

THE STATE OF THE ESTATES

**ACCEPT REFUSE/ROLL OVER DOSTOESVSKY/OUT OF THE SHADOWS/I WANNA KNOW . . . /
EYES OF THE BEHOLDER/MYSTERY SOLVED/HISTORY IS FUN/GOAT APPRECIATION**

Woodridge Estates Homeowners Association Newsletter

December 2021

NEIGHBORS: Welcome to the 8th edition of this monthly effort to awaken you to matters concerning our mutual surroundings with notes on community rules, local news, helpful hints, fun facts, and abject silliness that we hope gets read and shared before being consigned to your new organics waste collection unit (you know, for all the bovine excrement herein).¹

Underwriter Laboratories has given us its coveted Silly of Approval for holiday gift giving, so pass this newsletter along to someone you know and put a checkmark on your gift list at the same time. You're welcome!

MONTHLY REMINDERS:

Gatekeeper Contributions: You all should have received email notice (pay attention, people!) of your HOA's plan to provide all homeowners a simple way to contribute to the **annual bonus fund for our gatekeepers**. Nothing really says "Thank You" to our gatehouse personnel as much as a little extra cash to cut into the bite of inflation. We hope to be able to report 100% community participation in the January issue of this screed—make it happen and give yourself a hug for being a good human (at least this once), m'kay?²

And Be Nice! Please also be reminded yet again that our gate personnel are just doing their job when they ask for visitor identification, send you notifications, and do all the other things they do to help us control neighborhood entry. If you have an issue with gate personnel, contact an HOA Board member or PMP Management. Please be courteous, respectful, and understanding that they really can't know every homeowner and his or her relatives on sight, and they are doing their very best to protect the privacy of all homeowners—and if all that fails to move you to some kindness, remember that we have a video of every gate interaction if we need it

NEW Management Contact: Louis Mellini has left the building, so while adjustments are made at PMP management, please email requests, concerns, or inquiries to PMP Community Care at care@pmpmanage.cpm to automatically open a ticket and it will be tracked for a response. If you need to speak with someone, call (805) 642-2400 and ask for our current manager, Julie Phan. Then watch this space for updated PMP contact information as it becomes available!

If you have a repair or some other common-area task that needs doing, you also can log into your PMP Management account at www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com (yep, you have

¹ See the November newsletter for the new organic waste disposal rules effective January 1. (A stiff drink first will help.)

² Make your check to Master Protection Security with a note that it is for the Woodridge Holiday Gate Personnel Fund. Mail to Property Management Professionals, c/o Sabrina French, 515 Marin Street, Suite 404, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360.

one, or someone in your household does), go to “Dashboard,” and then go to “Submit a Request.” This PMP portal sometimes leads to a faster response while also giving you 24-hour access to your HOA account information, online payment options, management communication tools, and other useful info and access.

Website: Please visit www.woodridgeestatesresident.com for more information about our community, its rules and regulations, HOA activity like scheduled tree trimming, a list of useful local phone numbers, fire prevention efforts in our surrounding common area, and other stuff unfit to print here because it is well above our tomfoolery.

GateKey: *Help smooth community entrance for your visitors and vendors by signing up for the “GateKey” app at www.woodridgeestatesresident.com. Go to the “Gate Key Access” tab on the lower right of that landing page for information on how to do so. (Tutorial access is at www.gatekey.com/resident-login.) This app makes quicker entry for your friends, family, and other guests very easy. Visitors always are required to show ID, so please make sure they know that, but putting them on the GateKey list with just a few clicks on your computer or phone is very helpful to our gateminders.³ (And then re-read the “Be Nice” note above!!)*

Emergencies: Always **call 911 first** in a genuine emergency in or around the community. Our Gatehouse personnel are not “security guards”—you can let them know of any problems as well, **but call 911 first in an emergency.**

Suspicious Activity: *In the event you see “suspicious activity” or have other non-emergency matters to report, do not call 911 but DO call police or fire (and not the Gatehouse).*

Police: 805-494-8200/8201 Fire: 805-371-1111 ext 34

And now to all the news that is fit to print (ha ha, we hear your jokes in our head, whatever):

RUBBISH NEVER SLEEPS

Sorry to use this epistle to beat a dead horse (dead animals go in the organic waste bin, by the way), but we really most sincerely mean it when we say that you need to get ready for the Thousand Oaks trash transit transition coming shortly after you recover from your New Year folderol, or maybe even before—you don’t want to wake up the week after your (way too) big celebration to find yourself unable to clean up.

Prior newsletters have told you all about registering with Athens Services, the new garbage gang, by calling 833-791-2377. (Also visit Athens’ FAQ page at <https://athensservices.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Thousand-Oaks-Residential-FAQ-FINAL.pdf>.) We also have warned you about new waste bin delivery and exchange, the need to memorize a new color scheme, and how to avoid being charged for bin lids that are not fully closed (which is going to help just about every one of us).

³**Please** do not put all your guests and vendors on the “Permanent Visitor” list; **this list is for very regular vendors and frequent family visitors only.** **For security purposes** all other guests should be added only to the “Temporary Visitor” list. Your adherence keeps our community safe for everyone. (See the Dostoevsky section on crime, supra.)

The City of TO also has put up its own trashy website at www.toakstrash.org, and we heartily recommend it.

We also request anyone in the community who can figure out exactly what goes into the organics trash bin versus recycling versus whatever other trash is left to please let us know, we don't all have time to get a garbage PhD (another one, that is), and publishing clear information on this subject might improve our chances for a Werlitzer Prize!

Seriously, friends, you need to look into all this info. You also will be getting stuff in the mail from Athens and the city—pay attention to it before you decide in which bin to throw it out. *And please do register with Athens!* Let's make sure the transition goes smoothly at least in our little corner of TO. You will be glad you got ahead of this, as will we all. Think of the fun we will have laughing at all the other area residents who have no idea this is coming! (Trust us, that will be most of them. They don't get this helpful newsletter!)

CRIME AND (NO) PUNISHMENT

The “giving season” sadly also has become the “taking season” this year, and the “smash and grab” and “flashmob” burglaries you have been hearing about in the “big cities” (c’mom, lift up that rock you are living under once in awhile) have made their way to our area. A gold store in The Oaks mall was victimized a few weeks ago by a band of masked (who isn’t?) marauders who broke through the closed store’s glass frontage and counters and made off with over \$100K of jewelry, coins, and other valuables in a manner of minutes. And it reportedly took TOPD twenty times as long to respond. Fortunately, nobody was hurt, including the late-arriving Paul Blart.

*Now, no matter what you think of Mr. Caruso, who owns The Oaks mall and who has stirred controversy in town of late with his plan to build 160 or so apartments behind “The Lakes” shopping Center on TO Boulevard, he did respond quickly by increasing internal security at all his malls. But friends, these very organized retail robbers always are at least one step ahead of security efforts, **and they aren’t going away**. TOPD (a/k/a Ventura County Sheriff) warns us all to be particularly mindful when going to and from our vehicles while shopping, and to keep an eye on the rearview mirror on the way home. “Follow home” robberies recently have occurred as nearby as Calabasas and Agoura Hills, and while Woodridge residents have some protection by virtue of our front gate, you might also be followed from the mall to another stop where you are ripe for pickin’. The sad and simple fact is that one just can’t be too careful these days. Forewarned is four legged.⁴*

Please, neighbors, be especially mindful of using GateKey for visitor and vendor access to our otherwise easygoing neighborhood this holiday season. If you or anyone in your household still are not registered with GateKey, please visit the HOA website at www.woodridgestateresident.com and the “Gate Key Access” tab on the lower right of the homepage for information on how to do so. The link

⁴ The “NextDoor” app is not something we recommend; we can’t even tolerate MyFace, Constantgram, or whatever that bird noise thing is, and prefer instead to waste our time with less aggressive endeavors like counting hummingbird visits to our feeders. But if you and yours need to get scared straight to the realities of the local crime wave, check that noisome app out. That will get you some good neck exercise next time you are out and about, for sure. (It also, ironically, will give you some pause about exactly the kind of people to whom you live “next door.” Crikey!)

www.gatekey.com/resident-login takes you to a log-in page and provides tutorial access. The GateKey app makes it easy to set up temporary and permanent visitors so as to ensure smoother entry for your vendors and guests—with attendant security for all of us. It takes a village, right? (Okay, whatever, just do it.)

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

Kudos to all of you brave souls who (a) found your holiday decorations, (b) were able to untangle your lights, and (c) still had the patience to put them up! Woodley residents appear to be the winners of this year's coveted "Most Decorated Street for the Holidays" award, at least so far—but it still is not too late to try to win free delivery of the Thousand Oaks Acorn! (Unaware of that award? See, it really does pay to read this newsletter on the regular!)

All these beautifully lit holiday homes remind us that keeping our outdoor lighting up to snuff is another smart safety protocol for your family and our entire community. As already noted above, TO in general and, as reported in the past, Woodridge specifically, are not immune from people who would like to take what you have without asking, and we do not mean (just) the guv'mint—poorly lit streets are 11 times more likely to be burglarized than those that keep some outdoor lights on from dusk to dawn. Yep, you can look it up! (We didn't. It actually might only be 8 times more likely.) Point is, the developers who built our community installed nice outdoor light fixtures at each home so they could reduce the need for big tall ugly streetlights. If we don't tend to our outdoor light fixtures, an important built-in safety feature for each home and for the neighborhood at large is wasted.

Pro lighting tip: Pretty easy to install dusk-to-dawn light switches for the light fixtures affixed to your home are a great move, but you do have to remember to check and change the bulbs now and again. As for your home's entryway lights near the sidewalk, you may be happy to learn—if you, like we, are not members of the local electrician union—that those lights usually are of the "low voltage" variety, so it turns out you do not have to replace your whole system just because you can't make a normal replacement bulb work. You just need a *low voltage* chandelier-type bulb, which is not the same kind you put in your Spiderman nightlight. *Cool beans!* Low voltage lighting also means you have, somewhere, an outdoor box containing a switch for these lights, and in that box should be an outlet into which you can plug a very cool invention called a "timer" that makes your newly-bulbed outside lights come on and go off whenever you like. It's some real live Harry Potter stuff, man! #lumos

... HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE RAIN?

By the time you read this we will have seen our first few rain "storms" of the season, and they sure are welcome. Amazing how green everything gets with even just a little soaking.

As previously reported, your HOA Landscape Committee's year-long irrigation monitoring project has been a great success, reducing our common area water usage (and saving everyone money) substantially throughout the hot summer and now into the "rainy season." One element of this effort is to ensure prompt irrigation system shut-off when we do get the agua skyfall. Kudos to our landscape vendor, ShowScapes, for looking at the weather forecasts and attending to our system accordingly.

The recent rain also is a good reminder to take similar care of your own irrigation system. Watering days and times now should be adjusted for our “winter” and “rainy season,” and run a check of your system to make sure you don’t have broken sprinkler heads and miniature Old Faithfuls in your yard when your system activates—those sprinkler heads and risers get a lot of abuse and need regular maintenance, particularly of the directional variety (no need to water the sidewalks and streets, thank you very much). Save money and help us all fight the drought and mother nature (we *are* living in a desert, after all) at the same time.

BEAUTIFICATION UPDATE

The effort to improve our front gate entry and exit area is moving along—concrete work and irrigation piping and whatnot take time (especially the whatnot)—and should be completed near the beginning of the new year.

It should be noted that the HOA Board is doing its best to get a fabulous look without a fabulous price tag, so thanks be to them!

For security and other reasons, the crushed rock pedestrian gate bypass on the north side of our front gates also is being re-landscaped and closed. The fence alone has not been enough to deter its use by residents *and* non-residents alike.

To safely enter and exit on foot (and by the way, good for you for walking more!), please only use the sidewalk and the locked pedestrian gate—you can get a key from the gatehouse. At no time are pedestrians to step into the traffic lane, walk through the big gates, or climb into the fenced area.

While the new landscaping is being done, please get yourself a key and start using the actual pedestrian gate itself—and just because so much does not in fact go without saying anymore, don’t try to use the bypass pathway *after* the landscaping is done, either! #getoffourlawn

HOLIDAY PARASITE

Next time you are on a stroll through the neighborhood—and you know you need it, both the new year and a new you are coming fast—take a look up at the Sycamore near the southern end of our pocket park on Morning Ridge. For some time now we have been mystified by a clump of bright green perfectly healthy leaves high up in the branches. Our varmint reporter Edward R. Burrow confirmed it is not a squirrel’s nest, as we thought initially. Our adventure reporters Matt Everest and Kat Mandoo similarly were stumped.

*But good news, and interesting, too—our meta-reporter Snark Zuckerperson dug into her trusty search engine and found the surprising answer just in time for Christmas—it is **mistletoe**!*

Seriously, it turns out that mistletoe is not for nothing blamed for the spiking Omicron numbers this season, it actually is a parasitic plant that literally sucks water and nutrients from trees. Sycamores and oaks are among its favorite hosts. Apparently we have exactly a thousand oaks in our larger community, and probably at least as many sycamores, so you better watch out and better not shout when passing underneath our local canopy this winter with your favorite canoodler. And the rest of the year, too,

‘cause these succubus plants live off host trees even when those trees are dormant. (Yep, *mistletoe!* Like, *who knew?*)⁵

HOLIDAY HISTORY LESSONS

40th US President Ronald Reagan had some angry detractors in his day, but still left office with a 63% public approval rating. Kinda hard to remember any president having that good a number during his term, let alone at its end; Bill Clinton was close, but since then has lost some luster while Reagan’s historical standing generally has improved among the cognoscenti. Meanwhile, being President ain’t what it used to be. But whatever you may think of California’s Governor from 1967-1975 and the nation’s White House occupant from 1981-1989 (he also is known for his Hollywood friendship with Bonzo), his part in our nation’s herstory is acknowledged exceedingly well at his Presidential Library, where the records are kinda off limits except to scholars (like we, of course) but the rest of which is a great museum in Simi Valley off of Olsen Road.

The Reagan Library museum currently is hosting an outstanding historical FBI exhibit, and also boasts a full-scale replica of the Oval Office, a sizable block of the real Berlin Wall, and an actual Air Force One airplane! You also should/can pay respect at the final resting places of Ron and his beloved First Lady, Nancy. Serene views of Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley abound from this hilltop retreat.

It always amazes us how far so many people are willing to go to see other parts of the world when their own country, and even backyard, are left unexplored. Nothing against world travel, but we do have a pretty cool backyard of our own, and this museum is just one local site that really ought not to be missed. The holidays are an especially great time to visit, and this is a museum stop at which even the kiddies will find a lot to like. It is a great learning and remembering experience—and a mere Justin Herbert third-and-long throw over the hills to our north. Highly recommended!

ORWELLIAN SIGHTSEEING

Several years ago a Newbury Park farmer/entrepreneur amassed a collection of the greatest of all time animals (goats) to rent-out for brush clearing projects. The pandemic ended that business—apparently people discovered too late that wildfires have natural immunity to Covid—but a handful of goats still wander the (now barren) hillside in Newbury Park at the corner of Dover Avenue and Janss Road. It is a quick visit but quite fun, especially for the kiddies—your dogs will be highly entertained as well. Signs on the fence tell you what you can and can’t feed the goats (grass, bark, bananas are okay, avocados are out). Definitely worth the jaunt! (Just don’t call any of the goats “Tom Brady,” they are Rams fans.)

⁵ Before you get all 13 years old and decide to climb a tree to harvest mistletoe for the holidays, be advised that mistletoe berries are great for birds and squirrels but toxic for cats, dogs, and Englishmen.

OLD BUSINESS

Some quick reminders of prior topics:

-Prior newsletters are posted on the HOA website at www.woodridgeestatesresident.com and under the “Newsletter” tab. (Clever, no?)

-Log into your account at www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com and make sure your contact information is correct, **especially your principal contact email address**.

-Get the GateKey app if you haven’t already: www.gatekey.com/resident-login

-The HOA election is coming, a company called “Ballot Box” is handling the process and you should be hearing from them soon. You first should receive some nomination forms, expect them between Christmas and New Year’s Eve. The HOA annual meeting will be in April of next year instead of March to accommodate the new timelines created (confused) by our many friends in Sacramento. #sarcasm

-Rat season is here: Empty your bird feeders, don’t leave pet food out, get rid of those Halloween pumpkins (you know who you are!), keep those garbage bin lids closed tight, and clean your garage—the rats and mice just love to set up winter camp in that cozy hoard of stuff you don’t remember you even have.

-Free hazardous waste drop off for batteries and computers and such: <https://www.toaks.org>

-Ventura County fire prevention info: <https://vcfd.org/public-info/ready-set-go/>, and venturafiresafe.org. See also [https://www.woodridgeestatesresident.com/current-events-and-issues](http://www.woodridgeestatesresident.com/current-events-and-issues) about fire prevention efforts specific to our community.

-Please visit your GateKey account to see who in your household is signed up to get emails. PMP’s community email blasts go only to the main contact person, but GateKey sends them to everyone on its list, so sign everyone up! Yeah, you will get some duplicates, but we know you learned how to hit “delete” quickly at least since you started getting this newsletter, and meanwhile the other people in your home can learn to be more self-reliant by receiving all the local misinformation directly.⁶

- The HOA’s Reserve Study Summary is available in its own tab under “Helpful Information” on the HOA website at www.woodridgeestatesresident.com. We know it doesn’t sound scintillating, but it really is worth reviewing. It may take a few bedtimes to get through it, but that makes reading it a win-win.

-We want to thank a local resident/loyal reader who evidently is as obsessed with doggie derriere deliveries as we are, and thus recently reported empty baggie stations in the ‘hood. Problem promptly solved! Our lawn and our shoes say, “Thank you very much.” Picking up, it seems, is picking-up. So we got that goin’ for us.

⁶ Speaking of self reliance, I recently was astounded to find an actual physical bookstore still in existence at “The Promenade” mall on Westlake and TO Boulevards. I asked the concierge/greeter/security guard where the self-help section is, but she told me to just try looking for it.

-Hey, y'all, we live in TO, so no matter where you are going locally, you are almost there already—slow down and stop tailgaiting, at least until you get to LA (and then good luck to you while there, gettin' scary). #snakepliskinformayor

-Do we really have to say it again? Unfortunately, we do: Please be courteous to our gatekeepers. (And remember, Big Brother is watching.)

MISCELLANEOUS

Holidays of the Month: Hannukah! Christmas! Kwanza! New Year's Eve! Whatever and however you observe, or don't, we wish you all the best for the season. Be safe and enjoy!

Holiday of Next Month: January 17 commemorates Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, and is a state and federal holiday. We all can do with a little reflection instead of mail that day. Amen.

Fine Dining of the Month: The Gallery Restaurant in "The Shoppes at Westlake Village" mall. Genuinely outstanding.

Psychologist Reflection of the Month: "The point is not whether the glass is half full or half empty, but that it is refillable." Unknown

Scientist Reflection of the Month: "The glass is always full, because air." Sir Isaac Fig

Physicist Quote of the Month: "Questions that can't be answered are better than answers that can't be questioned." Richard Feynman

Word of the month: Noisome.

Social Distancing Champion of the Month: Sasquatch.

That's all s/he/it/they/we wrote for this month. Don't forget to check out the HOA website at www.woodridgeestatesresident.com for more information, including a convenient list of useful local phone numbers at www.woodridgeestatesresident.com/helpfulphonenumbers.

NEXT HOA BOARD MEETING: January 20, 2022 (there was no meeting this month), and you should get an email invitation that will clarify the manner and means of the meeting (probably Zoom again) about a week before. *You really ought to attend, if for no other reason than to gain some appreciation for the fact that you do not have to do the work your fellow resident volunteer Board members do.*

TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND IDEAS FOR THIS NEWSLETTER, WRITE jbriggs@jbriggslaw.com

**TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS ABOUT WHERE TO PUT THIS NEWSLETTER, WRITE:
thisreadslikeorganicwaste@athensservices.bs**