

THE STATE OF THE ESTATES

HOLIDAY WINNERS!/IS ANYONE REALLY SURPRISED?/BE CAREFUL OUT THERE/RAIN O'ER ME/WELCOME TO WOODRIDGE!/MORE AVIAN NEWS

Woodridge Estates Homeowners Association Newsletter

January 2022

FELLOW WOODRIDGIANS: Happy new year! The HOA Newsletter Committee (me, myself, and Irene) sends its best wishes to all of you and to all of yours for this new year, with fingers crossed that it is more like 2019 than 2020 and 2021, i.e., that some semblance of the old “normal” returns before we forget what it was like to be blissfully ignorant of the term “N95” and to think only of a great beer when someone mentions “corona.” Meanwhile, we hope you all had a happy holiday season, and we are pleased to welcome you to 2022!

You now should be receiving two copies of this Howitzer Prize-winning newsletter, one from PMP Management and one from GateKey. GateKey has a little broader distribution for reasons we won't try to explain (because we can't), so just take our word for it, and we want to be sure this gets in as many resident hands as possible. So forgive us any duplication, please still pass along copies of this missive to everyone in your household, and don't be shy about making sure a copy goes to your neighbor (who most definitely needs to bone-up on HOA rules and regulations and all the other helpful hints contained within). Be sure to visit your GateKey account and make sure all household members are signed up to get emails!

MONTHLY REMINDERS:

New Management Contact: Please email requests, concerns, or inquiries to PMP Community Care at 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 our new manager, Julie Phan.

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 (you or someone in your household has one), 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, your HOA's fire prevention efforts in our surrounding common area, and other stuff you really oughta, like, you know, know.

GateKey: Help smooth community entrance for your visitors and vendors by signing up for the “GateKey” app at www.woodridgeestatesresident.com. (Tutorial access is at www.gatekey.com/resident-login.) This app makes entry for your friends, family, and other

guests very easy. Visitors always are required to show ID, so please make sure they know that ahead of time and ask them to treat our gatehouse personnel with respect, but putting them on the GateKey list with just a few clicks on your computer or phone is very helpful to our gateminders.

*NOTE: The “Permanent Visitor” list is for regular vendors (like gardeners) and very frequent visitors only! **For security purposes**, all other guests, including occasional repeat visitors, should be added only to the “Temporary Visitor” list when you know they are coming.)*

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 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 again, NOT the Gatehouse).*

Police: 805-494-8200/8201

Fire: 805-371-1111 ext 34

Thank you! And now, gentle readers, lay on like McDuff to the news at hand!

MERRY AND BRIGHT!

The competition was fierce, and many homeowners made a late push as Christmas drew nigh, but in the end Woodley held on for the win as the most holiday-decorated street in the ‘hood on a per capita basis. Sunset Hills and Heavenly Ridge were tied in a close battle for second place, and individual honorable mention kudos go to the vintage Santa and reindeer display in the Morning Ridge cul de sac (we hope those homeowners get their Christmas wish, by the way—you know what we mean) and to the deer family on a bed of lighted “snow” on Sunset Hills. There were many other excellent decorations throughout the community, and we enjoyed them all and thank you all, it brightened the holidays for everyone. You Woodley winners should already have received your first free delivery of the Thousand Oaks Acorn—congrats!

Eco-tip of the Future: It is too late now to put out your whole Christmas tree for the one-time free tree pick-up Athens Services (our new waste-hauler) offers, so when ready to part with your ol’ Tannenbaum you should cut it up to fit in your green waste bin and it will be composted alongside all that fruitcake you didn’t eat. (Surprisingly, by the way, fruitcake actually is considered “food” waste, so it goes in the green can with your yard refuse under new statewide composting regulations.¹)

Speaking of happy holidays, we also are pleased to let you know that the community’s response to the HOA’s effort to raise funds for year-end bonuses for our gatekeeper personnel was not terrible for the first time out, some 39 contributions averaging \$75 apiece. We are advised that our entry sentries are very appreciative, and that they also got some nice personal thank you’s and have been getting less attitude as they go about their job. So thank you, neighbors—the HOA will shoot for even broader

¹ Our mind reels at what our state legislators deem important these days. Just imagine what they would come up with if the legislature were a full-time job! Oh, wait . . . Okay, that explains it.

participation next year, and will start that effort earlier. We also know that some of you handed our gateminders your own gift personally, and you all will be included in our “nice” list for Santa (with the caveat that we still have 11 months to go before that list goes up North . . . so you better watch out).

ORGANIC MATTER MEETS ROTARY OSCILLATOR

As forewarned, a new year has brought us a new trash hauler, and so far the results are . . . well, let’s just say not yet quite as promised, at least not for everyone. But there is reason to hope we are getting there!

On New Year’s Eve, we received a nice email from the old waste company apologizing for not emptying our green can that day and asking us to please put the can out for pickup on the next Monday, i.e., January 3. That struck us as a bit odd in that said company’s contract expired December 31, but never reluctant to test the Garbage Gods we put our green can out on that Monday. To no avail, as it turned out. (Maybe we got punked—good one, Waste Management!) Oh well, that was the old company, so in and on with the new, right?

Okay, so then that same last week of 2021 we received a nice letter from the new garbage people, Athens Services, and the following week we got a follow-up voicemail, both telling us our new garbage bin pickup day is Thursday instead of Friday. And just to be sure they didn’t miss anyone, they said they would come by on Friday that first week of the year, too—wow, that sounded pretty on-top-of-it!

Well, not so fast, Private Jimenez. Unfortunately, that first new pickup Thursday of the year came and went with a pickup only of our black recycling bins (soon to be blue, by the way), at least on some of our community’s streets. And then came the old pickup day, Friday, on which Athens had said they also would come—alas, many blue and green bins sat forlorn and ignored at our community’s curbs yet again.

Now, some of you evidently *did* get everything picked up that first week, so it was not a total fail. And lest any of us think that Athens had it out for us alone, you will be relieved to know we were not the only community that experienced service transition problems. Our trashy reporter Oscar G. Rouch has learned that the old waste company—which is continuing to challenge the city’s decision to award the garbage hauling contract to Athens—still operates the landfill lucky enough to receive our detritus and “may” have been “slow-playing” the dump entryway as the Athens trucks pulled up and then piled up in line, delaying their return to our area for more of our refuse that first week of the year. Or at least that is what Athens is suggesting . . .

So then came several communications from Athens, via US Mail and email (we did register with Athens—did you?), explaining that our old bins would be replaced between January 14 and 20. The instructions were to leave our old cans out after our next new trash pickup day, and that they would be replaced with new bins the following day. Well, again, didn’t happen 100% throughout our community. Evidently most of us did get new black bins (to replace the old blue bins), only some of us had our old blue bins removed, many had no green bin disposal/removal/replacement at all, and—well, you get the idea.

But hey, we are all about third chances, having gotten more than our own share in the past! The latest word from Athens is to again leave out any old bins after our next trash pickup day and cross your fingers for removal and replacement with new bins within 48 hours. But after this week if you haven’t

had any luck with your trash pickup and bin removal/replacement, you can write rguthrie@athensservices.com. (Very responsive so far!) Meantime, prior newsletters have told you all about registering with Athens Services 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 the need to memorize a new bin color scheme,² changes in what goes in which kind of bin (don't get us started, that part gives us a headache),³ 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).⁴ But if you want more info, the City of TO also has put up its own website at www.toakstrash.org, and we heartily recommend it. You also can try www.athensservices.com/thousand-oaks.⁵

We told you before we were looking forward to this whole new garbage company transition, and so far the entertainment value of watching the city and the new garbage people and most of Thousand Oaks try to figure it all out has not disappointed! But we remain hopeful that things soon will be back to battery after a little bit of a rough start. **If you are having any problems getting your trash on track, the links above should be of help and we encourage you to contact Athens and get it straightened out sooner than later after the next trash pickup day.**

RULE REMINDER: HOA Common Area Rule 3 allows placement of your trash bins at your curb the evening before pickup, and requires them to be returned to "an area not visible from any neighboring residential lot or common area" (i.e., not visible from the street, e.g., behind your side yard gate, not on the street side!) the evening after they are emptied. So to be clear, you can put your bins out Wednesday evening and you need to pull them off the curb and put them out of sight from the street by Thursday night. Please!

SUNSET HILLS STREET BLUES

We don't want to be the new year's Debbie Downer, so instead of telling you that local crime is on the rise—for example, there have been multiple after-hours glass door smash-and-grab burglaries at the Oakbrook Mall over the last month, and that's getting pretty close to home—we will just remind you that it always is smart to be aware of your surroundings, while away and even while at home, and to take proactive steps to avoid becoming a victim of what is clearly acknowledged now as a new crime wave:

² Black is the old blue, for trash; blue is the old black, for recycling; and green is still for yard refuse, but also now for "food waste."

³ "Food waste" is not only what you think it is—chicken carcasses (after you make soup), banana peels, orange and lemon rinds, coffee grounds, and the like—but also greasy pizza boxes, fast food wrappers with melted cheese left on them (Jim Gaffigan's favorite), unrinsed jars of jam and pickles (the rinsed ones go in recycling---isn't this fun?), to-go containers with the veggies you should have eaten but didn't, and—well, we would say "similar" items, but honestly it is hard to really know what is and isn't food waste anymore, so just do your best; the guv'mint fines don't start until 2024! (See Note 1, above.)

⁴ Yep, seriously—after a few months' grace period, Athens is going to fine you \$25 if your bin lid is not fully closed—they want you to pay for an extra bin if you can't fit your refuse fully in one bin. (One of our neighbors already experienced a lack of pickup due to an over-stuffed bin—so forewarned is fourlegged!)

⁵ (We love footnotes, if you couldn't tell.) Anyway, you also should maybe contact Athens about a possible "Senior Discount." We haven't been able to track down those requirements yet, but we suspect a lot of us will qualify!

- Our community is surrounded by public open space, some of which also is near easy escape routes. Alarms are recommended even in our gated community.

- Light up your outdoors at night! All our homes in Woodbridge have excellent outside light fixtures—make sure yours are working (see tips in December newsletter), and *let those outside lights stay on well into the early morning hours!* Good outdoor lighting protects your privacy (one can't see inside from outside) and is a verified crime deterrent.
- Use timers, motion sensors, or other devices to give your home a “lived-in” feel when you are away. Very old school, but it works. Consider leaving TV's or radios on while you are away—flex energy alerts be danged!
- *Lock your vehicles! Do not leave valuables in your car in plain sight, especially when out and about but even while at home—and yes, even in our gated community, so please just get in the habit! (80% of auto break-ins are of unlocked vehicles! Doh!) And park in your garage!*
- Be mindful of your surroundings when shopping—avoid storing shopping bags in your vehicle until you are finished shopping and ready to depart, and pay attention as you leave one shopping location for another. (Thieves don't just follow you *home*, there have been several local gas station robberies of late.)
 - *Keep your doors and windows locked, even when you are at home. Most residential burglaries occur when doors and windows are left open or unlocked, and being at home is not the deterrent it once was. Moreover, 60% of home burglaries actually occur during the daytime, so secure your home during the day as well as you do at night. (Again, get in the habit!)*
- Do not allow newspapers or other deliveries to collect on your driveway or by your front door. If you are out of town, have a neighbor pick them up and hold them for you. (Tell the neighbor s/he/it can keep the fruitcake.)⁶ Have a neighbor take out and put away your trash cans in a timely fashion.
 - *Do not post on Facebook, Twitter, or other social media when you are going to be out of town. Especially important to make sure your kids and others in your household follow this rule! Doh!*
- Report anything suspicious, and don't be shy about it—our local gendarmes really do appreciate these calls! (805) 494-8200 or 8201; **911 only if an emergency.** (Do not call the Gatehouse!)
 - *Use GateKey for visitor and vendor access to our neighborhood! If you or anyone in your household still is not registered with GateKey, please visit the HOA website at www.woodridgeestateresident.com and the “Gate Key Access” tab on the lower right of the homepage for information on how to do so. The link www.gatekey.com/resident-*

⁶ Most on-line delivery retailers allow you to track a package and receive notice when delivered—don't let packages (a/k/a “Porch Pirate Booty”) stack up by your door! (It is okay to leave the fruitcake out, though.)

[login](#) takes you to a log-in page and provides tutorial access. It is easy and provides security for all of us—it takes a village, right?

Lest you think we are overreacting—and yes, we are very well aware that we live in a gated community—the stark reality is that gated communities in the area have not been immune from recent vehicle break-ins, porch pirates, and burglaries. (We already have had one reported burglary, see www.woodridgeestateresident.com/_files/ugd/fccece_2494c37920074ae5a55366fb5f8f637f.pdf.) In fact, the bad guys have figured out that those who live in gated communities let their guard down more often than those who don't, and thus *several gated communities in the area specifically have been targeted of late.* This is why adherence to GateKey policy and protocol regarding visitors is so important to everyone—think again if you think the bad guys can't figure out how to access the neighborhood in one way or another, **so please do your part to help keep the community safe.**

One other suggestion while we are at it: Ventura County Sheriff Bill Ayub, whose office also supplies the Thousand Oaks Police force personnel, asks all residents to contact our California Assembly member, Jacqui Irwin (assemblymember.irwin@assembly.ca.gov and 805-482-1904), to urge her support for legislation reinstating a recently expired law that allowed one county's DA to consolidate cases from other counties against the same perpetrators, enabling Ventura, for example, to better enforce the law against those who cross county lines to commit crime. (Most of Ventura County's retail and residential burglaries are being committed by residents of other counties, like LA, which are far more lax on prosecution and sentencing these days than is Ventura County.) The expiration of this prior crime consolidation law has hindered Ventura County's law enforcement effort to keep repeat offenders off our streets no matter whence they come. So if this sounds like something you can support (it sure sounds good to us), please contact Assemblymember Irwin's office. See also www.toacorn.com/articles/teens-facing-time-for-perfume-thefts/)

Assemblyperson Irwin is not psychic, so let her hear from you on this and other things you care about as they arise. Even people you voted for don't always know what you are thinking, especially about things that never came up during their campaign, so you gotta let 'em know—don't be shy!

RAIN, RAIN, DON'T GO AWAY

In case you were wondering, we got about 5 inches of rain here in Woodridge in those rainstorms we had at the end of the year—and yeah, that's a lot. The slightly higher area elevations got closer to 6 inches. Northern California, whence comes most of our fresh water, got even more, and the Sierra Nevada snowpack is way above average for this time of year. Yay! More good news is that the water concentration of the snowpack is nearly double what is normal—so we have more snow *and* it apparently is wetter than usual. In sum, our weather reporter Chico Escuela reports that “La Nina been berry berry good to us” so far this so-called “rainy season.”⁷

But just like in the Midwest, where no farmer ever is happy with the weather no matter what it is, our ever-watchful guv'mint says this rain is not a “drop in the bucket” in terms of our drought,

⁷ Also good news: Instead of the non-bullet train to and from nowhere, the California legislature and the Governor have been pouring (forgive the pun) money into building all kinds of new reservoirs, dams, and other means of storing rainwater and snow melt when we get it--awesome! Oh, wait. No, they haven't. Nevermind.

and thus has put residential irrigation limits in place (e.g., no more than two days a week, and not within 48 hours of any rain) and implores all of us to do whatever else we can to conserve water. (C'mon, man, surely it is at least “a drop in the bucket?”) Anywho, visit www.toaks.org/savewater for more information (mostly, of course, what you can’t do anymore). #mandatesrus

While on the subject of rain, snowpack, water supply, drought, and such, we took a hike up the Sunset Hills Trail to check on Bard Lake and sure enough, it looks darn full! That also got us to wondering about the other reservoir in our area, the covered flat one you can see on the hill to the southeast of Morning Ridge; it looks like a big cement wall rising out of the hillside with a fence around it. It gets a lot of helicopter activity when there is a fire nearby, and in fact there is a helipad up there along with a hydrant used to load up those water-dropping choppers. That said, there is no signage up there, and we can’t find anything about it on local water department websites. It may be little more than a way of building a community water supply feature that blends into the environment better than a big tower or tank, and if so, we are thankful for that, indeed. But if you have any more specific information about that hilltop monolith adjacent to our community, we are all ears! #curiosityisnotjustforcats

More good water news: The final numbers are in, and HOA review of our common area irrigation resulted in a 37% decrease in water usage in 2021 as compared to 2020, despite having gotten much less rain, a 25% smaller water bill, and a 10% savings under the 2021 common area water budget. Thanks to everyone on the Landscape Committee and the HOA Board who helped with this effort.

FRONT GATE LANDSCAPE UPDATE

The effort to improve our front gate entry and exit area should be done sometime in February. (Something had to be done to keep lost souls from backing out of the entrance and murdering the old dividing-line pots.) The HOA Board is continuing to negotiate the details and costs of the final new planting area infrastructure (drip irrigation, lighting, etc.), so it is worth a little longer wait and thanks be to them for the effort to get a great look without a great big price tag!

For security and other reasons, the crushed rock pedestrian gate bypass on the north side of our front gates also has been re-landscaped and closed, as the fence alone has not been enough to deter its use by residents or non-residents. To safely enter and exit Woodridge on foot, please only use the sidewalk and the locked pedestrian gate—you can get your very own 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 where all the new planting has been done. Safety first and stay off the flora!

Don’t forget to notice that the fountain is working again, another HOA Board labor of love (and negotiation). Lighting of the fountain also is being investigated. Should look great!

SPELLING BIRDS

Are we alone in wondering what happened to our local quail population? Yes? No? Anyone? Well, we used to have almost as many quail in the yard as crows flying overhead, but they seem to have moved to

Texas along with a lot of other Californians. We asked our nature reporter, Otto Bon, to look into this apparent aviary emigration, and it (preferred pronoun) reports that quail are very skittish about environmental change.

"As a wildfire precaution, the Ventura County Fire Marshall ordered the Woodridge HOA to clear out a lot of acacia in the open space surrounding the community," says Otto, "and the local quail population really loved hiding out in that acacia. Although quail are smart enough not to run for Vice President again, they are not so smart about predator avoidance, and when their preferred cover was reduced, the local coyotes and owls had an early Thanksgiving for those too slow to move elsewhere." Thanks, Otto, and farewell, our head-bobbing low-flying feathered friends. RIP. Hope those of you who made it out fare better in Texas and its part-time legislature.

Wild Birds Unlimited is a local treasure, check it out at www.ventura.wbu.com (and tell 'em Otto Bon sent you).

OLD BUSINESS

- Prior newsletters are posted on the HOA website at www.woodridgeestatesresident.com and under the "Newsletter" tab. #transparencyrus
- 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. Sign up your whole household for emails.
- The HOA election is coming; a company called "Ballot Box" is handling the process and you should have received your ballot already, with instructions for nominating board members. Several current seats are up for re-election, and there also is one vacancy, so please don't be shy about volunteering (or volunteering someone else). NOTE: The HOA annual meeting/Board election will be in April instead of March to accommodate the new statutory timelines in effect this year.
- Check your outside irrigation lines and sprinkler heads for leaks, flow, and accuracy—no reason to water the sidewalk.
- Rat season is here: Empty your bird feeders, don't leave pet food out, keep those garbage bin lids closed tight, and toss out all that stuff in your garage you don't know 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 pick up after your dogs. (Let's not let ourselves get to the point where we have to register our doggie DNA—yes, that is a real thing! See www.israel21c.org/pooped-by-dirty-pavements-tel-aviv-plans-dog-dna-testing) What a world we live in, eh?)

- Slow Down and stop tailgating. If you need more incentive than just good sense and courtesy to your neighbors, please know that TOPD is making random visits inside our gates to look for speeders and stop-sign laggards. (Haven't seen? That is because they hide! But they are lurking—firsthand experience!)

MISCELLANEOUS

Quasi-Holiday of Next Month: February means St. Valentine's Day is coming, on Monday the 14th. Woodridge is for lovers, y'all, so pucker up! *#supplychainexcusenogoodforlackofvdaygift*

Actual Holiday of Next Month: February 21 is President's Day, so you can take the day off just like all Presidents and other government employees do—you just don't likely get paid for it.

Word of the month: Whence.

Squirrel of the Month: www.toacorn.com/articles/squirrel-of-the-month-109/

Gardening Tip of the Month: Now is the time to prune your garden shrubs and plants, especially your roses.

Hospital of the Month: Los Robles Regional Medical Center. First hand knowledge, y'all—outstanding care!

Joke of the Month: Guy takes his dog into a bar and tells the bartender the dog will talk if the guy can get a free drink. Bartender plays along. Guy asks dog, "Who was chasing Little Red Riding Hood?" "Woof." "Good boy. What's on top of a house?" "Roof." "Excellent! Now, who was the best baseball player of all time?" "Rufe." Bartender throws them both out. Dog turns to guy and says, "You think I should have said Dimaggio?"

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: February 17, 2022, you should get an email invitation that will clarify the manner and means of the meeting (probably Zoom again, Covid variant ya know) about a week before. *You really ought to attend: Local participation is the backbone of democracy, and as Dorothy said, "There's no place [to start getting involved] like home."*

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

TO TROLL THIS NEWSLETTER, WRITE: markzuckerberg@whyamibannedfromfacebook.gov