

THE STATE OF THE ESTATES

Woodridge Estates Homeowners Association Newsletter

September 2023

Gentleneighbors: As school approaches its resumption, we know those of you with kids are more than ready and that those of us without had better be ready as traffic picks up once again. Enjoy your Labor Day festivities, and as the stores already are telling us, it's never too early to start planning for Halloween!

IN THIS ISSUE:

- HOA Budget time
- How to use GateKey for visitors and vendors (again)
- Community Security
- Landscaping Plans
- Irrigation News
- Thousand Oaks Development Plans
- Ask the Newsletter (of rain, graffiti, and butterflies)

HEADS UPS

● **HOA Budgeting:** Your HOA's annual budget planning process is underway and will start being discussed at the September Board meeting. The budget process determines, among other important things, *the coming year's HOA dues*, so everyone's participation is encouraged and all input welcomed.¹

● **ARC Rule Changes:** *Proposed Architectural Review rule changes are out to all residents for input. Meanwhile, be advised that PMP regularly inspects the neighborhood for disrepair and other rule and regulation compliance issues, and notifies relevant homeowners of requirements in need of attention. (And if you see paint patches on homes, they are just that—experimental applications awaiting ARC review—so don't freak out! The Architectural Review Committee is showing a little more leeway on color schemes, but colors as actually applied often look quite different from the paper swatch samples, so be patient while the ARC considers resident desires for paint colors while staying within the community rules.)*

● **Dog Doings:** One of our residents wants to thank everyone for their much-improved doggie-don't behavior—there is, indeed, a lot less mess in and around the community these days, so hooray for all of us! And please send “thanks” toward the heavens for a wonderful resident dog guardian who

¹ State law requires virtually all Board matters to be discussed only in open meetings, so come to the Board meetings for budget discussions if you want to keep up and be heard.

voluntarily makes sure the doggie waste stations have bags, but who wants to remain anonymous. (Dude, you know who you are, and we all appreciate you!)

● ***PMP Electronic Mail Set-Up:*** Please be reminded that it saves everyone money if you sign up for email communications from the community management company, PMP, instead of paper/mail. You can change your communication preferences from regular mail to email and save us all that cash (it does add up!) as follows:

Login to your PMP Portal at www.connect.pmpmanage.com

-Click “Contact Info” on the left-hand side menu

-Click “Email” under the “General Communication Preference” and under the “Billing Communication Preference”

-Click “Update”

That’s all there is to it!! Thank you!

● ***GateKey App:*** Please get the front gate “GateKey” app at www.gateky.com/resident-login and at your smart phone’s app store (it’s free). With a couple of very simple clicks from your computer or phone you can let our front gatekeepers know you have a visitor coming and drastically increase the speed at which guests are allowed entry. **Tutorial access is on the site.** It is very user-friendly once you sign up, and its use really speeds things up at the gate for all visitors and vendors.

Actual usage of Gatekey to ease visitor entry is at a mere 30% in our community. You wanna know why your visitors complain about how long it takes to get through the front gate? *That absurdly low usage rate is your answer.* **PLEASE sign up for and use Gatekey for visitor entrance!!**²

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. Open space hides burglar gang lookouts with their eyes on our community, so if you do see something “off” on the trails, say something! The Park Rangers and the police encourage all inquiries and notifications.

● **Management Contact:** Email your 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)

² NOTE: It is very easy to add an expected visitor to the GateKey list, **BUT BE SURE YOU INCLUDE THE SPECIFIC DATE OF THE EXPECTED VISITOR ENTRY.** A common entry error is to not include the expected visit date, and the system defaults to the date of entry.

642-2400 and ask for Julie Phan. You also can submit a request via your PMP Management account at www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com and via its “Dashboard.”

● **Website:** *The Woodridge community website is www.woodridgeestatesresident.com, and also try www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com or https://connect.pmpmanage.com/Home_v2/Login and look for the “Documents” tab after you log in. Agendas, minutes, and all your personal PMP account information, methods of payment of dues, violation notices, etc., are on both of the latter sites.*

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

● **Community Facebook Group:** *One of our residents 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.)*

● **Prior issues of the 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”).

‘HOOD 411

BURGLARY PREVENTION

As reported last month, a home on Eaglewood was burgled the week of July 24 at approximately 9:30 pm. The rash of burglaries in and around our community last winter therefore continues, and so far homes on Eaglewood, which back up to open space in close proximity to several escape routes, have borne the brunt (but others in the community have suffered as well). All homes abutting open space are vulnerable to these professional thieves, who are not deterred by long treks through the brush.

*Your Newsletter has been offering individual home burglary prevention tips for many moons. If you haven’t already taken these precautions, repeating them here again isn’t going to convince you to do so. (You can find plenty of advice in prior Newsletters, see above for access directions.) So now we simply would like to remind everyone of what you can do to help your neighbors if not yourselves, for example by **maintaining and operating your outdoor lighting** and by **agreeing to help your neighbors put out and take in trash bins/pick up newspapers when they are gone for extended periods**—let your neighbors know you are happy to help if need be. These simple steps help the entire community—please attend to them accordingly!*

As discussed at the August HOA Board meeting, the HOA does not provide “security” services, and in fact is prohibited by law from doing so. The HOA can, however, consider Architectural Review standards and Rules and Regulations amendments that might help residents do more on their own properties to feel secure. *Such standards and rules changes cannot be approved at a single Board meeting*, but require a process dictated by state law for proposal, drafting, legal review, board discussion, and circulation for final resident approval. And all such matters must be put on a Board agenda and discussed only in open Board meetings—again, a state law requirement. So, it takes time to effect change—the first step is to propose a specific agenda item for Board meeting discussion, give input to

PMP Management ahead of time for Board consideration and discussion at the open Board meeting, and then volunteer to assist the Board in developing standards and rules changes for submission to community homeowners for final approval.

It is important to keep in mind that this process allows for full community discussion, development, and ultimate approval, but does not require unanimity at the outset. So, if you have specific ideas, get them on the agenda with an agenda request to PMP and encourage your neighbors to give input to PMP ahead of time to enable open Board discussion and due consideration. Consensus development takes time, but starts with specific suggestions, the more the better regardless of support or lack thereof at the outset—many good ideas come out of bad ones, so input away! Just understand that there is a process that has to be followed—and that everyone agrees that we want our community to be safe and our neighbors to feel safe.

As one resident noted at the August meeting, home security concerns are not just for Los Angeles anymore, and the larger governmental and societal causes behind the lawlessness we see every day in news headlines are not going to be remedied anytime soon. We are fortunate to live in a county and city that still take law enforcement seriously, but the bad guys now are both emboldened and mobile. Let's all work together to do what we can to help keep our neighborhood safe and secure, maintain property values, and help your HOA do what it can by participating in the processes it is required to follow in order to effect change.

And while you are at it, remember to register to vote and then learn all you can about candidates and ballot propositions before the next election. Think nationally or even globally, but vote locally!

LANDSCAPE UPDATE

After considerable study from both a cost and aesthetic perspective, your HOA has decided, in consultation with the common area landscape provider, Marina Landscape, to stick with grass in the front gate area and on common area parkway medians on Sunset Hills and Heavenly Ridge. These areas will be aerated, dethatched, iron-treated, and overseeded in the fall when the new grass will require less irrigation to re-establish. Some drought-resistant planting tweaks also will be made in the front gate area.

The grassy area on Morning Ridge also will be overseeded in the fall, and your HOA welcomes your input on the suggestion of one resident that a playground area be installed on part of that Morning Ridge “dog park” area—you can send your input to Board member Bill Giragos at bgiragos@gmail.com, and he will collate it for the HOA Board's consideration at the September meeting.

Meanwhile, at the August Board meeting your HOA voted for the “natural look” with respect to shrubbery trimming on our common area landscaped hillsides—this means less “shaping” of the perimeter shrubs in the future. Perimeter tree trimming for fire prevention is ongoing, and internal common area planted areas are being weeded manually (that is, without chemical intervention) by Marina on a rotating basis throughout the community.³ Marina also will be developing a new internal

³ A question arose at the August Board meeting about using HOA reserve funds to pay for additional landscape workers to accomplish weeding and similar work more expeditiously. Weeds are a particular problem this year

common area/parkway tree-trimming schedule for posting on the community website, so keep an eye out for that and plan accordingly.

Please be reminded that if you see landscape issues that need addressing, please email PMP Community Care at care@pmpmanage.com to open a “ticket.” If you need to speak with someone, call (805) 642-2400 and ask for Julie Phan. You also can submit a report via your own PMP Management account at www.woodridgecommunityassociation.com and via its “Dashboard.” PMP and the Landscape and Irrigation Committees welcome your input and will work with Marina Landscape to address your concerns. Just remember, though, that not everyone agrees on aesthetics, so leave some room for agreement to disagree, m’kay? And volunteer to participate on a committee if you have strong feelings you do not think are being heard.

IRRIGATION NEWS (“Money money muh-nee—Muh-nee!”)

With all the rain we have had this “water year” so far, Thousand Oaks and its water suppliers are under “Level 1” irrigation conditions, which means irrigation is allowed three days per week (on days of your choosing), NO watering between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., no more than 10 minutes per day per station (unless you have drip systems or other water efficient devices, in which case there is no limit on time, but do check your timer and be reasonable), NO washing down of hard paved surfaces, and decorative water features still must use recirculating pumps or stay dry. Check out this site for all the details: <https://www.toaks.org/departments/public-works/sustainability/water/water-use-regulations>.

*A combination of greater rainfall and less common area irrigation has continued to drive substantial savings to the bottom lines of both the HOA operating budget and the HOA reserve fund, even as all other costs are rising (common area utilities, vendor agreements, etc.). The HOA Landscape and Irrigation committees are working hand-in-hand with our common area landscaper to ensure we are not watering while it is raining and that we are using efficient irrigation timing as seasonal changes dictate. A big **thank you** goes out to all our community volunteers on these committees, their efforts quite literally continue to “pay off” for all of us.*

THOUSAND OAKS HOUSING PLANS

Here is an extremely informative article on housing development plans in Thousand Oaks, worth a read and worth wondering how our infrastructure will handle thousands of new residents and how changes will affect everyday life in TO: <https://www.toacorn.com/articles/multifamily-projects-spring-up-around-the-city/> .

because of all the rain, and because of the lack of irrigation for much of last year due to water use restrictions. PMP advised the Board that such work is “operational” and that reserve funds cannot be used for such purposes. While there always is room for improvement, and for disagreement on landscaping priorities, the Board consensus appears to be that Marina Landscape is doing the best it can under the terms of its contract and the unusual growing conditions this year, is responsive to HOA input, and is following best practices in terms of timing its efforts (for example, awaiting cooler weather for re-grassing various areas in need).

Whatever one feels about development in our fair city, it is worth remembering that most of these plans are driven by mandates from Sacramento, not decisions by our locally elected representatives.

ASK THE NEWSLETTER

How much rain did we get from Tropical Storm Hilary?

Just over three inches, according to various sources—some places in TO got closer to four inches. By comparison, we got an inch more than downtown LA and half as much as parts of Santa Clarita. Palm Springs experienced serious flooding, but with less rainfall than we got here in TO—our drainage seems to work a lot better than theirs, and TO road crews were out all day making sure drains were not blocked by debris.

Thousand Oaks now has had double its annual average rainfall for this rain-year (which starts in October): 15 inches is about average, and we are at almost 30 inches. Pretty cool! And California reservoirs are full!⁴

Also, you might like to know that Ventura County has a website helpful to those who want to be prepared for our next “hurriquake” (we did not feel the shaker, did you?) at www.readyventuracounty.org.

Is there a Graffiti Hotline in Thousand Oaks??

We don’t know how “hot” this is, but call 805-449-2588 to report any graffiti you see in the area (here’s hoping it never is inside Woodridge). TO does not have a big graffiti problem (knocking on wood), but that’s partly because its road crews are very quick at covering it up when it does appear. (Evidently this hotline number also can get you to CalTrans for freeway graffiti removal, but that might take longer to accomplish since TO can’t do that itself and, since all our freeways and overpasses are in such tremendous shape, CalTrans now is very busy spending all its extra money on building exit ramp memorials to fallen CalTrans workers. No disrespect intended, RIP, but seriously?)

Are garage sales permitted in Woodridge?

Yes, but ONLY with pre-approval by the Board, so plan ahead! Here is the current Woodridge Community Rule on the subject:

Section 1.11 Garage Sales/Estate Sales/Yard Sales--This is a private gated community with limited access. Yard sales, estate sales, garage sales, community sales, boutiques or other sales involving the public are prohibited without Board approval. Visitors attempting to enter the community to access the above mentioned will be denied access, unless Board approval was previously obtained.

⁴ We just need more of them.

Have you been seeing a lot of butterflies?

YES!! Your Newsletter office gardens are chock full of butterflies, Monarchs in particular, more than ever this year according to our unscientific observation. It seems we have a lot of milkweed springing up, in which they love to lay eggs, and they also love our lantana and geraniums for nectar. We are going to try a butterfly feeder in the garden soon—you can't be angry or depressed when you see these lovelies flitting about, they really lift one's soul!

It is reported that Monarch numbers are up again on a statewide basis for the second year in a row, but supposedly are down in Ventura County as compared to last year. Experts advise, however, that the overall state count is most important because distribution throughout the state varies greatly in any given year. If you want to help these beautiful creatures procreate, remember only to get native milkweed from a nursery, as Tropical milkweed can interfere with butterfly migration—but if you have the Tropical variety growing by itself as a weed, we are far enough south that you do not need to dig it up, the Monarchs should be fine with it in this part of the state.

OLD BUSINESS

- **“BRING WOODRIDGE ON-LINE”:** We continue to urge everyone to use *GateKey* to notify the front gate guardians of expected guests and vendors. *GateKey* is easy to use and available on your computer and/or via a free “app” on your smartphone. **Here is the website log-in page:** www.gatekey.com/resident-login .

Using GateKey to let gate personnel know of expected visitors in advance reduces wait times for your visitors arriving at our front gate. It reduces the need for the gatekeepers to interrupt your last-minute visitor preparations with a call for access approval (but you still get notice of arrivals in whatever manner you choose). It helps your HOA keep track of various metrics important to community security. It provides an alternate method of communication with residents about topics of importance. And it saves money! Please take a few moments to sign up, you will thank us for having done so. It is easy and fast, really.⁵

- **Woodridge streetlights and street repairs:** Most streetlights in our community now are working with their new LED lamps, but three remain out of operation due to electrical connection problems and a lack of responsiveness from SoCalEdison. Your HOA Board is elevating this to De(a)con 4 (an Edison term in more ways than one) and will be seeking help from our newly assigned city councilperson, David Newman. We don't have a lot of streetlights to begin with, and safety and security demand they all be working—we hope this will get the councilperson's attention, and thereby Edison's as well.

Meanwhile, major street repairs on Sunset Hills, Morning Ridge, and the front gate area, to be followed by a slurry seal of all community roadways, are budgeted from reserves and scheduled to begin next July; please keep your eye on this space for developments so you can plan around this work when it begins.

⁵ And see footnote 2, above!!

● **Snakes Alive:** Just a quick reminder—as your Newsletter office recently found out firsthand, the rattlers are still out and about, especially after all the recent rain! They can be hard to spot in your garden, but if you hear a loud hi-pitched cicada-like or escaping gas/water sound when out of doors, it might well be a rattler warning you with its namesake biological feature. Call the Sheriff non-emergency number and they will connect you to the fire department, or call the fire dudes directly (see phone numbers above, we include them every month) and they will come quickly to help rid your yard of the danger. *Be advised:* The firefighters do not relocate snakes, they kill them—so if that bothers you, call a local snake wrangler and hope s/he can get to you before the critter slithers under your house or someplace else where hard to know if truly gone . . . and then good luck sleeping!

WHATEVER

Holidays of the Month: Monday, September 4 is (was, depending on when you get around to reading this) Labor Day, we hope you enjoy(ed) the day off! Rosh Hashana begins September 15, and Yom Kippur begins September 24. September 10 is Grandparents Day (as if anyone other than greeting card companies even knows that is a thing). Judging from store shelves, Halloween apparently has moved to late September this year.

Taste of Conejo: Mark your calendar for Sunday, October 1, as many local restaurants will be showing off their fare at the Hyatt Regency in Westlake Village from 1-4 pm.

While on that subject, our food critic Jim Moustache reports that “Slice House” on TO Boulevard near the Post Office serves up myriad styles of everyone’s Italian favorite, from New York to Detroit to Sicilian and everything in between.

*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 suggest. (This month’s un-helpful number is 1-555-howtogetaRealIDandgoodluckwiththat.)⁶*

NEXT HOA BOARD MEETING: The next HOA Board meeting is September 28 at 6:30 pm at the PMP offices at 515 Marin Street, Suite 404 (opposite “The Oaks” mall off Hillcrest). *You can attend HOA Board meetings remotely by way of Zoom, but your HOA encourages at least occasional physical presence—especially if you can bring cookies.*

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

SEND COMPLAINTS ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER TO tswift@cheapconcerttixunavailable.com .

⁶ We kid (mostly). Appointments at the Avenida de Los Arboles DMV actually are pretty easy to get, and they move you through the line pretty quickly. *Pro Tip:* If you are getting a Real ID in connection with a Driver License renewal, *make sure you know ahead of time if this is your year to re-take the written driver test!* It surprised us, but the bigger surprise is that we passed without studying—save yourself the angst and ask ahead of time if you have to re-take the written test. (From what we observe on local roads every day, nobody ever has to re-take the actual driving test.)