

ELDORADO at SANTA FE VISTAS

IN THIS ISSUE

ECIA News2-3
In the Community4-5
Library News6
Recycling News.....6
Wildlife6-7

Monthly Newsletter of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association

1 La Hacienda Loop, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508 ▼ (505) 466-4248 ▼ www.eldoradosf.org ▼ Security 204-2945

Management Talks Underway

Following lengthy deliberations, the ECIA Board of Directors has decided to enter into negotiations with a management company, HOAMCO, to provide administrative services for the Association. After a brief fact-finding period, the Board will meet with HOAMCO leadership to design a contract that will define the company's role and responsibilities in the community. The final agreement is likely to entail the hiring of a general manager, who would be employed by HOAMCO and specifically approved by the ECIA Board. In preliminary talks, the company has emphasized its commitment to community service and professionalism.

Under any such arrangement with a management company, the ECIA Board of Directors would remain in full control of decision-making on budgets and policies. It would be the responsibility of the company to carry out those decisions and administer the daily activities of the ECIA in a professional and efficient way. The budgetary impact of this transition would be minimal, and may even save the Association money, depending on how the agreement is finalized.

HOAMCO is a privately owned, full-service community association management firm. It provides a wide range of services to associations in Arizona and New Mexico. Prior to any formal transition, HOAMCO principals will participate in several public meetings in Eldorado to give members a chance to get to know them and allow the company to address any concerns that Eldoradoans might have.

During negotiations with HOAMCO, the ECIA Board will determine the extent to which the Association can take advantage of centralized services provided by the company, such as bookkeeping, group insurance policies, communication tools, and human resources. Regardless of the final arrangement, the company would be expected to understand what makes Eldorado a unique community and to work to strengthen those values. If at any time the ECIA Board becomes dissatisfied with the partnership with HOAMCO, it will be able to terminate the arrangement with a few months' notice.

Even though there are many details to be worked out, the ECIA Board would anticipate that a new management team can be in place around the beginning of the year.

Additional information about the proposed transition, updates, and schedules for public forums with HOAMCO principals will be posted to the ECIA website.

—Dag Ryen, ECIA President

Emergency Resource

ELDORADIO, the community's local low-power radio station, is ready for emergencies or disasters with an emergency power supply. It can stay on the air even if electricity fails, to relay emergency messages from ECIA, law enforcement, or other authorities. Residents may want to set one of the pushbuttons on their car radio to 1660 AM, to be ready in case of emergency.

The station broadcasts 24 hours of music, with automatic on-the-hour time signals and occasional other messages. A morning wake-up program at 7 AM includes weather and the day's events and activities in Eldorado and Santa Fe. From time to time, special programming marks holidays. FCC rules limit the station's power, so it only covers Eldorado.

The day after Thanksgiving, ELDORADIO adds holiday music to the mix. The amount of Yuletide and Hanukkah music will grow each day until it's all Christmas listening by December 24.

ECIA Board Meeting,
Community Center
Railroad Bldg.
Thurs.,
November 20,
7 PM.

REMEMBER TO VOTE!

Tuesday, November 4, 2014, is Election Day, with General Election races for Governor and Lt. Governor, U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, Secretary of State, State Auditor, State Treasurer, Attorney General, Public Lands Commissioner, Court of Appeals Judge, State Representative, County Commissioner, County Assessor, County Sheriff, a variety of judges, plus general obligation bonds and five proposed constitutional amendments. On Election Day, all polling places will be open from 7 AM to 7 PM. The polling place for Precincts 63 and 65 in Eldorado is at the El Dorado Community School, 2 Avenida Torreon.

REMINDER: Please remove any candidate signs from your lot immediately following the election.



Share your comments with us! For policy and deadline, see below

Editorial Policy

Vistas invites ideas, stories, photos, and art from the community at large. Please include full name and contact information. The newsletter will not publish material deemed inflammatory, biased, or inappropriate. Submissions will be selected and edited at the discretion of the editor. 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 DiAna@eldoradosf.org. 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.

Stucco Finish Maintenance

Every year the ECIA receives calls from concerned residents about a neighboring home's stucco work that is in disrepair, its finish cracked, faded, peeling, or worse. We often hear the comment that a particular house looks terrible and could affect the value of other homes nearby.

Some stucco finish problems are caused by a combination of New Mexico's intense sun, moisture, extreme temperature changes, and, at times, homeowner neglect. Such problems can occur so slowly over the years that homeowners may be unaware that their stucco finish has deteriorated.

The average life-span of a stucco finish on a home is around 10 to 15 years, assuming that regular routine maintenance work is undertaken (filling in or repairing any cracks or peeling). If the stucco coat has not been refurbished in a timely manner, the house may develop a mottled or peeling exterior surface. A stucco coat that has been long neglected can also create more serious problems, such as:

- Water penetration into and possible damage of the wall
Possible parapet or structural damage
Mold, mildew, or other water-related issues

The ECIA therefore asks that residents inspect the stucco coat on their home to ensure that there is no cracking or peeling that could lead to more expensive repair work in the future.

Should the ECIA receive a complaint from a resident about the appearance of a neighbor's home due to its poor stucco condition, the ECIA will contact the homeowner to ask him or her to restucco part or all of the home to bring it into compliance with Article II, Section 14 of the covenants, which prohibits conditions that can be deemed a visual nuisance. Thank you for your cooperation!

-Mark Young, Covenant Compliance Representative

2015 Budget Work Continues

The Finance Committee is continuing work on the 2015 Operating and Maintenance budgets. Note the evening meeting on Monday, November 17, and the Saturday morning hearing on December 6. All are open to Eldorado home and lot owners. Meetings are scheduled as follows:

Wednesday, November Nov. 12, 9:30 AM: The Finance Committee adopts a final recommended budget and Budget Message at its regular monthly meeting. Venue: Conference Room.

Monday, November 17, 6:30-8:30 PM, followed by a Board working meeting: Joint meeting of the ECIA Board and Finance Committee. Committee chairs and residents are invited for information or to further discuss budget items. Venue: Conference Room.

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Tuesday, December 2, 9 AM: Proposed 2015 Operating Budget and Message available at the ECIA office and on the website.

Saturday, December 6, 10 AM: The Board conducts a public hearing on the proposed 2015 Operating Budget. Copies will be available at the hearing. Venue: Railroad Building.

Thursday December 18, 7 PM: The Board adopts the final 2015 budget at its regular meeting. Venue: Board Meeting, Railroad Building.

Windmills and Dreams Update Project

A book on the history of Eldorado, Windmills and Dreams, is in the process of being updated. The original, published in 1997 by ECIA, is now out of print and out of date; and sadly, the original proofs are gone. However, thanks to the efforts of Steve Rudnick of the Planning and Education Committee, the text has been scanned and is available for update.

Three components are needed to move this project forward: (1) Volunteers to proofread the scanned text and correct the inevitable errors of computerized optical character recognition; (2) knowledgeable people to add chapters to bring the Eldorado story forward from the mid-1990s; and (3) replacements and additions to the original photos, many of which did not scan or reproduce well. If you have a proofreader's eye and/or Eldorado knowledge and history to contribute, contact the ECIA office (466-4248).

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-Dan Drobnis



Message from the ECIA Board

With the holidays right around the corner, the ECIA Board wishes to offer thanks to all the people who made the summer season such a resounding success at the Community Center. Nearly 1,300 members and residents made use of their pool passes. The number of four-legged friends enjoying the dog park has risen to more than 400. On several weekends this summer, tennis enthusiasts had to wait 15 minutes or more to get onto our new courts. Several members of the Board have overheard remarks this summer claiming that “this is the best pool in Santa Fe,” “these are the best courts in the county,” and even “the Community Center grounds haven’t looked this good in decades.”

We take considerable pride in these compliments and thank everyone who made them possible, particularly the crackerjack pool guards who got up earlier and stayed later than ever before. And thanks to our maintenance staff, who pitched in when our pool

pumps gave us fits and who spent long hours reconfiguring lighting, water systems, and plantings around the center. Not least, we thank “Obie,” whose stunning cactus garden is a marvelous gift to the Eldorado community. And, of course, our thanks go to our office staff, who have gracefully carried an added workload lately.

While we’re at it, thanks are also due to the residents of Herrada Road and adjacent roads, who have patiently waited for the county to complete its paving project. We hope the improvement will serve them well through rain and snow this winter, and we hope that everyone in that area will observe speed limits and watch for pedestrians and pets along the new roadway.

Finally, the Board wants to thank the dedicated volunteers in all our committees and working groups, who have selflessly put in countless hours this year to ensure the smooth running of the Association. We couldn’t have done any of it without you.

—The ECIA Board of Directors

Recent Board Actions

The ECIA Board held its regular meeting on October 16, 2014, with five Board members present: **Dag Ryen** (President), **Gershon Siegel** (Secretary), **Jeanne Calzada**, **Greg Colello**, and **David Yard**. Absences by Board members **Pam Henline** (Vice-President) and **Todd Handy** (Treasurer) were excused.

The Board heard a brief presentation by Santa Fe County Treasurer **Patrick Varela** and Deputy Treasurer **Eric Lujan**. The Treasurer’s office will have staff available at the Senior Center in Eldorado from 10 AM until 1 PM on November 10 and 17 and on December 1 to receive property tax payments and to answer questions about recent changes in property tax assessments.

President Ryen announced that the Board has initiated negotiations with a management company, HOAMCO, to provide administrative services to ECIA.

The following formal actions were taken unanimously, without the Chair voting, excepted as noted.

- ▼ A variance was approved for 3 Monte Alto Way for a small ground-based solar array to run a cistern pump during summer months.
- ▼ A variance was approved for 31 Monte Alto Road for an existing small accessory structure that stands 10 feet at its peak.
- ▼ Revisions to the Election Policies and Procedures for ECIA elections in 2015, as recommended by the ECIA Election Committee, were approved.

▼ Amendments to the ECIA Information and Instructions Sheet for Nomination Petition for Board elections in 2015, as recommended by the ECIA Election Committee, were approved.

▼ A revised Road Committee charter was approved.

▼ Changes to the Architecture Committee’s guidelines for RV screening, allowing 8-foot fencing as an acceptable screening option, were approved.

▼ A motion was approved requiring Board committee liaisons to provide written committee reports prior to each regular Board meeting and the inclusion of such reports in the consent agenda at those meetings.

▼ Additionally, the Board approved by a vote of 2–1 (Calzada and Siegel voting for, Colello against, Yard abstaining) three associated variances at 75 Encantado Loop to allow an 8-foot RV screening fence to intrude into the 20-foot setback and an expansion of allowable fenced-in area.

Regular Board meetings are scheduled on the third Thursday of each month at 7 PM at the Community Center. Meetings begin with community announcements and an open forum. Complete minutes and meeting agendas are available at the ECIA office or website: www.eldoradosf.org. In addition, two informal Board working sessions are held each month at 7 PM on the first Thursday and the Monday prior to the regular Board meeting. ECIA members are welcome to attend, and may request in advance to speak about an item of the agenda by calling the ECIA office at 466-4248.

ECIA OFFICE

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Katherine Mortimer
Conservation: **Jim Daniel & Cherry Payne**
Election: **Kathie Graham**
Facilities & Grounds:
John Calzada
Finance: **Dan Drobnis**
Information: **Frank Schober**
Roads: **Felicia Probert**
Stable: **Open**

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Vista Grande Library
466-READ
Fire and Rescue
466-1204
eldoradofireandrescue.org
County All Purpose
820-CNTY (2689)



Pajarito Spanish Dance Alliance

Flamenco Music & Dance

Add a dash of mystery, several drops of surprise, and an overflowing cup of good humor to your day by joining the Pajarito Spanish Dance Alliance for their annual Fiesta del Otoño, a performance for all ages. This year's show, ¡Bailar, Amar, Cantar, Vivir!, features flamenco and traditional

Spanish pieces performed in true flamenco *tablaó* style by a professional company with local roots.

The Pajarito Spanish Dance Alliance is a 501(c)3 organization that brings together local artists to perform, teach, and preserve the art of Spanish dance.

When: Saturday, November 15, 7–8:15 PM and Sunday, November 16, 2–3 PM

Where: The Performance Space in La Tienda

Admission: \$15 adults, \$8 children and students 18 and under; tickets available at the door or from brownpapertickets.com, starting October 31. Seating opens 30 minutes before the show. Contact Elena at PajaritoSpanishDance@hotmail.com or (505) 412-0104.

Flea Market at Senior Center

On Saturday, November 1, the Adam Senior Center will host the 4th annual indoor Flea Market from 9 AM to 2 PM at 16 Avenida Torreon. The event is free and there is ample parking. Inquiries: 466-1039.

Mah Jongg in Eldorado

The Eldorado Mah Jongg group would like to encourage new players to join in. If you have played American Mah Jongg before, great, but if you have never even seen how the game is played, they'd love to teach you. Currently, the group plays on Friday afternoons, from 1 to 5 PM in the Classroom in the Eldorado Community Center. Call Nancy Robbins for details: 466-1780.

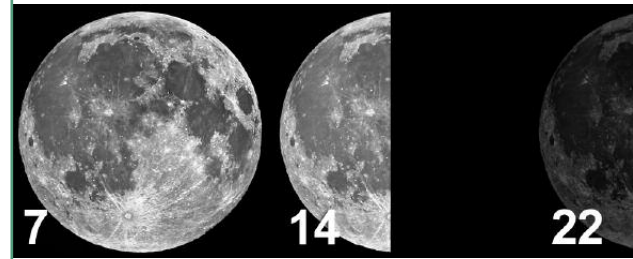
Sally Hayden Von Conta Pastels

"Moments of the Unexpected," a show of plein-air pastels by Sally Hayden Von Conta, is on view October 25 to November 29 at Las Chivas Coffee House in the Agora Shopping Center. An Artist's Reception is being held on November 2, from 1 to 3 PM. For details: sallyhaydenvonconta.com, 505-466-0174.

Support Groups for Caregivers

The Gloaming at Santa Fe, LLC, is a new business in Suite 6 of the business condominiums on 3 Caliente Road that provides mental health counseling and life coaching services. As a service to the community, the Gloaming offers free support

MOON PHASES FOR NOVEMBER



groups in response to a need for caregiver support. Meetings are held at The Gloaming at Santa Fe.

- Support Group for Caregivers with a Family Member Who Lives with Alzheimer's or Dementia: 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month, from 9:30 to 11 AM.
- General Caregiver's Support Group, 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, from 5:30 to 7 PM. Email drkittyfallon@thegloamingatsantafe.com for more information.

Greenbelt Trail Project Completed

The ECIA Conservation Committee has now completed the Greenbelt Pilot Project in the Pueblo Canyon Greenbelt area. This work, which was approved by the Santa Fe County Land Development Office, successfully turned an eroded greenbelt trail into a 2.6 mile long, class 4, multi-use trail for walking, biking, or horseback riding. For more information, contact the ECIA at 466-4248.

Reel New Mexico!

On Thursday, November 13, at 7 PM, REEL NEW MEXICO will present the delightful comedy, shot on Route 66, *Bagdad Cafe*, at the Performance Space at La Tienda.

Bagdad Café, an adorable comic fable set in a ramshackle motel-restaurant on the edge of the Mojave Desert, is West German director Percy Adlon's first English-language film. It is a triumphant teaming of Marianne Sagebrecht, the irresistible Rubenesque star of Adlon's *Sugarbaby*, and the formidable African American actress CCH Pounder.

This little gem is not just a hilarious and touching account of the friendship that develops between two women of jarringly different cultures. It also offers a renewed, endearingly quirky vision of America as the land of opportunity, not in the economic sense, but as a place with plenty of room for self-discovery and individuality.

Progressing from bleak reality to utopian fantasy, *Bagdad Cafe* is an inspired charmer of the first order abounding in images that recall the quaintly tinted postcards that preserve the history of roadside America. Shot entirely at a roadside cafe/



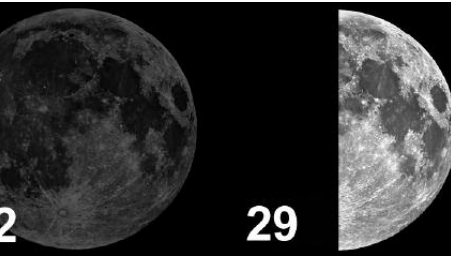
"From Inside the Spirit Cave, Bandelier," pastel by Sally Hayden Von Conta on view at Las Chivas.

Changes Near You?

Have any of your neighbors submitted architectural modification plans to the ECIA for approval? What changes to the built landscape are being considered near you? Check out the Architecture Committee agenda at <http://tinyurl.com/ldjmreo> or the ECIA Board agenda at <http://tinyurl.com/lkxxdmw>.

November Events

EMBER 2014



motel in the Mojave Desert, the film was later turned into a television series starring Whoopi Goldberg and Jean Stapleton.

Filmgoers will now be able to order and bring food and drink from La Plancha into the Performance Space, offering a casual dinner-and-a-movie type of event.

The \$5 suggested donation/admission at the door will go for expenses and to bring in filmmakers for other screenings.

Screening on Thursday, December 11: Christmas in New Mexico, featuring a delightful and slightly corny television special shot in Santa Fe in 1979 and the only Christmas-themed film shot in New Mexico, *Miracle in the Wilderness*.

For more information, contact Jeff Berg at 466-1634 or at nedludd76@hotmail.com.



Left out? Help us compile a comprehensive events listing.

Email marilyn@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

SPECIAL EVENTS

Indoor Flea Market	Sat., Nov. 1, 9-2	Senior Center
General Election	Tues., Nov. 4, 7 am-7 pm	Community School
ECIA Office closed	Thurs.-Fri., Nov. 27-28 (closed for Thanksgiving)	

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Architectural Committee	Tues., Nov. 11, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Architectural Committee	Tues., Nov. 25, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Board Work Study	Thurs., Nov. 6, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Board Work Study	Mon., Nov. 17, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Conservation Committee	Tues., Nov. 4, 7-9 pm	Jim Daniel	609-941-4527	F
ECIA Board Meeting	Thurs., Nov. 20, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	RR
Election Committee	Wed., Nov. 12, 2-4	Kathie Graham	466-2133	CFR
Facilities & Grounds	Wed., Nov. 5, 4-6 pm	John Calzada	466-1947	CFR
Finance Committee	Wed., Nov. 12, 9:30-11:30 am	Dan Drobnis	466-4781	CFR
Information Committee	Tues., Nov. 25, 7-9 pm	Frank Schober	310-8593	CFR
Road Committee	TBA	Felicia Probert	466-1563	CFR
Stable Committee	TBA	Alice Griffin	795-6424	CFR

MONTHLY / SEMI-MONTHLY MEETINGS

EAW&SD*	1st & 3rd Thurs., 7-9 pm	Anna Mondragon	466-1085	RR/CR
Eldorado Arts & Crafts	Last Thurs., of month	Barrie Brown	466-3035	CC
Eldorado Book Club	3rd Wed., 3:00 pm	Susan Aylward	shaylward@gmail.com	
Eldorado/285 Recycles	2nd Tues. of month, 4-6 pm	Karen Sweeney	466-9797	CFR
Library Book Group	2nd Sat., 9-10:30	Joan LaMarque	466-6000	CFR
Roadrunner RV	3rd Tues. of month	Pat Stewart	820-0303	
Search & Rescue	2nd Thurs., 7-9 pm	santafesar.org		CR

WEEKLY MEETINGS

AA	Tues., 5:45-6:45 pm			CFR/LR
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	Jackie Vaughn	466-2558	LR
Community Church**	Sun., 9:00 & 10:30 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			RR
Mah Jongg	Fri., 1-4:30	Nancy Robbins	466-1780	CR
Overeaters Anon	Mon., 7-8 pm	Barb	954-1533	LR
Senior Lunch***	Mon.-Fri., 11:30-12:30 pm	Senior Center	466-1039	
Square Dancing	Fri., 6-9 pm	David Lovro	466-0540	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

At the Library

Come by and see the newly renovated library! It's been quite a process, but the move into the new addition is complete. There is now a larger children's area, more shelf space for fiction and DVDs, and a "Youth Zone" for teens and tweens to hang out in. Everything is clean and it all looks wonderful. Also, the community meeting room is available for groups to use.



FALL BOOK SALE: The Fall Book Sale will be held on November 13, 14, and 15 at the library. There will be a nice selection of adult fiction and nonfiction, children's books and young adult materials, along with some DVDs and miscellaneous items.

Stock up for the long winter months, and maybe find some great holiday gifts.

PROGRAMS: Story Time for toddlers and preschoolers will continue to meet on Friday mornings at 11 AM this month, except on November 28. The Wags and Words program, where children read to dogs at the library, is going strong. Children can sign up for Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons. Family Movie Night will be on Friday, November 7, at 7 PM. Contact the library for information on any of these events, at 505-466-7323, or see the website at www.vglibrary.org.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS: VGPL will be closed on November 27 and 28 to celebrate Thanksgiving.

—Tracey Mitchell

ELDORADO/285 RECYCLES

Involve Your Local Dentist in Recycling

As announced in a recent issue of *Vistas*, Eldorado/285 Recycles started collecting certain dental products at LaTienda for recycling. People are now bringing in old toothbrushes, floss containers, toothpaste tubes and caps, and deodorant containers to be shipped to TerraCycle for remanufacture into new products. Each shipment also results in a small donation to El Dorado Community School.

Local dentists have been participating in this program. So far, five dentists have started a collection program at their clinics. The best way to involve dentists is through personal contact, when a patient comes in for dental work and can introduce and explain the

program. If you are willing to ask your dentist to participate, before your next dental appointment please contact Shirley Knarr (shirleyknarr@gmail.com, 505-954-1525) or Joe Durlak (jdurlak@luc.edu), who will provide you with the information the dentist needs to get started. Eldorado/285 Recycles can even follow up with your dentist as needed. This is a great way to encourage more people to recycle items that currently cannot be recycled in Santa Fe. Our local dentists have been responsive so far; now let's spread the word!

—Joe Durlak, Eldorado/285 Recycles



Bewick's Wren (BW)

I am a fan of all wrens, with their small body, up-tilted tail, and lively movements. I was happy to catch a glimpse of this new (to me) bird outside a front window in the spring of 2014. I was to get more than a passing glance, as a pair of BWs decided to set up housekeeping in a bluebird box about 15 feet from my kitchen window. First there was a two-day shoot-out between the BWs and a pair of Juniper Titmice for possession of the box—won by the BWs. Then, there was much gathering of nesting material, including picking small threads from a throw about 4 feet outside a glass door (they wanted the threads and not some dog hair I put on the throw). Up close, they are easy to identify: about 5 inches long, wing span 7 inches, a gray underbelly, and brown body, wings, and tail. They have a distinctive "eyebrow" of white/light gray stripe running from the bill, over the

eye, and to the back of the head. There is usually some black and white banding visible on the tail. Male and female markings are similar.

BWs can be found in New Mexico year round and prefer scrub, bushes, and thickets in open woodland. They also can be found in California, Washington State, much of the Southwest, and into the southern parts of Mexico.

They are cavity nesters, with the male usually starting the building process and the female joining in. When courting, the male may turn and flutter and also offer food to the female. Pairs are seasonally monogamous. My nest was mostly made of small sticks placed about 3 inches deep in the box. During the process, there was much singing before entering the box, even with a stick in the mouth! Eventually

CONTINUED ON FACING PAGE >>



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH FLORA & FAUNA GROUP

Tumbleweeds

Recent visitors squealed with delight and grabbed their cameras when tumbleweeds blew across the road. I, on the other hand, grumbled with disgust when I had to dig up a stubborn patch of new tumbleweeds growing on a spot of our property that was recently bulldozed.

Those of us who experience allergies this time of year can usually blame plants that rely primarily on wind for pollination, rather than plants that have visible flowers to attract insects for pollination. Maple and hickory and olive trees, ragweed, and many other grasses that spread their pollen via wind can cause allergic difficulties.

A notable plant that relies on wind for pollination is the ever-present tumbleweed. Tumbleweeds amaze tourists, appear in every Western movie set, create real problems for animals and for motorists, can pose a fire hazard, and cause significant allergies in some people.

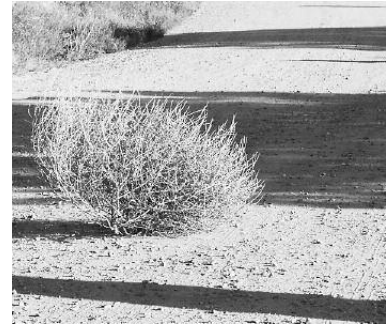
Two of the plants known as tumbleweeds, Russian thistle (*Salsola kali* ssp. *tragus*) (not to be confused with Russian sage!) and Kochia (*Kochia scoparia*), were brought to the New World by immigrants. The plants grow in disturbed dirt—in agricultural and construction sites, along roadsides and newly graded lanes—and Kochia turns red in the fall. In their dry state, the plants are known as tumbleweeds when the branches break from the main stem and roll across the ground propelled by wind. Species with thorns are sometimes called “wind witches,” due no doubt to the stinging pain inflicted when high winds blow them onto skin.

Many tumbleweeds provide food to animals: pronghorn and deer eat the foliage, prairie dogs and some birds eat the seeds, and in small amounts young Russian thistle can be nutritious for livestock. For humans, the leaves and tips of some tumbleweeds are edible if cooked. In fact, Kochia seeds, sometimes called “land caviar” because of the texture and salty taste, can be used as garnish.

A REMINDER ABOUT TREES: Water your trees well to prepare them for the winter and then water once a month during the winter unless there is a great deal of snow.

SPECIAL NOTICE: We’ve seen a number of dead house finches in Eldorado, which we learned could be due to a respiratory virus common to this species especially at this time of year. If you use bird feeders and birdbaths, please keep them clean and remove the seed hulls that accumulate on the ground. The cylinder type of feeder—the type that the birds have to put their beaks into to get the seeds—are especially problematic. To clean the feeders and baths, use a solution of 8 cups of water to 1 cup of bleach, scrub with a stiff brush, rinse thoroughly in clean water, and allow to dry.

References for this article are available upon request. Contact us at EldoradoFloraFauna@yahoo.com. We love hearing from you!



Still-growing Russian thistle (top); tumbleweed blowing down a road (bottom).
Photos by Ann V. Wood.

Bewick’s Wren (BW), continued from p. 6

they were settled in, with the female laying three to eight eggs which hatch in 14 to 16 days. The helpless young develop quickly and fledge in 14 to 16 days. During the time the nestlings were fed, the adult usually stopped on a perch just below the nest and belted out a lovely short song.

Diet consists of pupae, larvae, eggs, and adult insects, such as caterpillars, spiders, beetles, moths, and crickets. In winter, they include seeds and other plant material. They may hang upside down gleaning insects and spiders from branches and tend to forage within 10 feet of the ground.

The bird is named for British engraver Thomas Bewick, who collected a specimen in the early 1800s. BWs have disappeared from eastern U.S., coinciding with the expansion of the House Wren (slightly bigger, they dominate at nest sites).

According to the Cornell All About Birds website: A young male Bewick’s Wren learns to sing from neighboring adult males while he is coming of age in his parents’ territory. The songs he develops differ from his father’s, with a note changed here, a syllable there. The melodious signature he acquires between the ages of about 30 and 60 days will be his for life.

—Pam Henline



Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii calophonus*, Seattle.
Photo: Minette Layne, Creative Commons license.

VISTAS

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Neighborhood Watch: <http://eldoradoneighbors.wordpress.com>

How the Railroad Room Came to Eldorado

The railroad never came to Eldorado—but the Railroad Room did! What we now call the Railroad Room began life as a workcrew bunkhouse and station along what was once the Santa Fe Railroad main line at Kennedy, New Mexico, during the late 19th century.

The site of Kennedy, never much of a place and now a ghost town, lies 8 miles southeast of Lamy, west of NM 41. Anyone wishing to visit can proceed from Lamy junction on US 285, south on NM 41 5.7 miles to Caminito Los Abuelos (County 42), and then turn right 2.1 miles to the railroad tracks. If you are very determined to reach the actual spot, you can turn left after crossing the tracks and proceed southwest a few hundred yards along a dirt wash.

The Simpson family moved the building to their ranch compound, now the Eldorado Community Center, around 1956 and used it as a bunkhouse for ranch hands. A photo in *Windmills and Dreams* shows it on the ranch, still with the Santa Fe Railroad logo and the name “Kennedy.”

After the sale of Simpson’s ranch to AMREP for the development of Eldorado at Santa Fe in the early 1970s, the building was used for a time as a general store, run by **Barbara Raznick**, long-time resident and wife of local realtor and community leader **Fred**. Recent repaintings have retained the railroad logo but substituted the name “Eldorado.” It now serves as a room for meetings, including those of the ECIA Board, Boy Scouts, and Square Dance Club.

—Dan Drobnis

Herrada Road Project

The project to improve Herrada Road (a 1.92 mile long road that begins at Avenida Casa del Oro and ends just before the railway tracks) should be finished by this writing. Santa Fe County awarded the contract to Mountain State Contractors, who undertook the installation of bar ditches and driveway culverts, put in the road base, and then paved the roadway. Residents’ mailboxes and driveways have remained usable throughout construction.

Financing for this project comes from a 2013 general obligation bond, a New Mexico Department of Transportation State Grant, and District 5 discretionary funds. The total cost, excluding gross receipts tax is \$1,205,496.26.

—Juliet White

