

The Ridges Landowners Association Newsletter

Number 47

www.ridgesla.org

Winter 2008

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.

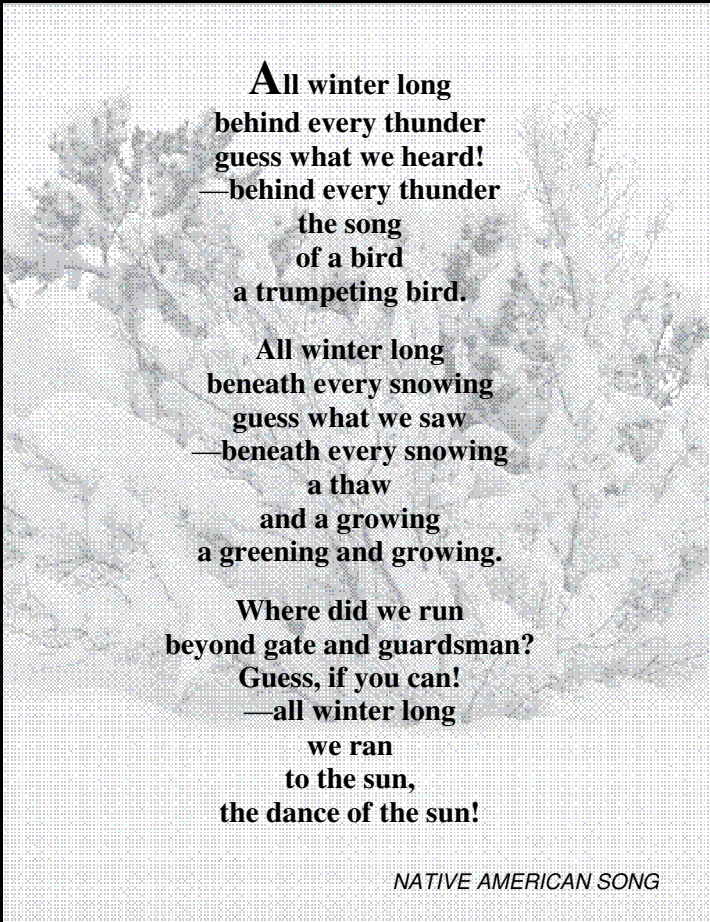
From the President's Desk

Winter is a time to reflect not only on events past but on what might come in the new year. In December the Board said goodbye to Doug Svetnicka and Arthur Reeder who had served selflessly for the last three years amidst the controversy surrounding the covenant revisions and then finally the PNM/budget storm of the last annual meeting. I can attest to their sincerity and dedication in seeking reasonable solutions and trying to "get it right." We thank you Doug and Arthur for your time and many contributions. We also want to thank Olin van Dyck who has stepped down as chairman of the Roads Committee. Many of us have seen Olin riding his bike down Principe eyeing the newly formed cracks and noting where the chamisa is infringing on the asphalt. More than that, he also researched remedies, talked to experts and crunched the numbers to come up with the most cost effective solutions. At other times, he could be seen throwing sand on the icy patches in the winter and then sweeping it off in the spring. Olin will continue to serve on the committee but the buck now stops with Dave Kingston who has taken over the chairmanship. Look out for Dave on his bike.

The Board welcomes its two new members, Fred Strauss who will serve with Dick Carlson on the Concerns and Suggestions Committee and Ken Ferjancic who will serve as vice president and liaison to the Roads Committee.

Looking forward, we have much to strive toward this year. We hope to open the lines of communication with members by extending an invitation to those who wish to attend a board meeting to address specific concerns. Anyone is welcome to attend the first 30 minutes of our bi-monthly meetings by sending a request to board@ridgesla.org. All requests will be granted, time allowing. Alternatively, general concerns can be addressed in writing and sent via email or snail mail. They will be put on the agenda to be discussed at the next meeting.

2008 will be a busy year. The budget was approved by a vote of 42 for to 5 against enabling us to move ahead with plans to repave Alma Drive. The first step will be to secure commitments for contributions from other users of the road. This work is already underway but will pick up momentum in March and April. By early spring, the



**All winter long
behind every thunder
guess what we heard!
—behind every thunder
the song
of a bird
a trumpeting bird.**

**All winter long
beneath every snowing
guess what we saw
—beneath every snowing
a thaw
and a growing
a greening and growing.**

**Where did we run
beyond gate and guardsman?
Guess, if you can!
—all winter long
we ran
to the sun,
the dance of the sun!**

NATIVE AMERICAN SONG

project could be ready to put out for competitive bid. If all goes as planned, we should be ready to begin work in mid summer. There are some formidable hurdles to get over in this project but the Board and the Roads Committee are resolved to get it done this year.

It is the hope of all the Board members that this year will be one of harmony and constructive effort to accomplish our shared goals and to insure that this community remains a place that we're all proud to live in. There will always be differences of opinion as to what needs to be done, how to do it and when to do it. It is only through open and respectful communication that we will be able to come to the best compromises and promote a friendly neighborliness that we all want to enjoy.

*Anne Smith
President*

Conflict resolution policy

Occasionally each year, a resident accuses another of violating a covenant. This is not unexpected because many of the covenants lack clarity and are open for interpretation. The Ridges Landowner's Association, through its Board of Directors, has put in place a conflict resolution policy that is intended to resolve the conflicts in an amicable manner.

Please read the following carefully. Should you feel that a neighbor has violated a covenant that affects your quality of life in The Ridges, please follow the procedure below. And, please note that the Board will not become involved in a conflict until this procedure has been initiated and followed by a concerned resident.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

1. When a concerned resident contacts the Association through its Board of Directors with a covenant violation or other problem, the Board will explain this conflict resolution process, advising the resident to attempt to resolve any problem directly with face-to-face discussions with the offending resident(s).
2. After two unsuccessful attempts to resolve the issue through resident-to-resident discussions, the concerned resident must report the grievance in writing to the Board, citing the pertinent covenant. The Board will then assign the grievance to its Concerns and Suggestions Committee.
3. The Concerns and Suggestions Committee is responsible for addressing the issue. If necessary, it may involve the services of other standing committees of the Board, such as the Architectural Control Committee.
4. If the grievance is found to involve a covenant violation, a member of the Concerns and Suggestions Committee will initiate discussions with the offending resident, informing that resident of the necessary corrective action to be taken within a three-month period. The offending resident will be told that unless the corrective action is completed by the end of the three-month period, the Board, representing The

Ridges Landowners' Association, will consider taking legal action.

5. The Board will send a letter to the offending resident that confirms any agreement and reiterates that legal action will be considered. The resident who initiated the grievance will be told of any agreement reached through discussions between the Board and the offending resident. The concerned resident must also understand that the purpose of the corrective action is to bring the situation with the offending resident into compliance with the covenants, not to satisfy the personal standards of the concerned resident.
6. If the issue does not involve a covenant violation, the Board will recommend that the parties seek professional mediation.
7. At a meeting in close proximity to the end of the specified time period, the Board will vote on the question of taking legal action. If a meeting is not scheduled in close proximity to the end of the time period, the President of the Board may call for a special meeting or an email vote.

The Ridges Board of Directors

Water questions—Water problems— Just love water

Quite often you hear people from the area frustrated with the water service. Be it water pressure, the bill, quality, what ever.

A Ridges Landowner meeting with the Eldorado Area Water & Sanitation District (EAWSD) has been set up for 7:00 pm Thursday, March 13, at the Eldorado Fire Station Day Room on Avenida Vista Grande. Park behind the building and enter at the rear of the building.

In order to have the appropriate information available for a successful meeting please submit your questions and interests by March 9 to Barbara Mandel, EAWSD board secretary, at bchimp2@msn.com.

EAWSD has a very interesting web site: www.eldoradowaterdistrict.com. This is a good site to get you jazzed up for the meeting. It might be good to go informed. On the web site all the past Water Notes are available for reading as well as Engineering and Hydrology Studies.

The EAWSD is also looking for technical/business types to be on the Board, so stop complaining and get on board to help!

Please call Patti Turpen (a homeowner in The Ridges) at 466-0805 to RSVP if you plan to attend the meeting.

It is not the intent of the Board to act as liaison with EAWSD. The Board thought that a meeting might be

beneficial to get a dialog started for those who have voiced concerns.

Neighborhood Watch

Several residents have noted that the “R” stickers most of the residents purchased to place on vehicle windshields have helped identify unknown persons, thus avoiding a call to Victor or the Sheriff. Thanks to all who participate.

Victor Hesch, Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, noted there has been no suspicious activity reported to him recently. However, a reminder that especially when you are away from home, closed and locked windows, doors, and, even when you are home, garage doors may deter a burglary attempt.

Recovering from back surgery, Victor promises to be back on his patrols soon.

Purse snatchings

There seems to have been a rise in purse snatchings in the area lately, probably linked to drug users targeting easy pickings. One woman we know was drug to the ground in the attempt. Please use extra caution when shopping and taking groceries or other merchandise to your vehicle. Be aware of your surroundings; if you feel you will be alone in the parking lot, wait until others walk out then go with them. Put your purse into your locked vehicle or at least out of the way in the trunk while unloading items. And please, please, don't leave your purse in the shopping cart while you wander off to look at items. The newspaper police notes are full of purses stolen from locked or unlocked vehicles while the owner is elsewhere. Take your purse or wallet with you when you leave the area for any reason.

—Ed.

US HWY 285 South Coalition

The Coalition is comprised of members from the 22 different subdivisions that make up the area in and around US Hwy 285 South. This area starts where Hwy 285 intersects Old Las Vegas Hwy and ends at Lamy. The Coalition started in 1992 and has become a regular hub of information and action in conjunction with the Corridor Plan and Ordinance (http://santafecounty.org/about_us/us_285_ordinance.php). The County Staff and Commissioners have been using the Coalition Spokes Group to broaden their information base to make decisions.

Currently, RoseMarie Bagioni and Lois Lockwood are Co-Chairs. On Sunday, June 8, the Coalition will be celebrating 16 years of hard work with a party at the Legal Tender. All people who live in the 22 developments are invited. More information will come.

Signs and vending are illegal within the right of way on Hwy 285. If anyone would like to help keep our area free and clear of signs and vending, please report it to Lt. Garcia at 827-9300. Give him the name and phone number on any sign on the vehicle and the license plate number if possible.

Tina Lanman, Liaison

Roads

We are having our "average" snowfall this winter with no big storm so far (knock on wood). The number of members in the Roads Committee has been thinned out temporarily. Tim Ames is in Santiago, Chile for two months improving his Spanish. Olin van Dyck is in the hospital for a heart-valve operation. We wish him well. With our reduced crew the sanding of the roads may be less frequent. If there is a snowstorm of six or more inches we will plow and sand the main road. If there are only snow flurries we will not.

We advise all commuters to drive slowly if the roads have had a little snow. Remember, use you gearshift to slow down, and not your brakes.

He took the curve
The car was whizzing
Brakes were used
But the funeral hizzin
Burma-Shave

Hitting the brakes on icy/snowy roads may result in loss of control (see photo). With normal conditions the sun will melt the snow on the asphalt road in a day or so. In the meantime slow is safe.

Dave Kingston

And, we have also had our “average” number of cars falling off the hill.

—Ed.



Photo by Velva Merrick

Accumulating trash

Soon—we hope!—warmer weather will prevail and we can go outside without freezing. When that welcome event occurs, please take some time to walk along your property abutting the road and pick up trash that has blown in or been deposited by some thoughtless person.

—Ed.

PNM Community CFL Exchange Program

February 23 thru March 1 at the ECIA Community Center, between 8:00-5:00 the Sierra Club will be having a light bulb exchange. PNM is donating compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) bulbs to exchange with old ones. You can exchange up to four bulbs free. Also, the Agora will have the exchange but just on the Saturdays. This is a great thing. These bulbs are 80% more efficient than the standard incandescent ones. Lot owner Teresa Seamster is spearheading this important community service. Let's all do our part in the conservation effort.

Be “fire wise”

We all love our piñons and junipers here in The Ridges. And of course we are always faced with the possibility of fire especially during drought years. Some concern has been raised regarding clearing of trees around one's property as a good fire control measure, usually suggested at a 35-foot radius around any structure. I contacted an acquaintance who is a Wildfire Management Specialist with the National Parks Service and here is what he had to say:

Both piñon and junipers are pretty flammable in the wildland environment. I don't think clearing one over the other gains you that much protection. Under extreme drought conditions, piñons die faster than junipers. But they are both pretty volatile when you get to that point.

The 35 ft. radius is a good idea, but not an absolute if you do other things right. Much depends on the crown spacing, slope and ladder fuels for the trees. The crown spacing determines how close the tree crowns are to each other, because fire can spread from tree to tree pretty easily when they are close together. A rough rule of thumb would be to have 20 feet space between crowns.

Slope is also an important factor in fire spread. For instance, the crowns probably need to be 30-40 feet apart on a slope (depends how steep) to get the same effect as the 20 ft. crown spacing on the flat. So if your house is at the top of a slope, where fire might be apt to come uphill toward the house, then those trees and carrier fuels on that slope below the house determine what kind of radiant heating the house and fuels next to the house will get exposed to.

Limbing lower branches from trees and/or ensuring that there are no ladder fuels beneath them is a great way to keep them from easily torching in a fire. Usually clearing the lower branches from ground level to 4 or 5 feet up is the recommended standard. The more bare (no brush or tall grass unless fire resistant species) that the ground is beneath the trees the less/lower amount of limbing that is required.

It all sounds kind of vague because there are no absolutes. During extreme fire conditions (like we might get 5% of the time) the best defensible space clearing might fail, but experience on fires has shown that even under extreme conditions, most homes with good fire wise work around them usually survive. We in the fire business, when we get rushed and stressed, don't even try to save some houses that have no defensible space.

The Firewise Website has a lot of pertinent info on all this: <http://www.firewise.com>.

More on wildfires

The Santa Fe County web site has a sizable and informative page on preparation for and prevention of wildfires at http://santafecounty.org/resident/protecting_your_home.php.

Additionally they have other information on construction and vegetation requirements in the Wildlands/Urban Interface areas.

One important note for us in all of this is that spark arrestors are recommended on any solid or liquid fuel burning fireplace or appliance, and required for new construction. I see driving around our neighborhood that many chimneys, even some of recent construction, do not have them.

—Ed.

Fleas and things

Before the spring newsletter issue, it will be flea time again. This is a really big deal here because of the associated problem of plague. It is one of those things we have to just keep in mind here in the high and dry.

If you let your pets roam, even if it is just off leash while walking or around your own property, you are greatly increasing the risk.

1. Most of the modern pet anti-flea treatments, so far as I can tell, pills, collars and drops alike, do not “prevent” fleas; they prevent them from multiplying on and after being on your treated pet by chemically damaging the eggs. This means that, if the animal contracts a flea from local vermin, plague can be transmitted to your animal if present.

2. Since the treatments do not kill the fleas, they can transfer to humans from your pet. Plague, if present, transfers along with them for the several day life of the flea.

3. It is my understanding that any mammal may harbor plague and transfer it to their next generation of fleas. Thus any of our native rats, mice, squirrels, rabbits and the like that your dog or cat might want to catch may be a vector.

4. Plague sick vermin (we have had tested samples in The Ridges in the past and a LOT as near as Eldorado) are really easy to catch and can transfer fleas.

5. An animal dead of plague retains its fleas on the carcass and den for some time, ready to transfer to anyone/thing investigating them.

6. Dead animals should be disposed of and disposed of carefully. Animal dens should be avoided and treated with spray insecticide if possible. This is especially true if you think the den is or recently has been active.

The bottom lines on this are: Keep your pets under control and away from the local vermin and their dens and treat for fleas anyway.

Jack LaRowe

Commentary and Opinion

In the aftermath of the Annual Meeting controversies, and discussion by the Board, we are now providing for a “Commentary and Opinion” section in the newsletter.

The guidelines for this column are in the Winter 2007 issue.

Proxy Votes

In October the members voted down the 2008 budget partly over concern that absentee votes were cast without hearing new information given in the meeting. The concern is usually present with any absentee voting, as recognized in Robert’s Rules of Order, which says that “Proxy voting is not permitted in ordinary deliberative assemblies unless the bylaws of the organization authorize it, since **proxy voting is incompatible with the essential characteristics of a deliberative assembly.**”

However, our bylaws permit absentee/proxy voting to give all the owners the opportunity to vote. Our usual proxy form lets you act in two ways:

1. To cast your own decided vote on certain matters in absentia and ahead of time;
2. To authorize another member to decide on and cast a vote on your behalf during the meeting.

The first option suffers from the incomplete information problem. The second option lets your vote be cast after the discussion, but you must trust someone to act in your interest.

We should ensure that these options are clearly presented, and that the members understand the limitations inherent in absentee or proxy voting. If quibbling over the process makes our meetings more difficult and indecisive, interest and attendance may lag and the democratic process will suffer.

Olin van Dyck

⇒ 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 and no attribution will be given.

I’ve been meaning to write you about neighbors walking their dogs and letting them do their business right by the mailbox and new paper box. We need to clear up the mess at least one a week. With all the open space we have I don’t think they need to use those particular spots.

*Here we are again...why would **anyone** think that others would like or should have to deal with their dog piles?*

—Ed.

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.

—Ed.

Welcome our new neighbors:

Grey and Conny Cooper, 5 Estrella de la Manana
Dave and Mary Elizabeth Eisenberg, 19 North Hijo de Dios
Dick and Marilyn Carter, 124 Principe de Paz
Dick and Holly Altman, 149 Principe de Paz

To Velva Merrick, whose mother died in November, our sympathy.

And to Ron Loch, welcome back to The Ridges following a long illness. We hope you and Kay can spend more time here.

