



# **THUNDERBIRD PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION**



Photo by George Evans

Spring 2022 ISSUE

PO BOX 1263

LAKE SANTEEHLAH, NC

## **OFFICERS (2022 – 2023)**

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**Betteannl@verizon.net**

**Vice President...Bill Piel (305-238-7836)**

**williampx@aol.com**

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**Treasurer.....Beth Carlton (828-479-3664)**

**carltonbeth09@gmail.com**

## **SANTEEHLAH TOWN COUNCIL**

**Connie Gross, Mayor**

**Ralph Mitchell, Vice Mayor**

**Tina Emerson, Chief Finance Officer**

**Diana Simon, Councilwoman**

**Jim Hager, Councilman**

## **TOWN OF LAKE SANTEEHLAH STAFF**

**Kim Matheson, Town Administrator**

**Emily Hooper, Town Clerk**

**Scott Kamps, Public Works Technician**

**Lamar Williams, Water System**

**Operator**

## **TPOA PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Frances Connor**

**Mary Roemer**

**Becky Block**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**HAPPY SPRING, EVERYONE!**

I want to thank all of you for submitting your dues in a timely manner; and also, for those of you who made generous contributions to our Green Elephant Fund, which benefits various Graham County Charities. Thank you so much! To find out how much our organization helped the county, check the Green Elephant report that appears later in this issue.



I am so pleased with the progress on the front entrance! Thank you, everyone who is involved in this ambitious project. Bill Piel headed up the initial fund-raiser, which involved the inscribed bricks, resulting in \$35,000 in donations; Diana Simon spearheaded the monetary contributions of the TDA, resulting in a donation in excess of \$10,000; Scott Kamps and his crew provided the actual physical labor; Town Council members handled the legalities and technical data needed for the project; Diana Simon, Kevin Haag and others are arranging for the beautiful plantings. The project truly reflects the interest and cooperative efforts of our entire community. Kudos to everyone involved!

I also want to express my appreciation to all of you who took time out from your busy schedules to attend the April Council meeting, via Zoom. Public comments overflowed, as our members expressed their feelings toward the elimination and/or relaxation of our well-thought-out zoning ordinances and land-use plans. As most of you know, these ordinances, as well as the land-use plan, were well-researched, property owners were surveyed, and several public hearings were conducted. The purpose of these zoning laws is to protect our property values and to retain the beauty of our beautiful mountain. Please continue to attend as many Council meetings as possible, voicing your feelings and lending your support in the time slot reserved for public opinion. Remember that those of us who are legally registered to vote in the Town of Lake Santeetlah are in a position to make decisions that affect each and every one of us. We all need to express our opinions at meetings or via email in order to let the decision-makers know what we, the majority, feel is best for our community.

Thank you, everyone who volunteered to help out this coming season! And to our new members who have offered their services, Welcome Aboard!

Sincerely,

*Bette LoBue*





## Mayor's Corner

By Connie Gross



Good day to all!

Spring has sprung here in the Town of Lake Santeetlah. Azaleas are blooming and are sharing their beautiful colored flowers for everyone to enjoy.

As Mayor, I have learned so much these past six months. Every day is a new day. We have a wonderful staff. Kim, Emily and Scott are amazing and caring people. I am blessed to work with them. As mayor, I vow to keep an open mind.

We are in the process of planning the 2022-23 budget. Hats off to our financial officer, Tina Emerson. She has been busy crunching the numbers. Even though zoning regulations were voted in by the previous council at the end of 2021, the current council voted to hold public hearings and to provide a forum for all citizens to voice their concerns. I stay hopeful that solutions will be found. We are not New York, Lake Lure, or Florida. Take a look around our town. We are a combination of small quaint homes and bigger 4 story homes. Some, if not most, are on very small lots. According to the current zoning regulations, there are close to 120 non-conforming homes here. In case of a necessary rebuild, these property owners would need to ask for a variance. A variance should be an exception, not the norm. I don't think this current zoning takes these homes into consideration. Our town is very small, and it would be hard and expensive to meet the zoning requirements within our current zoning ordinance. When new people are installed to an official office, it's natural to expect questions to be asked and changes to be made. My main goal is to have transparency in the internal workings of the town council. I hope to expand on our small-town charm.

On Thursday, July 7, please come on out to Manierre Park and shake the hands of our firefighters and first responders. This is a chance to show your appreciation for the Santeetlah Volunteer Fire Department, station 3, and to hear their specific needs. Please remember just how important these volunteer men and woman are to all of us. Enjoy a BBQ plate with all the fixings. Food always makes for a better time.

I hope we can work together as the community that we really are. It shouldn't be the size or location of your home that defines who you are. We are all invested in keeping the community safe, productive, and thriving. Please be concerned, attend meetings, and get involved, but please do so respectfully. I'm thrilled to see so many property owners at our meetings. The attention and input from the speakers at public comment time is a tool for council members, and in the end, many things need to be considered before a vote is taken. I value all homeowner's opinions and what you say will be taken into consideration. I hope to see you at the meetings.

My Best to All,  
Connie Gross, Mayor

### PROPERTY OWNERS ANNUAL WELCOME PARTY!

THE TPOA PLANNING COMMITTEE INVITES YOU TO JOIN YOUR FELLOW PROPERTY OWNERS FOR OUR ANNUAL WELCOME PARTY, June 11, 2022, FROM 4 TO 7 P.M. AT CHALET VILLAGE! PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN CHAIRS. WATCH THE BULLETIN BOARDS FOR FURTHER DETAILS!

Note: If you are interested in joining the Planning Committee, please contact Frances Connor (fconnor@outlook.com) or Mary Roemer (marycroemer@gmail.com).]

### GREEN ELEPHANT FUND-RAISER

THANK YOU, THUNDERBIRD PROPERTY OWNERS, FOR YOUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR ANNUAL GREEN ELEPHANT FUND-RAISER! WE HAVE RECEIVED \$5,905 TO DATE! YOUR THOUGHTFUL GENEROSITY WILL BENEFIT VARIOUS WORTHWHILE CHARITIES IN GRAHAM COUNTY.

## Tourism Development Authority

By Diana Simon

Springtime at the Lake is always spectacular. The forest is full of wildflowers... come and see! An amazing entrance welcomes your homecoming. Thank you so much, Dr. Bill and Marti Campbell and all who made donations towards the front entrance transformation. Scott Hatch has donated the rich soil to fill the planting areas. He mentions that TOLS homeowners have been so good to him. Tourism Development Authority (TDA) thanks all of our rental home owners and guests whose 3% occupancy tax payments contributed to financing over \$10,000 towards this project. Taylor's Greenhouse was contracted by the TDA to supply materials and plants. (Buy Local!) Diana Simon, Kevin Haag and Scott Kamps worked with Karen Taylor, planning and visualizing the plantings. Homeowner volunteers are helping to install the plants, and the pavers should be installed in May. Thank you, everyone!

TDA has been advertising in "Our State" magazine the past two years. An unexpected increase in home rentals during COVID may be attributed to these advertising efforts. Advertising in the magazine will continue through the next fiscal year.

As you may have heard, Council Members Connie Gross, Tina Emerson and Ralph Mitchell voted on February 10, 2022, to de-fund our TDA. Zero percent occupancy tax revenue will be collected by the Town of Lake Santeetlah, beginning July 1. Sadly, we will not have that revenue to continue benefiting our community.

TDA plans to continue funding beautification projects in the Town as long as funds are available. We currently have our eyes on the grassy area in Chalet Village. Perhaps a welcoming seating and game area would work.

I am looking forward to gathering with everyone at Manierre Park for the June Welcome Party!

## Around the Mountain

By Bette LoBue

Happy Spring to all!

Hope blooms anew on our beautiful mountain! Weekenders are already taking advantage of the pleasant weather and the emerging beauty that encompasses and surrounds our Lake Santeetlah. Meanwhile, seasonals and vacationers are rapidly pouring in as well!



The spirit of community is already evident around the mountain, as Kevin Haag, Beth Carlton, and Diana and Joe Simon participated in a March litter pickup along Thunderbird Mountain Road and Highway 129, as part of TPOA's Adopt-a-Highway program. Thanks, team, for helping to keep our highways and byways trash free. Now, if we can only get a volunteer to take over the two pet stations along Thunderbird Trail!

Seen wielding their shovels and pushing top soil into place were Kevin Haag, Diana Simon, and Scott Kamps, who were working with plantings at the new front entrance! Many more Lake Santeetlah neighbors worked behind the scenes in various ways to move this project along. Thanks also go to Bob Wehr, Kevin Haag and others who sent pictures at various stages of the project. Everyone's efforts are so appreciated!

Be on the lookout for yellow and blue Ukrainian flags, dotting the yards here and there around the mountain. Jim Hager ordered fifty or more of these bright and hopeful flags as a tribute to the valiant citizens of Ukraine.

In a rare moment of self-indulgence, I decided to share with you a brief encounter of my own, that occurred one scary night in late December! As I stepped out onto my enclosed porch to unplug the holiday lights, my kitty, Gus, followed me out and started sniffing around the windows for nocturnal wildlife. I thought it would be okay for him to investigate for a few minutes while I closed up the rest of the house. A few seconds later, I heard Gus utter a terrified screech and at the same instant I heard a loud thump! As I ran back to the porch, I added my own screams to





## Around the Mountain (from page 3)

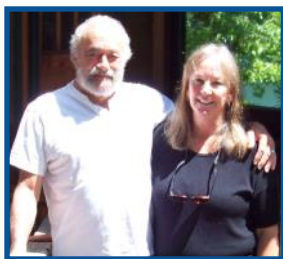
the mix. Shaking with fright, Gus had taken refuge under a chair, and just above him was a huge, gaping hole in the screen where something the size of a large dog had tried to push his way through! I learned later that a couple of coyotes had been seen camping out in my back yard! No worries for you guys, though! This occurred at my Florida house. Back at Lake Santeetlah, I only have to worry about squirrels, mice, and chipmunks getting in! Right?

By the way, while you are strolling about, looking for coyotes, lions, tigers and bears (oh, my), be on the lookout for patches of violets and other wild flowers, peering out here and there along the trails—ALL AROUND THE MOUNTAIN!

[Note: Members contribute info to this column. If you would like to share positive news with your fellow property owners, simply drop me an email. Easy as pie!]

### Know Your Neighbors

Rebecca (Becky) and Larry Block come to Thunderbird Mountain from Sarasota, Florida. They have been coming up to Lake Santeetlah for five years, searching for their life-long dream of a house on a beautiful lake and finally found that dream home on Thunderbird Trail.



Becky worked in real estate for the first half of her working career and switched to landscape design for the second half. Larry began his career as a jeweler, later switching to home improvement sales. Both Becky and Larry are now enjoying their retirement.

Becky and Larry enjoy travelling, eating, and making things. Larry does wood carving on walking sticks and makes wood “spirits”. Becky works on stained glass and enjoys other crafts as well.

Look for Becky, Larry and their dog, Callie, on their daily walks along the trails of Thunderbird, and be sure to say hello. They are obviously enjoying their life on the mountain by the lake!



### Pet Stations

We are in need of a volunteer to stock and service the two Pet Stations that are located on Thunderbird Trail. These handy stations help to ensure that pet owners can take care of their pets' needs as they walk the trails on Thunderbird Mountain. Past volunteers, Karen Anderson and Keith Predmore, would be more than happy to explain the duties relating to the pet stations. Please contact any Board Member to help with this continuing project. Thank you!

### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

**Publishing/Distribution: Carolyn Piel**

**Staff Writer: Bette LoBue**

**Editor/Formatter: Charles Mathews**

### FIRE FIGHTERS APPRECIATION DAY

*WHEN: Thursday JULY 7 FROM 7PM to 9PM WHERE: Chalet Village*