

# ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2024

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

**PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE** 1

**SHORT TERM RENTALS** 1

**WELCOME COMMITTEE** 2

**BEAUTIFICATION** 2

**WEBSITE** 2

**HAZARDOUS TREES** 2

**ANNUAL MEETING** 2

**FIREWISE** 3

**NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH** 3

**FIESTA FUN** 3

**CULVERT CLEANING** 3

**ROAD REPAIR** 3

**TREASURER'S REPORT** 4

**NEWSLETTER TEAM**

Writers — RTGA Board  
 Editor — Carolyn Rice  
 Layout — John Meyer

**PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE**

We invite everyone to update themselves about this past year's Rancho Tierra Grande Association (RTGA) board activities by reading the articles and committee chair reports in this newsletter. As you will see, it's been a busy year. We think you will find quite a bit of useful information in the pages which follow.

**SHORT TERM RENTALS**

RTGA objects to Short Term Rentals (STR) in our community. This is based on the greatly increased potential for neighborhood disturbances created by people who occupy short term rental homes, and the negative effect on adjacent property values.

The first item on our deed restrictions, which are still in force for all three RTG subdivisions, prohibits any commercial activity. RTGA retained a specialist law firm, Noland, Hamerly, Etienne and Hoss LLC to assess the validity of this specific restriction to prevent STR activity. Their legal opinion is that it is valid since County fees and occupancy taxes are levied on STRs which are required to have County permits to operate. Also, there is no legal example in California that would overrule the existing RTGA restriction to prevent STRs.

Since Monterey County requires a paid permit for all STR homes, there is a review process similar to building permits. It is the intent of RTGA to oppose these applications and get a general ruling by the County that the specific RTGA restriction is valid. However, the STR Application Notice for these permit hearings is only sent to homes within 300 feet of the applicant. Thus, RTGA must rely on being informed by our residents when they receive such a notice.

## WELCOME COMMITTEE

We greeted two new residents with welcome packets in 2023 and printed the new phone directory which we do every two years. Mary Cushing and I tried our best to get phone numbers added and corrected wherever possible.

I'd like to especially thank John Meyer for his diligence in maintaining the data base. This is an immense job and is so useful when printing the new directory and printing mailing labels. John also formats the annual newsletter for us.

Throughout the year if you have corrections or additions to the database, you can send them to me at [nancybartell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nancybartell@sbcglobal.net).

— Nancy Bartell

## WEBSITE

The RTGA homeowners association website [rtghoa.org](http://rtghoa.org) is continuously updated and has useful information for residents such as:

- Fire safety including all 2024 Firewise documents and compliance information.
- Property documents for RTG including restrictions (CC&R), current satellite maps and original Monterey County property maps
- Real-time emergency information such as for wild-fires and services disruptions
- Fun stuff including neighborhood news, photos and drone flyover videos.

## ANNUAL MEETING

Fifth District supervisor candidate Kate Daniels, spoke at the well-attended RTGA annual meeting on February 22 at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church. She summarized her background and main issues faced by the County, focusing on water, housing, fire safety, short term rentals, and roads. Currently she serves on the County Planning Commission and in the past worked for Supervisor Mary Adams. She noted that all the current supervisors have endorsed her. She lives in Carmel Valley, was raised in the Carmel Highlands, and attended local public schools.

During the meeting the board members reported on the year's activities and answered questions. They were unanimously reelected, and invited others to join them at meetings and volunteer for projects.

## BEAUTIFICATION

We invested in new irrigation along the fence on the north side of the entrance this past year which has resulted in better plant health, although there are still some spots which need replacements. The new system saved \$1,500 in 2023 compared to the 2022 Cal Am bills. We are planning to rework the irrigation system on the other side of the road, amend the poor soil, and replace much of the unsightly, aged-out landscaping with lower-growing and, hopefully, prettier flora. We realize there are issues with visibility for drivers, both entering and exiting. Any of you with a gardener's eye are welcome to reach out with suggestions.

We are most grateful to Jennifer and Lou Valdez for their delightful seasonal decorations this past year. They have made a great contribution!

— Nancy Bartell and Mary Cushing

## HAZARDOUS PINE TREES

Winds howled and rains pounded on February 4, but as many huddled at home with no electricity, Darrell Richards and Bob Rice grabbed their chain saws and, accompanied by several other neighbors, removed a pine and a Monterey Cypress tree that had fallen across Tierra Grande Drive. One was at the S-curve near the Carol Place, and the other near Via Cazador. Kudos to the energetic neighbors and Monterey County Regional Fire District staff who joined the effort to keep our street open.

Monterey County Public Works has removed multiple dead and dangerously leaning pine trees within the County right-of-way in 2023 due to their potential hazard to vehicles and also to mitigate fire hazard. Tree limbs creating a potential fire tunnel were also pruned. CSA17 managers used a contractor to mow and weed whack the heavy vegetation between Carmel Valley Road and Tierra Grande Drive, and to remove several trees at the bottom of the hill facing the Mid Valley Shopping Center.

— Dave Wisherd and Jeff Hawkins



## FIREWISE PROGRAM

In 2023, RTG received its fourth consecutive Firewise Certification with 144 households (69% of total) participating in the effort, spending an average of \$4,462 per household and fifty-five hours of resident labor on fire safety. This is an outstanding achievement and represents an overall increase from 2022. This hard work and money spent by residents not only improves home fire safety, but will also help lower property fire insurance for all of us. That is because the RTG results were used by the California State Insurance Commission to justify improved rates and coverage availability from fire insurance companies.

We scheduled brush chipper cleanups in the spring and fall and had high levels of resident participation. Ninety cubic yards of chipped fuel was removed for another record result. RTGA paid \$10,100 for 2023 chipper and tree services, a sizable percentage of the \$23,550 members' dues.

Special thanks to Peter Stern, Tyson & Kellie Holmes, Mike Colyer and the twenty-seven RTG neighborhood fire captains for their outstanding efforts in accomplishing these results. — *Dave Wisherd*

## FIESTA FUN

Our first association social event since COVID was held on October 7, 2023. It featured a taco truck with the food provided by our association. Participation was excellent with many new families attending this long overdue chance to get together for some fun. Go to the bottom of each page on our [rtghoa.org](http://rtghoa.org) website to see photos from the Fiesta and other activities.



## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH/SAFETY

Rancho Tierra Grande has an increasing number of families with kids and pets. While walking/jogging, please wear bright or reflective clothing and avoid poor lighting conditions when feasible (dusk, night, and fog). While driving, please give pedestrians ample room and slow down. A sneeze or cell phone ping can result in a distraction with serious consequences.

The increase in pedestrians has also brought about more encounters with off leash dogs. Monterey County law states all dogs must be on lease in unincorporated areas when off their owner's property.

Please remember to lock your doors and outside cars, and set alarms when available, even when gone for short times. Note that your car alarm button on your key chain is a great tool to scare away potential intruders while inside your home. Setting home lights on automatic timers while away is an easy tool to make your home look occupied. Doorbell cameras enable you to monitor your home and talk safely with anyone arriving at your home unannounced. — *Jeff Hawkins*

## CULVERT CLEANING

Using CSA17 funds, the large culvert running underneath Via Cazador near Tierra Grande Dr. was cleaned this fall by a contractor after many, many years of deferred maintenance. Prior to their work, the culvert was blocked due to four to six feet of dirt, shrubs and debris. All residents in that vicinity benefited during these past storms by having that culvert function as designed.

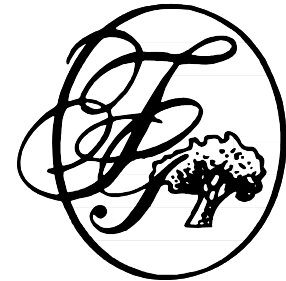
After the recent storms, ongoing efforts will be needed to maintain good drainage.

## ROAD REPAIR

Mike Raydo and others have implored County Public Works for years to "fix" our streets. The County has a new department head and in recent days County staff have been on site to assess Tierra Grande and its side streets for repairs in 2024. Complete replacement of the current road has been what Mike has requested, as our streets are in poor condition in many places. New pavement would be a huge boost to vehicle and pedestrian safety as well as our property values. Continued efforts will be made with County staff to accomplish this goal, but RTGA competes with other Monterey County unincorporated areas for road maintenance, so it remains to be seen what level of road repairs Public Works will undertake in our neighborhood.

## RANCHO TIERRA GRANDE

P.O. BOX 22244  
Carmel, CA 93922



**Dues Envelope Enclosed!**

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Our Co-Presidents, Jeff Hawkins and Dave Wisherd, have been actively addressing on-going issues in our Tierra Grande community, none of which come with quick or easy solutions. I am grateful to have them and all the other engaged members who volunteer their time and expertise to continuously improve our quality of life.

*Please avail yourself of the opportunity to show your appreciation **by sending in your \$150 dues** (tax- deductible) in the enclosed envelope or by using Zelle at [rtgacv@gmail.com](mailto:rtgacv@gmail.com). We will gladly accept, and put to good use additional donations if you are so moved.*

This year, for the first time since I've been treasurer, we have earned about 4% on association funds of \$35,500 in short term certificate deposits. This amount accounts for about 75% of RTGA's total funds at present. As in recent years about 75% of our homeowners have paid the association dues. Why it's not 100% I cannot tell you.

— Mary Cushing

### RTGA BOARD & COMMITTEES

Co-Presidents	
Jeff Hawkins	831-277-3224
Dave Wisherd	408-838-0077
Vice President, Robbie Robinson	831-620-5569
Secretary, Bob Rice	831-625-1425
Treasurer, Mary Cushing	831-238-1829
Beautification	
Mary Cushing	
Nancy Bartell	831-915-2780
Architectural Review	
Peggy Warren	831-595-1660
Katy Kozachik	
Fire Safety, Dave Wisherd	408-838-0077
Safety/Neighborhood Watch	
Jeff Hawkins	831-277-3224
Welcome/Membership	
Nancy Bartell	831-915-2780
Member-At-Large, Peter Stern	408-888-8059

**RTG Website:**

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

**Community website:**

[www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com)