



## RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

[www.ridgewood.netfirms.com](http://www.ridgewood.netfirms.com)

NOVEMBER 2009 NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 35

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**BOARD MEETING:** Monday, January 11, 2010 at the home of Carole and Ray Pfoutz, at 3:00PM .

**RIDGETTES:** Thank you to all the Ridgettes ladies who hosted our luncheons this year. I'm looking for hostesses and new ideas for 2010. Please let me know at the Annual Holiday Party or call: 588-9519.  
Happy New Year!  
Carole



Cold Springs, Fall Colors Photo: D. Palmer

### PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Winter is approaching and we are currently planning the Ridgewood Christmas party. Jim and Robin Ronan have graciously agreed to host the Christmas party at their house at 16446 Ridgewood Drive on December 13<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 pm until 5:00 pm. So, bring your favorite hors d'oeuvres to share with your neighbors and, if you wish, the beverage of your choice. The Ridgewood Neighborhood Association will supply soft drinks and water.

The sand/seal operation, which was performed

### PRESIDENTS MESSAGE. (continued)

on Ridgewood CSA #32 roads, began in July and was completed in September. As I reported in August, the project required 49, 978 square yards of fog sand/seal cover at \$0.35 per square yard. The total cost of the fog sand and seal was \$17,492. In September a Tuolumne County road crew replaced the road marking and striping that had been covered by the new surface. The cost of replacing the marking and striping was \$1,033.22. The total cost of the CSA #32 road project was \$18,525.22.

Due to budget cuts, Tuolumne County offices will be closed for much of the time during the next two months. All county offices will be closed on November 11<sup>th</sup> for Veteran's Day and the entire week of Thanksgiving. This includes all non-emergency county services. No one will be answering phones during the furlough days. In December all County offices will be closed from the close of business on December 18<sup>th</sup> until January 4<sup>th</sup>. Similar to the November closures, nobody will be answering the phones.

The Tuolumne County Public Works Department is in the process of setting up a roadside weed abatement program with Agricultural Department for CSA #32. Because the County is short staffed, it is taking longer than they would like to get things setup. However, they assured me that they are moving forward.

The County Public Works Department has a snowplowing contract in place for CSA #32. There should be no problem with that service this winter.

I am sure most of you know that Ridgewood Drive is part of the Phoenix Lake Road project traffic detour. Obviously, the traffic on Ridgewood Drive has increased dramatically since the project to replace a bridge and resurface the roads approaching the bridge began in late summer. Originally, the county planned to reopen Phoenix Lake Road by Thanksgiving. As of last week, the County hopes to reopen the road by Christmas depending on the weather.

There are several trees that are within a few feet of the road in Ridgewood. A few of the larger trees already have roots large enough to cause road damage. The smaller trees may not be causing road damage now but if they are not removed damage will occur in the future.

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE -(continued)

Also, I noticed at least two cases where road water drainage systems are blocked by debris forcing the water to flow into the street. In both cases the water is damaging the road.

Please look at the trees, and water drainage, along the road bordering your property. If the County is forced to remove the trees, or fix the water drainage system, all CSA #32 residents will be forced to pay a portion of the cost.

There has been concern regarding the traffic on the private road behind the homes of Charles & Kathie Luke and Don & Anne Denhard. Vehicles have been traveling up the road well into the night. In addition to the noise, trash has been left at the top of the hill. The owner of the property has been contacted and he agreed to place a barrier at the road entrance and include no trespassing signs. The Tuolumne County Sheriff's office has also been contacted.

Finally, your voluntary annual \$10.00 RNA dues are due in January 2010.

See you all at the Christmas party/meeting.

—Dave

*See Membership form on page 3*

## A BETTER WAY TO RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER

When filling your Ridgewood Neighborhood Association (RNA) renewal, please consider receiving your newsletter by email and check the box for electronic newsletter. Why should you receive your newsletter via email? It saves your RNA the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter to you, which is a significant part of the RNA budget. The cost per person of printing and mailing is ninety cents (\$0.90) for a four-page newsletter and a dollar-thirty (\$1.30) for an eight-page newsletter. This saving would be used by the RNA for items such as: longer newsletters, weed abatement, signage, and RNA party supplies.

Receiving your newsletter via email also has direct advantage to you consisting of receiving your newsletter at least a day earlier than by standard mail, pictures are in color, allowing an electronic archiving, and allowing the option of either printing your newsletter or viewing it on your computer.

—Don Nester

## THE RIGHT MULCH FOR NATIVES

The benefits of a three to four inch layer of mulch around plants helps moderate the soil temperature, conserve water, reduce or eliminate weeds, and help with erosion control. Organic mulch also enriches the soil while providing the garden with a neat and cared for look.

In the April-June 2009 edition of the California Native Plant Society's Bulletin, Barbara Eisenstein, the horticulture outreach coordinator at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, writes that when selecting mulch for native plant gardens, it is important to know what mulch is appropriate for native plants. She states that gardeners should learn where the plant grows naturally and what type of soil covering is around the plant in order to provide the right mulch.

"Woodland soils are usually covered by a deep layer of organic material. Chaparral and scrubland have little organics on the soil, though some do collect along with pebbles and inorganic debris." She goes on to state, that "using organic mulch in gardens that feature desert, chaparral, or scrub plants can produce undesirable results. If the mulch remains too moist, these plants are more likely to rot. Furthermore, in time organic mulch enriches the soil. Dry plants are adapted to lean soil. In enriched soil they may respond with lush growth that dehydrates during hot weather, resulting in extreme stress or even death. On the other hand, plants adapted to wetter more verdant regions appreciate a layer of organic material. Inorganic mulch can get too hot in summer, too cold in winter and does not hold water nearly as well as organic mulch."

Salvias, Penstemons, Ceanothus and Buckwheats are just a few natives that should be mulched with pea gravel or decomposed granite. These plants all enjoy a drier type landscape. However, many native shrubs and ferns should be mulched with organic mulch as most grow under canopies of trees that provide a deep layer of organic material.

Just remember that whatever type of mulch you use, keep it at least 2 inches away from the trunks or stems of plants. If you use a thick layer [4-6 inches] of organic mulch, be sure and water enough to soak the soil beneath the mulch and then give the soil a chance to dry out before watering again.

And in case you were wondering about rubber mulch, consider this. Linda Chalker-Scott of Washington State University concludes in her review of scientific studies that this is an inappropriate material for mulching for the following reasons: it is not as effective in controlling weeds, it is highly flammable and difficult to extinguish once it begins burning, and it contains a number of metal and organic contaminants with known environmental and/or human health effects.

You have heard the saying, "Right plant, Right place". Now with this new mulching information for natives we might say, "Right plant, Right place, Right mulch!"

*Carolee James, Master Gardener*

## THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY GREAT OUTDOORS

As I mentioned in the Summer 2009 newsletter, some of the best hiking and biking trails in the country are located in Tuolumne County. Another great hiking trail is located near Fraser Flat Road in Cold Springs. The trail is about three miles long and borders the south fork of the Stanislaus River between Fraser Flat and Strawberry.

### The Trail Head



### Directions to the trail head

Travel up highway 108 toward Cold Springs. After you leave Peter Pan and just before you enter Cold Springs look for Fraser Flat Road on your left. Turn left of Fraser Flat Road and travel down the hill about three miles. Just before you cross a single lane bridge over the Stanislaus River look to your right and you will see the trailhead. There is a parking area just before you enter the trail. As I mentioned, the trail is approximately three miles long. About a half mile from the trailhead you will see a flume that carries water from the Stanislaus River into the Philadelphia ditch. The trail is flat and the scenery is beautiful.

Have Fun!!  
The Hiker

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