



Your

Homeowners News

The Meadows on Rio Grande

NEWS AND EVENTS

Your Assessments at Work

By Jim Nelson

Here is an update on two projects that The Meadows Homeowners Association undertook recently to maintain and enhance our subdivision's common areas:

Keeping Trees Healthy and Happy

In March, the association contracted with a tree maintenance service to remove the mistletoe growth on several cottonwood trees. When it attaches itself to a tree, mistletoe is a parasite that will kill the host tree if allowed to grow unchecked. Since it is spread by birds, mistletoe is generally found near the tops of the trees, beyond the reach of ladders.

Prior to taking action, the Association sought advice from two arborists, both of whom recommended immediate removal of the mistletoe.

A special truck with a personnel bucket attached to an extension arm was required to reach the necessary working heights. Since the vehicle rental cost was significant, the Board decided to also contract for selective branch trimming of all the large trees. The trimming will enhance the health of the trees and also cut down on the number of limbs lost during high winds. **Project Cost: \$3,900.00**

A Facelift for Our Common Walls

In early Spring, the association contracted with a stucco company to repair the large cracks, loose materials, and chipped-stucco areas found along the subdivision's common walls. The contractor carefully recoated the repaired areas to match adjoining surfaces. We began the work in mid-April and, as this newsletter goes to print, the job is nearing completion. **Project Cost: \$5,600.00**

The association allocated funds from our special **Wall Maintenance Reserve** to fund this project. Since the common walls will continue to be subject to deterioration, we'll be replenishing the special reserve with funds from the annual assessment to cover future needs.

WORKING ON OUR BEHALF

Meet Your New Meadows Board

Nine of your fellow homeowners were elected in May to serve on the all-volunteer Board of Directors of the Meadows on Rio Grande Homeowners Association, charged with managing our association and maintaining our common areas during 2008-09. The next time you see a board member at the Co-op or dry cleaners, please say hello!

Returning Board Members



In addition to serving as our board president, **Cynthia (Cindy) Lewis** works professionally in the homeowners association industry – and we benefit from her experience. Cindy took an early retirement from PNM, where she served for 20 years in the areas of residential marketing management, business consulting and business continuity/emergency management. She is an unabashed fan of Meadows living because, she says, 1) the North Valley in general and our subdivision in particular are stunning and 2) the neighbors couldn't be nicer.



Returning to the board after two years' absence, **Gene Finch** is a determined advocate for Meadows causes, having lobbied the City of Albuquerque numerous times on our behalf. A retired business owner, Gene is also an expert woodcarver.



A Registered Nurse and interior designer, **Susan Finch** paints in pastel and watercolor in her "spare" time and serves as chair of the Board's Architectural Review Committee. She loves the Meadows' proximity to the Rio Grande because "it is the greenest part of town and it is very peaceful here." *Susan is Gene Finch's daughter.*

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Homeowners Association Board Members

Cindy Lewis, President	243-9150	riocl@msn.com
Gene Finch	765-5944	gnfinch2@aol.com
Susan Finch	764-8262	sfinch64@comcast.net
Jim (Pete) Jett	243-9757	jjett22@comcast.net
L. Kent Morrison	242-6541	lkm@unm.edu
Jim Nelson, Treasurer	246-8515	nelson2308@comcast.net
Dick Ruddy	242-3093	rruddy@comcast.net
Marilyn Smith, Secretary	244-8346	MSmith8659@msn.com
Gene Vance	247-1111	gene@vancefirm.com

Meet Your New Meadows Board

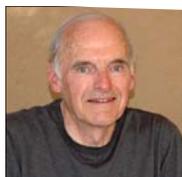
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A retired Los Alamos National Laboratory fellow, **James H. (Pete) Jett** was drawn to the Meadows because of its charm as “a quiet, safe and pleasant neighborhood.” He is a member of the Board’s Architectural Review Committee. Like Susan, he is available to answer questions about changes you may be contemplating to your property’s exterior.



For the past year, **James R. (Jim) Nelson** has served as treasurer of the Meadows Homeowners Association while also managing the subdivision’s common landscaping, grounds and walls. The retired consulting mechanical engineer volunteers with Tax Help New Mexico and serves as a Court-Appointed Special Advocate for children in state custody.



Richard A. (Dick) Ruddy believes that regular communication with Meadows residents is an important part of community building; for this reason, he regularly provides photos and articles for our quarterly newsletter. Dick loves living close by the Bosque recreational trail and the ditch banks, both of which he and his wife, Mary, enjoy. The retired photographer is writing a biography on New Mexico Territory Governor Edmund Gibson Ross.



Attorney and former Texan **Claud E. (Gene) Vance** enjoys international folk dancing, woodworking, fine wines and Chinese teas. Gene created the Meadows on Rio Grande web site (www.meadowsonriogrande.org) and provides the Board with legal counsel. He loves Meadows living for its beauty, proximity to recreational trails, and great neighbors.

New to the Board



L. Kent (Kent) Morrison loves to see people out walking and biking in the neighborhood and feels that more community events could bring the neighborhood closer together. He’s interested in continuing to work on street repairs and exploring ways to “green” the neighborhood. Kent retired as a physicist from the U.S. Army Research Laboratory and currently serves as an Adjunct Professor of Physics and Astronomy at UNM.



Having served on several boards before, **Marilyn H. Smith** understands the importance of working to achieve consensus in organizations such as ours. The retired computer programmer jokes that her current goal is “to continue to travel with the aim of seeing most of the world before I am too old to toddle on and off the tour bus.”

FINANCIAL REPORT

A New Year

By Jim Nelson, Treasurer

Welcome to a new operating year for your homeowners association. We completed the 2007/08 operating year on April 30; you should have received a copy of the Annual Financial Report summarizing financial activity for the year in our recent mailing.

The current operating year runs from May 1, 2008 through April 30, 2009. Invoices for the \$200 annual assessment for 2008/09 were mailed in early April. About 50 percent of Meadows households have responded with payments – a good beginning.

Homeowners approved the operating budget for 2008/09 at the Annual Meeting on May 4. We’ll be providing ongoing reports on our income and expenses in future issues of this newsletter.



QUARTERLY QUOTE

A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken."

— James Dent

Special thanks to Dick Ruddy for the beautiful photos and to Denise Davis for printing this newsletter.

Gayle Vance, Editor

MEET THE NEIGHBORS

Traveling Duo Reflect On a Life of Adventure

By Dick Ruddy

Unless the weather is bad, **Jay and Helen Todd** take a walk through the neighborhood twice each day with their dog, Mya. The couple has practiced their healthy habit faithfully for the past seven and a half years.

Since the Todds began their active life together decades ago, it's probable that walking has contributed to their longevity. Both well into their nineties, Jay and Helen celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary this year.

They met on a street corner, Jay says with a smile. Well, yes, sort of. As college kids at the University of Washington, Jay and Helen each volunteered with the Seattle Mountaineers, a wilderness advocacy group. The street corner in question was the place where a group of Mountaineers, Jay and Helen among them, had agreed to meet before setting out on a project. It's a place they remember fondly.

College Courtship

Jay studied physics, Helen studied art, and courtship led to marriage. In 1952, Jay completed his PhD in physics and took a job with Sandia Corporation, where he stayed for five years. Then he moved to Los Alamos National Labs, where he spent the remainder of his career. In 1975, Jay retired. "That's when the fun began," he says.

The Todds had always wanted to live on a boat, so they headed for Massachusetts and bought a 35-foot sailboat, which they named Natoma. Excursions into the Atlantic were fun, but at some point they decided to try something more daring – a transatlantic crossing. Wisely they enlisted an experienced sailor to make the trip with them.

The threesome set out for Europe, believing that a serious Caribbean storm posed no danger since it was situated far south of them. But the storm moved north, and soon they were encountering waves as high as 60 feet.



The crew held on for dear life for three agonizing days, Jay and Helen literally tied to the boat with nylon rope. They bailed water constantly and lost all but the most basic control of their craft. Ultimately the storm's fury carried them all the way back to Georges Bank, Mass., safe and sound but forever altered by the experience.

More Moves

After Massachusetts, Jay and Helen moved south for the winter to a spot near Chesapeake Bay. After that, they spent a year and a half in the Caribbean; then they returned to Washington state. While there they gave up their Natoma, though the boat lives on as a fond, indelible memory.

The Todds returned to New Mexico just in time to spend Christmas 2000 in the Meadows, where they live today with their daughter Edith. They have another daughter, Melissa, plus three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. You can sense the pride in Jay when he tells you that one of his grandchildren teaches Math at the University of New Mexico.

IN THE GARDEN

Give Weeds an Inch, They'll Take a Yard

By Susan Finch, Chair
Architectural Review Committee

The philosopher who said that work well done never needs doing over never weeded a garden.

— Ray D. Everson

Our yards have come back to life after a long winter — hurrah! But along with the beauty of the new season comes the rebirth of unwanted weeds.

Section 10 of the Protective Covenants for Meadows homeowners (see www.meadowsonriogrande.org) addresses the need to keep all plants pruned and weeds removed to maintain the front yard in a “healthy,



neat, and attractive condition.” Please consider that not weeding your own yard makes it more difficult for your neighbors to keep *their* yards weed-free – since the wind blows seeds from one yard to the next.

WEEDING BY PULLING

Pulling is an effective and organic way to get rid of weeds, but it is also the most time-consuming method. A big benefit of this method is that, when you pull the weed out *roots and all*, it won't come back.

ORGANIC METHODS

Boiling water: It's said that pouring boiling water on weeds will kill the weeds as well as the seeds. Just be careful not to get any boiling water on *you*, or on the plants you want to keep!

Mulch: Not only can mulch help prevent weeds from growing in the first place, it can smother and kill existing weeds as well. Two or three inches of mulch will do the trick and also helps hold water in the soil.

Soapy water: Add about 4 tablespoons of liquid dish soap to 4 cups of water. Mix it up, put it in a spray bottle and spray it on weeds, preferably on hot days.

Alcohol spray:

Mix 4 cups of water with from 1 to 5 tablespoons of alcohol, depending on the stubbornness of the weeds. Prepare and use mixture as you would the soapy water (above).



Vinegar:

Undiluted vinegar is a great choice for killing weeds. Apply to weeds with a spray bottle, but take care not to spray your plants – it can kill them, too.

CHEMICAL METHODS

Products such as Roundup and Ortho® Weed B Gon are probably the most popular chemical products for getting rid of weeds, but they carry health risks and must be used carefully, in strict accordance with instructions. They are effective and kill the roots as



well as the top growth. Often the products contain a pre-emergent killer to kill the next round of weeds as well, keeping you weed-free for several months.

www.meadowsonriogrande.org

Your Association is Online

The Meadows on Rio Grande web site is your source for subdivision documents, forms and more. Visit www.meadowsonriogrande.org for:

- Covenants and bylaws
- Architectural Review Committee info and forms
- Board of Directors list
- Direct link for Board correspondence
- Historical information about the association
- Past issues of this newsletter

You may also contact Meadows board members directly if you have questions. You'll find contact information on page 2 of this newsletter.

THE MEADOWS HOA AND TVNA

Why Both Groups Deserve Our Support

When invited to join the Thomas Village Neighborhood Association (TVNA), homeowners who live in the Meadows sometimes say, "I already belong to the Meadows on Rio Grande Homeowners Association. Why should I join another group?"

The answer is that the homeowners association ("HOA") and the neighborhood association ("TVNA") exist for

different reasons and affect our quality of life in different ways. The groups are complementary – and each deserves your support.



The Homeowners Association ("HOA") exists to protect the value of homeowner properties and common areas in the Meadows on Rio Grande subdivision. The HOA is required to abide by the protective covenants governing

the subdivision, so "membership" in the Meadows HOA is *mandatory* for all homeowners in the subdivision. Annual assessments, which are currently \$200 per year, include funding used to maintain the common areas and contribute towards reserve funds. Activities of the HOA include:

- Maintaining and enhancing the common areas of our subdivision, including upkeep of the common walls and common-area landscaping
- Enforcing the protective covenants and restrictions that apply to all properties within the subdivision
- Holding an Annual Meeting
- Maintaining the HOA web site and publishing the HOA newsletter

Thomas Village Neighborhood Association (TVNA) is a voluntary organization whose goal is to support and strengthen our entire community, which consists of Thomas Village, the Meadows on Rio Grande and the Abbey Jean townhomes. While TVNA supports all area protective covenants, it primarily sponsors a number of community-building activities that serve to strengthen our entire neighborhood. Examples of these activities include:

- Annual Picnic and National Night Out for Crime Prevention
- E-mail group and Web site. To join this popular

group and/or access the web site, contact BAMannMD@aol.com.

- Community-wide directory and newsletter
- Neighborhood watch for crime prevention
- Other projects and groups, such as the current Bosque replanting effort, book groups and special events.

For the past two years, TVNA has generously contributed a portion of their membership fees to the Meadows on Rio Grande Homeowners Association in support of the work we do to maintain area landscapes. We appreciate this contribution and encourage you to consider joining TVNA. Annual dues are \$35, and should be mailed to Richard Meyners, 3316 Calle de Daniel NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS



News from Your Architectural Review Committee By Susan Finch, Chair

Many thanks to those of you who have contacted the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) to ask questions or

provide notification of planned design changes to your home's exterior.

In keeping with the types of inquiries we've received, here are examples of changes that **do not** require pre-approval from the ARC:

- Adding a metal storm door or screen door to the front door
- Changing the front yard landscaping.

These changes **do** require pre-approval from the ARC:

- Raising the height of the backyard lot walls. Walls may be raised to between 5 and 6 feet as stated in Section 7 of the Protective Covenants. Crego Tan or an identical color block must be used, and the agreement of both neighbors sharing the wall is necessary. Changing a lot wall also requires a permit from the City of Albuquerque.
- Building an addition to an existing home. Plans must be submitted to the ARC, along with samples of color finishes. Home additions also require a building permit from the City.

If you're planning a change to your home, you can download the Request for Design Approval Form from our web site, www.meadowsonriogrande.org. Thanks!

CLOSE TO HOME

The Legacy of Los Duranes

By Dick Ruddy

Just south of the Meadows on Rio Grande lies a community born 25 years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. For those who take the time to look, La Plaza de Señor San Jose de Los Duranes – just “Duranes” these days – has a stirring story to tell about Albuquerque’s roots.



Long before U.S. explorers set foot in our state, the villages of the Middle Rio Grande Valley – Los Duranes, Los Candelarias, Los Griegos, Los Gallegos, Los Poblanos and Los Ranchos – formed one of the richest agricultural regions in all of New Mexico. Linking these communities was the Camino Real, the transportation route that wound from Chihuahua, Mexico, all the way to Santa Fe. Another crucial link was the region’s *acequia* irrigation system, the envy of farmers up and down the Rio Grande.

More than just a means of moving water, the *acequias* (ditches) that carry water even today to the small farms of Duranes were the source of a rich cultural tradition. They gave us the legend of *La Llorona*, whose spirit wanders the ditches as she weeps for her lost children. And they spawned the ritualistic rules of *los mayordomos*,



those powerful officials who controlled the even distribution of precious irrigation water.

Beyond farming, the people of the Middle Rio Grande Valley enjoyed a rich spiritual

life. Each of the neighborhoods had a chapel to serve the religious needs of families, and Duranes, with its chapel of San Jose, was no exception. Built in the 1880s, the old chapel is still used for religious

ceremonies from time to time, especially during the annual Feast of San Jose in March. It sits just a block or so west of Rio Grande Blvd. on Indian School Rd.

A growth spurt led to construction of a new chapel at the north end of the neighborhood, but the old chapel never lost its place in the hearts of *residentes*. A procession still winds from the old chapel to the new during the Feast of San Jose.

San Felipe de Neri Church in Old Town provides a weekly Mass at 12:00 Noon on Sundays at the new Duranes chapel. For Catholics in the Meadows, it’s an easy walk on the paved path along Don Fernando east to about one block shy of Rio Grande Blvd. Cross the footbridge over the irrigation ditch and follow the dirt road next to the irrigation ditch for about one block and you’re there.

When the railroad arrived in 1880, the population of Albuquerque’s North Valley grew quickly. The old, Spanish-speaking neighborhoods absorbed newcomers – Italians, Germans, Irish and others – who added their own cultural dimensions to the region. The neighborhoods resisted change and gentrification with varying degrees of success, but Duranes remains the least changed. In fact, a large part of Duranes was never absorbed by Albuquerque



and remains a part of Bernalillo County even today, a political island surrounded by the city.

For a pictorial look at the history of Los Duranes, head for the community center at the heart of the neighborhood. The center houses an impressive indoor mural that chronicles the area’s interesting story. As you might expect, a walk or bike ride through Duranes is the best way to appreciate the charming, narrow roads – and to glimpse a way of life that remains hidden, in plain view of the city.

Discover Duranes with Us

Noted New Mexico travel writer and history buff **Kathy Chilton** will lead Meadows residents on a walking tour of Duranes on Saturday, July 26 at 8 am. To travel through time without getting behind the wheel, RSVP to Dick Ruddy at 242-3093. The fee is \$5 per person.