

THE STATE OF THE ESTATES

Woodridge Estates Homeowners Association Newsletter

February 2024

Woodridgistas: We are a little late this month on account of a re-scheduled HOA Board meeting—our apologies, we know you all have been waiting for your community news fix! Anywho, we are here now. So the days already are getting longer, we have had lots of rain so far this young year, we get an extra day this month/year, and Daylight Saving Time begins in just a few weeks (March 10)! Meanwhile, if you haven't already planned for Valentine's Day, *it's too late*—the local stores already are pushing July 4th wares and you also may already be too late for Easter. **We are told on good authority, however, that there is no missed Valentine's Day (or anniversary, or birthday for that matter) that cannot be cured by a good jeweler.**

IN THIS ISSUE:

-Front Gate landscaping kudos and design

-"Firewise" insurance update

-Vendor solicitation

-Gopher solutions

-2023 Financial Report

-Homeless legal update

-Ask the Newsletter

HEADS UPS

● **KUDOS** to your HOA Landscape Committee and to Marina Landscape for the recent work completed in the grassy area by the front gate—some of the former grassy area has been replanted with shrubs, and what's left of the grass was de-thatched and overseeded, and wow, it looks like it was completely re-sodded! New lighting of the trees/rock formations on both sides of the entry area, and higher up on the hill to the north of the gate area, also has been installed. New driveway lights also are in the works. The Newsletter thanks and congratulates all whose hard work returned the area to and exceeded its former glory. Well done!¹

● **No, water rates have not gone down:** *You may have noticed that your latest water bill is substantially less than usual—our own excitement was tempered by the realization (and by reading the handy little billing insert that normally does not make it out of the envelope before it hits the round file) that the TO*

¹ FYI, the various outdoor light timers are not exactly precision instruments, so occasionally you will see some lights on and others not as the timers sync up. Rats and other rodents also like to chew the wires, causing periodic outages. And photocells that time the lights also can be tough to maintain. The point is, the lights look great but just understand that they do require a fair amount of upkeep and be grateful for those who try to keep them up!

Water Overlords have started a monthly billing cycle instead of sending the bill every two months as it has been doing since God herself knows not to the contrary. That's six more stamps or mouse clicks a year starting, well, now. Sigh.

- **No more Acorn delivery?** You may not have received the Thousand Oaks Acorn newspaper for the past couple weeks. We all used to get it delivered every Friday, for free. Apparently our community is no longer on the home-delivery list. But the new owners of the paper have done away with the online paywall, so the electronic version is still available at www.toacorn.com, and now for free. It's a great local resource, and we encourage you to check it out on the regular!

- **"Firewise" update:** *It turns out that getting our community certified as "Firewise" may not be as complex as previously thought, and the volunteers in our community who are working on this advise that "education" is the most important component to certification. "Firewise" certification should translate to lower homeowner insurance premiums. You can learn more about the program at <https://vcfd.org/firewise/>. Continue to watch this space (and attend HOA Board meetings!) for more as this effort proceeds, and thanks again to all our neighbors helping to make this certification possible.*

- **Please welcome our new PMP Management community manager, Sydney Catton!** You can reach her at scatton@pmpmanage.com. Hanna Lupoli has moved on to new things and we wish her well. Welcome to Woodridge, Sydney!

- **Speaking of welcomes:** *If you get any new neighbors in our community, please let the Newsletter know so we can welcome them—and give them a copy of the Newsletter while you are at it!*

WOODRIDGE ESSENTIALS

- **Emergencies:** *Always call 911 first in a genuine emergency in or around the community. Our Gate access personnel are not "security guards"—you can let them know of any problems, but **first call 911 in any emergency.***

Police: 805-654-9511

Fire: 805-371-1111 ext. 34

Open Space Park Rangers can be reached at (805) 402-9551 for matters pertaining to our local trails and their environs. **PLEASE:** If you see something, say something, the Rangers really want your help!

- **Management Contact:** *Email your community requests, concerns, and inquiries to PMP Community Care at care@pmpmanage.com to automatically open a "ticket." If you need to speak with someone, call 805-642-2400 and ask for **Sydney Catton**. You also can submit a request via your PMP Management account at www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com on its "Dashboard."*

- **Website:** The Woodridge community website is www.woodridgestatesresident.com, and also try www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com or https://connect.pmpmanage.com/Home_v2/Login. Agendas, minutes, Rules and Regs, and all your personal PMP account information, methods of payment of dues, violation notices, etc., are on the latter two sites. You can find old Newsletter issues on all of the sites.

- **HOA Board Meeting Agendas:** *Your HOA Board (thank you, volunteers!) meets every fourth Thursday of each month except July and December. If you have something you want the Board*

to discuss, let PMP know (see above) and **ask for it to be on the agenda at least 7 business days before the meeting**. Then come to a meeting (via Zoom these days) and speak up at the “Homeowner’s Forum” at the beginning of each HOA Board meeting. Please Note: Under state law, and with few exceptions, the Board only can discuss matters that are on the meeting agenda. So don’t be shy (or late).

● **Bulky Items:** Athens Services will pick up bulky items for free twice a year with a simple request at www.athensThousandOaks.com .

● **Local Wildfire/Homefire Prevention:** **VCFD** (Ventura County Fire Department) offers “Firewise” workshops you can access online. Check out these links: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHVfYAXIOLE>; <https://vcfd.org/firewise/>; and <https://vcfd.org/fire-prevention/fire-hazard-reduction-program-fhrp/> .

● **Community Facebook Group:** A Woodridge resident has created a Facebook Group called, “I Live in Woodridge Estates, Thousand Oaks,” and you are invited to join and share. (NOTE: This is not an HOA project.)

● **Painting Reminder:** If you are going to do ANY exterior painting, please contact PMP with your plans in advance! PMP will help you comply with community architectural rules and promises a quick turnaround on your proposals. Contact Adela Oseguera at aoseguera@pmpmanage.com for your painting inquiry.

NEWS

LANDSCAPE UPDATE

Thank you to all residents who took a couple minutes to give feedback on the HOA Landscape Committee proposal to replace the front gate entryway planter (currently a seasonal “colorway”) with boxwoods and rose bushes. Residential input was virtually unanimous in favor of maintaining the current seasonal “colorway” approach, and your HOA Board listened. New seasonal flowers will be planted there soon.

Please keep up your notes to the Newsletter with your input, and of course attend an HOA Board meeting or three and speak up during “Homeowner Forum” at the outset of each meeting--it is clear from the front gate planter “survey” that some of you have questions and/or strong opinions about things you see in the ‘hood and you need not be shy in bringing them to attention. Your input is appreciated and it makes for a better and better informed neighborhood, know what we’re sayin’?

Your HOA Board previously instructed Marina Landscape to leave many common area shrubs in their “natural” look rather than pruning them. This led to a number of homeowner complaints that Marina was not doing its job, but it was only doing as instructed by your HOA Board. That Board decision has been reversed, and Marina will begin shrub trimming as weather permits—it should be noted that this is a cost-neutral decision.

Marina reports that its preparation for spring is underway with rose pruning and fertilizer, and new mulch is on the way. The “v-ditches” surrounding the community have been cleaned out, and tree trimming on the perimeter slopes is ongoing. Parkway work has been delayed by the weather, but is on the “to do” list. Efforts to secure permits needed for removal of several

problematic (dead or in dangerous condition) trees are also ongoing—the city does not move quickly on such matters.²

Please be reminded that if you see a landscape issue in need of attention, email PMP Community Care at care@pmpmanage.com to open a “ticket.” PMP and the Landscape and Irrigation Committees of your HOA will work with Marina Landscaping to address your concerns. NOTE: For transparency and clarity purposes, homeowners and Board Members alike are asked to communicate with and give instructions to community vendors only through PMP.

VENDOR SOLICITATION

A neighbor recently expressed concern about a vendor working at one Woodridge home soliciting door-to-door for work from other Woodridge homes. Our heightened security alertness makes this a valid concern with respect to even the best-intentioned vendors.

If you have favorite vendors and want to help them grow their businesses, please let the Newsletter have their information and your praise and we will be happy to publish it here. If asked, please discourage vendors from soliciting door-to-door from your neighbors.

GOPHER REMEDY UPDATE

Please be reminded that Wildlife Management Professionals (“WMP”), our new pest control vendor, offers a discount to Woodridge homeowners. Please contact Troy Spillman at (805) 578-3454 for your specific gopher, vole, and rat control needs. Here are the discount details:

“Should a homeowner/resident require additional service, such as general pest spraying, we provide a discounted fee of \$45.00 on the days we are scheduled to service the community. Should a homeowner/resident request service on a non-community scheduled service day, the fee is \$85.00. (Our regular rate is \$145.00). A rat bait station is \$65 for placement and \$45.00 for ongoing monthly service. Discounts do not apply to bee treatment, rabbit removal, coyote depredation, racoon, skunk, and/or possum control.”

In our common areas, WMP uses old-school snares to catch gophers, but one homeowner has found his own less murderous remedy, i.e., four tablespoons of castor oil in a gallon of water poured liberally down and around the gopher mounds in which the holes appear, plus a sprinkling of used coffee grounds around the mounds. It is a nicer way of telling Caddyshack that he ain’t alright, not in Woodridge anyway.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Your HOA Finance Committee is pleased to report that the community chest is in fine fettle as we enter 2024. Reserve funds for capital improvements increased by 12% in 2023 and remain in good standing vis a vis the Reserve Fund Report and Recommendations received a couple of years ago from the

² Trees removed will be replaced by location-appropriate trees.

community accountants. Accounts receivable decreased by some 26%--thanks to all our neighbors who pay their dues on time! Prudent investment in safe and laddered certificates of deposit took advantage of interest rate increases and gained the community some \$21,000 in 2023. And despite vendor increases in 2023, thanks to water conservation the HOA came in under its 2023 budget. Those savings and investment returns should continue during 2024 and will help guide planning for capital expenditures and cost increases throughout this year. Thanks are in order for all Finance Committee members!

HOMELESS LAW GETS A SCOTUS HEARING

Your interest in previous Newsletter articles on homelessness issues affecting Thousand Oaks and Ventura County suggests you will be pleased to know that your Newsletter's lawyer submitted a "Friend of the Court" brief to the US Supreme Court on behalf of a number of California and Washington business improvement districts asking the Court to review the decisions of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in cases involving Boise, Idaho and Grants Pass, Oregon. Both cities had been told that their respective criminal and civil penalty ordinances prohibiting camping in public spaces violated the Constitution's 8th Amendment prohibition on "cruel and unusual punishment" unless they could show they have sufficient shelter space for every homeless person in their jurisdiction at the time of enforcement. These rulings severely handcuffed cities throughout the Western US in their efforts to get help to those on the street who need it (and to move the others along). So, we are pleased to report that the Supreme Court has agreed to review those rulings and there is good reason to believe they will be reversed. Cities do not generally use civil or criminal penalty ordinances except as a last resort in respect of the most recalcitrant street-campers, and those genuinely seeking rational solutions to homelessness need every tool they can muster, so freedom to enforce anti-camping ordinances will be of great help. Thousand Oaks already is at work on creating temporary shelter space in order to avoid the scourge of public space encampments, and will join other cities in welcoming a reversal of these cases in their efforts to prevent Los Angelization of the area.³

ASK THE NEWSLETTER

How much money did our community raise for the holiday "thank you" for our Gatekeepers?

\$5885! Thank you to all who participated (some 30% of us with an average donation of about \$100), you helped make a merry Christmas and happy new year start for our regular gatekeepers.

We greatly appreciated a prior issue's note on front gate entry statistics and the like, can we get more of that info?

Yes, you can, it is in the "Statistics of the Month" section below this month and hereafter will continue there. Glad you think it is interesting, we do, too! **Please use GateKey, friends!**

³ If interested in these issues and solutions that help those who need it and those who pay for it alike, please write the Newsletter at jbriggs@jbriggslaw.com and we will make sure our lawyer gets back to you.

Must everything that goes up come down?

Not utility rates, that's for sure. Athens Services, the TO waste hauling company, has increased its rates by 4% starting this year, in accordance with its city contract. So don't forget to register with Athens and take advantage of senior discounts, free oversize item pick up, Christmas tree pick up, and the like—get ya moohlah's worth!

OLDS

- **REMINDER of Return to all Zoom HOA meetings:** After experimenting with “hybrid” HOA meetings (a combination of in-person meetings at the PMP offices with some remote “Zoom” participants), technical and audio challenges have prompted your HOA Board to go back to all Zoom meetings for the time being because they seem to be more seamless, and it is easier for everyone to hear more clearly (or at least equally poorly).
- **REMINDER also that “Homeowner Forum” will now open all HOA Meetings:** Your HOA Board also has decided to move Homeowner Forum (input from Homeowners) to the beginning of HOA meetings going forward. Time limits will still apply, and the chat room is open on Zoom throughout the meeting as well.⁴
- **GateKey App and PMP Electronic Mail Set-Up:** Please be reminded that signing up and using the GateKey app at www.gatekey.com/resident-login, and signing up for email communications from the community management company, PMP, instead of paper/mail, **SAVES EVERYONE MONEY**. None of this is difficult—PLEASE take care of this, you will be glad you did, really. **See the September 2023 Newsletter for more sign-up details.**⁵
- **Pest Control:** Woodridge's pest control vendor, Wildlife Management Professionals, asks that you please notify PMP if you see dirt mounds or other ground holes caused by squirrels, mice, moles, gophers, voles, etc., in our common areas so WPC can try to abate their presence. WPC also offers discounts to Woodridge homeowners for all your pest control needs. Contact Troy Spillman at (805) 578-3454 for your specific gopher, vole, and rat control needs.

OTHER

Holidays of the Month: February 19 is Presidents Day, a federal and state holiday, all banks and government offices will be closed. State offices also are closed Feb 12 for Lincoln's birthday, the State never takes away a holiday . . . Valentine's Day is Feb. 14th, but is not a holiday. (Pro Tip: Treat it like it IS a holiday!!)

Statistics of the Month: In December, the front gate personnel processed 7,357 non-resident vehicles into the community, averaging 237 per day. (This will be a fun comparison to make as the months

⁴ See www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com or https://connect.pmpmanage.com/Home_v2/Login for agendas under the “Documents” tab. Agendas are available at least three days before each meeting.

⁵ Prior issues of the monthly Woodridge Newsletter are available at www.woodridgeestatesresident.com, www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com, or https://connect.pmpmanage.com/Home_v2/Login (on the latter two sites, click on the “Documents” tab after you log in, and then on “Community Newsletters”).

progress. Over/under betting now available at the MGM Sportsbook.) Our gatekeepers were required to create entry records for 72.4% of our visitors—this remains high as compared to other gated communities with entry control (the norm is closer to 50%). PLEASE use GateKey to let the gate know of visitors expected in advance, it saves everyone time, and time is money!

Homeowner Suggestion of the Month: *One of our neighbors reminds us that the beginning of the year is a good time to change-up your online passwords, in particular for your home wi-fi connection. It is, indeed, a good idea to periodically change various online passwords. (Now if we could just figure out how, or remember any old passwords, that would be cool.)*

Self Examination of the Month: “You can’t please all the people all the time.” And apparently they all read last month’s Newsletter.

*That’s all s/he/it/they/we wrote for this month. **Please find a list of helpful local phone numbers at www.woodridgestateresident.com/helpfulphonenumber**. Let us know of any others you suggest. (This month’s un-helpful number is 1-555-anyoneinsacramento.)*

NEXT HOA BOARD MEETING: February 22 at 6:30 pm **by Zoom only**—watch your email for the agenda and Zoom-in instructions. See also www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com or https://connect.pmpmanage.com/Home_v2/Login and visit the “Documents” tab for meeting agendas usually about five days before the meeting.

Reminder: HOA Board members generally are prohibited by law from discussing most matters outside of public Board meetings and items not on the published meeting agenda. If you want the Board to address something specific, please ask PMP to put the matter on the agenda at least 7 business days before the next Board meeting and then speak up at the next meeting’s Homeowner Forum.

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

SEND COMPLAINTS ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER TO anyonebutjbriggs@jbriggslaw.com.