

THE STATE OF THE ESTATES

**THE TRASH TALK NEVER ENDS/FIRE DANGER ALERT/DON'T BE A STATISTIC/
GATE UPDATE/FILM AT 11/A WALK IN THE PARK/ HUMDINGERS IN THE HOOD**

Woodridge Estates Homeowners Association Newsletter

February 2022

FELLOW WOODHOODS: We hope these first two months of the new year have treated you and yours well—and that by now you all have your new garbage bins and have been able to get your old ones picked up. It was a bit more of a chore than anticipated, as many of you know all too well, but we hope you are back into that regular funky trash rhythm by now. (More info below just in case!)

Please pass along copies of this fine publication to everyone in your household, and make sure your neighbors got it, too. Pro-Tip: Visit your GateKey account and make sure all household members are signed up to get emails! Never miss a scintillating issue!

MONTHLY REMINDERS:

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

Local crime is on the uptick, even in gated communities, so please keep your eyes open and read below for crimestopper tips.

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 Julie Phan. But do the “ticket” thing first, it really helps the team.

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 (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 information and access.

Website: Please visit www.woodridgeestatesresident.com for more information about our community, its rules and regulations, HOA activity (like its reserve study—important for financial planning), a list of useful local phone numbers, and other Wikipedia-worthy knowledge about our community.

GateKey: Help ensure smooth community access for your visitors and vendors by signing up for the “GateKey” app at www.woodridgeestateresident.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 be patient and respectful of our gatehouse personnel, but putting expected visitors on the GateKey list is easy with just a few clicks on your computer or phone and greatly helps our gateminders avoid backups at our front gate!¹

REMINDER: GateKey’s “Permanent Visitor” list is for regular vendors (like your pool person, though we get that s/he/it probably is not really all that reliably regular) and super frequent visitors only (like a car pooler)! **For the security of our entire community**, all occasional repeat visitors and other guests should be added only to the “Temporary Visitor” list each time you know they are coming. **PLEASE** get the GateKey app and learn how easy it is to add an expected visitor—it’s really, really easy and really, really helps everyone. Like, really!

Thank you, read on, and *Excelsior!*²

ATHENS WASN’T BUILT IN A DAY

Short Version: If your old Waste Management trash bins have not yet been picked up and removed, you need to register with Athens Services and then call Athens to arrange a pickup. For info on how to do that, keep reading.

One thing we know about Athens, the new garbage gang, is that it is efficient at billing. So if you haven’t had any luck with your trash pickup and/or old bin removal/replacement to date, you can call the number on the tidy little bill you surely have received by now. (Note: That bill should be for less than what you used to pay, but *your new bin size and number impacts the total*. The bills are for two-month periods, and ours is about \$25 less than it used to be with one fewer but larger trash bin. And that is without the senior discount we keep forgetting to ask for!) You also might write rguthrie@athensservices.com, who so far has been very responsive to those we know who have tried her. 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> or www.toakstrash.org or www.athensservices.com/thousand-oaks for more information. There is lots of info out there—if you can’t figure it out at this point, we can’t help you.³

*Meanwhile, remember that Thursday is the new Friday when it comes to garbage pickup, which means you can **put your bins out on Wednesday evening for Thursday collection** and then*

¹ PLEASE let your visitors know they have to show ID at the gate, and ask them to be patient while we try to keep our community secure. Rude guests at the gatehouse are the exception, not the rule, but come on, friends, we shouldn’t even have to mention this at all. (Remember that everything at the gatehouse is on video and TikTok and Instawham and the like are just a click or two away)

² Even as recovered comic book aficionados, for the record we greatly lament Marvel’s takeover of the film industry.

³ You can read about Athens’ transition report to the TO City Council at <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/athens-offers-council-an-update/>.

please return them to an area not visible from the street, i.e. behind your side gate (we all have those), by Thursday evening. (At this point your old bins probably only will be collected if you call Athens directly, so don't bother leaving them out after pickup day anymore, the garbage can removal fairies don't come now without being called.)⁴

Also remember that black is now for non-food waste and non-recyclable trash (e.g., that old broken toaster oven you clogged up with toast crumbs and Pop Tart pieces); blue is for recyclables (e.g., clean paper and plastic and glass); and green is for yard **and** "food waste" (so those Pop Tart pieces now go in the same bin as your grass cuttings). You can try these links if you want to know more about "food waste" (new state law, by the by, not TO-specific) -- www.vcstar.com/story/news/2022/01/03/eco-tip-more-curbside-advice-recycling-organics-ventura-county/6614446001/ or <https://www.recyclesmart.org/filebrowser/download/4900449> -- and we are happy to publish any understanding you glean. But here is what we think is true so far:

- *News article references to "Ventura" do not necessarily mean "Thousand Oaks" as well—for example, people in the confines of the city of Ventura received new in-home containers for "food waste" separation, but we in TO are not so blessed (or cursed, depending on your point of view, which in turn depends on your kitchen size and nasal passage tolerance for thrown-out food). We in TO have to make do with some other method of separating our food waste from other non-recyclable trash—and by the way, you need bio-degradable plastic (look for the "Easy-Tear!" symbol on the packaging, which itself may or may not be recyclable) or old-school paper bags (hooray for Gelson's) to line your homemade food waste container and to deposit your collection in your green can along with the yard clippings. Compost, baby!*
- **Peanut butter jars:** A washed out jar is plastic, so it goes in recycling. But despite being plastic, evidently an unwashed *gooey* jar goes in the "food waste" with your banana peels and roadkill gut piles. As for the little piece of paper adhering to the jar mouth when you first open up the peanut butter jar, that goes in recycling unless it has any peanut butter on it, in which case it also is "food waste." Same thing for the inside of the yogurt cup lids that always have some schmutz on them.
- **Fast food wrappers:** *If clean, they go in recycling, unless backed with aluminum foil, in which case they go in the regular trash (black can). If dirty, they still go in the black bin for trash.*
- **Potato chip bags:** Unless you rinse them out—in which case you need more than just help with your trash separation—they can go in the green bin. We think.
- **Bones:** *These go in the green bin as "food waste" unless your surname is Lecter, in which case they still are "food waste" but you will want to bury these out in the common area, somewhere hard to find.*
- **Coffee grounds:** *No need to separate the grounds from the filter paper, they go in the green bin together. Your "K-cups" and similar one-use coffee ground containers are soiled plastic and go in the black trash bin along with your cleverer-than-thou George Clooney Nespresso smirk.*
- **Banana peels:** Not just for supermarket floors and law school exams anymore, these are "food waste." (We are very sure on this one. All the rest? Not so much.)

⁴ Speaking of community Rules and Regulations, a revision will be distributed soon for resident comment.

We could go on and on, and could cite you to numerous websites containing conflicting information on this subject, but most of which contain less information than you get right here (suggesting those news writers can't figure out the rules, either), but not to worry—we understand that more “food waste” definitions will be coming from those wild and crazy rocket scientists in Sacramento any day, and we will get you a link when that happens. It probably will come out about a month after they start fining people for using the wrong bin. #dontholdyourbreath #exceptwhennearyourindoorfoodwastecontainer

SMOKEY WANTS YOU . . .

. . . to help prevent fires! In case you missed it, here is the “fire bad” information our HOA recently transmitted via GateKey and PMP Management:

The use of fireplaces and/or fire pits, during windy conditions can be extremely hazardous. These can be particularly dangerous when using wood, fire logs or other flammable material. Embers originating from these, or other sources, could quickly spread and cause structure fires and brush fires.

Powerful winds, especially “Santa Ana’s” can cause strong gusts to blow down the chimneys into the fireplaces. This can force flammable material and smoke into the home. Winds can also create a venturi effect that draw embers out of chimneys and into the community.

In following the Fire Department’s guidelines and to help ensure the safety of our community:

- 1. During dry conditions or strong wind events, we strongly recommend that residents avoid using fireplaces, fire pits, charcoal/wood burning BBQs, meat smokers, candles, Tiki torches or any open-flame devices.*
- 2. During windy conditions, please be particularly alert when using your natural gas/propane BBQ’s and/or turkey fryers. [Ed. Note: Are these a thing?]*
- 3. It is strongly advised all chimney spark arrestors are professionally inspected to ensure they are composed of the permitted material, the correct mesh size and cover all openings.*
- 4. All chimneys should be professionally inspected at the recommended intervals.*
- 5. Please adhere to all fire departments guidelines for proper clearance of flammable materials, tree limbs etc. away from all chimneys.*

See also <https://www.woodridgeestateresident.com/current-events-and-issues> regarding fire prevention efforts specific to our community.

RETURN OF THE CROOKS

We really hate to have to keep bringing this up, but we continue to be reminded by the local thin blue line that communities surrounded by open space—sound familiar?—still are being targeted for burglary by gangs from out of town, state, and country, whether said communities are gated like ours or not. Spotters lurk in the open space brush, look for evidence that residents are away, send that intel to

others ready to brave the brushline, and that leads to home burglaries, most of which are occurring between 5 and 8 pm. **Please** be serious about this and take preventive steps for everyone's safety:

- *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.*⁵
- Use timers, motion sensors, or other devices to give your home a “lived-in” feel when you are away, *even if just for dinner or a quick trip to the mall.*
- *Lock your vehicles! Do not leave valuables in your car in plain sight, especially when out and about but even while at home—and especially in our gated community where vehicles are fast and easy targets!*
- *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.*
- *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!)*

We are advised that these well-organized bad guys have figured out that those who live in gated communities let their guard down more often than those who don't! **Please do your part to help keep the community safe.**

OUR WELCOME MAT IS DONE!

The effort to improve our front gate entry and exit area is just about 100% done as you read this—the curbed planter area has drip irrigation and beautiful new plants and great lighting. The HOA Board got a great look without a great big price tag, so thanks be to them! **Special thanks to Dave and Susie Saltmarsh, resident volunteers who came up with the design, did a lot of the planting, and otherwise helped get this done in myriad ways.**

For security, the crushed rock pedestrian gate bypass on the north side of our front gates has been re-landscaped and closed. To safely enter and exit on foot, please only use the sidewalk and the locked pedestrian gate—you can get a key from the gatehouse. Please do NOT step into the traffic lane to walk through the big gates, or climb into the fenced area where all the new planting is trying to grow.

⁵ The HOA has reported some recent inquiries about improving the street lights in our community. Thousand Oaks, however, has fairly strict regulations on street lighting, so we cannot add to our existing fixtures or brighten their bulbs. All our homes were built with excellent outdoor lighting fixtures, please use them from dusk to dawn. See the December newsletter for some helpful lighting tips! (www.woodridgeestatesresident.com under the “Newsletter” tab)

Don't forget to notice that the fountain is working again! And kudos to everyone involved in selecting the *new entryway signage*—very clean and classy.

LOCAL NEWS YOU CAN USE

23 Update: Can you tell there is progress on the 23? Well, some of the onramps seem to be done—we are not exactly sure what is “done” about them as compared to what was “not done” before, but some onramp lanes seem to have been restored to normalcy, equipment is gone from some areas, and some of the freeway onramps even have bright new stripes painted (others are impossible to see, however; be very careful getting on the 23 North from Avenida de los Arboles, and then note the new bright line on one side only of the northbound 23 exit ramp at Sunset Hills—they must have separate right and left side line painting crews). But supposedly the project—which is not about resurfacing more than a lane or two here and there, but rather about those onramps and the all-important “shoulders”—remains on track for completion in the fall of 2023. (Not a typo.)

“Looking for Progress on the 23” actually is a really fun game to play on a family trip! But only if your family trip is limited to the 8 miles between the 101 and the 118. (Helpful Hint: You have longer to play if you get on the 23 between 4:30 and 7 pm.)

Storage Wars: So many people in Woodridge have garages full of stuff they never use that our community probably has little use for off-site self-storage facilities. Good thing, because the City of Thousand Oaks has just imposed a 90-day moratorium on new self-storage facility construction, and is expected to extend it for a year or more after some public hearings. TO has a lot of empty buildings for myriad reasons, and some owners have proposed conversions of some pretty large buildings to self-storage facilities in order to get rent checks coming in again. A concern of the city council is that such businesses come without many jobs attached, which will make it harder to fill up all the housing units the state is requiring Thousand Oaks to build. (Vicious circle much?) Anyway, if you already have off-site self-storage space, all you need worry about is a rate increase as demand for that space outstrips supply; if you *need* such space, however, prepare to look outside Thousand Oaks to find it and we suggest you shop now, it is going to fill up rather quickly without more spaces being built for at least another year. *Spring cleaning, anyone?*

Do you have a leak? No, it isn't just you, and you probably don't have a leak—gas bill increases of 200% or more are now *de rigueur*. Like self-storage units, the law of supply and demand impacts natural gas prices. And because California's war on oil has been so successful in getting people used to gasoline prices double or more than what they are in most other parts of the country (but we get such great road conditions for all those gas taxes, right?), California has added natural gas to its *casus belli* on 20th century energy production technology. In fact, California wants existing homeowners to feel lucky to even have any gas appliances at all: All new construction in some CA cities (and the woke list is growing—TO just shot down this effort but it will be re-considered in the near future) now can be built only with electric appliances. (Take that, Julia Child!) Because, you know, electricity is so cheap, and it all is going to be produced “carbon free” in just a decade or so. (Sure it is.⁶)

⁶ “Welcome to Fantasy Island.” See what green energy planning *should* look like at www.manhattancontrarian.com/blog/2022-1-25-how-about-a-pilot-project-to-demonstrate-the-feasibility-of-fully-windsolarbattery-electricity-generation, and then look at some photos of the lovely North Sea wind farms at www.renewable-technology.com/projects/gemini-offshore-wind-farm-north-sea/ (coming soon to the California

Shrinkflation: It isn't just that your gas bill and everything else suddenly has gotten more noticeably more expensive, it also is that we are getting less than we used to in the same old packaging for that new higher price. Facial tissues, for example, are down 10% per box from 2021, but neither the price nor the box size has changed. This is just one of some 2500 goods that people on the internet who live in their parents' basements have documented as being sold at the same price and in the same packaging for less actual product inside. Your newsletter staff has wondered forever about potato chips and cereal—why has the bag or box always been so big when it never is more than half full?—but “shrinkflation” is a real thing beyond the snack and breakfast food aisles these days. We recently observed this ourselves in ice cream bars—way smaller than they used to be, the horror!—and so we researched the heck out of it (i.e., we Googled it⁷) and found out shrinkage really is not just for swimmers anymore. *Caveat emptor!*

Covid Curious: Keeping track of what is happening with Covid can be difficult, particularly for those of us with one foot in Ventura County and the other in LA County, where the rules are different. (Viruses are so amazing—they know our county and city boundaries!) The Ventura County Public Health Department has tried to make it easier with its www.venturacountyrecovers.org website, which includes a “dashboard” with current test, hospitalization, and vaccine statistics (showing, for example, that while most Venturans over 5 years old have had a full dose or doses of one of the vaccines, only about a third of them also have had a booster jab, kinda interesting) and other information about current mask requirements and the like. At present in Ventura County, masks are optional indoors for those who are fully vaccinated, but there are exceptions, so check the website out, it is worth looking at now and again for those wishing to be Covid copacetic.

A PARADISE HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

We bet you either haven't heard of, or never have visited, “Gardens of the World” on Thousand Oaks Boulevard across from the Civic Center (and next door to Mastro's, if that is more helpful to some of you, and you know whom you are). A gift to the community from the local Hogan family (travel arrangement entrepreneurs from way back), this is a beautiful spot for a casual walk among gardens featuring plants of all kinds from all over, well, the world. (The place is well-named.) You can trod every little pathway in about an hour and still have time to read the flora identification signs, and admission is free. They are very particular about photos, though, so for once just turn off the phone and its camera and enjoy the walk and the pretty flowers in real time, old school-like—the lack of selfies actually is one of the pleasures of the place, it reminds us what a “stroll” is supposed to be all about. We all could use more of that, know what we're sayin'?

coast?). See also <https://wattsupwiththat.com/2022/02/08/national-audubon-society-sues-bay-area-wind-turbines-altamont-pass-a-40-year-problem/>. Can't wait for green energy, but it makes us wonder: Do “they” really want (non-nuclear) clean energy or simply to stop “us” from driving altogether when the all-renewable electric grid can't handle all our new electric vehicles? Discuss among yourselves.

⁷ “Google” is a registered trademark belonging to Alphabet, Inc. (Yep, that is the actual name.) Since we actually used Google and not some other search engine, our usage here is not an infringement. So there, Sergey!

HUMMINGBIRD LOVE

Does anyone who is not in the Taliban not love hummingbirds? Fast, colorful, bug bullies, imperceptible droppings—they are just too much fun to watch.

Our local Ace Hardware at Oakbridge Mall on Avenue de los Arboles/Erbes Road has a great feeder selection. It also has red nectar, but the hummers are attracted to a feeder by its own bright colors alone, so all you need for homemade nectar is 3 cups of water to one cup of white sugar, simmer until boiling with an occasional stir, let it cool, and voila, your hummingbird fast food restaurant is ready to go without any syrupy red goop that also attracts bees and ants.

There are many different kinds of hummingbirds, and we have a lot of them in these here parts. All are territorial, and their aerial acrobatics as they chase each other around a feeder are a joy to behold. And no matter how much they enjoy your feeder, rest assured they are eating all kinds of other stuff all day long as well, so *you are not enabling them*—you are just providing another alternative to an already rich local diet. No-guilt feeding!

Pro-Tip: Our outdoors reporter Gristly Adams reminds you that you need to clean that feeder every time you refill it! Get yourself a little makeup spoolie (free at Sephora when nobody is watching) and reem out those little holes where the long little hummer tongues reach into the tiny feeder holes—those little flower doo-dads on most feeders should pop out for cleaning, and they need it on the regular. Harsh chemicals are not required, just a little soap and water will keep your feeder (and the hummers) fungus free.

Wild Birds Unlimited does all kinds of bird business at www.ventura.wbu.com. Highly recommended, and a great place to visit with the little ones.

OLD BUSINESS

- Prior newsletters are on the HOA website at www.woodridgeestatesresident.com under the “Newsletter” tab. #captainobviousstrikesagain
- 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. Encourage family independence and sign up your whole household for emails.
- The HOA election is coming in April, and we have 5 candidates for three open seats—a big thank you to everyone who is running, and it is great to see some new interest in being on the Board. A company called “Ballot Box” is handling the process and you soon will receive, if you haven’t already, a packet of information about the upcoming election and the candidates. Two incumbents are running for a new term, and we have one former Board member seeking to return and two newcomers also in the running. Each homeowner household has three total votes, all of which can be cast for a single candidate, or you can vote two for one and one for another, or one for three—the three candidates receiving the most votes will be elected. *Rock the Vote, people!*
 - 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.woodridgeestateresident.com/current-events-and-issues> about fire prevention efforts *specific to our community*.

●*PLEASE pick up after your dog(s). (Why do we keep having to say this?!?)*⁸

●Slow Down and stop tailgating. You already are almost wherever you are going. (And same “Why” question as immediately above.)

●*The next tree trimming is scheduled for March 18. Check the HOA website to see if your street is next in line:*

https://www.woodridgeestateresident.com/files/uqd/fccece_2f08d9bd73f54a16bc73963515cf_a022.pdf

If you have a tree that needs attention while the Showscapes team is in your area, let them know and they will assist if time permits.

MISCELLANEOUS

Quasi-Holiday of Next Month: March means St. Patrick’s Day on the 17th, when everyone is Catholic for the day (because green beer).

Day of this Month: February 15—hail!

Word of the month: Spoolie

Kudos of the Month: We have to give a shout out to Showscapes, the HOA common area landscapers, for their cleanup effort after the recent high winds. Thank you! And we can’t say it enough: Thank you Susie and Dave Saltmarsh for all your front gate work!

Gardening Tip of the Month: Check your fruit trees—*harvest any fruit now so your tree will produce in abundance as the year progresses*. Unharvested fruit (a/k/a ratnip) attracts unwanted vermin, yes, but it also is quite unhealthy for your tree or bush. It works hard to crank out that nectar of the Gods for you, and we know it is more than you can consume, but whether you donate it to a local food shelter or toss it in your green garbage bin, you gotta get it off the vines!

Conundrum of the Month: The State was able to rebuild an entire freeway overpass—not exactly simple construction—in three months after the Northridge earthquake back in the day. On the other hand, since we hit “severe drought” standards several years ago, the State has managed to build exactly zero new reservoirs and zero de-salination plants to fight the drought (and to combat future sea level rise). Huh.

Observation of the Month: They say that at some point we all begin to resemble our pet. Have you noticed that everyone also is starting to look more and more like their Bitmoji?

⁸ Thank you to the resident who has volunteered to help maintain the doggie bag stations! Really appreciated!

That's all s/he/it/they/we wrote for this month. Please stop by www.woodridgeestatesresident.com for a list of useful local phone numbers at www.woodridgeestateresident.com/helpfulphonenumbers.

NEXT HOA BOARD MEETING: March 17, 2022 (see Quasi-Holiday of Next Month, above, and prepare for a lit meeting), probably by Zoom again, watch for your invitation by email about a week before the 17th.

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

TO KVETCH ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER, WRITE: bluebin@woodridgenewsletteroffice.us