That person switched to their personal email address intentionally to hide that they were sending it to Lyn.

By 12:34pm the next day, December 29, Kandace emails the letter to Lyn.

And there you have it, for now.

Respectfully submitted by John Traynor

Notice: In addition to reporting *facts*, this Newsletter will contain the author's perspective on topics or events affecting Carefree residents. That perspective may not be popular with the mayor, council members, staff, town attorney, or Facebook Trolls. The fact is, I don't care what they think.

If we lived in a perfect world, we would need but one newspaper.

God Bless America.

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"The power of accurate observation is frequently called cynicism by those who don't have it." - George Bernard Shaw