

The Mount Lemmon ECHOES

Volume 46, No. 9

October 2019

Trico trims trees on Mount Lemmon to prevent outages and forest fires

[Editor's Note: In 2018 electric transmission and distribution lines operated by Pacific Gas & Electric ignited the most destructive wildfire in California history, killing 85 people and ravaging three communities. PG&E has since filed for bankruptcy as a result of extensive litigation stemming from the fire. At the urging of Mt. Lemmon stakeholders, Trico Electric Cooperative has taken a proactive path to prevent a similar occurrence here. (This article is based on material provided by Trico.)]

Since April, Trico Electric Cooperative line crews and Asplundh Tree Expert Company have been working in tandem to trim trees that are encroaching on the power line right-of-way on Mt. Lemmon.

In early April, Trico's Patrolman started to patrol the right-of-way by vehicle and foot (in inaccessible areas), identifying trees that needed to be cut back. Trico crews started trimming trees a week later.

Some trees and limbs were out of reach of Trico crews working from the ground with saws on long poles. While Trico's linemen are good at climbing utility poles, they are not trained to climb trees. In June, Trico hired Asplundh, whose employees are skilled in working from bucket trucks and scaling trees in inaccessible areas or where limbs exceed the height of the bucket.

Because it was spotted owl breeding season on USFS land, Asplundh began its trimming work within the village of Summerhaven,

while Trico crews used quieter battery-powered chainsaws, which don't disturb the owls, to continue trimming what they could where the right-of-way crossed USFS lands. Asplundh then moved into these areas at the end of August, the end of the owl's breeding season.

Asplundh has completed the Summerhaven area and worked down to the Soldiers Camp area. Next year, Trico employees will continue to maintain the right-of-way to prevent outages and remove hazards.

Twice a year, Trico will continue to use a helicopter to patrol the Mt. Lemmon power line to keep an eye on the remote areas, which are difficult to access by other means. When an outage occurs in the winter, Trico line crews use a Snow Cat or tracked Polaris, and sometimes a helicopter, to get close and then hike in deep snow to repair poles and restore power.



Asplundh employee climbs a tall aspen to remove encroaching limbs that could threaten Trico's transmission line to Mt. Lemmon.
| Photo courtesy Trico Electrical Cooperative

SAVE THE DATE

OCT	SAT 6	Craft Fair: Market with a Cause	Next to MLCC 11 am – 4 pm [Benefits So. AZ Pet Food Bank]
	FRI 11	BUNKO	MLCC 6:30 pm – 9 pm Bring a snack & your beverage
	SAT/SUN 12-13	Craft Fair: Market with a Cause	Next to MLCC 11 am – 4 pm [Benefits So. AZ Pet Food Bank]
	SAT 19	Mountain Meetings	MLWD Water Office 8 am MLHOA Board MLCC 10 am MLWC MLCC 1 pm
	SAT 27	Craft Fair: Market with a Cause	Next to MLCC 11 am – 4 pm [Benefits So. AZ Pet Food Bank]
NOV	SAT 16	Mountain Meetings	MLWD Water Office 8 am MLHOA Board MLCC 10 am MLWC MLCC 1 pm

The Mt. Lemmon Echoes seeks new editor for 2020

This publication needs one or more motivated individuals to take or share lead responsibilities for writing, editing content, working with contributors and advertisers, laying out the newsletter, and coordinating with the commercial printer to produce 10 monthly issues a year (February through November). This is a great opportunity to serve the Mt. Lemmon community. If you have an interest, please contact Linda Currin at lcurren@q.com or Bernadette Blatt at bernablatt@gmail.com.

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The Mount Lemmon Echoes is published 10 times a year, February through November, by the MLHOA.

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PO Box 812
Mt. Lemmon, AZ 85619

PIMA COUNTY**From the Desk of Steve Christy
District 4 Supervisor, Pima County**

As mountain mornings become brisk with that nip of autumn in the air, thoughts of the snow that we hope will follow become top of mind. Rumor has it we can expect a repeat of last winter's snow days, and perhaps a few more, this season.

We will meet this month with the Mt. Lemmon Business and Economic Association, the US Forest Service, the Pima County Office of Emergency Management, as well as the Sheriff's and Transportation Departments, to formulate an action plan, similar to the effort mounted during the 2018 Stage Two fire alert following the 2017 Burro Fire. As we learned then, communication is essential and public safety is paramount.

Speaking of the Transportation Department, we wish Joe Soto a happy "next chapter" as he retires after 35 years of service—both on the mountain and in the valley below. I know we all are going to miss his "can do" spirit on the mountain. We are fortunate to have a great team that will carry on his work.

County applies for grant to reduce congestion in Summerhaven

Pima County has applied for a grant from the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) to fund some of the recommendations from a consultant's study to reduce vehicular and foot traffic congestion in Summerhaven. (See the July 2019 issue of The Echoes for a discussion on the study's preliminary recommendations.)

MLWC**Mt. Lemmon Woman's Club News
by Connie Taylor, president**

The first of October is already here and we have seen events and activities come and go: the Pancake Breakfast, the Craft Fair, Bunko, the monthly MLWD, MLHOA and MLWC meetings, and a special presentation by Frank Rose on "The Catalina Mountains: A Special Treasure"—I feel that Frank Rose is a "treasure" to our mountain! And lest I forget, September 23 was the first day of Autumn. Does it feel like fall is in the air? Activities are winding down, but the Mt. Lemmon Woman's Club keeps going!

The Southern District Fall Conference was held on September 28, hosted by the Benson Junior Women's Club. At this conference we celebrated "Kids at Heart," and the director of philanthropy from Ronald McDonald House Charities spoke. The Done-in-a-Day Project collected items for the Ronald McDonald House.

September 28 was also our special Woman's Club Members event, "Music on the Mountain," at Drs. Henry and Dorothy Johnson's cabin on N. Tucson Avenue, with good food and lively music.

Three of our members are going to the GFWC-AZ South Central Region Fall Conference at the Sheraton Hotel in Tucson, October 25–26. There we will meet ladies from New Mexico, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Arizona. Every six years GFWC-AZ has the honor of hosting this conference. The Done-in-a-Day Project will be filling bags for "Emerge Center Against Domestic Abuse."

Our next meeting will be Saturday, October 16, 1:00 p.m. at MLCC. See you there!

Do you have ideas for making Mt. Lemmon an even better place to live or visit?

Are you interested in keeping our community sustainable for the future?

**Become a board member of the
Mt. Lemmon Homeowners
Association**

Contact Michael Stanley at
lemmonh2o@aol.com or (520) 576-1505.

MLFD

Take to the trails

by Dan Leade, captain, MLFD

As the summer comes to an end and the weather begins to cool, one of the best times to enjoy hiking on Mount Lemmon arrives. Bird watching, viewing the changing fall colors, exercising, or simply exploring are all good reasons to take to the trails.

That said, it is important to remember that there are potential hazards associated with hiking mountain trails that can result in a host of different types of injuries, some of which can be life-threatening:

- Getting lost is an all too common occurrence on Mount Lemmon.
- Adverse weather conditions can occur at a moment's notice on the mountain.
- Many trails have been affected by wildfire and pose unique hazards that are not found in other areas, such as falling trees or branches and loose soil and rocks.
- There are also quite a few potentially dangerous animals and plants.

In order to help hikers enjoy the outdoors and mitigate risk, the National Parks Service identifies ten essential health and safety considerations when planning a hike:

navigation	a way to start a fire
sun protection	a repair kit or tools
insulation	nutrition
illumination	hydration
first-aid supplies	an emergency shelter

Here are a few more tips for a safe and enjoyable hike:

- Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Check the weather forecast on the day of your hike.
- Wear proper hiking gear.
- Hike with at least one other person.
- Research the trail and stay on it.

No list will be all inclusive, and it is impossible to prepare for every possible emergency, but this is a great place to start. Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Happy hiking!

Typical Trail Calls to MLFD

Mt Lemmon Fire District responds to a multitude of calls on the trails within our service area. Trail calls are categorized into the following general types:

- Rescue/trail extrication
- Fall injuries
- Dehydration/environmental emergencies
- Lost hikers
- Animal encounters
- Campfires/wildfires/smoke

There are times when more than one type of specific need occurs on the same call. Rescue calls in particular require extensive manpower from several different agencies. All types of trail calls demand working in difficult conditions and unfavorable terrain.

MLFD receives two grants to purchase jaws of life

Extricating victims from vehicular crashes can be extremely dangerous for both the victim and the firefighters, but the proper tools—paired with firefighter training—can reduce this risk.

The Mount Lemmon Fire District applied for and has received grants to purchase extrication equipment, also known as the “jaws of life.” The Arizona Governor’s Office of Highway Safety awarded MLFD \$30,000, and an additional \$40,000 is coming to MLFD from a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighter’s Grant.

MLFD**MLFD issues its five-year strategic plan**

The Mount Lemmon Fire District has completed our strategic planning process. As part of this process, we have reviewed our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges and then developed goals and objectives for the District. We invite everyone to review the document at our website (www.mlfdaz.org) or at the fire station, or to access the QR code available at the post office and fire station.

Dan Leade

The tough road ahead for MLFD

by Bernadette Blatt

Have you read the Mt. Lemmon Fire District's first-ever strategic plan? I'll bet you haven't. Most of us take MLFD's fire and medical services for granted. With one of the highest property tax assessments in the state—a chunk of which directly funds MLFD—why shouldn't services continue at the quality and reliability we expect?

Fire Chief Joe Gunia's pie chart in the March 2019 *Echoes* confirmed a general belief that the vast majority of the district's service calls (medical, fire and other) were for visitors—131 calls (82%) in 2018. Only 29 calls (18%) were to Mt. Lemmon residents and businesses. So, what does that really mean in dollars and cents?

Based on MLFD's current budget (see MLFD's website):

- The lion's share of MLFD's \$580,000 in expenses is paid for by property tax revenues—\$559,000.
- Only \$21,000 in revenue comes from other sources.

This prompted me as a taxpayer to crunch a few numbers:

- Property owners pay a whopping \$19,000 per call (taxes divided by 29 calls).
- Visitors/others pay virtually nothing for their 131 calls (no math required).

This is how it's always been. No one claims it's fair.

So, what does the new strategic plan tell us about future costs and revenues?

- The district must begin to set aside an estimated \$82,000 a year (a 14% budget increase) in order to replace the fire engine, tankers, etc. when they reach the end of

their useful life.

- To retain and attract qualified employees (employees haven't had a significant increase since 2012), a modest 1% annual salary increase is needed to make compensation more competitive. (The estimated five-year cost of \$73,600 would add 3% to the annual budget.)
- To make medical response available around the clock, the district will need to add a paramedic for the third shift. (No cost details presented.)
- MLFD needs to budget additional funds to correct serious deficiencies in the station house and to replace the roof and asphalt apron. (It is implied that \$94,000 already on hand won't be adequate.)

There are other worthy objectives in the strategic plan, but those above are the big-ticket items. MLFD's first step in most cases will be to refine/improve the current analyses and replacement schedules, which will give a better handle on projected costs. The second step is to figure out how to pay for all this.

The strategic plan identifies some potential opportunities for generating additional revenues. For example: increase the service area to expand the tax base, have commercial and tax exempt entities on the mountain subscribe to MLFD services; and obtain more grants. MLFD has said in the past that billing visitors directly for services received doesn't generate much revenue. Common wisdom would say that raising property taxes is self-limiting: higher taxes depress property values, thereby limiting tax revenues.

I don't envy Fire Chief Gunia and the District's board for the task they have taken on. Clearly some outside-the-box thinking will be required to significantly reduce the central inequity in MLFD funding—to not just increase revenues but also shift far more costs to others who also benefit from the district's services.

Next month, we'll look more deeply into possible options and whether there are actions that community members can take to help move the needle on this persistent issue. Have an idea? Email me at bernablatt@gmail.com or by private message on Nextdoor.

WILDFIRE PROTECTION

Crews create a firebreak northwest of Summerhaven

The Fort Apache fuels crew and State of Arizona crews from Florence and Tucson have completed a firebreak as part of the Northwest Summerhaven Firescape Project. The Fort Apache crew is working on the project through the Reserved Treaty Rights Lands program.

The firebreak, originally planned on US Forest Service land adjacent to private property in the Turkey Run area, was relocated to the ridge line to be even more effective in stopping wildfires coming from the west and north.

Work also continues with thinning on US Forest Service land outside of the firebreak.

Turkey Run thinning project nears completion

The Arizona Department of Fire and Forestry Management provided a chipper to replace the one that has been broken all summer. The functioning chipper makes it possible to chip rather than burn in place more of the standing piles of waste wood cut on private property.

The thinning project has been funded by ADFFM as well as by contributions from property owners in the Turkey Run area. Some property owners have still not taken advantage of this opportunity to protect their properties—and Summerhaven's watershed—from the risk of wildfire. Please contact MLFD to get on board.




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3–6 pm, MLCC**

CONTESTANTS

- ☀ To enter contact Jenni Zimmerman at jenni@mtlemmonrealty.com or 861-0161
- ☀ Prepare 3 gallons of your favorite chili
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ATTENDEES

- ☀ \$5.00 donation benefits MLFD Volunteers
- ☀ Cast your vote for the best chili
- ☀ Donations of corn bread and baked goods are appreciated!



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PANCAKE BREAKFAST

September 1, MLFD | Photos courtesy P. Thomas, B. Blatt



PANCAKE BREAKFAST

MLHOA has donated \$1,075 in proceeds from the September 1 Pancake Breakfast to the Mt. Lemmon Fire District. The car raffle generated another \$835 for MLFD. More than 60 attendees received flu shots from Walgreens.

Thanks to the community for the large turnout, and to Linda and John Mulay, who did a terrific job organizing the event. Thanks also to the following for donations of food and supplies, set up/clean up, cooking and serving at the breakfast:

Mike Bernstein	Sawmill Run Restaurant
Catalina Blair	Mike Stanley
Bernadette Blatt	Jerry & Connie Taylor
Dennis Cozzetti	Tom Thomas
Lou & Sally Crum	Sandi & Merle Triplett
Linda Currin	Jenni Zimmerman
Debbie Fagan	Mt. Lemmon Firefighters
John Perchorowicz	



FEATHERED FRIENDS

Mt. Lemmon supports nesting platform project for Mt. Lemmon Cordilleran Flycatchers

Thomas Miller sold handmade platforms at the annual Pancake Breakfast and donated \$96 from the proceeds to MLFD. In August and September, 33 people joined the COFL Nesting Network by purchasing 42 platforms to hang in or near their cabins. Some people have stained or painted the platforms to match their cabins or present a cheery welcome when Mt. Lemmon's very own Cordilleran flycatchers return in late spring to build their nests and raise their hatchlings.

Many thanks to everyone who supported Thomas and this project, including master carpenter Glen Schaefer, who cut all the pieces from wood donated by Sally and Lou Crum, Glen Schaefer and Susie Pearce, and David and Bernadette Blatt, and also Dr. Charles van Riper III, who provided technical guidance.



Did you know? North America has nearly 3 billion fewer birds than it did 50 years ago, a 29% decrease according to a study recently published in *Science*.

MOUNTAIN KIDS

A summer of fun and personal growth for the Sky Island Kids Club

by Christina Grossman

Nestled in the mesquites on the northeast side of Tucson is the beautiful Rancho Merlita, the private residence of Diana and John Osborne and the former guest ranch of cosmetics icon Merle Norman. Diana graciously offered Rancho Merlita for a pool party as this year's closing event for the Sky Island Kids Club.

Surrounded by beautiful and majestic cacti and trees, the pool and grounds, much like the mountains, are a haven from stress and the hectic life of the city. For the children, it was a space to come back together as mountain kids, but in a decidedly non-mountain setting. It was amazing to see them together, having fun, and just being kids.



Photo courtesy P. Winsten

In this second year of the Sky Island Kids Club, we attempted yet again to provide the children a place where they can just be themselves and be accepted. We saw all the children grow into themselves in an amazing way. A few of them have been so shy, my child included, and now have come out of their shell and can talk the afternoon away with

the other children. For others, it has given them a chance to be outside and to just have fun, the same as we did as children. In our group, we have a ballet dancer, video game aficionados, artists, an activist in preserving the habitat of the flycatcher birds, nature-seeker adventurers, a superhero against cancer, gymnasts, and much more. Mount Lemmon, we have some incredible kids!



Photo courtesy P. Winsten

We want to thank the Mount Lemmon HOA, Mount Lemmon Woman's Club for opening their speaker program to the kids, Mary Lou and Bill Piatkiewicz, Diana and John Osborne, Mike Stanley, Henry Johnson, Leigh Anne Thrasher, Jasmine the Donkey, Pam Harmon and Teiko Miller for helping our Sky Island Kids Club come into fruition this Summer of 2019.

IN MEMORIAM

Russell Severian

Russell Severian, 58, passed away on September 1, 2019. He is survived by his wife Cathy and three children. For nearly 20 years Russell worked at Pima County's waste treatment facility in Summerhaven.



NEIGHBORHOODS

The news from Soldier's Camp by Chuck Huber

The 2019 Monsoons

The Soldier's Camp Recreational Residences had a moist summer—good for the flowers, and good for the mushrooms! The monsoon season brought some heavy and some persistent light rains. As of mid-September, the creek in the Bear Wallow drainage continues to run.

New Community Members

Several new members joined our community in 2019.

- **Cabin 27: Mark and Linda Kimble.** Cabin 27 is “The Green Cabin” in Lower Soldier's Camp—everyone knows it. It is situated at the end of our road, surrounded by huge pines. It has a second floor “door to nowhere” because the US Forest Service forced previous owners to remove the small second floor balcony the cabin once sported.
- **Cabin 33A: Wolf and Ortrud Schuh.** Cabin 33A is perched on the side of a steep hill and is one of the oldest cabins in the development. It overlooks the confluence of several roads and the Sunset Trail, and Wolf and Ortrud have a great view of the many lost hikers taking the wrong routes.
- **Cabin 36: Fred and Lisa Knapp.** Cabin 36 had been Don and Rosemary Clay's cabin, the “Typical Lot” that was used by the USFS as the basis for appraisal back in 2010. What excitement that was! Fred has just completed significant updates—it's now quite the showplace.
- **Cabin 51: Michael Singervalt and Paul Floro.** Cabin 51 is a rustic A-frame perched on the top of the Fern Ridge hill. It has an outstanding view to the east: a very scenic look at the Upper Soldiers and Bear Wallow ridges and the Mt. Bigelow radio towers.

Welcome to our newest residents!



Robert T. Zimmerman
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"Debbie has been helping us care for our cabin for 4 years now and we're so grateful. She does everything from spring cleaning to monthly and some repairs along the way. We come up here to relax, and that's what we get to do thanks to Debbie!"

Laura & Doug Mance

"Debbie has cleaned our Tucson home and mountain cabin for over 6 years. She is always on time, thorough, focused and detail oriented. She wipes down our kitchen and bath walls, uses the most amazing stainless polish and her vacuum is powerful. Our kids favorite gift from us is the gift of Debbie cleaning their house."

Pam & Dennis Winsten

MOUNTAIN DINING

Dining Hours

The Cookie & Pizza Cabin (576-1010)

Monday thru Friday 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

The Iron Door (576-1321)

Monday/Thursday/Friday: 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday: 9:00 a.m.–5 p.m.,

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MLCC

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the year.

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Mt. Lemmon Community Center

The Mt. Lemmon Community Center (MLCC) is part of Pima County's Natural Resources Parks and Recreation (NRPR) department. The center is located in Summerhaven. The facility is dependent upon local volunteers to staff and support the visitors center. The mission is to welcome all who visit the facility and to promote Summerhaven, Mt. Lemmon and Pima County, Arizona. To reserve the MLCC, call Kelly Cheeseman, Pima County Parks and Recreation, 520-724-5208, or email Kelly.Cheeseman@pima.gov.

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About the MLHOA

Mt. Lemmon Homeowners Association (MLHOA) was formed in 1969 to protect the welfare of the Mt. Lemmon community and to be involved in all aspects of its improvement. The concerns of the organization are not limited to private property owners. Full membership with voting rights is accorded to private owners and leased land holders upon payment of yearly dues. Being organized, having a legal fund and having active local voice participation enables the Association to accomplish most of its goals. The Association organizes social events such as potlucks, pancake breakfasts, ice cream socials and raffles, enabling owners to mingle. The Annual Dinner and Meeting is held each year on the first Tuesday after taxes.

Pima County has said the MLHOA is the strongest and

most respected homeowner's organization in the entire county.

Members of the board of directors are Mike Stanley, president; Jenni Zimmerman, vice-president; Linda Currin, treasurer; Sally Crum, secretary; Bernadette Blatt and Barbara McLean, Echoes co-editors; and members-at-large John Mulay, Pete Krauss, Debbie Fagan, Glen Schager, Mike Bernstein, Tom Thomas, Bill Piatkiewicz and Matt Grossman.

The Mt. Lemmon Echoes is the primary communication arm of the MLHOA. It is published monthly, from February to November. Advertising in the Echoes for one year (10 issues) is \$100 for a proportional business card, \$250 for a quarter page and \$500 for a half page.

Check the address panel on the back page for your MLHOA renewal date.

Mount Lemmon Homeowner's Association
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