



July 2025

Vol. 41 – No. 7

*Unit numbers shown in parentheses*

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#### **SHHA Office**

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Albuquerque, NM 87122

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

**Closed on federal holidays.**

**Phone:** 505-797-7793

**Website:** [www.sandiahomeowners.org](http://www.sandiahomeowners.org)

**Email:** [shha@sandiahomeowners.org](mailto:shha@sandiahomeowners.org)

## **Message from the President, July 2025**

**Jim Stewart**

Howdy Neighbors,

As you delve into the pages of this special historical issue, I believe you'll find reflections that resonate deeply, much like the heartfelt sentiments shared by Lawrence Fultz, on the following page. His writing offers a poignant reminder of the enduring spirit that connects us to our past.

It is remarkable to consider that 200 years after the pivotal Battle of Concord, our very own Sandia Heights Homeowners Association (SHHA) was incorporated. Now, another 50 years have gracefully passed, marking a significant milestone in our community's journey. The Communications & Publications (C&P) Committee envisioned this special historical issue as a way to offer everyone a profound sense of place here in the Heights. Through these pages, we hope to illuminate the rich tapestry of history that has shaped our beloved community, and a deeper connection to the ground we walk upon. It is my sincere wish, and that of the GRIT editor, who also chairs the C&P Committee, that you thoroughly enjoy this commemoration of the holiday and the vibrant history of the SHHA.

Remember our website at <https://www.sandiahomeowners.org/> is full of information, and our office staff (Trish and Anna) are available at [office@sandiahomeowners.org](mailto:office@sandiahomeowners.org). You can easily contact the appropriate committee chair directly, with your questions, comments, and suggestions, under the "contact" tab on our website homepage. Of course, you can also reach me at [president@sandiahomeowners.org](mailto:president@sandiahomeowners.org); I promise you will receive a response.



## Meditation at the Bridge at Concord

Lawrence Fultz

Republished from the GRIT, July 2013, with permission from Mr. Fultz  
Mr. Fultz and his wife, Virginia, are 40-year residents of Sandia Heights

### *The Bridge*

*By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,  
Here once the embattled farmers stood,  
And fired the shot heard round the world.*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

I have stood on this bridge on a clear, cool day and turned slowly in a circle trying to grasp the emotions that came with so much feeling as tears gently rolled down my face. I think of the fear that those good men and boys must have felt as they prepared to face the most feared professional army in the world. All were farmers, craftsmen, shopkeepers, family men all. They did not know that their brief stand would never die, and its philosophical importance would ignite a nation. Less than one month earlier, Patrick Henry of Virginia had delivered his moving speech to the Second Virginia Convention when speaking of the buildup of the British Navy and Army units in the American Colonies. Henry had almost predicted the battle at Lexington and Concord. Perhaps the Minutemen had Henry's speech on their minds as they formed up on that April day in 1775. The last paragraph of Patrick Henry's speech, March 1775:

*It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, 'Peace, Peace' but there is no peace. The way is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!*

At Concord that day, they would have heard the drums and fifes of the British as they came out of the woods, seen the bright red uniforms as the British crossed the bridge with military precision formed up in front of them about 100 yards away. It must have been terrifying, knowing with certainty that you were going to die. They had been called out so urgently, no time for goodbyes. Now, here they stood and there were not enough of them to make a real difference. They were afraid of being cowardly; they were not. Witnessed by their families, friends, and mates standing in the ranks with them, they held their positions. Small in number, they fired their muskets, received vicious volleys from the British regulars in return, and taking heavy casualties before they broke. They had made a statement, not yet known to them, that rallied a nation yet to be born.

As I stood on the bridge, looking out at the trees that had once been open farmland, my wife joined me and we stood there together, thankful for the bravery exhibited that day. It is true what Emerson said: it was the "shot heard round the world."

## ACC Activity Log

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

24 Sandia Heights Dr	remove wood pergola slats and replace with 2"x2" aluminum slats painted brown to match existing color; repave asphalt driveway
37 Sandia Heights Dr	roof over existing deck
156 Juniper Hill Rd	replace front walkway and gravel with epoxy river rock path; add native and xeric landscaping to a portion of the front yard
163 Juniper Hill Rd	install retractable awning 12 ft wide, 10 ft extension to the house, facing north
206 Spring Creek Dr	replace exterior utility room doors with new equivalent items. Painting existing color
304 Spring Creek Pl	install new septic system
337 Whiteoaks Dr	Repaint window trim tan color
513 Roadrunner Ln	install 8' X 14' storage shed in backyard
565 Live Oak Rd	install 10'x25' deck w/ railing over the garage
634 Cougar Loop	install 5'h x15'w retaining wall; add 3 trees
643 Cougar Loop	install solar panels
646 Cougar Loop	1) install new windows and sliding glass door; 2) re-stucco entire house and perimeter wall
673 Bluebird Lane	1) add mini-split unit to the main bedroom, on the exterior portion of the west elevation of the house. There will be supply lines running up the inside corner of the structure; 2) add exterior ground surface unit to support new mini split; 3) add coyote fence with gate at condenser unit to conceal visual from road; 4) paint the new construction tubing and external conduit same color as house.
711 Tramway Pl	re-stucco town house
793 Tramway Ln, Unit E	replace wood pergola slats with 2x2 aluminum slats (matching color)
937 Bobcat Blvd	expand driveway and install new gate
1006 Tramway Lane	re-roof 670 sq ft recently using tan TPO
1015 Tramway Lane	replace several old windows and frames

1189 Laurel Loop	1) replace rotted posts and broken boards; 2) stain/ paint to match existing fence
1466 Morning Glory Rd	install 6 ft. coyote fence (latillas) around portion of back yard area to the north, adjoining house. Project includes approximately 200 LF of fencing
1806 Tramway Terrace Loop	replace heating and cooling unit with new
1827 Tramway Terrace loop	replace lattice patio cover with beige color
1837 Tramway Terrace Loop	repair damaged stucco on house and boundary wall; match existing color and texture
1847 Tramway Terrace Loop	replace old solar panels
1860 Tramway Terrace Loop	replace stucco surface on house and walls; currently two different colors with many repairs needed
2030 Quail Run Dr	replace 4 curl leaf mountain mahogany trees
2721 Tramway Cir	add fence topper to complete the backyard fence and window
2892 Tramway Pl	re-paint brown trim
7711 Cedar Canyon Pl	remove and replace 1) concrete driveway and concrete patio; 2) paint garage door in SHHA approved light green color
8231 E Raintree Dr	repair parapets (no change to color or appearance)
8232 Raintree Dr	1) touch up minor cracks on outside of house; 2) repaint cream-yellow color
12704 Carmel Ct	install pea gravel xeriscaping in backyard

## ACC Activity Log

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

23 Cedar Hill Rd	remodeling project (fence) from 2024
634 Cougar Loop	build a cinder block wall 7ft wide and 9 ft high
727 Cedar Hill Ct, Unit 16	Install split-rail natural cedar fence between Units 15 and 16
1605 Quailwood Dr	re-roof with white color
1847 Tramway Terrace Loop	replace part of roof with white TPO
11108 Bobcat Pl	re-stucco entire house

## Useful Numbers:

<b>Sandia Heights Homeowners Association</b> <b>(505) 797-7793 (o)</b> Email: <a href="mailto:office@sandiahomeowners.org">office@sandiahomeowners.org</a> Web page: <a href="https://www.sandiahomeowners.org/">https://www.sandiahomeowners.org/</a> Address: 12700 San Rafael Ave. NE, Ste.3	
<b>Sandia Heights Services</b> provide water, sewer, trash and recycling collection	<b>(505) 856-6419</b> After-hours emergency: <b>505-888-5336</b>
<b>Sandia Heights Security</b>	<b>Office: (505) 856-6347</b> <b>Mobile: (505) 263-4654</b>
Membership in <b>SHHA</b> does not include <b>Sandia Heights Security</b> membership. You can call <b>Security</b> to confirm your membership with them.	
<b>Emergency</b> <b>Police/Fire/Rescue:</b> prorated area of Bernalillo County)	<b>9-1-1</b>
<b>Bernalillo County Sheriff</b> Non-Emergency	<b>(505) 798-7000</b>
<b>NM Gas Co. Emergencies</b>	<b>(505) 697-3335</b>
<b>PNM Outage &amp; Emergencies</b>	<b>(888) 342-5766</b>
<b>Bernalillo County Animal Care Services and Lost &amp; Found Animals</b>	<b>(505) 314-0281</b> <b>(505) 468-7387</b> <a href="https://www.bernco.gov/animal-care-services/lost-found-animals/">https://www.bernco.gov/animal-care-services/lost-found-animals/</a>
<b>Bernalillo County (Roads/Snow/Misc)</b>	<b>(505) 848-1503</b>



## Announcements & Notices:

- ❖ **Office hours:** Mon – Thur 9 AM - 4 PM.  
Fri 9 AM – 12 PM
- ❖ **Board Meeting:** the next board meeting will be held at the SHHA office on July 9th, 2025, 6:00pm.
- ❖ **Office Closures for Holiday(s):** July 4<sup>th</sup>
- ❖ **Notary services,** by appointment ONLY.
- ❖ **Contractor Evaluation Binder** - free to members.
- ❖ **Committee meeting dates are posted** on our website calendar: [www.sandiahomeowners.org](http://www.sandiahomeowners.org)
- ❖ **Tram passes** for sale in the SHHA Office for **\$10.00 per ticket** for members on a first-come first-served basis, no reservation, no cash. Checks and Credit Cards are accepted. To view the Tram Pass Procedures for SHHA Members go to the SHHA website.

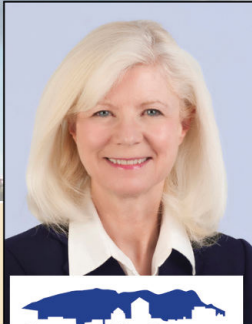
The following statistics are the latest provided by Sandia Heights Security since the last GRIT

### May CALLS SANDIA HEIGHTS SECURITY PATROL

May 2025	# of calls
Alarms	17
Car accident	1
Customer Assist	3
Fire/Smoke	1
Parking Problem	4
Miscellaneous Call	1
Newspaper/Package pickup	13
Open Door/Window/Garage	2
Salesman complaint	3
Special extra Patrol	4
Special request/vacation	118
Suspicious person	2
Suspicious vehicle	6
Theft	1
Threat/personal	1
Utility Co. Assist	3
Wildfire report	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>181</b>



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smminabq@aol.com | (505) 822-0080

### Sharon's Sandia Heights Market Update Past Year 7/2024 to 7/2025

8 Larger homes For Sale on Larger Lots | Avg Asking price \$1,510,250 Avg Asking price/sf \$325.12  
8 Homes Pending | Avg Asking Price 1,055,088 Avg Asking price/sf \$274.50  
50 Homes Closed past year to date | Avg Sold Price \$947,398 Avg Sold price/sf \$264.08

3 Smaller homes on smaller lots | Avg Asking price \$546,667 Avg Asking price/sf \$274.79  
12 homes pending | Avg Asking Price \$472,779 Avg Asking price/sf \$266.41

40 Homes Closed past year to date | Avg Sold Price \$476,370 Avg Sold price/sf \$276.27

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

Current Interest rates hovering around 7.125% for 30 year conventional & 6.125 %VA



**SOLD!**

1114 San Rafael Ave NE



**SOLD!**

2027 Quail Run Dr NE



**SOLD!**

908 Tramway Lane NE



**SOLD!**

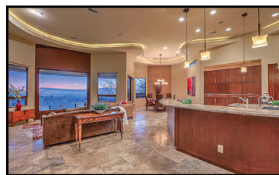
1723 Quail Run Ct. NE

## ANOTHER GREAT SANDIA HEIGHTS HOME SOLD!

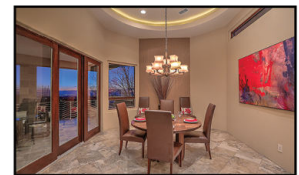
18 SANDIA HEIGHTS DR NE | PRICE \$1,295,000 | 4139 SF | 4/5BR | 4BATHS 3+ CAR GARAGE



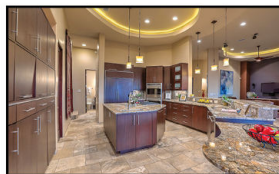
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## Community Events Bulletin Board

*These groups are not sponsored by SHHA. Information is provided to keep residents informed.*

**Come play with us at the Duke City Bridge Club!** Bridge uses playing cards to solve puzzles while providing a lively social community. Hundreds of thousands of people the world over have found a lifelong passion playing bridge. For lessons and games for players of all levels, call 505-271-2877, email [dcbcbridge@gmail.com](mailto:dcbcbridge@gmail.com), or visit <https://dukecitybridge.com/>

**Sandia Heights “Cork & Fork” Dining Activity:** Cork & Fork is having bimonthly dinners. We gather in the homes of our members. Each small dinner group is typically 6–8 people, including the hosts. The host decides the menu theme and prepares a main dish, with attendees contributing to some part of the meal—along with a wine to go with their dish. The emphasis is on food and fun rather than formal elegance. Though most of the dinners are smaller, there are two whole-group dinners during the year. All adult Sandia Heights residents are welcome. To inquire or join any time of year, call Rene Kessel at (505) 504-3886 or email at [rene.kessel@cblegacy.com](mailto:rene.kessel@cblegacy.com).

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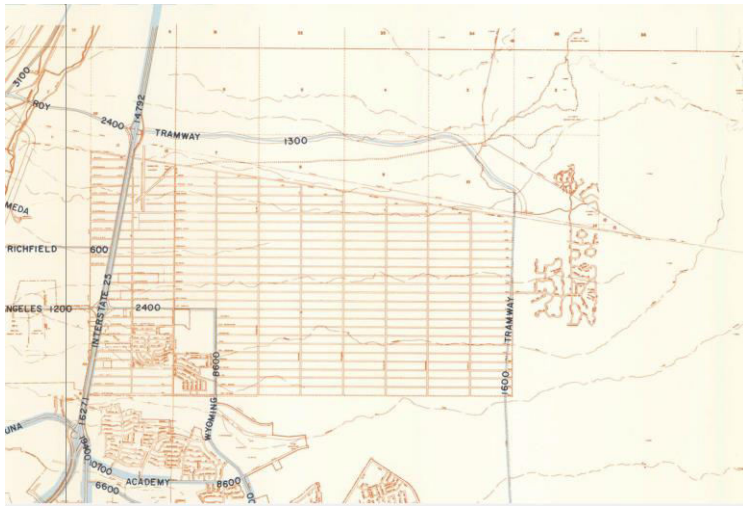
8300 Carmel Ave NE STE 203, Albuquerque, NM 87122

# Happy Golden Anniversary to the Sandia Heights Homeowners Association!

Communications and Publications Committee

## Part One: In the beginning...

On July 25, 1975, in Santa Fe, the Chairman of the State Corporation Commission of the State of New Mexico, Floyd Cross, signed the original Certificate of Incorporation of the Sandia Heights Homeowners Association and the official seal of the Commission was affixed to the document. The registered office of the fledgling SHHA was #10 Tramway Loop, where the Sandia Heights Services office is today. The incorporators were Larry Buchmiller, R. Russell Rager, and Patricia Beatty. The original board of Directors consisted of Ben Abruzzo, Liuda Avizonis, Peter Gregory, Phyllis McGill, Russell Snyder, Peter Stirbis, and Van Tillotson. Their vision stated in Article II, was "...to provide for services, improvement, beautification, and maintenance of Sandia Heights subdivisions..."



Albuquerque-area roads in 1975. Sandia Heights was just getting started as the squiggly roads at the far right, east of Tramway. Taken from the larger 1975 traffic flow map at <https://www.mrcog-nm.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2545/1975-Traffic-Flow-Map-for-Greater-Albuquerque-Area-PDF>

Much has changed and evolved since that day. The laws and land have morphed beyond what the original visionaries could have imagined. The first riders up the Sandia Peak Tram nine years earlier on May 7, 1966, drove up on a gravel road and looked out on the thinly populated Rio Grande Valley with only a couple of homes in the foothills around the base station. Ben Abruzzo envisioned a community in those foothills complete with horse stables and bridle trails, a swimming pool, swim

team, tennis courts, and a ski team. Gosh, maybe up to 500 homes, he joked.



*An early photo of the Sandia Peak Tram base station circa 1967; note the dirt/gravel road.*

Today Ben and the sturdy band of early homebuilders would be astounded at the 2000+ homes in Sandia Heights. They braved dirt roads, little to no services, lots of rattlesnakes, and relative isolation to live in the rugged foothills with the magnificent Sandia Crest towering over them and the vast valley spread out below.

The Communications and Publications Committee decided to commemorate the half century of history with memories and stories for your enjoyment, to mark how far this unique place has come. The coin of progress has two sides: gain and loss. Most residents have welcomed the improvements, but some remember the interdependence and pioneering community spirit of the early residents and mourn its gradual disappearance.

We hope you enjoy this look back at 1975 and the years surrounding that date.

## Part Two: What was going on in the world outside of Sandia Heights in July 1975?

While folks in Sandia Heights were driving down their gravel roads and enjoying relative isolation from the world at large, the world was turning and churning as usual. We researched the month of July 1975 in the *Albuquerque Journal* to find the events of national and local interest. Some of you might remember these highlights from July 1975 national headlines.

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- The nation was still engrossed by Watergate. Gerald Ford had been president for nearly a year, after Nixon's resignation in August of 1974, but Nixon was still answering questions about the notorious "personal" tapes of White House discussions.
- A joint US-Russian Apollo-Soyuz space mission where each nation's vehicle docked with the other, was hailed as a first step in normalizing US-Russia space relations.
- There were articles in the news expressing concern about the cost of living as exemplified by the rising cost of gas—up to 59 cents per gallon! Oh dear!
- President Ford proposed gun control legislation that would mandate waiting periods before purchase. This then-new concept carried over into many states' later gun control laws, including New Mexico's current 7-day waiting period.
- The United States, along with 16 of the 21 voting members of the Organization of American States, voted to lift economic sanctions and trade embargoes that had been active against Cuba for a decade.
- In the Middle East in July 1975, UN forces were occupying the Sinai Peninsula as a buffer zone in the Arab-Israeli war. By September, Egypt and Israel would sign the Sinai II agreement.

Locally, in Albuquerque these topics made the headline of *The Journal* in July 1975:

- A ten-day police strike over \$4/hour wages dominated the July news. The strike spurred citizen protests (generally pro-police) along with sympathy "sick-outs" from Bernalillo County law enforcement officers. Three hundred and thirteen officers resigned and striking police officers faced contempt charges. The dispute was eventually settled after a fact-finding commission was formed, and a new contract eventually drawn up.
- The Mayor in July 1975 was Harry Kinney, whose legacy would later include the establishment of the Elena Gallegos open space preserve and launching the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta as an annual event.

- The concept of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center received its first pledges of support.
- The idea that one might obtain power from the sun had begun intriguing US citizens generally, and those in the Land of Enchantment specifically. Consequently, the ABQ journal committed to piloting a new "Solar Energy Report." Soon after, the City announced federal funding for construction of a test solar energy facility near Sandia Labs.
- In late July 1975, an aging 26-year-old lion was euthanized at the Rio Grande Zoo, after a long and, ahem, productive life siring over 25 cubs.


Although there was no specific mention of Sandia Heights in the *Journal* the classified ads offered opportunities to buy land or homes at prices unfathomable today. How about a custom four-bedroom house on an acre for \$69,900? Smaller houses for \$25,000 to \$30,000 with the lot, or large lots (over an acre) of various sizes from \$18,000 to \$45,000. Of course, these real estate listings raved about the "views from every window."



*The bottom of Sandia Heights Drive NE where it branches off Tramway Road NE, circa 1968. The sign announces the entry to "Sandia Heights, members and guests only" Photo courtesy of Allison Johnson.*

... continued on page 11








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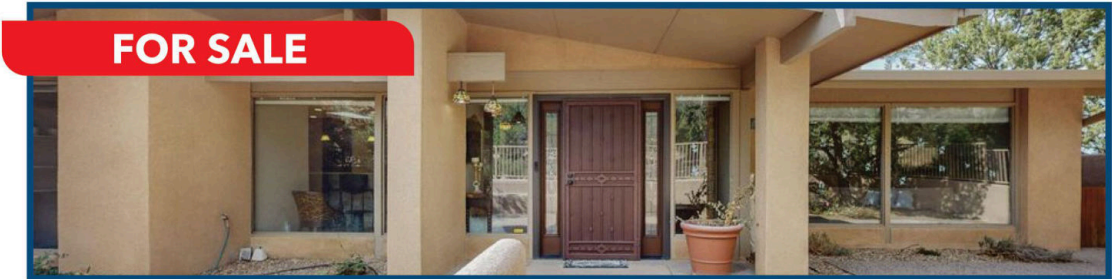




## 2025 IS OFF TO A LOVELY START!



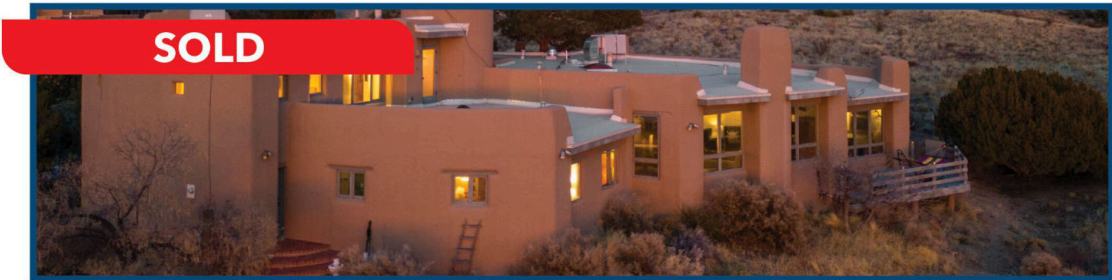
FOR SALE

2811 Tramway Circle NE \$550,000  
1,876 SQ FT 3BR 2BA .13 Acres



FOR SALE


338 White Oaks Drive NE \$975,000  
4,598 SQ FT 4BR 4BA 1.09 Acres



SOLD

67 Pinon Hills Place NE  
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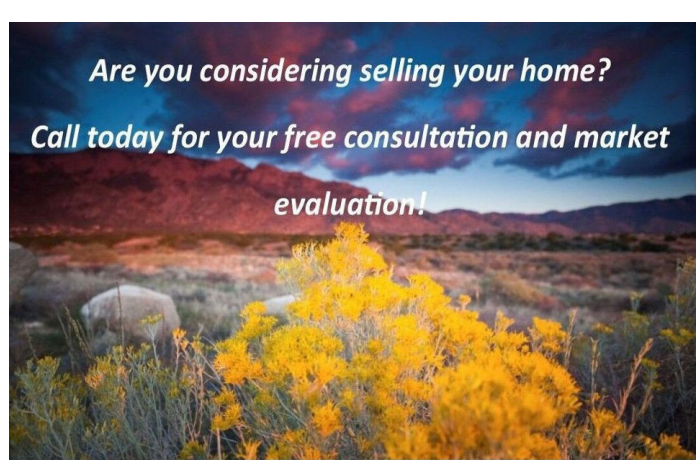
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... continued from page 8

Ann List, resident since 1972, recalls purchasing two three-quarter acre lots adjacent to their house during that time for about \$8000 per lot. They subsequently sold one of the lots, but now Ann gets about two offers per year to sell the second. Her standard response is, “My starting price is one million dollars if you want to negotiate.” Needless to say, she never hears back from the ‘wannabe’ buyers.

### **Part Three: Memories, Anecdotes and scenes from Sandia Heights around 1975**

We would like to thank the folks who shared their stories for this article. If any of you would like to contribute for future issues, you may email them directly to *The GRIT*’s editor, Claudia Mitchell, at [helmalee@msn.com](mailto:helmalee@msn.com).

**Judge Jonathan Sutin, ret.** graduated from the New Mexico School of Law. He sat for 18 years on the New Mexico Court of Appeals. Except for a two-year period in 1963-1965 when he worked with the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, Judge Sutin has lived in Albuquerque since he moved here with his family in 1946. He and his wife moved to Sandia Heights in 1972, building a home designed by his close friend, Antoine Predock, a nationally recognized architect then based in Albuquerque. The Sutins were seeking relief for his wife’s allergies. They soon learned that they were mainly caused by the juniper pollen and so were even worse, but they stayed and made many good friends. Judge Sutin recalled that the backyard of their Big Horn Ridge home “seemed to be a favored landing site for hang glider flights off the Crest.” The Judge deeply appreciates the natural environment that we share. “When we first moved to Sandia Heights, big horn sheep roamed the foothills.” He particularly enjoyed watching the female bears and their cubs climbing the trees behind his house but says that “visits from the black bears only started a few years ago” (Editor’s note: Probably from a growing population and trash cans being left out overnight). “The spring, summer and fall flowers in the...foothills have been there for many years and continue to be marvelous.” He summarized the feelings of many long timers by stating “For my family, Sandia Heights was and remains a paradise. Of course, in the 70’s and 80’s it was almost a hidden treasure—the great and beautiful mountains on one side,

and seeing forever to the west, northwest, and southwest. Of course, the sunsets, the climate, the people up here. But then came --- population!”

**Ann List**, a resident since 1972, is currently on the Communications and Publications Committee. She has reminded the committee many times of how close-knit the community was, and, like all the early residents, she knew Ben Abruzzo. She recalls helping each other in the snow, SHHA annual meetings seated next to the single fire truck at the original fire station at the base of the Tram, and house-to-house caroling on Christmas Eve. Ann wanted to emphasize the appeal of the underground telephone lines as part of the attraction of moving to Sandia Heights. She had lived in Boston, upstate New York and Hawaii, all places with above-ground telephone poles and lines that posed a fire hazard whenever downed by weather or lightning strikes. “And they certainly distracted from views in every direction in those various locales.”



*Ann List’s house, from the early days of Sandia Heights when houses were few and land was cheap.*

**Bill and Laurie Johnson** got a job transfer to Albuquerque in 1978. They left ten wooded acres in Colorado Springs. After a week of disappointing house-hunting in Albuquerque they were leaving to go back to Colorado and happened to pass by Sandia Heights. Laurie remembered saying, “I could live in a place like that, with nature and open spaces.” They stopped and talked to a construction worker building a new house. He said that professionals of all kinds were building homes “out here.” It took a little more time, but Bill and Laurie found a newly built house perfect for their family of four. They were able to add on an addition for Bill’s workshop. “What an investment!” they say now.

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**Christine Swayden's** first impression of Sandia Heights was in the fall of 1975. They had only been in Albuquerque for a year when she was invited up to play tennis. It was one of those gorgeous fall mornings, and she thought, "I would like to live up here." Christine's husband knew Ben Abruzzo who helped them find a lot on Bluebird Lane. They built a home and moved in in 1976. The kids were only 4 & 6. Unfortunately, they lost their view due to solar panels across the street, but they rebuilt where no one could block their view, and they have been there ever since. Their kids grew up "playing on the rocks and dodging cactus. "Over the years we have formed lifelong friendships. I love the majesty of the mountains, the serenity of the neighborhood and the wildlife I see daily. These are treasured memories of living in Sandia Heights."

**Terry Walker** is a member of the SHHA Board of Directors, and Communications and Publications committee. He wants everyone to know, "I had hair when we moved here." Terry and his wife, Donna, felt they were "insane for spending \$16,000 for a lot in 1977." The amount was nearly what they had paid for the house they lived in at the time. Plus, the home mortgage rates were "astronomical." Terry could not remember what their rate was, but research revealed that they were 13.74% in 1980. They were not really sure the area would develop—Tramway and Paseo del Norte were gravel and dirt roads. Of course, there were no natural gas lines, so they had an all-electric house and their "jaws dropped" at their first PNM bill. They decided on "an immediate conversion to the high-tech solution—a wood-burning stove which remained our main source of heat until natural gas lines came in—cannot remember when that was." More remembrances: "Residents burned the tumbleweeds on their lots. Coyotes howled almost every night. Our daughter was in the first graduating class of La Cueva high school, which was easily visible from Paseo de Norte, in fact it was basically the only structure visible from PDN." Terry remembers Friday night tennis/potlucks/cocktails at the Sandia Heights tennis courts. Bill and Laurie Johnson, noted above, were among the regulars. Terry and his wife made the local news when their car was totaled upon hitting a buffalo near what is now the intersection of Tramway and Academy. No, not the ones we see today on the Sandia Pueblo. These buffalo were

bred by a guy in the North Valley and regularly went on walkabout, trampling everything in between.

The last two contributions are about what it was like growing up in Sandia Heights. **Allison Johnson Kane's** first memory of Sandia Heights was her fifth birthday. The family built a house and moved here in 1968. They were the fourth home to be built on Sandia Heights Drive. There was a model home/sales office south of Tramway Road on Juniper Hill Rd., which later became the Jackson's house. When they bought their land, they also bought into the tram company. Allison's dad was the first non-tram employee. Ben Abruzzo, Mr. Curl and Mr. Jackson all worked for the tram. "The kids grew up working for the tram in one way or another: at the restaurants (the Firehouse at the bottom and High Finance at the top), at the tram itself or at the ski slope." When Allison started school, it was a 45-minute ride each way. All the kids from the original houses played together. At night they would play flashlight tag since they could not run around in the dark with all those cacti!



*Allison Johnson's family (Allison is the littlest one in the yellow dress) stands in front of their house, just getting started, about 1967. Note the ruins in the photo background next to Allison's mom's lower right arm. The Johnson house, on Sandia Heights Drive NE, was the fourth house to be built in Sandia Heights.*

Later, in the 70's, they would have "Tram Jams" at her house, playing really loud music until officials stopped it because of complaints in the city. She remembers the volunteer firemen hanging out at the actual firehouse at the base of the tram. For Allison's high school graduation, she was harnessed to the top of the tram car

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## Sandia Heights YTD MARKET TRENDS

Year to date through October 24, 2024 \*detached homes\*

Closed Sales

79

Average Sale Price

\$705,816

Current Inventory

12

Avg Price per sq.ft.

\$261.99

Avg Days on Market

29

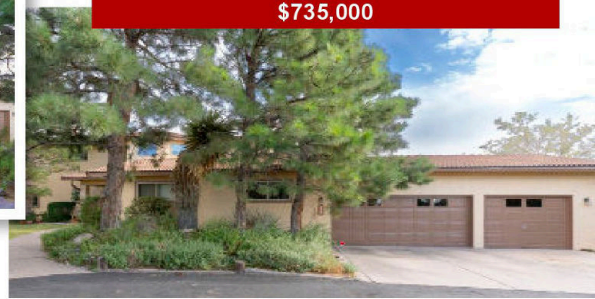
## Just Listed in Sandia Heights



3br | 2ba | 2729sq.ft. | .92 Acres

559 Black Bear PL NE

\$735,000



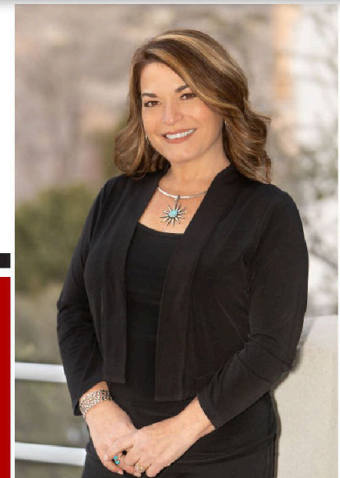
Free Tram Passes available call to reserve

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*When Allison Johnson moved into her family's new house in 1968 and started school, she had to get up pretty early to catch her bus since she had a 45-minute ride each way. Circa 1967.*

and rode all the way to the top! They loved their little community and were not happy to see the ice-skating rink and the County Line restaurant come in, and had a “tough time adjusting when they showed up.” Allison’s dad was the last of the “originals” to pass away in 2018.

The final colorful reminiscence is from the point of view of a boy who, at the age of 10 moved into and grew up in a natural paradise where the kids “learned early on that everything in the foothills poked, pinched, scratched, squirted, bit, made you stink or stuck to your clothes.” **Guy Jackson’s** first memories of Sandia Heights were in 1965 when his dad, Willie Jackson Sr, took Guy (7), and his brother (10) up to see the massive construction project at the bottom and top of the mountain. Willie Jackson Sr. was the Sandia Peak Ski Area Assistant Manager and assisted with the tram construction. The family moved to Sandia Heights in 1968 to be close to his work. (Willie Jackson Sr. ultimately became the Sandia Peak Tram’s first general manager along with several other responsibilities like District Five Fire Chief and the water works manager before Sandia Peak Utility was started. (More about Willie and his namesake, W.L. Jackson Park, in a future GRIT article.)

They were the fourth family to move up here behind the Curls, the Abruzzos, and the Bowers. Of course, the kids all played together. The guys were doing “cool stuff like skiing, gymnastics, riding minibikes. They had wrist rockets, BB guns, and M80’s. My brother and I had no choice but to join in.

“Before Tramway Boulevard existed, there was a bumpy dirt road that somewhat paralleled it to the west. Riding the school bus was a lot of fun as it crossed all the arroyos.

“It seemed like all the early families in Sandia Heights skied—adults and kids alike. Most of the neighborhood kids work at the Tram, museum, or later at the Firehouse. I don’t think there were any child labor laws yet.

“There were a lot of snakes around due to the open trenches from underground utilities as the subdivision expanded. The Tram even kept a terrarium in the motor room filled with rattlesnakes. It was way cool. As preteens, we camped just about everywhere in the foothills—sometimes for a couple of days. We built forts all over. One rock fort we made has been rebuilt many times and still sits at the mouth of Domingo Baca Canyon. Years ago, someone told me it was mentioned in a Sandia’s trail guide as a presumed pueblo dwelling. Nope!” Guy notes that “there were buffaloes in the foothills between Domingo Baca and Bear Canyon.” Terry’s experiences can attest to that. Guy’s memories corroborate Allison’s “Tram Jams.” Guy says, “they were the absolute best—of course, Dr. and Mrs. Johnson were always out of town.

“We rode through all the arroyos—from the foothills west to I-25 and south to Montgomery. There were no roads nor trails back then. A bit later, Los Angeles (now Paseo Del Norte) was just a rough dirt road crossing the arroyos. I think most of us learned to drive on it.”

What about utilities? “Well, everyone joined the volunteer fire department at the Tram. Benny Abruzzo, my brother Will and I were the Sandia Heights original trash crew (okay—boys). My brother was the boss because he was oldest (15) and had a driver’s license. Still no child labor laws, yet! There was one 10,000 gallon water tank up the hill near Tower One of the tram that served

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the first lots in Sandia Heights. My brother or I had to check the water level each morning before heading to the school bus stop. Good thing we had minibikes.”  
“We continue to love and cherish our lifelong friends who grew up in those early Sandia Heights years.”

### In Conclusion

This blast from the past has been presented to you by the volunteers on the Communications and Publications (C&P) Committee. The members include: Ann List, Burt O’Neil, Terry Walker (SHHA board member), Merrilea Mayo (GRIT layout editor), Elizabeth Edgren, Jim Sorenson, and Claudia Mitchell, SHHA board member, C&P Committee Chair and editor of the GRIT. We would also like to thank Kathleen McCaughey, SHHA board VP, for obtaining the memories from Allison Johnson Kane and Guy Jackson.

In conclusion, we would like to thank all those volunteers who started the GRIT newsletter and have kept it going for nearly fifty years. The first issue of the GRIT that we have been able to find is from May 1979. It is a mimeographed (raise your hands, all who remember what a mimeograph was) three-page quarterly document entitled: SANDIA GRIT “News of Sandia Heights.” It was apparently hand-delivered. It asks for cooperation in keeping motorized vehicles off the playfield, invites all to the annual meeting at the firehouse at the base of the tram, asks for folks to observe the annual clean-up day, May 12—especially to “look out for tumbleweeds,” and announces the kick-off of the swim team season with their new coach—Livy Parsons, a sophomore at Princeton, and “the most qualified young man in Albuquerque.”

You can see a pdf of this issue in the GRIT Archives on the homepage of our website under the “GRIT Newsletter” tab where you can find all the back issues of the GRIT. Take a look and enjoy some memories.

#### Covenant Support Violations as of May 30, 2025

Received: 0   Open: 11   Closed: 2  
(1-RV, 1-Leach Field)

## No Fireworks in Sandia Heights

Kathleen McCaughey, Chair  
Environment and Safety Committee



*Arroyo de Dominga Baca, May 2025*

### This is a photo of a fire in Sandia Heights last month!

Fire Danger is Real! A fire broke out in Sandia Heights near Little Cloud Park when two kids were playing with fireworks in the arroyo. Thanks to a vigilant neighbor who immediately called 911, Bernalillo County Fire & Rescue responded quickly and contained the blaze. Fortunately, only about 1/10 of an acre burned — but it could have been much worse. What if we had had strong winds? What if the neighbor hadn’t looked out the window?

**Fireworks are strictly prohibited in Sandia Heights at all times.** Please take a moment to talk with your children, guests, and visitors about this rule. Our unique environment is highly susceptible to wildfire, and a single spark can cause catastrophic damage.

A firework is any device that produces a striking display such as **light, noise, or smoke, or a combination of those**, by the combustion of explosive or flammable composition. So you want to have something for the kids? Party poppers, snaps, sparklers, smoke bombs, ground spinners? Unfortunately, these are **all fireworks**, and are prohibited! Go instead to the [City July 4th celebration](#) at the Balloon Fiesta Park, starting at 3pm, and keep our community safe.



**Sandia Heights Homeowners Association**  
**12700 San Rafael Ave. NE Ste. 3**  
**Albuquerque, NM 87122**



*The Johnson house, circa 1968-69, the fourth house to be built in Sandia Heights, sits all alone on the edge of BLM land off of Sandia Heights Drive.*