



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

# NEWSLETTER

Volume 25 No. 1

APRIL, 2009

[www.pichachohills.org](http://www.pichachohills.org)

## David Zeemont

President, Picacho Hills Property Owners Association

April 9

*I'm sure many of you were entertained by Mr. Stephen Blanco's letter of February 27, 2009, to the "valued customers" of Picacho Hills Utility Co. If, for some reason, you missed it or have misplaced your copy, I had it posted on our website, [www.pichachohills.org](http://www.pichachohills.org), along with a copy of my partial response and invitation to Mr. Blanco to attend our Annual Meeting on March 10, 2009. Sadly, he did not attend, so I feel a more complete response to his charges and inaccuracies should be made here.*

*Certainly no resident of Picacho Hills wants inferior water and sewer service. Our aim is to receive the best possible service without unduly enriching the principal of the utility or improperly funding the expansion of the PHUC system. One of the things that we learned from the unfortunate fire on Vista Hermosa was that the present water system utilizing two wells was adequate to handle the emergency. Indeed, the third well that PHUC has constructed has never been licensed or connected to the system. Furthermore, it was discovered during the water outage of May, 2008, that under normal circumstances PHUC only operates one well at a time. The reason that service was interrupted was that one of the wells failed during the night, and the condition was not discovered until the next morning, when the other well was put into service. Despite the protests of PHUC, the Public Regulation Commission has also stipulated that Phase II water rates cannot be used until the new well has been completely brought on-line.*

*As regards the wastewater line to the Rio Grande, PHPOA removed its objection to its construction once it was learned that construction of the line was mandated by the New Mexico Environmental Department, due to the danger of a nitrogen "plume" being discharged into the groundwater by the current system. For some reason, PHUC chose to hide this fact during direct testimony before the Public Regulation Commission. This fact was only uncovered during the Discovery Period, when Paul Gradwohl contacted the NMEC directly.*

Continued on Page 4 . . .

## 2009 PHPOA DIRECTORY NOW AVAILABLE

Every PHPOA member will receive with this newsletter a fully-updated insert for their Picacho Hills directory. If you are a member and did not receive yours, please call Kay Frye 524-7112. If you are not a member, why not consider joining us? The directory is just one of many benefits your dues support. To join, call RoseMarie Levasseur at 526-9253.



## **We Ate ... We Met ... We Won**

Bruce Coryell, Chairperson, Newsletter and Directory

Eighty PHPOA members convened at the Picacho Hills Country Club on March 10<sup>th</sup> to attend the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership Meeting and hear presentations by board members, voice their opinions, elect new officers and visit with each other over dinner. Most left with a smile and ten lucky residents left with a door prize. To see who's smiling log onto [www.picachohills.org](http://www.picachohills.org), click on the **Past Activities** link and then on **PHPOA 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting – 2009**.

We are very grateful to the generous people and organizations in our community who donated door prizes: Donna Wood and Gregg Tracy, Picacho Hills artists, Joyce Desao, owner of the Simply Posh Gallery, Laura Smart, who donated ARBONNE skin care products, John Schwebke, who donated Caliche's gift certificates, Patrick Hanlon, proprietor of Brigid's Cross Pub, Karen and Bob Pofahl of Picacho Mountain, Desert Sage Building and Development, and Picacho Hills Country Club.



## **Neighbors Serving Neighbors**

Rebecca McNair, former Hospitality Chairperson

Newcomers were welcomed with food and friendship at the PHPOA- and PHCC-sponsored social. Chef Darrell outdid himself, serving delicious hot and cold appetizers and carving roast beef for the fifty attendees.

Don't forget our **Adopt a Road Gang**, especially in these windy times, when all trash travels fast and far. To join, contact the new Hospitality Chair, **Kaye Fry**, at **524-7112**.

I would like to thank the hostesses and other helpers that delivered Newsletters during my four years as Hospitality Chair. Many hands make the load lighter so please volunteer to help the PHPOA.



## **Community Events**

RoseMarie Levasseur, Membership Chairperson

Happy spring to everyone in Picacho Hills. I have big shoes to fill in following Sylvia Bizzell as the new Membership chair for PHPOA. We need the support of all residents of Picacho Hills, as new issues are continually coming up and old ones beg for attention. Your support is deeply appreciated as the PHPOA board works to keep our communities attractive and safe and to represent the homeowner associations in crucial matters.

Be on the lookout for information on a **Blood Drive** in the near future. Also, the **Art in the Garden** tour takes place again on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Send me your ideas for social events and ways for making our neighborhood more welcoming. I'll do the legwork!



## Community Improvements

John Kutney, Community Improvements Chairperson

We will have our Spring Cleanup on **April 25th** beginning **7:30** at the **McKay residence on Via Norte**. The event is in conjunction with the Great American Cleanup, the nation's largest community improvement program. Please see the attached flyer for further details. We hope to see you there.

Still tapping the steering wheel while waiting for a break in Picacho Avenue traffic? Funding for the **traffic light** is expected soon and work should be complete by July.

Doña Ana County recently resurfaced **Vista del Oro** and should begin **Via Norte** next. **Via Campestre** is on the County's agenda for curbing and drainage improvements.



## Web Site Turns 1

Nancy Fuller, Newsletter and Web Site Committee

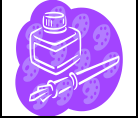
It's been a year since we launched **www.picachohills.org** and the content has exceeded our original expectations of making the *Newsletter* available on-line. Check it out!

- Back Newsletter issues
- PHPOA Annual Calendar
- PHPOA By-Laws
- Resolution of the Water Rate Case
- Meetings & Events with links to flyers with details
- Past Activities, including pictures when available
- Board of Directors: name, office, phone & email. Also, Standing Committees with links to Hospitality Committee Members and Adopt-a-Road volunteers
- Subdivision information with covenant name; HOA contact information with a link to the HOA newsletter and the streets within the subdivision
- Neighbor-to-Neighbor – residents who have services to share
- Community Links & Resources
- Kudos for Picacho: recognizing residents who have added to our community
- Join PHPOA: download and print a PHPOA membership form
- Contact us: contact information for PHPOA Board members and email-contact capability by topic to the appropriate Board member.



### Thank You, Paul Gradwohl!

At the Annual Dinner Meeting President Dave Zeemont recognized Paul's tireless pursuit of a fair outcome in the NM Public Regulation Commission hearing of Picacho Hills Utility Company's request for an 81% increase in our water and sewer rates. As a result, all of us will save hundreds of dollars. Please be considerate when you receive in the mail a request for a contribution towards PHPOA's legal expenses.



## From the President

(Continued from Page 1)

### David Zeemont

President, Picacho Hills Property Owners Association

Page 2

*Phase II sewer rates cannot be implemented until after the discharge line is completed and operational. PHUC moved in both cases to be allowed to use the new rates after the financing for these projects was obtained, but the motion was denied.*

*Also denied were PHUC's repeated attempts to discredit Paul Gradwohl and have his testimony stricken from the record. The PRC time and time again established his right to be heard before them. PHUC has gone to great lengths to attack Paul personally, but they have never been able to refute his findings. Furthermore, as I stated in my response to Mr. Blanco, his complaint before the Professional Engineering Board was made during the previous rate case of four years ago, and was also denied.*

*As to Mr. Blanco's claim to be the best small utility in the state, he neglected to mention that the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission fined the utility \$50,000. (albeit with \$35,000. suspended) for repeated disregard of its rules and stipulations.*

*Unfortunately, one of the few statements made by Mr. Blanco which has any validity is the extent of the legal bills sustained thus far by PHPOA. These have exceeded six figures and are, of course, continuing since the NMPRC has set up a new case docket to deal with the Line Extension Agreements. Obviously, the amount we have collected so far through our dues structure and voluntary donations is inadequate to cover this expense. Since we are a voluntary organization we have no power to assess our membership.*

*Accordingly, our Board has authorized me to request a voluntary donation of \$150.00 for this year from each member affected by PHUC's rate request. I would ask those of you who have previously made donations to subtract that amount from the \$150.00. I also intend to ask non-members to contribute the same amount, since they benefit from our efforts as well. Remember, that had PHPOA's rate increase been granted when it was applied for in January, 2008, without our intervention, the average monthly increase would be a total of \$45.27 per household.*

*Donations can be mailed to PO Box 51, Fairacres, NM. If we act as a group, we have the resources to continue to fight Picacho Hills Utility Company's unreasonable demands.*

*Thank you for your support.*

**Dave**

## YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2009/2010

|            |                         |          |       |           |                       |               |
|------------|-------------------------|----------|-------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------|
|            |                         |          | Until |           |                       | Until         |
| President  | <b>Dave Zeemont</b>     | 523-0913 | 2010  | Directors | <b>Bruce Coryell</b>  | 541-0876 2010 |
| Vice Pres. | <b>John Schwebke</b>    | 527-0238 | 2010  |           | <b>Kay Frye</b>       | 524-7112 2011 |
| Secretary  | <b>Anna Leuenberger</b> | 525-1052 | 2010  |           | <b>John Kutney</b>    | 525-8470 2010 |
| Treasurer  | <b>Larry Goforth</b>    | 527-1707 | 2011  |           | <b>RoseMarie</b>      | 526-9253 2011 |
|            |                         |          |       |           | <b>Levasseur</b>      |               |
|            |                         |          |       |           | <b>Franklin McKay</b> | 527-4750 2010 |

### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

|                           |                       |                     |                            |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Budget & Planning         | <b>Larry Goforth</b>  | Hospitality         | <b>Kay Frye</b>            |
| Community Improvement     | <b>John Kutney</b>    | Membership          | <b>RoseMarie Levasseur</b> |
| Covenants/Safety/Security | <b>Franklin McKay</b> | Newsletter/Web Site | <b>Bruce Coryell</b>       |
| Directory                 | <b>Bruce Coryell</b>  | Nominating          | (open)                     |
| Fund Raising              | <b>John Schwebke</b>  | Utilities           | <b>Dave Zeemont</b>        |

### HOSPITALITY REPRESENTATIVES

| <u>Street or Area</u>                              | <u>Representative(s)</u>   | <u>Street or Area</u>                    | <u>Representative(s)</u>                         |
|--|--|--|--|
| Alhambra Court                                     | Ellen Martin   | Pueblo Gardens                           | Polly Dias                                       |
| Barcelona Ridge Area                               | Sharron Stepro, Sylvia Bizzell   | Pueblo Vista                             | Marlys Kleppe                                    |
|  | Cindy Oheim, Eva Jane  | Ranchos de Picacho                       | Nancy Fuller                                     |
|  | Cheyre, Revae Swenson  | Spanish Ridge                            | Terry Bates, John Illis                          |
| Bright View Road                                   | Julie Mueller  | Tuscany Dr.                              | Clare Kapner                                     |
| Butterfield Ridge                                  | Suki Duran   | Via Campestre                            | Julia PorterRebecca                              |
| Calle Vista Bella &<br>Barcelona Ridge Rd to 6995. | Elaine Childs  | McNair                                   | Joan Sheehan                                     |
| Camino Blanco 6704 - 6756                          | Jan Hall   | Via Emma                                 | Mary Mulvihill,                                  |
| 6740 - 6848  | Doris Walker   |  | Carla Clark                                      |
| 6894 - 7146  | Diane Nelson   | Via Norte 1130 - 1413                    | Mary Ellen McKay                                 |
| Camino Nuevo Mejico                                | Renee Smith, Ruth Olmick   |  |  |
| City Lights  | Sandra Weber   | 1415 - 1600                              | Jean Windels                                     |
| Cordova Circle.                                    | Pat Anderson   | 1601 - end                               | Marilyn Hansen                                   |
| Coronado Ridge                                     | Jan Severson, Kathy Mayer,<br>Carrie Gaddy, Hilde Lee, Judy<br>Miller, Joyce Gautheraut, | Via Rubi, Via Turquesa &<br>Via Diamante | Phyllis Taylor                                   |
|  | Patricia Felhauer, Ronnie<br>Wright, Laura Smart   | Villa Chiquita                           | Barbara Moon                                     |
|  | Carole Coryell, Julie Mueller  | Vista del Reino                          | Marilyn Hansen                                   |
| Desert Blossom &<br>Deer Ridge Court               |  | Vista de Oro                             | Becky Fuller                                     |
| Fairway 18   | Pat Bigard   | Vista del Cerro 1305 - 1412              | Lynn Black                                       |
| Renoir, Morisat, Matisse                           |  | 1432 - 1590                              | Marion Mills                                     |
| Baudin, Sisley, Bazille                            | Joyce Langenbahn   | 1595 - 1676                              | Rebecca McNair                                   |
| Fairway Village 1300 - 1399                        | Pat Retig  | Vista del Monte                          | Mary Ann Waddell                                 |
| 1400 - 1499  | Janet McIntyre   | Vista del Valle                          | Frances Stevens                                  |
| 1500 - end   | Robin Cohen  | Vista Hermosa                            | Sue Brown, Denise Marta                          |
| Las Casitas  | Rosemary Chaffee, Sandy<br>Miles   |  | Elaine Jeveli,<br>Victoria Tann,<br>Alice Cerola |
| Murano Estates                                     | Lu Bucci   |  |  |