



Inside SDH

Sonoran Desert Homeschoolers • Tucson, AZ • March 2009

UApresents

by Alica M.

Joe Bonamassa "Blue in the Schools" will be on Wednesday, March 18. We will meet in front of Centennial Hall at 10:00 a.m. and be seated together about 10:15 a.m. Please allow time for parking down by the University – it can be rather tricky. If you not sure if you bought tickets please contact me and I will look it up. Hope to see everyone there!

TWEEN-TEEN BOWLING

by Lara B.

Bowling is set for the older kids. There's no exact age requirement, but it's for older kids who don't need their parents with them. The parents who want to stay and bowl too will have their own lane apart from us. It's Wednesday, March 11 at 1:00 p.m. at Fiesta Bowl on River and Oracle. It's \$1.99 per game (we'll likely do 3 games, but people can do however many they'd like) and \$2.75 for shoe rental. Please RSVP as soon as possible.



GAME DAY

by Lara B.

It's time for another game day! It will be at Woods Library in the large meeting room on Wednesday, March 18 from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m. Come one come all, and bring your favorite board games!! We will have drinks and snacks for everyone too. This is for all ages of game lovers – 1 to 101! No need to RSVP, just show up and have fun.

SPRING CLOTHING EXCHANGE

by Sharon A.

The spring clothing exchange will be at the park on **Tuesday, March 31** (please note that this is a change to a week later than was originally listed on the calendar). Bring any clothing you would like to pass along. You do not need to bring something to take something. Take whatever you can use. Any unclaimed clothing items will be bagged up at approximately 1:00 p.m. and given away to a local charity.



NEW PARK SCHEDULE

On February 17 the vote was held and it was decided that we will alternate monthly for our Tuesday park days between Ft. Lowell Park and McCormick Park.

The alternating schedule we will be:

January – Ft. Lowell

February – McCormick

March – Ft. Lowell

April – McCormick

May – Ft. Lowell

June – summer break

July – summer break

August – McCormick

September – Ft. Lowell

October – McCormick

November – Ft. Lowell

December – McCormick

SDH LEGO CLUB

by Kim B.

The first Lego Club meeting was a success so we're going to do it again! Our March meeting will be on Friday, March 13 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Martha Cooper Library. The kids can build to their heart's content and share with other builders. This is all ages and parents will have to stay unless you work something out with me or another parent. The kids don't have to stay the whole 3 hours – come and go as you please.



HARRY POTTER CLUB MEETING

by Kim B.

Would your kids like a chance to hang out with other kids who love Harry Potter? Then come to the Harry Potter club meeting. This is not a class, but an informal gathering. The kids can do whatever kind of Harry Potter themed activities they want: dress up, duel with wands, play games, or just talk. We will meet at Himmel Park on Thursday, March 26 at 11:00 a.m. This is all ages and since it's at a park, parents will have to stay with their children unless you work something out with me or another parent.

HIGH SCHOOL DRAWING CLASSES

by Victoria M.

I am trying to set up a drawing class at the Drawing Studio. Although it is geared for high school students, any student who is interested and able to sit for three hours and draw (with a short break) is welcome. If I am able to find ten students, the class will likely begin in early March, for 8 weeks, three hours a week, probably on Thursday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00. Please call me if you have any questions and to make sure you are on my list. Thanks so much!

BOOK DRIVE THANKS!

I want to thank everyone who donated books and toys to the book drive for Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse. We had a good response. In addition to Emerge!, items that couldn't be used by the center were donated to the Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona's MLK Day Book Drive. The items were very much appreciated, so thanks everyone for your support!



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENS

The Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona's Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC) is looking for volunteers for its Reading Buddies program (see the information they provided below). In addition to being a teen member of SDH, I'm also a member of the volunteer center's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) and I have participated in several YVC volunteer activities and they are a lot of fun. YVC's spring block of volunteer activities will be beginning soon, so call the volunteer center to learn more about all the opportunities to help our community!

Reading Buddies: Help little kids have fun learning to read! Do you enjoy working with children and want to make a positive impact in their lives? Come and be a one-on-one tutor helping elementary school students with reading and homework. Come every week or just on the days you are able. We welcome all youth volunteers, ages 11-18, who enjoy working with children. Tutor training offered but not mandatory. Help kids build their confidence in reading and writing by being a youth mentor!

Meeting time on Thursdays 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. across the street from New Beginnings for Women and Children at 2485 N. Alvernon, 85712. (Note: the first meeting 3/5 will be at the Volunteer Center, 924 N. Alvernon Way.) For more information, contact Rachel Howard at the Volunteer Center 881-3300 or rhoward@volunteersoaz.org



JUNIOR STATE OF AMERICA

We are forming a Junior State of America Chapter and would like to invite all SDH students in middle school and high school to join us. Junior State of America (JSA) is a nonpartisan organization for students who are interested in politics and government, foreign affairs, the law, and education. JSA is a national organization that was created by and for students. Our chapter will have debates, discussions, and learn more about how our government works. Our first task will be to write a constitution for our new chapter.

In addition to chapter activities, JSA offers many opportunities to meet with other Arizona students, as well as opportunities to attend out-of-state conventions. We attended JSA's Winter Congress in Pasadena, Calif. Feb. 21-22 and had the opportunity to debate legislation proposed by students and vote on these bills just as the United States Congress does. It was great and next year we hope our homeschool chapter can attend a 2010 JSA Congress. A spring state conference will be held in Tucson in April. To participate in overnight conference like this one, you must be in high school. But middle school students can participate in chapter activities.

We will hold our first meeting on Friday, March 20 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. at Himmel Park, located near Tucson Blvd. and Speedway. We'll meet in front of the Himmel Park Library, 1035 N. Treat Ave. and then find a place in the park for an outdoors meeting. Please feel free to bring a lunch or snacks. RSVP so we can contact you if it rains and we need to change locations. If you can't attend this meeting and would like to join us in forming a JSA chapter, please email Donna. She will be our advisor. For more information about JSA, check out their web site: <http://www.jsa.org/>

SPRING FESTIVAL SCIENCE EXHIBITS

by Donna J.

Planning has started for SDH's annual spring potluck. This year's theme is Earth Day, which is also a great theme for science projects. Instead of a traditional science fair, we will have science exhibit tables at this year's potluck festival. This is an informal, very free-form format, unlike the more structured science fairs we have done in the past. There will be no judging or competition, although all children who participate will receive a certificate recognizing their work.

Students may exhibit any type of science project and it doesn't have to be in line with the Earth Day theme. Projects may be traditional science experiments, but they may also include reports, or displays, including things like rock collections. Last year several students did science demonstrations and that was a lot of fun. Also, while not required, it would be great to see some projects that relate to the Earth Day theme. Topics could include alternative energy vehicles, solar projects, climate change, ways to save energy at home, safe and non-toxic ways to clean your home, water conservation, and recycling.

If you purchased kits to build solar cars or model houses last year, your kids could also bring these projects to the festival and exhibit them. If you didn't purchase kits last year, I noticed that the Tucson Earth Day Festival is again sponsoring a student solar competition and selling kits. So a group of students could purchase kits through the Society of Women Engineers again this year. They are selling these in paks of 10, so a group would be needed to make this feasible or at least inexpensive. If anyone is interested in coordinating a group buy, you can find information on the Tucson Earth Day Festival web site: <http://www.tucsonearthday.org/> Click on the link to the left that says student solar competition.

If you have questions about the potluck science exhibit, please contact me.



ANNUAL PARENTS PLANNING MEETING

by Lara B

Our SDH Parents Planning Meeting for the 2009-2010 SDH-year will be on Monday, May 18 from 5:45 to 8:00 p.m. at the downtown Joel Valdez Main Library in the big lower-level meeting room. The library closes at 8:00, so we will not have the option of staying late. I will open doors at 5:30 p.m. so we can start on time and have at least a full two-hour meeting.

We will decide dates for the annual activities and go over each job that needs a new volunteer to do it. If there is a job or something that you'd like to add, this is a great time to do it. If you already have a job that you'd like to give up, please post it and announce it ahead of time if you can, so that someone else can think about it and volunteer for it either before, or at the meeting. If someone has something that they'd like to add to the meeting, but cannot come, please let me know, so that I can add it to the agenda. I will print out the standard agenda to pass out, so if you have something that you'd like added to it beforehand (jobs, dates, etc), let me know! With whatever time is left, we will go over last-minute stuff that does not make it onto the pre-printed list.

There will be refreshments and snacks served! Usually this is for the parents, but if you have to bring kids, then maybe have them bring something quiet to do off to the side. (We'd rather have parents there with kids, than to not come at all!)



SDH JOB OPENINGS by Lori O.

Since this is the time of year to be thinking about how you would like to contribute to SDH next year, here are some open jobs to consider:

- **Roster/Phonelist/Who's-Who List:** This job entails keeping track of the memberships, and publishing a fall/spring roster and phone list, as well as keeping the Who's-Who list up-to-date as people and jobs come and go. This job can be scaled down – maybe we only need the phone list, and the who's-who list could just be published after the May planning meeting. If you take the job, you get to decide how the job is done. This job takes a few minutes each week to add the new people in, then a few hours in the spring and fall to fine-tune the roster/phonelist.

- **Yahoo groups administrator:** This job goes hand-in-hand with the roster job (maybe a couple of people could do the two jobs together). This job entails adding new members to the yahoo groups, cleaning out the yahoo groups in the fall, responding to questions/problems. The person who takes this job should be somewhat comfortable with yahoo groups, although you do not need to be an expert. I will be happy to train you. This job also takes a few minutes each week to add the new people in, as well as a little bit of ongoing time to deal with problems. The largest amount of time is, again, in the fall when cleaning out the yahoo groups after the fall membership deadline.

- **Newcomer committee** (needs members and a chairperson): The newcomer committee greets new people, gives them the newcomer packet, explains how SDH functions. You are basically the "welcome wagon." This is a great way to meet new people and help 'newbie' homeschoolers. I have made some good friends this way. This job only requires time spent at the park. Each committee member does not need to be at each park day, although someone from the committee should always be there. There can be a rotating schedule.

If you would like more information before deciding on any of these jobs, please contact me. I will be happy to talk to you and train you. I think three years of doing these jobs is long enough and I will be retiring at the end of this year!

SPRING MUSIC RECITAL by Victoria M.

The Spring Music Recital is scheduled for May 7, the first Thursday in May. I am hoping to have it again at the Armory Park Senior Center downtown, just east of the Children's Museum. It will be from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Call or email me with any questions, or to be added to the program. In the past we have had fun getting the students together to play an ensemble song. I thought that this time we could try "My Country 'Tis of Thee" in the key of G. If this is a difficult key, or if anyone needs any help with notes or lyrics, please call or email me.

ROOTS & SHOOTS EARTH SCOUTS

by Lara B.

• **Mystery Castle Tour**

On Thursday, March 12 we are going to tour the Mystery Castle in Phoenix. It's a house that was built by a sick father for his young daughter in the 1930's. He built it slowly, over I believe a 15 year period, using whatever he could get a hold of. At the time it wasn't far from the dump, and so lots and lots of various scraps were used. Talk about recycling! The daughter, who is now in her 80's, still gives some of the tours herself. It's \$5 for 12yo and up, \$3 for littler kids. (It may be cash only.) Here are some pictures and info:

<http://www.arizona-leisure.com/mystery-castle.html>

<http://www.roadsideamerica.com/tip/94>

<http://photos.anapana.com/mystery-castle-on-south-mountain/>

http://phoenix.about.com/od/attractionsandevents/ss/mysterycastle_2.htm

<http://www.phoenixasap.com/phoenix-mystery-castle.html>

After that, for anyone interested, we will head to Circle K Park, a nearby park, to play and picnic before heading back home. I already have a second family in my car for carpooling, but if you would like to carpool as well, and need a match-up, please let me know and I will put those interested in contact with each other. If you'd like to caravan, please let me know, otherwise we will meet there at the Mystery Castle at 11:00 a.m., which is when they open. The tour takes about one hour.



• **Spring Camping:** We are camping again at the Colossal Cave campsite, Friday, March 27 through Sunday, March 29. This year we will do a service project for them, which will be on Saturday morning for two hours. Things it could be are: picking up trash in certain places where it accumulates, various things at their ranch with the stables and/or horses, painting picnic benches, etc. She may pick a few different things for us to do based on our ages, so that everyone from very little through teens will have something appropriate to do. Everyone who participates in the two-hour service project will receive a free pass into Colossal Cave that you can use at a later date.

Because we are a scout group, they are letting us camp for free! The group campsite where we will be camping is El Bosquecito, and it is in the center of the second map <http://www.colossalcave.com/map.html>

There is one big built fire-pit in the center of the group campsite where we'll have a fire each night. There's a grill over it so it can be used to cook on as well. Each family space within the campsite has a bbq grill and picnic table. There are two campsite water spigots, and a waterless bathroom (one for boys, one for girls). Each family will bring their own tent and camping supplies and food, etc. And if you want to bring some firewood to contribute to the group campfire, that'd be great! And don't forget smores stuff! A little wash runs right by the campsite, and is lots'a fun to explore in.

Please RSVP ASAP, with number of people and ages of kiddos who will be doing the service project.

• **Hiking**

We hike on an ongoing basis, about twice a month, alternating between Fridays and Saturdays. No RSVP is needed, but please be on time so you are not left behind.

The first March hike will be Saturday, March 7, Douglas Spring Trail, 10:00 a.m. It's on the east side of town, trailhead is where Speedway dead-ends (about 5 miles past Houghton). We will hike to the waterfall, which I think is about 2 miles. We'll have lunch/snack and play, then head back. For those that would like to do it shorter (have littler ones or just don't want to go that far), then people are welcome to turn around whenever they want to make the hike the length they want. This trail is appropriate for all ages. It's very sunny, so lots of water, sunscreen, hats, etc are recommended!

The second March hike will be Friday, March 20, Wasson Peak Trail, 10:00 a.m. It's out of town west near the intersection of Kenny and Sandario. (For map, go here: <http://tinyurl.com/cmjd9> on left side of screen you'll see that A is "Wasson Peak Trailhead" click under that on "Wasson Peak Trail". You can zoom in on map to see exactly where to go.) Directions: from south side take Ajo west and then Kenny north, from Speedway go west over Gates Pass and north on Kenny. About 3 miles past Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum, and right before Sandario Rd, take a right onto Hohokam Rd/Bajada Loop Dr. Trailhead is about 3/4 mile down. (Trail itself is about 5 miles to the end, so not everyone will do the whole length.) It's an uphill trail, and is a trail less-traveled than others. Jeans may be a good idea as the coming heat may bring out critters. Again, lots of water, sunscreen, hats, good walking shoes, lunch for a pit-stop, are all recommended.



As always, this is all open to all SDH members!



SDH MONTHLY PARENT OPPORTUNITIES

Parents' Book Discussion Group - March 17

The book discussion group meets at the regular park day, on the third Tuesday of each month. It starts at 12:00 noon and goes until we are finished, likely around 2:00 p.m. People are always welcome to join whether they've read the book or not.

- March: *Mercy* by Jodi Picoult
- April: *The Post-American World* by Fareed Zakaria
- May: *The Happiness Myth* by Jennifer Michael Hecht

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 - March 25

Held on the last Wednesday of every month at ***Something Sweet***, 5319 E. Speedway (NW corner of Speedway and Beverly east of Craycroft) from 7:30 p.m. to midnight (or any time in between)

Dads' Coffee Night - March 4

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



Sonoran Desert Homeschoolers

<http://tucsonhomeschoolers.org>

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Sonoran Desert Homeschoolers is an open, not-for-profit home education network, providing social and creative outlets for homeschooling families. We are not devoted to any one homeschooling approach, political platform, religious outlook, or philosophical ideal. Our homeschooling community supports all families, regardless of their personal lifestyle or educational choices in the area of home education. Our motto is "**hozho**," a Navajo word meaning "harmony" or "walking in beauty or friendship."

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