



January 2022

Vol. 38 – No. 1

#### **Officers**

President – Roger Hagenruber  
Vice President – Susan McCasland  
Secretary – Martin Kirk  
Treasurer – Randy Tripp

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Dale Arendt  
Joe Boyce  
David Crossley  
Elizabeth Edgren  
Tracey Goodrich  
Robert Hare  
Fenton McCarthy  
Mike Pierce  
Hugh Prather  
Bob Thomas

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David Crossley – Architectural Control Committee (ACC)  
Bob Thomas – Covenant Support Committee (CSC)  
Susan McCasland – Communications & Publications (C&P)  
Elizabeth Edgren – Community Service & Membership (CS&M)  
Randy Tripp – Finance Committee (FC)  
Susan McCasland – Nominating Committee (NC)  
Joe Boyce – Parks & Safety Committee (P&S)

#### **Office Staff**

Betsy Rodriguez – Lead Administrator  
Teresa Gonzales – Administrator

#### **SHHA Office**

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

**Office Hours:** M–F, 9 AM – 4 PM

**Closed on federal holidays**

**Phone:** 505-797-7793

**Fax:** 505-856-8544

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

**Emails:** [sandiaheights@comcast.net](mailto:sandiaheights@comcast.net)  
[shha@sandiahomeowners.org](mailto:shha@sandiahomeowners.org)

## **2022 SHHA Annual Meeting Announcement & Agenda**

The Annual Meeting of the Sandia Heights Homeowners Association membership will be on **Saturday, February 19, 9:00–10:30 AM**. It will be held virtually via the Zoom application. **If you would like to attend, please notify the office before close of business on February 11.** You will then receive the Zoom link prior to the meeting; the link is necessary in order to attend.

### **Business Meeting**

- I. Call to order and establishment of a quorum
- II. Approval of the Agenda
- III. Approval of the Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting
- IV. Introduction of invited guests
- V. Introduction of the 2021 Board of Directors and SHHA Standing Committee Chairs
- VI. Election by membership of two new Directors to the Board
- VII. Announcement of 2022 Officers and Board of Directors
- VIII. Reports for 2021 to the membership by the Officers and Standing Committee Chairpersons' written reports (Questions from the members must be submitted in written form and will be answered, when possible, in the Question and Answer Session)
- IX. Business meeting adjourned

### **Break**

### **Question and Answer Session**

- I. Answers to written questions by appropriate Officer/Committee Chair
- II. Wrap-up
- III. Question and Answer Session ends

## **Board Member Candidate**

### **Susan McCasland, Nominating Committee Chair**

**Rick Thomson** is a candidate for the SHHA Board of Directors. Mr. Thomson is a new Sandia Heights resident. He and his wife moved here from Dallas, where he volunteered with both his HOA and church. Until recently, he was CEO of his own company and dealt with financial, administrative, engineering, scientific, manufacturing and marketing operations. Mr. Thomson believes strongly that individuals should be engaged in their local communities and so is interested in serving on the Board. He will bring his experience and fresh perspectives to the SHHA Board if elected by you, our members.

**Kathleen McCaughey** is also a Board candidate. Her qualifications were published in last month's GRIT.

## 2022 SHHA Annual Meeting Procedures of Conduct

- All attendees must pre-register to receive the sign-in information and link. Attendees will be placed in a virtual Waiting Room for membership verification before being admitted to the meeting.
- Please place your microphone on mute until recognized by presiding Officer during the meeting. This will eliminate background noise.
- Questions to the Officers or on Committee reports will be written via the Zoom “chat” process and sent to the Secretary, and each will be addressed according to the agenda. No oral questions will be accepted.
- Before speaking, a member must be recognized by the Presiding Officer; please unmute your microphone to be recognized and state your name.



### SHHA Street-side Cleanup

By Joe Boyce, Parks & Safety Committee chair

Recently, I saw a lady walking her dog have to jump into waist high weeds on the side of the road to avoid being hit by a truck coming down the street. The truck couldn't see her because of a bush growing out into the street, and I got chills thinking of how close it came to a tragedy—a very preventable tragedy. I'm sure many of us have experienced similar events walking in the neighborhood. We can do better.

As you may know, the Bernalillo County actually owns several feet into each Sandia Heights lot from the street asphalt, and comes out about twice a year to mow and clear this area of the roadside. They recently did San Rafael for example, and it made a major improvement in safety. Although the County has the right to do this, it is actually the homeowner's responsibility to maintain this street-side area year-round, improving fire risk and safety around their home. Thanks to those of you who already keep your yard near the street clear and unobstructed—this is preferred to the county doing it (see photo). However, some residents still haven't gotten the message or are simply unable to do this critical work.

We are asking that homeowners address this need and clear brush and plants for 2–3 feet near the street in order to improve safety around their property. This will also reduce liability from accidents and avoidable injuries—the “cracked

sidewalk” hazard. Another step that helps is for residents to urge our local Bernalillo County administration and representatives to do the mowing and cutting on a regular, twice-a-year minimum basis. Antonio Jaramillo is the director of Operations and Maintenance with responsibility for this area. Website: <https://www.bernco.gov/public-works/about-the-public-works-division/operations-maintenance-department/> His email is [aejaramillo@bernco.gov](mailto:aejaramillo@bernco.gov) and office phone is (505) 848-1548. Let him know, too, if you are happy with work the County has done.

Our committee has had recent discussions about SHHA sponsoring a commercial landscaper to clear major street sides with homeowners' permission, but that proposal has several obvious drawbacks including cost, liability, and communication difficulty. It's on hold for now. We ask that residents provide feedback on this idea in an email to [SHHA@sandiahomeowners.org](mailto:SHHA@sandiahomeowners.org) with any comments or thoughts on this issue. Thank you for your consideration.



County's clearance of obstruction



Weeds yet to be cleared in foreground; after clearing in background



## Dangerous Intersection

On November 16, the following letter was sent on behalf of the SHHA membership to Senator Martin Hickey, New Mexico District 20 legislator; Representative William Rehm, New Mexico District 31 legislator; and Commissioner Walt Benson, Bernalillo County District 4 representative.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Senator Hickey, Representative Rehm, and Commissioner Benson:

This fall, the southbound entry from Paseo Del Norte onto Tramway Blvd. was changed for the worse, as has been noted by the majority of complaints we have received from our 2400 household drivers using the route, and by local media. <https://www.krqe.com/traffic-roads/drivers-question-change-merge-lanes-on-tramway-and-paseo-removed/>. Where there once was a safe lane for cars to merge, white pylons have now been placed to narrow the entry point, resulting in cars entering from Paseo Del Norte having a “Blind Spot” for vehicles and bicyclists coming south on Tramway Blvd. at 60+ mph.

During a recent trash pickup along Tramway Blvd., we witnessed several near accidents at this location in an hour, with no significant benefit for any traffic or bicyclists. We have discussed this with the district 3 engineer responsible, Nancy Perea, to no avail. We encourage you to visit the scene and see for yourself how bad this intersection has become as a result of blind adherence to inappropriate, albeit well intentioned traffic design.

Our board is unanimous in concern at the dangerous situation that has been created as a result of this change, and we request your assistance in rectifying the situation, including creation of a longer merge lane and removal of the pylons to improve safety for bicyclists and vehicles using both Tramway Blvd. and Paseo Del Norte. Please contact Joe Boyce at (816) 261-6304 or [mkjboyce@yahoo.com](mailto:mkjboyce@yahoo.com) for any questions or information concerning this situation.

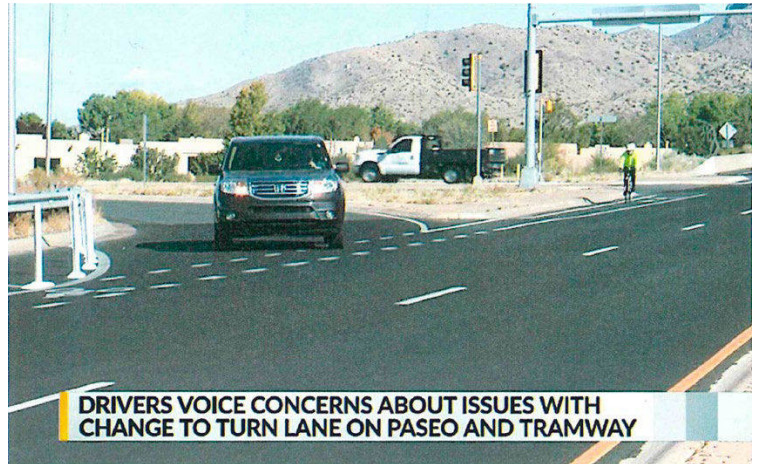
Thank you for your consideration  
Sincerely,



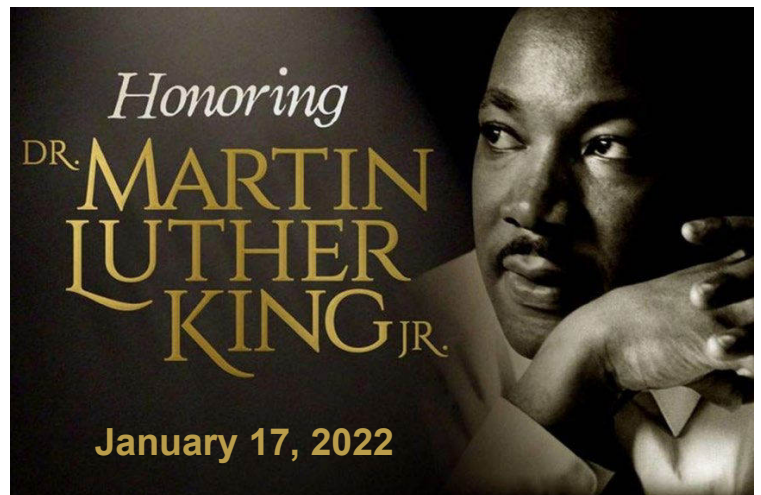
Joe Boyce, Parks & Safety Chairman  
Sandia Heights Homeowners Association



Roger Hagengruber, President  
Sandia Heights Homeowners Association



\*\*\*\*\*



“The time is always right to do what is right.”

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

“I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.”

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”

“Forgiveness is not an occasional act.”

“Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

“We may have all come on different ships, but we’re in the same boat now.”

“I have a dream.”

## NOVEMBER CALLS TO SANDIA HEIGHTS SECURITY PATROL

The following statistics are the latest provided by Sandia Heights Security since the last GRIT. **Please be reminded that Sandia Heights Services (they provide water, sewer, trash and recycle collection, and security services) is a subscription service separate from Sandia Heights Homeowners Association membership.** Also, Membership in SHHA does not include Sandia Heights Security membership. You can call Security to confirm your membership with them. If you have questions, please call **Sandia Heights Security** at 856-6347, **mobile** 263-4654.

November 2021	# of calls		# of calls
Alarms	6	Special Extra Patrol	4
Animal Control Assist	1	Special Request/Vacation	88
Customer Assist	1	Speeding Vehicle	0
Lost/Found Pet	0	Suspicious Activity	4
Motorist Assist	2	Suspicious Person	8
Neighbor Dispute	0	Suspicious Vehicle	1
Newspaper/Package Pickup	6	Vandalism	1
Noise Complaint/Suspicious Noise	2	Vehicle Burglary/Break In	1
Salesman Complaint	1	<b>Total Calls</b>	<b>126</b>

**Useful Numbers: Emergency Police/Fire/Rescue:** 9-1-1 (Be sure to let the operator know you are in Sandia Heights – an unincorporated area of Bernalillo County) **Bernalillo County Sheriff Non-Emergency:** 798-7000 **Bernalillo County Fire Department Non-Emergency:** 468-1310 **SHS Water/Sewer Emergencies (M-F 7AM – 4PM):** 856-6345 **SHS Water/Sewer Emergencies After Hours:** 888-5336 **NM Gas Co. Emergencies:** 697-3335 **PNM Outage & Emergencies:** 1-888-342-5766

### Announcements & Notices:

- **Office hours:** Monday – Friday 9 AM – 4 PM.
- **Board Meeting:** scheduled for Wednesday, January 12, 2022, at 6:30 PM via Zoom Meeting.
- **Office Closures for Holiday(s):** Monday, January 17, 2022, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- **Notary services (except on Fridays), copies (20 per month) and faxes, e-mail alerts, and contractor evaluation binder are free to members. Also, voter registration in office.**
- **Committee meeting dates** are posted on our website calendar: [www.sandiahomeowners.org](http://www.sandiahomeowners.org).
- **Classified ads** can be found on the website on the top bar menu under Notices and Information/Classifieds.
- **Safety vests for sale** in the SHHA Office. \$2.50 per vest for members, cash or check only.
- **Tram passes for sale** in the SHHA Office. \$7.50 per ticket for members on a **first-come, first-served basis**. Cash or check only. Tickets purchased must be for one date at a time per residence. To view the Tram Pass Procedures for SHHA Members go to <http://sandiahomeowners.org/notices-and-information/notices-and-information/96-tram-passes>.

**ACC Color Reference Guide** is available to borrow in the SHHA Office for up to 30 days. \$20 refundable deposit is required. Cash or check only.

### SHHA Member Benefits:

Check out the entire SHHA Member Benefits Program and the discounts offered to SHHA members at [www.sandiahomeowners.org](http://www.sandiahomeowners.org), under the **Notices and Information** tab. Each participating merchant offers a discount to SHHA members. The following is a list of currently participating merchants:

Jade Enterprises Inc.
Tutor Doctor





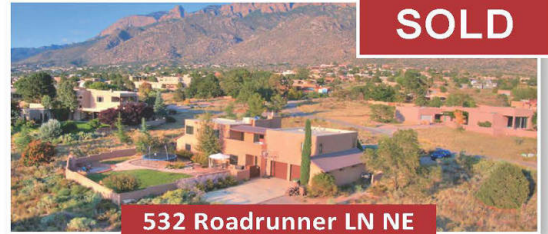
**“Sandia Heights”**

**Just Listed**



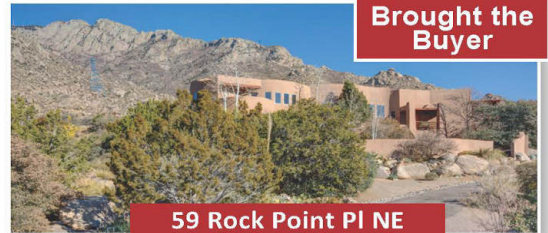
**43 Cedar Hill Pl NE \$1,395,000**

**SOLD**



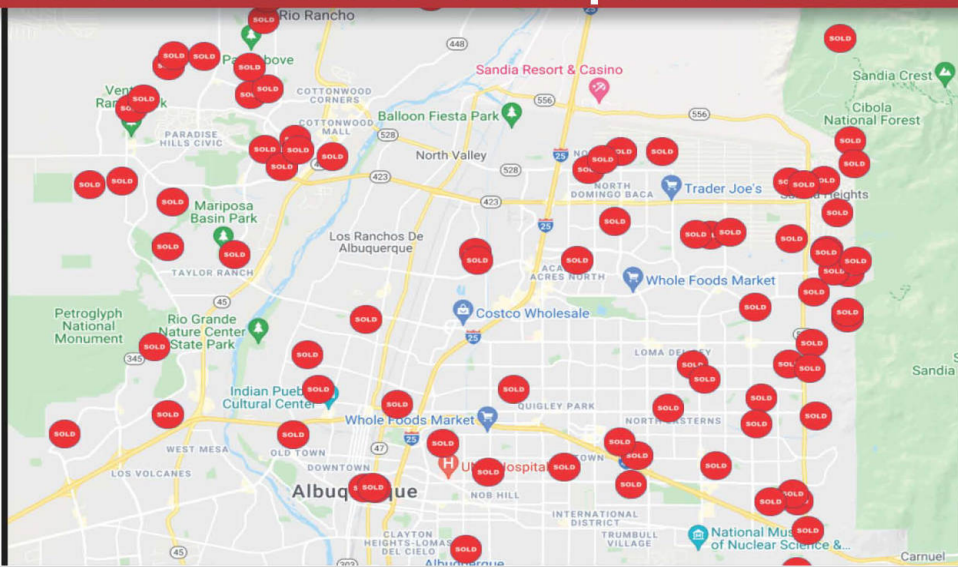
**532 Roadrunner LN NE \$830,000**

**Brought the Buyer**



**59 Rock Point Pl NE \$1,160,000**

**We SOLD over 120 Properties in 2021!**



**Sandia Heights home values increased by 19%**

*From December 2020 to December 2021*

**Sandia Heights Resident and Neighborhood Specialist**

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[smminabq@aol.com](mailto:smminabq@aol.com) | (505) 822-0080

### Sandia Heights MARKET UPDATE PAST YEAR 12/2020 to 12/2021

**1 Larger homes For Sale on Larger Lots | Avg Asking price \$742,500 | Avg Asking price/sf \$277.05**  
**6 Pending | Avg Asking Price \$799,150 | Avg Asking price/sf \$229.84**  
**57 Homes Closed past year to date | Avg Sold Price \$794,612 | Avg Sold price/sf. \$218.88**

**1 Smaller homes on smaller lots | Avg Asking price \$399,000 | Avg Asking price/sf \$211.33**  
**2 homes pending | Avg Asking Price \$ 314,500 | Avg Asking price/sf \$208.47**  
**49 Homes Closed past year to date | Avg Sold Price \$379,999 | Avg Sold price/sf \$213.03**

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

Current Interest rates hovering around 3.25% for 30 year conventional & 3% 30 year VA!



1405 San Rafael PINE



1195 Bobcat Blvd NE



8210 Indigo Court NE



54 Rock Ridge Court NE

## ANOTHER GREAT SANDIA HEIGHTS HOME! SOLD!

**24 SANDIA HEIGHTS DRIVE NE | ASKING PRICE \$725,000 | 3119 SF | 3 BR | 3 BATHS**



Unique Home!



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## Monthly Fun Fact

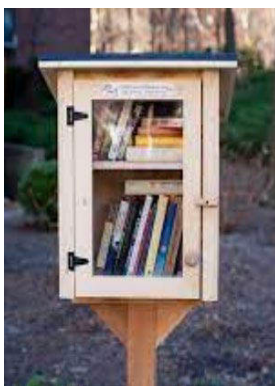
Here's a really weird one! One of those ridiculous laws that is still on the books. In New Mexico, it is illegal to dance while wearing a sombrero. Guess these guys are in big trouble!



## 2022 Residents' Guide & Directory

If you're a SHHA member, you should be receiving your copy of the 2022 Residents' Guide and Directory very soon. Congratulations to Harold Cole who submitted the winning photo of a stranger peering in his window. This will appear on the front of the 2022 Directory.

### Little Neighborhood Libraries Community Service & Membership Committee



Calling all Little Neighborhood Libraries. The SHHA Community Service & Membership Committee would like to compile a listing of Little Libraries in Sandia Heights. If you have a Little Library or know of one in your neighborhood, please e-mail the address to [TheGritSHHA@gmail.com](mailto:TheGritSHHA@gmail.com) or [sandiaheights@comcast.net](mailto:sandiaheights@comcast.net). We will keep the list in the office available for all residents, and may publish the list occasionally in *The GRIT*. Thank you.



## ACC Activity Log

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

54 Rock Ridge Court - Landscaping
212 Spring Creek Place – Repair Stucco
246 Spring Creek Place - Install Roof Mounted Photovoltaic Panels
539 Black Bear Road – Spa with Flagstone pad/Walkway
754 Tramway Lane – New Stucco Wall
868 Tramway Lane Court – Replace Gutters
1027 Tramway Lane - Reroof
1051 Red Oaks Loop – Addition
1128 Marigold Drive - Landscaping
1148 Marigold Drive – Install Concrete Pad and Walkway
1148 Marigold Drive – Rebuild Fence
1702 Quail Run Court – Reroof Tar & Gravel
1841 Tramway Terrace Loop – Replace Fence
1845 Tramway Terrace Loop – Repaint Home
1872 San Bernardino Drive - Restucco
1874 San Bernardino Drive - Landscaping
1949 Quail Run Loop – PV Panel Installation
2313 Calle de Rafael – Raise Height of Wall
2437 Tramway Terrace Court – Replace Swamp Cooler w/ HVAC
2437 Tramway Terrace Court – Replace Fence and Radon Mitigation System Installation
2724 Tramway Circle – Replace Canales with Downspouts and Gutters
7739 Cedar Canyon Road – Replace Cement Driveway
8250 Raintree Drive – Repaint Garage Door & Garage Door Trim

Visit the website: [www.sandiahomeowners.org](http://www.sandiahomeowners.org) to read about all projects currently under ACC management.



## Letter to the Editor

I'm writing to recommend that a posting be placed monthly in *The GRIT*, advising people that jog or walk in the neighborhood foothills, on the safest and proper method to do so.

Bikers, motorcycles, autos drive according to recognized laws, on the right side of the road. Walkers, joggers walk/jog AGAINST oncoming traffic, not with it.

The individuals walking/jogging on the same side and direction of traffic pose a great danger to the traffic that must go around them, basically causing this traffic to often drive blindly into oncoming traffic.

With the numerous hills and curves in our neighborhood, driving around walkers/joggers has nearly caused deadly results.

Some walkers/joggers are walking dogs, are hard of hearing, have headphones on listening to music or are talking on their headphones or hand-held phones, oblivious to traffic coming up behind them. Often times walking 2–3' distant from the edge of the street, forcing traffic to go around them to avoid hitting them when they do not move or realize a vehicle is coming up behind them.

I'm sending this suggestion for the monthly GRIT in the hope an injury or fatality can be avoided.

Best regards,  
Franklin S.

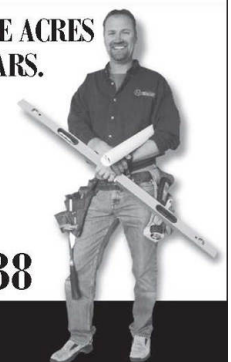
[ed: Franklin, we won't be able to publish a pedestrian advisory every month, but here's your cautionary letter. And remember, everyone—safety vests are available to members at the SHHA office for only \$2.50. They work! I have one and have noticed that drivers notice me much sooner than when I am not wearing it.]

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## 7 REASONS WE'RE NOT IN A REAL ESTATE BUBBLE

REAL ESTATE BROKERS & ANALYSTS STUDYING MARKET FUNDAMENTALS OFFER 7 REASONS THE U.S. IS NOT IN A HOUSING BUBBLE.

### 1. Low inventory

Housing sales across the country declined, according to data released by the National Association of Realtors. The primary reason is lack of supply. In November, there were 1.07 million homes for sale, down 28.2 percent from the prior year. That is far below the 4 million homes on the market in July 2007 during the last housing bubble.

### 2. Lack of supply

Currently, the U.S. housing market is 3.8 million single-family homes short of demand, according to Freddie Mac. A low level of new home construction over the past three years has increased that shortfall, which was estimated at 2.5 million units in 2018.

New housing starts are rising, but the supply of new homes is projected to remain well below demand.

### 3. Favorable demographics

Nearly 5 million millennials will be turning 30 this year, with similar numbers coming in 2022. A significant percentage are looking to buy homes and condominiums – a big change in the market compared to five years ago.

In fact, millennials are expected to continue to drive the nation's real estate market for the next decade.

### 4. Return of international demand

As the COVID-19 pandemic recedes, international travel and home purchases

will pick up. In many states, international buyers have sought vacation homes, primary residences and investment properties in the U.S.

### 5. Low mortgage rates

While mortgage rates have begun creeping up, there are no signs of a spike that could bring the home financing process to a halt.

The Federal Reserve is supporting housing market by keeping short-term rates low – a practice expected to follow into 2022 at least.

### 6. Tight credit

Risky credit practices in the early 2000s were a leading cause of the last housing bubble. Back then, lenders offered loans with “nothing down,” adjustable rates or balloon payments and easy terms to borrowers with marginal credit ratings. At that time, risky loans comprised about 40 percent of the mortgage market, according to a Morgan Stanley report. Currently, those loans are only 2 percent of the market.

### 7. Greater equity

Rising home prices and greater savings rates have increased equity for millions of U.S. owners. A report from ATTOM Data Solutions, found that one in three of the 55.8 million mortgaged homes was “equity-rich,” with loans 50 percent or less of estimated market value.



**PENDING**

**125 Whitetail Drive NE  
3281 SQ FT 4BR 2.5BA**



**WE BROUGHT THE BUYER**

**153 Juniper Hill Road NE  
2403 SQ FT 3BR 3BA**



**JUST SOLD**

**1846 Tramway Terrace Loop NE  
1871 SQ FT 3BR 1.75BA**



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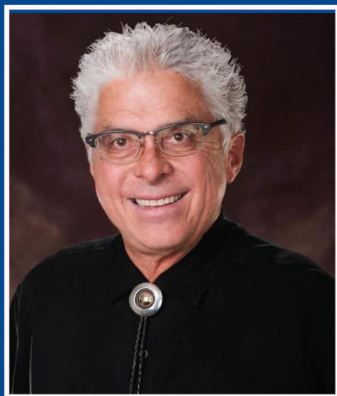
Data for all homes. Information is deemed reliable but not guaranteed from MLS.

*Happy New year to all the Sandia Heights  
residents and their families!  
Wishing you a safe and prosperous 2022!*

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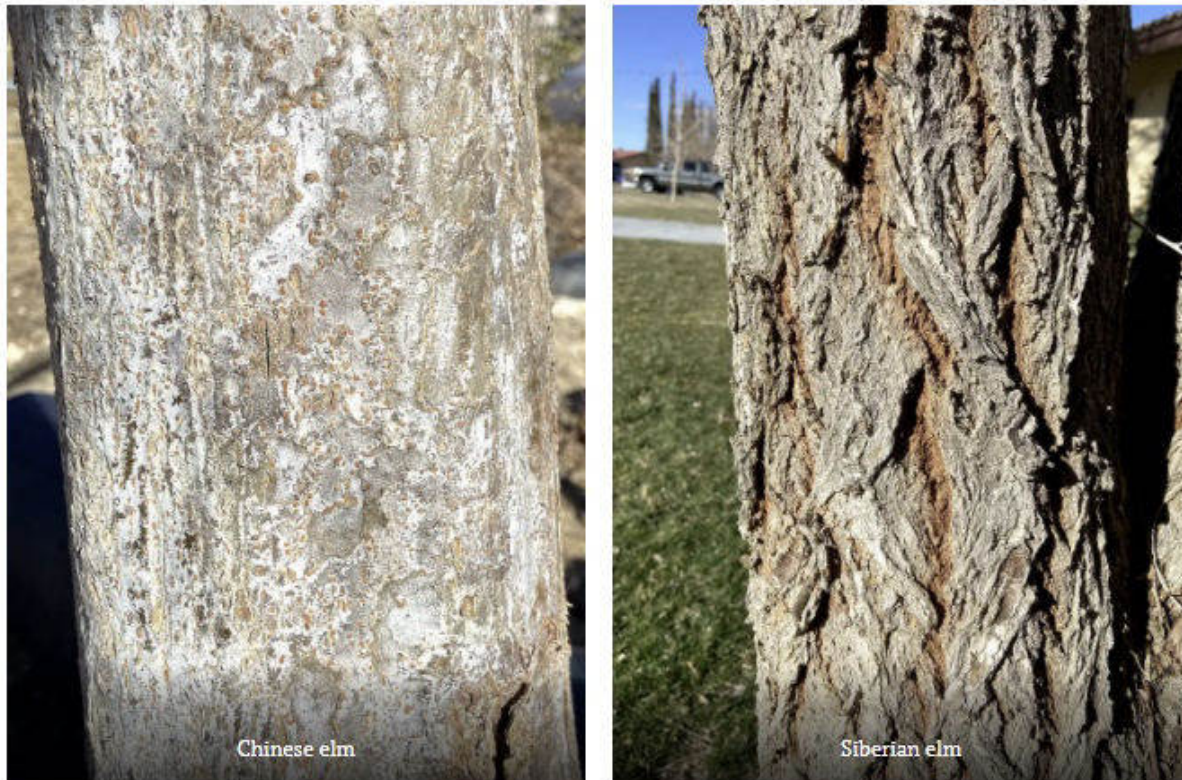
## Update on Invasive Siberian Elms

### Covenant Support Committee

Articles on invasive vegetation, including the Siberian elm, have recently been published in *The GRIT* (November 2020, October 2021, November 2021). This article serves to reinforce the message that the Siberian elm is considered an invasive species and that planting new trees of this type in Sandia Heights is prohibited.

Although the Covenants for all but two Units mention “Chinese” elms as the prohibited tree, the *Chinese* elm is generally not considered to be the invasive type that was the original intent of the Covenants; rather the *Siberian* elm is considered to be the more invasive and, hence, prohibited tree.

One characteristic that aids in distinguishing between the two types of elm is the bark on *mature* elms, which is deeply furrowed on the Siberian, and much smoother on the Chinese. The bark of a mature Chinese elm is comparatively smooth and has a distinctive light-colored mottling, hence the Chinese elm is also referred to as the *lacebark* elm ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulmus\\_parvifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulmus_parvifolia)). See photos below for the bark types on mature trees.



*Chinese elm bark (left) and Siberian elm bark (right). Notice the roughness of the Siberian elm bark. (Natesnursery.com)*

Our understanding is that most, if not all, of the invasive elms in Sandia Heights are Siberian elms. Chinese elms are not nearly as prevalent in New Mexico as are Siberian elms (“Rethinking the dreaded Siberian Elm,” Rebecca Moss, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 2017). However, Siberian elms actually make up a significant portion of the tree canopy in places like Taos and provide beneficial shade in an increasingly drying environment. (R. Moss, 2017). Note that some sources list *all* elms as invasive in New Mexico ([Treesforme.com](https://www.treesforme.com)).

The November 2020 *GRIT* article informs the neighborhood that removal of *mature* Siberian (invasive) elms will not be enforced by the CSC, due in large part to the high costs of both removal and litigation, but an additional consideration is that the mature elm trees can provide beneficial shade. However, the October 2021 *GRIT* article reminds us that it is the homeowners’ responsibility to maintain their yards, and as such *immature* Siberian elms should be removed as soon as possible after they are observed. Identifying whether young elms are Siberian or Chinese can be difficult, because the leaves are similar and the bark has not attained the distinguishing characteristics that mature elms exhibit. When in doubt it is probably best to remove all young elm trees in a timely fashion—and this is most easily done when they can be pulled out rather than dug out. (See photo on page 14.)

*Continued on p. 12...*





Large, mature Siberian elm (background) across the street from a garden in which elm seedlings/sprouts are growing (foreground, circled).

The photo below on the left shows a close-up of the trunk of the large elm, showing deep furrowing that is characteristic of the invasive Siberian elm. The picture on the right shows a close-up of the seedlings/sprouts invading the garden. These seedlings/sprouts have since been removed by the homeowner—before the situation got any worse.



Close-up of elm trunk in Sandia Heights showing deep furrowing characteristic of mature Siberian elms (left), and close-up of elm seedlings/sprouts growing in the garden across the street from the tree (right).



...continued from previous page

Another motivation for removing Siberian elms, with their moisture-loving, shallow root systems, is that they can ruin your septic systems, sewage and effluent pipes, and drainage fields (R. Moss, 2017), and can also be damaging to foundations, driveways, walls, patios and walkways. You most certainly don't want these trees anywhere near your septic system components.

The Charter for the Covenant Support Committee states that, together with the SHHA, we aim to promote the common interests and welfare of homeowners, property owners and residents within Sandia Heights and to preserve the unique character and quality of life of the area. As such, we maintain a level of stewardship of the environment as articulated in and consistent with the original intent of the Covenants. With regard to invasive elm trees, **the CSC will enforce removal of immature trees** when valid complaints are submitted to the SHHA through the proper protocol.

## SH Tips & Hacks

**Little Green Bucket.** Did you know that there is a paid service you can sign up for to turn your garbage and food scraps into compost? It's called Little Green Bucket, and you can visit their website at <https://littlegreenbucket.com/>. You have a choice of receiving a bag of compost twice a year or having it donated to a local community garden, farm, or non-profit. When you sign up, you get a... well... little green bucket to fill with your food scraps. Leave the bucket outside on your collection day. The service will pick up the full bucket and exchange it for a clean, empty bucket. That's all there is to it. You can elect to have the bucket picked up weekly, biweekly, or monthly. No more worrying about putting out your regular trash can overnight during the active bear months. If you have a garbage disposal, there will be less going down it and, hence, less filling your septic tank or going to the sewage plant. And you're not adding garbage to our landfills.





*Signature*

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## Community Events Bulletin Board

*This group is not sponsored by SHHA. Information is provided to keep residents informed.*

**Sandia Heights “Cork & Fork” Dining Activity:** We are happy to announce that Cork & Fork has resumed our 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 2 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).

**Notice:** Any corrections to the printed version of the GRIT can be found on the website: [www.sandiahomeowners.org](http://www.sandiahomeowners.org). We always welcome Letters to the Editor and your response to articles in *The GRIT*. Email us at [thegritshha@gmail.com](mailto:thegritshha@gmail.com).

### History of New Year’s Celebrations from History.com

Civilizations around the world have been celebrating the start of each new year for at least four millennia. Today, most New Year’s festivities begin on December 31 (New Year’s Eve), the last day of the Gregorian calendar, and continue into the early hours of January 1 (New Year’s Day). Common traditions include attending parties, eating special New Year’s foods, making resolutions for the new year and watching fireworks displays.

The earliest recorded festivities in honor of a new year’s arrival date back some 4,000 years to ancient Babylon. For the Babylonians, the first new moon following the vernal equinox—the day in late March with an equal amount of sunlight and darkness—heralded the start of a new year. They marked the occasion with a massive religious festival called Akitu (from the Sumerian word for barley, which was cut in spring) that involved a different ritual on each of its 11 days. In addition to the new year, Akitu celebrated the mythical victory of the Babylonian sky god Marduk over the evil sea goddess Tiamat and served a political purpose: It was during this time that a new king was crowned or that the current ruler’s divine mandate was symbolically renewed.

Throughout antiquity, civilizations around the world developed increasingly sophisticated calendars, typically pinning the first day of the year to an agricultural or astronomical event. In Egypt, for instance, the year began with the annual flooding of the Nile, which coincided with the rising of the star Sirius. The first day of the Chinese new year, meanwhile, occurred with the second new moon after the winter solstice.

The early Roman calendar consisted of 10 months and 304 days, with each new year beginning at the vernal equinox; according to tradition, it was created by Romulus, the founder of Rome, in the eighth century BCE. A later king, Numa Pompilius, is credited with adding the months of Januarius and Februarius. Over the centuries, the calendar fell out of sync with the sun, and in 46 B.C. the emperor Julius Caesar decided to solve the problem. He introduced the Julian calendar, which closely resembles the modern Gregorian calendar that most countries around the world use today. As part of his reform, Caesar instituted January 1 as the first day of the year, partly to honor the month’s namesake: Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, whose two faces allowed him to look back into the past and forward into the future.

In many countries, revelers often enjoy meals and snacks thought to bestow good luck for the coming year. Other customs that are common worldwide include watching fireworks and singing songs to welcome the new year, including Robert Burns’ ever-popular “Auld Lang Syne.” The practice of making resolutions for the new year is thought to have first caught on among the ancient Babylonians, who made promises in order to earn the favor of the gods and start the year off on the right foot. (They would reportedly vow to pay off debts and return borrowed farm equipment.)

In the United States, the most iconic New Year’s tradition is the dropping of a giant ball in New York City’s Times Square at the stroke of midnight. Millions of people around the world watch the event, which has taken place almost every year since 1907.





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



**The SHHA office will be closed on Monday, January 17, 2022,  
in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.**