

THE STATE OF THE ESTATES

WATER CONSTABLES/RULE OF THE MONTH/MODEM MADNESS/ALTERNALAWN/WILL L.A. COME TO T.O.?

Woodridge Estates Homeowners Association Newsletter

July 2022

FELLOW WOODRIDGERS: Hope you all had a wonderful Independence Day! Our longest day is now behind us, daylight is all downhill from here, and no holidays in August. Sigh. Well, whatever you may be doing this year for a summer vacation, we wish you the very best! Meanwhile, don't forget to pray and/or dance for rain, never too early to start.

HEADS UPs!

● **Remember to water your median trees**, and other trees and shrubs in your yard that *may not be getting water now that you have reduced or completely shut off your lawn irrigation!* Aside from your Saturday or Sunday watering day, the T.O. Water Wizards recently clarified that you may hand-water trees and shrubs as needed to keep them alive on any day of the week between midnight and 8 am and 6 pm to midnight. Hand-watering includes with a hose and nozzle that stays off until you physically activate it.

● *We all have until July 30 to change our yard sprinkler system heads to the “low volume” or drip kind (if there is any difference). Not sure if just reducing existing heads to a lower spray level is an option (it makes sense, so probably not). You can use your new sprinklers or hand-water what lawn you have left 1 day/week, 15 minutes max per station. Be mindful of your runoff, it is one way the water cops catch you, and they are out there.*

● Our landscape vendor Showscapes has secured approval from the city to add a second day of automatic watering to our perimeter hillsides because they are “engineered,” i.e., the plantings prevent subsidence. Our perimeter still is going to be drier than usual, so we will see some browning, but the landscape vendor is doing its best to maintain our common area landscaping under the current restrictions. We also are allowed to water the park on Morning Ridge because it is a “playing area” (at least for doggies, yay doggies!). Alternatives to turf in other common areas are being explored by your HOA Board. Attend a meeting to contribute to that discussion!

● *Fire Season is (always) upon us and especially with the new water restrictions! Your HOA Board made the decision a couple of years ago to comply with the local Fire Marshall's five-year open space fire prevention plan in a single year, and you can learn more about what Ventura County is doing to prepare and to protect us all at <https://vcfd.org/public-info/ready-set-go/>. Individual homeowners can provide additional protection for themselves and their neighbors by requesting a free home fire safety assessment at venturafiresafe.org. These individual home assessments are eye-opening and even fun, and may well provide just the extra level of protection your family needs.*

● No, you didn't miss it—there was no HOA Board meeting this month. The next Board meeting is August 18, by Zoom, and you will receive connection details a few days in advance as usual. (Log into

your account at www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com and make sure your contact information is correct, especially your principal contact email address, so you never miss a thing, including this Newsletter!)

411 REMINDERS

● **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 gateminers will not be tolerated!* Tell your visitors and vendors as well. These nice folks are just doing as told—if you have a beef, take it up with PMP and the HOA and let the gate boss deal with it. *Please.*

● **Website:** The Woodridge community website is www.woodridgeestatesresident.com. You will find community rules and regulations and Board Minutes and other information of use. *Suggestions and contributions to the website are welcomed.*

● **Please be watchful of the open area that surrounds us—it is being used by ne'er-do-wells to observe and launch burglaries when we leave our homes.** The latest trend, *including in gated communities*, is catalytic converter and gasoline theft, the latter by a mere puncture of your gas tank. *Any suspicious activity should be reported to the police and/or fire departments:*

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

● **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.***

● **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 within its “Dashboard.”

● **Trash Day:** Reminder that your trash bins go out Wednesday evening and *must be put back out of sight Thursday evening.* #brokenwidowstheory

NEWS TO AMUSE AND INFORM

HERE COME DA FUZZ

Thousand Oaks is using a combination of Water Department and privately contracted enforcement personnel to patrol for sprinkler, pool, fountain, and other water restriction mandate scofflaws. This undoubtedly elite force is not confronting anyone directly—cowards!—but they are on the job various days of the week and at various hours of the day looking for “excessive runoff” and other signs of overzealous H2O activity. If they see something they will say something only to the *city* member of the squad, who will issue the warning to the violator. *Fines will be imposed for subsequent violations.* The

finances escalate with successive violations, so once you are on “the list,” you can be sure they will be watching you even more closely. *Da!*¹

Our fingers are crossed here at the Newsletter—more severe restrictions will be here by October if we don’t show considerable conservation as a result of the current limits. Woodridge’s Municipal Water District is “Calleguas,” but some neighboring communities are in the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District. LVMWD reports early success in water savings from its recent restrictions—but they are more severe than those we face in Calleguas MWD. LVMWD is contemplating moving closer to Calleguas’s prescriptions, especially including shrub and tree watering allowances. (See the “Heads Up’s!” above.) Seems they just realized that letting trees and shrubs die along with lawns could lead to the need to use all the water savings on wildfire suppression. (Better late than never—but wow, they didn’t think of that before? Hope it is not too late for those shrubs and trees.) Anyhoo, PLEASE be sure to keep your trees and shrubs watered and alive as we all try to get through this dry summer!

Here is an article on how to help keep your trees alive during the drought:

<https://gardenprofessors.com/saving-your-trees-from-drought/>

The highlights are that trees are resilient and can survive on limited watering, but do not prune them or plant new ones during the drought, do not fertilize them during the drought, and wood chip mulch surrounds are great for helping water them slowly. The author also argues that deep watering, to the point of runoff, is good for trees and shrubs during a drought.

And here is an article on which kinds of lawns will just go dormant and which simply will die on once-a-week or no watering: <https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/2022/07/03/eco-tip-not-all-lawns-survive-under-local-watering-limits/7793681001/> See prior newsletters for information on alternatives to traditional lawns.²

For an interesting article on the drought and its contributors and remedies, please visit <https://www.perc.org/2022/07/07/running-dry-in-the-american-west/>.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Our “Rule(s) of the Month” for July (and beyond, of course) can be found on page 5 at https://www.woodridgeestateresident.com/files/ugd/fccece_ce5d2c79b9184a67b916ea60d517ced6.pdf concerning “Signs” and “Flags.” Basically, any sign you would like to erect on your property first must be approved by the HOA Architectural Review Committee (“ARC”). This includes “For Sale” and “For Rent” signs. *No signs are permitted on common area property.* Signs that are not approved and do not

¹ For the most current and clearest yet statement of the actual currently-in-place water restrictions in Thousand Oaks, visit <https://www.toakswater.org/conservationstages>. DO NOT rely on NextDoor contributors for accurate information (DO rely on them for amusement, but be ready for the melancholy that follows as you contemplate the fact that these are real people and some have important jobs and many actually vote).

² In addition to water restrictions aimed at traditional grass lawns, it is interesting to note that California also is outlawing gas-powered lawn mowers and other lawn and garden maintenance tools in 2023. (“Things that make you go Hmmm.”)

meet the sign rules are subject to removal by the HOA. *Flagpoles also are subject to ARC review, and only one flag per property is allowed.*³

The HOA has been working for a year on revising our community Rules and Regulations, subject to notice and community input in accordance with California HOA law. Yet another set of revisions will be circulated again in the fall. Note that the previously circulated proposed rules include additional details on signs and flags, but do not change the foregoing basics.

The preamble to our community Rules & Regulations states: “The purpose of the Association is to ensure that the common area amenities will be maintained in an attractive manner, to maintain property values by enforcing covenants and restrictions, and to ensure peaceful enjoyment of their properties by Homeowners. . . . These rules, regulations and policies have been developed with consideration given to providing each resident with the greatest enjoyment of the common areas without infringing on other residents and their rights to quiet enjoyment of their homes and community. . . . Congenial living and maintenance of community property values are the primary intent of these Rules and Regulations.”

Please review the R&Rs when next circulated, and please submit any comments before the subsequent Board meeting when the new rules will be discussed and possibly adopted. And also please do your best to observe them.

GOT FIBER?

Last summer AT&T was all the local rage as it set about installing fiber optic cable for internet customers in Woodridge.⁴ The hardhats were here throughout the summer making sure that all AT&T utility boxes you see on our medians twist street and sidewalk were connected to fiber optic lines, which originate someplace near Roswell, New Mexico (as far as we know—which, by the way, isn’t very far).

The second stage of AT&T’s effort to help us all get more fiber has, since last fall, consisted of incessant phone calls to customers—probably non-customers as well—informing us of the availability and benefit of a fiber optic connection. Telling AT&T you are ready to connect is just the first step, however—it stops the phone calls, but as for “all we need to do is switch out your modem,” well, not so fast there, Abner.

Our telephony reporter, Alexander Graham Cracker, reports:

“Bringing fiber optic cable from the street to your house can be as easy as running the new cable through existing conduit or as difficult as having to dig a trench across the street to put in new conduit. It all depends on where your AT&T streetside utility box is located. Some are right on your own median, some are a couple of homes away, and others are as far away as across the street. Assuming they don’t have to trench-in some new conduit, which happily is rare, the next obstacle is the age of the existing conduit, some 20 years in many cases, which means that tree roots and other obstructions might make snaking the new cable through the pipeline more than just a standard roto-rooter kind of job.

³ Proper American Flag etiquette means having a light on the flag if you leave it up overnight.

⁴ The fiber is for *internet only*—it has nothing to do with AT&T cellular reception (unfortunately).

Once they manage to get the new fiber optic cable from the street to the side of your house (the same box in which your phone connections live), they then need to get the cable into your home. To accomplish this they usually cannot use existing wall conduit because fiber optics operate on light that cannot make a sharp 90-degree turn; the cable needs to make more gentle and sweeping bends to function properly, and with as few of those graceful bends as possible. This usually means a new hole or three in your house to run the new cable to an indoor connection point. Your internet and phone lines and TV connections then hook up via an ethernet line and/or wirelessly through your new cable modem."

This all sounds a bit more laborious than it really is, opines Cracker, "but it also is not as simple as 'just get a new modem,' as the AT&T salespeople tell you. So when you finally decide to end the AT&T calls and upgrade to fiber—and by the way, your old AT&T internet connection will go away after December 31 this year if you *don't* connect to fiber—be sure to tell the AT&T caller that you understand there are some street-to-home connection issues in our community that could make it a bit more complicated than just installing a new modem. And then be prepared for the various connection operations to take several hours."

For what it is worth, Cracker also reports that a number of Woodridge resident AT&T customers already have made the switch, and advise that their internet connection is faster once the fiber line is installed. The faster connection speed will be lost on those of us still trying to dial-in to AOL for that comforting "You've got mail" greeting, but the whippersnappers among us will be very happy with the change. It also might make it easier to get them to the dinner table in a timely manner.

You won't have to wait long for that next pestering call from AT&T, but if you want to increase your daily dose of fiber right away, try calling AT&T representative Joseph Gonzales at 210-241-4971 or send him a note via your existing slow email to Joseph.gonzales.1@att.com. Tell him the Woodridge Newsletter sent you.

TOMAYTO, TOMAHTO

Okay, we get that artificial turf is not everyone's cup of grass. Some people, of course, think it's the bees knees. (Hey man, like, different strokes for different folks and doobee doobee doobee.) Previous newsletters (*all available on the community website!*) provide links to a variety of *natural* lawn alternatives, and we wish everyone unwilling to nurse their lawn through drought dormancy/death the best in making a turf-replacement choice.

Now we have another alternative to share—please don't laugh or grimace (but we understand if you do): Lawn Paint. There, we said it. Yes, it turns out that there are lawn paints available (we are guessing/hoping they all are a shade of green?) that are non-toxic, last through mowing, won't harm the drought-damaged turf (any further), and are inexpensive to acquire and apply/reapply. Unconventional? Yes (for now). Does it work? Some people swear by it. So, we offer this alternative to you without judgment—if interested or curious, start by searching for "lawn paint" on that worldwide web thing, or talk to someone at our local Ace Hardware store at Oakbrook Mall. And remember: Only your gardener will know for sure!

Please also see the watering article above for a link to information about lawn survival and how to keep your trees alive.

BUT SERIOUSLY . . .

Homelessness—a scourge to both the unhoused and the housed—is a scandal in Los Angeles, and this former Angeleno actively involved in fighting LA homelessness for the past 14 years is not optimistic that a solution ever will be found in that city. (We will spare you further pontification here; you can write us separately for more information, but our sources and experience are pretty reliable.) T.O. does face the issue as well, albeit in its infancy, and many would argue that one person living on the streets is already a crisis, but T.O. still has time to deal effectively with homelessness here before an LA-like tipping point is reached. So, we inquired of each of our city councilpersons as to their plan. Here is the substance of the response we received from the City Manager, complete with his embedded links to additional information from the city:

“Addressing homelessness continues to be a [top priority](#) for City Council. As you rightly pointed out, collaboration and coordination across government and community actors is essential for developing and implementing integrated strategies and actions to effectively combat homelessness. The City works closely with the County, law enforcement, and non-profit partners to continuously cultivate and adapt locally-tailored multipronged approach to address the diverse needs of persons experiencing homelessness in Thousand Oaks as well as preserve the safety of our community.

We also concur that housing alternatives, including an interim shelter and permanent supportive housing, are fundamental to a comprehensive approach to homelessness. In [September 2021](#), City Council authorized staff to enter into agreements with two teams of external partners to pursue state [Homekey Program](#) funds to support projects that would bring these facilities to Thousand Oaks.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is currently in the final stages of a very thorough review of our application to convert the old Quality Inn and Suites motel into 77 units of permanent supportive housing. City staff have been in communication with HCD throughout the review process and we anticipate a final decision very soon.

Efforts to identify the best feasible site for an interim shelter are still underway. City Council understands the importance of this endeavor to assist those in need as well as to enhance our enforcement options.”

We thanked the City Manager for his response, but also expressed our humble opinion that waiting for Sacramento to fund a handful of housing units and taking two years to find a “feasible site for an interim shelter” is not a prescription for helping the unhoused or the housed anytime soon. Here is part of our substantive response to the City Manager:

“[Permanent supportive housing](#) is a proven strategy for that component of our homeless population suffering from mental illness who are capable of living independently as long as they stay on their medications. That by no means makes up the majority of our homeless population; many are (or also are) afflicted with addictions for which they need treatment before any sort of permanent housing is a realistic solution, many are severely mentally ill, and some live on the streets simply because they are allowed to, under current law, in the absence of temporary nighttime shelter to which they can be moved (and then helped). Many find comfort in their numbers on the streets, and some even work hard to keep their encampment “communities”

intact, often aided by “activists” with other agendas. The city’s ability to get help to those who need and want it, and to keep others from usurping access to public space, is entirely dependent on temporary shelter availability, and until T.O. provides that in some form, residents can expect homelessness to continue to endanger those living on the streets and to threaten the public spaces of which we rightfully are proud and desire to preserve for safe use by all.”

Meanwhile, there is some good local news to report on this front: A notorious encampment along Conejo Creek just south of Janss Road adjacent to and visible from the southbound 23, and a scene of somewhat regular homeless-on-homeless violence, finally has been cleared by CalTrans, the state transportation agency and owner of the right-of-way on that property. Unlike the city, CalTrans can use “public safety” concerns and “non-public property” rights to clear encampments adjacent to freeways without first having to provide alternative shelter, but for two-plus years has been prevented from clearing this encampment due to state-ordered contact prohibitions stemming from pandemic concerns. Most of the 25 or so inhabitants—some of whom had erected two-story “structures” in the area (!!!)—found help from one or more of the several local agencies and non-profits able to provide real assistance for those who need and want it, and from shelter space available in Oxnard; interestingly, however, nearly one-third refused all offers of assistance and simply left the area the day it was cleared. For more information see <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/jungle-clearing/> and <https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/local/communities/conejo-valley/2022/07/05/thousand-oaks-california-homeless-encampment-residents-cleared-out/7798839001/>.

We encourage readers to let our electeds know that LA’s intractable problem need not become T.O.’s as well, and that prompt action—including incessant banging on Sacramento’s door for that promised funding—is of importance to you and you would like to hear more about their urgent efforts on an ongoing basis. You can write the City Manager here: CityManager@toaks.org.

OLD BUSINESS

- *Fines are coming from our trash collector for trash bin lids that are not fully closed! You are encouraged to order another bin of whatever color you typically overfill so as to limit trash spills on our streets from the wind and from scavenging crows, gulls, squirrels, and even coyotes. Call Athens to get another bin or to arrange for bulky item pick-up, 805-852-5264. And don’t forget to call Athens and get your \$5/mo Senior Discount. (That will pay for almost one full gallon of gas!)*
- *Homeowners are responsible for maintaining their own perimeter fencing (i.e., painting it now and again)—but the HOA will split the cost with you under certain circumstances, so please let PMP know if you are interested in the details.*
- *Slow down, stop tailgating, make full stops at stop signs, be kind to our gatekeepers, pick up after your dog, and carry that full doggie baggie home or to one of the several doggie doo bins throughout the community. And water those trees and shrubs!! Pretty please.*

MISCELLANEOUS

Holiday of Next Month: None! But Europe is taking the whole month off. So they got that goin' for them.

Observation of the Month: Seems like it's been "one of those days" for 2.5 years now.

Henny Youngman Quote of the Month: "My doctor asked if I suffer from a mental illness. I told him, no, I enjoy it."

Ironic Song Lyric of the Month: "JoJo left his home in Tuscon, Arizona, for some California grass."
Lennon/McCartney

NextDoor App Quote of the Month: "Does anyone have a good lawn painter?" Are there really enough of these to be compared?

Baby Onesie Saying of the Month: "Proof of Quarantine"

Zen Quote of the Month: "Humility is the first step to enlightenment and peace."

Abe Lincoln Foreshadowing George Orwell: "You can call a tail a leg, but a dog with four legs and a tail still has only four legs."

*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 1-800-desalinate.)*

NEXT HOA BOARD MEETING: August 18, 2022; watch your email for an invitation a few days before the 18th. *It is your HOA—please attend, participate, and volunteer some time.*

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

SEND COMPLAINTS ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER TO havesomecake@yourgovernmentisheretohelp.com