

## THE STATE OF THE ESTATES

**WELCOME NEW HOA BOARD!/WILLOW WATER/WATER WIN/FOLLOW THE RULES/WALK THIS WAY/SNAKES IN THE GRASS/EARTH DAY LESSONS/WASTED DAYS AND NIGHTS/FOWL WEATHER/LOCAL ELECTIONS AFOOT**

*Woodridge Estates Homeowners Association Newsletter*

*April 2022*

**FELLOW WOODRIDGIES:** We hope you all had a happy Easter, Administrative Professionals Day, and Earth Day, and we hope Passover, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and Ramadan were and continue to be reflective and peaceful for you and all of yours.

### **HEADS UPS!**

We are advised of a neighborhood power shutoff scheduled for 9 am – 3 pm on May 5, for local utility maintenance and repairs.

As further discussed below, it is likely that we all will be restricted to 1 day/week-8 mins/station watering by June 1. This restriction will include our common area irrigation, both internally and on our community surrounds, and includes car washing, hosing down driveways, and all other outside watering—and there may be odd/even days by address as well. (The 70's called . . . .)

### **MONTHLY REMINDERS**

**Website:** Our community website is at [www.woodridgeestatesresident.com](http://www.woodridgeestatesresident.com). It is worth an occasional visit for information about HOA activity, community rules and regulations, and a list of useful local phone numbers. *Suggestions and contributions welcome.*

**Emergencies:** Always call 911 first in a genuine emergency in or around the community. Our Gatehouse personnel are not "security guards"—you can and should let them know of any problems, but FIRST call 911 in any 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 again, NOT the Gatehouse).

**Police: 805-494-8200/8201**

**Fire: 805-371-1111 ext 34**

**Community Safety:** Gated communities like ours are not immune from crime! See prior newsletters for numerous "safe and secure" tips, but meanwhile get an alarm system, turn on and leave on your outside lights at night, don't leave stuff in your vehicles on the street or in driveways, and promptly pick up deliveries from your front stoop—in short, don't advertise you are not at home.

*AB 1613, which would have made it easier for Ventura to crack down on "tourist burglars" (a real thing, yes) sadly died in the legislature, which is woke to(o) much but not to rising crime. For*

*a recap of local crime statistics (so you know we are not making this stuff up), visit <https://tinyurl.com/vsoccrime2021>. These crooks are very organized—we need to be as well!*

**Management Contact:** Email your requests, concerns, and inquiries to PMP Community Care at [care@pmpmanage.com](mailto:care@pmpmanage.com) to automatically open a “ticket” that will be tracked for a response. If you 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](http://www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com) and its “Dashboard.”

**GateKey:** Sign up for the “GateKey” app at [www.woodridgeestateresident.com](http://www.woodridgeestateresident.com). Tutorial access is at [www.gatekey.com/resident-login](http://www.gatekey.com/resident-login). This app makes entry for your friends, family, and other guests very easy. Please make sure your visitors know ahead of time that they will have to show ID at the gate, and ask them to be patient and respectful of our gatehouse personnel. (Remind your guests that **all interactions at the gate are video recorded!**)

*Putting expected visitors on the temporary GateKey visitor list takes only a few clicks on your computer or dumbphone and helps our gateminders avoid backups at our front gate.*

**Poop Scoop:** It really is kind of sad—some would say pathetic—that *any* of our residents feel the need to put up little “clean up after your dog” signs on their boulevard medians and in their yards, but we have noticed more of them of late. C’mon, people, be a good neighbor and clean up after ol’ Barky, okay? And make sure your kids know to do this? Maybe tell them to actually participate in the walk with your dog instead of staring at their phone the whole time? (Incidentally, this is good advice for being out and about without your dog as well.) Seriously, dog waste is a problem we simply should not have. *We really would LOVE to stop writing about it!*<sup>1</sup>

#### **AND NOW, THE REST OF THE STORY**

#### **THE VOTES ARE IN! BUT . . .**

122 of 228 households cast votes in the April HOA Board election (54%) for the three contested seats. Newcomer Bob Gray was elected, and current HOA Board President Mary Jo Ammon was re-elected. However, current Board member Robert Kaplan and former Board member Bill Giragos actually tied even after all the hanging chads were re-counted several times. There will be a runoff between those two very game volunteers, so watch your mail for the new runoff ballot; the process takes about 60 days all told, and Mr. Kaplan will keep his seat until that runoff election is concluded.

*We offer our thanks and appreciation to all the candidates, as well as the two Board members whose seats were not yet up for election. Each is to be commended for volunteering for what often is a thankless “what have you done for me lately” job.*

Anyone doubting the efficacy of our HOA should visit a *non*-HOA 20+ year old development and compare it to what we have here in Woodridge. You will see a lot of home neglect and disrepair and a lot—a LOT—of cars and trucks and RVs and boats parked on the streets, among many other comparisons that should make you realize how fortunate we are to be here and to have an HOA paying

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<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the Bowser Backside Burp Bag Leaver is back again. Anyone who can handle bagging the mess ought to be able to carry it a few blocks to a trash receptacle. Good grief!

attention. We all take our neighborhood for granted day-to-day, but the election reminds us to take a moment to thank all our HOA volunteers. *And thanks to everyone who voted*—it is not unusual for communities to fail to reach a quorum in these elections (over 50%), so well done all y'all!

*If you are interested in helping one of the HOA Committees, like Finance or Landscaping or Rules and Regs or Architectural Review, please let PMP know ([iphant@pmpmanage.com](mailto:iphant@pmpmanage.com)). Don't be shy! Your participation is most welcome!*

## **WATERWORKS ON WILLOW**

Earlier this month your HOA Landscape Committee noticed some water pooling on Willow Canyon between Country Home Court and Hampton Court. Willow Canyon is a low point below the hillside rising to the north, as well as to the east and west, and recent rainfall and nearby residential overwatering are possible contributors—Woodridge also has some underground springs below it which may have filled to the brim over time. The TO Water Department was on the scene mid-month and dug up part of the street to try to locate any leaking pipe in the area's main line or in one of its offshoots; they did replace one access line while the street was dug up, as a precaution, but actually never found a leak. The street work remains unfinished at this writing and the TO Water Wizards continue to look into the cause.

*Please be reminded that lawn watering is limited by law to three days/week and 15 mins/station April through October (and only twice a week the rest of the year). **We are advised it could go to once a week and 8 mins/station within the next month, with enforcement to begin by June 1 (written warnings followed by fines).** So please check your irrigation lines and your watering timers and save a few bucks of your own while still giving your lawn and plantings a little drink now and again. (Where are all those rainwater-capturing reservoirs when we need them? Oh yeah, that money all went to bike lanes instead. So we got that goin' for us.)*

For more H2O 411, read on!

## **DROUGHT SCHMOUT?**

The California drought continues according to the powers that be, and despite the Willow Canyon leak we are delighted to report that Woodridge is doing its part to conserve water: *Common area water usage is down some 60% this year over the same period last year*, at very substantial savings to your HOA and thus to each of us residents. Your HOA Landscape Committee, led by Mary Jo Ammon and ably assisted by several other volunteers, has been working on reducing community common area water use—and its attendant cost—for a year, and now can claim real success (such as the first budget surplus last year in many years).<sup>2</sup> Special thanks to Brendan Devlin and his controller mapping project, the fruits of which you can find on the community website at:

[https://www.woodridgeestateresident.com/\\_files/ugd/fccece\\_7891a656921a4209aef1f824a7b355c8.pdf](https://www.woodridgeestateresident.com/_files/ugd/fccece_7891a656921a4209aef1f824a7b355c8.pdf).

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<sup>2</sup> Also worth noting is that your HOA is running below budget on expenses through the first quarter of this year, partly due to ongoing water savings. We will save even more when the new water restrictions are rolled out—some solace for the loss of our lawns!

*You can read more about how we distinguish ourselves from many other communities in this Ventura Star article:*

<https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/2022/03/15/urban-californians-used-more-water-after-drought-emergency-declared/7052321001/>

Good on us! But all that said, it is worth repeating that **we very likely will soon be limited to once-a-week watering throughout the development**. Accordingly, an HOA Board plan to replace some tired plantings throughout the neighborhood's internal common areas has been put on hold for now, and **everyone needs to brace themselves for considerable landscaping deterioration, especially lawns and hillscapes, throughout this summer**. If you were planning to do some landscaping improvements of your own this year, you certainly will want to look into guv'mint subsidies for drought tolerant replacement plantings, and the HOA has good recommendations for artificial turf if that is your fancy. In all events, *remember to run all outdoor landscape, hardscape, redesign, painting, and similar projects past the HOA's Architectural Review Committee first*—not just for approval, but also for helpful hints and recommendations from years of experience.<sup>3</sup>

## THEM'S THE RULES

Proposed amendments to the Woodridge Community Rules and Regulations were circulated to all residents for comment, and we are pleased to know that many suggestions were both received and accepted. A final set of revised R&Rs will be circulated soon for another comment period (per da law, doncha know) before final adoption.

*We thank all residents who took the time to review the amendment proposals and to comment on them, as well as the R&R Committee for its development of the proposed changes.*

## NOBODY WALKS IN L.A.

True 'dat, but we live in Ventura County (can we get an "Amen"?). So while our neighbors to the southeast stay in their cars with the doors locked and windows rolled up to avoid offending their would-be robbers, we get to smell the jasmine and feel the breeze on our cheeks and the sunshine on our shoulders as we work our glutes and hammies and lungs in the great outdoors. (Apologies to those with hay fever.)

*That said, as relative newcomers to the area we wonder if people out here missed the memo on sidewalks? "Sidewalks," for those of you not familiar, are those flat whitish cement swaths running parallel to both sides of the roadway and providing ample room for those on two legs to stay clear of the multi-wheeled vehicles using the wider black asphalt area in between. After two years of haranguing about protecting others and ourselves with everything from mask layering to serial pokes in the arm, it seems like a no-brainer for the step-counters and animal walkers among us to keep to those safer "sidewalks"—as in "walking areas to the side of the road"—out of a sense of self-preservation if not social distancing. You bipedal enthusiasts can be hard to see, especially late in the day as the sun sinks low and blinds us already careless*

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<sup>3</sup> For an interesting take on California droughts, see <https://wattsupwiththat.com/2014/02/19/a-perspective-on-the-california-drought/>. Some of us still remember the 70's when pools had to be emptied, and we ain't there yet.

*drivers. So step into the danger zone on the street when you need to avoid a Rottweiler, but how's about steppin' right back up the curb to safer ground when Brutus goes by, m'kay?*

That said, please know your smart-alecky Newsletter staff is all about self-education and personal growth—so if there is a reason you habitually walk or jog on the roadway instead of on the sidewalk, we really would love to hear it and we will publish your responses (anonymously if you like) next month!

## **KNOW YOUR REPTILE**

Avid resident newsletter reader (is there any other kind?) Steve Albers notes in response to last month's newsletter's "Snake Alert" that living where we do makes it useful to learn the difference between a venomous rattlesnake and a harmless (except to gophers and other rodents, and apparently bulls) gopher/bull snake (they are the same). Good point, and thanks much, Steve, very good advice—especially because it also turns out that another of our readers corrected our previous report and says that the TO Fire Department does *not* in fact relocate rattlers, it simply goes all Robespierre on 'em and chops their heads off. We have no problem with that when it comes to rattlesnakes, but those gopher snake brethren of theirs do a lot to help keep the local rodent population at bay, and naturally; so we should avoid playing Queen of Hearts with *all* local snakes and let the big gopher guys pass.

*Rattlesnakes and gopher/bull snakes often are confused. They both get pretty big, have similar markings, and, well, they are snakes. Gopher snakes even sometimes imitate rattlers by hissing in a way that can sound like a rattle! These key differences might be of help in identification:*

*Rattler heads are VERY distinctly triangular and the base of that triangle head is MUCH wider than the body; gopher snake heads are more oval and just barely wider than the body.*

*Rattler skins are dull, kind of "matte" in appearance—gopher snake bodies are shiny.*

*Gopher snakes can be over 6 feet long and are fairly skinny—most rattlesnakes top out around 5 feet but are pretty wide-bodied.*

There are some other differences as well, of course; for example a rattler's pupils are slanty and a gopher snake's pupil is round—but who wants to get close enough to tell based just on that? And will a 4.85 foot snake agree to uncoil so you can use that tape measure you always carry around (nerd)? So stick with the head shape and shiny/dull comparison (and actual rattles on the tail) and save a few of the harmless slitherin' beasties you may run across. Here is a good article about both kinds of serpents: <https://stunewslaguna.com/index.php/archives/front-page-archive/5791-gopher-snake-or-rattlesnake-070618>.

*You also might try contacting Bo Slyapich, a/k/a "The Snake Wrangler," as he is the Neville Chamberlain of rattlesnake wranglers and will be pleased to relocate yours for a small fee. Visit [www.rattlesnakewrangler.com](http://www.rattlesnakewrangler.com). And here is that mean ol' Fire Department number again when necessary to hand out the ultimate punishment: 805-371-1111, ext 34 (**not** 911!).*

Stay safe out there!

## GREEN BIN COMPOST UPDATE

Another month brings yet more suggestions about how and what to put in your green bin under the new California composting law. (Ironic in that California is kind of composting itself, no?) This one comes again from the Thousand Oaks Acorn—a free paper you really ought to pick up off your driveway and read, if you don't mind us saying—and now says that any kind of paper that has food waste on it, Cheeto bags and the napkins you use to wipe the orange stuff off your fingers included, need to go in the black trash bin and thus to the landfill, not in your green composting bin or your blue recycling bin. Apparently this stuff makes the compost and the recycling bundles “look bad.” (Pause over that for a second.) Okay, whatever. See <https://www.toacorn.com/?s=compost> for the latest tips.

*And before you get to feelin' all bad for Mother Earth (isn't that sex discrimination now that men can be mothers, too?), please take a look at this perspective on how much of a disaster landfills really aren't:*

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/entertainment/books/2001/10/21/greener-than-you-think/67184d01-7bac-40ce-985f-9c8b5637f1e1/>

There is no harm in recycling, of course, and certainly some genuine benefit, and we really do try our best, but fining people for putting the wrong stuff in one of several garbage bins is a bit much, right? (Yes, fines really are coming!) We like the government's bully pulpit to be used for encouragement, not for just plain ol' bullying. But maybe that's just us. #parttimelegislaturenow

## WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

We also now have some more specific guidance on what goes in the *non*-composting trash bins. The problem is that by the time you figure it all out, you will have missed several months' worth of trash days and most of your stuff already will be composting! But anyway, if you really want to earn a degree in Garbology, Athens Services is here to help—check out these handy sites:

<https://athensservices.com/recycling-guide>

<https://files.constantcontact.com/ff5a6613701/6675017e-2064-45a7-8fc6-45aed9f412dd.pdf>

We wish everyone the best in sorting all this out (pun intended)—but we take solace in knowing the final exam (i.e., a fine for doing it wrong) is several years away, so we choose to catch up on sleep during homeroom for now. (Do the kids even still have “homeroom”?) Here is the Cliff Notes version: As near as we can tell, just about everything that isn't unbagged egg shells, banana peels, orange rinds, or cat scat goes in the black trash bin, kinda just like always (except that bin used to be blue). Much less than we thought can be recycled! *You are not even supposed to use plastic bags for recycling!* Oy, we give up. Time to start planning for a trip to the hoosegow when the refuse enforcers come a'callin'.

## THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

Our popular birding correspondent James Otto Bonn excitedly reports Bald Eagle sightings at Lake Casitas. But don't fret the drive—you can see some great photos courtesy of the Ventura County Star at

<https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/2022/03/27/bald-eagle-watcher-ojai-anxiously-waits-babies-nest/7099545001/>. Pretty exciting to have nesting National Birds in our midst! Goes to show you we ain't completely citified out here in Ventura County; we are still a little bit country! Pretty amazing stuff to have in one's backyard.

*The Bald Eagle (no, not the Golden Eagle) landed on our nation's official Great Seal (that is not a pun but kind of an oxymoron) in 1782. The history behind that is here:*

<https://www.history.com/news/how-did-the-bald-eagle-become-americas-national-bird>.

Lake Casitas is a nice drive and a beautiful place, another great adventure with the kids and grandkids. Highly recommended. And for other eagle protection information, check out these articles regarding the unintended consequences of wind turbine (a/k/a "Cuisinarts of the Air") energy production: <https://wattsupwiththat.com/2022/02/08/national-audubon-society-sues-bay-area-wind-turbines-altamont-pass-a-40-year-problem/> and <https://humanevents.com/2022/04/11/blood-on-the-blades-are-thousands-of-dead-bald-eagles-too-high-a-price-to-pay-for-clean-energy/>. ("Not in my backyard," indeed.)

## DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Local elections are off to a big start in preparation for the June statewide primary, and in a great reminder that elections really do have consequences—often unanticipated—the first local controversy is over election signs. (You know, those signs that go up fast and everywhere and then never seem to quite go away?) On the one hand, Thousand Oaks has strict laws about the size of election signs, where they can go, and *when they can go up*—specifically only 45 days before election day. On the other hand, Ventura County has adopted early voting. So, it seems the Thousand Oaks 45-day rule applies to the first day of *early* voting, which means a whole extra 30 days of all that wonderful signage, which is just what TO was trying to save us from! Funny how stuff works out sometimes, right?

*You should receive your state and local primary mail-in ballot around May 9. Everyone gets a mail-in ballot now, you don't have to ask or be out of town during the election. (Or even be alive.) The ballot promises to be intimidating, with 26 candidates for Governor alone. Here is some information that might help you wade through the lengthy ballot:*

*Thousand Oaks is in the 26<sup>th</sup> US Congressional district, the 27<sup>th</sup> State Senate district, the 44<sup>th</sup> State Assembly district, and the Second Supervisorial District of Ventura County.*

<https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/2022/04/07/2022-election-candidates-running-ventura-county-california-june-primary-sheriff-council-supervisors/9462174002/>

<https://recorder.countyofventura.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/candidate-list-4-4-2022.pdf>

Important local elections approaching include for Sheriff, County Supervisor, and County District Attorney. These and other local elections really do matter, *so learn what you can and vote accordingly—please.*

## OLD BUSINESS

- Prior newsletters are on the HOA website at [www.woodridgeestatesresident.com](http://www.woodridgeestatesresident.com), and then under the “Newsletter” tab. (We are simple people.)
- Log into your account at [www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com](http://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 done so already: [www.gatekey.com/resident-login](http://www.gatekey.com/resident-login). Encourage family independence and sign up your whole household for emails.
- Ventura County fire prevention info: <https://vcfd.org/public-info/ready-set-go/>, and [venturafiresafe.org](http://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. And please note that Woodridge’s annual perimeter fire prevention brush clearance effort is about done, 6 weeks or so ahead of schedule—thanks, Showscapes!

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Special Days of Next Month:** Mother’s Day is May 8. Armed Forces Day is May 21.

**Holiday of Next Month:** Memorial Day is May 30—great day to visit a National Cemetery and pay your respects to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for what’s left of our freedoms.

**Way Too Early Holiday Plug:** For all you Halloween aficionados, the “Reign of Terror” Haunted House at the Janss Mall every October was a great success again last year, and just donated \$50,000 of its proceeds to the Conejo Recreation and Park District (“CRPD,” pronounced kinda like it looks, make of that what you will). The operators have been doing the haunted house thing in TO for 22 years (but apparently they have very slow accountants since it took them this long to close last year’s books). We thank all you scaredy-cats who attended and contributed! And hey, Halloween stuff should be available in local stores quite soon, probably about a week before July 4<sup>th</sup>!

**ARC Tip of the Month:** When doing work around your home (after, of course, it has been approved by the Architectural Review committee of your HOA), please try to have your contractors clean up as much as possible at the end of each day. Its just neighborly. Pass it on.

**Trim of the Month:** The HOA website has the regular internal common area tree trimming schedule here:

[https://www.woodridgeestatesresident.com/\\_files/ugd/fccece\\_3af9912827cc41caa0bf1104f55c2926.pdf](https://www.woodridgeestatesresident.com/_files/ugd/fccece_3af9912827cc41caa0bf1104f55c2926.pdf)

But please let PMP know if you see a tree elsewhere that needs attention—Showscapes will check it out and tend to it as necessary, regardless of location.

**Rot of the Month:** Your HOA is engaging the services of a local trustworthy painter to give attention to common area wrought iron fencing that needs, well, attention. If your own property’s wrought iron is

looking a bit overwrought, let PMP know and the HOA will split the re-painting cost with you if it borders HOA common area property and you get three bids. (HOA recommends Pedro at 805-908-1470.)

***Disappointment of the Month:*** *Athens Services cannot adjust its street sweeping to another day so as to allow time for people to get their garbage cans off the street—the good news is that they do the street sweeping then to help pick stuff up after the trash trucks have come the day before, and we get that. So please do your best to get your cans in on Thursday evening so the street sweeper can do its thing throughout the 'hood without having to navigate around your bins.*

**Gardening Tip of the Month:** Remember to water *in the morning around sunrise* for best absorption and thus conservation of the agua.

***Welcome Mat of the Month:*** *"Please Place Packages Where Spouse Won't See Them."*

**Observation of the Month:** Parents of boys work hard from son up to son down.

***Restaurant of the Month:*** *Phil's, 3316 E Thousand Oaks Blvd. (across from Post Office). Basic American comfort food with some great foodie twists, nice dining area, and fun bar scene in back. Very new and very good. And quite busy (no reservations).*

**"Did You Know?" of the Month:** Your Amazon packages arrive more quickly these days thanks to a new Amazon distribution facility in Oxnard employing 2,000 people! (We hope Amazon is employing all the former small retailers it displaced.)

*That's all s/he/it/they/we wrote for this month. Please find a list of helpful local phone numbers at [www.woodridgestateresident.com/helpfulphonenumbers](http://www.woodridgestateresident.com/helpfulphonenumbers). This month's unhelpful number is 1-800-dieselscarsforsale.*

**NEXT HOA BOARD MEETING:** May 19, 2022, by Zoom again, watch your email for an invitation with connection details a few days before the 19th.

**TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND IDEAS FOR THIS NEWSLETTER, WRITE [jbriggs@jbriggslaw.com](mailto:jbriggs@jbriggslaw.com)**

**TO REPORT THIS NEWSLETTER TO THE AUTHORITIES, WRITE [nobodycareswhatuthink@1600pennave](mailto:nobodycareswhatuthink@1600pennave)**