

# Gym Rat Rantings

by Bob Ring



## A Year of Writing a Newspaper Column

Let me tell you about my first year of columns for the Foothills section of the *Arizona Daily Star*.

In November 2008 I wrote about inviting a bunch of different animals to the family Thanksgiving dinner table – animals Pat and I had encountered in the previous year, like a pool-savy gila monster, a roving bobcat, window-crashing doves, a road-walking buck, endlessly circling hawks, a house-invading cactus wren, a scrawny coyote, and a stinging scorpion.

In December I wrote about my Christmas wish list: finishing Foothills road improvements - including roadside landscaping; building a bridge on East Snyder road between North Kolb Road and North Sabino Canyon Road; and keeping Sabino Canyon open all year in the face of rain and flood damage, Buffel grass, and mountain lions.

January's column told of Pat's and my trip to Pasadena to view the Rose Bowl parade. I heard from a local mother, whose daughter attends Cal Poly, who had missed the TV coverage of the Cal Poly float that won the "Viewer's Choice" award, and who appreciated my coverage in the *Foothills Star*.

In February I really stepped into it with a column about the need for a cross-town freeway in the Foothills. I was barraged with emotional comments - the nicest of which involved my moving somewhere else if I wanted better access to the freeway.

I chose a non-controversial subject in March - attending a knitting retreat with Pat in Mexico's artistic community, San Miguel de Allende. Kudos about the article from Pat's knitting friends helped allay some of the tirades from the previous month's "freeway" article.

I changed pace dramatically in April and May with five articles on the History of the Catalina Foothills and the Tanque Verde Valley. I was greatly gratified at the positive response; readers commented about "really looking forward to the next article."

In June I wrote about taking the Diamond Express bus trip from Foothills Mall to Phoenix to attend a Diamondbacks baseball game. Several readers agreed that the trip is a very enjoyable bargain.

I squeezed two columns into the month of July – one on viewing 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks. Many readers were intrigued with my glowing description of Pat's and my fireworks watching place that was revealed in the last sentence as the upper patio deck at our house.

The *Foothills Star* made a colorful food spread out of the second July article - summer dining deals. Unfortunately restaurants continue to close (like the Ventana Room at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort) in this difficult economic environment.

The August column on wine was fun to write and Pat and I certainly enjoyed the extensive research required. We helped Yvonne Foucher at CataVinos, our favorite neighborhood wine shop, celebrate her two-year anniversary along with more than 400 others at a rocking party on September 5<sup>th</sup>.

In September I talked about writing this column, “Gym Rat Rantings.” My friends in my Building Bones class liked the article – even the ladies whose buddies e-mailed them that they recognized their backsides in the photo.

In October, I did what I’m doing here, revisited the last year’s columns – but in a little more detail.

Finally, last month in November, I talked about Pat’s and my recent travels and our happiness to be home for Thanksgiving.

You can read any of these columns on my website at <http://ringbrothershistory.com> under “Bob’s Projects.”