

The Ridges Landowners Association Newsletter

Number 38

www.ridgesla.org

Fall 2005

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

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of Association members will be at SteaksSmith at El Gancho, social hour and dinner starting at 6 pm, business meeting at 8:15 pm. Notification was already mailed out; and further materials will accompany this newsletter. At this time, I don't know of any major votes except for the budget and election of new Board of Directors. I do expect a lively discussion of a few issues and advisory votes for the next Board.

Board of Directors

A nominating committee chaired by Judy Whiteley and including Marilyn LaRowe and Tim Ames proposed this list of new candidates for the Board of Directors:

- Dick Carlson
- Tina Lanman
- Fred Strauss

Also on the slate (with eligible years remaining) are

- Judy Whiteley (1 year)
- Doug Svetnicka (2 years)
- Arthur Reeder (2 years)

Candidates can also be nominated from the floor during the general meeting. The next Board will consist of the candidates receiving the five highest vote count in the meeting, proxies included. The vote will be by paper ballot. Members can vote their number of lots owned for each of five positions (if you own two lots, you have ten votes).

Candidates will be asked to make a brief statement regarding their interests. Officers of the Association are then elected by the new Board when it meets next.

Outgoing directors are Brent Bonwell and Olin van Dyck; neither is eligible for re-election.

The nominating committee did a commendable job in scouting around for candidates and received some expressions of interest from folks who might work on committees other than the Board.

Bylaws Draft

A rewrite of the Bylaws is available on the website for review and comment. The principal change in rules provides for 3-year terms for directors and clarification of start of terms. The rewrite is intended to be in plain, simple language, and by deleting unnecessary extracts from the Covenants, the result is only 40% as long as the extant version. It is intended to leave the basic operation of the Association as is. The Bylaws can be changed by a majority of the members of the Association or by unanimous action of the Board, which perhaps will consider this draft.

Association Governance

My article in the previous issue of this Newsletter made these points:

1. The Ridges Landowners' Association is a corporation — a legal entity distinct from its members — with its affairs managed by the elected Board of Directors and Association officers.
2. The Declaration of Restrictive Covenants comprises the contract among landowners on certain rules within the subdivision, especially on property rights.
3. The Bylaws set forth the Association's operating procedures and must be consistent with the Covenants.

Sometimes issues arise that aren't unambiguously addressed by the Covenants or the Bylaws. The Board can handle these issues and leave a record of its decisions by means of resolutions. Examples from the past include resolutions to:

- Advise the ACC to apply the setback rule to fences, etc.;
- Include impact on adjacent property within ACC criteria;
- Allow storage sheds, subject to ACC approval.

As might be expected, many Board actions address concern over the impact of some activity on the neighbors. Omitted from this list are larger matters that the Board puts to membership vote as budget items or amendments to the Covenants such as the gas line project.

Of these examples, perhaps the item with the broadest continuing impact is the storage shed policy. To arrive at this policy, a legal interpretation of the Covenants was obtained, thus making it harder to back away from. In my (non-lawyer's) view, it would have been better to address this in the general meeting and adopt an amendment to modify the applicable sentence in the Covenants, so that the result reflected the majority view of the residents rather than one lawyer's opinion.

A complete list of Board resolutions will be included in our records on our website. I think that such resolutions should remain in effect until changed or overturned by the Board or general membership, although in the past we haven't been consistent, probably due to lack of knowledge of the record — a deficiency that the website may help to correct.

As a final thought, I hope that the members will expect the Board to use its time on substantive matters that could permanently impact appearances and property rights. Asking the Board or ACC to revisit transient matters can discourage the willingness of members to serve in these positions and at worst could result in dysfunction of the Association.

It has been a privilege to be a Ridges director and officer in the last few years. A great benefit to me was the opportunity to meet many of you, members in our very special community.

Web Site

Our web site, www.ridgesla.org, is operational again.

Near the beginning of August, our website became inoperative and the hosting service provider was unresponsive. After several weeks of this, I settled on a new web site host service and initiated the process of transferring registration of the site name (ridgesla.org) to the new host. This process took another week. Re-establishing all site content is in process, maybe done by the time you read this, but it's mostly there and running.

Sorry for the loss of service, but it's been an educational experience. One of the lessons is to use a USA web service provider. Our first host company was in Australia, so I didn't want to try dealing with them by phone. The prorated value of the lost service is only ten bucks.

According to my husband,, Olin spent a ton of time and no small amount of annoyance on this attempting to deal with the old provider, getting the name swapped over and setting up the new site much as the old one was. Thanks, Olin. —Ed.

Conflict resolution

On September 7, 2000, the Board finalized a procedure that they had been working on since the beginning of the year to resolve conflicts among neighbors. Here is the procedure they agreed upon:

Instructions to the complaining party:

First, try resolving it directly with your neighbor by one-on-one discussion at least twice;

If unsuccessful after two attempts, report the problem to a member of the Board of Directors;

If the issue does not involve a Covenant violation, the President will delegate a board member to act as a neutral third party in an attempt to bring the involved parties to resolution;

If the grievance involves a Covenant violation, the Board will issue a letter to the offending neighbor, directing compliance;

If all else fails, the Board will recommend that the parties seek professional mediation.

Septic Tank Pumping

Charlie Whiteley did some calling around and got a good price for septic tank pumping for himself and a few neighbors. The company, located in Lamy, is Chavez Septic Pumping Service, 466-0905. Don't let your tank get too full, to the point where the solids get into the drain field lines. Further thoughts from Charlie include ways for us to exchange info on reliable contractors. Let's talk more about this.

Olin van Dyck, President

Meet the candidates

The names listed here are in the order they are listed in the president's letter for the sake of continuity. Information is as provided by the candidates with minor editing.

Richard (Dick) Carlson:

I have lived in The Ridges a few months less than two years, yet have “known” The Ridges for more than a decade having purchased a lot on Buen Pastor in the early ‘90s.

Rather than build on Buen Pastor, my former wife and I decided to build a horse property across the road in Los Caballos. There I had experience of being President of the Home Owners Association. We then moved to Arroyo Hondo and although I held no HOA office, I attended the meetings and served on committees.

I am very pleased to be living in The Ridges and am impressed by how the community is maintained, which speaks well for the Association and the pride of the residents.

I still operate a small management consulting firm, although downsized from its roots in Chicago. I no longer keep horses at home, but usually ride three or four times a week. I have been a member of the Santa Fe County Sheriff’s Posse for 12 years and have served as Captain for the last four years.

Tina Lanman:

I was born and raised in the little town of Lafayette in California. I worked many years as a Technical Editor with Brown and Caldwell Consulting Engineers as well as being a Research Analyst with Automatic Data Processing (ADP) prior to having twins in 1994.

Since my husband Henry was born and raised in Santa Fe, we vacationed here often, staying with his family in the east side of town. I loved the area and we both agreed it was a much better atmosphere in which to raise our twin children. Thus after many years of house hunting we finally found the spot we loved in The Ridges.

Since moving to The Ridges in 2001, I have volunteered at El Dorado Elementary School, represented The Ridges on the Simpson Ranch Committee and raised my children as a stay at home mom. I feel very strongly about maintaining the country feeling of the area and ensuring that the residents abide by the Covenants. With these goals in mind, I feel I will be an asset to The Ridges Board.

Frederic (Fred) Strauss:

In my work as a television director, I have served on numerous not for profit boards in the last 23 years, including the New York State Council on the Arts, the Corporate Community Job Program, and the White Plains Community Health Fair Board. I am familiar with how boards function and, more importantly, how they conduct business and achieve their mission.

My wife Nancy and I arrived in The Ridges in May, 2005, and love being here. We have met some of the nicest people on our morning walks throughout The Ridges. We chose to live in this place a few years ago and waited until the right home became available that suited our needs. 97 Principe de Paz is that home.

I am honored to have been nominated to serve on the Board of Directors. If selected I will gladly serve all the residents of our great community.

Judy Whiteley:

Having lived in The Ridges the past four years I’ve come to appreciate the sense of community created by our interestingly diverse gathering of people. Charlie and I arrived here after living in Oklahoma, Michigan, Colorado, California and Georgia, during which time I served on various boards and civic organizations while working in office administration. About 13 years ago I pursued my avocation of sports officiating, working both high school and club volleyball matches in Michigan, California and Georgia. Since arriving in Santa Fe, I’ve served on the Simpson Ranch Committee and the past 2 years as Treasurer of the Ridges Landowners Association Board of Directors. During my time on the Board I’ve developed an interest in seeing our Covenants clarified and administered consistently.

*Also nominated are **Doug Svetnicka and Arthur Reeder**, whose biographical sketches are in the Summer 2005 Newsletter. Please refer to that issue for information about them.*

Roads

The Roads Committee spent more than a few hours trying to find a contractor to handle roadside mowing and in the end cut its losses by doing the job with its own labor and a rented weed mower. This proved to be a difficult proposition and we needed more horsepower than we had. Especially difficult to get through is the chamisa, which we ended up tackling bush by bush with chainsaw and loppers. We worked only as far east on Principe de Paz as Estrella de la Manana, although there are some heavy stands of chamisa on up the road that overhang the pavement by as much as two feet, and some patches of tumbleweed. We’ll probably continue to chew away at this stuff during the autumn or next year.

We attempted to cut mostly the noxious weeds and spare the wildflowers, using Marilyn LaRowe’s advice on desirable species. We did find with the weed mower that we were able to cut the arroyo crossing all the way to the culvert curb, letting some better-looking stuff

poke up through the tumbleweed and tumble mustard in this badly overgrown stretch.

We heard a variety of opinions on how much mowing to do, ranging from none to eliminating all the chamisa. Although we expect neither extreme to be the community preference, we'll probably ask for an advisory vote at the general meeting along the lines of "less," "same," or "more."

If you ask what's the end result we want, I'd say it's something like the country lane look—natural growth near the roadside but not dominated by the noxious species and not crowding the roadway. I've seen this achieved nearby, but it may take some time and judgment to develop.

*Olin van Dyck with Charlie Whiteley,
Roads Committee*

A note of thanks is extended to the Roads Committee and their assistants who mowed/swept the road shoulders. Olin van Dyck picked up the mower, Charlie Whiteley manned the mower all day and Estee Roll swept cuttings off sections of Principe de Paz. . – Ed.

Dead piñon trees: the 2005 sequel

Many residents of The Ridges, having lost most of their piñon trees in previous years, may have only a few dead ones this year, not enough to contract a tree cutter/chipper for a one-lot job.

We are planning to have Sam Madrid, our cutter of previous years, come to The Ridges sometime this winter (December or January) and he will cut and chip small numbers of trees on each lot, if there are enough in total to make the job worthwhile coming up here (35 to 40+ trees).

If you have any dead trees and are interested in getting them cut or branches chipped, you can contact me, Dave Kingston, at 466-4078, and I will try to coordinate the many small jobs into one. I need to know: the number of dead trees per lot, whether they are to be cut and branches chipped (\$20 per tree), or \$10 per tree for chipping only.

If you cut your own trees and want chipping only, the branches must be taken to the roadside or driveway for easy access. If you want to get on this year's cut and chip list please let me know by December 1, 2005.

Contributed by Dave Kingston

Earth's crust stretching along the Rio Grande Rift

The Rio Grande Valley is actually not a river valley, but a geological rift valley that happens to have a river

running through it now days. This rift is still active according to a recent study detailing images of the geology hundreds of miles below the Earth's surface.

"The Rio Grande Rift is the defining topographic feature of our region," said Richard Aster, professor of geophysics at New Mexico Tech. "There are only a few clear places on the planet where narrow rifts are being pulled apart by tectonic forces, and this is one of the classic examples."

And the extension is about four times wider about 20 miles down than at the surface, where the Rio Grande flows from southern Colorado through New Mexico, according to James Ni, a physics professor at New Mexico State in Las Cruces.

The findings of the 1 1/2 year deep-imaging study were described in a recent issue of the British journal *Nature*.

At the same time as the stretching below the rift, the entire region dropped in elevation. Southern New Mexico's Rio Grande Valley, now about 4,000 feet above sea level, might once have been at about 10,000 feet.

Scientists put 54 seismic instruments across nearly 600 miles of the Southwest to study the rift, placing them from near Pecos, Texas, to Lake Powell in the Four Corners.

Earthquakes anywhere in the world above about magnitude 5.6 sent out detectable waves beneath the instruments.

Because seismic waves change as they pass through structures of different compositions, the readings allowed scientists to put together what is described as "the best, most detailed, two-dimensional images" down to about 400 miles below the surface. The instruments were put in place in 1999, dissected New Mexico from southeast to northwest, crossing the Rio Grande south of Belen. The last station was removed in May 2001.

The bottom line on this for us in The Ridges is not to panic but optional earthquake coverage added to your homeowner's insurance is probably appropriate. Are you covered?

This article was excerpted from an article from The Associated Press appearing in *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, Friday, February 25, 2005

Summarized and commented on by Jack LaRowe

Ed. Note: The preceding article has been in limbo since February 2005 due to an abundance of other articles of (we should hope) more pressing local interest.

A plague of flies?

Late this summer, many residents noticed an explosion of the fly population. Not only were more houseflies apparent but also many other varieties made their presence known.

While this may be due simply to wetter than normal (lately) conditions, all should examine their lots for fly breeding sites such as exposed garbage (particularly meat scraps), carrion and animal feces.

—Ed.

Snakes in The Ridges

For chapter three, we move to the quick, if not the fastest: *Masticophis flagellum*, commonly known as Coachwhips or Racers. For this issue, since it was in my tree, the subspecies Western Coachwhip. The other likely local subspecies is the Red Coachwhip which is very similar except tending to a bright pinkish red coloration particularly immediately after shedding.

The photo is from a September 9, 2005 sighting on Agua Viviendo. Quick little bugger. This example is not very large (2-2 ½ feet and no larger than a large fountain pen in diameter) but showed typical quickness and ability to get head high in a juniper in no seconds flat. The copy of the newsletter on The Ridges Internet site will have the photo in full color for those interested.



Western Coachwhip, eye to lens

These are long, up to 100 inches, very thin snakes that travel very fast on the ground and up into trees with great agility. Markings range from patternless to broad dark crossbars (as with my sample). The Western Coachwhip has a double row of dark spots on the belly.

Eggs are laid in clutches of up to 16 or so in June through July and hatch in 6-11 weeks. Hatchlings are 12-16 inches long.

These snakes hunt primarily during the day and prey on grasshoppers, lizards, other snakes and small rodents. While not venomous and effectively harmless to large animals including humans, when cornered or pestered coachwhips will coil and may strike repeatedly and inflict minor bites that are subject to infection. Let them alone.

*Contributed by Jack LaRowe, with reference to:
National Audubon Society Field Guide to North
American Reptiles and Amphibians (New York: Alfred
A. Knoff, 2002);
Jonathon Hanson and Roseann Beggy Hanson, 50
Common Reptiles & Amphibians Of The Southwest
(Tucson: Western National Parks Association, 1997)*

⇒ Feedback ⇐

There are sometimes issues, concerns, votes, etc., that invite comment, or things said of interest. You are invited to submit – in writing – items of concern, or, goodness, we'll even take praise! A couple of caveats, however: we may edit to a pithy line or two, with no attribution to the contributor (nor will we share with anyone the source) and with no targeted remarks to or about individuals.

We may also fiddle with the format considerably as it wears on.

In response to the column on ravens in the Summer 2005 Newsletter, we received the following from a resident (the only response, we might add):

I purchased my lot in 1992. At that time, there was an active raven nest in a piñon tree on the property. Ravens often rebuild their nests in the same tree from year to year, but they do not reuse the material that falls from the tree. There were large piles of old sticks from previous nests at the base of the tree, indicating they had been using this spot for many years prior to 1992. There is ample food for ravens throughout the area; they scavenge quite effectively, picking up road kill and other sources of carrion. They unquestionably thrive in our area without being fed by humans.

We find them to be delightful, and greatly enjoy the aerial acrobatics, extremely varied calls and strong family bond that they demonstrate. We agree that they should not be fed; other than songbirds and hummingbirds, we should leave all of our wildlife to fend for themselves. However, we live in an area that is ideal for many different types of wildlife: ravens, coyotes, road runners, Cooper's Hawks and hummingbirds and of course many other species. The presence of wildlife is one of the great attractions of The Ridges. Although it may be unpleasant to have ravens using our parapets as roosts, it would be horrible

if we, the residents of The Ridges, contemplated taking any action to reduce the wildlife habitat that we occupy.

Ed note: I have also seen them chasing and pecking a baby rabbit on the road in The Ridges.

Historical Notes

Many thanks to Carolyn Cochran, our Administrator, who laboriously sifted through several years of accumulated documents. We didn't realize we had passed a milestone early this year, becoming ten years old. On January 5, 1995, the first mention of a newsletter was that Daryl & Cindy Templeton might sponsor a quarterly newsletter in connection with a real estate business. In February 1995 the first issue was published.

On March 23, 2000, the Board recommended that the quarterly *Newsletter* be issued after the quarterly Board meeting so that relevant information could be reported

in the *Newsletter*. It was also stated the editor would be invited to the Board meetings.

Editors have been Daryl & Cindy Templeton, 1995 – 1998 (Issues 1 – 13); Dick Chenault, Fall 1998, Special Supplement 1999 (Nos. 14 & 15); Abby Weinstein, Summer 1999 – Fall 2001 (Nos. 16 – 23); Marilyn LaRowe, Winter 2002 to present, (Nos. 23 – 38 to date).

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.

There is apparently nothing new to report in this issue.

—Ed.

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

NAME	OFFICE	TELEPHONE	E-MAIL	COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
Olin van Dyck	President	505-466-2492	w5vn@yahoo.com	Roads
Doug Svetnicka	Vice President	505-466-9248	dsvetnicka@dca.state.nm.us	
Judy Whiteley	Treasurer	505-466-4138	cwwhiteley@peoplepc.com	
Brent Bonwell	Secretary	505-466-4177	brent@bonwell.org	
Arthur Reeder	Member	505-474-6707	ajreeder@aol.com	
Jerry Fornell		505-466-0588 Office: 505-466-2612	Gfor1@juno.com	ACC Chair

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