

Inside SDH

Sonoran Desert Homeschoolers • Tucson, AZ • January 2008

NEW YAHOO GROUP FOR SDH YOUTH

by Sybelle V. and Donna J.

Did you know that our roster has over 60 youth 12 and older on it? Do you know where they are? Wouldn't it be fun if they themselves knew where the others are?

By now most of the parents of one of those youth have received an invitation from our newest Yahoo Group and hopefully you have sent your child's name and what email address to use for them to join.

SDH-Youth was set up to help our youth 12 and older to stay connected. This group allows them to keep or make new friends with others in SDH. They can just talk about things, or organize social or home school related events, lunch dates, movie nights, etc.

The group is moderated and it is invisible for anyone browsing or searching Yahoo groups. Joining it is only possible after being invited. Parents can join also, if they wish. However, they are discouraged from posting, since this is a group for the younger crowd. It should meet their needs, the same way SDH-Discuss does for us.

If you have a child in that age group, but did not receive an invitation, this may be for one of the following reasons: you were not on the November roster; you did not list your children on the form when you joined SDH or did not list their birth date; you have no email address listed on the roster; your email is set to not receive invitations or the invitation is in your junk folder. If you did not receive an invitation for whatever the reason and you would like your child 12 or older to be invited, let us know.

We are also still working on a system to know when children turn 12, so we can invite them at that point. In the meantime, if your child has a birthday and is not invited shortly after, let us know.



INTER-HOMESCHOOL SOFTBALL GAME

by Lara B.

Last month's softball game which was postponed (due to drenched fields) has been rescheduled for Monday, January 14. All other information remains the same: 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Lincoln Park (4325 S. Pantano Road, south of Golf Links) Fields 2 and 3, Ramada 7.

We have decided to bring hotdogs for everyone; players, their families, and all SDH people who come to watch the game. So please come and cheer us on - everyone is invited. Bring a potluck contribution and we will have a fun game and lunch! (If you'd like vegetarian hotdogs, please let me know so I have enough of those.) Also, remember to bring your own serviceware and drinks. Hope to see everyone there!



CYT "ANNIE"

by Laura N.

Please sign up for "Annie" by Friday, January 4. We now have a choice between two school days showings: Wednesday, February 6 or Thursday, February 7, both at 12:00 noon. If you have already signed up for Thursday's show and would like to change to Wednesday, let me know. Both shows still have spaces available. Tickets are \$4.00 per person. Payment (*made payable to CYT Tucson*) must be made in advance. I plan to be at park day on Tuesday, January 8 and that will be the absolute latest to sign up and pay for this show. No refunds are issued, so please make sure you can attend. We will meet as a group at Crowder Hall (U of A) and go in to the play together.



2008 GEOGRAPHY BEE

by Donna J.

Do you love learning more about the world? Or are you a whiz when it comes to geography facts? Then get ready for the 2008 Pima County Home Educators National Geographic Bee, scheduled for Saturday, January 12 at noon in the large meeting room of the Woods Memorial Branch Library, 3455 N. First Ave. Registration for participants will begin at 11:45. Due to some really tight scheduling (another event will be in the room until 11:30), I will be doing a quick 15-minute setup. If you can come at 11:30 to help by moving around a few chairs or tables, please do.

All homeschoolers in grades four to eight may compete. Everyone is welcome to attend the event and cheer on our bee participants. Children too young to compete, or those who don't want to officially participate this year, are welcome to join in a quick practice round before the bee begins. This is a great way for kids to see what the bee is like and prepare for the day when they may want to compete.

Who can officially participate? The bee is open to homeschoolers in grades four through eight who meet National Geographic's eligibility requirements and who are not over the age of 15 by the time of the national level competition. Eligible students don't need to pre-register to participate. All you have to do is register on the day of the bee. *Please note, students competing in the homeschool bee may not be attending publicly funded virtual academies.* According to National Geographic's rules, students enrolled in public or private schools may not compete as part of a homeschool association's bee and, conversely, students who are homeschooled must participate through a registered homeschool association. To hold a competition, there must be a minimum of six eligible students.

More information about the bee, its eligibility requirements, and study resources may also be found on the SDH web site's geography bee page: <http://www.hozho.homestead.com/GeographyBee.html> and on the National Geographic Bee web site: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geographybee/>

While pre-registration isn't required, please contact me if your child is planning to compete. This will help me confirm that I have the minimum number of students needed to hold the competition and I can also send you more detailed information about the bee.

HARRY POTTER CLASS

by Kim B.

More of Harry Potter: A Mythological and Literary Treasure Hunt! Following the clues from the Harry Potter books to find the magical treasures of our own world. We are using the books as an entry into literature and mythology. Class takes place on Fridays from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. We are in the community room at the Bookman's on Grant and Campbell.

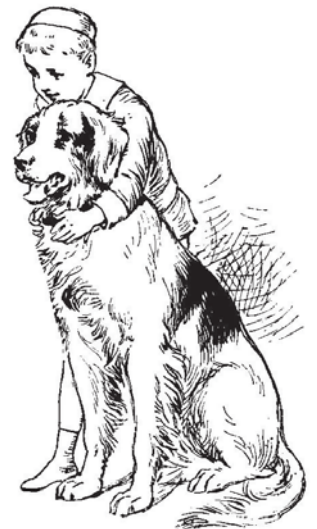
This time the class will be broken into two sessions. The first session will run from January 18 through March 7. This session we will read Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. The second session will run from March 21 to May 9. We will read Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. Same time, same place.

This class is designed for kids who are familiar with the books. We will read through them again, but familiarity is a must (even if it's watching the movie). We may discuss things out of order that could spoil the plot for those unfamiliar with the books. The kids can read the books in any format. Listening to an audio book or having a parent read are perfectly acceptable. The age limit is 9 and up. The books we will be reading are longer, more intense, and have more mature themes than the first two books. The class is long at 1 1/2 hours and we spend a lot of time discussing the books. This time I want to spend more time doing a "close" reading with the books; picking out themes, studying characters, and understanding plot.

I also plan to have the students write one paper per session. I will help them learn to write an essay and we will use the books to give us ideas. The length and breadth of the papers will depend on the age and ability of the students. It may vary from a couple of paragraphs to two pages. If your child does not write then he/she can transcribe the paper to a parent.

You can do one or both sessions. If your child is interested in the first session, please let me know by January 11. I will need to have an idea of how many students to expect. The limit will be 20 students. Also, if your child was in my previous class I will still need to be notified if he/she wants to attend again.

A blurb about my background: I have a B.A. in English and an M.A. in Humanities with a focus in literature. I taught Rhetoric and Humanities at the college level and literature at a private school. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.



SDH SHIRT ORDER

by Lara B.

I have the shirt order in, but will not be at park Christmas or New Years, so January 8 is the next time I will be at park with the remaining orders. If someone wants their order before that, please contact me and we can make arrangements.

ROOTS & SHOOTS

by Lara B.

Over the next few weeks there will be many different kinds of activities scheduled. A few of them will likely be in January, so please keep an eye and ear out for those, as they obviously will not make it into this newsletter. As always, everyone is welcome to do as many or as few R&S activities as they wish, it is always open to all!



GEOGRAPHY CLUB

by Donna J.

We will be traveling to Japan in January. I will post more information soon. If you are not on SDH discuss and want information about this meeting, please call me. In February, Jill will be our tour guide for a trip to Peru. That meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, February 20 at the River Branch Library.

AZ OPERA SIGN-UP

by Donna J.

I will be doing a third sign-up for Arizona Opera's student dress rehearsal performance of *The Magic Flute* and I am continuing the sign-up for this spring's opera look-in. Student dress rehearsal tickets are \$6 each for students and \$12 each for adults. *I must receive all opera ticket orders and payments by January 31.* Seats will be dependent upon availability, first-come, first serve. The look-in is free and I will continue to take reservations in February. Mail your student dress rehearsal order and a check to cover the entire cost of your *Magic Flute* tickets to my home address, which is listed in the roster. Please make your check out to me, so I can consolidate our payments. If you have any questions, call or email me.

Both the opera and look-in take place at the Tucson Convention Center Music Hall, 260 S. Church. Please keep in mind the running time for *The Magic Flute* is three hours, so it isn't a good choice for young children, especially when you consider the performance doesn't begin until 7:00 p.m. (Also remember that Arizona Opera doesn't allow infants and toddlers in the music hall during performances.) If you have younger children, the look-in is a wonderful introduction to opera for all ages and is definitely a lot of fun for younger kids. For more information, see below, or go to Arizona Opera's website: <http://www.azopera.com>

- Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Thursday, February 28, 2008, 7:00 p.m. Meet at 6:30 p.m.

With the aid of a magic flute, Prince Tamino is guarded on his journey towards spiritual enlightenment. Layered with visual allegory and sublime lyricism, it awakens our visual and aural senses.

- OPERA LOOK-IN, Saturday, March 1, 2008, 12:00 noon, Free!

This program is designed to give a behind-the-scenes glimpse of opera theater. Students are shown demonstrations with sets, lighting, sound, special effects, costumes, wigs and make-up. The look-in ends with a performance by a main-stage artist, followed by a question and answer period. This free one-hour program is a lot of fun and appropriate for all ages. It was a big hit with younger SDH kids last year.

NORTHWEST PARK DAY

by Joy M.

The Northwest Park group meets regularly at Richardson Park on Thursday's from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Some of us may arrive earlier or later. Be sure to bring plenty of water, sunscreen and snacks and a chair.

Directions: Richardson Park is located behind Richardson School, 6901 North Camino De La Tierra 85741. Cmo. De la Tierra is half mile east of Thornydale Rd. Take Ina Rd. or Orange Grove Rd. to Cmo. De La Tierra. The school and park are located half-way between these streets on the westside.

On occasion, the group decides to not meet or relocate at another park, please contact Joy for further information.



MATH CLASS

by Lara B. (w/ Eric Nielsen)

Eric Nielsen, a former homeschooling dad who has been running a French enrichment for SDH is also now starting a math enrichment for SDH as well. Eric's background is in biostatistics and food process engineering, both very quantitatively demanding disciplines. He is an AZ certified substitute teacher, complete with state background check, so he is highly qualified to perform this service.

The math enrichment group will be different from a traditional math class where the teacher always dictates what is being taught and everyone in class doing the same thing. In this class the kids will go at their own pace, doing whatever level they are each at, and mostly bringing their own workbooks and materials from home.

If you need to figure out what level your participant is at, you can use the AIMS sample to get an idea: <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/AIMS/SampleTests/>. Otherwise, you would just bring from home what is currently being worked on, or wanting to learn. It will partly be a one-on-one with each kid, as Eric will move around helping everyone with what they are each working on, as well as some group activities where everyone will learn about and work together on common projects emphasizing hands-on math. There is also the possibility that the more advanced students may encounter opportunities to solidify their knowledge base by mentoring less advanced students. Possible group projects include kitchen statistics, rocketry, weights and measurements, maps and orientation with treasure hunts, and possible building (like legos/robotics), each with the focus on the math aspect of course.

Eric has started a new teaching job at Fenster Academy, which has limited the dates he is available to do this class. There are three possibilities for days, so I need feedback from people interested so that we can accommodate the largest audience possible. We can choose from Tuesdays 3:00 p.m., Fridays 3:00 p.m., or Sunday early afternoon. Please let me know what works best for you, and classes will start in mid to late January. The class will be about 90 minutes long and be clustered in approximately 6-8 week sessions, and be at a central Tucson location (probably in the Himmel Library community room). The cost will depend on the number of participants/families who join, but Eric has made it clear that he does not want cost to deter participation - so cost will be reasonable. If a lot of people end up participating, that will drive individual cost down dramatically. This is open to all ages and abilities (including any parents who are interested) and aptitude grouping details will get sorted out when class starts, after the levels and abilities of all participants are better identified. If there is a wide range of ages/abilities, then it is possible that the beginner-type group could go the first part of the class, and the more advanced participants could go the second half. It will be worked out. So, please get back to me with your day vote, and let me know if you have any questions.

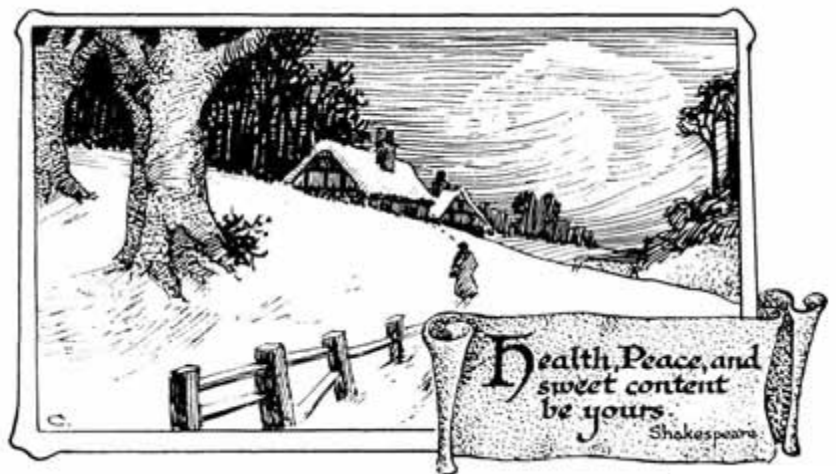
SCIENCE FAIR REVAMP

by Donna J.

I will be holding a planning and brainstorming meeting for the science fair after park day announcements on Tuesday, January 15. During the science fair information meeting in November, several options for revamping the fair were discussed. We seemed to have a consensus that an informal fair held during a park day would be a better fit for SDH than the more structured fairs we have been having. One idea we seemed to have some agreement on was to have the fair in April to coincide with Earth Day and to have a "green/ alternative energy theme" and maybe even try our hands at cooking using solar ovens. Although there would be a theme, kids could bring any science-related project to park. Projects wouldn't have to relate to the theme. Rather than a competition with rankings, all participants would receive certificates.

For kids interested in preparing for the Southern Arizona Regional Science Fair (SARSEF), scheduled in March, we could still have a science fair study group or preparation course. We could also schedule a time for mentors (past science fair judges) to come and critique their projects before SARSEF. This evaluation aspect of the science fair has always been an important part of helping our students compete successfully at the regional competition. So if your child might be interested in such a study group, please let me know.

If your family is interested in participating in science fair, please bring your opinions and ideas to the January 15 meeting. We will also need volunteers to help organize this new type of fair. Some of the jobs won't take much time and include helping to set up on the day of the fair. If you can't make it to the park day meeting and would like to help or have ideas or opinions about this revamp, please call or email me.





SDH MONTHLY PARENT OPPORTUNITIES

Parents' Book Discussion Group - January 17

Book Group is always the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. and you are welcome to come whether you have read the book or not. We meet at Denny's (3655 E Speedway, two blocks west of Alvernon).

- January: *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle : A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver
- February: *Eat, Pray, Love: One woman's search for everything across Italy, India, and Indonesia* by Elizabeth Gilbert
- March: *The World Without Us* by Alan Weisman

Note: Some of these books have long lists at the library, so you might want to get on the list asap if you plan to get them from there.

Moms' Coffee Night - January 30

Held on the last Wednesday of every month at Denny's (3655 E. Speedway, two blocks west of Alvernon) from 7:30 p.m. to midnight (or any time in between).

Dads' Coffee Night - January 2

Held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Borders on Oracle.

PARK DAY is every Tuesday.
SDH members meet at Fort Lowell Park (Glenn and Craycroft) every Tuesday.
Announcements are held at 11:00 a.m.



Sonoran Desert Homeschoolers

<http://tucsonhomeschoolers.org>

Info: sdhtucson@yahoo.com

Newsletter: sdhnewsletter@yahoo.com



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