



sam hughes neighborhood association

News on Hughes

Summer 2009

The Library on the Green

A library should be surrounded by growing things as a reminder that in this little spot learning never stops, that here deep thoughts are sown and tended weeded out and then made fertile for the rise of wisdom.

When my own children were growing up they'd play for hours in the park then tear across the grass to check another stack of books out for the coming week. Thus reading and playing they grew up strong and sweet, secure enough to meet their own dreams in the wide world.

This morning as I walk empty-handed to a north corner of the park the sound of the city fades and flycatchers parade in the trees and possibility continues to grow as another mother's children race each other to the library door.

—Molly McKasson

Join your friends and neighbors as we celebrate



Independence Day!

12th Annual Independence Day Parade Saturday, July 4

Himmel Park, Southwest backstop

Parade at 5 p.m.
Decorating & face painting at 4:30 p.m.
Food, camaraderie & reading of the Declaration of Independence follow the parade

What to bring:
Your bicycle, wagon, stroller, wheelchair etc
(we'll provide streamers)

A red, white &/or blue food or beverage to share

???? Call Lucy Weeks 881-2742 or Michelle Kinnison 319-5965

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POB 42931
Tucson 85733-2931
www.samhughes.org

Board meetings:
3rd Tues. each mo.,
7pm Himmel Library

Everyone Welcome

Every day I step onto the grass at Himmel Park is a good day! Sometimes it nourishes my solitude, other times it fills me with a feeling of "common good." And that's how it's been for over fifty years. To show my gratitude, I'm representing our neighborhood in a new alliance with Blenman-Elm, Miramonte, and Palo Verde called the Himmel Park Coalition of Neighborhoods. The sole purpose of this coalition is to work for the maintenance and improvement of one of Tucson's oldest and most beloved community gathering places.

Clearly the responses (from all four neighborhoods) to the park survey sent out last year reveal that an overwhelming majority of people agree that Himmel is a little bit of "heaven" in the heart of Tucson. Whether jogging across it, swinging, swimming, dog walking, or strolling with friends—Himmel softens the urban edge and stretches the imagination. Here we drum and fly kites—party, kiss, meditate—do tai chi, watch plays, play soccer, enjoy festivals and birthdays, and, perhaps most unique of all, we check out books!

How brilliant were our city fathers (no "elected" mothers yet) to "marry" a library to a city park in 1961! Thanks to Mayor Hummel and all, Himmel Library was the first "suburban library" to be built outside of downtown. Had I been a city planner I would've pushed hard to repeat this winning combination. My family lived in Sam Hughes Neighborhood then, over on 9th Street. I was just starting at Tucson High and many's the time I rode my bike to Himmel for last minute research.

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AGELESS HIMMEL POOL by Lisa Button

Looking for something to do on a stormy summer night, 14-year-old Sam Hughes resident Prudence Myrland and several of her friends decided to sneak into the new city pool across the way. The girls made their way through the greasewood and climbed over the chain link fence surrounding the pool. Made of concrete, the pool had been completed, but still contained wooden forms and wasn't ready for swimmers yet. The girls tramped around in the knee-deep rainwater from a previous storm until the night guard chased them out. The year was 1936, and Northside Pool, named for its location relative to Tucson, was one of thousands of public works built by the Works Project Administration.

Later renamed Himmel Pool, Northside Pool was regarded "the finest and most ultra modern in the southwest" because of the filtration system and because the wastewater was used to irrigate the landscaping surrounding the pool, the Arizona Daily Star reported in 1937. The pool water was said to be purer than city tap water.

According to news articles and other information on file at the Arizona Historical Society, Himmel Park was created on land sold to the city by Alvina Himmel Edmondson with the stipulation that the park be named after her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Himmel. Beginning in 1897, Mrs. Edmondson, a native of New Orleans, homesteaded 160 acres of land bounded by Tucson and Speedway Boulevards while her husband Charles Edmondson went to work in Clifton. She and her four daughters lived in a redwood house at 2625 E. First Street. The nearest neighbors were two miles away and Mrs. Edmondson used sticks to threaten the coyotes that trailed her when she walked the four miles into town.

At the time Prudence (now Prudence Haney) and her friends first dipped their toes in Northside Pool, it was one of only a handful of public pools in Tucson. But Himmel Pool was always special. As architect and Sam Hughes Neighborhood Association zoning committee member Kathleen McLaughlin described it in a 1995 memo to city officials, the pool was meant to be "an oasis within the park setting – purposely set apart by design to provide a special and relaxing experience." High walls on the west and south sides provide a feeling of separation from the rest of the park and drown out noise yet allow a sense of openness. Architect Eleazar Diaz Herreras set the elevation of the main pool and the wading pool 4 to 6 feet higher than the park elevation.

In 1997 a renovation of Himmel Pool, which was deteriorating, was completed at a cost of more than \$1 million. The Sam Hughes Neighborhood Association and others fought to keep the historical aspects of the pool intact, which was costlier than razing and rebuilding the pool entirely. The pool, bathhouses and guardhouse had been included in a national historic designation of the Sam Hughes Neighborhood by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1994. The west wall and bathhouses were rebuilt, and ramadas were added for shade. Some of the other features kept during the rebuild were the same pattern of steps entering the pool and a one-meter diving board. Himmel originally had two one-meter diving boards and a 3-meter one in the middle.

Tucson Parks & Recreation Aquatics Mgr. Billy Sassi says that what sets Himmel Pool apart is "the fact that it is historic. The old wading pool at Himmel was so quaint, I wanted to keep it so the moms could still sit on the edge." The rebuilt wading pool has a walk-in design accessible to the smallest toddlers and includes Pebble-tec surfacing. Another really cool thing that makes it Himmel Pool is the design of the bathhouse. When we redid it, we wanted to keep it the beach look in the guard office with the lift-up counter," Sassi said.

Today, palm trees line the north side of the enclosed pool area, providing views from within while masking it from outside view. The grassy area north of the main pool and wading pool invites relaxation. To longtime neighborhood resident Frank W. Soltys, "it feels like being in a Maxfield Parrish print." The special feel of the place has drawn young and old for more than 70 years. "You can talk to a lot of the older people in town and a lot of them will tell me, 'I learned to swim at Himmel Pool,'" Sassi said. To share your memories of Himmel Pool, please send an e-mail message to samhughesneighbors@mac.com, write to SHNA, P.O. Box 42931, Tucson, AZ 85733-2931, or attend the free swim event July 31.



Arizona Daily Star 1938 file photo reproduced with permission. In 1938 there were 4 municipal swimming pools in Tucson. "Northside Pool (now Himmel Pool) boasted the most elaborate water purifying system in the state. Photo # 14-7279 courtesy of the Arizona Historical Society/Tucson.



WHERE SHOULD I USE MY POOL/SPA DRAIN OR BACKWASH WATER?

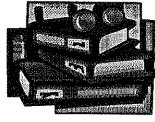
Swimming pool and spa backwash water contains chemicals used to control microorganisms and the pH level of the water. Many species of plants are sensitive to these chemicals. However, water from swimming pools & spas can be used to irrigate several salt tolerant plants.

Plants sensitive to salt (do not use backwash water): fruit trees, star jasmine, roses, Algerian ivy, Frasher's photinia, Chinese hibiscus, willow, hopbush, jojoba. **Moderately sensitive plants (limited use of backwash water):** glossy privet, pyracantha, lantana, xylosma, juniper, bottlebrush, most acacia species, palo verde, yucca. **Salt-tolerant plants:** oleander, evergreen euonymas, rosemary, bougainvillea, natal plum, Texas ranger, olive, native mesquite, desert broom, saltbush, aloe, deer grass, bear grass, ice plant, Japanese Honeysuckle.

Fun facts:

1936	The year Himmel Park Pool built by WPA workers
\$32,000	Cost to build original pool
200,000	Gallons of water contained in pool
13,115	Visits to Himmel Pool, May 24-Aug. 12, 2008
12	Lifeguards/water safety instructors typically staff the pool
160+	People took swimming lessons at Himmel Pool in 2008

For further information call the Extension Agent, 626-5161, or City of Tucson, DOT, Stormwater Management Section, 791-4251.



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In 1972, when the City Council first tried to close Himmel, which they believed was too small, I was living in New York City. How grateful I am that farsighted residents put a stop to that proposal. In 1982, however, the elected tried again to close the library and move its services to a storefront in El Con Mall. But again, community wisdom prevailed (eventually Himmel experienced a modest expansion instead). That was the same year my husband and I were looking to buy a house. Our daughter, Lily, was four years old, and I recall very clearly what sold us on our Fourth Street bungalow: It was close to a beautiful park and a neighborhood library. Both Lily and her little brother Clay quickly grew to associate playing in the park with the joy of reading. I can't tell you how many times we stashed our wet towels (from swimming) beside the front door, before going in to check out books.

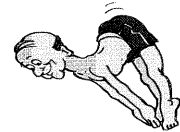
In last year's Himmel Park survey, 87% of the 620 neighbors who responded had library cards. Though Himmel is one of Pima County's smallest libraries, it's one of the most heavily used. Per square feet (there are only 5,652 total—counting closets and entry way), Himmel checks out more items than any other library in the system. The survey made it clear that inner-city residents love Himmel Park Branch Library (its official name on a plaque to the right of the door). Along with pride, however, a majority of respondents agreed that the library needed expanding.

Last winter, when I asked Sarajeon Harwood—Himmel's excellent head librarian—to give me some statistics, her numbers for the month of January bore out people's concerns about overcrowding: Himmel sponsored 47 programs for 1122 children and youth; there were 104 community meetings; and 17,653 people came into the library—that's about 569 people per day.

The Park Coalition will be looking at strategies to insure that Himmel Library—now “the oldest continuously operating library” in the city, according to Sarajeon's assistant, Sue Parker—stays put and continues to meet the expanding needs of a diverse inner city population. The current wish-list for a larger Himmel includes: a computer lab, a second meeting room, a second literacy room (The current one was carved out of a closet), and a quiet room just for reading. The Coalition looks forward to working with the County Board of Supervisors on a plan that ensures Himmel will continue to deliver high quality service in the heart of Tucson. Great libraries make for great communities, one mind and one imagination at a time.

If you're a friend of the library and interested in becoming more of an advocate, your help would be much appreciated. (You can e-mail me directly at memckasson@cox.net.) In the meantime, enjoy the wonderful programs and events happening at Himmel. (There's still time to sign the kids up for Summer Reading. Call 594-5305 for more info) Summer hours are the same, Mon.-Thu. 10-8, Fri. 10-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 1-5. Look forward to seeing you on the green!
--Molly McKasson

Himmel Pool . . .



Season ends Friday, July 31 with FREE SWIM 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

The Sam Hughes Neighborhood Association is sponsoring a FREE SWIM once again this summer at the historic Himmel Pool. Everyone is invited to say a fond farewell (until next season) to our neighborhood pool in the last session of the last day this year. Please make plans now to swim in the 1936 WPA constructed “Northside Pool” (refurbished in 1997.)

Himmel Pool is located in Himmel Park, at the intersection of Tucson Blvd. and 2nd St. The 25-yard pool features a 1-meter diving board, depths 3.5' to 11', accessible stairs and grassy area with ramadas. A separate wading pool has a beach entry. **You do not have to wait until the last day to enjoy our pool.**

Hours are: Tues-Fri: *Adult Lap* (Noon-1:00 p.m.); *Recreational Swim* (1:00-5:00 p.m.); *Family Swim* (5:30-7:00 p.m.) Sat: *Recreational Swim* (Noon-7:00 p.m.) Adults only \$1.00, Children still 25 cents!

GOT POTHOLE? To have potholes filled, one must contact the Tucson Department of Transportation at 791-3154. One must provide the DOT with the precise street address of the offending pothole. Your pothole will then be placed on a waiting list, and you can hope for the best. Residents can also contact the Ward 6 City Council Office, 791-4601, and speak to the Sam Hughes liaison, council aide Monique Martin. Good luck!

Our apologies to Betty Guarraia for omitting her last name in the Spring newsletter. Betty helped plan and carry out the very successful Sam Hughes Home Tour!
Thank you again, Betty.



NEW - Special Offers for SHNA Members! SHNA Membership Committee is actively working with merchants and businesses to make available **Money Saving Deals and Discounts for Association Members**. For a current list of participating merchants/businesses and program information, go to the membership page at <http://www.samhughes.org>. **You will need your Certificate of Membership to take advantage of these offers.**

Certificates of Membership: By now our paid members should have received their Certificate of Membership (blue postcards) recently mailed. If you would like us to check or update our records, please send written notification to SHNA, c/o membership, PO Box 42931, Tucson, AZ, 85733.

Become a Member...Don't miss out on the special offers. Become an SHNA member by completing the membership form and mailing it with your membership payment. You will receive a Certificate of Membership postcard and can start saving \$\$\$\$ by taking advantage of these special offers. **More special offers are coming soon.**

Membership Information:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Address: _____ Email: _____

_____ Annual Membership: \$20.

Please include a check payable to SHNA, and mail to SHNA, c/o Membership Chair, POB 42931, 85733-2931.

All memberships renew January 1st of each calendar year.

I am interested in volunteering: _____ Yes _____ No

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| _____ Historic Preservation | _____ SH Cares/Seniors | _____ Home Tour | _____ Traffic |
| _____ Campus/Community Relations | _____ Special Events | _____ Membership | _____ Zoning |
| _____ Park/Library/Water Tower | _____ Board of Directors | _____ Newsletter | _____ Website |

I am interested in participating in neighborhood watch: _____ Yes _____ No

My current watch captain is: _____

Voting members must be 18 years of age and reside within the Sam Hughes Neighborhood which is bounded by Broadway, Speedway, Campbell, and Country Club. Businesses, organizations, and non-residents may join as non-voting association members.

The City of Tucson, its officers and employees, its Community Services Department and all other offices neither agrees nor disagrees with the views expressed or implied in this communication or any referenced websites and are not therefore responsible. The distribution requester is solely responsible.