

Tucson Weekly

PUBLISHED ON DECEMBER 18, 2008:

The Skinny

By MARI HERRERAS and JIM NINTZEL

SAGUARO RANCH SIT-IN

Neighbors of the Saguaro Ranch development in Marana conducted an old-fashioned sit-in as part of their skirmish with developer **Stephen Phinny** over the boulders Phinny keeps putting across two access points on a contested right of way.

One of the roads is an extension of Thornydale Road that remains a legally recorded public easement by the county. Neighbors have used the road for hikes and horse-riding for more than 40 years. (See "Tortolita Showdown," Currents, May 22.)

Earlier this month, neighbors--who filed a lawsuit asking a judge to determine if the road remains a public easement--got together and removed Phinny's boulders, encouraging everyone to hike the roads that Phinny claims are private, because he wants to support the exclusivity of his high-end development, Saguaro Ranch.

Along one access point, rather than use boulders, Phinny recently had his employees park a car to prevent access. And on the other access point, rather than waiting for the boulders to return, neighbors **Tracy Chamberlain**, **Steve Blomquist** and **Sharyl Cummings** decided to head out with lawn chairs at 9 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 15, to block the tractor full of boulders they expected that day. Sure enough, two Saguaro Ranch employees showed up, followed shortly by a tractor.

"Those employees seemed quite incredulous that we were blocking the area," Blomquist says. "They didn't stay more than five minutes. We stayed there all day until about 3:30 p.m. We succeeded."

The neighbors' lawsuit recently took a different turn when their attorney asked the judge to give the surrounding residents the public easement, based on a recent deposition from Marana attorney **Frank Cassidy**. Blomquist said Cassidy confirmed in his deposition that Marana didn't abandon the easement, contradicting one of Phinny's claims.

And the boulders? Chamberlain says she expects Phinny will replace them in the next day or two, and the neighbors will get together yet again and remove them.

The Skinny is wondering where Phinny is getting all those boulders. If this development deal doesn't work out, maybe he can start a landscape-supply company.

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