



Picacho Hills Property Owners Association
PO Box 51
Fairacres, NM 88033

NEWSLETTER

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Signs of Change

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As I was taking a walk in our neighborhood this past fall, I noticed the new lot map signs that have been posted for Mansiones de Galicia, the area beyond Vista del Cerro. Plans for expansion in Picacho Hills have been in the works for a long time, and we now see some movement in new construction. We used to be an intimate group—a small neighborhood of homes. Now we comprise over 900 residences, with plans being prepared for many more! Our life here on the hill is changing—gradually, but in dramatic ways.

Evidence of change is all around us. And of course, moving to a new water utility is a significant change. We are fortunate that Dona Ana Mutual will be constructing a new water tower and then properly repairing our current tower. Even though we now cover a larger territory, we will have a reliable water supply.

When the Picacho Hills community first began development over 30 years ago, the world was vastly different from the one we live in today. As board president, I believe it is our responsibility to review practices that were begun decades ago and to assess how well they now serve us. I want us to continue to find ways to use our resources to keep our community looking attractive and well maintained. And even though we now cover a large area, I want the Picacho Hills Property Owners Association to represent its members as individuals. If you have ideas you would like to share, comments, concerns or visions, please feel free to contact me.

Special points of interest:

- Annual PHPOA Meeting
- Upcoming Events – See Page 4
- Newsletter Distribution

Kay Trujillo, PHPOA President
katpaints@aol.com

It's rather hard to believe, but back in the early 1980s when the PHPOA was first formed, color television and a VHS player were considered high tech. Personal computers and cell phones were not common, and we certainly did not enjoy the convenience of the Internet or email for communications. Back in the early 1980s, when we were just a small number of houses on the hill, the PHPOA needed a way to communicate news and information, and the practice of providing residents with a paper newsletter was the easiest way to achieve that goal.

To date, the PHPOA has found ways to continue providing a paper copy of our newsletter to every residence on the hill (members and non-members alike), despite the very large area that is now Picacho Hills. Your dedicated neighbors volunteer and strive to find efficient ways to distribute the newsletter on foot. Communication between home owners has always been a priority, which explains why this practice has endured.

There are several significant reasons why the board now needs to ask questions about how to best communicate with our community. One obvious reason concerns the ever expanding size of Picacho Hills. The day will soon arrive when it will not be possible to ensure that we are, in fact, delivering a paper copy of the newsletter to everyone. A second reason involves the cost of paper and printing, which continues to rise significantly. Every year we use a larger percentage of member dues dollars to print newsletters, even while limiting the length of the newsletter and quality of the paper. Third, there are non-members that actually do not want a copy of the newsletter, and they merely dispose of the one they receive. Residents that are out of town do not appreciate having the newsletter lying on their porch. These are a few of the problems with mass distribution of paper.

The PHPOA now has its own website (picachohills.org), and we post every newsletter on this site. It is convenient and free to all readers. Electronic access to information changes the landscape of our world. It's highly likely that if the PHPOA were just forming today, we would have never printed the newsletter on paper. We would have taken advantage of what is now possible.

After spending considerable time contemplating and discussing the newsletter printing and distribution, the board proposes a new practice:

We propose that paper copies be delivered only to members who are still requesting them (as opposed to email delivery,) and we will make a limited number of paper copies available at the club for those who desire one. In this way, we would be ensuring that we are delivering paper to those who desire it, while practicing better stewardship with our resources and more fully acknowledging the availability of information electronically.

We believe that this proposal acknowledges the changes that have taken place in the 21st century, and that it represents responsible action on our part. In the sense that information provided in the newsletter would still be available to anyone desiring it, there would be no actual change taking place at all.

Let us emphasize that this is still a proposal, and we invite you, our readers, to share your opinions. You may write to us at our new email address: phpoanews@gmail.com. In the Spring 2014 newsletter, we will summarize all opinions submitted and will continue the conversation at that time.

PHPOA Annual Meeting—7:30pm, Tuesday, March 11, 2014, at PHCC Clubhouse

Please mark this date on your calendar. **This is an important year for attendance. We need a quorum, and we need to pass a by-law amendment to allow us to hold the annual meeting on a different day of the week.**

The PHPOA is run by a set of by-laws that were first adopted back in the 1980s. A few by-laws have been amended over the years. However, because of changing times, there are more that need updating. If interested, you may read the by-laws in their entirety on our website (picachohills.org).

We are currently concerned with Article 3 Section 1, which reads as follows:

“An annual meeting of the members shall be held at such a place as may be designated by the president or secretary, in Dona Ana County, New Mexico, on the second Tuesday of March, in each year, at 7:30pm, for the purpose of electing directors and for the transaction of such other business as may come before the meeting. If the day fixed for the annual meeting is a legal holiday in the state of New Mexico, such meeting shall be held on the next succeeding business day.”

We all enjoy having the annual meeting at Picacho Hills Country Club. It's a beautiful venue and an important part of life here on the hill. The authors of the by-laws could not have foreseen that Tuesday evenings at the club would become one of the busiest nights of the week with Pub Night. Under consideration, therefore, is a change in the by-laws that designates some flexibility for the date of the annual meeting.

The Club is graciously allowing us to have our annual meeting at the Clubhouse on Tuesday evening, March 11. We will meet in the lower level (the former pro-shop.) This will be a business meeting only. A social time and complimentary refreshments will not be possible because the staff will be engaged with Pub Night. We can look forward to 2015 when we will be able to hold the meeting on a different night and enjoy a festive, social event along with the annual meeting.

Thank you for your understanding and support. The notice of annual meeting mailing will go out approximately 21 days before March 11. Please RSVP promptly, so we can begin to determine if a quorum will be present. **Also, just as a reminder, only members with currently paid dues will be able to vote.**

Newcomers Social—February 9, 2014

This year's Newcomers Social will take place at Picacho Hills Country Club on February 9, from 3 to 5pm. Light hors d'œuvres and mimosas will be served. All new homeowners are invited.

Annual Neighborhood Clean Up Day—Saturday, April 12, 2014

Please circle Saturday, April 12th, on your calendar as the date for the annual Great American Cleanup (GAC). We look forward to a great Picacho Hills turnout--many hands make light work. The McKays, who live at 1380 Via Norte, have once again graciously allowed us to gather at their home. At 8:30 a.m., coffee and donuts will be served prior to the cleanup. The city supplies trash bags and gloves, and GAC t-shirts will be distributed to each volunteer along with a designated cleanup area. It's a great way to meet fellow residents, as well as help to maintain the beauty of our community. For any questions, contact Rosie Jay at 649-3594.

*Let's
keep it
clean !!*

Art in the Garden - May 18, 2014

The Art in the Garden Tour here in Picacho Hills is rapidly approaching. The committee is looking forward to showcasing local gardens and artists during the springtime, when many gardens are at their best. If you would like to help with this event, please contact Patti Danley at 556-9369 or Marilyn Hansen at 527-2367.

Introducing new board member Rosie Jay!

I grew up on a dairy farm in northwest Pennsylvania, and after completing college, I moved to the Boston area. There, I taught at a suburban middle school and met my husband Bruce. In 1986, I accompanied him to a conference in Albuquerque, and while he worked, I explored. At the end of our stay I had become totally "enchanted," and as a result, our future vacations were spent taking in all that New Mexico has to offer. Without a doubt, we knew we had found our retirement destination. In 2012, our dream of settling in Las Cruces finally materialized, and it has been everything we hoped it would be. Life is good!

VP Hazel Coelho passes newsletter & directory distribution

They say times flies when you are having fun! That old saying was never truer, as I write this article. This edition is the last one I will be responsible for distributing. Your Spring newsletter and directories will be distributed to your neighborhood reps by Rosie Jay. It has been a pleasure working with those of you who deliver our newsletter, and thank you for volunteering! Sincerely, Hazel

And a note from the board—thank you very much, Hazel, for the years you have served the neighborhood in this capacity. We admire the way you managed an ever increasingly large job, always with good will and humor!

Website Update – Bruce Jay

Within the next several weeks we will be rolling out a new website. You may have noticed that for the past several months our website activities have been somewhat limited. As a result, we are in the process of reconstructing the website, using a professional website design and management company located here in Las Cruces. The new design will offer many technical benefits compared to the current site, including flexibility not possible in a “template” type format. However, the most important aspect is that the new site will enable us to make changes and additions easily and quickly. As stated in a previous newsletter, “The website supports the mission of the PHPOA by providing timely information regarding matters affecting the community and provides updates and status reports on current issues.” In order to be effective, we need to have the ability to make changes as warranted, and the new website will enable us to accomplish that.

Use Water Wisely—Forrest Beeson, Treasurer

Many residents have come to me to express concerns regarding the new water rates. Yes, the new rates are quite a bit higher than what we have become accustomed to. The good news is that we now have a water company that is financially sound and well managed. The challenge for residents is to learn and practice new ways of conserving water. This, too, is a good thing because water is precious, and we must use it wisely.

The most common concern I’ve heard involves landscaping. This is usually the biggest source of water consumption for a residence. There are many native plants available that are beautiful and use very little water. An excellent book that I highly recommend is “Best Plants for New Mexico Gardens & Landscapes” by Baker H. Morrow. It includes a chapter on what grows best in Las Cruces. The list of plant species is surprisingly long, so there are plenty to choose from. We recently re-landscaped our home and our choice of plants is based on this book.

Another excellent resource is the “Water – Use it Wisely” campaign in Arizona. They have created a list on their web site (wateruseitwisely.com) that describes 190 ways to save water. The EPA’s web site also has recommendations on how to conserve water. Most of these are small adjustments that when you add them up can make a big difference. One of the more popular ones is instant hot water. Not only does this save a lot of water, it’s a nice convenience. Any reputable plumber can easily install this feature on your water heater. The biggest water user inside the home is the toilet. It also happens to be a major source of wasted water, due to leaks and inefficiency. Once a year, test it for leaks by placing food coloring in the tank. If it seeps into the bowl without flushing, it’s leaking. You will need to fix or replace it.

Now here is the hard part. Making these adjustments is accepting the fact that we need to change the way we do things. And, change is something most of us don’t like to do. But keep this in mind. Less than 1% of all the water on Earth can be used by people. We have no control over the rains that replenish our water supply. We may even find ourselves in a situation like California, where 20% voluntary water rationing is now in effect. That could become mandatory, and it could happen here as well if the drought persists. So, let’s move forward and do all we can to conserve this precious life giving resource.

Merchant Discount Program – 2014 Update – Nancy Simmons

The Merchant Discount Program, which allows members of the PHPOA discounts at many local businesses, is thriving. A complete list of merchants along with the discount they offer is available on our website. We have grown to 39 merchants - businesses and restaurants - with all but one renewing. C&A Enterprises is apparently no longer in business, as the phone is no longer in service.

Merchants may have changed their Discount Benefits, so please check the website. All have agreed to accept the 2012/2013 orange Membership Identification Card until March 15th. This is our year to transition to a calendar/annual membership, and the 2014 Cards are blue. Renewals and new membership applications are available on line and in the Newsletter. All merchants have a signed laminated 2014 agreement on their premises.

Our most recent additions are: Aqua Reef Asian Cuisine, Better Life Pet Foods, Denny's, Simply Devine Salon, Savoy de Mesilla, and Team Alternative. Please visit these businesses and restaurants, and enjoy the benefits of your membership. If you have suggestions for new businesses/restaurants, please email (npsimmons@msn.com) or call me ([480-277-5258](tel:480-277-5258)).

Notes from recent County Planning Commission Meeting—from Bruce Jay

In a hearing on January 16, 2014, the Dona Ana County Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve Dona Ana Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association's request for a special use permit to increase the capacity of the sewage treatment facility in Picacho Hills. The request was amended by the board to limit capacity to 500,000 gallons. This was a number suggested by one of the DAMW engineers, and compares favorably to the original capacity of 200,000 gallons. It was cited that the system of 200,000 gallons was originally designed to handle only 400 hookups, but the current number of hook-ups is above 800. So clearly the current system is being stressed.

The new construction will include additional water treatment facilities, as well as a single story structure for housing equipment and possibly a laboratory for water analysis. The new capacity will have negligible impact on traffic, odors, or views. This is an important step in upgrading our water system to an acceptable level of compliance and reliability, as well as ensuring capacity for future growth in the area.

Landscaping Update – Chris Leyva

To improve the look of our Picacho Hills neighborhood, we have obtained permission from Picacho Hills Country Club to paint their signs at the following locations: 1) the monument on Picacho Hills Drive at the 15th green, 2) the monument at Via Norte and Via Campestre, and 3) the lettering at the entrance gates of the Country Club. We should have this project completed by mid-February. We are also having pre-emergence weed spraying done at the entrance to Picacho Hills off of Picacho Avenue, and also at the "Y" as you turn off of Barcelona Ridge Road.

PHPOA Board of Directors

Position	Name	Phone	Term	Email
President	Kay Trujillo	575-649-2280	2015	katpaints@aol.com
Vice President	Hazel Coelho	575-523-0004	2014	hazelcoelho@hotmail.com
Secretary	Nancy Simmons	480-277-5258	2015	npsimmons@msn.com
Treasurer	Forrest Beeson	575-642-4939	2014	fmbeeson@gmail.com
Directors	Bruce Jay	575-649-3594	2015	rbjay44@gmail.com
	Chris Leyva	575-323-3055	2015	elnino1@comcast.net
	Kelly Williams	248-420-3233	2014	kelly.williams@gdc4s.com
	Tamara Fetzer	575-652-4241	2015	623tsf@gmail.com
	Rosie Jay	575-649-3594	2014	rbjay44@gmail.com

Standing Committees	Committee Chair	Members
Annual Meeting	Kay Trujillo	Nancy Simmons, Hazel Coelho, Tamara Fetzer, Marilyn Leyva
Community Improvements/ Landscaping	Chris Leyva	Forrest Beeson, Kelly Williams, Marilyn Leyva
Covenants/Safety/Security	Kay Trujillo	Bruce Jay, Kelly Williams
Directory	Tamara Fetzer	Nancy Fuller, Bob Oheim
Membership/Social Functions	Hazel Coelho	Nancy Simmons, Rosie Jay, Marilyn Leyva
Neighborhood Representatives/ Distribution	Rosie Jay	Marilyn Leyva, Sue Dueland
Newsletter	Tamara Fetzer	Kelly Williams, Bruce Jay, Nancy Simmons
Nominating	Hazel Coelho	Kay Trujillo, Kelly Williams
Website Coordination	Bruce Jay	Forrest Beeson, Tamara Fetzer

Picacho Hills Real Estate Statistics

provided by Laurie Beougher, RE/MAX Classic Realtor & Picacho Hills Resident

Description	#	Avg List Price	Avg Sold Price	Avg Days on Market
January 2014 Active Listings	47	\$ 363,821	---	176
Sold and Closed 2013 Calendar Year Homes, Townhomes, Zero Lot Line, Condominiums	39	\$ 326,368	\$ 310,718	127

Seven Great Reasons to Become a Member of the PHPOA

1. The Association cares for the entrance from Picacho Avenue to Picacho Hills Drive. We maintain the landscaping and control the weeds. We recently re-painted the monument and installed new night lighting. We pay for the electricity to light the sign. We also provide weed control in other high visibility areas as needed.
2. The Association sponsors a Merchant Discount Program—comprised of 39 businesses and restaurants providing member discounts and savings. With this program, for the \$55 annual membership dues, you can cut your trash collection costs to \$45 per quarter!
3. The Association is the eyes and ears for every property owner. We alert members regarding activities of potential concern, and we respond in the best interest of members. Our updated and expanded website (picachohills.org) will be used increasingly to share news and updates about neighborhood issues.
4. The Association strives to keep public areas neat and clean, and we sponsor an annual Clean Up day. To help clear private areas, we bring in dumpsters twice a year (located near the entrance to Fairway Village Drive and the corner of Vista Hermosa & Via Norte) for the convenience of residents.
5. The Association contributes \$300 annually to the Fairacres Volunteer Fire Department.
6. The Association attends to signage issues, and we look for ways to help maintain local aesthetics.
7. The Association provides members with a Picacho Hills directory. We help neighbors communicate and encourage a sense of community. We hold an annual Newcomer's Social at Picacho Hills Country Club to welcome homeowners new to the area.

There are actually many other reasons to join the association. If you are not a member, please consider joining your fellow residents in helping us all take care of our neighborhood. A membership application is included as an insert in this newsletter.