

# The Ridges Landowners Association Newsletter

Number 33

Summer 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

### Re-Greening The Ridges

In June, we had several days of rain, totaling about half an inch of water. In July, the clouds are teasing us with a hint of the monsoon season. But the piñons continue to dry and die.

Like many of us, I'm putting in some plants that with water, time, and luck will restore some green to my property. Throughout The Ridges, we have many landscaping projects ranging from the planning stage through established growth. And we have folks who are experts or have used experts for landscaping, and others who are looking for advice. So I wonder if we might have the makings for a **landscaping interest group** to exchange information. If you are interested, send me email ([w5vn@yahoo.com](mailto:w5vn@yahoo.com)) and I'll start an email list. A volunteer to organize the meetings is solicited.

### Architectural Control Committee

Several new house or house addition projects are progressing. The ACC and Directors have had several contacts with landowners and contractors on secondary issues arising from these activities, including trash control, trespassing, and signage. Generally, we have found contractors to be responsive when these concerns are brought to their attention.

### Our Water Expert

The Ridges has many residents with impressive and interesting résumés. This issue of the newsletter contains a report by John Brown, who has served on local water advisory groups, regarding the activities of a state-sponsored committee.

### Banking and Administrator

We have transferred our banking to The First National Bank of Santa Fe. This will be more convenient for us. Also, FNBSF will enforce The Ridges policy of requiring two signatures on a check.

Please note that our Administrator, Carolyn Cochran, is now with the legal practice of Cuddy, Kennedy, Albetta & Ives,

LLP, at 1701 Old Pecos Trail; the phone number is 988-4476 and her new e-mail address is [ccochran@cuddylaw.com](mailto:ccochran@cuddylaw.com).

### 285 South Highway Corridor Plan

This plan will form the basis for a county ordinance adding to land development rules. A salient feature is the proposed reduction in allowable commercial space. The plan was presented to the County Development Review Committee in June. Gary Boyle, owner of The Agora, spoke against the plan because he said that it did not sufficiently restrict additional commercial and other development, further over-committing the water supply. I spoke in favor of the plan, as a step in the right direction, and noted that the plan defers to county water use policy. The plan passed the CDRC and on July 13 was approved by the Board of County Commissioners. In the BCC discussion, it was said that the implementing ordinance would probably address the water issue.

A highly abbreviated version of the plan, focused on the Alma Road area, is available on our website.

### Website

[Http://home.comcast.net/~ridgesweb/wsb/index.html](http://home.comcast.net/~ridgesweb/wsb/index.html), our rough draft website, now has our past newsletters for 2004 and 2003. (I should say again that this website is hosted for "free" as a bonus to Comcast Internet subscribers, and has only limited features available. I'm looking into the cost and effort required to have a more full-featured website with a shorter address.)

*Olin van Dyck, President*

### Roads

A resident inquired about possible treatment of our gravel roads for dust suppression. Magnesium chloride is used for this purpose but has been associated with tree damage in Santa Fe, so I don't think we'll consider

it further. Other matters under continuing discussion include installing speed humps instead of speed bumps.

*Charles Whiteley and Olin van Dyck, Roads Committee*

## Break-in

A break-in occurred recently between 7 pm and 7 am into a tack room in the subdivision. A small window was broken and used as access to kick the door open. Stolen were several items of value, including saddles. To date, unfortunately, nothing has been recovered

– Ed.

## Political signs not allowed

In the heat of the season (any way you would like to interpret this) political signs are starting to pop up in The Ridges. Our covenants do not allow these. Your Board of Directors does not want to see a political sign war here. Please do not add to the visual clutter in our peaceful neighborhood.

*Olin van Dyck, President*

## 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. Here is another. – Ed.*

Olin van Dyck, president, worked for 28 years in Los Alamos National Laboratory, most of the time as a nuclear physicist but in the final seven years as a congressional relations specialist-during the time of "The Troubles:" the security scares, the Cerro Grande fire, and lab management fiascoes. (Sometime let me tell you about my wife's powerful voodoo dolls. Her score is a perfect 5 for 5--scary!)

In 2001 I retired and moved to The Ridges, where I keep busy working on the house, landscaping the property, mountain biking, and our landowners association duties. I was also an officer in my homeowners association in Los Alamos. That association fell apart when the county tried to rezone our area and bitter feelings divided us. Without strong local oversight, a few lot owners started to push the envelope, including storage of construction machinery, and I think use of the permitted "mother-in-law" cottage as a rental property. The lessons to me include being careful about tinkering with the rules everyone started with, and to be thorough and consistent in application of the rules.

## Jemez y Sangre Water Committee Activities

Six years ago, the state engineer developed a structure of 16 regional committees to provide advice on future water needs and supplies. Our committee district was called Jemez y Sangre and ran from Madrid in the south to Alcalde in the north. Last year the district submitted its report (over 4" thick) to the state engineer and then several subcommittees were formed to implement some of the plans.

Two of the subcommittees were "cloud seeding" and "new water technologies." Since all of the CS members were also in the NWT subcommittee the two were temporarily merged, and it was agreed to attack cloud seeding initially. A workshop was organized and put on last January with presentations being made by both cloud seeding companies and buyers of the services.

It was learned that less than 10% of the moisture that passes over the country falls to ground, and that cloud seeding could be expected to increase the precipitation by 10-15%. Estimates of cost ranged from \$5 to \$10 per acre-foot. A study in the 1980's concluded that a 10% decrease in precipitation resulted in a 30% decrease in stream flow in New Mexico. Reversing this information gives a 43% increase in stream flow from an 11% increase in precipitation. This difference in percentages results from the fact that the ground is usually very dry so that much of the precipitation goes into soil moisture before there can be any runoff. The soil moisture is soon lost to evaporation.

The cloud seeding group has now split off and formed the non-profit New Mexico Weather Modification Association. They are currently trying to raise money for a satellite study of the clouds over the state to see where the best seeding can be done. The goal is for a winter program in November 2005.

The new water technologies subcommittee is now looking at three possible projects.

1. Non roof-catchment water harvesting. This involves grading a slope and covering it with a membrane or vegetation that enhances runoff. The water is then fed into a reservoir or back into the ground. A proposal has been submitted to the state to fund a workshop.
2. Water swapping. Southern California uses over one million acre-feet of Colorado River water per year. A proposal has been submitted to the state to negotiate a deal in which New Mexico would build a desalination plant on the West Coast and trade desalinated water for Colorado River water. This

river water could then be diverted to the Chama through existing tunnels and pipelines.

3. Petroleum water. Water is a byproduct of petroleum production. It currently imposes an expense on the company to get rid of it. This water could possibly be treated and used constructively.

*Submitted by John Brown*

## Things are humming

For those who are not aware or just haven't noticed, July, August and into September are the height of the hummingbird infestation in the mountains of New Mexico including The Ridges.

From early to mid-July until mid-September, all four of the varieties of hummingbird common to our area are in residence...fighting for the most part and otherwise sucking down sugar syrup if available. These little darlings are just MEAN! They are also so quick that they have no fear of humans and will hover within inches of your head. I even know one local woman who claims that they have drawn blood through her flowered dress. I have on a couple of occasions managed to replace a feeder perch with my finger and had them land on it to feed.

If there are two hummingbirds in New Mexico, they will be fighting in our courtyard.

Besides hovering, they are also able to fly backwards, climb and descend vertically (while spinning around if they want), start and stop on a dime (with change) and perform wildly aerobatic maneuvers. This makes them a lot of fun to watch and makes feeding the little buggers worthwhile. More on this later. All this flight ability is made possible by a unique wing structure that is rigid from the shoulder outward. This allows them to fly by waving their wings back and forth (from about 60 to 120 cycles per minute) like a fan. Adjusting the fan angle controls their speed and direction.

Unlike most of the continent East of us who usually have only the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and often not a lot of those, our four types are common in the summer. Elsewhere, the mountains of southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona may have up to 14 varieties depending on location. Our four are:

**The Broad-tail.** This is the largest of the four and the males are identified by a brilliant red gorget (a bib or shield shaped marking on the chin and chest). Females are harder to identify (all four are just basically green) but careful observation will show that Broad-tails are larger and have a slightly droopy looking wing at rest.

They also may have a reddish flash at the base of the tail with green between when spread.

Broad-tail males will arrive in very late March or early April. The last will not leave until late September or early October. But, while some Broad-tails nest in our area, most will go elsewhere and return in numbers during mid July when the young are flying.

**The Black-chinned:** "Black-chinned" is something of a misnomer as the males have a black head with a purple band at the top of the chest below (but touching) the black. The females are best identified by the fact that they have a grayish rather than green head.

Black-chinned arrive in the spring and depart in the fall at similar times to the Broad-tails. Quite a few of them nest in this area so most of the population during May and June are Black-chinned.

**The Rufous:** The Rufous (red) are, by far, the gaudiest of the United States hummingbirds. The adult males are a bright rust red color with a white bib and a brilliant bronze colored gorget. Rufous breed elsewhere (Pacific Northwest into Alaska) and don't arrive here until early to mid-July. Females are somewhat identifiable by being a little plumper than the Black-chinned and with less droopy black wings of the Broad-tails. They also have a more rufous tail when spread and usually have a small red spot under their chin.

Rufous are the most territorial of the four and will be seen parked on branches near feeders trying to defend them against all hummingbird comers. Generally, they will not make actual contact but the loud hum and high-pitched chittering provide warning. A common sight is two birds beak-to-beak spinning around the central point and either climbing or descending. I have also on one occasion seen a fighting pass that left one tiny feather falling behind it.

**The Calliope:** The Calliopes are the smallest of the United States hummingbirds and noticeably smaller than the other three we have. The males have a bright purple-violet streaky gorget of long, noticeably frilly feathers. The females are almost identical to the Broad-tailed females but smaller in size and without the red on the tail.

The Calliopes also breed elsewhere (Sierra up into Canada) before they arrive and depart here at about the same times as the Rufous.

In our courtyard Calliopes are far more rare than the others and we have seldom had more than two or three males sighted at a time as opposed to dozens of the others.

In all cases, the new hatching males resemble the females but are starting to develop their adult gorgets and other coloring.

Attracting hummingbirds with feeders is simple but may become labor intensive if you let it. While there are many types of hanging feeders, we prefer one that hangs on a suction cup on the outside of a window. This allows easy viewing from inside the house and the little darlings can be observed and photographed from only a few inches away.

For syrup, avoid the commercial red mixes. The color is not necessary and may even be mildly harmful to the birds. A simple syrup of one part granulated sugar to four parts water is ideal for these little birds. Boil the mix to assure all is dissolved and refrigerate any that is not used immediately (it will ferment nicely but has no real wine flavor). If syrup remains in a feeder more than a few days, replace it to avoid fermentation and other harmful bacterial growth. Wash the feeder before refilling in all cases.

As to the labor intensive part: we will soon have twelve feeders out and use up to a gallon of syrup a day in the height of the season during August and September. Fortunately, Marilyn does all the work except for

occasional shuffling of feeders in and out of the house for filling.

If you are up to the work, feeding to attract these birds will provide a great deal of summer entertainment. Including: I once bet a ten-year-old visitor who was watching our courtyard hum that she couldn't sit in the middle of the courtyard for five minutes without flinching. She was NOT interested in even trying.

For much more information and pictures, I recommend Sibley's books *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior* and *The Sibley Guide to Birds*.

*Contributed by Jack LaRowe  
with much assistance from the Sibley books*

## **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, titled "newsletter article" and will be included in the subsequent newsletter. We also welcome timely articles.)*

***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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