



# PINE NEEDLER

A PONDEROSA COMMUNITY CLUB NEWSLETTER

## 2008-9 PONDEROSA BOARD OFFICERS

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Vice President: Gina Wilkins  
Secretary: Mike Buck  
Director of Operations: Jeanne Whitlow  
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## JANUARY 2009

The Ponderosa Community Club publishes the PINE NEEDLER quarterly. Letters and submissions are welcome! Mail to the NEEDLER at 21100 Cayuse, Leavenworth, WA 98826; or phone the PCC Office, 509-763-0320; or visit the NEEDLER online at the Ponderosa Website: [www.ponderosacommunityclub.org](http://www.ponderosacommunityclub.org). Tim Olson, editor.

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## **Ponderosa Community Club Mission Statement**

**The Ponderosa Community Club's mission is to create and maintain a safe and welcoming community which enhances recreational and residential living through active membership participation, visionary leadership, and commitment to sustainability and harmony with the natural environment.**

### **NEWS FROM THE BOARD**

By Bill Griffin, President

### **RENTALS: YES, WE HAVE MAIL**

If we had a high fence around the Ponderosa and a uniformed guard at the gate, it would be easy to recognize that we are a Members Only Club. However, with open roads that anyone can access, it is even difficult for members to recognize we are "members only".

For the first 40 or so years of Ponderosa's existence, it was a members-only Club; its facilities and amenities were paid for, maintained by and enjoyed by members only. This was possible because the County zoning code prohibited short-term rentals, among other things. In 2006 the County rezoned the Ponderosa, creating a current problem and a number of potential problems. The new zoning allows rentals, and we find this new category of "landlord members" inviting the public into the Ponderosa to use our members-only facilities. The "landlord members" pocket the income and the "regular members" receive the expense of increased maintenance and the reduced availability of Ponderosa amenities.

Here is a quote from a "regular member's" letter:

"The first day I brought my children down to the pool. We were the only ones there, which was great but then a large group of 20 people infiltrated the pool. No problem, I thought, okay they might just be neighbors using the pool all at the same time. I listened to their conversation as it was pretty impossible to ignore since they were being really loud and had obviously already started drinking. They were talking about renting again the following year, since they were having such a great time. I packed my kids up and left. The following time I went to the pool I encountered a very similar situation, so we didn't end up using the pool the rest of the summer."

I also received two letters from "landlord members". To quote from those letters:

"I recently heard a rumor that the Board had taken a vote as to whether or not nightly rentals would be allowed any longer - is this true?? I certainly hope not - I love visiting my properties and vacationing but cancelling nightly rentals would force me to sell my places as I cannot afford to pay mortgages on places I stay at once a month."

"Upon reading Mr. Griffin's article "The Continuing Problem of Rentals" in the November 2008 issue of the Pine Needler, my first reaction was that if we, and therefore our guests, are going to be prevented from using facilities such as the swimming pool, then we should be receiving a discount on our dues, not be charged for anything. Furthermore, if we are prevented from allowing our guests to use facilities, then all guests should be prevented from using those facilities. You may respond that rental guests are unattended by home owners, and in that case, there needs to be a ruling for everyone that all guests unattended by their homeowner hosts are prevented from using facilities. In addition, long term renters who live in Ponderosa should be prevented from using facilities, and their landlords should also be charged these proposed fees you speak of.

I responded to those letters along these lines:

Your properties are private properties and, as such, may be used in any way that is consistent with County and State codes. The County zoning code did not allow short-term rentals until about four or five years ago when the code was changed. Short-term rentals are now allowed as long as you have a State license to use your properties in that way. The Board has no plans to prevent rentals, but if landlords do not provide us their business license we intend to follow up with the Washington State Department of Revenue.

The problem arises when landlords allow the public to use PRIVATE, MEMBERS ONLY Ponderosa Corporation facilities, such as our Swimming Pool, Clubhouse, Playgrounds, Greenbelts, Roads and Water System. The Board has recently adopted rules to prevent the public (i.e. tenants) from using our Swimming Pool and Clubhouse and to charge

landlords for allowing the public to use other private, member's only facilities from which we cannot screen them. For details I refer you to our website - [www.ponderosacommunityclub.org](http://www.ponderosacommunityclub.org).

Most members-only Clubs allow their members to bring guests. Our governing documents extend that same privilege, but "guests" was never intended to allow open invitations to the public to use our facilities. Back in the day when that word was placed in our governing documents the Chelan County Zoning Code did not allow short-term rentals in the Ponderosa. When someone provides their property to another person for a fee or for compensation, whether short-term or long-term, that person is a "TENANT", not a "guest". "Tenants" have no rights to use our private, members-only property.

Yes, temporary use cards for tenants is an alternative. There are two problems with the idea: First, if we allow the public to use our pool, state law requires us to provide a full-time lifeguard. It is doubtful we could collect enough money to cover the expense, and I would not care to have to manage the multiple employment and staffing problems it would create. Second, our pool is a limited capacity facility which should be for the exclusive use of the members who paid for it. We have had complaints about members taking their family to the pool last summer when TWENTY tenants from ONE 2-bedroom rental unit not only hogged the pool, but broke a number of our pool rules and ended up scarfing up our member-paid-for barbecue. We ran out of food with members who had paid for it still to be served.

Any ideas anyone has about this problem are welcome, but any solution has to recognize that the issue is public use of a private, members-only facility.

## **SHOW ME THE MONEY**

In the past 15 months a number of changes have been initiated to provide us quicker and better information about Ponderosa's financial condition.

When money is received from a variety of sources in the Office, a record is made in our Quick Books computer system of the source and amount. When money is deposited in the bank a record is generated which is also entered into Quick Books. When the month-end bank statement is received, the reconciliation process matches what the bank says it has with what Quick Books says is supposed to be in the bank.

When an invoice is received from a supplier, the Association Manager creates a written request for the Office Manager to issue a check. The request and a copy of the check are kept on file.

At each month-end several reports are generated and provided to the Board:

A report of Accounts Receivable is reconciled with the receipts and deposits.

A Checks Issued Report lists the date, payee, amount and budget item.

An Income & Expense Report lists income received from Dues, Assessments, Interest and Clubhouse Rental. All expenses for the month and year-to-date are listed for each budget line item, as well as the percent-spent-to-budget and the percent of the year expired.

The Treasurer is charged with the responsibility, among other duties, to monitor each of these reports for anomalies, and the entire Board reviews them to continually assess our financial health. All of these reports are, or will shortly be, available to members on our website ([www.ponderosacommunityclub.org](http://www.ponderosacommunityclub.org)) or in hard copy at the Office.

With special thanks to Bob and Nancy Melson, we believe we have an excellent accounting system.

## **WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE... AND NOT A DROP TO DRINK**

Unless we act now, our plight will be like that of the Ancient Mariner. About 40 years ago our water mains, valves and hydrants were installed. Since that time they have been patched and pieces have been replaced with whatever was

handy at the time. Now when a valve or a hydrant goes out, it is anyone's guess what it is, or if we have the right kind in stock. And our mains have become such a Jacob's Coat that we are putting patches on patches. The Fire Department is afraid to connect their pumper to much of our system because they are afraid the suction would collapse the ancient PCV mains.

This situation has grown worse so slowly it has only been noticeable to those who have to fix the leaks. Several years ago we obtained a low cost loan in the hope of replacing our water system. The terms of the loan did not allow us to replace mains and hydrants, but we did use it to good advantage to upgrade our wells and pumps. Now we need to take a bigger bite and replace the mains and hydrants.

Following the Board's priorities and 10-year timeline, Bill Schmidt, our water system engineer, has given us a detailed estimate to replace our mains, hydrants and to pave the roads afterward: \$3.845 million adjusted for inflation over the next 10-years. That equates to \$6,573 per lot, or \$658 each year per lot for 10 years.

This is a big hit, but it is the price of putting off (as we have done) that which is inevitable. Don't do it and the next break could shut off our water...all of it.

Besides maintaining our water supply, what are the advantages? As the system is replaced we would have maps and drawings that show us what exists and where. No more wasted money digging and hoping it is in the right place and that we have the material to replace it. No more putting off other work that needs to be done while we throw our money into a growing number of breaks and their repair. Budgets could focus on improvements, not holding our own.

Saving the best for last...the ductile iron pipe we would use should last 200 years.

Please stay informed by reading the Board Minutes and studying the Maps, the Priority Schedule and Costs posted at the Clubhouse. If you have questions, attend the Board Meetings (2nd Saturday every month except January, 10:30 a.m. at the Clubhouse) and call or email a Board Trustee.

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## **WHAT WILL PONDEROSA LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE?**

By Tim Olson

We have made strides in the Ponderosa! We have professional management; we have an up-to-date accounting system; we have competent staff; we even have a mission statement. All of these, however, do not define what we will be and how we will get there. There's an old saying that if you don't know where you are going, you will probably wind up somewhere else. I'm still not sure we have a handle on where the Ponderosa is headed. All I have to do is read the NEEDLER and the news coming from the Board in each issue. What is clear to me is that the Chelan County codes for the Ponderosa are of little help; the covenants established in the beginning of the Ponderosa have lapsed (except in Division 1) and were not effectively enforced when they did exist; that we have long deferred maintenance and replacement in our facilities and infrastructure; and that while some of these will not cost us dollars, several of them will cost each of us lots of dollars. I'm convinced that our current Board is working hard to both corral the horses that are out of the barn and to, also, shut the barn door before more horses get out. The Board, however, needs our input in determining their direction and influencing how they set priorities.

I'm making a plea here. Ponderosa is not the federal government and each of us has the opportunity to have a voice in what happens here. How do you feel about renters using our facilities? What do you think about real estate and business advertising signs in the Ponderosa? What about the care of personal property? How important is it to you that more of our roads get paved? Should drivers of all vehicles be required to have a license? Should all vehicles be required to be licensed? Should all dogs be on leash? What about a curfew on loud music in the late evening? Are you concerned about commercial businesses increasing in the community (some are low impact and others are not)? Make your wishes known! Write the Board; write the NEEDLER; keep yourself informed. I've been here long enough to know that how we manage ourselves impacts our enjoyment in being here and, also, dramatically impacts the value of the investment we have in our property.

We've really turned Ponderosa around and in the right direction in the past couple of years. Let's keep it going!  
Merry Christmas!

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## The View from the Office Window

By Nancy Melson

What fun it has been to watch the happenings in the Ponderosa from the office side of the picture. The “view” from the window has been great—seeing the Clubhouse used and appreciated, seeing families enjoying the updated playground and recreational activities such as softball and sand volleyball, and having people stop in to visit on their walks through the park.

The other side of the “view” has meant learning the names of Ponderosa members and families, attending to financial details, learning and appreciating QuickBooks AND the general responsiveness of all of you to statements, questions, etc. We have well over 250 members in our email listserve, which has enabled us to keep you up to date on many different things. The best part has been getting to know many of you personally.

We have a GREAT community! Sometimes it is easy to get caught up in the negative “bits”, which are really only minute particles of the BIG PICTURE.

Thanks for your support and enthusiasm and appreciation. The feeling in the community is definitely different than it was a few years ago. Bob and I have appreciated seeing the view from the “office window”. You will be well served by Chelcie Strode (Office Manager) and Mary Cox (Association Manager). Now we will be able to stop in the office on our walks through the park!

Happy Holidays!

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### BALLOT RESULTS

2009 Budget

149--Yes

124--No

Clubhouse Flooring Replacement

146--Yes

130--No

There were no invalid ballots.

Total ballots cast 276

The narrow margin on both issues raises the question of why? Nineteen voters included written comments with their ballots. These have been included in the December 13 Board Meeting Minutes. It would be helpful to the Board's understanding if other members would be willing to share their reason(s) for voting as they did. We realize that doing so would destroy the anonymity of your vote, but your response would be helpful to the Board's understanding of what the members want from the Ponderosa.

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### PONDEROSA COMMUNITY CLUB WINTER PLOWING POLICY

1. Roads travelled by the school bus have priority in the morning. The remainder of the roads will be plowed as soon as the bus routes are cleared.
2. Sanding is a priority on Colt and Palomino. It is, however, wasteful to spread the sand when the snow is falling, as it will be covered quickly and therefore of little use for traction. Therefore, unless there are extenuating circumstances,

sanding will take place after the snow has stopped falling.

3. NO PARKING on roads or cul-de-sacs! Our roads are so narrow that the plow needs every bit of maneuvering room available to keep our roads clear. Vehicles will be towed and impounded if they are impeding traffic OR the snowplows.

4. Obey the one-way signs. When someone takes a short-cut by driving the wrong way on a one-way, it is a sure recipe for disaster, usually resulting in vehicles in the ditch, sideway in the road, or jackknifed. Since we only have one way in and one way out, it is scary to contemplate what would happen if the roads are blocked and emergency vehicles are not able to reach someone in need of help.

5. Every effort will be made to keep the roads clear, especially during busy weekends. Cooperation from the members helps our contractor fulfill this obligation. To that end, it is imperative that all members and visitors abide by the following rules:

a. Use snow tires during the winter season.

b. CARRY CHAINS! Make sure they are the right size, and make sure you know how to install them! (Yes, even IF you have 4 wheel drive!)

c. Obey the speed limit of 15 m.p.h.

d. If in doubt, stop and chain up before attempting to drive our roads. It might save you a tow bill, and will certainly save other road users a lot of grief and wasted time.

e. Remember to use a lower gear when driving on ice and snow. Brakes are minimally effective on slick surfaces.

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED TO KEEP SLEDDING SAFE IN THE PONDEROSA

1. Sledding is prohibited on our road system

2. Excellent sledding areas are available in the greenbelts. The power corridor below Primitive Park Road and the Greenbelt just off upper Saddle are particularly good spots.

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### **Ponderosa Building and Grounds Committee**

By Nancy Melson, Chairperson

The committee has made recommendations to the Ponderosa Board in regards to improving and maintaining the Clubhouse and grounds. This article is being written before the budget ballot count, so we are awaiting the results! We are hoping that the Clubhouse will be painted, inside and out, this coming year, and that the gray linoleum will be history.

We will be adding another **Ponderosa** bench to the park area, as well as another garbage can near the main Clubhouse door. These will be installed in the spring after the snow. [I did say snow!]

It has been a very good year in terms of improving our Clubhouse. It has been used much more in 2008 than ever before, and we hope the trend continues. Remember, this is YOUR community.

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### **Plain Lazy Quilters**

By Nancy Melson

The Plain Lazy Quilters have had a busy year. We have donated 30 quilts and fleece blankets to The Good Grief Center, the Burn Center for Children, and the Women's Resource Center. We also have many quilts in process to be donated. As always, we appreciate donations of fabric and notions that you cannot use. They will be put to good use! Please call Nancy at 509-763-0266 if you have something you would like to contribute. We can also always use batting for quilts if you have extra.

Many of the people in our group entered quilts in local quilt shows and the Chelan County Fair--- and earned prizes and ribbons. We have a very talented group.

Our holiday gathering was the first part of December at the Clubhouse. We enjoyed the fire, the many projects being completed and a day of good times. We waited for snow...are we really still waiting in mid-December? By the time you receive this we will hopefully be "blanketed" in snow!

Photos From 4<sup>th</sup> Of July Wheeled Parade  
By Donna Malcevski



