

ELDORADO VISTAS

VOLUME XI, ISSUE 5

May 2009

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Monthly Newsletter of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association

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

Pool Opens May 23!

GET YOUR PHOTO ID

Photo ID pool passes will be needed again this year. To get yours, go to the ECIA offices Monday–Friday, 8–5. There is a fee of \$2 per photo ID, to cover the cost of the plastic.

ATTENTION RENTERS

Before you are allowed pool access, the owner of the home you are renting must submit a letter to the ECIA authorizing you to use the pool.

POOL SEASON AND HOURS Through Labor Day weekend.

Lap Swim, 8–10:00 am daily, and 6–8 pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

General Swim, 10:00 am–8 pm Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, and 10:00 am–6 pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

PLEASE KEEP FOOD AND BEVERAGES IN THE SNACK AREA OR PATIO AREA ONLY.

*ECIA Board
Work Study
Meeting,
Community
Center, Mon.,
May 18, 7 pm*



PHOTO BY NOREEN O'BRIEN

18th Annual Studio Tour

ON MAY 16–17, THE ELDORADO Arts and Crafts Association is holding its 18th annual studio tour, featuring 96 artists in 61 studios, from 10 am to 5 pm. This is an opportunity to meet the artists, see where they create, and purchase collectible works directly from them—outstanding works in a wide range of contemporary and traditional fine art and craft: painting, sculpture, ceramics, fiber, wearables, photography, jewelry and more.

The El Dorado Community School (on Torreon) will be hosting the “Preview Gallery” from 10 to 5 both Saturday and Sunday. This is where you can view a sample of each artist’s work before heading out to visit the studios. You can also pick up a brochure with a map showing where the studios are located, so you can enjoy the art and meeting the artists. For more information, go to www.eldoradoarts.org.

*ECIA
Annual
Meeting
May 4 at 7 pm
in the Eldorado
School Gym.
For informa-
tion, call
466-4248.*

WEB WINNERS

Here are the **March** stats for our new website. Total page views rose up to 600/day vs 460/day in Feb.

PAGE	# OF VIEWS
Events Calendar	4,773
Classifieds	1,889
Photo Album	988
Committees & Other Organizations	904
Address Book	544
Homes for Lease	423
Amenities	388
Vistas Newsletter	354
Pam Henline's Birds	250
Announcements	230

Note: It's easy for residents to add a garage sale or other listing. Click on *Request a Login*, or use your existing login. After logging in, go to the page where you want to add your listing and choose the link at the bottom that says “ADD....”

eldoradocommunity.org

*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 ECIADebby@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.

Spring Has Sprung

A BREATH OF SPRING IS IN THE AIR; many of us will be outdoors enjoying our various activities. Some drivers may wonder why bicycles are on our narrow roads. The answer lies in the way road bikes are built. They are not meant for gravel, curbs, potholes, or hazards of even the paved walking paths. Therefore, they must be at the mercy of the road (and drivers). If a road biker is not on the right side of the white line, it could be because the other side is loaded with gravel or glass, or that the road ends just over the white line. We try to keep as far right as safety allows and do not want to endanger motorists or ourselves. If we are in the way, we'd appreciate a swerve as you pass by, as you would do for a walker. If drivers cannot give a little space due to an approaching car, just pause until the car clears and then swerve. We appreciate it! Thank you and happy spring!

—Debby Hunter



EDITOR'S NOTE: The rights of bicyclists and pedestrians on New Mexico roads are protected by state law. The problem is safety. Our avenidas have little or nothing in terms of proper shoulders, so cyclists and pedestrians must consider the hazard posed by speeding or inattentive motorists. Bicyclists who travel with traffic and pedestrians who should walk against it should keep their personal safety in mind at all times. Our Association maintains the hike/bike trails as an option.

Adam Senior Center News

THE ADAM CENTER, located at 16 Ave. Torreon (next to the library), is open Monday to Friday from 10 am to 4 pm for all county seniors aged 60 and older. Partially subsidized by Santa Fe County, the center offers group lunches, a Meals on Wheels program, and many types of classes, including yoga, tai chi, and art. The center features a comfortable living room (with fireplace, computers, TV, lending library and piano), a pool room with two billiards tables, an art room complete with kiln, a small fitness room, a community kitchen and a commercial kitchen, a great room, and, of course, fabulous views.

NOW SERVING... The Adam Senior Center has expanded its senior lunch program to four days a week. Lunch is now served on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Payment for lunch is by donation; most people donate \$1.50 or \$2.00 (but feel free to give as much as you'd like). Monthly menus are available at the Center. Reservations are required, so please phone the Center at 466-1039 by 9:30 on the day you wish to attend (earlier if possible), so we can know how many meals to prepare. As regular attendees will tell you, we have the best cook in the county!

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION... The Center is now showing movies after lunch on two Thursdays a month. This month's dates are May 14 and 28 at 1 pm. No reservations are required. Call the Center at 466-1039 to see what's playing!

NEW CLASS... We are privileged to announce that Sally Ryan has offered to teach a class in "the fun and easy way to write your life story." Those of you who have participated in her classes know that they are informative, fun and full of laughter. At press time we are unsure of the time of the class, but it will most likely be on Wednesday afternoons. Call the Center for more information.

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS WANTED: The Adam Senior Center Meals on Wheels program needs volunteer drivers to help cover deliveries during the summer months, when many regular drivers are on vacation. The MOW program delivers lunch (prepared at the Adam Senior Center) to shut-in seniors five days a week in the local area. The program is in its seventh year and has served as a lifeline for many of the elderly in our community. To become a volunteer driver or to learn more about the program, please call Pat Lavengood at 466-0765 or the Adam Senior Center at 466-1039.

From the ECIA President's Desk

AMONG THE CALLS that I have received from our residents, many are concerned about speeders and stop sign runners. Needless to say, both are dangerous. We are a semi-rural community and many of our residents enjoy walking along the side of the road. We have no sidewalks or hike and bike paths along many of our roads, and residents walking their dogs or pushing a stroller or just plain jogging are forced into the traffic lanes, which can be extremely dangerous at times if a speeding auto is coming around a curve or over a hill. There have been tragic accidents in the past, and certainly because of speeders in our community, it could happen again. The county has made a traffic study on all of Eldorado's roads and has posted speed signs which tell you the safe speed to travel. Please be a considerate driver and good neighbor and make Eldorado a safe community for

all who enjoy walking along our roads.

Although we have many residents who obey the traffic laws, we seem to have a few who feel that stopping at an intersection where it is posted to stop is for someone else and not for them. The stop signs are there for your safety, and they mean what they say: STOP — not Slow Down and proceed through the intersection. I know there are times when we are preoccupied and may miss a stop sign, but it is dangerous not to pay attention to your driving. Inattention can lead to an accident, which no one wants. The Sheriff's Department has had traffic blitzes here in Eldorado in the past, and they just might be planning for another one, so the Board asks you to slow down and be a good neighbor. Obey the stop signs, so we can all enjoy our lifestyle here in Eldorado.

Ed Benrock, ECIA President

Neighborhood Watch

NUMEROUS RESIDENTS have asked Neighborhood Watch about the role Eldorado Security plays in our community. Here are answers to questions most frequently asked.

Eldorado Security is provided by Associated Securities Industries (ASI). They are primarily responsible for locking doors at the Community Center and patrolling common property such as the amenities (the stables, wilderness areas, green-belts, and the sports facilities).

Secondarily, Security patrols the community, watching for suspicious activity. They provide individual home security checks by walking around a property for \$3 a day. If they see suspicious activity anywhere, they call 911. Throughout the day, the officers check in at 15 punch stations.

Typically there are three officers assigned to the various shifts. Eldorado General Manager **Bill Donahue** works with ASI toward consistency in the officers assigned. "Consistency" means the officers know the streets in Eldorado, interact with the residents, and are invested in the safety and security of our community.

Neighborhood Watch (NW) encourages residents to say hello to the Eldorado Security officers

and acknowledge their important role. They are friendly, helpful and well trained to care for our community. Take a minute to introduce yourself and thank our officers.

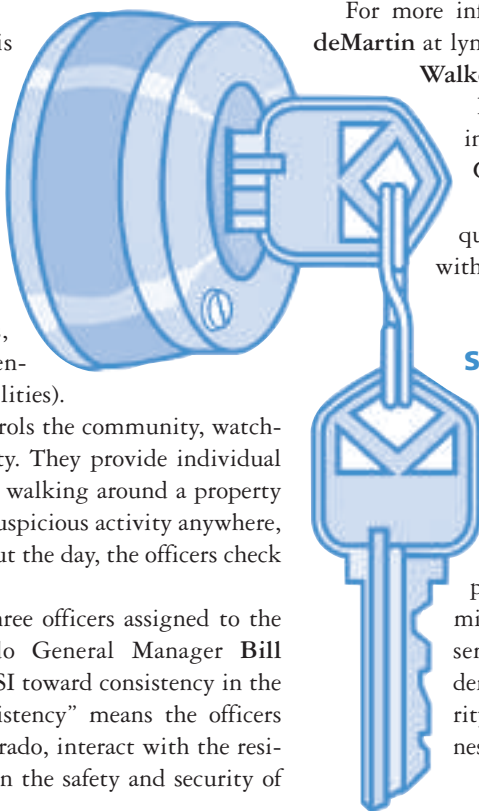
For more information about NW, contact **Lyn deMartin** at lyndemartin@hotmail.com or **Marilyn Walker** at lightwalker2@comcast.net.

Next Neighborhood Watch meeting: Monday, May 11, 7 pm at the Community Center classroom.

TIP OF THE MONTH: Use a quality, heavy-duty knob in a lock set with dead bolt mechanisms.

SPECIAL COMMUNITY MEETING ON SECURITY & SAFETY

An Eldorado Area Community Meeting sponsored by the ECIA and spearheaded by our Neighborhood Watch Committee is in the planning stage at a date to be determined this summer. It will include seminars, product showings and demonstrations focusing on home security, community emergency preparedness and personal and traffic safety.



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Conservation: John Parker and E.J. Evangelos
Stable: Bonita Mamp
Election: Ken Robinson
Roads: Nolan Zisman
Information: Frank Schober
Neighborhood Watch: Larry Eccard & Marilyn Walker
Facilities & Grounds: Fred Raznick

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Vista Grande Library
466-READ
Security
204-2945
Fire and Rescue
466-1204
County All Purpose
820-CNTY (2689)



Eldorado resident and softball coach **Bill Schwent** prepares the Eldorado Community Ball Park for another season. For more information about softball in Eldorado, please log onto eldoradocommunity.org and look under RESOURCES and MESSAGE BOARD.



IN THE COMMUNITY

4th of July?

It's not too early to begin thinking about the Fourth of July celebration. There will be bands playing, flags waving, hot dogs to eat, snow cones to taste and popcorn. Make plans to stay in Eldorado this Fourth and come join the parade! Let us know if you have a special idea for the day of our big celebration. Call **Pat Lavengood** with your ideas, or to sign up to help: 466-9765.

Botanical Talk, Walk

On Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10, the Conservation Committee is sponsoring a special Botanical Slide Show and Walk, where we will be observing, exploring and examining our local terrain for wildflowers and other flora. Led by **Bill Neuwirth**, a local botanical expert from Santa Fe Community College, this will give all participants an opportunity to know flora in a new way. Meet at the Community Center at 9 am for a 1-hour slide show, followed by a walk in the Eldorado Preserve. The terrain is gentle and non-strenuous. Bring day hiking gear, a magnifying glass, any books you have and your curiosity to this fun outing.

Uprooting Our Anger Problem

Anger is a painful state of mind that destroys our peace and happiness. Buddha teaches a supreme method whereby we can learn to stop our anger as soon as it arises. Classes are 7:00–8:30 pm on Mondays (June 1, 8, 15, 22), in the Railroad Building. \$10/class. Everyone is welcome at any class. For more information: Tushita Buddhist Center, 505-820-2226.

Bluebird Presentation

On Saturday, May 2, from 2 to 4 pm, **Claudia Daigle** will hold a Bluebird Presentation in the Railroad Building to discuss what we can do to protect our Bluebirds and native birds from the non-native House Sparrows that are quickly encroaching in Eldorado and killing our Bluebirds and other native cavity-nesting birds. Learn why we should *only* put out black oil sunflower, safflower, and sterilized thistle seeds with *no* millet/corn; why we shouldn't put up nestboxes we aren't going to monitor; and much more. There will be a short film, demonstrations, and question period. Email or call Claudia at 466-1950, EnchantedBluebird@comcast.net, for more info.

Lace 'em Up!

The Eldorado adult basketball season is here. Lace 'em up, players, and c'mon out on to the Community Center state-of-the-art court for fun and friendly pick-up hoops, Thursday evenings 7:00 pm–dusk.

El Dorado School Community Garden

The new El Dorado School Community Garden will be planting this spring! Our garden will be

Moon Phases for M



completely chemical and pesticide free. Communal and 4 × 8 ft personal plots (raised or sunken beds) will be available for planting. Garden membership: \$30 per person. Communal plots: \$20; sunken beds: \$20; raised beds: \$30.

If you'd like to participate in creating a sustainable and productive garden cooperative, please come to our next meeting. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month at 10 am in the School Library (May 2 and May 16). For general information, contact **Marilynn Jacobs**, eldogarden@comcast.net, 466-6707, or **Eleni Cahn**, elenicahn@msn.com, 466-1558. For information on the communal garden plot, contact **Ann Bates** at anncbates@yahoo.com.

The Eldorado Food Coop

The Eldorado Food Cooperative meets once a month and/or as needed. Our food interests include better access to locally produced food; ways to gain more knowledge, information and skills about food production, preparation and preserving; community interaction; foods that are any or all of the following: local, organic, minimally processed, home produced, cost effective, cruelty free. Our most recent action has been the exploration of Beneficial Farms CSA (community supported agriculture), a CSA that supports local food production and small-scale farmers. For more information, contact **Carole Tashel** at ctashel@cybermesa.com, 466-6153 or **Fox Skylar** 231-0892

The Eldorado Energy Coop (EEC)

The Eldorado Energy Coop is envisioning an energy-independent Eldorado and doing some wonderful work planning the action agenda necessary to make this happen. Come join us! For more information, meeting times and locations, contact **Deborah Boldt**, dboldt23@gmail.com, 466-2295, or **Amy Bertelli**, 466-1624.

The Eldorado Spiritual Coop

Performing the 5 Tibetan Rites (optional), meditation, and open discussion. *Meeting times:* 1st and 3rd Thursdays. *Time:* 5:45–7:15 pm. *Place:* School Library. Contact **Don McAvinchey**, 955-1847, donmcavinchey@comcast.net.

Strike Up the Band!

The Eldorado Community Band presents its spring concert "Uncommon Time," a collection of diverse



ASTRONOMY HAIKU

Above the still desert,
Stars whirl. I stand
Fixed at their center, with awe.

— Diane Thomas

musical selections with unusual time signatures, including "Third Suite," by Robert Jager; "Symphony for Band," by Vincent Persichetti; and "Mars," from The Planets, by Gustav Holst. The band will also perform the overture to The Marriage of Figaro, by Mozart.

The evening also features an eclectic mix of small-ensemble performances, from saxophone duets to brass quintets. Please join the Eldorado Community Band on Saturday, May 9, at 7 pm, at a new location — Christ Lutheran Church — at Old Pecos Trail and St. Michaels Drive. For more information, call 505-466-8412 or visit www.eldoradoband.org.

ERA Flea Market

Recycle, reuse, and rejoice at the ever-popular ERA Spring Flea Market on Saturday, May 9, at the Community Center from 8 am to noon. The 125 vendor spaces are first-come, first-serve. Setup begins at 7 am (some vendors arrive as early as 6 am to ensure snaring their favored space). Fees are \$15 for Eldorado residents, \$20 for non-residents, and \$25 for commercial vendors. If you'd like to help out by volunteering a little of your time for this event, contact Marilyn Farrell, aka Queen Flea, at 466-4469.

Summer Reading Program

On May 12 (Tuesday, 10 am), VGPL is pleased to be the statewide kick-off site for the Summer Reading Program: Be Creative @ Your Library. We will host First Lady Barbara Richardson and 2nd and 3rd graders from El Dorado Community School for a morning of read-aloud stories. Look for us in the newspapers!

May Events

Left out? Help us compile a comprehensive events listing.

Email 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

MAY SPECIAL EVENTS

Bluebird Presentation	Sat., May 2, 2pm	Claudia	466-1950	RR
ANNUAL MEETING	Mon., May 4, 7 pm	ECIA	466-4248	School
EACA Studio Tour	Sat. & Sun., May 16-17			
ERA Spring Flea Market	Sat., May 9, 8 am	Marilyn	466-4469	ECIA
Local Botanical Talk-Walk	Sun., May 10, 9 am			CC
Pool Opens	Sat., May 23, 10 am	ECIA	466-4248	Pool

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Finance Committee	Mon., May 4, 4-6 pm	Dan Drobnis	466-4781	CFR
Facilities & Grounds	Tues., May 5, 4 pm	Fred Raznick	466-2305	CFR
Conservation Committee	Tues., May 5, 7-9 pm	John Parker	466-7513	LR
Neighborhood Watch	Mon., May 11, 7 pm	Marilyn Walker	466-2553	CR
Architectural Committee	Wed., May 13, 7-9 pm	Bill Schwent	466-7708	CFR
Board Work Study	Mon., May 18, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
ECIA Board	Thurs., May 21, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CR
Information Committee	Tues., May 26, 7-9 pm	Frank Schober	310-8593	LR
Architectural Committee	Wed., May 27, 7-9 pm	Bill Schwent	466-7708	CFR
Stable Committee	Tues., May 26, 7-9 pm	Bonnie Mamp	466-4271	LR

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Search & Rescue	Thurs., May 14, 6:30-9:30 pm	Dave Burdett	466-9765	CR
La Canada Wireless	Mon., May 4 & 18, 7-9	lcwireless.org	Library	
Eld Dog Club	Tues., May 12, 7 pm	Freddie Hetler	466-2005	LR
Roadrunners RV Club	Tues., May 19, 6 pm	Beverly Cottingham	466-4655	Fire
Library Book Group	3rd Mon., 7-9 pm	Shelley Moore	466-9636	VGPL
Cub Scout Pack 414	4th Tues., 7-9 pm	John Kieling	466-4232	Sm Gym
Bird Walk	1st Sat., 8:30 am	Ron Duffy	466-6398	
Conserv. Comm. Hike	3rd Sat. of month	Eleanor Gossen	466-1949	
EACA Meeting	Last Thurs. of month		466-6245	Fire
EAWS&SD*	Thurs, May 7 & 21, 7-9 pm	466-2411	CR	

WEEKLY MEETINGS

AA	Tues., 5:30-6:50 pm			LR
AA	Wed., 10:30-11:30 am			CFR/RR
AA	Fri., 6-7 pm			CFR
AA	Sat., 10:45-11:45 am			LR
AA	Sun., 5:15-6:15 pm			CFR
Boy Scout Troop 414	Wed., 7-9 pm	Ramon Quintana	757-6424	RR
Bridge	1st & 3rd Mon, 1-4:30 pm	Kate Kaulbach	466-1465	LR
Bridge	1st & 3rd Fri., 1-4:30 pm			CR, LR
Bridge	2nd & 4th Fri., 1-4:30 pm	Pat Lavengood	466-9765	CR, 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
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
Senior Lunch**	M, W & F, 12-1 pm	Senior Center	466-1039	
Knitting Club	Tues., 10 am-noon	Joyce Hanmer	466-3018	LR
Figure Drawing	Mon., 12:30-2:30 pm	Sande Anderson	466-4688	RR
Softball Practice	Sundays 10 am	Tom Miller	553-5888	CC
Adult Basketball	Thursdays, 7:00-dusk			CC court

*Eldorado Area Water and Sanitation District

**Reservations Required

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.eldoradocommunity.org

Night Sky Protection

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

JUST 200 YEARS AGO, before the invention of the electric light, most people could regularly see stars in the night sky. Humans have marveled at the beauty of the night sky for thousands of years. Fortunately, residents of Eldorado can still see the cloud-like band across the sky at night that is our galaxy, the Milky Way. Our dark night skies are a spectacular resource that must be preserved, so that all of us can appreciate them.

There are many treasures to behold in our night skies, either with unaided vision or with binoculars and telescopes. You don't have to be an astronomer to be amazed by the planet Saturn with its large rings, Jupiter with its swirling clouds and storms and the mysterious features of Mars. Farther out are magnif-

icent star clusters such as the Hercules Cluster (also known as M13), the multitudes of galaxies such as our neighbor Andromeda, and nebulas (named by their appearances: the Lagoon, the Ring and the Crab Nebula), all visible from our backyards, and all because we follow our dark night covenants. If you've ever seen a comet, meteor, or satellite, you know there are many things to see every night—if you just look up.

The ECIA Board has been encouraged to sponsor a new program to bring our community in line with the requirements to be an official International Dark Sky Community as defined by the International Dark Sky Association. We'll have more on this in another *Vistas* article.

—David Goodrich

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ECIA COVENANT COMPLIANCE REPRESENTATIVE

HAVING MOVED FROM VERMONT just a few months ago, one of the many things that attracted me to Eldorado this past year was its most unique dark night sky quality that allows for wonderful stargazing. Ironically, it was not until I began working as the ECIA Covenant Compliance Representative that I learned Eldorado had won a 2005 Night Sky Association award for its efforts in protecting dark night skies.

As many are aware, the New Mexico legislature passed the "Night Sky Protection Act" in 1999, believing our night sky to be endangered. Soon thereafter, Eldorado also addressed this concern by implementing Dark Sky initiatives into the Eldorado Covenants. Article II, Section 10, Exterior Lights, and its guidelines read as follows: "Exterior lights are prohibited unless they are 75 watts or less and are properly shielded so as to direct light downward. The lighting of signs on a lot is prohibited." What this means is:

- ▼ A shielded light fixture must use "opaque" material, and the light shall not be visible through any openings in the fixture other than the lowest point of the fixture. There shall be no upward component of any exterior light.
- ▼ "To shield" means to hide or conceal. "Opaque" means not transparent or translucent; not allowing light to pass through.
- ▼ "Exterior" includes all outdoor lighting such as building wall- or pole-mounted lighting, landscape, walkway, monument or driveway lighting as well as security lighting switched by photo sensors or motion detectors. Note: Security spotlights should be timed to go off after 2 minutes.

- ▼ Landscape lighting shall illuminate only the ground below (adjacent) to the fixture and it is recommended that the lighting not be mounted higher than 24 inches above the ground or exceed 20 watts per luminary and made of a non-reflective finish.

Despite these specific lighting guidelines, however, Eldorado is not free from "light pollution" problems. In 2008, 73 lighting violations were reported and logged, and another 40 were logged through March 2009. So we at the ECIA are taking this issue seriously and are now proactively addressing these lighting violations by:

- ▼ Performing weekly night site visits to locate and address any potential lighting violations. (Yes, that is probably me you have seen driving around evenings in the white truck—not a burglar!)
- ▼ Timely follow-up on any alleged lighting violations called in by Eldorado residents.
- ▼ Public outreach regarding the night sky through upcoming *Vistas* articles and a spring 2009 Dark Sky Symposium here in Eldorado (at Fiesta Verde on May 1).

I look forward to working with Eldorado residents to help protect the night sky. If you have any questions, or want to report a lighting violation, please contact me at eciaccr@aol.com, or at 466-4248, ext. 15.

—Mark Young, ECIA Covenant Compliance Rep.

At the Crossroads

“**IT’S A DIRTY JOB** but somebody has to do it.” That familiar phrase applies to the County Public Works folks, the Road Committee, and our neighbors who live on dirt roads and have to deal with the dust and mud. As discussed in previous “At the Crossroads” columns, your Road Committee is dealing with the issue of dirt vs. paved roads in our community. In recent issues of *Vistas*, we have offered primers on dirt roads, washboard, base course and chip seal (a less expensive form of paving than asphalt). We have endeavored to identify the pluses and minuses of each alternative. But in discussing roads with our residents, a clear picture of the community’s preference for road surfaces has yet to emerge. One thing is certain: Getting all the funding needed from the Legislature or via bond issues is not easy, even to restore the base course on our roads, let alone for any form of paving. Historically we have charged a special assessment to get some of our more high-traffic roads paved, sharing the costs with the County. Going forward, it is unclear what we will

be able to do. But other than continuing to seek funding for base course, our most pressing priority is to determine what the community wants, dirt or pavement. Later this year we plan to conduct a community survey to find out. You’ll be reading more about it in upcoming issues of *Vistas* as well as on the ECIA website.

*Nolan Zisman,
Chair,
ECIA Road Committee*



PHOTO BY HOPE KIAH

The Patio as Oasis

MAY HAS ARRIVED, and soon we will be past the average last frost date, which around here is about May 15. We have already had some beautiful weather, and our time in the sun and outdoor living has begun. Caution should be taken when putting out geraniums, houseplants and other tender annuals, as a frost can kill them. Getting our patios and decks ready for the summer can be a joy—it’s time for glorious sunsets with refreshments in hand.

If you haven’t already prepared garden beds with YumYum mix and mulch, now is the time. Regular fertilizing is encouraged throughout the season. Slow-release fertilizer and fresh soil should also be added to pots for the best growth and blooming. Potted gardens are a great alternative to working in our poor excuse for soil, and a whole lot easier than dealing with weeds and critters. Purchasing landscape plants throughout the season and keeping them in pots (in their plastic containers and dropped into decorative containers) close by the patio, then planting them in the fall, is a fun way to add to your landscape. They would rather be planted in the autumn anyway.

By using xeric techniques, we can be the most efficient with our water usage. The thirstiest plants should be planted close to the house. Farther away from the patio, our gardens and landscapes can blend into our incredible New Mexican vistas with native

vegetation and less thirsty plants. These plants look best with occasional watering and are much more resistant to our furry friends.

The patio areas can be our little oases. With some shade, our outdoor living areas are places to catch the breeze—and shoot it too! The addition of fountains, recycled plastic outdoor carpets, colorful pottery and even music can create very desirable places to be. Potted gardens, houseplants of all types (be careful not to burn them), and even containerized ponds can be used to enhance the wet zone of the xeric landscape. It’s also much easier to get recycled kitchen and bath water to this zone as well. The whole idea is to save water, work less and enjoy more, at a time of year when we want to be out of doors.

The north and east sides of the home are the most pleasant in summer. If possible, this is where you should create your outdoor living spaces. The west side can be brutal late in the day, so establishing shade trees here is recommended. Shade cloths and freestanding ramadas are also great ways to beat the heat. South-facing exposures, where the heat can be captured for *la resolana* or the warm, sunny place, are ideal in the winter.

On Saturday, May 2, I will hold a class called “May in the Garden” at 11 am at Tropic of Capricorn. It’s free and all are invited!

Michael Clark, Tropic of Capricorn





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

Imagining the West



Vista Grande Public Library is hosting an author talk with **Johnny D. Boggs**, President of the Western Writers of America and local resident, on Thursday, May 14, at 7 pm. The Santa Fe novelist will discuss how he has worked to redefine the genre by reaching out to new audiences. "My goal is to offer crossover appeal by bending, mixing, and even breaking genre rules," Boggs said. "In writing fiction for young adults, I want to get them interested in, first and foremost, reading, and learning about the West's vast history and heritage."

Boggs attempts that in his two latest novels: *Killstraight*, a murder mystery set on the Comanche Indian reservation in the 1880s; and *Soldier's Farewell*, a young-adult novel set in southern New Mexico during the outbreak of the Civil War. Both books will be available for purchase at the free library event. Refreshments will be served.