

THE STATE OF THE ESTATES

H2OPEFUL/IT'S A HARDSCAPE LIFE/ATHENS NOT BUILT IN A DAY/ROCK THE VOTE/LOCAL FLORA AND FAUNA/WE GET QUESTIONS, YOU GET ANSWERS

Woodridge Estates Homeowners Association Newsletter

September 2022

FELLOW WOODRIDGIES: Autumn is here, and welcome it and some cooler weather are! The “rainy season” in Cali officially begins in October—the imperceptible amount we “got” a week or so ago doesn’t really count—so pray, dance, howl at the moon, or do whatever else you think might help get us some relief from the drought. (Don’t buy any sandbags yet, though, the clouds don’t like us to get too cocky . . .) Anywhat, only about 40 days to Halloween, 60 to Thanksgiving, and 90 to Christmas. (If we could figure out how to add graphics to this lo-tech newsletter, we would add one of those bug-eye emojis right here, so just pretend you see it. Coincidentally, Ventura County just adopted a new flag, so we have suggested that the State do the same and replace the bear with that same bug-eyed emoji. Sorta fits these days, no? No word back yet from Sacramento. You hold your breath, we will keep you posted.)

HEADS UPs!

- Keep an eye out for possible additional water restrictions—as in *NO outdoor watering at all*—as of the first of October. The restrictions began in June and were re-evaluated in August, resulting in a new TEN MINUTE limit on your one watering day, instead of fifteen. The Acorn and Ventura County Star are great local resources for updated info, and the TO city website is www.toaks.org. Be ready to re-set those low-drip sprinklers to permanent off, or alternatively to celebrate our conservation efforts; there should be news on this one way or the other at the referenced resources by the time you read this. Here is a good article on the current conservation status in the meantime: <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/outdoor-watering-zero-day-pushed-back-to-october/>
- Water your trees and shrubs! Especially those of you who have installed artificial turf, but everyone needs to hand water their trees and shrubs as needed (and permitted!) to keep them alive!
- As the holidays approach, please be reminded that the new community Rules and Regulations adopted at last month’s HOA Board meeting provide as follows in terms of decorations:

Section 1.14 Holiday Decorations and Lights

Halloween decorations may be installed beginning October 1st and must be removed within two (2) weeks after October 31st. Winter holiday decorations may be displayed starting the week of Thanksgiving and must be removed by the end of the second weekend in January. Related sound elements are only permitted between the hours of 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Any decorations that impede any portion of the walkway or streets are prohibited. The ARC reserves the right to approve, disapprove, holiday displays.

Best wishes to everyone for whatever and however you celebrate (or don’t); please have fun and be safe!

- **FIRE HARDENING:** The fire season also is upon us (does it ever leave?), and two excellent resources are at www.nfpa.org and <https://vcfd.org/fire-prevention/fire-hazard-reduction-program-fhrp/> . Studies increasingly prove that wildfire *flames* are not to blame for most home fires, but rather burning embers that find their way into your walls, often through small spaces in roofing material, open vents, and the like. *Call the fire department and ask for a fire hardening inspection*—they will give you all kinds of pointers for free, plus you get to meet and thank some first responders.

NEIGHBORHOOD FUNDAMENTALS

- **Website:** The Woodridge community website is www.woodridgeestatesresident.com . Suggestions for and contributions to the website always are welcome.

- **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, but ***first call 911 in any emergency.***

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

- Get the GateKey app at www.gatekey.com/resident-login . Tutorial access is on the site.

- **Management Contact:** Email your requests, concerns, and inquiries to PMP Community Care at care@pmpmanage.com to automatically open a “ticket.” If you really need to speak with someone, call (805) 642-2400 and ask for Julie Phan. You also can submit a request via your PMP Management account at www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com and its “Dashboard.”

- **Fire Prevention:** Here is a good website to check into once in awhile for the latest Ventura County fire prevention news: <https://vcfd.org/fire-prevention/fire-hazard-reduction-program-fhrp/> . Our community website has a section on our common area wildfire prevention plan as well.

- **Everything that happens at the front gate area is video and audio recorded!!!** Your HOA Board reminds you that *verbal and any other type of abuse of our gateminders* *will not be tolerated!*

HERE COME DA NEWS

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Outdoor watering limits are now **10 total minutes per irrigation station once a week** instead of 15 (there are some exceptions for which you probably don't qualify).

*You can't water your **lawn** at all, nada, period, full stop, end of story, pay the fine.*

Your “spray” sprinklers are verboten; you need to replace them with a drip system. (The Water Bosses finally clarified that “low volume” does not mean simply reducing the spray range. They did not explain why. #ishouldhaveboughtsprinklerstock)

Cover your pool, and only top it off one foot at a time (that actually seems like a lot of water to us, but we don't have a pool so what do we know?).

No hosing down cars, driveways, or annoying neighbors; your mobile car washer (we who use them know who we are) has to use greywater.

Shaming your over-watering driveway and car mat hose-down neighbors whose homes are shaped like a rock or who just don't care is allowed, but not encouraged—their ignorance or righteous indignation won't seem so '*'murican*' when we all get water restrictors placed on our main supply pipe! Please protest with the ballot instead.

There is some promising news, if not likely to help us anytime soon: The federal government has given one of the local water providers—not ours, but eventually we could benefit nonetheless—a big-money grant to treat wastewater for use as drinking water. Apparently our taxes in Cali are not sufficient to support drought prevention, so we have to ask all the other states' taxpayers to chip in. (So maybe we should let them vote here, too? Just sayin'.) Here is an article on the subject: <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/federal-funds-flow-to-treatment-plant/#soyletgreenanyone?>

COMMON AREA “LANDSCAPE” UPDATE

Your very active HOA Landscaping Committee is working hard with our landscape services vendor, Showscapes, to deal with the havoc the drought hath wrought on our common area landscaping. Here is the latest (along with a few oldies but goodtoknowies):

Common area sprinklers have been re-set to water just once a week, but slopes and the little park on Morning Ridge are watered twice a week thanks to a city waiver to keep “engineered slopes” alive and from slippin’ and slidin’ when the rains do come again one day.

Showscapes will be hand-watering shrubs and trees along Sunset Hills, Heavenly Ridge, Willow Canyon, and similar areas in the community, as allowed by the area Water Lords. The Landscape Committee reminds you to PLEASE water your own median trees and shrubs, and let PMP know if you see signs of stress in common areas, the Committee wants and needs your help. We can't save everything, but your HOA wants to save all we can!

Alternatives to grass near the front gate and along common area parkways are being explored and bids are being solicited. “Kurapia” is a drought tolerant grass-like alternative possibility for the “green” area near the front gate—if you want to weigh in, please let PMP know your thoughts and suggestions and then come to the Board meetings as discussions continue. Meanwhile visit <https://kurapia.com/> for a look at this particular option under consideration.

The new front gate “welcome” planter has been re-planted with flowers that should do well on the drip irrigation system already installed there.

Tree trimming will continue as scheduled (the schedule is on the community website)—Showscapes follows arborist standards that are not just safe for the trees, but in fact keep them healthy.

The tree up-lights just inside the front gate all have been attended to with new bulbs and other maintenance. Rodents do a number on the wiring now and then, but your HOA does its best to keep up.

Your HOA also reports that common area water usage continues to decline, not surprising between the system repairs done earlier in the year and the new watering restrictions. The cost savings are significant even as offset by new plantings, mulching, and other water restriction compensations made to try to keep our community beautiful.

*And once again—because it can't be said enough—**don't forget to water your trees and shrubs!** It is allowed as necessary for their well-being (except between 8 am and 6 pm). **Those of you who have replaced lawns with turf—that is a lot of us—and therefore shut off some sprinkler valves need to pay special attention to your trees because they are not getting the lawn-water they used to get!***¹

GIGO²

Apparently our garbage hauling friends at Athens Services have figured out that their messaging on what-goes-in-which-bin has not exactly resulted in clarity. So, they have sent around some new guidelines (check your bill package), and here are a couple of highlights:

- *Plastic baggies, plastic utensils, chip bags (whether rinsed or not—yes, that is a thing), bubble wrap, and those super annoying styrofoam packing “peanuts” are NOT recyclable, they go in your black trash bin.*
- *Food-stained paper, egg cartons, paper napkins, paper towels, pizza boxes, paper plates, un-coated to-go boxes,³ and wooden or bamboo or other fiber-based utensils all **can** be composted and therefore go in your green bin.*

Unless, that is, they are “waxed” or have “bio-plastic coating,” whatever that is,⁴ in which case they go in the black trash bin.

Oh, and your compostable kitchen garbage-can liner bags also can go in the green bin (with yard clippings and food scraps) UNLESS they are not see-through. Yes, that is what we said, the bags need to be see-through to go in the green bin, which in our experience also means tear-through, but hey, whatevs.⁵

¹ Please see the “Ask the Newsletter” section below for more on tree and shrub watering!

² Browser it (“Google” is a trademark, not a verb). Or ask a tech savvy child.

³ “I’m a Doctor, Jim, not a packaging material specialist!” (Live long and prosper.)

⁴ See note 3, above.

⁵ On a subject very near and dear to the Newsletter, here is an inspiring article about an enterprising young man in the area who has been raising money for charity by helping his neighborhood get their trash bins to the curb and back in a timely fashion: <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/bin-service-benefits-foundation/>. Mowin’ lawns and paper routes ain’t what they used to be, so this is a way cool young’un work idea and rekindles our hope in the younger generation (which is plural for many of us). Read the article and rejoice in newfound appreciation for “kids these days.”

BALLOT ENVY

We never will say you should give up voting in national or statewide elections, but we do (almost) understand it, at least so long as it is your actual choice not to vote. ("Meet the new boss, same as the old boss" ain't just an old rock lyric; it could be a universal political slogan these days, right?)

*But **local** elections are a whole 'nother kettle of fish (we sorta don't mean that literally), are non-partisan on paper (no political party affiliations on the ballot), and make a bigger difference in your daily life here in Thousand Oaks than most of us realize. We may not be able to influence the national debt, but we **can** have a say about the size and location of new apartment/condo buildings, how we combat homelessness, whether those (horrific) motorized skateboard-scooter rentals ever will invade our streets, vacation home rental regulation, car lanes versus bike lanes, and all manner of other local issues. Several local elections loom and we encourage you to vote with the enthusiasm that knowledge about the candidates inspires!*

There currently are 10 candidates for three seats on the five-person TO City Council: Two incumbents face 8 challengers who also vie for one other soon-to-be-open seat. Here is an article about the candidates, and their respective websites will have more information to help you sort through all the yard signs that soon will be popping up on dead lawns everywhere:

<https://www.toacorn.com/articles/top-10-city-council-field-set-for-pivotal-race/>

There also are two incumbents and three challengers for three seats on the Conejo Recreation and Parks District board. TO has more open than developed space, and a very high per capita park ratio—we Woodridgers can't go to the local grocery store without passing two public parks, and of course we are surrounded by public open space, all managed under the direction of the Parks and Recreation board. Here is a good place to start learning about our local parks and open space trails and such, <https://www.crpd.org/about-us/administration/>, and here is an article on the candidates running for board seats, <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/conejo-park-district-race-sees-renewed-attention/>. We encourage you to read about all of them on their own websites.

Knowledge is power only if you vote for what you know. The Acorn covers local election races quite well, yet another reason to pick it up off your driveway every Friday. (Seriously, pick it up, will ya?)

WATER RESTRICTIONS FOR THE BIRDS

We are surrounded by wildlife that was here before we were, and they also are suffering from the drought. Whether you believe we humans are at fault or Mother/Father/+ Nature is to blame, consider lending the birdies a hand by leaving a small water bowl out—one of our residents reports that her now unusable fountain makes a great birdbath and is as popular with local birds as a Jack-in-the-Box restaurant after a Dodgers pitcher strikes out 10 opposing batters. Just be sure to change the water every day to keep mosquitos from taking residence. (Your own fountain is unused, right? Unless you are recycling the water, der fountain iz verboten!)⁶

⁶ You might notice a nice new water dish set out near the front gate fountain—our gatekeepers change the water daily, and we and our local feathered friends thank them for that!

*And while you are out re-filling your little bird oasis every day, **don't forget to check your shrubs and trees and give them a drink as well.** The water content of shrubs is excellent for fire prevention, so please keep yours healthy via hand-watering!⁷*

ASK THE NEWSLETTER⁸

This month's anonymous comments and questions:

Question: Do you have any suggestions for drought tolerant landscaping that also is fire resistant?

Here is a good article on that very subject: <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/when-landscaping-consider-threat-of-fire/>

Question: How much water do our trees need?

Many trees can make it for about three hot months on one good 15-minute soak. But that probably will draw the attention of the Water Cops and it has been hotter than usual, so we recommend a few minutes once a week. Most shrubs need 20 minutes total, spread out over a few waterings a week. Remember that you can hand-water shrubs and trees all you need to keep them alive (just not between 8 am and 6 pm). If you installed artificial turf, your median trees need special attention now that your lawn-watering valves are shut off!

Question: We hear you moved here from Hollywood right before the pandemic—since you can foresee the future, do you have any stocks or lottery numbers to recommend?

Past performance has proved to be no indication of future success. And we don't want to split our lottery prizes with you. So, no.

Question: Do you know who designs the packaging for batteries? We would like to write a nasty letter to that person and to her or his extended family.

We safely can assume you want to offer "constructive criticism," not a pat on the back. Not a good idea, though: After the last "friendly suggestion" letter these packaging psychos got, they went from difficult-to-open cardboard packaging to impossible-to-open plastic. It's like those little batteries are laughing at you from behind that plastic window while you are cutting up your fingers trying to pry them out of there.

Comment: Love your newsletter, you should get a raise!

Thanks! As it happens, the HOA Board just tripled our pay. (You should not have missed the last meeting.) 3 x \$0 = \$000! We plan to hold out for an even larger multiple before

⁷ Interestingly, the water content of Ventura County shrubbery is actually above normal for this time of year, and more than it was last year and the year before. On a related note, and equally interesting, our local rainfall total for the past year (the new "rain year" starts in October) is only 75% shy of "normal." (Hey Sacramento, more water storage please!)

⁸ The best question each month gets free delivery of a hard copy of the Acorn for life.

next year's training camp. And no, you can't have our agent's number, negotiate your own dang deal, Lamar.

Thanks to those of you writing to us now and then with questions and suggestions (and some even with kind words), all feedback is very much appreciated! As a bonus, we promise not to ever ask you to fill out a satisfaction survey.

OLD BUSINESS

- Not sure we have said it enough yet—HAND-WATER YOUR TREES AND SHRUBS AS NEEDED TO KEEP THEM ALIVE, YOU ARE ALLOWED TO DO SO AND MUST DO SO TO KEEP THEM ALIVE. THOSE MEDIAN TREES ARE YOURS, BY THE WAY!
- TO Police (staffed by Ventura County Sheriff officers) encourage you to call their non-emergency response line, 805-654-9511, to report anyone you see anywhere in the city *who seems to need medical care or non-emergency law enforcement intervention* (a/k/a homeless persons). Feel good about calling: Resources are available to those who need and want help, *and those who don't will find other places to stay where quality of life crimes are not enforced*. TO expects to have permanent supportive housing (77 rooms) available in about 6 months for those who can follow basic rules and just need help staying on their medications—state grant money for that specific purpose just arrived, and will fund the conversion of a “Quality Inn” motel on TO Boulevard near The Oaks mall. But the city still needs temporary shelter beds to keep people from camping on public rights of way. (The newly funded units cannot be used for that purpose.) You can read more about all of this in a very good article from the Acorn: <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/state-delivers-27-million-to-city-for-supportive-housing/>.
- One more time: *Water your trees and shrubs!*

MISCELLANEOUS

Holiday of Next Month: Yom Kippur arrives at sundown on October 4. October 16, a Sunday, is “National Bosses Day.” (What is a more “boss” thing to do than schedule something special on a day on which we already don’t have to work?) Halloween arrives Monday the 31st—see “Heads Ups!” above re community holiday decoration rules, and then have fun and be safe!

NextDoor App Quote of the Month: “Our AC is so loud that I can hardly hear my TV! It’s not a concerning sound, just the very loud sound of rushing air. Has anyone else experienced this? If so, what was the fix?” *Put down the seashell, turn up the TV volume, and remember there are worse things, like kids melting in Europe.*

Excuse of the Month: “Sorry we’re late. We got here as soon as we wanted to.”

Workout Tip of the Month: A panic attack does not count towards your daily cardio minimum.

Senior Moment of the Month: Do you really have all that free time, or are you just forgetting to do the things you’re supposed to do?

California “Joke” of the Month (a/k/a voting inspiration): California legislators propose to use incarcerated felons to help fight wildfires. Hence the state’s new tourism slogan: “California—come for the drought, stay for the burning forests full of murderers.” [#snlweekendupdate](#)

That’s all s/he/it/they/we wrote for this month. Please find a list of helpful local phone numbers at www.woodridgeestateresident.com/helpfulphonenumbers. Let us know of any others you can suggest. (This month’s un-helpful number is 1-555-parentalfinancedstudentloanforgiveness.)

NEXT HOA BOARD MEETING: October 20, 2022, again by Zoom, watch your email for an invitation a few days before the 20th.

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

SEND COMPLAINTS ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER TO iconapop@2013hitsong