

The Ridges Landowners Association Newsletter

Number 32

Spring 2004

In an effort to keep all landowners in The Ridges informed of the status of the development of the community and issues that may affect you, we are distributing this quarterly newsletter. We hope that you enjoy this periodic update and find it useful.

From the President's desk

A number of topics, some of the replay variety, continue to concern residents of The Ridges.

Trees

The attack of the bark beetle on our beloved piñon trees will probably continue. Two articles by knowledgeable parties here are included in this newsletter, addressing whether it's best to cut down dead trees and choices for replacement foliage. On my lot, I've left some of the larger tree skeletons in place, stripped of the smaller branches and festooned with many birdhouses. For help with tree removal and chipping, Dave Kingston or I can give you the name of a competent contractor. Maybe those beautiful April rains will help our trees survive the beetle attack. Some Ridges residents may think that the Association should apply pressure to landowners to remove their dead trees. Because expert opinion is divided over the utility of this measure, and for other reasons, the Board of Directors does not contemplate Association action.

Outside storage

Loss of tree cover can make materials and vehicles stored outside more visible. If residents check their own lots for items exposed contrary to our covenants and take reasonable measures to conceal same, we can avoid a squabble like ECIA is suffering.

Barking dogs

We love our own furry friends, but not someone else's when they launch into bark mode. Dog owners sometimes are not aware of the problem with their own pets because the dog might be quieter when the owner is at home. If you have an outside dog, ask your neighbors about this possible nuisance. A similar comment can be made about wandering dogs.

Ridges Web Site

Should we have a web site? It's not clear whether we're a big enough outfit to keep a timely and useful web site. But more and more people expect information to be available by that mode. Key items for a landowners' association web site would be covenants, bylaws, newsletters and meeting announcements. A rough draft of a web site for The Ridges can be seen at <http://home.comcast.net/~ridgesweb/wsb/html/view.cgi-home.html-.html>.

ECIA's web site, www.eldoradocommunity.org, is more elaborate than we would need but can serve as an example for features we might use. Note that our site and ECIA's lists the association officers but *not* the members. Many Internet Service Providers will host small web sites for no extra charge on top of a personal account—such is the case with The Ridges draft site—but to get more professional features (including a web address you can actually type) there would be some cost. We'll continue to collect opinions and info on this before doing anything more (or less).

Fire hazards

Please observe the strict prohibition in item IX.1.k of the Bylaws against fireworks and other activities that may create a fire hazard. The Board interprets this item to prohibit open fires – an outside fire not in a container with spark suppression. We have acted once already this year to request a resident douse an open fire – thanks for their ready cooperation.

Looks like the hot weather is here! Be conscious of your water use, while enjoying the summer in our beautiful area.

*Contributed by Olin van Dyck,
President*

Board Meeting Notes

The Ridges Board of Directors met on May 4 with all directors in attendance, plus Michel Marx, head of the Architectural Control Committee. Michel reported that the high level of activity recently, as recorded in his note in this issue, has not only been time consuming but has cost him a bit for supplies. The Board suggested that he submit an invoice, and expressed appreciation for the outstanding service that he and his committee provide.

Treasurer Judy Whiteley said that she and our Administrator Carolyn Cochran recommended that we transfer our accounts to another bank; one reason is to use a bank that will enforce our two-signatures policy. The Board unanimously passed a resolution authorizing Judy and Carolyn to pursue this plan.

Judy said that in February we had up to 11 past-due assessments, although now are all paid. The Bylaws specify an interest charge and other measures for assessments in arrears, although we have not been hasty to apply such steps.

The Board also took note of the value of this Newsletter, and extended our appreciation to the contributors and especially the editor.

*From Olin van Dyck,
President*

(The editor thanks everyone for their kind words but without our contributors submitting articles, my husband's computer expertise and Carolyn Cochran's role in getting this out to the landowners, this newsletter could not exist. Thanks to all of you!)

Roads

Speeding

Residents toward the west end of Principe de Paz, which eventually carries all Ridges traffic, often complain about speeding. Among the "traffic calming" measures discussed are speed humps, which are a different animal than the existing speed bumps. You've probably seen the extensive use of speed humps in Santa Fe, like on Arroyo Chamiso and Botolph Roads near Albertsons on St. Francis. The distinguishing feature of speed humps is the several feet of a flat top, which gives a smoother ride at the designated speed limit. Should we install speed humps? This should be discussed for a while before a decision.

Pavement

We anticipate only light maintenance and small upgrades on our paved roads for several years. Among

the measures that can help extend pavement lifetime would be putting rolled edges at those intersections that show edge breakup where they lead onto gravel roads. Also, at some point, every gravel road will need additional base course and grading. The Roads Committee is making a multiyear plan to balance possible maintenance items and the need to save for a major repaving in five or ten years. If no additional stretches are paved, we hope to be able to pay for the necessary work from normal income

*From Charles Whiteley and Olin van Dyck,
Roads Committee*

From the ACC

The Ridges subdivision has received high marks from the real estate agents dealing with our area for the clean and pleasing environment we are offering. We should all be proud and happy that our efforts are rewarded by an increase in property values.

The Architectural Control Committee has reviewed and processed the following applications during the past six months:

- On Lot 22, Sundance Builders are working on the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Soccea.
- James and Linda Becker, Lot 37, have put the house they are building for sale.
- Frank and Brigitte Welsh plan to build their dream home on Lot 30. Things are taking shape despite some difficulties with the soil on their property.
- Dick Carlson bought the house on Lot 61, moving here from across Highway 285. We welcome him as a new neighbor and wish him well for the completion of the remodeling on his house.
- Jim and Bernadette Shanaberger, Lot 75, long-time residents of The Ridges, are adding a guesthouse on their property
- Henry and Tina Lanman, Lot 29, are also adding an improvement to their house. We hope we can conclude that both Shanabergers and Lanmans are planning to stay in The Ridges for years to come.

New applications that have been received but not yet processed have come from Tim Haggerty, Lot 58, and Cynthia Coates, Lot 82.

We have received several requests to provide names and recommendations of contractors who have built in The Ridges. It is clear that the ACC cannot provide opinions but we will compile a list of builders we have

on file and make that list available for information only.

Lastly the dog issue is still with us. The ACC position is defined by Article 7.13 in the Declaration of Restrictive Covenants. This article prohibits “Noxious or offensive activities...that become an annoyance or nuisance to the residents.” We hope that this can be addressed and respected by the animal owners in question. Barking is an issue as are the dog droppings on the property of others and on the trails and roads.

Anyone who has knowledge of how to deal with the bark beetle invasion should share it with us. The season is starting!

*Contributed by Michel Marx,
Architectural Control Committee*

Bark beetles

I recently attended a lecture on the beetle infestation in the greater Santa Fe area given by Pat Torres, the Santa Fe County Cooperative Extension Service Agent. The following is an overview of some of the information that he imparted.

The 2002-2003 region-wide drought has created conditions favorable to the population explosion of bark beetles, weakening the trees’ normal way of resisting these attacks. Trees depend on moisture to fight off beetle attacks. Adult beetles chew their way through the outer bark of a tree, emitting a chemical scent that attracts other beetles. The beetles then mate and lay eggs in the galleries they construct between the bark and the wood. When the eggs hatch, the larvae feed on the soft inner bark layer, causing the separation of the protective outer bark layer from the tree. A ‘blue stain’ fungus carried by the beetle contributes to the death of the tree by clogging water and nutrient-conducting tissues.

The adult beetles then leave the infected tree and fly to a nearby tree, starting the fatal process all over again. What has surprised the various agencies monitoring the progress of this outbreak is the surprising number of hatchings in one season. It has been 2-3 times what was expected.

Applying an insecticide to individual trees prior to a beetle attack can protect individual trees. Treatments consisting of a proper solution of carbaryl (found only in professional strength Sevin) or permethrin can offer protection. These must be applied by a licensed technician using proper protection. They are dangerous chemicals and can potentially kill more than your intended target. Another strategy is to water trees to bolster their natural defenses. Watering, however, is no

guarantee of protection because a mass attack can overwhelm a healthy tree and kill it.

It is important to remember that no amount of spraying or watering will help a tree once it has been infested by the beetle. To determine if a piñon has been infested, look for evidence of a “pitch tube,” which is a small hole surrounded by a build-up of sap, or look for sawdust around the base of a tree or in branch crotches. The Santa Fe Piñon Initiative Steering Group has a web site at www.santafetrees.com. Click on FAW for much more information.

Submitted by Estee Roll

What? Replace those piñons?

This is a big question right now. And, of course, there are different opinions. For example, Bob Pennington, owner-manager of Agua Fria Nursery, was quoted last year as advising against replacement with trees. Instead, he said, plant wildflowers or grass in the soil that used to surround the now vacated sites. If you choose grass, Plants of the Southwest sells a Dryland Blend that’s inexpensive. It would need to be scattered and covered with mulch before the summer rains. I’ve done this in several places and used straw as mulch. It works.

If you’re bent on a tree or trees, here are some suggestions: First, think: *Avoid Conifers!* Certified arborist Rich Atkinson of Southwest Trees teaches that the beetles will attack other conifers with a vengeance once they’ve destroyed all the piñons. If you *must* have a conifer, try the Rocky Mountain juniper.

You want hardy trees. This means trees that withstand drought and infertile, alkaline soil. There are some hardy alternatives that aren’t part of the diet of the Ips beetle, black and honey locust trees, for example. They can withstand anything and they do give you some canopy spread. Other deciduous trees that are hardy in this climate are: Arizona sycamore, desert willow, New Mexico privet and the “almost bulletproof” but slow-growing hackberry.

Tree nurseryman Gordon Tooley, of Tooley’s Trees in Truchas, would add to the list Tatarian maple, white ash and fruit trees. Fruit trees do require more water though; all mine are on drip irrigation. Hawthorns, like the Kansas variety, do well here, especially as an understory beneath other trees.

Plants of the Southwest recommends lance leaf cottonwood, wafer ash, and Arizona cypress.

Shrubs and species roses, like the Austrian copper rose and rosa glauca or red-leaf rose, work well too,

especially when planted in groups. Tooley adds the Manchu rose and the sweetbriar rose. Good shrub selections for our drought area are Apache plume, fern bush, butterfly bush (Buddleia), mountain mahogany and the sages. Plants of the Southwest adds Gambel oak, small-leaved sumac, algerita, cliff rose and winter fat as useful shrubs in our area.

When shopping a nursery for trees, it's really important to press the question, "Is this tree extremely tolerant of drought and infertile, alkaline soil?" Diversity is where it's at, these days. Try something new, something beyond piñons, junipers and aspens. You'll like the change.

*Contributed by Ray Olson,
Certified Master Gardener*

New Mexico State Forestry Conservation Seedling Program

The New Mexico State Forestry Conservation Seedling Program provides an excellent way to do large-scale revegetation in areas with substantial piñon loss. The 2004 program has just ended, but the 2005 program will start up again in November of this year. Those who took advantage of the program were able to obtain a wide range of seedlings for about a dollar per bush or tree from their "one season" seedlings. The following plants with low water needs were available this year:

Apache plume
Arizona cypress
Black locust
Buffaloberry
Chokecherry
Eastern red cedar
Four-wing saltbush
Hackberry
Lombardy poplar
New Mexico Forestiera (privet)
Rocky Mountain juniper
Rubber Rabbitbrush (chamisa)

If you are interested for next year, check at their web site in late November of this year at: <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/forestry/tree/web/Seedlings/main.cfm>.

From Tom Seamster

Geology of The Ridges

The surface geology and topography of The Ridges is the direct result of the last Ice Age. From about 20,000-10,000 BC the Sangre de Cristo mountains were

covered by an ice sheet, perhaps a mile thick in the center.

The heaviest snows fell at the top of the ice sheet above the mountains. More snow burial turned the snow into ice, which by gravity slowly flowed down to lower levels.

This glacier scraped off the topsoil of the mountains and transported the broken rocks and sand down to the lowlands to the east, west and mainly to the south. At about 10,000BC the climate began to warm up (good global warming) and the glacier began to melt at the outer extremities. As the glacier retreated it left "terminal moraines" or "ridges" parallel to the ice edge at the glacier's foot. Eventually the glacier retreated up into the mountaintops and disappeared leaving only relict lakes (cirque lakes) up in the mountains.

The Ridges subdivision we have today is within these terminal moraines of the long-vanished glaciers. Over the thousands of years since the glacier's retreat, rain and surface erosion have washed the soil (sand and silt) off the tops of the hills and into the valleys below. Those of us who live on the hilltops or hillsides have poor topsoil and caliche and lots of granite boulders left behind by the glaciers. Those of us who live down in the valleys have better topsoil (washed down from the highlands) and few if any rocks. I guess it all evens out. People up on top have the good views but poor gardens. Those in the valley may have lesser views but better gardens.

Planting season is here. Get digging!!!

Contributed by Dave Kingston

Meet our board members

Many of us only know our Board members as names and phone numbers, so your roving reporter asked them for some information about themselves, without giving much direction on what they might wish to tell. Enjoy reading about them. – Ed.

Judy Whiteley says she is waiting to see what evil results from releasing her highly classified information, so here it is! Judy was born in Washington, DC, and has lived in such diverse places as Virginia, Maryland, Florida, California, Oklahoma, Michigan, Colorado and Georgia. Now, she says, she is settled irrevocably in New Mexico, never to move again.

Her pastimes include bookkeeper, office manager, sports official, wife, mother, flyfisher, cook and Lakers and Braves fan. She is a "certifiable soccer nut" and acknowledged supervisor of a perpetual adolescent boy.

(And, Judy, the adolescent boy's name would be...? – Ed.)

Dave Kingston, a resident here since 1994, has served two terms as Board president: in 1996-1997 and again in 2002-2003. He was born in Marinette, Wisconsin in 1927 and attended high school in Green Bay. He served in the US Army and graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a BS, MA and PhD in Geology and Meteorology. He then joined what is now EXXON/MOBIL in 1953 and worked with that company until 1987, in the oil exploration field, in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, South America, the Far East and northern Canada.

From 1987 until 2003 he was a consultant in oil and gas exploration and taught management schools in related subjects.

Dave married Eva in 1965 and have three children: Caroline, also a resident in the subdivision, Julia and Russell. They have five grandchildren. Dave's many interests, past and present, include football, fishing, hunting, and wrestling. He's also been a lumberjack.

Brent Bonwell moved to New Mexico in 1984 to work at the Santa Fe ComputerLand store and has been involved in the technology industry ever since. After managing a computer reseller for many years, Brent is now a product manager for a local software company.

His wife, Sally Wright, works part time for a jewelry wholesaler as an Account Executive. They have two children, Carly age 6 and Logan age 10. They purchased their lot in The Ridges in 1990, built their house in 1992 and moved into it at Thanksgiving of that year.

Our neighbors

This column is about and for the residents of The Ridges. Input is welcomed from anyone who has news to include. Items may be e-mailed to the editor at any time and will be included in the subsequent newsletter. We also welcome timely articles.

Resident and Clay Artist, Judy Nelson-Moore, has two sculptures in the juried regional exhibition, "From the Ground Up XXII" at the Museum of Fine Art & Culture in Las Cruces. The show is on display through May. She will have two additional pieces at the New Mexico Potters Association show in Taos at the Maravilla Contemporary Craft Gallery, June 4 to June 30. See her work also at www.nelsonmoore.com/art.

Our sympathy goes to Victor and Yolanda Hesch (Lot 13) whose grandson died in Florida and to Michael Wightman (Lot 49) who lost a brother-in-law in Utah recently.

***The Board of Directors and the Association officers are listed for your information.
Please feel free to call for assistance or information.***

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