

Loose in the Foothills

by Bob Ring

My Christmas Wish List

Once again this year I mailed my Christmas wish list to Santa Claus. I figure it couldn't hurt.

Dear Santa,

Please bring me these three gifts for Christmas:

Finish Road Improvements in the Foothills. In the wink of an eye Santa, please complete the long planned road improvements on Kolb, from Sabino Canyon to Sunrise; on Sunrise, between Craycroft and Sabino Canyon; and on Tanque Verde, between Santa Catalina Boulevard and Houghton. Please have the road workers do the intersections at the same time as the roadway, so as not to prolong the mess. Make sure that construction worker parking doesn't interfere with the already restricted traffic flow. Don't let the workers put up those warm-fuzzy "Slow Down - My Mommy Works Here" signs. And please dear Santa, give them real rocks and plants to landscape the completed roadways. Finally, give the workers barricades and traffic cones that self destruct ten seconds after the roadwork is completed, instead of taking root on the side of the road.

Complete the Snyder Bridge. No, no, Santa, not the bridge over Sabino Creek that Foothillers have been arguing about for years. I'm talking about a bridge on Snyder about a mile west of Sabino Creek, between Kolb and Sabino Canyon - you know over that wash that floods the road every time more than ten drops of rain fall.

For more than a decade I've watched the Transportation Department work on that roadway "dip," mostly sweeping away the rocks and mud after the water goes down. Culvert engineering must be tougher than "rocket science." The only thing they've learned is to leave "Road Closed" signs on each side of the wash for instant use when required.

Keep Sabino Canyon Open all Year. Just to be clear, Santa, that's the park not the road. Tucsonans were relieved in October to learn that the Arizona Geological Survey concluded that cliff walls collapsing and cascades of boulders (as happened in July 2006) occur in Sabino Canyon only every 1,000 years or so. It appears that none of the study participants were present during the earthquake in 1887 that many believe caused a similar "cascade of boulders."

Sabino Canyon reopened to visitors last November 15th, after repairs were completed, following floods and those rock slides in 2006. But what about the future? For example, what can we do about invasive grasses adding to the fire danger and the erosion that would follow with heavy rains?

You may recall Santa that development work began on bridges, picnic areas and ponds in Sabino Canyon in 1934 under Federal emergency relief programs that followed the Great Depression. Please put in a good word in Washington, D.C., Santa, that there is more "infrastructure" work to be done in today's difficult financial times. Maybe we need a Buffelgrass Emergency Relief Program.

Finally, Santa, I hope you can do something about those mountain lions that periodically roam into Sabino Canyon and disrupt hikers. Does Rudolph have any extra bright red flashing noses? At least that would provide some extra warning.

I've been good all year, Santa,

Bob

Editors Note: On Christmas morning, Mr. Ring will be out and about in the Foothills checking on Santa's progress on his Christmas wish list.



Courtesy of Bob Ring

Green-conscious columnist Bob Ring is opposed to faux landscaping of Foothills roadways like this metal century plant in front of a concrete cliff on Sunrise, just west of Craycroft.