

# ELDORADO VISTAS

VOLUME XV, ISSUE 12  
December 2013

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Monthly Newsletter of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association

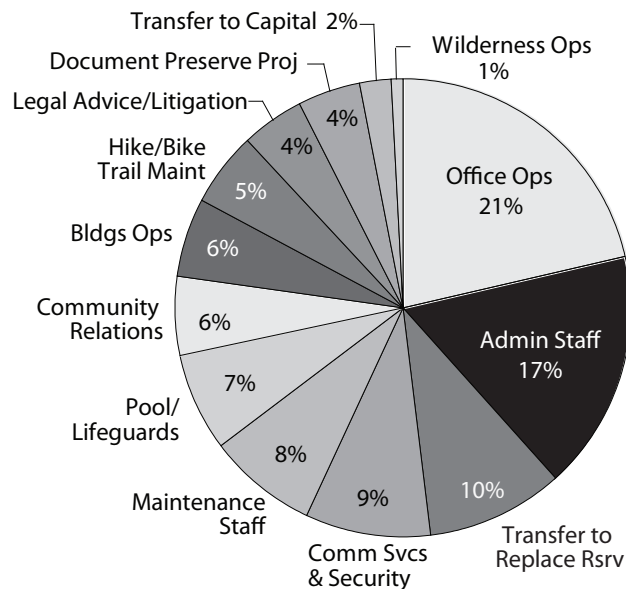
1 La Hacienda Loop, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508 ▼ (505) 466-4248 ▼ [www.eldoradosf.org](http://www.eldoradosf.org) ▼ Security 204-2945

## Where Does the Money Go?

**W**e all ask this from time to time. For the ECIA, the proposed 2014 Budget shows the following:

Maintenance for hike/bike trails, buildings and grounds, and a transfer to Replacement Reserves for amenity maintenance now and in the future consume 29% of the ECIA's resources. Funding these needs will likely require an assessment increase. Details will be available in the ECIA office and on the website, and open meetings will be held for questions and discussion as follows:

- ▼ **Tuesday, Dec. 3, 8 AM.** Proposed 2014 budget available at the office and on the website, [www.eldoradosf.org](http://www.eldoradosf.org).
- ▼ **Saturday, Dec. 7, 10 AM.** Public hearing on the 2014 budget. Venue: Railroad Room.
- ▼ **Thursday, Dec. 19, 7 PM.** Board adopts 2014 budget at its regular meeting. Venue: Railroad Room.



## Students Assess Wetland Health in Preserve

**O**n October 18 and 21, more than 70 seventh-grade students of science teachers **Laura Cullen** and **Hope Cahill** from El Dorado Community School took part in an assessment of wetland health in the Eldorado Community Preserve. The outing was led by **Jan-Willem Jansens** of Ecotone and supported by members of the Conservation Committee. The objective of the students' fieldwork was to introduce them to several scientific methods used to monitor the health of wetlands in the 200 section of the Preserve. In the past six years, the Conservation Committee has worked with several partners to bring the eroding wetlands, which had become overgrown with invasive trees, back to ecological health. Between 2008 and 2011, all invasive trees were removed, the arroyo channel that holds the wetlands was stabilized with rock dams, erosion control structures were built in side drainages, and trails were redesigned to improve natural trail drainage and reduce erosion.

The students learned how to use a laser level and measuring tapes to calculate the shape, depth, and width of the arroyo/wetland channel. They were also instructed in techniques to assess the nature and amount of plant life in the rehabilitated area. Once the data was brought back to class, it was analyzed and presented to classmates in graphs. The students observed a decrease of as much as 2 feet of channel depth in some places, which points to an accumulation of dirt in the wetland channel (or a reversal of past erosion), which helps to store water and grow wetland plants.

For many participants, this may have been their first time in the Preserve. We hope this outing has enhanced their interest in science and introduced them to one of the most valuable amenities available in Eldorado.

—Conservation Committee

See project photos on back page.

**ECIA Board Meeting,  
Community Center  
Railroad Bldg.  
Thurs.,  
December 19,  
7 pm.**



*Share your  
comments  
with us!*

*For policy and  
deadline, see  
below*

### Editorial Policy

Vistas invites ideas, stories, photos, and art from the community at large. 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; 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 [diana@eldoradosf.com](mailto:diana@eldoradosf.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.

## Holiday Lighting Tips

With the holiday season upon us, many Eldorado residents will soon be decorating their homes as part of their family celebrations. We'd like to remind all residents that Eldorado does have guidelines for exterior lighting as part of the Protective Covenants and Building restrictions—specifically, Article II, Section 10, Exterior Lighting. These guidelines, which help to prevent excessive glare and light pollution and help to keep our night skies dark, should be followed as closely as possible when putting up your exterior holiday lights. Some key points that residents should remember when planning their exterior holiday lights include:

- ▼ Avoid using any bright-colored spotlights or unshielded bulbs over 75 watts.
- ▼ Be sure that any larger lights (such as colored spotlights) are shielded downward and are not just bare bulbs shining out toward your neighbors.
- ▼ Be sure that if you are illuminating any outdoor features, your lighting is shining toward the base, as all lighting should be directed downward.
- ▼ Consider putting a timer on exterior lights that will turn off your lights at a reasonable evening hour, so as to save energy and keep from bothering your neighbors late at night.
- ▼ Consider using energy-efficient LED holiday lights wherever possible, as they are safe and energy-saving.

While the covenants do not regulate lighting inside your home, we ask that you respect your neighbor's right to view the dark night skies, and carefully place any bright interior holiday lighting along an interior wall, rather than in front of large picture windows, which can send a large blast of light outside of the home.

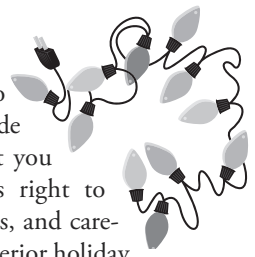
Remember to take down holiday lights no later than the end of January.

Further information on energy-saving lighting can be found at <http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/tips/holiday.html>.

Lastly, if you are using any exterior lighting to help guide your nighttime guests, be sure that these lights are in compliance with the covenants. Compliant exterior landscape lighting is a great way to illuminate your driveway and walkways without the higher energy costs and unwanted light pollution associated with non-compliant exterior lighting. If you have any questions at all regarding exterior or holiday lighting, feel free to call me at 466-4282 or email me at [mark@eldoradosf.org](mailto:mark@eldoradosf.org).

Wishing you and your entire family a most enjoyable holiday season!

—Mark Young, Covenant Compliance Representative



## Recent Board Actions

The ECIA Board held its regular meeting on October 17, with Board members present: **Dag Ryen** (President and Chair), **Jan Pietrzak** (Vice President), **Karen Mounsey** (Secretary), **Pam Henline**, and **Dave Perlmutter**. **Todd Handy** (Treasurer) was absent, excused. The following formal actions were taken unanimously, without the Chair voting:

- ▼ \$59,749 was approved from the Replacement Reserve to maintain and repair 3.23 miles of hike/bike path along Avenida Vista Grande.
- ▼ \$20,073 was approved from the Replacement Reserve for the resurfacing, repair, and restriping of the Community Center parking lot.
- ▼ \$23,993 was approved from the Replacement Reserve for replacement of Community Center parking lot overhead lights with new LED fixtures.
- ▼ A variance was granted for 3 Condesa Court for an 8-foot fence (where the Guideline limit is 6 feet) to screen an RV.

▼ A variance was granted for 3 Baya Court for a 61-foot wood and steel banister.

▼ A variance was granted for 12 Alondra Road to build two driveway monuments inside of the 50-foot front road setback.

▼ A Confidentiality Agreement regarding poultry mediation was approved.

▼ A variance was granted for 9 Avila Court for a screened enclosure for cats, with conditions.

▼ A request for a Home Occupation Permit for a general contracting business at 23 Palacio Road was tabled because the applicant was not present.

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. An open forum, community announcements, and reports from ECIA committees are normally included. Complete minutes and meeting agendas are available at the ECIA office or website: <http://eldoradosf.org>.

## Message from the ECIA Board

The ECIA Board of Directors wishes everyone a wonderful holiday season. As the year draws to a close, we especially want to thank the scores of volunteers who have given generously of their time, energy, and expertise to sustain and improve our community. The people who serve on committees and participate in the many special events throughout the year are the lifeblood of our homeowners association. It is their work that makes Eldorado a richer, more inviting place to live.

December is also the month in which the Board will make final decisions about the budget for 2014, and about the assessment level for the coming two years. An open forum will be held on Saturday, December 7, at 10 AM for ECIA members to learn about the budget process and to comment on the draft budget, which will be available by the December 3. Go to our website, [www.eldoradosf.org](http://www.eldoradosf.org), for further details.

The past year has been a busy one for ECIA, with major renovations of the pool and basketball courts, complete rebuilding of the tennis courts, significant maintenance on segments of our hike/bike trails, and various improvements to the dog park, stable area, and playgrounds. We are working closely with county officials on our roads and trails, and expect to see several major projects get underway early next spring. We also look forward to a major renovation of the playground equipment at Compadres Park.

None of this would be possible without the active participation and support of our community. Even if opinions may differ on some issues, we are all interested in making Eldorado more attractive and pleasant for residents. The Board looks forward to working with its members to achieve this goal.

—The Board of Directors  
of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association

## Emergency Phone Calls

**REGISTER YOUR CELL PHONE WITH THE ECIA OFFICE. GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS—TWO WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR PERSONAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THAT OF YOUR FAMILY IN AN EMERGENCY.**

As every firefighter, police officer, and medical technician knows, communications are the critical failure points in the operation of any emergency response system. Equipment fails, lights go out, messages are misunderstood, and required procedures are not followed. The results of these failures very often turn a manageable emergency into a larger, widespread disaster.

Land-line communication, dependent on “cop-pers” and standard for over a century, has been overtaken by the cell phone and to a lesser extent by the voice technologies available on the Internet.

With convenience and accessibility, not to mention cost, as the driving forces, Eldorado residents are following a national and worldwide trend by eliminating land-line phones in their homes and businesses. By one estimate, some 35% of Eldorado homes now use only mobile phones for their personal, business, or emergency communications. Therein lies a major problem. Land-based phones are tied to a physical location and cell phones are not. If an emergency situation occurs at a resident’s home and that resident is, for example, on an Alaskan cruise or visiting relatives some distance away in another state, ECIA Security, our El Dorado Fire and Rescue Service, or the Sheriff’s Office will not be able to provide that resident with information regarding the emergency.

There are some simple steps that will mitigate the above situation.

- ▼ Register your mobile phone number at the ECIA office, and when you do, resolve to keep the number you give the Association current.
- ▼ Register with the County of Santa Fe for emergency communication notifications. To enter their Self-Registration portal, visit [SantaFe911.onthealert.com](http://SantaFe911.onthealert.com).
- ▼ If you haven’t done so yet, get to know your neighbors. Joining Neighborhood Watch is a good way to start. (Check out our website for information on Neighborhood Watch at [EldoradoSF.org](http://EldoradoSF.org).)
- ▼ Exchange telephone numbers (land-line, cell, or voice Internet) with a neighbor. This effort is regularly shown to save lives, reduce property damage and loss, and enhance security in emergencies large and small. If 911 is not working and emergency responders are occupied elsewhere on higher-priority calls, neighbors may be our only emergency resource.

For your own safety, for that of your loved ones, and for that of our Eldorado community, resolve as soon as possible after reading this article to take the steps above. The life you save and the property you protect may very well be your own.

—Frank Schober

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Election: Kathie Graham  
Facilities & Grounds:  
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Finance: Dan Drobnis  
Information: Frank Schober  
Neighborhood Watch:  
Marilyn Walker  
Roads: Open  
Stable: Gretel Underwood (Interim Chair)  
Sustainability, Planning, & Education: Steve Rudnick

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### COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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





Report lost or found pets on the new website [www. Eldoradoneighbors.wordpress.com](http://www.Eldoradoneighbors.wordpress.com).



### Adam & Kim's Christmas Trees

Opening Saturday, November 30, at the north parking lot of La Tienda, the Eldorado-owned and operated business Adam and Kim's Christmas Trees will offer quality, fresh-cut Christmas trees from Oregon. Douglas Fir, Grand Fir, and Noble Fir will be available in sizes from tabletop to tall trees. Wreaths, garland, and chili ristras will also be available. A portion of proceeds will be donated to El Dorado Volunteer Fire & Rescue. Facebook: AdamKimsChristmasTrees for more info.

### Become a Master Gardener

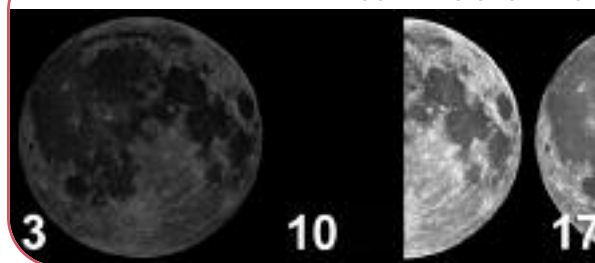
Deepen your gardening knowledge, connect with others who share your passion, and help others learn to garden successfully in Santa Fe County. The 2014 Intern Class is now forming: a 16-week, intensive course taught by New Mexico's top horticultural educators, researchers, and practitioners. You'll learn current best practices for soil building and composting; pruning, pests, and diseases; best fruits, vegetables, and ornamentals for Santa Fe; water harvesting, xeric techniques and much more. Classes start Feb. 3, with morning and evening options. Class size is limited. Registration closes December 31. For more information or to register, visit [www.sfmga.org](http://www.sfmga.org) or call 471-4711.

### Reel New Mexico in December

On Wednesday, December 11, 7 PM, at La Tienda's Performance Space, Reel New Mexico will be screening "Christmas in the Clouds," a classic comedy of mistaken identity and romance set during the holiday season at a ski resort that is owned and operated by an American Indian Nation. Shot on location at The Sundance Resort in Utah, this is the first contemporary romantic comedy to feature an almost entirely American Indian cast. The film was featured at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival and co-stars Graham Green ("Dances with Wolves") and features Santa Fe's own Wes Studi in a cameo role.

"There will be holiday pictures that are more high-tech than this one, more sensational, with bigger stars and higher budgets and indeed greater artistry. But there may not be many with such good cheer." —Roger Ebert

Suggested donation is \$5. (Mr. Studi is our invited guest.) Food and drink can now be served and brought into La Tienda. For more information: 466-1634.



### Lost Pet Website Launched

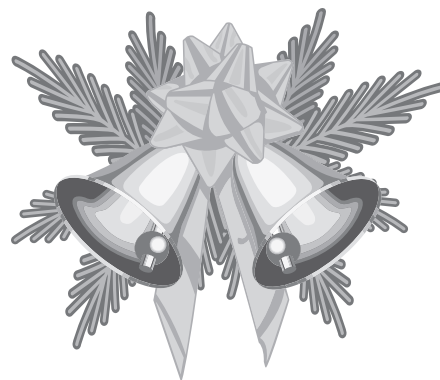
A service has been established by the Neighborhood Watch Committee to help reunite lost pets with their families. It works two ways:

▼ Anyone who has lost or found pets may contact [FLFullington@centurylink.net](mailto:FLFullington@centurylink.net) or call 466-2005 to post a notice.

▼ Anyone who finds a pet that cannot be identified can check the link on the ECIA website, [www.eldoradosf.org](http://www.eldoradosf.org), or go directly to [www. Eldoradoneighbors.wordpress.com](http://www.Eldoradoneighbors.wordpress.com) to see if a notice of the lost pet has been posted.

### Holiday Fair at La Tienda

On December 7, from 10 AM to 4 PM, La Tienda is hosting a Holiday Fair (in Building A) and Cowgirl Christmas (in Building B). Santa will be at Utopia from 11 AM to 1 PM. Gift-wrapping and package services will be available. Artists and crafters present one-of-a-kind works, while the La Tienda shops offer their first sidewalk sale. Stroll the halls, share some cheer, and wrap up your holiday shopping.



### Relax with Eldorado 1660 AM

Did you know that Eldorado has its very own very low-power radio station at 1660 on the AM dial? Eldorado broadcasts eclectic, easy-on-the-ears music and local information 24 hours a day, with 100 mW radiated power. This unlicensed but legal low-power broadcast facility is a not-for-profit hobby run by Eldorado resident **Bill Dunning**. Tune in to gentle jazz, comfortable classics, familiar folk music any day of the week!



## ASTRONOMY CORNER

**December 13, 14**

### Geminids Meteor Shower

The king of the meteor showers, the Geminids are considered by many to be the best shower in the heavens, producing up to 120 multicolored meteors per hour at its peak. It is produced by debris left behind by an asteroid known as 3200 Phaethon, discovered in 1982. The shower runs annually December 7–17. This year it peaks on the night of the 13th and morning of the 14th. The waxing gibbous moon will block out some of the meteors this year, but the Geminids are so bright and numerous that it should still be a good show. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Gemini but can appear anywhere in the sky.

—From seasky.org

### PROTECT OUR NIGHT SKY

Lights left carelessly on may spoil the views of our night sky.

### Vistas Needs Writers!

With the departure of valued committee member **Don Dayton**, the Information Committee is short a writer or two. Monthly meetings are held on the Tuesday following the third Thursday of each month in the Community Center Conference Room at 7 PM, where writing assignments are planned. Interested? Contact **Frank Schober**, 310-8593, or come to the next Information Committee meeting on December 17.

# December Events

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

Email [eciamarilyn@aol.com](mailto:eciamarilyn@aol.com) 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

Public Hearing on 2014 Budget, Sat., Dec 7, 10 am	RR
Board Adopts 2014 Budget Thurs., Dec 19, 7 pm	CR
ECIA Office closed Wed., Dec. 25	

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Architectural Committee	Tues., Dec. 10, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Architectural Committee	<del>Tues., Dec. 24, 7-9 pm</del>	Canceled	466-4248	Foyer
Board Work Study	Thurs., Dec. 5, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Board Work Study	Mon., Dec. 16, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Conservation Committee	<del>Tues., Dec. 3, 7-9 pm</del>	Canceled		
ECIA Board Meeting	Thurs., Dec. 19, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	RR
Facilities & Grounds	Wed., Dec. 4, 4-6 pm	Jeanne Calzada	466-1947	CFR
Finance Committee	Sat., Dec. 7, 10:30 am	Dan Drobnis	466-4781	RR
Information Committee	Tues., Dec. 17, 7 pm	Frank Schober	310-8593	CFR
Road Committee	TBA		466-4248	CFR
Stable Committee	Canceled	Gretel Underwood	466-7825	CFR
SPE Committee	Thurs., Dec. 12, 7-9 pm	Steve Rudnick	466-1335	CFR

### MONTHLY / SEMI-MONTHLY MEETINGS

EAW&SD*	1st & 3rd Thurs, 7-9 pm	Anna Mondragon	466-1085	RR/CR
Eldorado Arts & Crafts	<del>Last Thurs., of month</del>	Canceled	466-3035	CC
Eldorado Camera Club	4th Wednesday, 7-9	biordi@aol.com		La Tienda
La Canada Wireless	2nd & 4th Mon., 7-9 pm	lcwireless.org		
Library Book Group	2nd Saturday 9-10:30	Joan LaMarque	466-6000	CFR
Local Book Readers	3rd Thurs, 3 pm	shayward@gmail.com		LR
Roadrunner RV	3rd Tues. of month	Pat Stewart	820-0303	
Search & Rescue	2nd Thurs, 7-9 pm	santafesar.org		CR

### WEEKLY MEETINGS

AA	Tues., 5:45-6:45 pm			CFR/LR
AA	Wed., 10:30-11:30 am			CFR/CR
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
Bridge	Every Fri., 1-4:30 pm	Jim Davidson	670-6949	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	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., 10-12 noon	Joyce Hanmer	466-3018	LR
Life Drawing	Mon., 10-12 noon	Jack McCarthy	466-9601	RR
Mah Jongg	Fri., 1-4:30	Nancy Robbins	466-1780	CR
Overeaters Anon	Mon., 7-8 pm	Kate	216-5302	LR
Senior Lunch***	Mon.-Fri., 11:30-12:30 pm	Senior Center	466-1039	
Square Dancing	Fri., 6-9 pm	David Lovro	466-0540	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)**



## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH FLORA &amp; FAUNA GROUP

## Mice and Winterizing

**W**e heard them in the still of the night. Small scratching sounds. Scurrying noises throughout the ceiling, scampering rapidly from one room to another. Gnawing sounds that were remarkably loud. We had mice in the home! We knew mice were destructive—chewing wires and wood, potentially carrying diseases—but we had never known how crazy-making their sounds could be.

In the winter months, mice are attracted to the shelter, warmth, and food sources that can be found around and inside our houses. We had taken what we thought were good precautions—removing thick shrubs near the door, repairing worn areas around windows, keeping the compost pile a good distance away—but we still had mice in the house.

Our cats evidently weren't mousers or at least never had the chance to try their hunting skills, since the mice stayed within the walls and ceilings. We tried setting traps—the snap kind that kill instantly, not the glue kind that are so cruel—but the mice evaded them.

We didn't want to use poisons; we think they are dangerous to have in a house, especially with pets and children around. Also, poisons can take a long time to work, which is not only inhumane but causes the mice to die within the house walls, creating a horrible smell. Finally, rodenticides pose a significant risk to non-target wildlife; bobcats, coyotes, hawks, and owls that eat the poisoned mice can bleed to death.

It was time to call a professional.

We learned that once mice have discovered how to get into your home, they will “tell” their friends to follow by leaving a trail scented by urine. We learned that if you can stick a #2 pencil through a hole, a mouse can probably get through it, and that it's smart to pro-

tect our cars because mice can get in them and destroy wires. We also learned that we should always use disposable gloves—and maybe also a mask—and use disinfectant when handling dead mice or cleaning mouse droppings.

The best course was to find out where the mice were getting in. With the professional, we thoroughly checked the house for problem areas such as missing screens on vents, worn weather stripping around windows and doors, tiny holes between vigas. We repaired where needed and thoroughly sealed additional holes with steel wool.

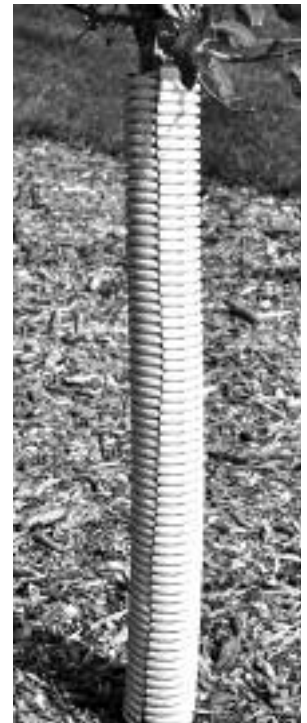
We learned that mice are enticed by food near the house: people food, pet food, bird food, compost, garbage, and even piles of edible materials such as cardboard. We relocated the birdfeeders a good distance from the house.

Finally, we could sleep at night.

**WINTERIZING THE GARDEN**

In addition to taking steps to keep out unwanted rodent visitors during the winter months, there are some procedures we can take to help our plants get through the cold season. Thoroughly water shrubs before freezing temperatures arrive. After the ground freezes, cover the bases of perennials with a loose mulch of straw, leaves, or pine needles. Some of us like to protect young or thin hardwood trunks from winter sun damage by using tree wrap. To stop rodents from chewing the bark, install a cylinder around it. Bury the cylinder a couple inches in the ground, have it reach up to 2 feet above the anticipated snow line, and be sure to leave a few inches between the trunk and the cylinder.

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



**Winterize your small trees against sun damage and rodents with a plastic cylinder.**



**Photo by Jens Buurgaard Nielsen. GNU Free Documentation license.**



## Rock Dove (RD), Part 2

**T**his bird, the Rock Dove, also known as the ordinary pigeon, has been around for a long time. Egyptian hieroglyphics suggest that pigeons were domesticated more than 5,000 years ago, and their origin is obviously much older. The pigeon is the bird said to have scouted for land from Noah's Ark. The pigeon was the first exotic bird brought to America, arriving on ships with European settlers between 1603 and 1608. By 1819, the homing pigeon was developed sufficiently to fly 200 miles in a day. They were used to transmit important news, even stock quotations.

For the last few centuries, pigeons have been selectively bred for interesting plumage, strength, and speed in flight, as well as for homing ability and meat. Since they are domesticated, they have been studied extensively. Some studies say that pigeons may have some cognitive abilities comparable to three-year-old children. Pigeons do not seem to compete with native birds, and they are food for native raptors.

When released in unfamiliar territory pigeons use earth's magnetic field as a major key for homing, although the specific mechanisms have not been discovered. They also use the angle of the sun, polarized light, star patterns, and olfaction. A pigeon that was trained near a mountain always flew to a high spot before heading for home.

Pigeons have played useful roles for the military. They carried messages for the U.S. Army Signal Corps during World Wars I and II, saving lives and providing vital strategic information. France and Austria maintained military pigeon companies into the 1990s, and the *New York Times* reported that Iraqi militia may be using pigeons to carry messages in 2008. One United States Homing Pigeon, called "G.I. Joe," was awarded the Dickin Medal for bravery by the Lord Mayor of London for saving over 100 British soldiers in World War II. Austrian Army Colonel Walter Buchmayer noted, "Pigeons never stop working when

there's a power cut, can't be bugged or tapped, and are not dependent on complicated software," nor computer links or satellite communications.

We know Darwin learned much from his study of finches on the Galapagos Islands, but he also began studying and breeding pigeons in 1856. He soon became as enthusiastic about the wonderfully varied breeds as any working-class fancier. There are an amazing variety of pigeon breeds developed to look pretty, interesting, or strange. The names give some clue to their looks: Fantails, Frillbacks, Tumblers, Croppers (have enlarged crops), Archangle, and Barb. One of the strangest is the Trumpeter Pigeon, which is a show bird, not raised for flight. These birds were named for their peculiar call, which is louder than that of other pigeons. It is a continuous, rising and falling, almost drumlike sound. Another major characteristic of the breed is its boots. A Trumpeter's foot and hock feathers can be 8 or 10 inches long. This does not make for a very aerodynamic bird!

It is estimated that there are 400 million pigeons worldwide.

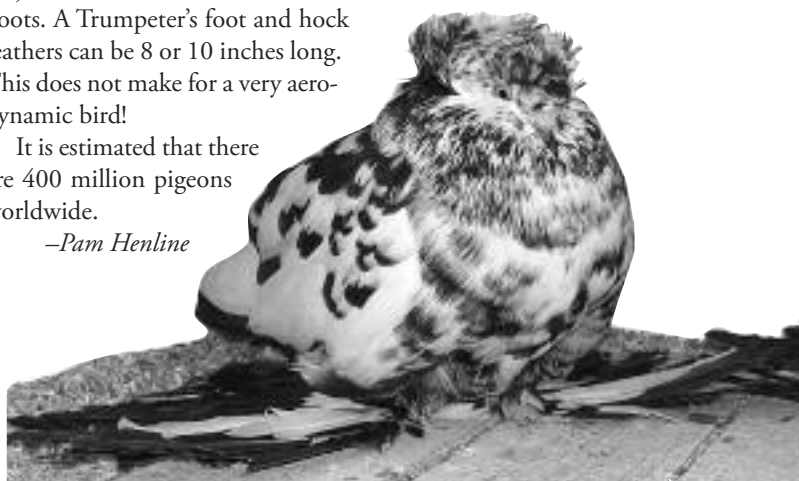
—Pam Henline



**Trumpeter Pigeon.**  
Photo by Jim Gifford;  
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike license).

**English Trumpeter Pigeon at the 2008 Queensland State Show. This bird is owned by Alan Watts.**

Photo by Graham Manning  
Wikimedia Commons (Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike license).



## Eldorado Hikers

**E**very Tuesday morning at 8:30, a group of Eldorado residents meets at the ECIA parking lot to enjoy a hike in the Eldorado Preserve or the New Mexico wilderness. The hikes scheduled for December are:

Dec. 3: Ball N-S X-Country ++ 2.7–3 mi./  
500 ft./4 hr./\$2

Dec. 10: Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks ++  
2.2 mi./ 500 ft./5 hr./\$8

Hikes are rated from + (= easy) to ++++ (= most difficult), and the fee is for car-pooling. To join, you need only show up in appropriate clothing with a snack and sufficient water.



# ELDORADO VISTAS

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



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## *Students Work on Wetlands . . . Following Erosion Control Efforts*



(Left): Students work with professionals and other volunteers on the wetlands in the Preserve; and some of their data on a bulletin board. (Above): Dick Keller works on a newly constructed water bar directing water off the trail.