

ELDORADO at SANTA FE VISTAS

VOLUME XVII, ISSUE 8

August 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

Water Series, Part 11
ECIA News2-3
In the Community4-5
Community Park6
Board Director Reflects6
The Amazing Raven7

Monthly Newsletter of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association

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

16th Annual Summer Fling

**ICE CREAM SOCIAL & SILENT AUCTION FUNDRAISER FOR VISTA GRANDE PUBLIC LIBRARY
SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 2015, 1 TO 4 PM, ECIA COMMUNITY CENTER**

This year's Summer Fling/Ice Cream Social and Silent Auction will be packed with delicious food and family fun you won't want to miss! Café Fina will be making apple and mixed berry crisps with ice cream à la mode for the event, or try Chez Dré brownies topped with ice cream and more chocolate. Also, this year's silent auction will have a wide array of great items, from beautiful baskets, to gift certificates for services and dining, to books, local jewelry and artwork, to food and wine. Enjoy some circus acts by Wise Fool, play a game of chess with friends, watch the Upstart Crows in a Shakespearean short act, bid on some fabulous auction items, build a Lego creation, make a craft, and enjoy the good company of neighbors and friends all while supporting your local library. Vista Grande Public Library (VGPL) invites you to the Summer Fling on August 9 at the ECIA Community Center from 1 to 4 PM.

Did you know that VGPL is an independent, non-profit organization? This means that while the library receives partial funding from Santa Fe County and grants, over 50% of the budget comes from direct community support. Fundraisers like this one, as well as direct appeals, pay for programming, new books and materials, staffing, and other operations that make our community library what it is. When you come to the Summer Fling, you are supporting an important

resource that provides access for everyone in our area to library resources.

Ice cream served with Café Fina crisp (gluten free) or a Chez Dré brownie drowned in delicious toppings will be more delicious than ever. With an admission wristband, you get all the ice cream you want and the chance to bid on items in the silent auction, plus entertainment for the whole family. The price for adult admission is \$8, and for children ages 6 to 11, it is \$5. Or purchase a family ticket, which includes two adults and your children (under 18) for only \$20. Children 5 and under are free. Entertainment/Auction Only tickets will also be available for \$5, if you prefer. Wristbands are on sale at the library, on the library website (click the Donate button), and will be sold at the event.

To contribute financially or with an auction item, please contact the Silent Auction co-chairs: **Roberta Armstrong** (466-3008) and **Donna Mazzola** (780-5114), or email publicity@vglibrary.org. Also, Summer Fling Sponsorships, which will give your business more visibility, are available at \$100, \$250, and \$400. Please call us if you are interested in this option.

To volunteer to help, contact publicity@vglibrary.org. And thank you, Eldorado, for your support in making VGPL your community library!

—Roberta Armstrong, Donna Mazzola, & April Lauseng

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



WATER MATTERS PART 1

Common Concerns Encourage Community

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ELDORADO AREA WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICT

Now servicing nearly 3,000 homes and businesses, the 18-year-old Eldorado Area Water and Sanitation District (EAWSD) is publicly owned by property owners within the district. However, the water utility now administered by the district came into public ownership just over a decade ago. Ratepayer ownership of the system through the district was only accomplished by years of hard work on the part of individuals and a great deal of community cooperation.

Carved from the former 27,000-acre Simpson Ranch in 1970, Eldorado was developed by a New Jersey-based corporation, American Real Estate and Petroleum Corporation (AMREP). In order to obtain the right to develop Eldorado's 6,000 acres, AMREP was required by various state and county agencies to build and maintain a water system to serve the subdivision. A subsidiary of AMREP, Eldorado Utilities, Inc. (EUI), was created for this purpose. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 >>**



**Share your
comments
with us!**

*For policy and
deadline, see
below*

Editorial Policy

Vistas welcomes your ideas, stories, photos, and art. Please include full name and contact information. The newsletter will not publish material deemed inflammatory, biased, or inappropriate. Submissions will be selected and edited at the discretion of the editor. Community announcements are welcome as well, along with accompanying photos.

DEADLINE: Newsletter deadline is the 5th day of each month. Submissions can be dropped off or mailed to the ECIA office or e-mailed to diana@eldoradosf.org. Please include "Attn: Vistas" in your message.

Mission Statement

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

Home Maintenance Projects Needing ECIA Approval

One of the more problematic covenant violation issues that we face as the Homeowners Association of Eldorado at Santa Fe occurs when residents begin home repair projects without realizing that the project requires the approval of the ECIA.

The most common of these infractions involves restucco work. A resident who fails to seek ECIA approval but uses a noncompliant stucco color could possibly be required to restucco again, this time with a compliant stucco color—at a significant cost to the homeowner.

We at the ECIA would like to remind all residents that any *permanent exterior* modifications or improvements require the approval of the ECIA Architecture Committee. This includes additions such as garages, sheds, walls, fences, cisterns, and solar arrays—in fact, any structures that are permanent in nature.

In addition, even some minor home improvement projects may require approval if they involve the exterior of buildings on a lot. Among the many types of projects that require ECIA approval are:

- ▼ Replacing any exterior doors or windows
- ▼ Repairing or repainting exterior walls
- ▼ Adding awnings or shade devices
- ▼ Adding driveway monuments
- ▼ Changing or modifying existing fencing

- ▼ Adding garden enclosures or greenhouses
- ▼ Changing exterior lighting

While these projects may seem small, the fact that they involve permanent structures, or entail changes visible in the neighborhood, means that they will likely require Architecture Committee approval. Note that certain projects, such as restuccoing with an approved Eldorado stucco color, can be approved by the ECIA staff rather than the committee, provided the required applications are brought to the ECIA.

If you are a homeowner and have a project in mind, we ask that you call me, Mark Young, at the ECIA at 466-4248 to see if your project requires Architecture Committee review. I will gladly work with you to ensure that you have the required forms filled out properly, so as to streamline the review and approval process. Residents may pick up the application forms at the ECIA office or can download the Architectural Plan Form from the Eldorado website at www.eldoradosf.org. As well, residents can review the most current Eldorado Covenants and Guidelines for Protective Covenants and Building Restrictions on the website.

If you have any questions at all, please contact me at 466-4248 or email me at mark@eldoradosf.org.

—Mark Young
Covenant Compliance Representative

Recent Board Actions

The ECIA Board held its regular monthly meeting on July 16, 2015. Four Board members were present: **Dag Ryen** (President, presiding), **Todd Handy** (Treasurer), **Greg Colello** (Secretary), and **Antone Forneris**. **Jeanne Calzada**, **Pam Henline** (Vice President), and **David Yard** were absent, excused. The following formal actions were taken unanimously, with the Chair voting:

- ▼ The Board appointed **Antone Forneris** as a Director to fill a vacant term expiring in May 2018.
- ▼ The Board approved a variance for 86 Verano Loop for an existing fence and shed, previously approved in 1993 but not constructed according to plan, to extend 5 feet into the required 20-foot side setback.
- ▼ The Board approved a Home Profession application for 31 Monte Alto Road for a custom furniture workshop, pending county approval.

- ▼ The Board approved a Home Profession application for 37 Verano Loop for an existing environmental studies business.

- ▼ The Board appointed **Eduardo Krasilovsky** and **Gershon Siegel** to the Information Committee.

Regular Board meetings are scheduled on the third Thursday of each month at 7 PM at the Community Center and are open to the public. The next Board meeting will be on August 20. An open forum and community announcements are normally included. Complete minutes and meeting agendas are available at the ECIA office or website: www.eldoradosf.org.

In addition, the Board holds an informal (no votes) Board working session in the Community Center Conference Room at 6 PM on the Monday before the third Thursday of each month. The next working session will be on Monday, August 17. ECIA members are welcome to attend and may request to place, and/or speak on, particular items on the agenda by calling the ECIA office at 466-4248 three business days in advance.

Message from the ECIA Board

First off, the ECIA Board of Directors would like to thank everyone who helped make this year's Fourth of July festivities so memorable. We enjoyed a parade full of enthusiastic participants, fabulous music from two gifted bands, and weather conditions that thankfully stayed cool and dry. Almost a thousand hot dogs were handed out, in addition to a couple of hundred bags of popcorn and an equal number of sno-cones. We estimate that more than 600 people joined in on the fun. Many thanks to everyone who gave graciously of their time to make this possible and everyone who added their smiles and enthusiasm to the successful event.

The Board would also like to make residents aware of the new smiling faces that grace the ECIA offices these days. Our greeter-in-chief, as you walk in the front door, is now **Lindamarie McDonald**. Lindamarie has learned the ropes quickly and stands (or normally sits) ready to take care of your everyday ECIA needs.

In the evenings, the offices are manned (and womaned) by our two facilities attendants, **Gloria Silva** and **Terrence "Trey" McLarney**. They help out with all the many groups that utilize our meeting rooms and other facilities throughout the evenings and weekends, making sure that everything is set up properly and that users' needs are met. Please stop by one late afternoon and say hello to them.

Last, but certainly not least, we want to welcome our new Board member, **Antone Forneris**, who joined the Board formally at the July regular Board meeting. Antone has an extensive background in international business and business marketing and brings a wealth of management and organizational skills to the ECIA Board. We look forward to tapping his knowledge and experience.

Finally, a reminder that schools will be reopening later this month. Please watch out for children at crosswalks and drive extra carefully in the waning autumn light.
—*ECIA Board of Directors*

History of the EAWSD, *continued from page 1*

EUI began laying pipes between the existing ranch wells and individual lots, and installing storage tanks. EUI would later add to the system by drilling more wells.

The Public Service Commission had required that AMREP subsidize its operations until Eldorado was at least 80% built out. In the early 1960s, AMREP had likewise been required to build a water utility system for its development of Rio Rancho, northwest of Albuquerque. With the creation of Eldorado at Santa Fe, AMREP, primarily a land sales company, now found itself with two water systems on its hands.

By the late 1980s, AMREP was anxious to sell off both the Rio Rancho and the Eldorado water utilities. It found a potential buyer in General Waterworks, a French-owned company. However, the EUI subsidization agreement killed the package deal, and General Waterworks bought only the Rio Rancho system.

In 1992, realizing that EUI could be sold at any moment, the ECIA began a series of community forums regarding the utility's future. At that point, the system was estimated to be worth around \$3 million. Many in the community thought that was a reasonable amount and believed that creating a water and sanitation district was a first step toward purchasing the utility.

Without a district, there would be no entity capable of entering into negotiations with AMREP should the community decide to purchase EUI. However, there was little community enthusiasm, and the idea languished until 1994, when AMREP's subsidization of

EUI was no longer required. Suddenly EUI customers began to see significant increases in their bills.

It was then that the Eldorado Residents' Association (ERA) in cooperation with ECIA revived the water issue. The two organizations set up a joint water study committee. However, residents from surrounding subdivisions also serviced by EUI showed an interest in the effort. At that point, an area-wide independent Ad Hoc Water Study Committee was created and included residents from many Eldorado-adjacent subdivisions.

The committee's year-long work resulted in its recommendation to create a water and sanitation district and to purchase the water utility. That's when the real work began. The committee now had to convince at least 25% of the taxpaying electors in the proposed district to sign a petition in favor of forming the district.

In early July 1996, the Santa Fe County Commissioners voted unanimously to accept and certify the petition submitted by 390 Eldorado area residents requesting an election to form a water and sanitation district. A year later, on July 1, 1997, out of the approximately 1,100 eligible voters, 427 said "yes" and 55 said "no" to creating the district. **Ray Nichols**, **Don Dayton**, and **Dick Chenault** were elected to that first district board to two-, four-, and six-year terms, respectively.

That board notified AMREP of the district's interest in acquiring the utility and initiated an engineering study to see what exactly they might be acquiring. By then,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 >>

ECIA OFFICE

#1 La Hacienda Loop
Santa Fe, NM 87508
466-4248, 466-4249
www.eldoradosf.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Dag Ryan
D.Ryan@eldoradosf.org
Vice-President
Pam Henline
P.Henline@eldoradosf.org
Secretary
Greg Colello
G.Colello@eldoradosf.org
Treasurer
Todd Handy
T.Handy@eldoradosf.org
Director
Jeanne Calzada
J.Calzada@eldoradosf.org
Director
David Yard
D.Yard@eldoradosf.org
COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Architecture:

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

ECIA STAFF

General Manager
Denise Villanueva
466-4248
gm@eldoradosf.org
Covenant Compliance Rep
Mark Young
466-4248
mark@eldoradosf.org

VISTAS NEWSLETTER

Editor & Designer
Carol Leyba
466-1158
cbsleyba@comcast.net
Webmaster:
Jack Arnold
webmaster@eldoradosf.org
Editorial Assistant:
DiAna Gutierrez
466-4248
diana@eldoradosf.org

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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

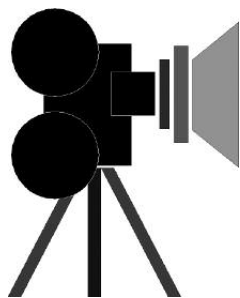
Pool hours:**Lap Swim:**

M–F 7:30–10 AM;

Sat.–Sun. 8–10 AM

Kiddie Pool & Big**Pool: Daily**

10 AM–8 PM

**Windmill Photo Sought**

Windmills and Dreams, a book on the history of Eldorado at Santa Fe, is in the process of being revised for a new edition. We are looking for a great photograph of a windmill for the cover. If you have a photograph you think would be suitable, please submit it to P.Henline@eldoradosf.org. We will select the best for the cover and the ECIA website.

Youth Soccer

Youth Fall Development Soccer Registration going on now through August 16 for Eldorado and Santa Fe teams. Ages 3–14. For more information and to register: www.northernsc.org. For questions, call 982-0878 ext 1, or email registrar@northernsc.org.

**2015 Bylaws Review: Please Email Your Questions or Comments**

The Election Committee is working on its biannual review of the ECIA Bylaws in order to recommend potential amendments that would clarify or update the document. To this end, the committee has established an email account, bylawsreview2015@yahoo.com, to receive comments and questions from ECIA members regarding this biannual review. This account will be active until August 31. We welcome your emails regarding the Bylaws review.

—Kathie Graham, Election Committee Chair

REEL NEW MEXICO! August 2015

Screening at La Tienda's Performance Space on Thursday, August 13, at 7 PM is: A Mystery Movie! The title of the movie for August will not be revealed here, but here are some clues: (1) A small portion of it was shot in New Mexico and released in the late 1970s. (2) It was directed by one of the most popular directors of the late 1970s and stars an actor whose popularity was at its peak when this film was made. (3) It is an adventure/thriller that will have you on the edge of your seat. (4) It has a two-hour running time. (5) Most of the film was shot on location and is a remake of a French film. (6) Steve McQueen was scheduled to be the star, but he turned down the role due to his commitment to fellow Santa Fe resident, Ali MacGraw. If you guess the title, you get free admission!

There is a suggested donation of \$5 and you can also bring food and drink into the theater from La Plancha Restaurant. For more information, please contact Jeff Berg at 466-1634 or nedludd76@hotmail.com.

Prescription Medicine Disposal

Properly disposing of unused or outdated prescription medication is important to prevent accidental exposure or intentional misuse. There are now two permanent dropbox locations in Santa Fe where drugs can be safely disposed.

▼ The lobby of the Santa Fe Police Department on Camino Entrada, just west of the intersection of Airport and Cerrillos Roads. The lobby is open M–F, 8–5.

▼ The lobby of Santa Fe Fire Department Station 1, at 200 Murales Road, close to Fort Marcy Park. The lobby is open M–F, 8–noon and 1–5 PM (closed at lunchtime).

Visit eldorado285recycles.org for information about other recycling opportunities.

Cactus Presentation at the Library

The Cactus Rescue Project is giving a slide show presentation about cactus gardening at the Vista Grande Library in Eldorado on Saturday, August 15, at 10 AM. For more information, contact the Vista Grande Library.

MOON PHASES FOR AUGUST**Planning 2016 Eldorado Gardening Tour**

The Eldorado Gardening Tour was a wonderful event that ran for three years. Seven or eight gardens in the Eldorado area were on view; between 300 and 400 people attended each year. If enough interest can be generated, another gardening tour will be held, in the Spring/Summer of 2016. If you are interested in showing your garden or helping in the planning of this event, please come to a meeting on Tuesday, August 4, at 6:30 PM, at the ECIA Community Center. For more info or questions contact Obie at jwo1959@aol.com.

Let's Grow! Education for Home Gardeners

It's time to think about fall, which is right around the corner. On Saturday, August 1, 10–11 AM, come to the Xeric Garden at the County Fairgrounds Extension Office, 3229 Rodeo Road, to see a low-maintenance, water-conservative demo garden by Santa Fe Master Gardeners, and learn how to prepare for the fall season and then how to proceed. Visit sfmga.org.

At the end of the month, come to the Herb Garden at the SF County Fairgrounds, 3229 Rodeo Road, on Saturday, August 29, 10 AM–2 PM. Following a brief tour and discussion with SF Master Gardener project leaders each hour on the hour, participants may plant herb seeds, cuttings and divisions in pots to take home. For more details, go to sfmga.org.

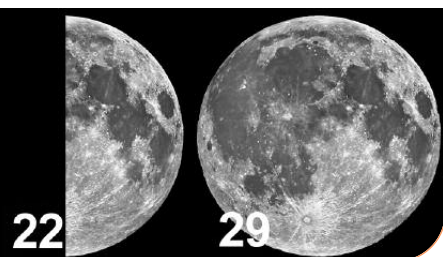
Meeting Changes

Two meeting date changes have been made to accommodate the financial report schedule from HOAMCO:

- 1 The Finance Committee regular monthly meeting has been moved to the Monday before the third Thursday of the month at 9:30 AM in the Community Center Conference Room. The next meeting is on August 17. All ECIA members are welcome.
- 2 The single Board monthly (non-voting) workshop has been moved to the Monday before the third Thursday of each month at 6 PM in the Community Center Conference Room. The next workshop is on August 17. All ECIA members are welcome.

Both meetings will thus be three days before the regular monthly Board meeting on the third Thursday of each month.

AUGUST 2015



ASTRONOMY CORNER

August 2015

August 12, 13: Perseids Meteor Shower. The Perseids is one of the best meteor showers to observe, producing up to 60 meteors per hour at its peak. It is produced by comet Swift-Tuttle, which was discovered in 1862. The Perseids are famous for producing a large number of bright meteors. The shower runs annually from July 17 to August 24. It peaks this year on the night of August 12 and the morning of August 13. The thin crescent moon will be no match for the bright Perseids this year, so be prepared for a great show. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Perseus, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

August 29: Full Moon, Supermoon. The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth as the Sun and its face will be fully illuminated. This is the first of three supermoons for 2015. The Moon will be at its closest approach to the Earth and may look slightly larger and brighter than usual.

—From seasky.org

Changes Near You?

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

August Events

Left out? Help us compile a comprehensive events listing.

Email marilyn@eldoradosf.org with your meeting/event information, or bring it to the ECIA office by the 3rd of the month for publication in the following month's Vistas. Please include "Attn: Vistas" and be sure to indicate:



1. Type of Event

2. Location

3. Date & Time

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

4. A Resource Person (one who can answer questions both about the event and the sponsoring organization) and his/her telephone number.

SPECIAL EVENTS

VGPL Ice Cream Social	Sun., Aug. 9, 1-4 pm	466-7323	CC
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Architecture Committee	Tues., Aug. 11, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Architecture Committee	Tues., Aug. 25, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Board Work Study	Mon., Aug. 17, 6-8 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Conservation Committee	Tues., Aug. 4, 7-9 pm	Jim Daniel	609-941-4527	F
ECIA Board Meeting	Thurs., Aug. 20, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	RR
Election Committee	Wed., Aug. 12, 2-4 pm	Kathie Graham	466-2133	CFR
Facilities & Grounds	Wed., Aug. 4, 4-6 pm	John Calzada	466-1947	CFR
Finance Committee	Mon., Aug. 17, 9:30-11:30 am	Dan Drobnis	466-4781	CFR
Information Committee	Mon., Aug. 24, 7-9 pm	Frank Schober	310-8593	F
Road Committee	Not Scheduled	Felicia Probert	466-1563	CFR
Stable Committee	Next: Sept. 29, 7-9 pm	Alice Griffin	795-6424	CFR

MONTHLY / SEMI-MONTHLY MEETINGS / BIMONTHLY

EAW&SD*	1st & 3rd Thurs., 7-9 pm	Anna Mondragon	466-1085	RR/CR
Eldorado Arts & Crafts	Last Thurs., 7 pm	Mary Fredenburgh	466-1035	CR
Eldorado Book Club	3rd Wed., 3:00 pm	Susan Aylward	shaylward@gmail.com	
Eldorado/285 Recycles	2nd Tues. of month, 4-6 pm	Karen Sweeney	466-9797	CFR
Library Book Group	2nd Sat., 9-10:30	Joan LaMarque	466-6000	CFR
Roadrunner RV	3rd Tues. of month	Gordon Groff	699-7680	
Search & Rescue	2nd Thurs., 7-9 pm	santafesar.org		CR

WEEKLY MEETINGS

AA	Tues., 5:45-6:45 pm			CFR/LR
AA	Wed., 7-8 pm			CFR
AA	Thurs., 6-7 pm (Women Only)			CFR
AA	Fri., 6-7 pm			CFR/LR
AA	Sat., 10:45-11:45 am			CFR
AA	Sun., 5:15-6:15 pm			LR/CFR
Adult Basketball	Thurs., 6:30-Dusk			CC Courts
Boy Scout Troop 414	Wed., 7-9 pm	Fritz Denny	466-4070	RR, CR
Bridge	1st & 3rd Fri., 12-4:30 pm	Jackie Vaughn	466-2558	LR
Community Church**	Sun., 9:00 & 10:30 am	David McPherson	466-2495	La Tienda
Eldorado Hikers	Tues., 8:30 am	Terry Gibbs	466-6914	CC
Fire & Rescue Training	Tues., 7-9 pm	Fire Station Office	466-1204	Station
Fire & Rescue Duty Sections	Sat., 8-12 noon	Fire Station Office	466-1204	Station
Knitting Club	Tues., 10-12 noon	Joyce Hanmer	466-3018	LR
Life Drawing	Mon., 10-12 noon	Jack McCarthy	466-9601	RR
Mah Jongg	Fri., 1-5 pm	Nancy Robbins	466-1780	CR
Overeaters Anon	Mon., 7-8 pm	Barb	954-1533	LR
Senior Lunch***	Mon.-Fri., 11:30-12:30 pm	Senior Center	466-1039	
Spanish Conversation Group	Tues., 10 am	Jill Charboneau	216-6065	Library
Spinning Group (fiber)	1st & 3rd Thurs., 9:30-11:30	Ellen Higgins	970-201-4776	LR
Square Dancing	Fri., 6-9 pm	Connie Walters	466-4226	RR

* Eldorado Area Water and Sanitation District

**For other religious/spiritual services, go to <http://santafe.areaconnect.com/churches.htm>

*** Reservations required

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.eldoradosf.org

Eldorado Community Park

Two years ago a group of volunteers started to plan. With the support of the ECIA Facilities and Grounds Committee, and with backing from the ECIA Board, a multi-year project was put together to save the dying landscape at the Eldorado Community Center. Much work has been done in the last few years to that purpose: a new xeric cactus garden, rock mulching, lighting, and other beautifying and water-wise projects.

Landscaping the “island” is part of the multi-year project that began with the recognized need to care for existing mature trees, and then grew into a plan to restore the Community Center grounds to a healthy, high-desert landscape. We are making use of the existing installed cistern system, channeling runoff from the paved surfaces, and using manure compost from the horse stables. The work has been done almost exclusively by ECIA staff and a few dedicated volunteers—an example of Eldorado at its best.

This project is well on its way to becoming an Eldorado Community Park. In addition to xeric shrubs and buffalo grass, we are planting trees such as honey locusts and autumn ash and offering them to the Eldorado public in a “Commemorative Tree Program.” This program will also include shade trees and large juniper trees to be located in the open area on the north end of the park. Anyone wishing to remember someone or commemorate an event with a tree can purchase one in the landscape plan for only \$295. Carved stone plaques are available for purchase as well, to be placed with the trees. Information on the commemorative tree and bench project is available at the ECIA office.

Trees bought in the next two months will be planted this fall. As of this writing, there are only 12 trees left! Please consider investing in this wonderful community project.

—John “Obie” Oberhausen

See photo on
the back
page.

Former ECIA Board Director Siegel Reflects



As a candidate running for the Board last year, I stated that one of my goals was “to help reinvigorate a spirit of cooperation within Eldorado.” Yes, there were philosophical differences among us during my 12-month tenure. And yet, the Board enjoyed a collegial spirit. At times we stretched from our positions to obtain an ongoing consensus on most all issues.

It’s no secret that my decision to run for the Board in the first place was to help voice a perspective on a particular issue. To many ECIA members, including myself, a long dispute over covenant interpretation seemed harmful to the community. I sought to bring balance.

Also as a candidate, I naively believed we could move past what I then termed “managing by lawsuit.” Unfortunately, the lawsuit brought some years ago by the Association toward residents over backyard hen keeping continues in the courts. The lower court found in favor of ECIA, but the defendants have appealed that decision. I had hoped we could move toward less adversarial ways of resolving our differences. To date, between the ECIA and the defendants, more than \$100,000 in legal fees has been spent on the matter.

Another of my candidate-statements was: “I know we can overcome the constraints that an HOA tends to place on a community when it comes to running itself democratically.” That was wishful thinking on my part. As a 24-year-resident, I’ve experienced numerous times when community building has taken a backseat to fiduciary duties and covenant enforcement.

Everyone on the Board during my tenure was decent and well intentioned. Still, the ECIA is charged

with enforcing 40-year-old covenants never designed to encourage an evolving, sustainable community. New Jersey lawyers created our covenants to facilitate selling nearly three thousand lots carved from a New Mexico cattle ranch. At times I felt conflicted sitting on the Board. Board members find themselves choosing between protecting the business end of Eldorado and protecting an individual’s right to adapt to changing times.

My last candidate statement was that “we have a membership that recognizes sustainability as a front burner issue and is ready to deal with it.” Was that naive as well? In 1991, *People Magazine* proclaimed Eldorado “the largest passive solar community in the nation.” Yet, we have a number of residents who believe solar panels are fine as long as they stay on roofs and can’t be seen.

Ironically, the ECIA is currently in litigation over this very issue. A resident has sued the Association for permitting ground-based solar installations. While the district court found in ECIA’s favor, ruling that state statute prohibits the Association from placing undue burdens on residents who seek to utilize their solar rights, the decision has been appealed.

While my goals as a candidate didn’t match up with my achievements as a Board member, I’m still hopeful for my community of 24 years. My wish is that these costly and unnecessary lawsuits get Eldorado to recognize sustainability as a front-burner issue. Perhaps our “city of gold,” in its own strange way, is finding its silver lining.

—Gershon Siegel



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH FLORA & FAUNA GROUP

The Amazing Raven

We've always felt lucky to live among ravens — their size and sleek beauty make them a real presence in the community. Recent research confirms how special these animals are.

Similar in behavior to crows but larger and with thicker bills, ravens are highly intelligent—as smart as chimpanzees and dolphins. Like other intelligent species, nearly a decade is required for a raven to reach full intelligence. They live an average of 17 years in the wild and up to 40 years in captivity. These amazing animals can remember a person's face, and they can relay knowledge about that person to other ravens. They solve problems by studying situations to determine a course of action, and they use tools (such as a stick to probe for food in small places) more effectively than chimpanzees. If a raven knows another raven is watching, it will pretend to hide food in one location when in fact hiding it elsewhere (but since the other raven is likewise smart, this trick doesn't always work!). Sometimes working in pairs, one raven will distract an animal while the other raven steals the animal's food. Ravens have a large vocabulary, with regional dialects and accents. Some have been known to mimic human speech. U.S. military experts have studied their potential use in spy-like functions.

The raven is featured in stories throughout human history. Native Americans considered the raven an honored cultural champion, known for heroism and great deeds, even involved in the creation of the world—but also known as a trickster who causes problems because of his enjoyment of pranks. Celtic goddesses of warfare took the form of ravens during battle. Odin, the Viking god, had two magical companion ravens. In the Middle Ages, people came to fear the

birds because, being scavengers as well as hunters, ravens were seen to eat off corpses from bubonic plague. Edgar Allan Poe's famous poem "The Raven" immortalized the bird with its repetition of "nevermore." In current times, artists celebrate the raven's beauty, and we recognize ravens' helpful contributions to our environment (the average small family of these birds eats over 10,000 bugs per month!).

A flock of ravens is called an "unkindness," but nothing can be further from the truth. Ravens can be very playful, frolicking like puppies, soaring and swooping, rolling around in snow, sliding down slippery hills, playing keep-away, and even using toys (sticks, golf balls, rocks) to play with each other. Although they sometimes taunt other creatures for amusement, they can also be shy and cautious. Young, unmated ravens roost together at night, sometimes in very large groups. Ravens mate for life, and if an area is too densely populated with other ravens, the grown "kids" will stay with the parents to help raise any final young. During breeding seasons, raven parents will use water (frequently in bird baths) to soften food—sometimes body parts of small animals—before taking it to their hatchlings. Ravens demonstrate friendships and empathy. When a raven dies, its family members gather and exhibit grieving behavior by walking past the dead bird, dropping sticks or straws by the body, making noise as a group, and then flying silently away.

The next time a raven flies overhead, say hello to this remarkable animal.

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



Common Raven.
Photo David Hofmann.

History of EAWSD, *cont. from p. 3*

however, AMREP believed that the leaky, barely adequate EUI was now worth about three times the original estimation. Negotiations for the utility's purchase between the district and AMREP stalled.

In July 2001, EUI was allowed a 42% rate increase. On top of that, AMREP was about to sell the water system to Utilities Inc. (UI), a subsidiary of Nuon, a Dutch multinational energy and water company. Nuon already owned hundreds of other small water systems throughout the world. The community became embroiled over the controversy of a foreign corporation owning the local water system. Globalization had arrived in Eldorado.

The district responded to the imminent sale of the utility by commissioning a financial analysis of the

system and surveying homeowners serviced by EUI. Of 900 responses from area residents, 58% concurred that the district should proceed with the acquisition. Voters approved a bond issue in August 2002 that enabled the district to purchase the system.

By February 2003, since an agreement on the utility's sale had already been completed between AMREP and UI, the district was forced to kill the deal by "condemning" the system. In September 2004, a jury trial was held to determine the purchase price—\$11.047 million. As a result, EAWSD, through the condemnation process allowed by its "quasi-governmental" status, acquired the water system as a public utility. In addition to owning the system, EAWSD also bears the debt load for the purchase price.

Next month — EAWSD's current status.

— Gershon Siegel

Windmills & Dreams

The ECIA and Terra Nova Books are pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of *Windmills and Dreams*, 2nd edition, which will present an in-depth history of Eldorado, including its water management. Stay tuned for news of its publication and how to obtain your copy.

This revision of *Windmills and Dreams* has been made possible by the voluntary effort of Pam Henline, a member of ECIA's Board of Directors, with contributions from many others in the community.

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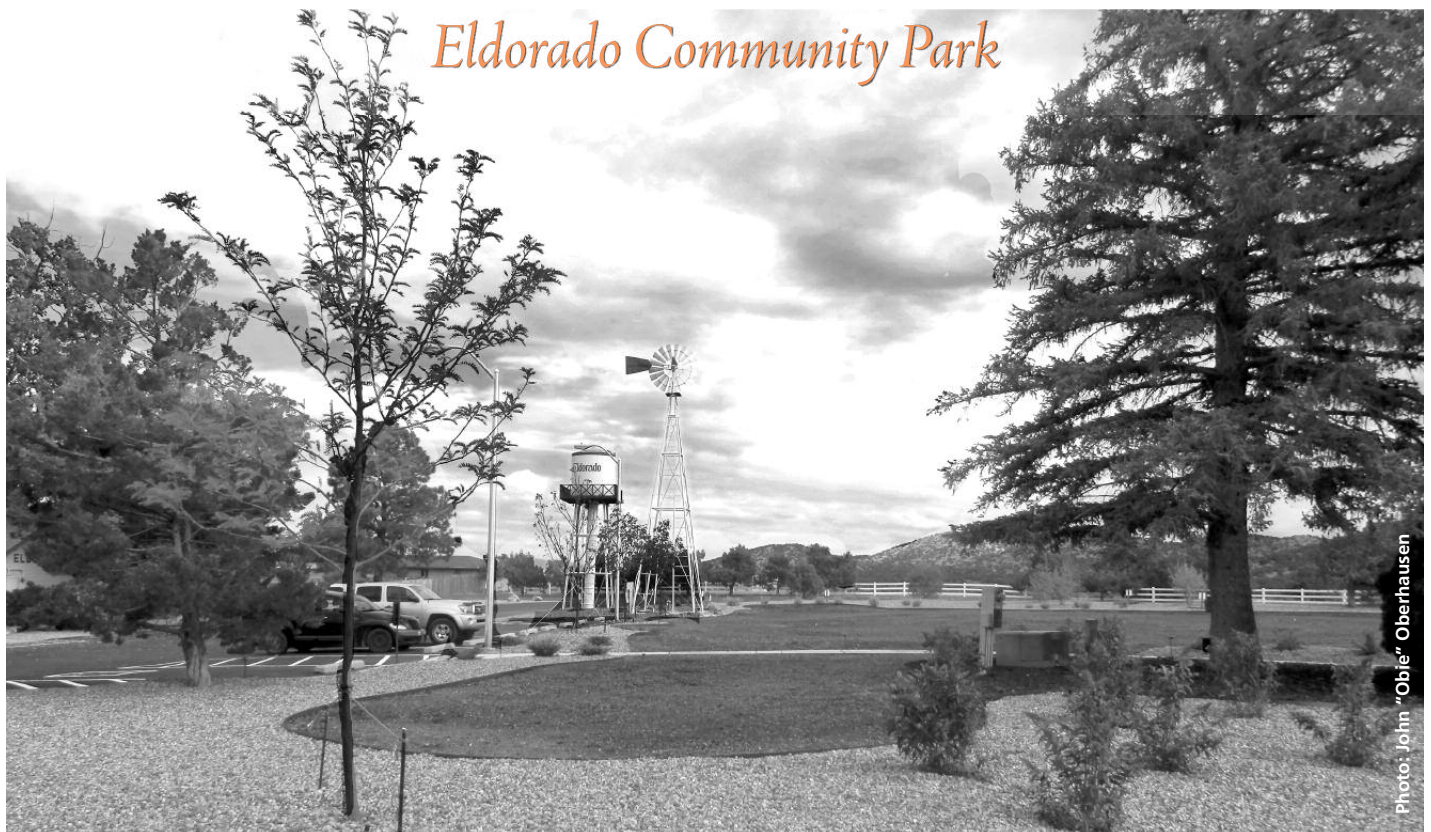


Photo: John "Obie" Oberhausen

View of the "island" at the Community Center, in July 2015. Watch it grow! (See story on p. 6.)