



December 2025

Vol. 41 – No. 12

Unit numbers shown in parentheses

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Editor, The GRIT

Claudia Mitchell

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Lead Administrator – Trish
Administrator – Anna

SHHA Office

12700 San Rafael Avenue NE, Ste. 3
Albuquerque, NM 87122

Office Hours: Mon–Thurs, 9 AM–4 PM
Fri, 9 AM–noon

Closed on federal holidays (page 4)

Phone: 505-797-7793

Website: www.sandiahomeowners.org

Email: office@sandiahomeowners.org

Message from the President, December 2025 **Jim Stewart**

Howdy Neighbors,

Following up on my November message regarding the PNM situation, this is a short update on the routing of high-voltage transmission lines. Since my last update the Special Task Group has convened several times and has had several productive meetings with representatives from PNM. Next up, in just a few days, is the BernCo Planning Commission meeting on December 3rd. More to come...

An issue that has generated some concern among our residents is the construction of new homes in our neighborhoods. Sandia Heights contains over 2,100 lots, with all but approximately sixty having been built upon. In most cases, these remaining lots are adjacent to existing homes whose owners have grown accustomed to a certain view from their property. That established view can sometimes be affected by new construction.

The members of the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) work diligently to ensure any new construction fits the aesthetic and character of the neighborhood. The ACC makes it a practice to invite adjacent homeowners to review and comment upon the plans for a new home, or any significant remodeling of an existing structure, prior to an application being approved. It is important that you, as an existing resident, take advantage of this opportunity to submit your comments.

The ACC's work is guided by the existing architectural guidelines and your unit's covenants. These formal documents sometimes mandate an outcome that may not align with an individual homeowner's preference for the new project. Please remember that the members of the ACC are your neighbors and volunteers committed to ensuring the best interests of our community are served.

Lastly, I urge everyone to maintain professionalism and courtesy with our office staff. We recognize that current circumstances are stressful for everyone. However, allowing frustration to lead to treating staff poorly is simply not acceptable. Let's all strive for a more positive and respectful environment.

Remember, our website at www.sandiahomeowners.org is full of information, and our office staff (Trish and Anna) are available at office@sandiahomeowners.org. Of course, you can also reach me at president@sandiahomeowners.org. I promise you will receive a response.

Changing Status of *The GRIT*

Claudia Mitchell, Editor, *The GRIT*

Dear Readers,

As of this writing, we have been unsuccessful in our search for a new volunteer editor. As a result, starting with the January 2026 issue, *The GRIT* will be published online only. This will allow us to explore creative and flexible options that would free the newsletter from its present print-compatible format and timeline restrictions. The most viable and sustainable options currently point to an online issue only, but all avenues will be explored. However, any option will require an editor/coordinator.

What would be the job of the editor? They will coordinate requests for content and ensure that the content is relevant, appropriate, timely and of good quality. They will compile content and write content as required. They will work with the current volunteer layout assistant. They will become a member of, and be supported by the Communications and Publications Committee, a talented and lively group. The current editor will be available through February for guidance. Two volunteers could share the job.

Since 1979 *The GRIT* has been the historical record documenting events, news and information that pertain to our unique neighborhood. It has been the heartbeat of Sandia Heights for nearly half a century. Its existence has depended completely on resident volunteer editors. If you have an interest in becoming the new editor, please contact office@sandiahomeowners.org.

Backstory on Setbacks

Stan Davis, Covenant Support Committee

There are two main types of setbacks in Sandia Heights (SH). One type is a “Zoning” setback, which defines how close to and inside a property boundary a property owner can build a structure. Another is the “Right-of-Way” (ROW) setback, which is the area between the edge of the public County road/curb/sidewalk and your private property line. The setback together with the road form the ROW. ROW setbacks are Bernalillo County property, and their purpose is to “aid private

property’s ability to use public facilities and provide regulated traffic control and public road drainage.”

Maintenance of landscaping or removal of weeds or trash within an ROW setback is the adjacent property owner’s responsibility. Throwing and piling green waste or other debris into the ROW setback is considered illegal dumping and carries possible fines and/or imprisonment. Additionally, “Unobstructed vision for traffic safety shall be strictly and solely maintained by the property owner on all corner lots.”

Property owners along the numerous bends of roads in our neighborhood must keep ROW setbacks clear of overgrowing brush and tree limbs that can disrupt vehicle drivers’ views. Property owners should also keep pedestrians in mind by keeping the ROW setbacks clear of brush, to allow pedestrians the ability to see oncoming traffic and to safely step off the road quickly in case of inattentive drivers.

For example, see below, which zooms into a small area in Sandia Heights. A County road is identified by a single purple line. The blue lines outline private property boundaries. The County ROW setbacks exist between the edges of the roads and the nearest property boundaries (blue) that more-or-less parallel the roads.



Note also the numerous “communal” driveways, identified by white arrows: these act almost as if they were roads, because they lead to multiple household garages and parking areas. However, these driveways lie entirely within private property boundaries, so are essentially private roads with numerous owners.

... continued on page 3

...continued from page 2

As another example, see this next image, which zooms into a small area at the foot of San Rafael Avenue.



Note the unusually wide ROW setback on the north side of San Rafael roughly indicated by the yellow dashed line, across from O'Beans Coffee shop and other businesses.

This shape actually has interesting historical origins, as explained to me by Vlad Jirik with Professional Surveying, LLC, and a SH resident. Vlad combed through historical plats to learn that at the very beginning of development of SH, a cul-de-sac was planned here to make it easy for vehicles to turn around before venturing further up the dirt road. This cul-de-sac was never incorporated into final paved road designs, but the shape persevered on the north side of the road in the pattern of ROW setbacks there (while on the south side it did not).

Property owners are required to maintain these ROW setbacks, as described above, regardless of how wide they are. Note also that a blue property boundary lies across the entrance to Red Rada Place (see yellow arrow); this means that Red Rada is a private road.

Caveats:

- Most County roads in residential areas of SH are paved, but some are not. The same rules apply, regardless.

- This article is about ROW setbacks only, not easements, of which there are various types in SH.
- The ultimate source for exact locations of different types of boundaries are the original plats.
- When in doubt, call the County.

Another Way to Compost

Elizabeth Edgren, C&P Committee Member

As told to the Editor

“Little Green Bucket” is Albuquerque’s only residential composting service. Elizabeth Edgren, a member of the C&P committee has personal experience with this convenient service. Here is her story:

Not long after reading about the *Little Green Bucket* service in the January 2022 *GRIT*, I decided to sign up. I know composting is a responsible and earth-friendly practice, and keeps our garbage can emptier and less stinky, but I also know myself: I won't be diligent enough to do it on my own.

I bought a small, inexpensive countertop bucket with liner from an online retailer, into which I put all our food waste. One benefit of Little Green Bucket (I'll call it LGB) is that I can put meat, dairy, and bone scraps in there, too, since the commercial composting process is robust enough to handle such things. When my little countertop bucket fills, I empty it into the LGB on our kitchen deck. Each week on our designated pickup day, I put the LGB out by the street, they come pick that one up, and leave me a clean, empty bin for the next week.

I cancel the scheduled pickup whenever we're out of town, and they don't charge me for those weeks. Twice a year I can opt to receive a bag of compost (about 1 cubic foot) or to donate my share to a community garden, farm, or nonprofit.

I like supporting a small, local business; I like knowing I'm returning organic matter to the soil; I like not having the smell of food waste in our kitchen trash or garbage can; I like how easy this service is to use!

Take a look at <https://littlegreenbucket.com/> where you can learn all about this convenient service.

Updated Helpful Numbers Magnet Available at the Office

Sandia Heights Homeowners Association Member Benefits

A member of the SHHA is a property owner who pays monthly dues. Benefits available to members include discounted Tram tickets, free Architectural Control and Covenant enforcement support, notary services, access to free contractor evaluation binders, a printed copy of *The GRIT*, an annual neighborhood directory, and the right to vote on SHHA issues and to serve on the Board.

All residents benefit from living in a covenant-controlled community which seeks to maintain the look and feel of Sandia Heights.

If you are not a member yet, please join and enjoy the full range of these benefits.

Sandia Heights Services

Customer Service: (505) 856-6419

Security Office: (505) 856-6347

Security Officer Cell: (504) 263-4654

After-hours emergency: (505) 888-5336

SHS is separate from SHHA and provides neighborhood security patrol in addition to our water, sewer services, and garbage collection. Residents may subscribe to receive additional security services including security watch when away from home, assistance with lost pets, suspicious activity, etc.

Emergency Police/Fire/Rescue

Emergency: 911

Bernalillo County Sheriff

Non-Emergency: (505) 798-7000

NM Gas Co.

Emergency: (505) 697-3335

PNM

Outage & Emergencies: (888) 342-5766

Bernalillo County Animal Care Services and Lost & Found Animals

(505) 314-0281 or (505) 468-7387

<https://www.bernco.gov/animal-care-services/lost-found-animals/>

Bernalillo County

Roads/Snow/Misc: (505) 848-1503

Announcements & Notices

- **Office hours:** Mon – Thur 9AM – 4PM, Fri 9AM – 12PM
- **Board Meeting:** The next Board meeting will be held at the SHHA office **on Dec 12th at 6:00PM.**
- **Holiday Office Closures:** **Nov 27th– 28th & Dec 25th, Jan 1st**
- **All property owners, regardless of SHHA membership, must submit an online or physical ACC application before starting any work that changes the exterior of their property.**
- **Notary services (for members)** are by appointment only, Tue-Thur. Call or email the office to schedule. Documents should already have lines for the notary signature block.
- **Discounted Tram Passes (for members)** are sold in the SHHA Office for **\$10.00 per ticket.** Only checks and credit cards are accepted. **Check availability on the SHHA website, then come to the office to purchase. Passes are non-refundable and non-exchangeable. If the Tram closes, passes remain valid for 30 days**
<https://www.sandiahomeowners.org/tram-pass-availability>
- **Contractor Evaluation Binders (for members)** are available to view in the SHHA office. Positive or negative reviews may be submitted on our website using the “Contractor Evaluation Form.”

October Calls to Sandia Heights Security Patrol

Latest statistics since the last GRIT

October 2025	# of calls	October 2025	# of calls
Alarms	6	Open Door/Window/Garage	1
Customer Assist	3	Parking Problem	1
Dump/Spilled Material	1	Snake Call	1
Fire/Smoke	1	Special Extra Patrol	2
Fireworks Complaint	1	Special Request/Vacation	90
Lost/ Found Item	2	Suspicious Person	8
Lost/ Found Pet	1	Suspicious Vehicle	8
Miscellaneous Call	4	Utility Co. Assist	1
Motorcycle Nuisance	1	Vandalism	1
Motorist Assist	1	Welfare Check	1
Total:	159		

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CURRENT INVENTORY - SEPT 2025

CB LEGACY BLUE SHEET - SEPTEMBER 2025



An informative overview of the Monthly Statistical Highlights. The SWMLS market areas includes Albuquerque, Corrales, Placitas, Rio Rancho, Bernalillo, East Mountains/Estancia Basin and most of Valencia County.

New Listings		Pending Sales		Closed Sales	
Detached	862	Detached	790	Detached	761
Attached	104	Attached	87	Attached	81
One Year Ago		One Year Ago		One Year Ago	
Detached	1,010	Detached	834	Detached	698
Attached	91	Attached	84	Attached	87
% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)	
-14.7%		-5.3%		+9.0%	
YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)	
+4.4%		+0.5%		+3.9%	

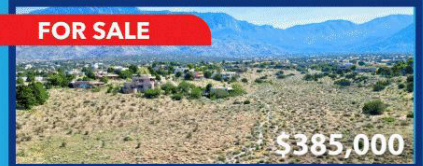
Median Sale Price		Average Sales Price		% of List Price Received	
Detached	\$385,000	Detached	\$437,050	Detached	98.6%
Attached	\$277,500	Attached	\$283,012	Attached	98.1%
One Year Ago		One Year Ago		One Year Ago	
Detached	\$359,000	Detached	\$406,273	Detached	98.7%
Attached	\$255,000	Attached	\$264,837	Attached	98.5%
% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)	
+7.2%		+7.6%		-0.1%	
YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)	
+3.0%		+5.5%		-0.3%	

Inventory of Homes for Sale		Avg. Days On Market Until Sale		Months Supply*	
Detached	2,109	Detached	43	Detached	2.7
Attached	216	Attached	36	Attached	2.5
One Year Ago		One Year Ago		One Year Ago	
Detached	1,841	Detached	33	Detached	2.2
Attached	149	Attached	17	Attached	1.8
% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)		% Change (Detached)	
+14.6%		+30.3%		+22.7%	
YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)		YTD % Change (Detached)	
~		+26.6%		+28.2%	

*The inventory of homes for sale at the end of a given month, divided by the pending sales for the month.

SOURCE: Greater Albuquerque Association of REALTORS® - based on data from the Southwest Multiple Listing Service. Data is deemed reliable not guaranteed

FOR SALE



\$385,000

1239 Rockrose Road NE
LAND LOT

FOR SALE



\$1,200,000

213 Spring Creek Pl NE
4844 SQ FT 4BR 5BA .76 Acres

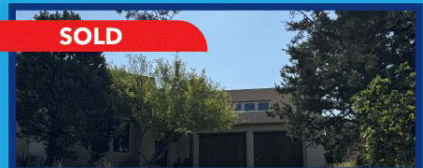
FOR SALE



\$1,050,000

51 Rock Ridge Drive NE
4181 SQ FT 3BR 4BA .93 Acres

SOLD



307 Big Horn Ridge Dr NE
3100 SQ FT 4BR 3.5BA 1.19 Acres

SOLD



166 Juniper Hill Pl NE
2727 SQ FT 4BR 4BA .82 Acres

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The Evolution of Sandia Peak Ski Area: An Historical and Personal Perspective (1975-Present)

Burt O'Neil, C&P Committee Member

Nestled in the Sandia Mountains just east of Albuquerque, the Sandia Ski Area has been a beloved winter destination for skiing enthusiasts since its inception. First established by Robert Nordhaus and the Albuquerque Ski Club in 1936, Sandia was originally known as La Madera Ski Area after the nearby La Madera Canyon. In 1958, Nordhaus and his business partner Ben Abruzzo purchased La Madera from the club. During this time, lift tickets were \$3.50 per day and \$25 for a season pass. Ben Abruzzo also helped turn Albuquerque into an international ballooning destination and was the developer of the present Sandia Heights.

By 1975 the name of the resort had been changed to Sandia Peak Ski Area and three double-chair lifts had been installed. Chairlift 1 carries skiers above "Exhibition" ski trail from the base resort to the mountain top, chair 2 carries skiers above "Inhibition" ski trail from mid mountain to the mountain top and chair 4 is for beginners. The current aerial tramway, which runs from the heart of Sandia Heights to the top of the ski slopes, entered service May 7, 1966. The Sandia Snow Sports School provided downhill racing lessons. The resort also routinely hosted races and competitions.

I returned from combat flying in Vietnam in 1973 and was assigned to Kirtland AFB. I had the privilege of meeting Ben Abruzzo, Robert Nordhaus, and Ludya Avizonas, a residential real estate agent at the High Finance restaurant, located at the peak, where we enjoyed lunch and where I was awed by panoramic views of Sandia Heights some 4000 ft below.

We finished lunch, then we all quickly got into our skis for an afternoon of skiing. Nordhaus was the best skier, but Ben was the most aggressive. He led us down the northernmost run, "Double Eagle" through the trees to "Aspen" and finally to a run aptly called "Suicide". At the end of the day, we did the most southern runs "La Madera", "Fred's Run", "Cibola" and "Suicide" which were spectacular as the late afternoon sun illuminated the ski trails with warm sunset colors.

To this day those are my favorite top to bottom runs.



The O'Neil family, L to R: Marguerite, Nate, Christopher, Nikky, Sara Mia, Burt

As the demand for skiing increased, the ski area expanded its facilities. An additional top to bottom chairlift was added, and in 2007 a large modern base lodge was built. As part of the ski area winter sports scene, a downhill racing club was formed, supported by Tom Long, the general manager of the ski area. My children joined and participated in downhill racing events. Interestingly enough, my daughter, who started skiing at three years old, raced against the boys and never lost a downhill slalom race.

My older son, Christopher, skied with Richard Abruzzo, the youngest Abruzzo boy. Richard was the first non-European on the University of New Mexico (UNM) ski team. After Richard graduated, Christopher was the second non-European UNM ski team member.



And here is a photo from another long-time resident, Ann List, with Ann and her late husband, Bob, during the 70's with sons Dawson and David practicing on the slopes

... continued on page 11

ACC Activity Log

Summary of **Approved Projects** since the last GRIT:

148 Whitetail Rd	install rooftop solar system
171 Big Horn Ridge Dr	replace 3 garage doors
203 Spring Creek Dr	repair stucco around 22 new windows
376 Juniper Hill Rd	replace 3 windows, 2 patio doors, trim to match
560 Black Bear Pl	1) remove pool; 2) extending parking area; 3) plant 6 pinon trees
660 Roadrunner Ln	replace fencing with vinyl
725-8 Tramway Ln	remove 2 dead pinon trees
793-A Tramway Ln	re-roof in tan TPO
939 Bobcat Blvd	1) remove tree undermining foundation; 2) replace decorative wall, refinish to match
971 Antelope Ave	construct 2 nd floor addition
985 Lynx Loop	replace 2 windows, add new window
1121 Marigold Dr	replace existing wood fence and stucco wall with new
1477 Morning Glory Rd	re-roof balcony in tan TPO
1553 Eagle Ridge Ln	repaint balcony railing and columns in beige
1704 Quail Run Ct	coat roof in tan coating
1818 Tramway Terrace Lp	replace roof with TPO
1822 Tramway Terrace Lp	remove rotting wood, patch with stucco to match
1843 Tramway Terrace Lp	paint exterior trim in green
1866 Tramway Terrace Lp	remove asphalt driveway
2154 Black Willow Dr	remove dead trees
2446 Tramway Terrace Ct	install tan TPO roof
2447 Tramway Terrace Ct	install tan TPO roof
2750 Cliffrose Dr	install tan TPO roof

2773 Wolfberry Pl	repair parapets to match
2876 Brushwood St	raise south wall to 6 foot maximum
7701 Cedar Canyon Pl	install grey concrete driveway
7732 Cedar Canyon Rd	replace garage door as like-for-like as possible
7735 Cedar Canyon Rd	re-roof in tan TPO

Please Protect our Dark Skies

Architectural Control Committee

Some of you have or are thinking of installing string-lights (also called “bistro lights”—those clear light-bulbs on a cord) in your yards or patios. While popular and relatively inexpensive, the use of string-lights can run counter to the intent of the Sandia Heights Covenants, the goal of enjoying living in a Dark Sky community, and even neighbor relations.

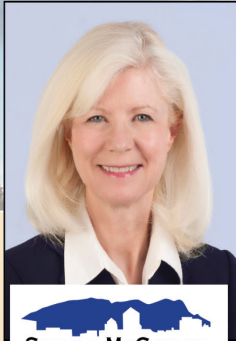
Every Sandia Heights Covenant has language concerning exterior lighting and the impact it might have on your neighbors. For example, one Covenant reads: “No unshaded flood lights shall be maintained which cause light to shine directly into the home of any other residents.” Some of the Covenants even include further exclusions as to the types of allowed lighting and advisories that “All exterior lighting shall be maintained and installed to minimize light pollution.”

While some have argued that string-lights are not technically flood lights, it is the judgment of the Architectural Control Committee that, if not placed appropriately or unshielded, the light produced does “flood” into other yards and homes. If in doubt as to which way to proceed please reach out to the ACC via office@sandiahomeowners.org

**Covenant Violations as of
October 31, 2025**

Received: 6 Open: 10 Closed: 7

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Sharon's Sandia Heights Market Update Past Year 12/2024 to 12/2025

10 Larger homes For Sale on Larger Lots | Avg Asking price \$1,419,900 Avg Asking price/sf \$290.97

5 Homes Pending | Avg Asking Price \$980,800 Avg Asking price/sf \$279.70

48 Homes Closed past year to date | Avg Sold Price \$931,220 Avg Sold price/sf.\$269.40

3 Smaller homes on smaller lots | Avg Asking price \$431,667 Avg Asking price/sf \$238.90

4 homes pending | Avg Asking Price \$454,500 Avg Asking price/sf \$270.34

52 Homes Closed past year to date | Avg Sold Price \$475,466 Avg Sold price/sf \$274.58

Note Every Home Is Unique . Price is always based on condition, updates, market appeal, location and views.

Current Interest rates hovering around 6.37% for 30 year conventional & 5.87%VA



1114 San Rafael Ave NE



2027 Quail Run Dr NE



908 Tramway Lane NE



1723 Quail Run Ct. NE

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Sandia Heights **SOLD** Statistics

Avg. Sold Price	Avg. \$/Sq.Ft	List to Sold Price %	Avg. Days on Market
\$726,443	\$271	99%	19

** Stats for Detached Properties **As of NOV. 10, 2025*

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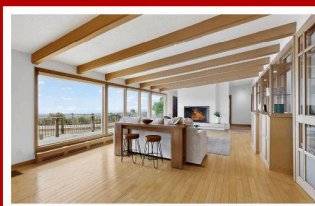
Sandia Heights Listings



scan QR code to see what's for sale



9 Sandia Heights Dr. NE \$1,875,000

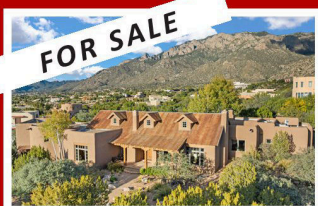


906 Tramway Ln NE \$895,000

What's Your Home Worth



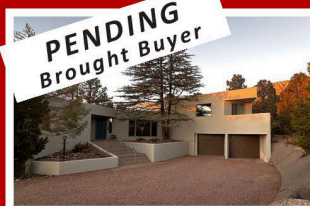
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348 White Oaks Dr NE \$1,680,000



10 La Luz Trl NE \$1,210,000



1066 Tramway Ln NE \$825,000



8237 Raintree Dr NE \$697,000



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... continued from page 7

Richard was a category A skier and raced all four of his university winters. Chris started out as a category B and finally made category A in his senior year and placed in 3 of 8 slalom races. Chris still slalom races with members of the Sandia Peak Ski Club. Because of COVID and warm winters, they race four times a year at Red River Ski Area near the town of Red River, New Mexico.

Two years ago, Chris invited me to go with the Sandia ski club one race weekend. Of course, I had no intention of racing. But I did ski about eight runs each day. I was surprised by the fact that I always had a ski partner tracking me down each run. I later learned my wife made Chris promise that I would always have a young strong ski partner available to help me if I fell.

Sandia Ski Area's Chairlift #1 has in the past offered scenic rides throughout the off season. This past summer the chairlifts and tows underwent major upgrades and tuning in anticipation of the winter season. Of course, Sandia Peak Tram rides are offered year-round including holidays, weather permitting.

You can have lunch at the top and check out the numerous notable hiking trails at the resort including the Grand Enchantment trail, 10K Trail, Golden Eagle Trail, King of the Mountain, and the upper end of the popular La Luz trail.

I see as I reflect on its history that Sandia Ski Area has transformed from a small local ski spot to a cherished pillar of New Mexico's outdoor culture. The period from 1975 to the present underscores a journey marked by growth, community involvement and a commitment to providing an exceptional winter experience. Looking ahead, the Sandia Ski Area is poised to continue evolving, embracing the spirit of adventure and the joy of the mountains for generations to come.



Sandia Heights Artists' New Display at the Sandia Heights Homeowners Association Office

Claudia Mitchell, SHA President-elect



Our local art gallery is back! The Sandia Heights Homeowners Association (SHHA) office art exhibit of work by the Sandia Heights Artists (SHA). The walls will be hung with some exciting new art just in time for the holiday season. The new collection features work from six of our resident SHA members: Lynda Burch, Evelyn Carter, Denise D'Angelantonio, Stan Davis, Charlotte Driver and Rebecca Whitecotton.

Lynda will have some of her distinctive acrylic and collage work. Evelyn will offer her imaginative and evocative acrylic paintings. Denise's art features intricate circular designs often featuring mandalas. Stan will be showing his pastel paintings inspired by his hikes in the Sandias. Charlotte will display some of her whimsical pen and ink drawings. Rebecca will have some of her creations made of natural materials.

The display is more than the sum of its parts and is a tribute to the variety of artists that reside here in Sandia Heights. It is a tiny preview of what is in store at the annual SHA Tour held each September. All pieces are for sale directly from the artist. Information for purchase will be on the labels with the art. The office staff cannot make the sale for the artist.

So come down and enjoy this little exhibit at 12700 San Rafael Ave. NE, Suite 3, on the southeast corner of San Rafael and Tramway Boulevard. When you stop by say hello to our friendly office staff, Anna and Trish.

No-no to BB Guns

Gerard Del Monte, Resident

In the beloved holiday film *A Christmas Story*, little Ralphie dreams of getting a Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas. His mother (and, later, a department store Santa Claus) warns famously that he might “shoot your eye out,” which indeed almost happens at the end of the movie.

They might have also warned Ralphie that he might shoot out a neighbor’s window, which recently happened here in Sandia Heights. A homeowner reported that one of her rear bedroom windows was hit. Police investigation determined that it was caused not by a bullet, but by a BB or pellet. Clearly, whether intentional or an accidental by-product of shooting at a target, a rabbit, or similar — discharging a firearm, BB gun, or pellet gun in our neighborhood is not only dangerous, but the shooter can be subject to action by law enforcement.

A bit of research shows that Bernalillo County’s general ordinances prohibit the discharge of any “firearm” within county limits. This could be interpreted to include BB or pellet guns powered by compressed air or carbon dioxide. The only exceptions are for law enforcement, military, self-defense, authorized target shooting, and hunting. Self-defense does not include against “wascally wabbits,” as Elmer Fudd may have said.

Also, these regulations deserve consideration:

- You can’t use a BB or pellet gun in a way that endangers others, such as near or in public areas like parks or schools.
- In New Mexico, you must be at least eighteen years old to purchase a BB or pellet gun.
- It is illegal to carry any concealed weapon, including BB and pellet guns, in Bernalillo County without a permit.
- In particular, if you do not properly store your BB or pellet gun in a safe manner as you would a firearm, *you are legally liable for improper use of any such gun by an adult or child.*

Common sense precautions include: Do not shoot within 150 yards of developed recreation areas, buildings, campsites, occupied areas, or livestock (which includes pets). Do not shoot across a road, arroyo, or trail.

Only shoot in areas well away from other people and property. In short, general firearm safety rules should always be followed.

BB and pellet guns can be dangerous to humans, pets, or property. So be smart. If this holiday season finds one under your tree, be careful and don’t shoot your eye out — or anyone else’s, for that matter.

Tramway Trash Pickup Oct 25

Environment & Safety Committee

On Saturday morning, October 25, twenty volunteers arrived at 8:30 AM at the Sandia Heights Homeowners Association office. Unlike earlier trash pickup events, the Sandia Heights residents were joined by members of the Rotary Club of Albuquerque. **Twenty-two** bags of roadside trash later, many of the team regrouped at O’Beans Coffee Shop to warm up with a steaming beverage—a small reward for a big job well done. A hearty thanks to all!



And a special shout-out to Kathleen McCaughey, Chair of the Environmental and Safety Committee, and her team for organizing this event once again.



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Meditations on Sharing our Scenic Roads— Avoiding a Tragedy

Editor, *The GRIT* with input from Sandia Heights
Homeowners Association Board members

Dear Readers, can't you just slow down when driving on the roads in our foothill neighborhood, walk on the left side of the road, and pay attention? As the editor, responsible for the content of this newsletter, I get a request to remind residents of the "rules of the road" or to slow down and watch out for children pretty much every other issue. So here we go again. DRIVERS, PLEASE SLOW DOWN; AND PEDESTRIANS, PLEASE WALK ON THE LEFT AND LOOK OUT FOR CARS.

It is extremely interesting to me that the earliest issue of the GRIT that we have in the online archive from May 6, 1979 has as its concluding sentence: "With the warm weather here again please DRIVE SLOW (sic) and watch out for the children playing in the streets—avoid a tragedy."

Perhaps spurred by the typically beautiful fall weather here, I received in October several emails from my fellow Board members regarding speeding incidents and pedestrian negligence: a lethal combination. As vehicular technology has advanced since 1979, so have the opportunities for speeding and not paying attention. To wit: speeding on electric bikes; speeding on motorized skate boards; drivers taking curves with a cell phone in front of their face and running a pedestrian *walking on the correct side of the road* off the road (did the driver even see the pedestrian?); folks standing in the middle of the road engrossed in their cellphones; and, my favorite, an eight- or nine-year-old girl running a stop sign at Cedar Hill and Antelope driving *solo in a golf cart!*

Now for you cyclists (of which I have received no reported incidents), I have been informed by a fellow Board member who loves her electric scooter, that under New Mexico Senate Bill 73, a law took effect July 1, 2025 that allows bicyclists to treat stop signs as yield signs (and red lights as stop signs, thank goodness). It is called the "Idaho Stop," and the theory is that if riders spend less time stopped in intersections, it is safer for them as a whole. Maybe so. But kids zooming around alone in golf carts running stop signs??

However, automobiles, of course, are the worst offenders. Another Board member recounted that in a nearby gated community, a speed picture/camera ra-dar unit has been installed, and hundred-dollar speeding tickets are being sent to violators. Not sure that such rules can take precedence over county or city ordinances, but I guess the homeowners got really frustrated.

Echoing that frustration another board member, Larry Layne, wrote for publication in this article: "Along with running red lights, blowing through stop signs, and not paying attention while driving, speeding has become many-a-driver's favorite pastime. People willingly exceed the speed limit for a variety of reasons: late for work, late for an appointment, late for a meeting, late for a date, late for church—generally just plain late—being defiant, being angry, being inebriate, unable to resist gravity, unable to remember where the brake pedal is located... None of these reasons can justify any excessive or chronic speeding. It's all too easy for a driver with any amount of experience to shove aside all thoughts of the damage a 2,500-to-6,000 pound chunk of metal, glass and other materials can do even at 20 mph—much less 40. In Sandia Heights speeding is made even more menacing due to the curvy, hilly, roads that come complete with many blind corners. Couple those with virtually no road shoulders nor sidewalks and, like a cougar... the untamed vehicle comes careening around a corner ready and able to take down its pedestrian prey."

In conclusion Larry pointed out the bottom line. "The decision to speed excessively, not pay attention, or blow through stop signs is a choice under the control of a driver 100% of the time. What is not a choice is that the driver will bear full responsibility and consequences for their actions."

Yet another Board member gave me this advice from her daily walks with her dog, "I make eye contact with them (the drivers) and make the motion with my hand to slow down. Most people comply and give a sheepish wave. I know it isn't our job to police the roadways, but I think people are distracted and we just need to remind them we are all humans just trying to take a walk in our neighborhood. I also encounter many people who are following the rules and are very friendly and say hi." Let's hope this can avoid a tragedy.

Winter Beauty Along our Roads

Claudia Mitchell, Editor, *The GRIT*

The amount of natural beauty we are privileged to enjoy in Sandia Heights is abundant year-round. Spring heralds the start of cactus-blooming time. Summer ushers in the monsoon season with the most green we get to see. Autumn is the best with the gold beginning with the aspens on the crest above us and culminating in the brilliant cottonwoods along the Rio Grande. What about winter? Well, look to the humble grasses for subtle color and texture gracing our arroyos and roadsides and occasionally, delicately decked with snow.



There are three hundred and one native species of grasses in New Mexico distributed among eight genera. *Bouteloua* is one of those genera and it contains the most beautiful and iconic species, *Bouteloua gracilis*, commonly known as blue grama. This lovely grass grows one to nearly four feet high and the seed stalks have two gracefully curling comb-like spikes. The spikes start out straight and greenish purplish, ripening and curling and turning tan as the season progresses.

Finally, by late autumn and into the winter it has completed its curl into a full circle. It's Latin name, *gracilis*, is apt denoting "slender" or "thin" and describing something that is narrow, graceful or delicate.

The perennial blue grama is hardly delicate. It is the state grass of New Mexico and is found in all thirty-three counties from 4,000 to 10,000 feet in plains, mesas, grasslands, woodlands, and forest openings; and in sandy and loamy soils, shallow sites, rocky slopes, bottom lands and mountain grasslands. Blue grama grasslands are the largest of the grassland communities and are resilient to drought and grazing. It is undoubtedly the most valuable forage grass in the state, providing excellent natural feed for livestock, especially in eastern New Mexico where the sloping mountain grasslands merge into the Great Plains. The only threat to the well-being of blue grama other than persistent drought is farming. Even sixty years of rest after plowing does not bring back the blue grama that once thrived there.

The grass' usefulness was known to the native people. Some Native Americans used the seeds to make flour for bread and mush. The Blackfoot Indians predicted the weather based on the number of primary branches produced during the growing season: one meant a mild winter, two a colder one, and three a long severe winter. As for myself, I love to watch the spikes appear in Spring and Summer, turn brown in Autumn, and start to curl as winter approaches, finally coming full circle when the mornings are really getting crisp. It marks the turning of the seasons for me.

It is so symbolic of our foothill ecozone that High Desert erected a polished aluminum sculpture at an entrance that mimics that elegant circle. It has also become a mainstay for xeriscaping.

This winter, as you walk along our curving roads, take a harder look along the roadside and marvel at the elegant curls of the humble blue grama.

Information for this article was primarily provided by *Field Guide to the Grass of New Mexico*, 3rd edition, 2005, by Kelly Allred published by the Agricultural Experimental Station of New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.



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***The GRIT* needs an editor, could that be you?**
See article, page 2



***A Gift From our Dark Skies:** On the night of November 11, 2025, a rare show of aurora borealis was visible for a while in Sandia Heights along with most of New Mexico. These shots were taken by residents Susan McCasland (L) and Gerard Del Monte (R)*