

# ELDORADO VISTAS

Monthly Newsletter of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association

1 La Hacienda Loop, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508 ▼ (505) 466-4248 ▼ [www.eldoradocommunity.org](http://www.eldoradocommunity.org)

VOLUME XII, ISSUE 4

April 2010

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## ECIA Annual Meeting, Monday, May 3

### THE BYLAWS OF THE ELDORADO

Community Improvement Association establish the first Monday in May as the time for the annual meeting of all lot-owner/members. Although there are many opportunities for members to participate in ECIA committees and meetings, and at monthly Board meetings, this is the time established for a special gathering.

This year, there are several topics of general interest to be addressed. The annual assessment has been increased for the first time in eight years, and there is additional information to be shared regarding financial irregularities in 2009. Also scheduled are reports from the chairs of the Architectural Committee, the Conservation Committee, the Facilities and Grounds Committee, the Finance Committee, the Information Committee, Neighborhood Watch, the Roads Committee, and the Stable Committee.

The Election Committee will report on the results of the elections for vacant Board positions. Coffee and light refreshments will be offered. In years past, candidates for local government offices have been available for informal Q&A sessions. All property owners are eligible and encouraged to attend. The meeting will be held at the El Dorado Community School. —Dan Drobnis

### ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

7:00 pm	Call to Order: Board President
7:05 pm	Opening Remarks: Board President
	Introduction of Board: Board President
	Announcement of Tellers: Board-Secretary
	Designation of Quorum: Board Secretary
	Introduction of Candidates: Board Secretary
7:15 pm	Approval of Minutes of 2008 Annual Meeting: Board Secretary
7:20 pm	President's Report: Board President
7:25 pm	Treasurer's Report: Board Treasurer
7:30 pm	Introduction of Guests: Board President
7:45 pm	Recognition of Committee Chairpersons and Acceptance of Committee Reports
7:55 pm	Resident of the Year Award
8:00 pm	Community Open Forum
8:55 pm	Election Results: Board Secretary
9:00 pm	Adjournment: Board President

*ECIA Board  
Meeting,  
Community  
Center, Thurs.,  
April 15,  
7 pm. Public  
is invited.*



The current ECIA Board: Left to right: Tom Willmott, Pat Lavengood, Lisa Robles, Ed Benrock, Mary Ann Caldwell, Todd Handy, and Ed Moreno. Photo: Jack Arnold.

## Fiesta Verde, April 30

### THE EL DORADO COMMUNITY

School, ECIA, Vista Grande Library, and the Eldorado People's Cooperative are collaborating to sponsor our third annual Fiesta Verde on April 30, 2010. This year's theme is "How Is My World Changing?" The event will feature creative activities that address many of the systems that form and sustain our lives here on Earth. Through art, music, and other media, student presentations will explore the

changes we see happening in our world, including the many positive changes that are taking place. Through our conservation of resources, continued education, and the development/implementation of "green" systems, our world is changing in beneficial ways.

Exhibitors from the larger community, all dedicated to a "greener" world, will have informational booths, and there will be lots of fun, hands-on activities for children. We hope you can join us for an evening of learning and celebration!

Contact: **Amanda O'Brien**, 505-780-1066.

**Where:** El Dorado Community School

**When:** April 30, 4–8 pm

▼ 4 pm: Opening Ceremony

▼ 4–6 pm: Student Projects and Exhibitors

▼ 5:30–7:30 pm: Organic Dinner Available

▼ 6–8 pm: ECIA Energy Fair

**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 emailed to [ECIADiAna@aol.com](mailto:ECIADiAna@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.

## Adam Senior Center News

### NEW VAN!

Our new van has finally arrived and is ready to roll! It's a beautiful 15-passenger E350 XL Super Duty flex-fuel white Ford van—just perfect for our trips. We have taken it for a few test drives, and everyone reports that it is quite comfortable. We are excited to have this van to help us increase our transportation offerings to seniors who live in this part of Santa Fe County. We can provide transportation to and from the Center for meals and classes, and into Santa Fe for shopping and appointments. The cost is only \$1 each way. Just call the Center at 466-1039 at least 24 hours in advance to make your transportation reservation. We look forward to serving you by providing many trips in this new van.

### TRIP TO MONTEZUMA'S CASTLE

And speaking of trips, we are planning a trip in April to Montezuma's Castle outside Las Vegas, NM, now

home to United World College. This wonderful historic building is quite a marvel, and the tour will be very special. As of press time, we have not confirmed the date, so call the Senior Center at 466-1039 for more details.

### MEALS ON WHEELS

It's been a long snowy winter, but spring is now here and, like the flowers, our Meals on Wheels program is growing again. We are looking for new scheduled drivers (one day every two weeks) as well as substitute drivers. If you would like to make a difference in a senior's quality of life, please volunteer to do this. It is fun and rewarding—and you don't need to be a senior to be a driver. We have routes in Eldorado, Arroyo Hondo, and Galisteo. If you would like to join our team (or if you know of seniors who may need to receive meals on wheels), please call the Senior Center at 466-1039. You will be glad you did!

—Cathy Berkley

## Eldorado Archaeology

**ELDORADO SITS AT THE SOUTHERN** end of the Rocky Mountains, one mesa west of the Great Plains, and at the eastern edge of the Rio Grande Rift. Mountains and mesas ring our horizon—the vistas are truly grand. Within the majestic natural landscape lie layered human landscapes, less visible but no less inspiring. Rock art on Rowe mesa shows that people used this region as far back as 4000 BC.

Visualize what you see from the top of the hill east of the service station. With your back to the freeway, you look out over the houses and US 285 and into the Galisteo Basin. From here we can take a quick tour of the ancestral pueblo world from about AD 1400–1600. To the west you see the distinctive shape of Tetilla Peak. The pueblos of La Cienega and La Cieneguilla lie before it. Turn counterclockwise, past the Cerrillos Hills. The pueblo of San Marcos, center of the turquoise trade, is not far away. Keep turning. Below the turtleback of the Sandia Mountains

are Petroglyph Hill and the pueblo of San Lazaro. Cerro Pelon (the Wave) hovers above Galisteo Pueblo, Pueblo Blanco, and the rock art site at Comanche Gap. Keep turning. The folded base of Galisteo/Rowe Mesa holds the community of San Cristóbal.

We can make this circuit again, a little later, and see Spanish missions at many of these villages. We could make it again, a little earlier, and see small communities from the 1200 to 1300s: over your right shoulder is Chamisa Locita, holding 280–300 rooms. The I-25/US 285 exchange destroyed Pueblo Alamo, which may have had 100 rooms.

These places have stories to tell. They are an integral part of the legacy we leave to our grandchildren. Please respect them. For more information on the archaeology and history of Eldorado, see *Windmills and Dreams*, available from the ECIA office. *Before Santa Fe: Archaeology of the City Different*, by Jason Shapiro, is another excellent book on area archaeology and history.

—Gary Hein and Gen Head

Photo: Jack Arnold



## From the President's Desk

**E**LDORADO IS A COMMUNITY TO BE proud of. In this day and age of insecurity and uncertainty, Eldorado offers a level of safety and security to our residents. As I drive around our community, I am always happy to see people out jogging, walking their dogs, and going to the Community Center, perhaps to use the dog park or other amenities that are available to our members. It is a good feeling to know that you can feel reasonably safe to walk to your car after a late meeting and not have a mugger waiting for you. Of course, no one can say they are 100% safe, but here in Eldorado we can feel safer than in some other communities. Common sense will tell you that no matter where you are, you should be watchful and look out for yourself and your neighbors.

Earlier this year I wrote about stop-sign runners and speeders, and I still receive emails and phone calls from residents with concerns about their safety. Most

of our residents do obey the traffic laws. However, there are still a few who think that stopping at a stop sign or obeying the speed limits is for someone else, and not for them. This attitude jeopardizes residents who jog, walk their dogs, and push their strollers along the side of the road. We do not have sidewalks that pedestrians can use, so residents who want to enjoy walking have to use the side of the road, which means sharing the road with auto traffic. Yes, we have hike and bike paths that the Association maintains, but the majority of our roads do not have them, which means that, again, our residents have to walk along the side of the road, which puts them at risk.

This is your community. Please be considerate of your neighbors: slow down and stop at the stop signs. I am sure that you wouldn't want to be involved in a serious accident.

—Ed Benrock  
ECIA President

## Trailers and Pop-Up Screening

**I**N AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND IF there were any new covenant violation trends here in Eldorado, the ECIA recently compared our 2009 violation data with the data from 2008. In this review process, we detected that there was one violation category with a noticeable increase in 2009: Utility Trailers. That is, there were many more recorded violations in 2009 of unscreened utility trailers (both open and enclosed) than in previous years.

While we are unsure whether or not this is due to an actual increase in the number of trailers in Eldorado, the fact remains that all utility trailers, plus camping trailers, boats, and RVs, are required to be screened under the Eldorado Covenants, Article II, Section 13. This covenant is further clarified in Section 19 (page 16) of the Guidelines for Protective Covenants and Building Restrictions for Eldorado at Santa Fe. The Section 19 guidelines specifically address the storage and screening of vehicles and their accessories, requiring that recreational vehicles, such as motor homes, campers, camper shells, vehicle accessories, trailers, horse trailers, airplanes, boats and the like, when stored on a lot, shall be located so as to minimize their visual impact on the surrounding neighborhood and roads and shall be obscured by screening in a reasonable manner—for example, by the dwelling house and/or plantings or fencing.

In essence, the overall objective of this guideline is to obscure trailers and RVs by screening, to make



them less conspicuous and more congruous with the environment. By "obscure" we mean to make inconspicuous or unnoticeable, or to conceal physically, hide or cover, with screening.

If a resident owns a utility trailer that is not properly screened and is visible to neighbors or from the road, please contact me, Mark Young, Covenant Compliance Representative at the ECIA. I will gladly work with you to come up with a screening plan that will ensure that the utility trailer is in compliance with the covenants.

If you have any questions at all regarding utility trailer screening, or other compliance questions, call me at the ECIA at 466-4248 or email me at [eciaccr@aol.com](mailto:eciaccr@aol.com).

—Mark Young  
ECIA Covenant Compliance Representative

### ECIA OFFICE

#1 La Hacienda Loop  
Santa Fe, NM 87508  
466-4248, 466-4249  
[ecommunity@aol.com](mailto:ecommunity@aol.com)  
[www.eldoradocommunity.org](http://www.eldoradocommunity.org)

### General Manager

Bill Donohue  
466-4248  
[gmbill1@aol.com](mailto:gmbill1@aol.com)  
Covenant Compliance Rep  
Mark Young  
466-4248  
[ECIAccr@aol.com](mailto:ECIAccr@aol.com)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President  
Ed Benrock  
466-2088  
[Francesed@cybermesa.com](mailto:Francesed@cybermesa.com)  
Vice President  
Mary Ann Caldwell  
466-4271  
[macbj3@yahoo.com](mailto:macbj3@yahoo.com)  
Treasurer  
Todd Handy  
466-3785  
Secretary  
Lisa Robles  
466-8975

[lisarobles66@msn.com](mailto:lisarobles66@msn.com)

### Director

Pat Lavengood  
466-9765  
[plavengood@q.com](mailto:plavengood@q.com)  
Director  
Ed Moreno  
466-1183  
[edmoreno@newmexico.com](mailto:edmoreno@newmexico.com)

### Director

Tom Willmott  
[tom.willmott@att.net](mailto:tom.willmott@att.net)

### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Finance: Dan Drobnis  
Architecture: Bill Schwent  
Conservation: John Parker & E.J. Evangelos  
Stable: Bonita Mamp  
Election: Open position  
Roads: Nolan Zisman  
Information: Frank Schober  
Neighborhood Watch: Larry Eccard & Marilyn Walker  
Facilities & Grounds: Fred Raznick

### VISTAS NEWSLETTER

Editor & Designer  
Carol Leyba  
466-1158  
[cbsleyba@comcast.net](mailto:cbsleyba@comcast.net)  
Webmaster:  
Jack Arnold  
[jwellsarnold@gmail.com](mailto:jwellsarnold@gmail.com)  
Editorial Assistant:  
DiAna Gutierrez  
466-4248  
[ECIADiAna@aol.com](mailto:ECIADiAna@aol.com)

### COMMUNITY RESOURCES

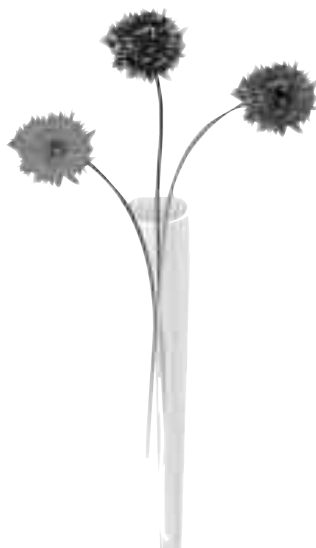
Vista Grande Library  
466-READ  
Security  
204-2945  
Fire and Rescue  
466-1204  
[eldoradofirerescue.org](http://eldoradofirerescue.org)  
County All Purpose  
820-CNTY (2689)



## ECIA ANNUAL MTG

All welcome

Monday, May 3, 7–9 pm  
El Dorado  
Community School



FORD ROBBINS' CONNECTIONS

A Vistas Journal



## IN THE COMMUNITY

### Rotary Club Now Forming in Eldorado

Rotary International is the world's first service club organization, with more than 1.2 million members in 33,000 clubs worldwide. Rotary club members are volunteers who work locally, regionally, and internationally to combat hunger, improve health and sanitation, provide education and job training, promote peace, and eradicate polio under the motto "Service Above Self." A club is now forming in Eldorado; meetings are Monday evenings 6–7 pm at La Tienda, Suite 101. (The first meeting was on March 15.) Contact **Dr. Leona Zastrow**, 466-8581.

### April Art Show at La Tienda

A group of Eldorado artists, THE ART MIX, will be hosting a reception in Building A at La Tienda on Saturday, April 3, from 4 to 7 pm. Artwork will include paintings in all mediums, pottery, weavings, handmade papers, stained glass and wood (furniture, etc.). The show runs through April 17. Gallery hours are 11 am to 6 pm daily. For more info, contact **Destiny Allison**, destinyallison@aol.com, or **Grace Burleigh**, gburleigh39@comcast.net.

### April's Library Events

Eldorado photographer **Ford Robbins** will discuss and sign his new book, *Connections*, a retrospective look at his work, on Thursday, April 8, at 7 pm at Vista Grande Public Library. Admission is free. Raised in Minnesota, Robbins relocated with his family to New Mexico in 1988. His photographs have been exhibited at the Museum of the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, the Albuquerque Museum of Art and Culture, the Harwood Museum in Taos, and elsewhere. His work is also part of the New Mexico State Capitol Art Collection.

**Family Movie Night**, on April 9 at the Library, includes a potluck at 6:15 and at 7 pm a showing of Walt Disney's *The Princess and the Frog*. The **VGPL Writers Group** meets at the Library the second and fourth Sundays, April 11 and 25, 3–5 pm.

### Lace 'em Up!

The Eldorado adult basketball season is here. Lace 'em up, players, and c'mon out on to the Community Center's state-of-the-art court for fun and friendly pick-up hoops, Thursday evenings 7 pm–dusk.

### Join the Community Garden!

You can still join the El Dorado School Community Garden in time for early spring planting! Individual plots are renting fast, but communal garden memberships are still available.

The collaboration begun last year between Eldorado residents and the El Dorado School has al-

## Moon Phases for April



ready transformed 1.5 acres of native landscape into a lush, organic growing and learning environment. Key projects this year include expanding the communal plot with a corn and pumpkin patch. If gardening alongside your Eldorado neighbors appeals to you, then the El Dorado School Community Garden may be just what you're looking for. Annual membership is \$30 per person, with an additional \$30 per individual bed rental or communal garden participation. Children under 18 are free. Contact **Marilynn Jacobs** at 466-6707 or email eldogarden@comcast.net.

### Horse Manure Deliveries

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

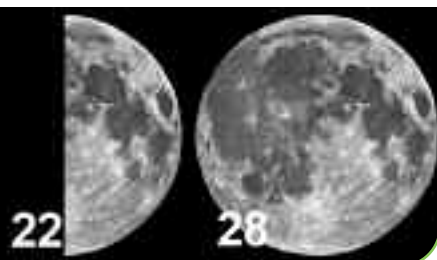
### ERA News

The Eldorado Residents Association (ERA) holds its 2010 Annual Meeting at 7 pm, Monday, April 5, in the Railroad Building. Everyone who lives in Eldorado can join, whether you rent or own your home here. There are no dues, and every resident is invited. This meeting includes the annual election of board members (who serve staggered, overlapping 2-year terms). It's also an opportunity for board members and residents to discuss a new direction for ERA—which wants to refocus on supporting current and future needs in our community.

ERA will sponsor another free TGIF social event, 5–7 pm on Friday, April 16, in the Community Center Living Room. All residents are cordially invited. The annual Eldorado Flea Market has been scheduled for Saturday, May 22, in the Community Center parking lot. Details at [www.eldoradoresidents.org](http://www.eldoradoresidents.org).

### Galisteo Stone Sculpture Workshop

Last month *Vistas* published incorrect dates for **Edward Fleming's** sculpture workshop. The correct dates are May 17–23. The workshop will be held at his Galisteo studio. The focus will be on realistic figure carving in stone. Visualization techniques, human anatomy, stone selection and characteristics, tools, and traditional and contemporary techniques will be covered. The class will be limited to six students. For more information, contact [efa@cybermesa.com](mailto:efa@cybermesa.com). View Edward Fleming's sculpture at [www.StoneHand.org](http://www.StoneHand.org).



## ASTRONOMY CORNER

April 2010

### WATER ON THE MOON

Many recent discoveries point to the fact that the moon does indeed contain water. Once thought impossible for the lifeless wasteland with no atmosphere, frozen water has been found in a permanently shadowed region near the moon's south pole. Some of these findings come from the October 9, 2009, intentional moon crash of the LCROSS satellite. Water on the moon is important as a potential future source of breathable air (oxygen) and fuel source (oxygen and hydrogen).

—David Goodrich

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

### How to Avoid Foreclosure

Are you struggling to pay your mortgage and suspect your home is now worth less than you owe on it? **Lauren Sato**, a Certified Distressed Property Expert with Barker Realty, and **David Hultin**, a mortgage banker with NM Bank & Trust, are offering a free seminar on avoiding foreclosure, Monday, April 5, 7 pm at the Community Center Classroom. Contact Lauren at 629-8779 or Lauren@NMRelo.com.

### History Talk

The Conservation Committee is hosting a talk by local historian **Bill Baxter** called "Remembering the Galisteo Basin. Stories of the Westside Towns: San Marcos, Dolores, Carbonateville, Cerrillos & Madrid," April 12, 7 pm, Railroad Building. Free to the public; refreshments will be served.

# April Events

*Left out? Help us compile a comprehensive events listing.*

Email [info@eldoradocommunity.org](mailto:info@eldoradocommunity.org) with your meeting/event information, or bring it to the ECIA office by the 8th 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

### APRIL SPECIAL EVENTS

ERA TGIF	Fri., April 16, 5-7 pm	LR
History Talk	Mon, April 12, 7-9 pm	RR
Fiesta Verde	Fri., April 30, 4-8 pm	School

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Facilities & Grounds	Tues., April 6, 4-6 pm	Fred Raznick	466-2305	CFR
Conservation Committee	Tues., April 6, 7-9 pm	John Parker	466-7513	LR
Board Work Study	Mon., April 12, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Finance Committee	Wed., April 14, 9:30 am	Dan Drobnis	466-4781	CFR
Architectural Committee	Wed., April 14 & 28, 7-9 pm	Bill Schwent	466-7708	Foyer
ECIA Board	Thurs., April 15, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CR
Information Committee	Tues., April 20, 7-9 pm	Frank Schober	310-8593	CFR
Stable Committee	Wed., April 28, 7-9 pm	Bonnie Mamp	466-4271	Annex
Architectural Committee	Wed., April 28, 7-9 pm	Bill Schwent	466-7708	Foyer
Road Committee	Mon., May 3, 6-8 pm	Nolan Zisman	466-2968	CFR

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

EAW&SD*	1st & 3rd Thurs, 7-9 pm		231-7885	RR
La Canada Wireless	2nd & 4th Mon., 7-9 pm	lcwireless.org		
Search & Rescue	2nd Thurs, 7 pm	santafesar.org		CR
Library Book Group	2nd Saturday 9-10:30	Joan LaMarque	466-6000	CFR
Library Book Group	3rd Mon., 7-9 pm	Shelley Moore	466-9636	VGPL
Conservation Com Hike	3rd Sat. of month	Eleanor Gossen	466-1949	
Roadrunner RV	3rd Tues. of month	Bill Bodle	466-3011	
Fire Cub Scout Pack 414	4th Tues., 7-9 pm	John Kielling	466-4232	Sm Gym
EACA Meeting	Last Thurs. of month		466-6245	Fire
MOMS Club	Wed., April 1, 13, & 28, 3 pm	Jackie Camborde	466-0094	CR

### WEEKLY MEETINGS

AA	Tues., 5:30-6:50 pm			CFR
AA	Wed., 10:30-11:30 am			CFR/CR
AA	Wed., 5:45-6:45 pm			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			CFR
Adult Basketball	Thurs., 7-dusk			CC Court
AI-Anon	Thurs., 6:45-7:45			CFR/LR
Boy Scout Troop 414	Wed., 7-9 pm	Fritz Denny	466-4070	RR, CR, LR
Bridge	1st & 3rd Mon, 1-4:30 pm	Kate Kaulbach	466-1465	LR
Bridge	1st & 3rd Fri., 1-4:30 pm			LR
Bridge	2nd & 4th Fri., 1-4:30 pm	Pat Lavengood	466-9765	LR
Bridge	Wed., 9-noon	Nancy Rost	466-2832	LR
Community Church**	Sun., 9:30 & 11 am	David McPherson	466-2495	CC
Community Band	Thurs., 6:30-8:30 pm	Joel Hopko	466-8412	New Gym
Eldorado Hikers	Tues., 8:30 am	Terry Gibbs	466-6914	
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
Life Drawing (EACA)	Mondays, 10 am-noon	Sande Anderson	466-4688	RR
Knitting Club	Tues., 10 am-noon	Joyce Hanmer	466-3018	LR
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.eldoradocommunity.org](http://www.eldoradocommunity.org)



# Preventing Residential Burglary in Eldorado

**L**OCK THE DOORS TO YOUR HOME and your vehicles, too. That's the most important thing Eldorado residents can do to prevent residential burglaries, says Sgt. Clifton Coleman of the Santa Fe County Sheriff's Department.

Coleman also told me that residents shouldn't leave items of value in plain view in their vehicles, even in their driveways. He also recommends ample driveway lighting (complying with covenants, of course.)

When you go on vacation, tell your closest neighbors and your Neighborhood Watch captain so they keep an eye on the property. If you are having construction or remodeling done on your property, advise your neighbors so they can help keep an eye on things.

Most of all, if you see anything suspicious, please call and report it so the deputies can check it out while it is occurring. Try to provide as much description as possible. "We love getting calls," Coleman said. "It lets the community and the criminals know that we have an active Neighborhood Watch and we do respond. Criminals are more afraid of Neighborhood Watch than they are of the sheriff."

Residential crimes are crimes of opportunity, he says, and it's the same old scam. Knocking on doors, asking some random question: "Do the Joneses live here?" or "We're doing construction in the neighborhood and can make you a good deal." What they really want to know is who is home and who is not.



Get a vehicle description and call it in. That information is needed immediately. Eldorado has the strongest and largest Neighborhood Watch in Santa Fe County—and the sheriff needs the extra set of eyes.

A new crime mapping program, [www.crimereports.com](http://www.crimereports.com), is a tremendous help to law enforcement because officers can recognize trends quickly and act on them. It gives officers a better idea as to where patrols are needed and where the hot spots are. Patrol cars have access, too. This new mapping program should put citizens' minds at ease, as they can see where crimes are being committed.

If you see suspicious activity, call the non-emergency phone number 428-3720. Please put this number in your phone for handy reference. You may remain anonymous.

## FEBRUARY CRIME STATISTICS

1 Larceny - Encantado Loop

(Source: [www.crimereports.com](http://www.crimereports.com))

**NEXT NW MEETING:** Monday, May 10, at 7 pm at the Eldorado Community Center.

**TIP OF THE MONTH:** Avoid announcing your vacation on Facebook or other social media. It's easier than you think to look up your address. For information on how to join Neighborhood Watch, please email **Marilyn Walker** at [lightwalker2@comcast.net](mailto:lightwalker2@comcast.net).

—Lisa Smith, [lisasmithsantafe@gmail.com](mailto:lisasmithsantafe@gmail.com)

## At the Crossroads

**Y**UCK! MORE MUCK! THE WINTER of 2009–2010 may go down in history as one of the muddiest in the history of Eldorado. We begin to wonder about the pros and cons of living in a community that has mostly dirt roads, especially when we have spent the last 20 minutes slip-sliding

down our road, haven't had the paper or mail in two days because the carrier can't get near the mailbox, and the front hallway looks like a battalion of kids with dirty feet have marched through. Your Road Committee has pondered this question. The answer, as we see it:

	PROS	CONS
Dust		Lots
Mud		Lots
Washboard		Lots
Drying Time When Wet		Slow
Passability When Wet		Difficult
Opportunity to Speed	Less than paved road	
Rural Atmosphere	Yes (value?)	
Cost to Maintain		High
Impact on Property Value		Lower than paved road

Have you said to yourself, "I'm fed up with it and don't want to put up with it anymore"? If so, watch

for more in the next *Vistas*. If not, you can look for the next installment, too!

—Nolan Zisman



## Northern Harrier (NH)

**I HAVE SEEN THIS HAWK ONLY ONCE** in Eldorado, although I know other bird watchers have also seen the NH here. I was driving west on Avenida Eldorado near the west end of Eldorado when the female was coursing low about 10 feet above the grass, traveling parallel with me. So identification was easy, and I enjoyed the long look I had of the hunting bird. NHs fly low to the ground, usually over grasslands or marshes, surprising small birds and mammals below them. They are on the large side of hawks, 18 inches long with a wingspan of 43 inches. They exhibit an extreme case of sexual dimorphism among hawks: the adult female is quite dark, with stripes on the under wing. The adult male is almost white, with black wing tips. The bird is slender and has an owl-like facial disk. This shape allows them to locate some prey using their hearing. The NH is the only Harrier in the United States. They occur here in winter or during migration (my sighting was in late fall). NHs migrate to Columbia, Venezuela, and Barbados.

Breeding areas are in the northern U.S. and Canada. Courting males perform dives, barrel rolls, and multiple U-shaped loops. A flimsy nest of sticks lined with grasses is placed on elevated ground or in thick vegetation. There is one brood per year, with four to six eggs hatching in 32 days and fledging in 30 to 35 days. When prey is abundant (especially voles),

the males may have multiple mates. The female feeds and broods the young. The male provides the bulk of the food for mate(s) and young. Outside the breeding season, NHs can sometimes be found roosting communally on the ground. A prior name for the Northern Harrier is Marsh Hawk.

### FIELD CHECKLISTS

Printed checklists are available at most National Parks and Monuments. Often you must ask for them. I have lists from the Randall Davey Audubon Center, Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge, Pecos National Monument, Maxwell Wildlife Reserve, and Bosque del Apache, as well as a comprehensive list for the State of New Mexico. These can be very useful when you think you have seen a bird that MIGHT be in this area. Approximately 523 species (the number changes!) have been sighted in New Mexico. A good online site is [www.nmbirds.org](http://www.nmbirds.org).

—Pam Henline



**Above:** Juvenile, male northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). Notice the distinct facial disk. Photo: © Tanya Dewey. **Below:** Northern harrier, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Photo: © Phil Myers. From Animal Diversity Web, University of Michigan Museum of Zoology

## Gopher Tales

**SPRING IS BURSTING. WINTER'S LET** go of its hold. The ground's softened. The sweet scents of the Earth are rising. And the gophers, well...what about them?

There are nine species of pocket gopher. In New Mexico, we have both the Western and Eastern species. They have big teeth that can grow 14 inches a year and fur-lined cheek pouches to carry food. They have BIG appetites! They have no regard for the love and care you so joyfully give to your landscape and gardens. Bulbs, tubers, roots, seeds, and tree bark are some of their favorites. Gophers eat up to 60% of their body weight per day. And as we know, they can damage underground utility cables and irrigation lines.

Pocket gophers live solitary lives except during the mating season. Each has a main burrow that is 4 to 18 inches deep parallel to the ground's surface, with many laterals off the main. These are usually deeper and are used to get to food storage and nesting areas. A single system may have up to 200 yards of tunnel. And there can be 16 to 20 gophers per acre.

Do they hibernate? Nope. They have stored goodies for winter. Breeding happens from March to June and many breed twice. Each brood consists of 5 to 12 babies; gestation is only 18 or 19 days. The young are weaned by two months and get to digging. Gophers have a short life span, rarely living more than two years.

I've heard people talk about the many different ways they've tried to control these pesky little guys. Some methods have (maybe) worked, others not at all. Trapping is probably the most effective and efficient overall. We can also think about protecting and encouraging their natural predators of weasels, snakes, and coyotes. Gophers are busy critters, but with persistence we can get their populations manageable. The time is now—the time before the breeding season is full on and our gardens are up, blooming and looking beautiful.

### FUN FACTS

They swim, do somersaults in their tunnels, their teeth come through their skin to keep from getting a mouthful of dirt, and they have slick coats so they can move at lightning speed through their tunnels.

—Kathy Yurista, *Gophers Good Bye*

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

*The Dog Park at the Community Center  
is one of ECIA's most popular amenities*



Photo: Jack Arnold