

THE STATE OF THE ESTATES

GOT MULCH?/(UN)COMMON AREAS/CITY WEBSLINGER/JIM CARREY UPDATE/OPEN
SESAME/VENTURA HIGHWAY/WATER BUG SAFETY/DEAR NEWSLETTER

Woodridge Estates Homeowners Association Newsletter

August 2022

FELLOW WOODRIDGIANS: Hope you all are having/have had a swell summer! Yikes, school can't be that far away now, and for some probably already has started as this arrives—so best wishes to all our Woodridge students and their parents for a productive year. We are rooting for you all!

HEADS UPs!

● Remember to water your *median* trees and other trees and shrubs that may not be getting water now that you have reduced or completely shut off your lawn irrigation. 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—just be sure to use a watering can or a hose with a nozzle that doesn't run on its own.

● We have been reminding you of the Calleguas Water District rules on residential outdoor watering for a several months. We don't make those rules, nor does your HOA; we just are here to keep you informed—and if you think the rules are unnecessary or make no sense and you believe continuing to water outside the rules is a righteous act of civil disobedience, we get it.

BUT, leaving aside the whole environmental thing, please be mindful that ignoring the water restrictions may affect your immediate neighbors adversely. For example, your defiant watering might run downhill to a next door neighbor's sidewalk and any Water Cops that happen by might mistakenly cite your neighbor instead of you—in fact, we know this very thing already has happened in the community! Look, friends, whatever else can be said about the rules, the fact is that violating them is more likely to cause an even greater crackdown than to change the Water Lords' minds. So PLEASE think about your neighbors, PLEASE abide by the rules as best you can, and PLEASE save your protests for the local Water Wizards and the city council—and the ballot box! Now go check your sprinkler timers

● 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/critter buffets on our streets. Call Athens to get another bin or to arrange for bulky item pick-up, 805-852-5264.¹

● Our gatekeepers soon will be sporting new patches on the uniforms—our longtime provider has been sold to Allied Universal, but our principal contact and other personnel will not change. The

¹ By the by, kudos to the Athens guys who recently have been observed getting out of their trucks and picking up loose papers and leaves that sometimes fall out as they are emptying our bins. They seem to be doing this even when they can't see anyone watching. Yeah, it is their job, but still . . . nice!

ownership change allows for increased personnel benefits and we welcome the new company aboard, but are glad to be retaining our principal relationship.

- **TO Police have announced traffic control as a top priority and, in light of an increase in the number of local traffic accidents generally and fatal crashes in particular, are more determined than ever to catch speeders on our local roads.** They are encouraging families with drivers of all ages to discuss with each other the dangers of speeding not just as to injury risk, but also as to the risks of citation, fines, insurance cost increases, and even loss of license. “If you speed in TO, we will catch you,” advises the local Chief of Police. “Watching for tailgating is one of our most effective methods of identifying speeders.” (Can we get an “Amen”?)

BASIC 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 gatemindeers will not be tolerated!* (And yes, sadly, we do have to keep repeating this. Oy.)

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

- **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.”

WHAT COUNTS FOR NEWS IN THESE HERE PARTS

MULCH ADO ABOUT LANDSCAPING

As you contemplate what to do with that brown lawnscape of yours, and as you remember to keep watering your trees and shrubs by hand, you might be happy to know that the City of Thousand Oaks has mulch and compost available for free to those of you who can figure out a way to transport the stuff to your yard. Please visit <https://www.toaks.org/Home/Components/News/News/3331/3338> for the 411, and know that both of these commodities can be of great use during the drought. Wood chip mulch is especially good for trees and shrubs because the chips absorb water and release it slowly into the soil and way down to your plants’ roots. But be careful of using compost for fertilizer during the drought—it can collect heat and damage your plants if you apply too much and if you don’t keep it *watered and raked* on a regular basis for a couple weeks after spreading it.

Your Newsletter is a big fan of “The House Whisperer,” Dean Sharp on KFI AM 640, on Saturday and Sunday mornings. If you have myface or mega or whatever those (anti)social media things are called these days, you can check Dean out at <https://www.facebook.com/HOMEwithDean> . He has lots of suggestions for “nativizing” your landscape, how to use mulch and compost, and all things garden and home.

By the way, here is an interesting article on a state water project that illustrates the difficulty in efforts to bring more water from the wet north to the dry south:

<https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/2022/07/27/delta-tunnel-salmon-risk-massive-water-project-state-report-says/10165475002/>

And here is an article on the current water rules throughout Ventura County; probably some eyebrow-raising comparisons to be made between water providers and communities:

<https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/2022/08/02/california-drought-water-use-restrictions-ventura-county-guide/7587198001/>

One more article of interest in regard to fire danger as we may face a complete outdoor watering ban in September: <https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/2022/08/12/state-denies-additional-water-fire-prone-neighborhoods-heres-why/10272413002/>

COMMON AREA IS ANYTHING BUT THESE DAYS

Watering restrictions and the age of some of our common area landscaping have combined to require some changes to our community beautification, and your HOA Landscaping Committee wants you to know they are on top of things!

-Common area sprinklers have been re-set to water just once a week, but slopes and the (dog) park on Morning Ridge are allowed to be watered twice a week.

-ShowScapes will be hand-watering shrubs and trees along Sunset Hills, Heavenly Ridge, Willow Canyon, and similar common area boulevards in the community, as encouraged by the area Water Lords.

-Alternatives to grass near the front gate and along common area parkways are being explored.

-Several dead or diseased oak trees have been removed under city permit, which also should save the community money on sidewalk and street repair caused by their intrusive roots. Each tree removed will be replaced by three new trees, though not necessarily in the same location and likely not until we get through more of the drought.

-Tree trimming will continue as scheduled (September 9 on Windridge, Country Vista, Woodley, Woodworth, Essex Junction, Country Home Court, and Hampton Court—it is all on the community website) because ShowScapes assures us that while pruning generally is discouraged in a drought, the arborist standards ShowScapes follows (many trimmers don't) are safe for the trees and pruning keeps them healthy. Still, ShowScapes is on special alert for signs of drought stress among our trees and will trim only those it determines can tolerate proper and limited pruning.

-Wood chip mulch has been added to median shrubbery plantings throughout the community, and some of those shrubs have been trimmed back significantly for their health—and already are coming back strong despite the watering restrictions.

-The Gatekeeper Hut is getting a much-needed update with new paint, tile replacement, a new door, and similar improvements; speed-bumps at the front gate also have been re-painted in bright white for better visibility.

Your HOA also reports that common area water usage year-over-year is down 39%, with a 29% cost reduction,² which projects to a \$70,000 operating budget savings by the end of 2022. These reductions are due to the watering restrictions and also a previously instituted efficiency plan spearheaded by the Landscape Committee.

While on the subject of landscaping, we notice that a number of Woodridgies are replacing their lawns with turf, some with gravel and drought-tolerant plants, some with new hardscape design, etc. One old-school drought tolerant option of which we only recently have learned is “St. Augustine” grass, which goes dormant and brown all winter (no water required) and then gets very lush and green with relatively minimal water in the spring through fall. It is a very hearty grass, tolerates a lot of activity and animal waste with little impact, but it is not the most comfortable grass on which to walk with your bare little piggies if that’s your thing. It also has to be trimmed around the edges regularly because it will invade adjacent shrubbery areas. But again, very drought tolerant and worthy of your consideration.

And one final admonition just so you don’t forget: ***Please be sure to water your trees and shrubs! It is allowed anytime as necessary for their well-being (except between 8 am and 6 pm).***

CITY HELP IS ON THE WAY!

Well, that remains to be seen, but the City of T.O. now has a new website/mobile app for reporting everything from illegal dumping to graffiti anywhere in the city: <https://www.toaks.org/departments/city-manager-s-office/request-city-services> . This replaces the old “T.O. Connect” site you probably never used even if you knew about it, so you can delete that and now not use this one instead.

Registration is pretty simple, and once on the site you can easily report potholes, sidewalk damage, sign violations, traffic signal outages, fire dangers, and, of course, water conservation scofflaws, among many other things. You can even add a photo of the situation you would like to see addressed.

Hey, the city people can’t be everywhere at once, so let them know if you see something that needs fixin’. And let us know how that goes!

² Because of tiered pricing and certain fixed costs, money savings lag behind water savings. You likely have noticed this yourselves at home!

TO MASK OR NOT TO MASK, IS THAT STILL THE QUESTION?

Ventura County is still *recommending* masking up, but no new mask mandate appears to be in sight, even if you travel to Los Angeles, which threatened to re-impose the indoor mask mandate until several cities with their own health departments said no and, well, pretty much everyone else did, too. Here is the most recent Ventura County word on the subject:

<https://www.vcstar.com/story/opinion/2022/07/27/ventura-county-star-aims-reflect-area-diversity-inclusivity/7832688001/>

Be advised, however, that state courthouses and federal court facilities here and in Los Angeles are requiring masks once again. (Makes jury duty all that much more fun!) Many doctor offices also still require masks.

Meanwhile, the California Covid vaccination rate appears to have stalled at about 70%. Booster rates are much lower, and vax rates for children under 5 are lower still. Proof of vaccination is no longer required anywhere of which we are aware.

Hope you all have a safe end of summer and beginning of fall, wherever and however you may roam.

WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSSES . . .

While on the subject of pandemics, after a couple years of seeing local stores close or restrict their hours, it is nice to have a chance to report a couple of new openings—unless, of course, you are not a fan of big chain stores (the Newsletter’s feelings are mixed). Anywho, construction is underway at Moorpark Road and Avenida de Las Flores (across from TO High) on a new drive-thru Starbucks with an outdoor dining area. It used to be a gas station (many years ago) and the long-empty lot was denied city approval for a 7-11 a couple years back, so not only will your high schoolers now get a head start on an expensive caffeine addiction, but there soon will be a new traffic snarl on our favorite Highway 23 bypass (Moorpark Road). Hooray for progress!

Another new opening of interest to anyone already addicted to on-line shopping (guilty) is an Amazon Fresh grocery store at the Westlake Promenade (TO Boulevard and Westlake Boulevard). This new outlet lets you experience what it is like to be fearless of prosecution as you fill your cart with all that food you shouldn’t eat and paper goods you are hoarding and then just walk out with it—when signed up, sensors at the exit “read” your cart and charge your Amazon account, but for a few minutes you can feel the thrill of being a Los Angeles or San Francisco resident getting away with thievery! We are not sure what happens to those who haven’t signed up with Amazon first, might be best not to know. #soylentgreen

On the other hand, PF Chang’s at The Lakes mall on TO Boulevard is closing after 17 years.

THE HEAT WAS HOT

With lyrics like “Cause never was the reason for the evening, or the Tropic of Sir Gallahad,” one could be forgiven for wondering just what the band *America* was ingesting back in the day when they sang about

“alligator lizards in the sky.” Well, the joke’s on us, “cause” it turns out “alligator lizards” are *a real thing!!* Maybe not in the sky, but definitely in our backyards! Who knew?!? *America* knew!

We all have seen myriad lizards scurrying around our yards, especially on our sun-baked patios and walkways. Our personal favorites are the ones we call “Jack LaLane Lizards” because they do pushups all day long (mockingly, we might add). But we recently ran into a somewhat larger fella with a longer tail who did more slithering than scurrying as we chased it off one of our window screens. Our photo evidence was submitted to our Nature Editor, Tool Howzer, who immediately recognized this bug-eatin’ machine as the aforesaid “alligator lizard” of “Ventura Highway” fame. These big guys prefer the shade to the sun, and love our outdoor furniture and hoarding storage areas (a/k/a garages)—but the main thing to know is that they bite and latch on like a pit bull when provoked.

So, you don’t poke at an alligator lizard any more than you would tug on Superman’s cape, to mix our early 70’s lyricists, and just remember that they would rather eat bugs than your finger. Enjoy watching them do that through those smoke glass stained bright color windows of yours.

And speaking of Ventura Highway, by the way, here are the latest developments on the work being done on the 23:

“IF THE SKEETERS DON’T GETCHA . . .

. . . then the gators will.” Or at least the alligator lizards. Ah, yes, good ol’ folk music. That old song has been playing in our Newsletter Office heads of late. (Kingston Trio fans unite!) That is, of course, because the mosquitos are back, and they are just as desperate for water as the rest of us—*so please remember to police your flower pots and other water collectors around your home to help keep those nasty little buggers away.* (Might help with the snakes and rats, too.)

NEW FEATURE: “ASK THE NEWSLETTER!”

We get questions! Our contact information is at the end of this missive, so feel free to ask away; we promise not to incriminate you by using your name if we choose to publish your question and our response. (And by the way, did your mama teach you to talk that way?)

Question: Where do you get your sense of humor?

Glad you think we have one. We get it at Walmart.

Question: Where do you get your cynicism and snarkiness?

Life.

Question: What’s with the Newsletter’s dog doo disposal obsession?

*We love dogs. Or at least our dogs. Or we would if we had any. We don’t. So we also don’t want to see, let alone step in, **your** dog’s detritis. When we were children, we “had issues” with picking up the dog’s mess. We grew up. And that was before plastic bags and doggie doolittle stations were available. Now they are everywhere—which is kind of*

a sad commentary on our times, i.e., that we need free baggies and trash bins to be reminded to clean up after RinTinTin. Also, have you been to Paris? (Spoiler alert: <https://www.flavorsofparis.com/blog/2020/5/11/heres-the-poop-on-paris-sidewalks>)

Question: On my morning and evening constitutionals, I see a number of homes in our community that either are watering when they shouldn't or have stopped all watering, including of trees and shrubs, which now are dying and frankly look like heck. What do I do?

Far be it from your Newsletter to tell you to contact the TO Water Cops and rat out a neighbor, that rests with your own conscience. We sleep fine knowing the city has its own way of finding water scofflaws. As for dying shrubs and trees, our CC&R's require everyone to keep their landscaping "sightly," and the current watering restrictions not only allow but encourage watering of trees and shrubs "as necessary" to maintain them—the city hates only lawns—so the HOA does have jurisdiction as usual and is keeping an eye out for landscaping falling into "unsightly" status. Please water your trees and shrubs!

Question: Does anybody really know what time it is?

Does anybody really care?

Thanks to those of you writing to us now and then with questions and suggestions and what we hope is meant as constructive criticism (and some even with kind words). All of that is much appreciated! (We don't get out much.)

OLD BUSINESS

● We heard from the TO City Manager again on homelessness, in pertinent part as follows:

"We share your position regarding the urgency of this matter. I assure you the City has not been bashful about our desire to advance our Homekey application through the review process as expeditiously and successfully as possible. Moreover, we have promptly responded to all HCD inquiries about our proposed project. Unfortunately, "very soon" is the best timeline I can provide at this time.

Questions about the state's Homekey application review process are best directed to HCD and/or our state legislative representatives. Our state legislative representatives are well aware of our application and have actively engaged to support us, as appropriate, during the review period.

Secondly, the concerns you've expressed about the need for an interim shelter within the City are understood and appreciated. The City agrees and remains committed to working towards this important goal."

We appreciate the response, but it does appear we are back to waiting for Godot. Your Newsletter will keep the pressure on—LA is in the insurmountable mess it is because the city council failed to make

keeping the sidewalks clear a full-time priority.³

- Speaking of homelessness, our local police and fire departments are on high alert this summer for “reckless fire control,” with particular emphasis on finding and stopping hidden open space homeless encampment fires. A recent brush fire off Erbes Road near Los Cerritos Middle School (just south of Oakbrook Mall where you buy your lottery tickets) led to a homeless encampment cleanup deep within a privately owned 75 acre parcel. Here is an article about this cleanup and its issues for local residents: <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/as-encampments-have-gone-down-new-problems-have-come-up/>
- In case you are interested—and we have seen evidence and heard from some of you that you are—here is some lawn painting information you might find of use: https://www.amazon.com/PetraTools-Grass-Paint-Strength-Repair/dp/B097FGT7L3/ref=sr_1_1_sspa.
- Speaking of painting, homeowners are responsible for maintaining their own 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.
- Brush clearance on our perimeter is complete for this year, but vigilance about fire prevention never is done. Here is a good website to check into once in awhile for the latest Ventura County fire prevention news: info@cvcfiresafe.org .
- Between Erbes Road and Morning Ridge, at least, *slow down, stop tailgating, and make full stops at stop signs*. TO Police are watching!

MISCELLANEOUS

Holiday of Next Month: September brings our most ironic holiday on Monday the 5th: “Hey, it’s Labor Day, so take the day off!” Autumn arrives September 22, but we don’t set the clocks back until November, so summer seems longer these days. Rosh Hashanah starts September 25.

NextDoor App Quote of the Month: “Hi, I’m in need of a cat sitter. I had a wonderful person for many years but she is now pursuing a career in *marine* biology.” That cat must be a real handful.

Roman Philosopher Quote of the Month: “Quod satis est.” (“That’s good enough.”) *Mediocrates*, 387 BCE.

Field Trip of the Month: “Secrets of World War II” is the new featured exhibition at the Reagan Museum just over the hill to our North off Olsen Road.

Stuff To Do in Coming Months: The TO Performing Arts Center has announced its upcoming schedule and, not that you asked, but we can highly recommend Penn & Teller (magic show, kind of) in October

³ Our intrepid vulnerable population reporter J. Wellington Wimpy reports that 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. Resources are available to help those who need and want it, and those who don’t will find other places to stay where quality of life crimes are not enforced. (They are enforced here as a priority, as best our officers are able under current law.) Here is an article discussing various local resources and their coordination efforts throughout the county: <https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/local/communities/simi-valley/2022/08/08/oxnard-california-ventura-county-rescue-mission-partner-homeless-shelters/10201716002/>.

and Nate Bargatze (clean comedian) in September. See <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/from-blues-to-ballet-toarts-unveils-season/> for more info.

Sign of the Month: “This month’s Fortune Teller Club meeting is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances.”

New Product of the Month: Old book smell spray for your e-book reader. (Seriously, it’s a thing. Gaggle it.)

A Reminder For the Young’uns: “YOLO, so LOL 2DAY.”

*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/helpfulphonenumber**. Let us know of any others you can suggest. (This month’s un-helpful number is 1-1-888-huduweappreciate.)*

NEXT HOA BOARD MEETING: September 15, 2022, watch your email for an invitation a few days before the 15th. Don’t let just the Board members have all the fun, attend!

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

SEND COMPLAINTS ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER TO athensservices@yourcurbside