

ELDORADO VISTAS

VOLUME XIV, ISSUE 2
February 2012

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Monthly Newsletter of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association

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Evaluating Eldorado's Amenities

In early 1993, the ECIA commissioned a survey of residents to find out how they felt about the community's services and amenities and how often they used them. Eldorado has changed significantly in the past two decades, and starting this month, the ECIA will conduct a follow-up survey to determine what has changed in the last 19 years (see questionnaire on page 2). The information will help the Board plan for "Securing the Future—the 5-10-25 Plan" that I described in December.

In 1993, there were about 1,800 households in Eldorado. In the last 18-plus years, that number has climbed to nearly 2,800, an increase of more than 50%. Also in that time, the Association has added a few amenities for residents' use.

The amenities that were surveyed included greenbelt areas, hike-bike trails, swimming pool, Eldorado Preserve, kiddie pool, Community Center, tennis courts, soccer and baseball fields, tot playgrounds, children's programs, social programs, picnic areas, horse owners' areas, and recreational programs. Since then, ECIA has added *Vistas*, socials, the dog park, a basketball court, Compadres Park, horseshoes, beach volleyball, and extensions to the hike-bike trails.

The 1993 data revealed some interesting dynamics about how people value the amenities. For example: That survey was conducted when there were fewer than two miles of hike-bike trail, and already it was ranked by 91% of residents as "somewhat important" to "very important." However, when asked about actual usage, only 71% of respondents said they used the hike-bike trails "somewhat often" to "very often."

This pattern was repeated for most of the amenities: 87% valued the swimming pool from "somewhat" to "very" important, whereas only 60% actually used the pool "somewhat" to "very" often. For the tennis courts, the ratio was huge: 75% to 29% .

The data demonstrated the essence and value of a diverse and mutually supportive community: People value the amenities even if they do not personally use them, because their existence provides opportunities to recreate, and the array of amenities supports Eldorado's property values as a whole. It will be interesting to see if that remains the case in our challenging times.

In a future column I will talk about what the 1993 poll said about community services, from trash pickup to security and road maintenance.

—Ed Moreno, ECIA President

ECIA Board Meeting, Community Center, Thurs., February 16, 7 pm.

Eldorado's Changing Landscape

Located at the southern terminus of the Rocky Mountains, Eldorado has historically been an ecological transition zone between mountains and desert. The piñon pine/juniper tree cover intermingled with low shrubs has historically been the dominant vegetative complex in Eldorado.

However, with the severe drought in 2004–2005, many of the piñon pine stands in Eldorado and along I-25 to the north became prey to bark beetles. Lacking adequate moisture, trees were unable to fight off the beetle invasion. Being more drought-resistant, the junipers have generally survived, although they are also becoming stressed. We may very well have another attack by pine bark beetles on our remaining piñon and other pine trees if dry conditions continue this year.

Over the past few years, the Siberian elm, an exotic "trash" tree, has been undergoing a rapid expansion into Eldorado, particularly along the roadsides. Unfortunately, this tree was introduced into the U.S. in the 1840s as wind breaks for agriculture. Since then, it has spread to many states, some of which are now trying to eliminate it. New Mexico has classified it as an invasive species; it can invade and dominate disturbed prairies in just a few years. Wind-blown seeds enhance their

Continued on page 6

Piñon tree in Eldorado greenbelt showing effects of bark beetle invasion.





Eldorado Homeowners Survey 2012

Share your comments with us!

For policy and deadline, see below

Editorial Policy

Vistas invites opinions, ideas, stories, photos, and art from the community at large. Please include contact numbers for fact checking purposes. The newsletter will not publish unsigned letters or material deemed inflammatory. Material will be printed at the discretion of the editors. Letters over 150 words will be edited for fit. Community announcements are welcome; accompanying photos are welcome, too. DEADLINE: Newsletter deadline is the 3rd day of each month. Submissions can be dropped off or mailed to the ECIA office or e-mailed to ECIA@DiAna@aol.com Please include "Attn: Vistas" in your message.

Mission Statement

The mission of Vistas, the monthly newsletter of the ECIA, is to inform the Eldorado community about issues before the ECIA Board and the membership at large. By so doing, the publication seeks to foster increased neighborhood pride and community participation in the decision making process.

ASSESSMENTS & AMENITIES

Some residents tell us they prefer to invest less in amenities in order to keep assessments low, even if it means eliminating some amenities or deferring their maintenance. Others say they prefer to maintain the amenities even if that requires regular increases in the assessment. We want to know what you prefer. Would you would like to:

- Raise ECIA assessments to maintain amenities
- Try to maintain assessments, try to economize
- No Increases even if we lose some amenities
- No Opinion.

LEVEL OF USAGE

To help the ECIA prioritize its planning and expenditures, please circle the level of your usage of the amenities in Eldorado: Very Often (3), Occasionally (2), and Never (1). Circle (0) for No Opinion.

Baseball/Soccer Fields	3	2	1	0
Basketball Court	3	2	1	0
Beach Volleyball	3	2	1	0
Community Center	3	2	1	0
Compadres Park	3	2	1	0
Dog Park	3	2	1	0
Greenbelt Areas	3	2	1	0
Hike/Bike Trails	3	2	1	0
Horseshoe Pits	3	2	1	0
Kiddie Pool	3	2	1	0
Picnic Areas	3	2	1	0
Shuffleboard	3	2	1	0
Social events (July 4, dances, potlucks, etc.)	3	2	1	0
Stables	3	2	1	0
Swimming Pool	3	2	1	0
Tennis Courts	3	2	1	0
Tot Play Area	3	2	1	0
Vistas newsletter	3	2	1	0
Wilderness Preserve	3	2	1	0

Please take the time to fill out this survey and mail it in or drop it at the ECIA Office; or you can go to www.eldoradosf.org to fill it out and submit it online.

LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE TO YOU

It is unlikely that any resident uses all amenities frequently. However, residents may place different value on the various amenities that ECIA provides. For example, you may not swim, but you believe the pool provides an important activity for our children and youth. Please indicate how much you value these amenities: Very Highly (3), Moderately (2), and Little/or No Value (1). Circle (0) for No Opinion.

Baseball/Soccer Fields	3	2	1	0
Basketball Court	3	2	1	0
Beach Volleyball	3	2	1	0
Community Center	3	2	1	0
Compadres Park	3	2	1	0
Dog Park	3	2	1	0
Greenbelt Areas	3	2	1	0
Hike/Bike Trails	3	2	1	0
Horseshoe Pits	3	2	1	0
Kiddie Pool	3	2	1	0
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Social events (July 4, dances, potlucks, etc.)	3	2	1	0
Stables	3	2	1	0
Swimming Pool	3	2	1	0
Tennis Courts	3	2	1	0
Tot Play Area	3	2	1	0
Vistas newsletter	3	2	1	0
Wilderness Preserve	3	2	1	0

Covenant Compliance Stats

ARCHITECTURAL PROJECTS

	DEC 2011	YTD PREV. MONTH	PLANS YTD
SUBMITTED	6	PROJECTS 194	200
APPROVED	6	APPROVED 137	143
VARIANCE REQ	0	VAR. APPROVED 38	38
VARIANCES DENIED	0	VAR. DENIED 9	9

No pending variance requests

COMPLIANCE ISSUES

MTD NEW	CLOSED MTD	YTD PENDING	NEW YTD	CLOSED YTD
27	27	27	320	327

Community Members

Because the Vistas newsletter has a long lead time for publication, we will be posting on our website information about the proposal to allow the recognition of hens and goats as household pets; go to <http://eldoradosf.org>.

The Board will provide information as it becomes available, but as yet no decisions have been made about how to proceed. This is an important issue that has attracted much attention, and the Board is interested in having an open discussion about it.

—Ed Moreno, ECIA President

Recent Board Actions

The ECIA Board held its regular meeting on December 15 and took the following formal actions:

- ▶ **Dana Richards, Brett Frauenglass, Amy Bertelli, Nancy Dayton, Joe Eigener, Eduardo Krasilovsky, and Greg Colello** were appointed to the Sustainability, Planning and Education Committee.
- ▶ The Accounting Consulting Group was awarded a contract to perform the 2011 audit of the Association's finances.
- ▶ An amount not to exceed \$4000 was authorized from 2012 Operating Contingency funds for the additional cost of the 2011 audit.
- ▶ An amount not to exceed \$2000 was authorized from 2012 Operating Contingency funds for the Sustainability, Planning and Education Committee.
- ▶ Support was approved to co-sponsor a Solar Forum on March 24–25, along with the Sustainable Eldorado Residents Alliance (SERA) and the Sierra Club, including free classes for residents.

Behaving Neighborly

While there are only a few specific project types that require Eldorado residents to notify neighbors of proposed building plans, there are many kinds of projects that can affect one's neighbors' views and privacy.

Recently we have had cases where additions built onto existing homes have caused a loss of views and privacy for some of the closest neighbors. The Eldorado Covenants and Guidelines do allow for attached additions to be built up to 18 feet in height (assuming that numerous other requirements are met), but, on some lots, this can be problematic for neighbors.

Because of this, we urge all residents to seriously consider how any project will affect their neighbors, before they formally submit a plan to the ECIA Architectural Committee for review. Some points to consider in the planning process that might protect views and privacy include:

- ▶ Will this project, as planned, adversely affect my neighbor's views?
- ▶ Will this project result in a reduction of my neighbor's, and my own, desired privacy?
- ▶ Are there other locations on my lot where a project might have less impact on my neighbors?
- ▶ If the location planned for the project is the only viable place on the lot, is there some kind of

Board meetings are scheduled on the third Thursday of each month at 7 pm at the Community Center, and are open to the public. An open forum, community announcements, and reports from ECIA committees are regularly included. For complete minutes and meeting agendas, visit the ECIA office or website: <http://eldoradosf.org>.

Run for the Board

Nominating petitions are available for two three-year positions on the ECIA Board. Petitions require 25 signatures from Association members in good standing and are due in the ECIA office by March 1, along with a 350-word resume. Ballots and election materials will be distributed with the Annual Report in March, and the election results will be announced at the Annual Meeting on May 7.

Applicants must be Eldorado property owners and current on all assessments by March 1. Petitions are available at the ECIA office or at the website: www.eldoradosf.org.

screening that I could use that would help to mitigate the impact on my neighbors? (This could be a fence, landscaped earth berm, or plantings.)

- ▶ Could I position windows and doors in the project in such a way as to ensure continued privacy for both myself and my neighbors?
- ▶ Is my exterior lighting planned in such a way as to not be bothersome to my neighbors at night?

The ECIA also encourages residents to always communicate with their neighbors before submitting any plans to the ECIA, to ensure that the project will not have a negative impact on them. Consideration of neighbors and thoughtful planning will often reduce or eliminate future complaints from neighbors and will go a long way toward promoting good neighborly relations. Neighbors can also stay on top of any upcoming architectural plan submissions by calling the ECIA or checking out the upcoming ECIA Architectural Committee Agenda at <http://eldoradosf.org/index.php/Agenda-Architectural-Committee/>.

We thank you for your thoughtfulness in the planning process. If you have any questions regarding the Eldorado Plan submission process, please feel free to contact us at the ECIA at 466-4248.

—Mark Young
Covenant Compliance Representative

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COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Architecture:

Katherine Mortimer
Conservation: **John Parker**
Election: **Jean Crawford**
Facilities & Grounds:

Jeanne Calzada

Finance: **Dan Drobins**
Information: **Open**
Neighborhood Watch:

Marilyn Walker

Roads: **Nolan Zisman**

Stable: Lisa Bessone &

Deena Joseph

Sustainability, Planning,
Education: **Dana Richards**

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Vista Grande Library

466-READ

Security

204-2945

Fire and Rescue

466-1204

eldoradofirerescue.org

County All Purpose

820-CNTY (2689)

ON OUR WEBSITE

Visit our website to read about ECIA's proposal to allow the keeping of hens as pets in Eldorado.

Also, go online to take the survey about ECIA's amenities.

Go to
www.eldoradosf.org



See KORDance at La Tienda Feb 25

IN THE COMMUNITY

Free Health Screenings/Information

In February, the Santa Fe County Mobile Health Van will be in Eldorado for Total Cholesterol testing (but no checking blood glucose). You do not have to be fasting, but fasting will improve the accuracy of the test. Look for the van on Saturday, February 4, 10 am–2 pm, at the Agora Supermarket parking lot; Tuesday, February 7, 10 am–3 pm, at the Ken and Patty Adam Senior Center; and Saturday, February 18, 10 am–2 pm, at the Lamy Train Station parking lot. For more information, please call **Angela Thorndyke** at 505-231-2382.

February TGIF

On Friday, February 17, from 5 to 7 pm, the post-Valentine TGIF will be held at the Community Center. Bring an appetizer to share or some Valentine's Day chocolate. TGIF is open to the Eldorado community.

Downed Trees in Preserve?

If any Eldorado resident notices downed trees along the Preserve trails, please notify the ECIA of the location of the trees so that we can remove them. Contact **Mark Young**, 466-4248, ext. 15.

Gardening Class

Gardening 101, sponsored by the Santa Fe Master Gardener Association, will be held on Saturday, February 18, from 10 am to 4 pm at the Santa Fe Center for Spiritual Living, 505 Camino de Los Marquez in Santa Fe. This day-long session is designed to help new or new-to-Santa Fe gardeners cope with the special challenges of gardening in our high desert environment. Topics include water-wise irrigation techniques, soil building, composting, and plant selection. **Moria** and **Steve Peters** will again teach this popular course. The cost is \$40 and preregistration is required. Visit www.SFMGA.org or call 471-4711 for information.

Horse Manure Deliveries

Now scheduling Eldorado Stable horse manure deliveries. Please email eldostable@gmail.com or call **Su Anne** at 660-1996 for information.

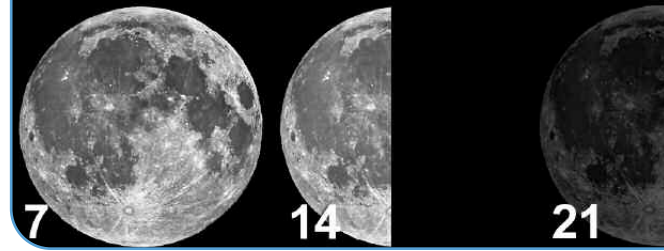
Women's Coffee & Conversation

On Sunday, January 29, at 2 pm, Destiny Allison Fine Arts Gallery is hosting a group wanting to build community, exchange stories, and generate creative and positive empowerment of women across the entire spectrum. If you are a housewife, an artist, a career woman, or just doing the Santa Fe Two Step, this group is about being a woman in today's world. For more information, email Karen@AdventurestoTransformation.com.

La Tienda Openings and Moves

La Tienda co-owner **Steve Ewers** reports that several of their businesses are growing and moving to new locations to offer more services. Just Cuts, To-

MOON PHASES FOR FEBRUARY



tally Awesome Dogs!, Eclectics, and Eldorado Yoga have new locations in Building A. In addition, two new businesses are coming to the area: Enchanted Leaf, a full-service florist, with free delivery in the Eldorado area, around the first week of March (or sooner); and JEM Creations 11, in collaboration with their existing business, Our Attention to Detail. JEM Creations 11 is more than a consignment store, with a bit of old, a bit of restored, and a bit of new. Our Attention to Detail is a complete home care business with a wide range of services. Keep an eye on the La Tienda Newsletter for announcements on their grand openings.

Local Art Exhibit (Dance & Poetry Too)

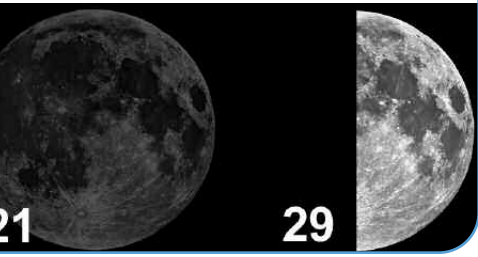
Five artists, **Thayer Carter**, **Andrew Davis**, **Geraldine Fiskus**, **Dee Homans**, and **J. Barry Zeiger** are creating a new exhibit in La Tienda from February 18 through March 11. The show, "5 Submerging Artists," will host an opening reception on February 18 from 5 to 8 pm. Gallery hours are Wednesday–Saturday, 11 am–6 pm. Scheduled in concurrence with 5 Submerging Artists at the Exhibit Space is a dance performance with **KORDance / Sarah Berges**, Saturday, February 25 at 7 pm with reception to follow; poetry reading of **IMPLUVIUM** by Andrew Davis, Wednesday, February 29 at 7 pm; artist talk Wednesday, March 7 at 6:30 pm.

Monthly Local Author Series

Local authors offer monthly evening readings at The Performance Space at La Tienda. The next two months will focus on fiction or poetry and will be held on February 15 and March 21 at 6:30 pm. Spaces are currently available for additional readers. If you are interested in reading, please contact Destiny Allison at 930-4821 or destinyallison@aol.com. Suggested admission donation \$2.

Art in the 21st Century

February's free talk on Art in the 21st Century at Destiny Allison Fine Art in La Tienda features **Lindsay Ahl**, speaking on the lyric and the narrative in poetry and fiction on Thursday, February 2 at 6 pm. Ahl, author of *Desire* (published by Coffee House Press), grew up in Washington State and New Mexico and spent much of her childhood traveling throughout the world. She has lived in Mali, Sweden, France, and New York City, where she



ASTRONOMY CORNER



February 2012

FEBRUARY 20–MARCH 12 The planet Mercury will be far enough from the Sun's glare to be visible shortly after sunset. Mercury will reach its greatest elongation from the Sun on March 5. This will be your best chance to see the planet this year.

Protect Our Night Skies: Lights left carelessly on may spoil the views of our night sky.

worked as a photographer, film producer, actress, and creative writing instructor. Her fiction has appeared in numerous journals and magazines, including *BOMB*, *Global City Review*, and *Fiction Magazine*. She currently lives in Santa Fe and is working on publication of two new novels. Please call the gallery at 428-0024 to reserve your seats or RSVP to Destinyallison@aol.com.

Time to Say Thank You

La Tienda is planning a free thank-you party on March 10 for all the local volunteers who help make the world a better place. If your organization would like to thank your volunteers with a fun day of music, dancing, food, and more, contact **Steve Ewers** at sfcomputerworks@aol.com. Each group will give a presentation to thank their existing volunteers and to reach out for new volunteers. If you want to get involved in your community, come meet many of the local groups that can use your efforts. Check the www.LaTiendaEldorado.com website or the La Tienda weekly update email for details as March approaches.

February Events

Left out? Help us compile a comprehensive events listing.

Email info@eldoradosf.org with your meeting/event information, or bring it to the ECIA office by the 3rd of the month for publication in the following month's *Vistas*.

Please include "Attn: Vistas" and be sure to indicate:



1. **Type of Event**
2. **Location**
3. **Date & Time**
4. **A Resource Person** (one who can answer questions both about the event and the sponsoring organization) and his/her telephone number.

Photographs (digital or snapshots) are encouraged!
Note: All meetings are at the Community Center, unless otherwise noted.

LR=Living Room, F=Foyer, CFR=Conference Room, CR=Class Room, RR=Railroad, K=Kitchen

FEBRUARY SPECIAL EVENTS

ECIA Offices Closed	Mon., Feb. 20, President's Day			
TGIF	Fri., Feb 17, 5-7			LR

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Architectural Committee	Tues., Feb. 14, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Architectural Committee	Tues., Feb. 28, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Board Work Study	Mon., Feb. 13, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Conservation Committee	Tues., Feb. 7, 7-9 pm	John Parker	466-7513	F
ECIA Board Meeting	Thurs., Feb. 16, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CR
Facilities & Grounds	Tues., Feb.7, 4-6 pm	Jeanne Calzada	466-1947	CFR
Finance Committee	Wed., Feb. 8, 9:30-11:30	Dan Drobnis	466-4781	CFR
Information Committee	Tues., Feb. 21, 7-9 pm			CFR
Road Committee	No Meeting	Nolan Zisman	466-2968	CFR
Stable Committee	Wed., Feb. 28, 7-9 pm	Lisa Bessone	466-7100	LR
SPE Committee	Thurs., Feb. 9, 7-9 pm	Dana Richards	690-5500	CFR

MONTHLY / SEMI-MONTHLY MEETINGS

Bridge	Wed., Feb. 1,15, 29, 9–noon	Natalie Bernet	466-6118	LR
EACA Meeting	Last Thurs of month	Kris Palek	466-3035	LR
EAWS&SD*	1st & 3rd Thurs, 7-9 pm	Anna Mondragon	466-1085	RR
Eldorado Camera Club	4th Wednesday, 7-9	biordi@aol.com		La Tienda
La Canada Wireless	2nd & 4th Mon., 7-9 pm	lcwireless.org		
Library Book Group	2nd Saturday 9-10:30	Joan LaMarque	466-6000	CFR
Library Book Group	3rd Mon., 7-9 pm	Pam Henline	466-4781	VGPL
Roadrunner RV	3rd Tues. of month	Pat Stewart	820-0303	
Search & Rescue	2nd Thurs, 7 pm	santafesar.org		CR

WEEKLY MEETINGS

AA	Tues., 5:45-6:45 pm			CFR/LR
AA	Wed., 10:30-11:30 am			CFR/CR
AA	Wed., 5:45-6:45 pm (Men Only)			CFR
AA	Thurs. 5:30-6:30 pm (Women Only)			CFR
AA	Fri., 6-7 pm			CFR/LR
AA	Sat., 10:45-11:45 am			CFR
AA	Sun., 5:15-6:15 pm			LR/CFR
Boy Scout Troop 414	Wed., 7-9 pm	Fritz Denny	466-4070	RR, CR, LR
Bridge	Every Fri., 1-4:30 pm	Jim Davidson	466-3091	LR
Community Church**	Sun., 9:30 & 11:00 am	David McPherson	466-2495	La Tienda
Eldorado Hikers	Tues., 8:30 am	Terry Gibbs	466-6914	CC
Fire & Rescue Training	Wed., 7-9 pm	Fire Station Office	466-1204	Station
Fire & Rescue Work Duty	Sat., Call for time	Fire Station Office	466-1204	Station
Knitting Club	Tues., 10-12 noon	Joyce Hanmer	466-3018	LR
Life Drawing	Mon., 10-12 noon	Jack McCarthy	466-9601	RR
Senior Lunch***	Mon.-Fri., 12-1 pm	Senior Center	466-1039	
Square Dancing	Fri., 6-9 pm	Richard Robinson	466-7319	RR

*Eldorado Area Water and Sanitation District **For other religious/spiritual services, go to <http://santafe.areaconnect.com/churches.htm> ***Reservations Required

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.eldoradosf.org

Senior Center News

Keeping your new year's resolutions will be easier this year by becoming a member at the Adam Senior Center. It takes only two minutes to join. Take one or more of a variety of exercise classes. Most of them are taught from 10:30 to 11:30 am daily. Stay for a nutritious lunch, which is served daily at 12 noon Monday–Friday (suggested donation \$1.50). We often have guest speakers share interesting topics or performances by local artists while we enjoy our lunch. Stop by to fill out a form and pick up an activities calendar and menu.

EXERCISE CLASSES

CHAIR YOGA: **Barbara Boreman** leads chair yoga on Mondays at 10:30 am for a contribution of \$2 per person. Using a combination of seated (in chairs) and standing yoga postures, you can move your body through motions that increase circulation, improve muscle strength and tone, and calm your mind. Barbara has dedicated her yoga business to teaching yoga to seniors.

CHAIR AEROBICS: **Carol Branch** leads chair aerobics and stretch class on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 am. Chair aerobics helps to promote cardio health and aids in controlling blood sugar levels. The exercises, which consist of rhythmic movements to great music, involve moving your arms, legs, and feet while sitting in a chair and sometimes standing. These exercises help you to perform your daily chores energetically and help build stamina and balance.

TAI CHI ARTS: **Wendy Singer** volunteers her time by teaching Tai Chi on Wednesdays at 10:30 am.

This ancient art uses gentle flowing movements to reduce the stress of today's busy lifestyles and improves overall health. Use this graceful form of exercise to improve balance and prevent falls.

STRENGTH TRAINING: **Neila Richardson** leads the strength training class on Wednesday afternoons at 1:30 pm. This class is generously sponsored by Eldorado Physical Therapy. Using resistance exercise bands, you tone and strengthen your body. Researchers at Tufts University exercise lab say that strength training is a potent age eraser. It is their weapon of choice for fighting physical decline associated with aging.

ARTS & CRAFTS

Learn to draw from a master. **Jack McCarthy** loves to draw, and many of his drawings become inspiration for his linocut prints. His class teaches the student to see what is around one and to find the shapes and textures of items that go into a drawing. The class is for beginners, although advanced students will benefit as well. Class starts Thursday, February 23, at 1:30. Sign-up begins February 6. All classes are free, and materials and equipment are included.

Volunteers are always welcome and needed for Meals on Wheels, answering the phones, helping in the kitchen, or leading activities. Anyone needing Meals on Wheels delivered to a family member should call the Center to get registered and have an evaluation by a staff member. The Center's hours of operation are Monday–Friday, 10 am–4 pm. Our telephone number is 466-1039.

–Carol Branch

Eldorado's Changing Landscape, *continued from page 1*

propagation. Because of long tap roots and an aggressive nature, the elm is better able to reach water than most other tree species. Where growing in close proximity to homes, during periods of drought its invasive root structure may extend to sewage lines and septic tank leach fields in search of water, sometimes plugging up these systems. Because of its extensive root structure, Siberian elm can consume significant groundwater.

Albuquerque has been considered the northern extent of the Chihuahuan Desert. However, since the 2005 drought, this desert ecosystem has been slowly advancing to north central New Mexico, including portions of Eldorado. Desert indicator species, including *Agave striata*, cane cholla, and prickly pear cactus, are becoming more prevalent here.

Throughout most of 2011, Eldorado was included in that portion of New Mexico classified by the U.S. Weather Bureau as having "extreme drought" condi-

tions. Tree-ring data indicate that similar conditions have existed in New Mexico only about eight times in the last 500 years. Despite a little moisture in December, the U.S. Weather Bureau still maintains that La Niña weather conditions portend possible continued drought conditions for 2012, with a warmer and drier than normal spring and summer. In 2011, Eldorado received fewer than 6 inches of moisture, compared with the norm of about 14.2 inches. The latest forecasts from the NOAA Weather Prediction Center indicate that dry, warm weather conditions may continue well into the summer for much of New Mexico.

If this current drought extends over the next several years, Eldorado residents may have to seriously restrict water use. In particular, plans for extensive new outdoor landscape plantings this spring may need to be curtailed and other existing or planned increases in water use reconsidered.

–Don Dayton



Cholla cactus flower in Eldorado greenbelt.

Library Hires New Director

Vista Grande Public Library is pleased to announce the hiring of a new library director. **Caroline Dechert** has accepted the position and will be on board around the first of March. She is currently the library director for Cotuit Public Library on Cape Cod and was previously the director for The Free Library in New Hope and Solebury. Prior to her career in library science, Caroline was a business owner and also has experience as a computer consultant. She has also been a library volunteer, as well as a library volunteer coordinator. Her education

includes an undergraduate degree from Brown and an MLIS from Drexel. She was also a National Merit Scholar.

The Board of Directors is excited about the experience and leadership skills Caroline will bring to our library. We plan to have a special day in which all of you can stop by the library to meet Caroline.

We wish to thank our patrons for their continued support during this time of transition and look forward to a wonderful 2012.

—Joan Lemmon



New VGPL Director
Caroline Dechert

At the Crossroads

As we begin 2012, there is hope for a good snowfall and spring/summer showers. The downside of (hopefully!) getting this moisture is the negative impact on our dirt roads—lots of ruts (some very deep) and some fishtailing. When roads get into these conditions, we yearn for either paved roads or new base course (which seems to be holding up pretty well where it exists). But the realities don't match up to the yearnings. There will be few if any funds coming from the county to upgrade any of our roads any time soon. And, the costs of materials and labor keep rising: the cost of one mile of paved road has nearly doubled in the relatively short time I've been involved with the Road Committee.

As suggested in an earlier "At the Crossroads" article, the answer for at least some of our roads may be the establishment of one or more County Improvement Districts (CID). Under these programs, lot owners can collaborate to fund, via a special assessment (which would show up as an increase in their property taxes), either new base course or chip seal for their roads. The alternative is to wait until the county can find funding and prioritize our roads for improvement—which could be a long wait! As a reminder, there is an FAQ explanation regarding CIDs on our ECIA website (page 2 under "Welcome to Eldorado"). Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to know how to start the CID process.

—Nolan Zisman, Chair, ECIA Road Committee

American Kestrel (AK), Part 2

In Eldorado, you are most likely to see American Kestrels (AKs) during the warmer months, when they are nesting and feeding young. Males climb and dive calling *klee!* to delineate their territory. AKs usually swoop down from a high wire or tree perch and pounce on prey on the ground, seizing the prey with its talons; from here they either stay on the ground to eat, or carry the prey to a perch. AKs also can hover and have been seen using this ability at sports stadiums, where they perch on or near high-power lights. They then swoop and pluck moths and other insects attracted to the lights. Pastures and parklands existing near human habitation also can provide nesting and prey opportunities for AKs. Some birds are comfortable in large cities!

Suitable nest cavities are absolutely necessary for AKs. They do not make their own cavities, but use woodpecker holes, tree hollows, or other hollowed-out sites. They don't even put nest materials in their cavity. The male shows nesting sites to the female, who makes the final choice. Human-made nest boxes will readily attract birds and will help this species sur-

vive. AKs are the most widespread falcon, but are declining in New England, Florida, and parts of the Northwest. Farming practices and use of insecticide are reducing reproduction and survival rates.

Most birds locate food via eyesight. AKs (and most birds) see ultraviolet light. Thus the urine trails of mice and voles may help them find food. In good times, AKs stash extra food around their territory. It is difficult to know how much is later retrieved. In the fall, females move south before males, and the females typically claim open territory. The later-arriving males must make do with areas with more trees.

It isn't easy being a small bird of prey. Other birds, such as red-tailed hawks, sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks, and northern goshawks, attack and eat AKs. Other predators include barn owls, crows, rat snakes, and corn snakes.

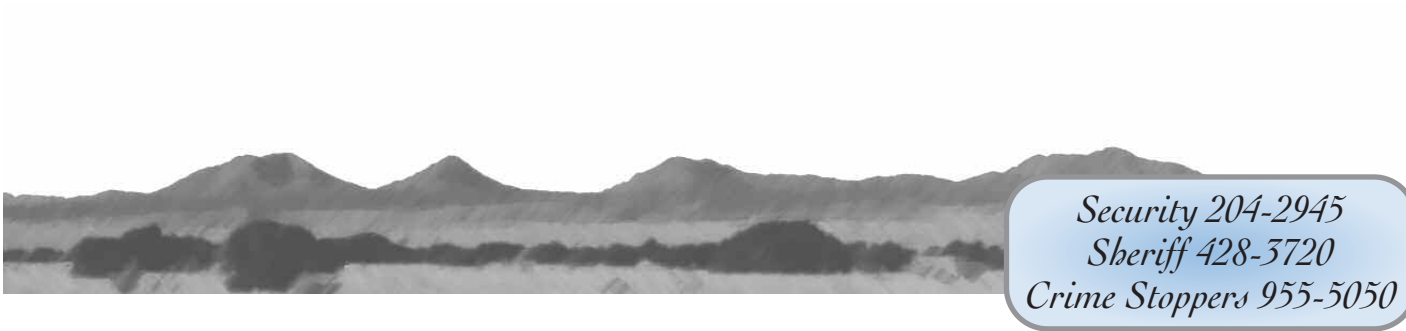
AKs are commonly mislabeled as sparrow hawks.

Thanks to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for much of this information.

—Pam Henline



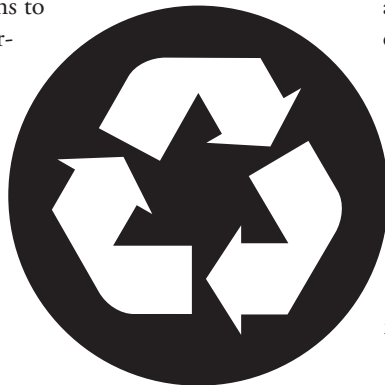
American Kestrel nestlings.
Photo by HSFarm, from
www.birds.cornell.edu.



*Security 204-2945
Sheriff 428-3720
Crime Stoppers 955-5050*

Recycling Tips **FROM SERA, ELDORADO'S RECYCLING RESOURCE**

- ▶ Eliminate unwanted catalogs from your mailbox. Sign up at catalogchoice.org.
- ▶ Recycle your non-usable computer, monitor, hard drive, keyboard, mouse, or anything else that plugs into the computer, at The Computer Works, Suite A3B (right here at La Tienda; 466-1262; they also take used printer cartridges, proceeds of which go to El Dorado School). Other places to recycle computer parts are Best Buy (438-4761), Capital Scrap Metals, Inc. (471-0740), Mr. G's Recycling (474-6969), Office Depot (986-0096 or 474-7181), Radio Shack (four locations), Staples (473-3721), and T-Mobil (471-0385).
- ▶ Donate usable computer items to thrift stores in Santa Fe; information can be found on the Santa Fe Recycling website, SantaFeRecycling.org.
- ▶ Recycle rechargeable and non-rechargeable batteries at the Eldorado Transfer Station located just off Hwy 285, two miles south of the Vista Grande entrance



- ▶ behind El Dorado Fire and Rescue Station #3. Hours 8–5, Wednesday–Sunday (466-1266). Other locations for recycling batteries: Home Depot, Lowes, and Office Depot.
- ▶ Additional donation sites can be found at SantaFeRecycling.org, along with many other recycling tips and important information. It is probably a good idea to call before you donate, to make sure donation regulations have not changed.
- ▶ **NEW!** As of November 1, 2011, any Waste Management customer of the trash and recycling service can call WM at 473-0982 and request either (a) a second 45-gallon recycling cart, or (b) replacement of their current 45-gallon cart with a 96-gallon recycling cart. There will be no increase in your monthly recycling fee!

