

VISTAS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ELDORADO COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

1 La Hacienda Loop, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508 • 505 466-4248 • www.eldoradosf.org

IN THIS ISSUE

Board Meeting Summary	2
ECIA Contact Information	3
Weeds / Halloween	4
Recycle / Crosswalk	5
Political Signs Permitted	5
Blossoming Beauties	6
Security Tip / 78,000 Bags	6
Meetings / News Tid-Bits	7
Sparrows Learn New Song	8

Make Your Voice Heard—VOTE!

Most information about voting here in Eldorado can be found online by starting at the following web addresses:

santafecountynm.gov/clerk/elections_information
and NMVote.org.

The County Clerk's Office is located at 100 Catron St., in Santa Fe. It is Closed **Oct. 12**. Call the office at **505 986-6280**.

NOTE: for in-person voting or registration, the County Clerk is available at the Santa Fe Community Convention Center at 201 W. Marcy Street downtown.

If you are a registered New Mexico voter, there are three ways to vote:

- 1. On Election Day: Tuesday Nov. 3**, vote in person at the Max Coll Center (next to the library). A registered voter may vote at any NM official voting center. Polls are open 7 AM through 7 PM. *Recommendation:* Vote early in the day.
- 2. Early Voting: Oct. 17 through Oct. 31**, in person at the Max Coll Center or other early voting sites. Hours are Tuesday through Friday Noon to 8 PM, Saturdays 10 AM to 6 PM. *Recommendation:* Vote early to avoid possible crowds. Ballots can be cast starting **Oct. 6** at the County Clerk's Office.
- 3. Cast Absentee Ballot:** Three steps—**Apply** for absentee ballot; carefully **fill** in your ballot; **return your ballot** by mail or dropping off.

Apply for Absentee ballot until Tuesday, Oct. 20.

Recommendation: Request your absentee ballot immediately, online if possible. Santa Fe County mailed absentee ballot requests to 'mailable' voters on Sept. 14.

Apply online for ballot. You will need NM ID or Drivers' License Number, last 4 digits SS# and date of birth, go to santafecountynm.gov/clerk/elections_information.

Print out application form from Clerk's web site and mail or deliver to County Clerk. Call the office at **505 986-6280** to request an application.

Return your Absentee Ballot. Mailing of Absentee Ballots to voters who have requested them will begin on **Oct. 6**. *Recommendation:* Fill out and return as soon as possible.

Carefully fill out ballot and follow all instructions so that ballot is correct and will not be invalidated. Absentee ballots

must be received by **7 PM Nov. 3** at the office of the County Clerk. Ballot counting may start 14 days before the election.

Mail Ballot via USPS: Return ballot as early as possible.

For maximum safety when mailing a ballot, deposit in a USPS Mail Box:

- At the Agora located next to grocery store, last pickup 3:30 PM
- At the Agora in QuikSend, last pickup 3:30 PM
- At the drive-by boxes at the Post Office on Pacheco Ave.

Drop Off Ballot: (NM requires that the voter, relative or caregiver deliver ballot).

Ballots can be dropped off at Polling places when they are open, during early voting or on election day (Max Coll Center). You will need to go inside and locate the drop-off box. Little time or waiting is necessary. There will be a separate line for voters dropping off their absentee ballots.

Ballots can be delivered to County Clerk in person at the Convention Center when open or to drop box at Clerk's office located at 100 Catron St.

Ballots can be placed in other drop boxes located around the state.

To Register to Vote:

You may register at the County Clerk's temporary Convention Center office **Oct. 7 through Oct. 31**, Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM and Saturday Oct. 31, 10 AM to 6 PM, no appointment needed, photo ID required. You can register to vote online at santafecountynm.gov/clerk/elections_information until **Oct. 6**.

You may also fill in a voter registration form and mail to the County Clerk's office.

Form must be received by **Oct. 6** to be valid for voting on Nov. 3.

You May have Received:

A non-profit non-partisan group, the Center for Voter Information, has mailed voter registration application and absentee-ballot application forms to just about everybody in

the state. These forms are valid for application, and include postage-paid envelopes. If you use these, follow dates and suggestions above.



Board Actions and Summary September 21

The September ECIA Board of Directors Meeting was held via Zoom. President Nancy Sulzberg, Vice President Melicent D'Amore, Secretary Carol Sanguinetti, Director David Sorkin, and Treasurer Sal Monaco were present and a quorum was met. HOAMCO staff including GM Julie Navarro, Facilities Manager Mike Rogers, Executive Assistant Rachel Turnbough, and Office Assistant Sarah Skagen, and Michael Smith, HOAMCO Executive Team, attended. The Board approved the Consent Agenda with a minor change to Motion 3. There were no Variance requests.

Newly appointed Commissioner Hank Hughes introduced himself and stressed his commitment to ethical and responsive governing practices. He shared his priorities for Eldorado which include working with the County regarding our water system, ensuring our roads are maintained and questioning the practice of moving nuclear waste along Route 285. He will work on behalf of the whole county on issues including affordable housing, climate change, renewable energy, and behavioral health programs. The Commissioner is holding a Town Hall on **October 1**. For more information or questions contact Commissioner Hughes at hhughes@santafecountynm.gov.

The GM and FM reported on current projects and plans. The use of electronic key cards to access Eldorado's amenities has been proposed but will need additional study before any action is taken. Lighting has been completed in the parking lot and will be completed at the courts, the stables and Compadres Park. The pool will remain open until Sunday, **October 4**. There will be no doggie swim this year. Jessica Collins, Pool Manager will be offering a Lifeguard Recertification Course before the pool is winterized.

Joseph Gutierrez, ECIA's County Liaison reported on three issues: one District 5 resident applied to become a member of the Transportation Advisory Committee; Eldorado's requests on the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan [ICIP] for \$300,000 for road projects and \$150,000 to begin evaluating for a Hike/Bike Trail on Azul is among 35 items listed by the County; and finally, a meeting will be arranged in an effort to formalize the relationship between ECIA, the County and the Tree Trimming Volunteer Team.

Sean Sartain introduced the not-yet-formalized Parents Task Group. The group hopes to provide input to committees and the Board regarding activities, amenities and programs for parents and children. Anyone interested in joining the group or for more information, please contact Jessica Collins, the Staff Liaison at **505 466-4248**.

There was a very productive discussion about the proposed Family Changing Room project. The procurement

process was carefully followed and ultimately only one company submitted a bid. The bid is fair and within the cost projections made by the architect. It is however, over the existing budget. Comments from residents raised the questions: should ECIA move forward with this project now, delay the project until next year or table the project entirely? The Board subsequently approved the increase in the Capital Projects budget but no decision was made regarding the project status. Once decided, the Board will send out an eblast.

Pam Henline reported on the status of the ECIA Logo Process. Ten bids were submitted and four of the vendors were interviewed. From that group, two companies were chosen and will be reviewed by Board members with the expectation that one will be chosen to complete the project. If you want more information about this project please contact Pam Henline at informationchair@gmail.com.

The HOAMCO Contract is in its final stages and is expected to be signed by the end of September. Stacy Maule, COO of HOAMCO will be on-site **September 30** for meetings with the staff and the Board and to finalize the contract. Once signed, the contract will be uploaded to the ECIA website.

The Board approved the following motions:

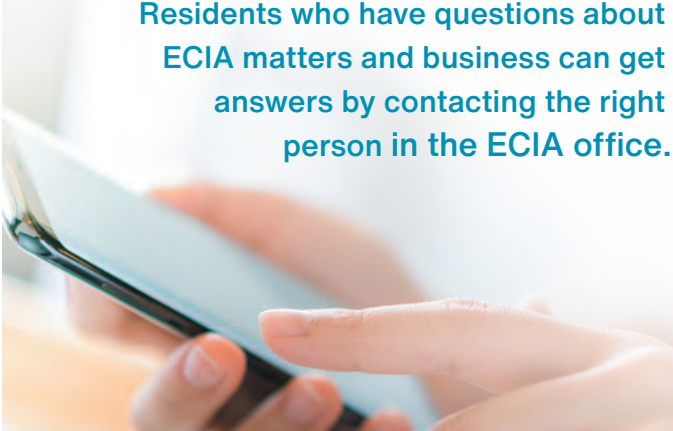
- To incorporate the Dog Park committee as a subcommittee of the Facilities and Grounds Committee and approve Marie Aragon, Taylor Ward, Bob Christie, and Guy Monroe as members.
- To increase the capital project budget by \$52K.
- To accept the Documents Retention Policy.
- To approve the Conservation Committee Preserve brochure.
- To accept the revisions to the Election Procedure process.

The President's Report and Treasurer's Report, along with Task Group and Committee reports are on the website. A summary of the Open Forum is also posted. Approximately 29 members of the community signed into the meeting that was recorded. Copies can be requested by calling the ECIA office at **505 466-4248**. Complete minutes and agendas are available at the ECIA office or on the website: www.eldoradosf.org.

Thank you to all who participated.
We hope to see you at the next meeting on:
Monday, October 26 at 5 PM.

—Nancy Sulzberg,
ECIA Board President

Get Your ECIA Information from the Source



Residents who have questions about ECIA matters and business can get answers by contacting the right person in the ECIA office.

ECIA OFFICE STAFF: 505 466-4248

JULIE NAVARRO

General Manager, jnavarro@HOAMCO.com:

- Resident and/or staffing concerns
- ECIA budget and reserve items
- Requests for ECIA records
- Collections and assessment payment plans
- Capital projects requests and status
- ECIA legal matters
- Governing documents, policies and procedures
- Committee and Task Group membership and liaisons
- Finance Committee

RACHEL TURNBOUGH

Executive Assistant, rturnbough@HOAMCO.com:

- Homeowner account balances, paid or outstanding bills
- Stable billing
- Marquee requests
- Lien filing and release
- Information Committee, Stable Committee and Policy Review Task Group

MIKE ROGERS

Facilities Manager, mrogers@HOAMCO.com:

- Amenities status: pool, preserve, courts, hike/bike trails, dog parks, playgrounds
- Common area maintenance
- Facility vendors
- Construction and maintenance projects
- Facilities & Grounds, Conservation, Roads and Stable Committees

SARAH SKAGEN

Office Assistant, sskagen@HOAMCO.com:

- Liability waivers and pool passes
- Dog park applications
- ECIA website
- E-blasts and Zoom links
- Event and meeting schedules
- Community Center hours
- Election Committee

MARK YOUNG

Architectural and Covenant Compliance Officer, myoung@HOAMCO.com:

- Architectural design submissions
- Non-compliance violations
- Architectural guidelines and covenants
- Solar installation procedures
- Architectural Committee

JESSICA COLLINS

Pool Manager, jcollins@HOAMCO.com:

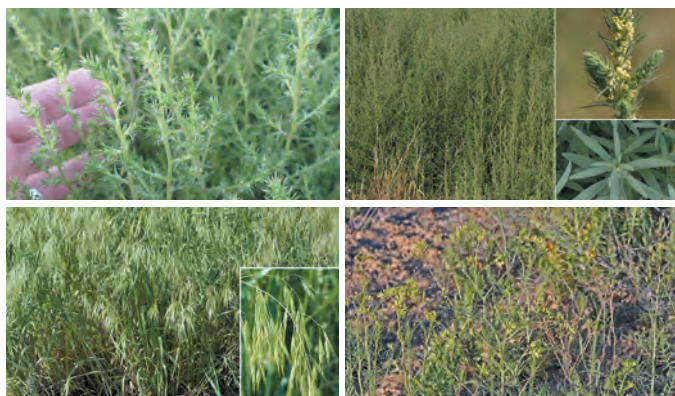
- Pool operations, rules and regulations
- Lifeguard certification
- Pool staffing
- Parents and Website Task Groups

ECIA BOARD & MANAGEMENT

Board: *President Nancy Sulzberg, Vice President Melicent D'Amore, Treasurer Sal Monaco, Secretary Carol Sanguinetti, Director David Sorkin.* There are two Board vacancies at this time.

Management: The ECIA is managed by HOAMCO. *General Manager Julie Navarro, jnavarro@hoamco.com*
Monthly report available at www.eldoradosf.org under Resident Resources.

Weeds Proliferate Despite Little Rain



Clockwise: Russian thistle, kochia, cheatgrass, Jim Hill mustard

We've had a dry summer monsoon season; but weeds are still growing aggressively over septic leach fields. Stewardship of one's property involves removing invasive weeds early, before they drive out native wildflowers and grasses. Weeds and piled brush create a visual nuisance, but more importantly, a potential fire hazard.

Many residents cannot tell weeds from native plants that sustain the wildlife we enjoy seeing in our yards. All our native forbs and grasses die back during the winter, but they provide food and cover for birds and other wildlife and recycle into the soil. Detrimental weeds such as Russian thistle, kochia, cheatgrass, and Jim Hill mustard that flourish in your yard cause a build-up of fuel as they dry out. Learn how to identify these undesirable plants when they are small and can be easily removed, and definitely don't let them go to seed.

Beyond maintaining the health of your land, the appearance of properties as it relates to weeds and brush piles does fall within the Eldorado Covenants under the Article II, Section 14, Nuisances-Clause: (In Part) ... *No unsightly or offensive objects shall be erected, placed, stored or permitted on any lot, nor shall any lot be permitted to appear in an unclean or untidy condition.*

The ECIA asks residents to inspect their lots for accumulating weeds, especially tall weeds over septic fields. These fuels, when close to homes, can act as a ladder fuel and even lead to a disaster. Please do not just pile weeds or woody debris; remove them from your lot. Consider spending your landscape budget on weed removal if the work is too difficult or time-consuming. Be sure the landscapers know which plants are weeds and which are the natives. If you are an absentee or seasonal landowner, please schedule a landscaper to take care of this.

As an added benefit, eliminating these piles may help to lessen our problematic rodent populations of mice and woodrats.

Thank you for your cooperation. For any questions, please call Mark Young at the ECIA at **505 466-4248**.

Photos clockwise from left: "tumbleweeds/Russian Thistle" by Derell Licht is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0; "Kochia Weed at Metzger Farm Open Space, Colorado" by nature80020 is licensed under CC BY 2.0; "Cheatgrass. Photo 1 of 4—The Bad Guy of Grasses" by nature80020 is licensed under CC BY 2.0; "CAD0010905a" by jerryoldennett is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

SAFER DRIVING WHEN WEEDS ARE MOWED

Did You Know?

Santa Fe County is responsible for maintenance of the road shoulders, which lie in the public right-of-way on either side of the roads throughout Eldorado. Shoulder maintenance involves annually mowing weeds, for the purpose of hazard reduction. The County is not mowing to beautify the roads.

If you wish to report an area where the weeds are so tall or overgrown that they are a hazard, simply go to the County's "Constituent Request" form on their website, [santafecountynm.gov/public_works/road_concern](https://www.santafecountynm.gov/public_works/road_concern) and click on the "Submit Your Request" box. You'll be prompted to enter information like your address and details about the problem. You can upload a photo.

If you have questions about road issues you'd like addressed, please send them to: Mike Rogers, Facilities Manager, mrogers@HOAMCO.com.

HALLOWEEN

is Saturday, Oct. 31.
Don't let COVID-19 put
a damper on your celebration.
Simple activities will help you
celebrate. Decorate your house
inside and outside and carve up
those pumpkins. Design a clever
face mask as your favorite
character and show it virtually
to all your friends.



Reduce Waste, Recycle Right

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has caused some changes in our local recycling opportunities. The good news is, the County Convenience Centers and private recycling haulers continue to accept the same materials as pre-COVID. The list of what can and cannot be recycled is available at eldorado285recycles.org and the Santa Fe County sites santafecountynm.gov/public_works/trash_and_recycling or santafenm.gov/ESD.

The ReUse Area at the Eldorado Convenience Center (Transfer Station) (ECC) on US 285 has been closed temporarily because of COVID concerns.

The collection area in La Tienda Bldg A, behind the decorative gates, has reopened. Dental items, disposable razors with packaging, pens, mechanical pencils, rubber bands, and corks are once again accepted. The skin care and beauty products collection is resuming. Athletic shoe collection in Bldg B near the gym is open again. Please note: Do not leave #5 plastics at La Tienda, but they can go in with your other plastic recyclables.

Do not leave batteries and light bulbs at La Tienda. All batteries—including standard, watch, laptop and mobile



phone batteries must be disposed of safely. They may be dropped off at one of the many retailers that participate in the Call2Recycle program. Alkaline batteries go in the trash. Rechargeable and lithium batteries can be taken free of charge to the ECC. Bulbs like fluorescent light bulbs that contain mercury should be taken to ECC for proper disposal. Most newer bulbs containing mercury say mercury (Hg) on the neck. LEDs do not contain mercury and go in the trash. Incandescent bulbs should also be trashed.

If your questions have not been answered here, ask on eldorado285recycles.org. We will answer you and post the information widely.

—Karen Sweeney, Eldorado/285 Recycles

The Mysterious Crosswalk—Who has Right of Way?



Olivia Compo riding Isabeau in the crosswalk near the Eldorado Stables.

For a number of drivers in Eldorado, crosswalks seem to be an abstract idea. Crosswalks are there every day and you just drive past them. But occasionally there may be pedestrians, people pushing baby strollers, folks on their bikes, kids near the school, riders on horseback, or dog walkers waiting at the crosswalk in order to safely cross the street. Anyone who passed a driver's test should know who has the legal right of way in this situation. But it appears to be a mystery to many in our community, who whip on past, without even slowing down, and ignore the person who is waiting. For those of you that may have forgotten what the law says and common courtesy demands, **you are required to stop if someone is waiting.** Mystery solved!

—Article and photo by Gretel Underwood

Political Signs Permitted on Lots in Eldorado



As the November 3 election approaches, political candidate signs will be popping up on lots. Section 9 of the Eldorado Covenants says signs may be erected no more than 14 days before an election. Early voting starts

Oct. 17 so signs should not go up before **Saturday, Oct. 3**. Please limit sign size to 2 feet by 3 feet or smaller. The Covenants also require removal of signs within 72 hours of an election, i.e. by **Nov. 5**.

All election signs must remain behind the Santa Fe County jurisdiction of 25 feet right-of-way measured from the centerline of the road into their lot.

Thank you for your help in keeping Eldorado beautiful.

—Mark Young

Blossoming Beauties in Eldorado

Gutierrezia sarothrae is a species of flowering plant in the daisy family known by the common names **broom snakeweed**, broomweed, snakeweed, and matchweed. It is a subshrub native to much of the western half of North America, from western Canada to northern Mexico,



Broom snakeweed, gutierrezia sarothrae

and can be found in a number of arid, grassland, and mountain habitats. It can be toxic to livestock in large quantities, due mainly to the presence of saponins.

Senecio flaccidus, formerly recorded as Senecio douglasii (in honor of the botanist David Douglas), member of the daisy family and genus Senecio is also known as **threadleaf ragwort**. It is a native of the southwestern Great Plains of North America. It is a fast-growing, short-lived (3 to 6 years) bushy perennial shrub growing to 4 feet 6 inches. It is common in gravelly washes, dry creek beds, along roads and trails and mostly away from the coast.



Threadleaf ragwort, senecio flaccidus



Four o'clock flower, mirabilis jalapa

Mirabilis jalapa, the marvel of Peru or **four o'clock flower**, is the most commonly grown ornamental species of Mirabilis plant, and is available in a range of colors. Mirabilis in Latin means wonderful and

Jalapa (or Xalapa) is the state capital of Veracruz in México. Mirabilis jalapa was cultivated by the Aztecs for medicinal and ornamental purposes. The flowers usually open from late afternoon or at dusk (between 4 and 8 o'clock), giving rise to one of its common names.

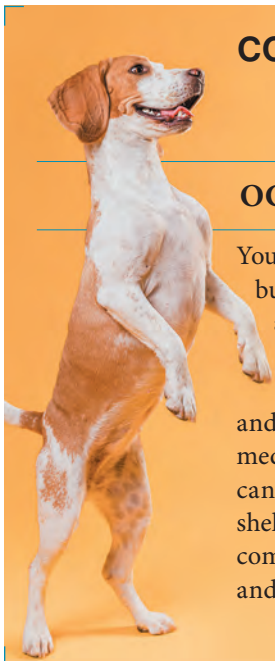
—Judith Cristini,

Photos by Pam Henline

COST-EFFECTIVE WAYS TO SECURE YOUR RESIDENCE

OCTOBER TIP: GET A DOG

Your own security dog is a great idea, but only if you will be a responsible and kind dog owner. A canine companion will prove loyal and protective of you, your family, and your property. A large or medium-sized dog with a fierce bark can do the trick. Visit a local animal shelter and you may find a canine companion that you can adopt and love.



78,000 Bags & Counting

Come rain or snow or hail, the maintenance crew services the 23 DOGIPOT Pet Stations three times a week. Fifteen of these convenience stations were

installed in the Spring of 2016 and the rest were added later because of their effectiveness in keeping Eldorado bike paths and trails clear of animal waste. Each contains a bag dispenser and a trash receptacle. A recent tally found that about 78,000 bags are used a year. Thank you Maintenance Crew.



October 2020 Meetings

Community Center closed indefinitely. Meetings may be suspended or held via Zoom.

ECIA Committee	Architecture Committee	Tuesday	13 & 27	3–5 PM Zoom	Katherine Mortimer	architecturechair@gmail.com
	Board Meeting	Monday	26	5 PM Zoom	ECIA Board	505 466-4248
	Conservation Committee	Tuesday	6	7–9 PM Zoom	Paul Butt	conservationchair@gmail.com
	Election Committee	Wednesday	14	3–5 PM Zoom	Bette Knight	electionchair1@gmail.com
	Facilities & Grounds	Wednesday	7	10 AM–12:30 PM Zoom	Kathy Ritschel	fandgchair@gmail.com
	Finance Committee	Tuesday	13	9:30 AM–12 Noon Zoom	Dan Drobnis	financechair1@gmail.com
	Information Committee	Monday	12	7–9 PM Zoom	Pam Henline	informationchair@gmail.com
	Road Committee	Wednesday	7	5:30–7 PM Zoom	James Mason	roadchair1@gmail.com
	Stable Committee	Thursday	8	7–9 PM Zoom	Amelia Adair	stablechair1@gmail.com
Monthly/Semi-Monthly	Bridge	Suspended during COVID-19			DiAna Gutierrez	505 699-3555
	EACA	Suspended during COVID-19			Kim Crickard	VP@eldoradoarts.org
	Eldorado Book Club	3rd Wednesday	21	3–5 PM Zoom	Pam Henline	phenline@comcast.net
	Eldorado/285 Recycles	2nd Tuesday	13	4–6 PM Zoom	Karen Sweeney	505 466-9797
	El Dorado School Community Garden	Suspended during COVID-19			Carol Robles	info@eldoradoschoolcommunitygarden.com
	Healing Arts Practitioners	Suspended during COVID-19			Laurie Sandman	lsandman9@comcast.net
	Life Drawing	Suspended during COVID-19			Mavis Murphy	505 466-8189
	MELT	Suspended during COVID-19			Maureena Bivins	info@maureenabivinsacupuncture.com
	Neighbors Helping Neighbors	1st Tuesday	6	6–7 PM Conference Call	Nancy Merz	nmmerz@msn.com
	Santa Fe Model Railroad Club	Suspended during COVID-19			Bob 505 466-4970	santafemodelrailroadclub.org
	Spinning Group (Fiber)	Suspended during COVID-19			Ellen Higgins	casaladerabe@gmail.com
	AA	Tuesdays		5:45–6:45 PM Zoom	505 982-8932	santafeaa.org
Weekly	AA (Women Only)	Thursdays		6–7 PM Zoom	505 982-8932	santafeaa.org
	AA	Fridays		6–7 PM Zoom	505 982-8932	santafeaa.org
	Al Anon	Suspended during COVID-19			505 989-3995	nmal-anon.com
	Breathing Meditation	Mondays		10:30–11 AM Zoom	Penny Russell	505 466-3137 sprussel@sjc.edu
	Eldorado Hikers	Suspended during COVID-19			Terry Gibbs	505 466-6914 triggibbs@comcast.net
	Knitting Club	Suspended during COVID-19			Joyce Hanmer	505 466-3018 joycehan@msn.com
	Overeaters Anonymous	Tuesdays		10 AM Comm. Ctr. Patio	Barb	505 954-1533
	Ukulele Class	Suspended during COVID-19			Hazel Jordon	ukehazel@gmail.com
	Yin Yoga	Mondays		5:30–6:45 PM Zoom	Julia Cairns	505 466-1935
	Yoga/Vinyasa Flow	Wednesdays & Fridays		9–10:15 AM Zoom	Julia Cairns	505 466-1935
	Yoga/Gentle Stretch	Tues., Thurs., & Sat.		9–10:15 AM Zoom	Mary Horst	505 490-2790

Zoom meeting information is online at www.eldoradosf.org > News & Events > Zoom Schedule

Events are verified as of September 22, please sign up for ECIA Newsbriefs by emailing rturnbough@hoamco.com to be notified of changes.

Send calendar event information to GM@eldoradosf.org.

News Tid-Bits

RESOURCES IN ELDORADO UPDATE SEPTEMBER 15

Changes occur frequently. Go to eldoradosf.org > News and Events > COVID-19 for more recent and complete information. The ECIA office is open via telephone, email and appointment, Monday through Friday 8 AM–8 PM, Saturday 8 AM–5 PM, **505 466-4248**.

SCHOOL IS IN SESSION

For the health and safety of all students and staff, Santa Fe Public Schools (SFPS) 2020–21 school year will start with a much improved version of the remote learning model used during the spring semester of the 2019–20 school year. SFPS will transition to a hybrid learning model once it's deemed safe to do so, based on guidance from public officials and health experts, and in consultation with the teachers' union. SFPS families and staff will be given ample notice before any such changes occur. The

El Dorado Community School began remote classes on Aug. 20 and plans to re-evaluate opening or partial-reopening sometime in October.

MORE FOR YOU AT LOCAL LIBRARY

VGPL library has expanded important services. Free school supplies are available while they last. Appointments may be made to use the library computers. There is now a puzzle exchange outside; books can be returned to door or drop box; Pen Pals with dogs can be arranged; and more. **505 466-READ** or www.vglibrary.org.

EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW OR WISH TO SAY

There is a new easy place to weigh-in with the ECIA. Questions, concerns, suggestions, comments, complaints, compliments, ideas, musings, or thoughts, all are welcome. On the ECIA home page, eldoradosf.org, click on OH YEAH!

*Election: your voice
to tell the politicians
that you are the boss.*

Mission Statement The mission of the monthly newsletter, *Vistas*, is to inform members of the ECIA about issues before the Board of Directors, various committees, and the office staff. Any interesting events happening in Eldorado or the surrounding areas may be included. The publication seeks to foster increased neighborhood pride and community participation in the decision-making process.

Editorial Policy *Vistas* welcomes factual and objective submissions, which will be selected and edited at the discretion of the Information Committee and Board of Directors. Community announcements and articles of interest to homeowners are welcome, along with photos. Submissions are due on the fifth of the month preceding publication. For help with any article, see the *Vistas* Style Guide posted on ECIA website, www.eldoradosf.org.

Some White-throated Sparrows Learn a New Song



Everyone loves to hear a small bird singing a beautiful song. Last month I described the White-throated Sparrow (WtS) call as the elegant *Oh sweet Canada Canada Canada*.

Since 2000 some researchers in Prince George, British Columbia have heard a rare new tune—*Oh sweet Cana Cana Cana*. Biologist Ken

Otter noted “the new song went viral between 2000 and 2019, when the new two-syllable song replaced the widespread three-syllable song.”

Such rapid uptake of a new tune is almost unheard of in male songbirds. Most birds belt out the same tunes their neighbors and kin do because there’s potentially little advantage to getting creative. Establishing and defending territories, for example, might be hard if a male sang a song unfamiliar to other male birds; likewise, attracting a mate could be difficult if the female doesn’t recognize a male’s

song. “You would predict dialects to persist in a location for extremely long periods of time,” Otter says, “because you get punished for not conforming.”

At first, the doublet-ending song emerged in a sparrow population in British Columbia, west of the Rockies, and by 2002 all recorded males in this region whistled the two-syllable tune. Between 2004 and 2019, the new song spread to regions west of central Ontario, completely replacing the triplet-ending song, and by 2019, the song traveled into Québec.

How did the song travel so quickly? Migration. Both eastern and western WtS winter at the same sites in Texas. “Young, impressionable birds hear different dialects and start to copy them,” Otter says.

In the last five years, WtS in Prince George have started singing a modified version of the doublet-ending song. Only time, and a lot of audio recordings, will tell how soon the predominant doublet-ending tune gets overthrown and replaced by an even fresher version.

Thanks to Audubon and an article by Priyanka Runwal for providing information for this article. See audubon.org/news/how-white-throated-sparrows-new-tune-went-viral

—Pam Henline

*Photo, “White-throated sparrow”
by esellingson is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0*



NEWSBRIEFS: For the latest information from ECIA, please sign up for newsbriefs, (ECIA’s electronic mailing system) by contacting rturnbough@hoamco.com.



RECYCLE: Help ECIA go green! Save on paper and mailing costs by opting out of receiving a mailed copy of *Vistas*. To sign up, email rturnbough@hoamco.com. You will be sent an email once a month with a link to the next issue of *Vistas* on the ECIA website, in pdf format, ready to view and print at home. Past issues are also available online. This paper is recyclable. Please recycle after use.