

*“REMEMBER THE TITANS”*

The period May 2005 through May 2009 presented an unprecedented challenge for the Rio Grande Corridor as pressures to raise residential densities and increase commercialization were fueled by easy credit and the City’s policy to promote infill. At the same time, major municipal development projects brought unique problems in the form of pollution, traffic congestion, and noise. The ongoing attempt by State Senator Dede Feldman and interest groups from outside the Corridor to urbanize the ditches along the acequias threatened one of our most cherished resources.

Although the effort to preserve the ditches in their natural habitat was supported by the vast majority of affected residents, reprisals from politicians were swift indeed. The annual election for three RGBNA board members held last May and June constituted a hijacking of the neighborhood association by Senator Feldman and City Councilor Debbie O’Malley. Dede’s husband, developer Mark Feldman, and City Council employee, Susan Johnson, now control the Board of Directors.

Though RGBNA is little more than a political action committee today, under the leadership of President Frank Mangano, the accomplishments from 2005-2009 were remarkable:

CREATED THE FIRST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION WEB SITE - RGBNA.ORG; THE SITE WAS FUNDED ENTIRELY BY AREA MERCHANTS AS PART OF THE RGBNA “NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS” INITIATIVE;

REDUCED SPEED LIMIT TO 25 MPH ON RIO GRANDE BETWEEN MONTANO AND GRIEGOS ROAD;

OBTAINED SPEED VAN PATROLS ON THE BOULEVARD AND LOBBIED FOR THE TWO SPEED BOARDS NOW IN PLACE;

WORKED ON BEHALF OF NEIGHBORS TO REPLACE SPEED HUMPS ON WEST CAMPBELL ROAD AFTER REMOVAL BY THE SAN JUAN CHAMA WATER PROJECT;

DEFEATED THE APPEAL FOR CELL TOWERS AT LOHMAN MOTORS AND JOINED WITH THE DURANES NA TO SUCCESSFULLY OPPOSE INSTALLATION OF THREE CELL TOWERS ALONG THE DURANES DITCH;

TEAMED WITH THE ALVARADO GARDENS NA TO PREVENT A ZONE CHANGE REQUEST FOR A MASSIVE TWO-STORY OFFICE COMPLEX ON RIO GRANDE NORTH OF KESTREL COURT;

(continued below)

TWICE STOPPED CONTRACTORS FROM CREATING INDUSTRIAL ZONES IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS DURING THE DIETZ FARM AREA K SEWER PROJECT;

WORKED WITH CITY PLANNERS, NEIGHBORS, AND BUSINESS INTERESTS TO ENSURE A SAFE CROSSWALK/MEDIAN AT FLYING STAR PLAZA;

INTERVENED ON BEHALF OF AREA RESIDENTS TO PREVENT HIGHER RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES ALONG RIO GRANDE, MATHEW, AND GRIEGOS;

SUCCESSFULLY OPPOSED TWO ZONE CHANGE REQUESTS TO PERMIT INVASIVE COMMERCIAL USES ALONG RIO GRANDE BETWEEN SAN LORENZO AND GRIEGOS;

WORKED WITH LAS MANANITAS DEVELOPER TO ACHIEVE A NEIGHBORHOOD-FRIENDLY RETAIL PLAZA AT INDIAN SCHOOL;

PREVENTED DEVELOPER FROM IMPEDING SOLAR ACCESS BY RESIDENTS ON MEADOWVIEW;

COORDINATED EFFORT TO RE-PLAT UNUSABLE PROPERTIES ALONG GRIEGOS ROAD TO PERMIT NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING;

JOINED WITH THE VILLAGE OF LOS RANCHOS TO ENSURE NEIGHBORHOOD-SCALE LANDSCAPING & BUILDING DESIGN FOR MONTANO PUMP STATION AND LATER FORCED THE WATER UTILITY AUTHORITY TO COMPLY WITH DARK SKY ORDINANCE;

SUPPORTED RESIDENTS IN DISPUTES WITH THE CITY AND OFTEN ACTED AS MEDIATOR IN NEIGHBOR VERSUS NEIGHBOR SITUATIONS;

SUCCESSFULLY OPPOSED REPEATED ATTEMPTS BY SENATOR FELDMAN AND OTHER SPECIAL INTERESTS TO URBANIZE THE MRGCD ACEQUIAS;

WORKED WITH CITY, VILLAGE, AND COUNTY OFFICIALS TO REMOVE ILLEGAL STREET VENDORS FROM RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS;

SUPPORTED LOCAL BUSINESSES, INCLUDING BOW WOW BLUES AND JOE S. SAUSAGE, TO EXPAND NEIGHBORHOOD-FRIENDLY SERVICES;

SPONSORED DITCH TRAIL CLEANUPS AND OBTAINED MITIGATION MEASURES TO CONTROL MOTOR VEHICLE ACCESS TO THE GRIEGOS DRAIN;

INITIATED EFFORT TO RETAIN DISABLED NEWSPAPER VENDORS AT LOCAL MARKETS AFTER BEING “RELOCATED” BY THE ABQ JOURNAL, WINNER OF THE FIRST RGBNA.ORG “BAH, HUMBUG” AWARD.

...It was quite a ride to be sure...

*Lammette B. Poone*