

# ELDORADO at SANTA FE VISTAS

VOLUME XVII, ISSUE 10

October 2015

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Monthly Newsletter of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association

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

## WATER MATTERS PART 2

## The Cost of Quenching Our Collective Thirsts

### ELDORADO AREA WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICT IN PERSPECTIVE

Just as I was writing this follow-up to the August *Vistas* ("Common Concerns Encourage Community: A Short History of the Eldorado Area Water and Sanitation District"), a friend happened to call about a strange encounter he'd just had. An EAWSD ratepayer, who shall remain nameless, was complaining about the high cost of water and blaming me. No joke. His reasons were (a) he believes the District isn't managed well; and (b) this reporter strongly supported creating the District and purchasing our water system.

As things turned out, it may be true that the \$11.047 million price awarded to AMREP by a jury for a three-decade-old water system may have been above market value. And it is true that the debt load taken up from EAWSD's bond issues used to purchase the system is reflected in the cost of our water. However, when comparing EAWSD's water rates with those of other districts, we're not doing so badly.

Buying the water system from the original developer, AMREP, was something of a chicken-or-egg dilemma. Although hundreds of residents in the community thought public ownership of its own water system was a good idea, AMREP couldn't sell the system to "hundreds in the community." Before AMREP could conduct negotiations, "the community" had to create an entity with which AMREP could haggle.

Unfortunately, by the time "the community" created such an entity in the form of a quasi-governmental water district, a Dutch conglomerate had already agreed to buy the system. That's when, in order to kill the sale, EAWSD turned to condemning the system. Such procedures generally end up in court, as happened here, where the jury awarded the aforementioned amount to AMREP. But that, as they say, is water under the bridge.

One thing is clear: From its rather bumpy beginnings of creating a water district from scratch and throughout its 18-year history, the elected board of volunteers steering our publically owned water district has attracted dedicated, talented, and experienced vol-

unteers. And these boards have had to deal with a lot more than an inherited debt load; maintaining the actual physical infrastructure of an aging system, drilling new wells, and taking responsibility for ensuring a safe, adequate water supply to 3,000 homes have been, and continue to be, enormously challenging.

In August 2013, EAWSD users were asked to rate the utility by taking a survey covering such areas as typical use, water quality, rates, customer service, etc. Of the 200 respondents, by and large EAWSD customers found our water rates to be "about right" and the quality and pressure of their tap water to be "good." EAWSD customers are also pretty adept at conserving water, with 63% using less than 3,000 gallons a month.

Comparing the cost of water with different communities is tricky. Districts use various models to charge their customers. Depending upon how much a household uses, EAWSD customers pay around 1.5 cents (\$0.015) per gallon. That's just about the same rate Santa Feans pay, but compared with the 3 cents per gallon for Seattle water users, EAWSD water is a bargain.

In the last dozen years or so, water rates have more than doubled across the nation, even in areas with abundant rainfall. EAWSD joins many other water districts struggling to pay off bond debt. Rising costs of electricity, chemicals, fuels, compliance with federal government clean-water mandates, district worker pension and health care costs, etc., add to that burden. The District Board last proposed general rate increases in 2009. The last phase of that rate hike was implemented in 2011.

This past August 20, EAWSD held an open forum to unveil a five-year rate-hike study and obtain public input about it. A copy of the rate design, as well as its justification, is available on the EAWSD site. The public is invited to email its comments on the study to [info@eldoradowaterdistrict.com](mailto:info@eldoradowaterdistrict.com).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 >>

*ECIA Board  
Meeting,  
Community  
Center  
Railroad Bldg.  
Thurs.,  
October 15,  
7 PM*



Water flowing over an irrigation dam on the Pecos River, near Villanueva, 2007 (a remembrance of water!)



*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](mailto: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.

# Mark Young, Covenant Compliance Representative

**ON THE FRONT LINES, KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY BEAUTIFUL, WORKING TO MAKE SURE THE RULES WE AGREED TO AS ELDORADO HOMEOWNERS ARE FOLLOWED**

Few people work as hard and effectively as our Covenant Compliance Representative, **Mark Young**. He spends little time sitting behind his desk in the Community Center. He is most likely to be found out and about, observing, inspecting, and informing our member homeowners on issues related to the care of properties here in Eldorado. His schedule is filled with site visits to advise residents who have applied for permits to build or improve their properties, responding to complaints and, among other things, looking at the effect that variance applications will have on the properties involved. His long regular hours are augmented with attending the twice-monthly meetings of the Architecture Committee and with traversing Eldorado in the evening, making sure the award that our community merited some years ago—for care of its night skies—remains justified. On top of all that, Mark also serves as the staff liaison with the ECIA Conservation Committee and plays an important role in the management and preservation of the trails in the greenbelts and in the Preserve.

Mark has an unusual and varied resume. The experience he gained before coming to Eldorado fitted him remarkably for his work here. He served as a planning commissioner in his previous home in Vermont, and he continues to serve as a volunteer for disabled veterans and maintains his credentials as a Professional Adaptive Ski Instructor with the Professional Ski Instructors of America. He is proof positive of the saying, "If you want to get something done, ask a busy person to do it."

There is a body of thought regarding residential developments and how they grow, change, and sometimes, sadly, decline. It seems to many that to prevent the small bad from eventually overtaking the larger good, homeowners have to maintain a constant vigilance and their governing boards must be strict in refusing to grant unwarranted exceptions to the rules they are supposed to enforce. In fact, some of us know of an example: a community in Santa Fe County

whose history of board inaction and failure to enforce the rules its residents agreed to when they purchased their properties has spawned a proliferation of offensive practices that will never be reversed.

These days Mark is dealing with a particular problem that seems to have worsened during his tenure as Covenant Compliance Representative. This problem can be summarized succinctly: landlords, renters, and those who choose to remain uninformed. Homeowners who rent out their Eldorado homes live all over the U.S. and some in foreign countries. But their on-site absence does not lessen their responsibility for following the rules that go with the title to their Eldorado property(ies). Too often they neglect to maintain the homes they own here. Mark is charged with communicating with the recalcitrant and uncaring among them and warning them that there are penalties for letting their properties fall apart.

About 15% of the homes in Eldorado are occupied by renters. Mark has found that in many cases renters have not been informed of their own responsibility to maintain the property they live in. Mark works at informing them of their rights—and their obligations to their landlord and to other property owners here.

For those of us who live here year round, the rules are the same, of course. Mark is finding that many of our homes are being carelessly maintained and in some cases not maintained at all—not just by absentee landlords but by year-round resident homeowners. Here is the key rule regarding the appearance of our properties that Mark works to enforce with all of us. It is from Article 14 of the Covenants: "No unsightly or offensive objects shall be erected, placed, stored or permitted to remain on any lot, nor shall any lot be permitted to appear in an unclean or untidy condition."

Maintaining the value of the properties we own in the unique community of Eldorado is more than an individual responsibility; it must be a group effort if it is to succeed, if the small bad is not to grow in strength and overtake the larger good. The community is special. Our homes follow the requirements of what has become known as the "Santa Fe style." The structures don't crowd each other. They help us exist in accordance with the Native American value of "living lightly on the land." Our homes must thus integrate as seamlessly as possible with the beauty of the land they occupy. This is what covenant compliance is all about: keeping our homes beautiful in the beautiful high desert and mountains of New Mexico.

—Frank Schober



**Mark reviews documents  
with Jack Arnold.**



## Message from the ECIA Board

**W**e regret to announce that **Denise Villanueva**, the first general manager under our new management agreement with HOAMCO, is leaving us to pursue other professional opportunities. The Board wishes to thank Denise for her dedication and hard work in the service of the Eldorado community. HOAMCO has initiated a national search for a replacement general manager and in the interim will provide full administrative support under the leadership of the company's director for New Mexico operations, **Paul Skojec**.

The Board has also made a minor adjustment to its slate of officers. Director **Jeanne Calzada** has been selected to serve as Board Secretary for the next several weeks while Director **Greg Colello** attends to pressing business and personal matters.

And, we are pleased to announce the hiring of a new facilities manager. **Michael Armijo** has extensive

experience in managing community amenities and is a certified pool operator. Please join us in welcoming him to our community.

At its September work session, the ECIA Board heard a presentation from **Craig O'Hare**, Santa Fe County's lead official on solid waste issues, regarding the possibility of a county pilot project in our area for an exclusive franchise arrangement for solid waste and recycling. The project would involve competitive bidding from haulers such as Waste Management, would require the hauler to include recycling, and would result in a multi-year, fixed-rate contract for waste removal services in Eldorado. It would not be binding on individual homeowners. We invite ECIA members to contact us at [gm@eldoradosf.com](mailto:gm@eldoradosf.com) with thoughts and suggestions about this concept, and we will provide additional details as the idea becomes more fully developed. *—ECIA Board of Directors*

## October Budget Development Meetings

**T**he Finance Committee continues development of the ECIA's 2016 Budget. An assessment increase will very likely be necessary to provide a larger contribution to the Replacement Reserves for amenities. A complete meeting schedule was published in the September *Vistas*; the meetings in October are:

**Monday, Oct. 12, 9:30 AM:** The Finance Committee reviews the second Budget draft, and begins review of committee and individual proposals at its

regular monthly meeting. Committee chairs and residents are welcome to attend for discussion of requests. Venue: Conference Room.

**Wednesday, Oct. 21, 7 PM:** The Finance Committee reviews the third Budget draft; continues review of proposals for evening attendees, including Committee chairs and residents; and reviews the first draft of the Budget Message. Venue: Conference Room.

*—Dan Drobnis, Finance Committee*

## Recent Board Actions

**T**he ECIA Board held its regular monthly meeting on September 17, 2015. Six Board members were present: **Dag Ryen** (President, presiding), **Pam Henline** (Vice-President), **Greg Colello** (Secretary), **Jeanne Calzada**, **David Yard**, and **Antone Forneris**. **Todd Handy** (Treasurer) had a work commitment, and his absence was excused. The following formal actions were taken unanimously, with the Chair voting:

- ▼ A variance request for a ground-based solar array located more than 15 feet from the primary dwelling at 18 Abanico Road was granted. The array will be located 140 feet from the home to take advantage of natural vegetative screening.
- ▼ A variance request for a ground-based solar array located more than 15 feet from the primary

dwelling at 48 Camerada Road, and for a screening fence of more than 50 continuous feet, was approved. The array will be located 74 feet from the house for maximum unshaded efficiency, and the fence, together with natural vegetation, will screen the array from neighboring properties.

Regular Board meetings are conducted on the third Thursday of each month at 7 PM at the Community Center and are open to the public. An open forum and community announcements are normally included. Complete minutes and meeting agendas are available at the ECIA offices and on its website: [www.eldoradosf.org](http://www.eldoradosf.org). The Board also holds working sessions at 6 PM on the Mondays preceding the regular Board meeting.



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### 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**

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### COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Vista Grande Library

466-READ

Fire and Rescue

466-1204

[eldoradofirerescue.org](http://eldoradofirerescue.org)

County All Purpose

820-CNTY (2689)



### Until Oct. 2:

#### Lap Swim:

M–F 7:30–10 AM

Sat.–Sun. 8–10 AM

#### Kiddie & Big Pool:

M–Th 10 AM–noon

Fri, Sat, Sun:

10 AM–7 PM

### Paws in the Pool Oct. 4



Lecture on local trees Oct. 3



Donate Your Art Supplies!



Reel New Mexico Oct. 15

### Martians in Eldorado!

The Martians are coming—again—to Eldorado. It's all in the imagination, though, so don't panic. Take a time trip to the past and hear Orson Welles's 1938 radio drama about an invasion from Mars at 6 PM Halloween night on local, low-power Eldorado 1660 AM. The station, heard only in Eldorado, will broadcast a "sound-track for trick-or-treaters" from 5 to 6 PM. Station owner/manager **Bill Dunning**, who started Eldorado five years ago, broadcasts eclectic "comfortable" music 24 hours a day, with special features from time to time.

Dunning was away from the microphone for several months following major surgery, but kept the station's automated music going and has now resumed Good Morning Eldorado, the 7 AM wake-up with weather and reminders about events in Eldorado and Santa Fe, including the Senior Center lunch menu, a feature that many rely on, and ECIA events. Listeners also can hear about other planned new features.

### Trees in the Southwest

Come by the Railroad Building on October 3, 10 AM to noon, to hear Eldorado resident **Cristine Freeman** of Tree Technologies discuss what a homeowner needs to know about urban trees in Santa Fe and the surrounding area, followed by an "Ask your Arborist" Q & A session.

### Seeking Art Supply Donations

Wanted: Leftover or extra craft or art supplies (pottery supplies as well) to donate to the Eldorado Senior Center. Call 466-4337 to have donations picked up.

### Senior Center Flea and Craft Market

On October 3, the Friends of the Adam Senior Center are hosting a flea market from 8 AM to 2 PM. The event is open to the public. The market will be held in the Senior Center parking lot. Sellers should plan to bring their own tables for setup. Spaces are \$10 each.

Several Adam Senior Center craft groups will have gift items for sale. They include jewelry, wind chimes, knitted items, plants and potted cactus.

The Adam Senior Center is located at 16 Avenida Torreon, next to the Vista Grande Public Library. For more information, call the Senior Center: 466-1039.

### TGIF is Back

But this time only—on a Thursday! October 15, 5–7 PM. Bring a "nosh" and enjoy meeting your neighbors. The next TGIFs will be on Fridays: January 15, 2016; February 19, 2016; and March 18, 2016.

### Reel New Mexico, October 2015

*Lonely Are the Brave* (1962) screens on October 15 at La Tienda's Performance Space at 7 PM. At the screening will be special guest Jack Loeffler, a personal friend of Edward Abbey's, author of the book on which the film is based.

### MOON PHASES FOR OCTOBER



*Lonely Are the Brave* is something rare: a leftist American contemporary western. It's based on *The Brave Cowboy* (1956) by Edward Abbey, with screenplay by Dalton Trumbo, a blacklisted screenwriter who clearly loved and understood the source material.

The film's hero, portrayed by Kirk Douglas, is John W. Burns, a cowboy anarchist who carries no ID, respects no authority, and pays attention only to his friends and his horse. Breaking into jail to see a friend, he attracts the attention of a vindictive sheriff, a one-armed Okinawa veteran, and a hot-shot military helicopter pilot, all of whom instinctively want to take him down.

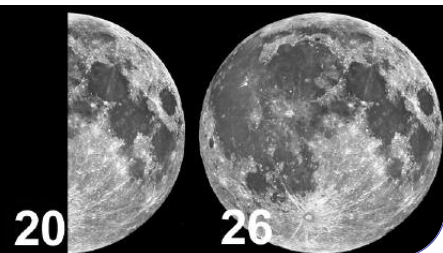
They don't. Always polite, always fair to those above him, the brave cowboy eludes his pursuers as he heads to Mexico and freedom. What happens to him and to Whiskey, his magnificent, proud horse, is as tragic as it is stupid, and inevitable.

The cast includes Gena Rowlands, who plays the woman who loves the cowboy; Walter Matthau, the bored sheriff who methodically tracks him; and George Kennedy, the deputy who fails to break him.

Released in 1962, *Lonely are the Brave* still seems totally modern—probably because it deals with issues that continue to matter: individual freedom vs. authoritarian clampdowns and an increasingly militarized and regimented America. Abbey loved the desert and hated unnecessary machines. Director David Miller communicates this, contrasting magnificent, monochrome, cinemascope images of landscape and wildlife with the screeching, rattling grinding of trucks and cars. The cinematographer was Philip Lathrop; the score, mostly excellent, was Jerry Goldsmith's first. *Lonely are the Brave* is a pessimistic tale of the triumph of "stuff" over all that is best in the bond of humans, animals, and the land. It is both a classic western and a great film.

Suggested donation is \$5, and viewers may enjoy the fine food and beverage menu of La Plancha in the auditorium during the film. Please note: REEL New Mexico usually screens the second Thursday of the month, but in October, the screening is on the third Thursday, October 15 at 7 PM.

OCTOBER 2015



## ASTRONOMY CORNER

October 2015

**October 1 - Comet C/2013 US10 Catalina.** Newly discovered comet C/2013 US10 Catalina may reach naked eye visibility on October 1 and will continue to brighten, reaching magnitude 5 by November 6.

**October 21, 22 - Orionids Meteor Shower.** The Orionids is an average shower producing up to 20 meteors per hour at its peak. Produced by dust grains left behind by comet Halley, it has been observed since ancient times. The shower runs annually from October 2 to November 7, this year peaking on the night of October 21 and the morning of October 22, in fairly dark skies, so it should be a good show. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Orion but can appear anywhere in the sky.

**October 26 - Full Moon, Supermoon.** This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Hunters Moon because at this time of year the leaves are falling and the game is fat and ready to hunt. This moon, also known as the Travel Moon and the Blood Moon, is the last of three supermoons for 2015

—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/lajmreo> or the ECIA Board agenda at <http://tinyurl.com/lkxxdmw>.

# October Events

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

Email [diana@eldoradosf.org](mailto:diana@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.

CC=Community Center, LR=Living Room, F=Foyer, CFR=Conference Rm, CR=Classroom, RR=Railroad, K=Kitchen

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Trees in the Southwest	Sat., Oct. 3, 10 am-noon	Cristine Freeman	466-3171	RR
Flea Market	Sat., Oct. 3, 8 am-2 pm	Adam Sr. Center	466 1039	Sr. Center
Paws in the Pool	Sun., Oct. 4, 11 am-3 pm	ECIA	466-4248	Pool
TGIF	Thurs., Oct 15, 5-7 pm	Dolores Brock	466-3848	CC

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Architecture Committee	Tues., Oct. 13, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Architecture Committee	Tues., Oct. 27, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Board Work Study	Mon., Oct. 12, 6-8 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Conservation Committee	Tues., Oct. 6, 7-9 pm	Jim Daniel	609-941-4527	F
ECIA Board Meeting	Thurs., Oct. 15, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	RR
Election Committee	Wed., Oct. 14, 2-4 pm	Kathie Graham	466-2133	CFR
Facilities & Grounds	Wed., Oct. 7, 4-6 pm	John Calzada	466-1947	CFR
Finance Committee	Mon., Oct. 12, 9:30-11:30 am	Dan Drobnis	466-4781	CFR
Finance Committee	Wed., Oct. 21, 7-9 pm	Dan Drobnis	466-4781	CFR
Information Committee	Mon., Oct. 19, 7-9 pm	Frank Schober	310-8593	F
Road Committee	Mon., Nov. 2, 6-8	Felicia Probert	466-1563	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	santa fe sar.org	Moved to VGPL	

### 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			Moved to La Tienda
Adult Basketball	Thurs., 6:30-Dusk			CC Courts
Boy Scout Troop 414	Wed., 7-9 pm	Fritz Denny	466-4070	RR, CR, LR
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
Eldorado Writers Club	2nd & 4th Tues., 7-9 pm	Randy Schultz	505-220-4327	CFR
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., 10:00 am	Jill Charboneau	505-216-6065	VGPL
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](http://www.eldoradosf.org)

## At the Library



Celebrate Halloween at the library!

If it has been a while since you visited the library, you will find a lot of new and exciting things happening. For example, thanks to a grant, VGPL once again has telescopes for patrons to check out, along with some nice supplemental materials on stargazing. The last of the older telescopes died some time ago, and the cost had prevented their replacement. Now VGPL can help you enjoy the night skies.

The library thanks everyone who came out to the VGPL Summer Fling and Ice Cream Social on August 9, with special thanks to the sponsors, volunteers, and donors of items for the silent auction. They would also like to recognize the local businesses that provided the great food: Café Fina, Chez Dre, and Las Chivas. This event is the library's biggest fund raiser, which raised over \$11,000 for library operations. The money made from ticket sales and auction items will go toward new books, DVDs, and other collection materials, as well as program expenses and all the other things that keep the doors open.

Story Time for preschool and toddlers has resumed on Friday mornings at 11:30 AM. The library opens at

a special time just for little ones and their caregivers. Drop-ins are always welcome.

The library is hosting two movie nights in October. Family Movie Night is scheduled for Friday, October 9, at 7 PM. They are showing the adventures of the lovable ghost-busting, crime-solving mutt and four "meddling kids" in their Mystery Machine. There will also be a Grownup Scary Movie Night on Friday, October 16, at 7 PM. Patrons can vote on the featured film at the library or on the website. Admission is free for everyone, and popcorn and juice are provided.

Spooks will also take over VGPL on Friday, October 30, and turn it into the Haunted Library. Starting at 5:30 PM, the annual Halloween Party will have food, games, and treats for everyone in the community. There will be a costume parade and contest, and much more.

It's not too soon to think about the Fall Book Sale, scheduled for November 11–13 at the library (noon to 6 PM on Wednesday and Thursday, and 10 AM to 4 PM on Friday the 13th). This will be a great time to stock up on winter reading materials and do some early holiday gift shopping.

—Tracey Mitchell

## Road Safety

Reminders about road safety, though covered frequently in various media, still bear repeating. Road safety needs to be stressed time and again because every time we take to the road, whether as a driver or bicyclist, our lives and the lives of others may be at stake, and it is vital that we stay keenly aware of traffic conditions, road conditions, weather conditions and, of course, personal conditions.

Everyone should know these basic rules:

- ▼ Do not cross the double line in the road.
- ▼ Abide by posted speed limits.
- ▼ Keep at least a four-car-length distance from the vehicle in front when traveling at road speeds.
- ▼ Anticipate that other drivers may do stupid things, so try to prepare for such.
- ▼ Adjust your speed downward to account for bad weather conditions.

### SAFE DRIVING



WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT



AVOID DISTRACTIONS



DON'T SPEED



STAY CALM, BE ALERT

Personal conditions—your age or the state of your health—are personal matters, but when you're on the road they can affect others. Some drivers are on medications that can affect driving ability. If this describes you, you should seriously consider whether sight, judgment, and awareness may be compromised. Younger drivers need to rein in impulses to make up for a late start and to recognize that other drivers may not be as quick to adjust to changing traffic conditions.

When my daughter was beginning to drive, a lesson I tried to impress on her was this: If you're beginning to encounter a tricky situation, think to yourself: "If I have an accident, I'll wish I hadn't risked it but it will be too late." Many years later, she told me that she had never forgotten the advice and had used it a number of times. There is nothing magic in such advice, but sometimes, keeping it in mind could help to avoid serious consequences.

The bottom line is that safe driving requires constant awareness of all factors involved in driving on public roads and highways.

—Ray Nichols

## Water Matters, *continued from p. 1*

A public hearing is scheduled for Monday, September 28, allowing for public comment on the rate-hike proposal. So far, most of the comments received by the District have been favorable and understanding. For the foreseeable future, EAWSD will continue to deliver safe, reasonably priced water to its customers. In the desert Southwest, that's saying something.

We can't know how much Eldorado water users would now be paying for water had AMREP been successful in selling the system to a for-profit Dutch conglomerate. We do know that those on the board of the non-profit EAWSD are concerned with ensuring a water supply for themselves and their neighbors. With all the others who voted to own our water utility, this reporter is happy to share in the blame. No joke.

—Gershon Siegel





## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH FLORA &amp; FAUNA GROUP

*Splendor in the Grasses*

Some visitors from the Midwest recently remarked, “Oh wow, all the colors and textures of your pretty neighborhood lawns and meadows look like an Andrew Wyeth painting!” They went on to tell us a lovely Native American (Ojibwe) story about how the mythological hero Nanabozho painted the grasses and flowers to provide more color, while frolicking bluebirds dipped in the paints and ended up creating the first rainbow. “Nanabozho really had fun painting Eldorado,” they said. They also pointed out that Native Americans had medicinal and dietary uses for many wild plants, including some grasses.

It's true that Eldorado is blessed with a wide variety of wild grasses that produce a beautiful picture each season. Some of our local grasses include Six-Weeks and Sheep Fescue, Fluffgrass, Cheatgrass, Blue Grama, Indian Ricegrass, Needle-And-Thread Grass, Hairy Crabgrass, Foxtail Chess, Western Wheatgrass, Buffalograss, Little Bluestem, and Purple Three Awn. Since Eldorado land was previously used for ranching, some of our “native” grasses weren't here originally. But the natural combination of plants works very well in the community.

Much of the beneficial beauty of native grasses lies below ground. Native grasses tend to have very deep roots. This enables the plants to reach moisture, minerals, and nutrients far below topsoil, so that the grasses can prosper in our desert environment. As the large roots naturally decompose during their nor-

mal life cycle, soil fertility is improved. And most importantly in our windy environment, these deep roots hold down soil, preventing dust and erosion.

The grasses also provide food, habitat, and a protective environment for a number of our wildlife, such as quail and small mammals. In turn, these animals attract predators such as eagles, hawks, owls, and coyotes. The open ground within the grass plants provides nesting space for migratory songbirds, whose national populations have been declining as they lose their habitats. As naturalists say, a robust diversity of plants attracts a healthy diversity of animals.

To mow or not to mow? Some property owners like the look of manicured, cultivated lawns, and they feel that mowing keeps down allergies as well as fire dangers. Eldorado neighbors who avoid mowing generally say they prefer our natural vistas, don't like the noise and odors of mowing machines, and are concerned about the dust and erosion that mowed lawns can create. Additionally, since mowing eliminates the ability of grasses to create seeds, the plants eventually die off, which leaves the soil significantly unprotected.

If you have questions about managing the grasses on your property, we recommend contacting your favorite local nursery or county extension agent (471-4711).

References for this article are available upon request. We love hearing from you! Contact us at [EldoradoFloraFauna@yahoo.com](mailto:EldoradoFloraFauna@yahoo.com).



**Tall bearded fescue.**  
From *A Natural History of*  
*British Grasses* by E.J. Lowe,  
1891

## ELDORADO/285 RECYCLES

*Worm Composting*

Food scraps from our kitchens, by weight, constitute about 20% of the solid waste we Americans generate and ship to the nation's landfills. In the oxygen-poor landfill environment, they decompose to produce methane, a greenhouse gas some 30 times more deleterious than the carbon dioxide that decomposition produces when oxygen is abundant. Homeowners can help reduce this problem, and possibly lower their trash removal costs, by composting their kitchen scraps in their own backyards. An easy way to do this is by straw bale “vermicomposting” (worm composting). This method requires less water and effort than other composting systems. The worms take care of aeration through their burrowing action, so backbreaking turning is not needed—and they produce a rich compost! The straw bales and straw bedding provide excellent insulation and water retention, and discourage animal scavenging.

Beginning October 1, the local recycling group Eldorado/285 Recycles will be accepting new requests for straw bale vermicomposting installations. Delivery of the straw bales, setup, instruction, and all needed supplies is gratis. However, reimbursement for the cost of the straw bales, six or seven minimum, at \$8 per bale, is required. The installation process requires about one hour. Anyone with an existing compost bin who wishes to convert it to worm composting can also be included. A single straw bale will usually be needed for this changeover.

Homeowners, or renters, in Eldorado and along the Highway 285 corridor from I-25 to Galisteo can be accommodated. Please consult the group's website, [eldorado285recycles.org](http://eldorado285recycles.org), for further information, or call Marcia at 805-341-3278 or email her at [mcihon2216@gmail.com](mailto:mcihon2216@gmail.com) if you have questions or wish to reserve an installation date.

—Joe Eigner



**A straw bale installation**  
**in Eldorado**

# VISTAS

Eldorado Community  
Improvement Association  
#1 La Hacienda Loop  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508  
[www.eldoradosf.org](http://www.eldoradosf.org)

PRSR STD  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 173  
Santa Fe, NM



Scan this code with  
your phone to take  
you to the online  
versions of *Vistas*



Scan this code to get  
to our online video  
about Eldorado by  
Jack Arnold

Road Repair (SF County) 992-3010  
[www.santafecountynm.gov/publicworks/road\\_concern](http://www.santafecountynm.gov/publicworks/road_concern).

Sheriff 428-3720  
Crime Stoppers 955-5050  
Neighborhood Watch: <http://eldoradoneighbors.wordpress.com>



## EACA Fall Art Show

Once again this year, the artists of the Eldorado Arts and Crafts Association will be hosting their annual Fall Showcase on October 16 and 17 at St. John's United Methodist Church, located at the corner of Cordova and Old Santa Fe Trail. This show provides an excellent opportunity to add to your own art collections as well as get a jump-start on the busy holiday shopping season. You will be able to sample artwork from more than 40 local artists—jewelry, photography, pottery and ceramics, wearable arts, birdhouses, woodturning, recycled arts, watercolors, pastels, glass, weaving, and more. The hours are Friday, October 16, from 3 to 7 PM, and Saturday, October 17, from 9 AM to 5 PM. Contact [eldoradoarts@gmail.com](mailto:eldoradoarts@gmail.com) for more information.



Among the many artworks on sale are (far left): Maggie Beyeler, ceramics; Karen Murry, fiber art; (left): Barrie Brown, glass jewelry; (right) All Hockwalt & Karen Nein (collaborating), birdhouse; and Carla Pennie McBride, silver pendant.

