

# ELDORADO VISTAS

VOLUME XII, ISSUE 12

December 2010

## IN THIS ISSUE

Energy Audit.....	2
ECIA News.....	2-3
In the Community.....	4-5
Of Mice and Birds .....	6
Neighborhood Watch .....	7
Senior Center.....	7

Monthly Newsletter of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association

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

## New Eldorado Website is on the Way

ECIA Board member **Elan Colello** is a talented web designer who graciously offered to rebuild the Eldorado community website. The new site Elan is building will be less costly to host, will be easier to use than the current site, and will not require logins.

The Information Committee has been reviewing the current site for several months to determine which features residents are actually using. Features like the events calendar, committee meeting minutes, important phone numbers, covenants, by-laws, maps, bird lists, services, and amenities are some of the more popular features that will move to the new site, and will be easier to find.

In addition, the new site will include in-depth articles about the activities of the ECIA office and the volunteer committees, as well as short video clips of events taking place in our community.

The new site will have the same Web address as the current site, [www.eldoradocommunity.org](http://www.eldoradocommunity.org). The new site should be "live" in the next few weeks.

—Jack Arnold, ECIA Webmaster



## Chief Guy Monroe, Eldorado's Local Hero

There are very few in our community who remember when Eldorado's volunteer fire department consisted of one, elderly truck that had been declared surplus by the US Forest Service. **Guy Monroe**, who recently left the job as Chief of the Eldorado Fire and Rescue Service, remembers it well. Other early volunteers, such as **Don** and **Nancy Dayton**, **Fred Raznick**, and ECIA General Manager **Bill Donohue** can recall the Chief's struggles to obtain needed equipment and to have enough hydrants placed around our community to ensure that every household was within hose range of one.

The Eldorado Fire and Rescue Service depends completely on volunteers of a special sort. Others of us may agree to give some of our time helping an ECIA committee, serving at the front desk of our Library, or working to support the PTA, but few of us volunteer to become on-call firefighters and promise to respond at any time of the day or night in weather fair or foul to help those in danger or in need. Chief Monroe, who may have one of the few motorcycles in the country

equipped with flashing emergency lights and a siren, was often the first on-scene and the last to leave the site of an emergency incident.

In the opinion of his volunteers, Guy Monroe has never been less than a totally hands-on, always available leader. He built a department from virtual scratch and on his departure left it with a superb fleet of fire and medical emergency response vehicles. With a first-rate equipment inventory, a superb water supply system which he fought to achieve, and a group of volunteer responders trained to the highest standards, he was able to earn the top-level insurance-industry rating of departments without full-time employees.

As for high ratings, the cohort of volunteers he left at the EFRS expressed it very well when they concluded their message to the Santa Fe Community in our local newspaper, *The New Mexican*: "We know leadership when we see it. Thanks, Guy." The members of the ECIA who are grateful for the superb fire department that protects us doubtlessly feel the same way.

—Frank Schober

**ECIA Board  
Meeting,  
Community  
Center, Thurs.,  
December 16,  
7 pm. Public  
is invited.**

**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 e-mailed to [ECIADiAna@aol.com](mailto:ECIADiAna@aol.com). Please include "Attn: Vistas" in your message.

### Mission Statement

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

## Hiking Trail 401 in The Eldorado Preserve

I first noticed Trail 401 while hiking with my family to the former "east Line Camp" via Trail 402. A worn-out sign pointed mysteriously down what looked like no more than an overgrown rocky slope. Upon further investigation, I noticed a crude pathway among the jumble of rocks and scrub oak. Yet the old map I brought with me didn't indicate another trail in this portion of the Eldorado Wilderness Preserve.

Later, after obtaining a newer map of the preserve, I saw that Trail 401 was now shown. I could see it formed a 4-mile loop, beginning at the top of the mesa, descending to a valley near the bottom of Cañoncito, and then climbing back up past Hidden Canyon. The geology of the area is complex, with extensive faulting exposing the pre-Cambrian age core of the Sangres and sharply dipping sedimentary beds. I was determined to go back and explore.

Descending off Glorieta Mesa on 401, you're struck by how comparatively cool and quiet it is within the forested area on the north slope of the mesa. Large Rocky Mountain junipers with their droopy blue foliage and tall piñon pines, seemingly distant cousins of their scrubby Eldorado relatives, line the trail, providing welcome shade in the heat of

summer. The trail runs through sandstone rock outcrops, and the grade becomes quite steep in places.

The trail bottoms out into an open field of winter fat, offering views of Cañoncito. This section of trail undulates through piñon and juniper, with multiple crossings of an arroyo, initially flowing east, then abruptly west after passing a topographical high. Mountain mahogany, scrub oak, four-winged saltbush and other shrubs proliferate here. On your right, a rocky ridge separates you from the box canyon of the Galisteo Creek. Here the trail follows what was once an old wagon route. The job now is to climb back up the southern portion of the loop, approximately 800 vertical feet, to the trailhead.

I recommend taking the loop counterclockwise, if only because the hike back up is easier that way. I also suggest that if sufficient time is available, the short hike to the rocky overlook at the end of 402 is worthwhile. The views of Lamy and the Galisteo Basin are magnificent. Start with 402 to get comfortable walking on loose rock. Take County Road 51 through lower Cañoncito, cross the Galisteo Creek and AT&SF railroad track, and continue up onto Glorieta Mesa. Trailhead 4 is on the right near the top.

—John Parker

## Eldorado Carbon Busters

### NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS REDUCE CARBON AND SAVE MONEY

**9:00 am Saturday morning:** Three Carbon Busters gather at Las Chivas to strategize who does what during the free home energy consultation they're about to provide to Eldorado residents. Decided: Amy gives the opening pep talk/orientation and takes notes; Allayne covers lighting and appliances; Tom focuses on weather stripping and infiltration.

**9:30:** Cheerful hellos and a brief kitchen table gathering; review demonstration items, prior year's

PNM bill, action sheet for the resident, and detailed note sheet for the Carbon Busters.

**9:45:** Check out the kitchen: Infrared test of refrigerator and freezer settings, refrigerator coils—are they clean? Phantom loads—what are they, and where can they be eliminated?

**10:00:** Living/dining rooms: Paper test for front door infiltration. Do windows need thermal blinds? Fireplace—what are the heat leak solutions?

**10:15:** Bedrooms: Are CFLs used for lighting? Is there heat loss through exterior wall switch plates?

**10:30:** Bathrooms: Test faucet/shower water flow: do they need aerators? Reduce bulbs over sink?

**10:45:** Hot water tank: Check settings and insulation. Point out "vacation" setting. Washer/dryer: Is it Energy Star compliant? Are interior lint trap and vents clean?

**10:55:** Wrap up: Energy saving tips, local resources/providers, specialty bulb sources, Carbon Busters info sheets. Referrals are greatly appreciated!

**11:00** Adios!

*So, what are you waiting for?! Save money, and learn how you can reduce carbon usage in*



**Continued >>**

## Outlook for Next Year

There is an oft-quoted saying, "May you live in interesting times." Well, we do. When you read this in early December, the state/county elections will have been decided, and happily, the political ads will be set aside to compost for another year or two.

The ECIA Directors reviewed the budget for next year and approved it at the November meeting. Thanks to General Manager **Bill Donohue** and the Finance Committee.

The ECIA staff and committees are looking forward to an active year. Our Finance Committee, General Manager, and Treasurer, **Todd Handy**, have done well to clean up the effects of the embezzlement that occurred in 2009. Our accounting practices are much more solid and credible as a result. Overdue assessments (about 5%) are still of concern, and we are actively, on your behalf, pursuing resolution of these outstanding debts.

Our General Manager has a vigorous plan for upkeep this year, including interior painting of the Community Center and resurfacing the interior of the pool. The Facilities and Grounds Committee is readying a plan to spruce up (figuratively) the grounds and plants around the Community Center, and that work, when approved, will be started in the spring.

The Architectural Advisory Committee is actively pursuing an update of the Architectural Guidelines, and we expect to have a public hearing on these sometime in the spring. It will include guidance regarding installation of solar tracking collectors, developed jointly with the Ad Hoc committee. Expect the dis-

cussion to be lively. We are also working on updating the policy on rental of the Community Center facilities, especially with regard to amplified music and serving alcoholic beverages. These should be ready for community review before the end of this year.

The Information Committee is preparing an upgrade of the website, so that it will be a more useful source of information about ECIA goings-on, and allow more feedback from residents. You can expect we will be using the site to ask more questions, as the Road Committee did this year, about amenities, policies, and directions.

In the County and State legislatures, there will be activity regarding sustainable growth and management of homeowners associations that may impact Eldorado. And we have active groups in our own community offering ideas and actions to support sustainable living. ECIA is engaging with these groups. Also, we continue to monitor plans for land development in the surrounding area, and will act to protect our community interests.

In the management of the Association, we have strong participation in all the committees; they will continue to learn about and address the needs of the community. We have an excellent staff, and we support continued development of their capabilities. They are the key to the Association's serving the community.

So, in spite of economic concerns and the usual political antics, we are looking forward to a lively year in Eldorado.

—Tom Willmott, ECIA President

## ECIA Board Election

Good stewards of Eldorado: The terms of three members of the ECIA Board of Directors will expire in May 2011. Please consider serving your Association.

Nomination forms will be available at the ECIA Community Center starting on January 3. Watch for more details in the January *Vistas*.

—Ed Moreno and Jean Crawford

## Carbon Busters, *continued*

our community and on our planet. Call 466-2295 for a *free* home energy consultation from your own local Carbon Busters. Then consider taking the next step and *join us!* Together we can make a difference.

—Dana Richards and Deborah Boldt  
Eldorado Energy Coop (EEC)

## 2011 Operating Budget Adopted

The ECIA Board adopted the Association's 2011 Operating Budget at its regular November meeting. The budget calls for the annual assessment to remain at \$300 per year per lot. Total operating expenditures are budgeted to rise about 1% to \$758,612, with an additional contingency for unanticipated expenses of \$15,000. Expenditures from the Replacement Reserve for major Community Center and amenity maintenance projects are budgeted at \$113,777.

The detailed 2011 Operating Budget is available at the ECIA office and on the Association's web site, [www.eldoradocommunity.org](http://www.eldoradocommunity.org). Copies will also be mailed to each lot owner with their annual assessment invoice in January.

—Dan Drobnis

### ECIA OFFICE

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Director

### Open position COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Finance: Dan Drobnis  
Architecture:  
Katherine Mortimer  
Conservation: John Parker & E.J. Evangelos  
Stable: Bonita Mamp  
Election: Jean Crawford  
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  
[eldoradofirerescue.org](http://eldoradofirerescue.org)  
County All Purpose  
820-CNTY (2689)



### The Eldorado Satellite

Santa Fe County's Eldorado Satellite office is now open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays from noon to 4 pm at 14 Avenida Torreon in the Ken & Patty Adam Senior Center. Services include general constituent liaison services as a local contact point for County government; Healthcare Assistance Program application assistance, County Clerk information; Assessor information; County job descriptions and applications; and processing land fill permits. Phone: (505) 466-4029.

### Hey, Dogs: Get Your Santa Pix!

Sunday, December 19, from 2 to 5 pm, you can get your picture taken with Santa! The Eldorado Dog Club has it on good authority that Santa will be at La Tienda's *Totally Awesome Dogs!* where he has heard dogs come to learn good behavior. A photographer will be standing by.

The Club will be collecting donations in the form of goods, cash or checks for the Santa Fe Animal Shelter and Humane Society. Refreshments will be served. Contact Freddi at 466-2005.

### Fresh Cut Christmas Trees

Celebrate the holidays with the fragrance and beauty of a real Christmas tree. A fresh trimmed Christmas tree creates a warm, homey atmosphere of goodwill that all will enjoy. Quality, fresh cut Christmas Trees from Oregon will be available at the north parking lot of La Tienda from Thanksgiving weekend through to Christmas Eve. There will be Douglas Fir, Grand Fir, and Noble Fir in sizes from tabletop to tall trees. Stop in for a tree this year and get service from an Eldorado-owned and operated business, serving Eldorado and the eastern communities of Santa Fe.

### La Tienda Celebrates First Anniversary

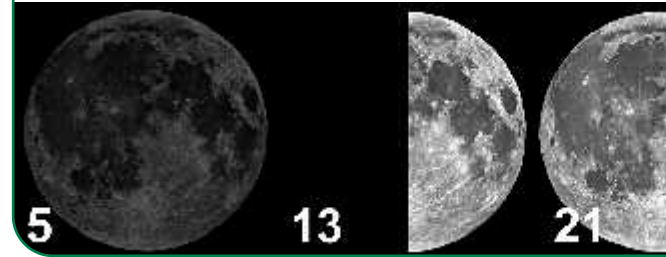
On Saturday, December 11, from 12 to 6 pm, La Tienda at Eldorado will celebrate its one-year anniversary.

When it first opened, people didn't think what the owners were trying to do could be done. Who develops a shopping center on non-profit principles? What landlord offers deeply discounted rents to help businesses get established? What landlord requires business tenants to give back to the community? What shopping center doesn't have an anchor, or rather, believes the center itself is the anchor because it is an intrinsic part of community life?

Over the last year, La Tienda has become a community center, an arts center, and a shopping center. By December, it will have 16 operating businesses, and early next year, will expand again. In spite of the economy, La Tienda is almost full.

The community is invited to come down and help celebrate this accomplishment on Saturday,

### MOON PHASES FOR DECEMBER



December 11, and be a part of a new way of doing business and a great community spirit.

La Tienda's Anniversary Schedule of Events:

Saturday, December 11, noon-6 pm

- Holiday Farmers Market, noon-4 pm
- Pictures with Santa Claus, 1-3 pm
- Santa Fe Model Train Club Train display, all day
- Tour "Main Street" on the patio, 4-6 pm
- Farolito Labyrinth, 4-6 pm
- Free hot cider
- Strolling Carolers, 4-6 pm
- Tree lighting at 6 pm

La Tienda is located on the southwest corner of Avenida Vista Grande and Highway 285 in Eldorado.

### Eldorado Radio

It isn't very big or fancy, and it doesn't cover the whole community yet, but Eldorado's hometown radio station is on the air at last. **Eldorado1610** broadcasts regularly in the center of the Golden Village, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With just a tenth of 1 watt of radio power (about what an LED radiates in visible light), the station is more hobby than anything else. It covers about 3 square miles between Avenidas Eldorado, Compadres, Vista Grande, and Torreon in the center of Eldorado, broadcasting at 1610 on the AM dial. However, with a car radio, you can hear the station almost everywhere in the community.

Even though it doesn't have an FCC license, and no official call letters, the tiny station complies with all applicable FCC rules, says retired broadcaster and journalist **Bill Dunning**, who put the 100-milliwatt transmitter up at his home. "We've also complied with ECIA covenants on radio antennas," he notes.

The all-day-all-night easy-listening program is nearly all music, he says, calling it "gentle sounds for the gentlefolk of Eldorado," and "a relaxing radio oasis in your busy day." Every now and then, listeners will hear a calendar of Eldorado events, Neighborhood Watch alerts, messages about the Vista Grande Public Library, Community School, Eldorado Coop and ERA, as well as other activities in the community. Irregularly, he'll throw in musical previews of concerts in the area for those who might want to go and hear the music live. Other ideas are in the works, he says, and they'll be on the air when they are ready, including holiday music.

### ENERGY-SAVING TIP OF THE MONTH

#### Just One Thing!

#### HOT WATER TANK

If your hot water tank is located in a garage or other unheated space, you can save major \$ and carbon by wrapping it with an insulated "blanket." Thin, super-efficient, highly reflective material developed by NASA is now available online and at local hardware/supply stores, making the job of wrapping easier.

Piping can be covered with snug-fitting tubular foam. Check the tank's water temperature setting. Try setting it to "Warm" (mid-range) and work upward as needed. When you go away, remember to change to the "Vacation" setting and enjoy the savings!

If you'd like more information or a free energy consultation by EEC's Carbon Buster team, contact Deborah Boldt at 466-2295, dboldt23@gmail.com.

Stay warm and save \$ and energy this winter!

— Eldorado Energy Coop



## ASTRONOMY CORNER

### December 2010

**Geminids Meteor Shower:** Considered by many to be the best meteor shower in the heavens, the Geminids are known for producing up to 60 multicolored meteors per hour at their peak. The peak of the shower this year should occur on the night of **December 13** and morning of the **14th**, although some meteors should be visible **December 6-9**. Some estimates say there could be as many as 120 meteors an hour visible from dark-sky locations. The radiant point for this shower will be in the constellation Gemini. The Moon will set early in the evening, setting the sky up for a spectacular show. The best viewing is usually to the east after midnight.

**December 21: Total Lunar Eclipse.** The eclipse will be visible after midnight in North and South America. Since the Moon will be almost directly overhead from these locations, this should be an excellent chance to view a rare total lunar eclipse.

**December 21: Winter Solstice** and the first day of winter. The Sun is at its lowest point in the sky, and this is the shortest day of the year.

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

Years ago Bill Dunning worked at Ivan Head's KSNM, and he put KSFR on the air in 1990. He's also written for *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, *Albuquerque Journal*, *Santa Fe Reporter*, *Prime Time*, *The Sun Monthly* and other publications, and is active with the Eldorado Residents Association and the Eldorado Co-op.

# December Events

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

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

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**

DECEMBER SPECIAL EVENTS				
Dog Club Xmas with Santa Sun., Dec. 19, 2-5 pm	Totally Awesome Dogs			La Tienda
COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
Facilities & Grounds	No December Mtg	Fred Raznick	466-2305	CFR
Road Committee	No December Mtg	Nolan Zisman	466-2968	CFR
Conservation Committee	Tues., Dec. 7, 7-9 pm	John Parker	466-7513	LR
Finance Committee	Wed., Dec. 8, 9:30 am	Dan Drobnis	466-4781	CFR
Board Work Study	Mon., Dec. 13, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Architectural Committee	Tues., Dec. 14, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
ECIA Board	Thurs., Dec. 16, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CR
Information Committee	Tues., Dec. 21, 7-9 pm	Frank Schober	310-8593	CFR
Stable Committee	Mon., Dec. 27, 7-9 pm	Lisa Bessone	466-7100	Foyer
Architectural Committee	Tues., Dec. 28, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
MONTHLY MEETINGS				
EAWS&SD*	1st & 3rd Thurs, 7-9 pm	Anna Mondragon	466-1085	RR
La Canada Wireless	2nd & 4th Mon., 7-9 pm	lcwireless.org		
Search & Rescue	2nd Thurs, 7 pm	Ken Robinson	466-1603	CR
Library Book Group	2nd Saturday 9-10:30	Joan LaMarque	466-6000	CFR
Eldorado Dog Club	4th Saturday 9:30 am	Freddi Fullington	466-2005	Dog Park
Book Discussion Group	3rd Mon., 7-9 pm	Pam Henline	466-4781	VGPL
Conservation Com Hike	3rd Sat. of month	Eleanor Gossen	466-1949	CC Prk Lot
Roadrunner RV	3rd Tues. of month	Pat Stewart	820-0303	
Fire Cub Scout Pack 414	4th Tues., 7-9 pm	John Kieling	466-4232	Sm Gym
EACA Meeting	Last Thurs. of month		204-7007	LR
WEEKLY MEETINGS				
AA	Tues., 5:30-6:50 pm			CFR
AA	Wed., 10:30-11:30 am			CFR/CR
AA	Wed., 5:45-6:45 pm (Men Only)			CFR
AA	Thurs. 5:30-6:30 pm (Women Only)			CFR
AA	Fri., 6-7 pm			CFR/LR
AA	Sat., 10:45-11:45 am			CFR
AA	Sun., 5:15-6:15 pm			LR/CFR
Boy Scout Troop 414	Wed., 7-9 pm	Fritz Denny	466-4070	RR, CR, LR
Boy Scout Pack 414	2nd & 3rd Thurs., 6:30-7:30	Johnny Boggs	466-3680	RR
Girl Scouts 286	Fri., 4-6 pm	Lisa Engeldinger	466-0077	CR
Girl Scouts 295	Every other Fri., 5:30-7 pm	Michelle Jaschke	466-2422	CR
Bridge	1st & 3rd Mon, 1-4:30 pm	Kate Kaulbach	466-1465	LR
Bridge	Fri., 1-4:30 pm	Pat Lavengood	466-9765	LR
Bridge	Wed., 9-noon	Nancy Rost	466-2832	LR
Community Church**	Sun., 9:30 & 11 am	David McPherson	466-2495	CC
Community Band	Thurs., 6:30-8:30 pm	Joel Hopko	466-8412	New Gym
Eldorado Hikers	Tues., 8:30 am	Terry Gibbs	466-6914	
Fire & Rescue Training	Wed., 7-9 pm	Fire Station Office	466-1204	Station
Fire & Rescue Work Duty	Sat., Call for time	Fire Station Office	466-1204	Station
Knitting Club	Tues., 10 am-noon	Joyce Hanmer	466-3018	LR
Senior Lunch***	Mon.-Fri., 12-1 pm	Senior Center	466-1039	
Square Dancing	Fri., 6-9 pm	Richard Robinson	466-7319	RR

\*Eldorado Area Water and Sanitation District \*\*For other religious/spiritual services, go to <http://santafe.areaconnect.com/churches.htm> \*\*\*Reservations Required

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.eldoradocommunity.org](http://www.eldoradocommunity.org)**

## Rodent Wars

A sheriff I worked with some years ago gave the officers of the county jail a phrase to keep on their minds at all times: “Inmates are always thinking about one thing—how to get out of this place. Your job is to be always thinking about how to keep them in.” This advice, turned around, has special relevance to anyone who has a mouse problem in Eldorado. Mice are “thinking” every minute of every day how to get into your house. You have to be thinking—always—how you are going to keep them out.

Everyone here probably has his/her own mouse story. Some of us with pet cats may have no problem at all. For those without such household hunters, we have to keep a number of things in check if we do not want to share our home with rodents.

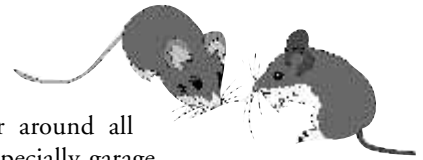
- ▶ Garages: Is yours orderly and junk free? Mice love to live and reproduce in suitcases, bundles of almost anything, paper accumulations, you name it.
- ▶ Mice will eat or chew on almost anything. Never assume they won’t be able to get through cardboard, paper, or plastic. Secure all food containers.
- ▶ Check your home for every potential mouse entrance. They will get through any aperture larger than the width of a pencil. So arm yourself with a pencil and a flashlight and check any and all entrances of wires, pipes, and weather-stripping

under or around all doors, especially garage doors.

- ▶ Many of us have exposed structural timbers—vigas—holding up our roofs. Look for holes in the spaces above and around them. I found several in mine and plugged them up, firmly, with steel wool.
- ▶ Poisons (rodenticides) do work, but mice will usually find an inaccessible part of your home for their final resting place; you will smell them long before you discover where that might be.
- ▶ Traps work too. “Live traps” trap without killing; in this case you may wish to drive the trapped critter to some distant place where it can bother someone else.
- ▶ Place bait traps around the house along the walls. The mice here like peanut butter—and it does not have to be organic!
- ▶ Good housekeeping is essential for winning the rodent war. A cookie left behind the couch can feed a mouse for a week.
- ▶ To investigate rodent traffic, spread a bit of flour on what you think might be a mouse freeway. Their paw prints will allow you to judge your infestation index.

Send your mice-fighting tips to us at *Vistas*.

—Frank Schober



## European Starling

This medium-sized, mostly black bird lives all over the U.S. year round. ESs are probably seen here in groups at different times, usually more abundant during winter. They are a chunky, 9-inch-long bird, with a 14-inch wingspan. When flying, wings are short and have a triangular shape. During breeding season, ESs are glossy black with purple iridescence and with pale yellow spots on their back and wings. The beak is sharp, long, and yellow. In non-breeding plumage, they are brightly spotted everywhere. Males and females are similar.

Starlings turn from spotted and white to glossy and dark each year without shedding their feathers. The new feathers they grow in fall have bold white tips—that’s what gives them their spots. By spring, these tips have worn away, and the rest of the feather is dark and iridescent brown. It’s an unusual changing act that scientists term “wear molt.”

All the European Starlings (which began as natives of Eurasia) in North America descended from 100 birds set loose in New York’s Central Park in the early 1890s. The birds were intentionally released by a group who wanted America to have all the birds that Shakespeare ever mentioned. It took several tries, but

eventually the population took off. Today, more than 200 million European Starlings range from Alaska to Mexico, and many people consider them pests. They usually can be found around towns, in populated areas, and around agriculture in various sized flocks. Very large roosts, exceptionally up to 1.5 million birds, can form in city centers, woodlands, or reed beds, causing problems with their droppings. Only sapsuckers show declines due to starlings; other species appear to be holding their own against the invaders. The ES is now found worldwide.

Males start building nests in a cavity, filled with grasses and feathers, with females helping at the end. During courtship, the male sings and flaps its wings. Four or five eggs hatch in 12 days. Both male and female incubate the eggs. Helpless nestlings mature and fledge in 24 days. Young may be fed another week or two by its parents. Food consists mostly of insects but includes snails, earthworms, spiders, fruits and berries, livestock feed, and garbage.

Starlings do not have a great voice, but they can mimic up to 20 birds or sounds. The oldest recorded wild European Starling was 15 years 9 months old.

Many thanks to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for much of this information.

—Pam Henline





## Holiday Crime Prevention Tips

**D**uring tough economic times, and during the holidays, property crimes tend to increase, says Sheriff **Greg Solano**—including auto burglaries, home burglaries, robbery, and thefts. We should always be vigilant and protect ourselves from crime, but it will be especially important in the coming months and year. Here are some tips to protect yourself and your property.

- ▶ Sign up for email and text alerts of crimes and tips at [www.santafesheriff.com](http://www.santafesheriff.com). Monitor crime in your area by looking at crime maps also available at [www.santafesheriff.com](http://www.santafesheriff.com).
- ▶ Join or start a Neighborhood Watch in your area.
- ▶ Lock items in the trunk of your car or keep them out of view. Park your car in an area with adequate lighting.
- ▶ Females: Don't walk to your car alone at night. Get security to escort you or leave in groups. Hold your keys or a small can of pepper spray in your hand. Keys make a good weapon and can stun someone just enough to give you a chance to get away. Carry a whistle on your keychain. If someone seems suspicious, use the whistle or use your cell phone to call someone who can call for help if something goes wrong.
- ▶ Make your home look occupied, and make it difficult to break into.
- ▶ Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed. Even if you'll be out for a short time, lock your doors.
- ▶ Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away overnight, connect some lamps to automatic timers to turn them on in the evening and off during the day. Use motion detector lights outside.

- ▶ Keep your garage door closed and locked.
- ▶ Don't allow daily deliveries of mail, newspapers or flyers to build up while you are away. Arrange with the post office to hold your mail, or arrange for a friend or neighbor to take it in regularly.
- ▶ Push-button locks on doorknobs are easy for burglars to open. Install deadbolt locks on all your outside doors.
- ▶ Know who belongs or does not belong in your neighborhood. If someone looks suspicious, call the police to have them checked out.
- ▶ Keep your yard clean and bushes and trees trimmed. You don't want to give burglars a place to hide or remain concealed as they come in and out of your yard.
- ▶ If you have an alarm system, use it, even if you are only leaving for a short time. While they may not prevent burglaries, they do reduce the number of items taken, and many times when the alarm goes off the burglar will leave without taking anything. Whether you have an alarm system or not, buy signs that say you do have an alarm and place them around your home.

To make a report, call the Sheriff's Department at 428-3720.

### SEPTEMBER CRIME STATISTICS

5 Property crime/burglary

1 Stolen vehicle

1 Breaking and entering

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

### NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH:

For information on how to join Neighborhood Watch, please email Marilyn Walker at [lightwalker2@comcast.net](mailto:lightwalker2@comcast.net).

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



## Senior Center News

**O**ur holiday lunches have become extremely popular, thanks to the wonderful menus devised by our chef, **Cindy Barreras**. On December 16, the Holiday Lunch will feature glazed baked ham, baked sweet potatoes, buttered asparagus, with pineapple upside-down cake for dessert. Like the Thanksgiving meal, Cindy is holding two seatings to accommodate seniors. (Our Thanksgiving lunch hosted 100 seniors!) Reservations are required for the 11:45 am and 12:15 pm seatings. Call 466-1039 well in advance, as space is limited. All lunches are \$1.50 per person for those 60 and older.

Activities in December will include a trip to Madrid to see the light displays, and as always, transportation to and from doctors' offices and shopping

are available to seniors. Seniors without transportation to the weekly lunches or activities can be picked up by our driver, **Jewel Pacheco**, and returned home. In January, art classes will begin again in clay work and tapestry weaving, led by Eldorado Artists **Bob** and **Lynne Coyle**. Sign-ups begin in December for these classes. Yoga and strength training continue to be popular, and seniors can join at any time.

Volunteers continue to be needed as drivers for the Meals on Wheels program and to help out at the center by answering phones, washing dishes, helping with other kitchen duties, and maintaining our library. To become a driver, contact **Pat Lavengood** (466-9765); to help at the center, either drop in and talk to Cindy or call 466-1039.

The center will be closed on December 24.

—Janet Amtmann



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Eldorado Children's Theatre and Teen Players, directed by **Lisa Lincoln**, present the epic extravaganza musical, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* at the James A. Little Theater December 3 and 10 at 7 pm and December 4, 5, 11, and 12 at 2 pm. This is a special production you won't want to miss! It's a great way to celebrate the holiday season. The music will be top-notch, with keyboard by Broadway veteran **David Geist** who will also conduct the professional chamber orchestra. Tickets are \$12 general admission and \$8 for children 12 and under. For more information and to order tickets, call 466-4656 or visit [www.eldoradochildrenstheatre.org](http://www.eldoradochildrenstheatre.org).

**Anna in *The King and I* practicing with the children in the song "Getting to Know You."** The show runs December 3–12 at the James A. Little Theater.