

PARK PLAZAS

Community Connections

Christmas Eve in the Early Years of Park Plazas

A FAROLITO EXTRAVAGANZA

Back in the olden days — when Park Plazas was still under development — *'Twas the night before Christmas* took on a whole new meaning with a community-wide light show. The ingredients included:

- Untold thousands of traditional farolitos, handmade from paper bags and votive candles with dollops of sand to keep them in place;
- Hundreds of hours of effort by Park Plazas residents, organized into work parties fueled by hot cider and holiday cookies;
- Dozens of moms, dads and kids who volunteered their time for assembly, set-up and take-down.

Starting in 1979 and for a half-dozen years through the mid-1980s, Park Plazas was magically transformed on Christmas Eve. “There were some earlier farolitos being sold by the Cub Scouts,” Christy Croshaw (Piñon) recalls, “but we had the idea of doing our own and making it a fun community event.” Developer Walt Chapman agreed to help and put up the seed money for the first year. (At the time, there was an annual Santa Fe competition for neighborhood holiday decorations, and Park Plazas consistently won the top prize for Southside communities. Each year’s prize money funded the farolitos for the subsequent year.)

Christy explains the process: “We started with station-wagon loads of paper bags — we’re talking thousands of bags — which were purchased from a local distributor. The top of each bag had to be folded just so. We also bought genuine votive candles, which were brighter and burned longer than the little tea lights.”

A resident with an engineering background figured out how much sand would be required, and Chapman’s crew delivered the sand. (They also took the soggy, sand-filled bags and burned-out candles to the dump after take-down on December 26.) “We needed to be relatively precise filling each bag with sand,” Butch Croshaw notes. “Otherwise we risked running out as we assembled the final bags on Christmas Eve.”

The plan was to line both sides of all the existing streets in Park Plazas with farolitos. The entrances to cul-de-sacs and plaza signs were also decorated with farolitos. In addition, residents were encouraged to buy dozens of farolitos for their own homes, which they used along fencelines and in front of individual houses. “They were \$1 a dozen, and we always sold out,” Christy remembers. “My phone would be ringing on Christmas Eve with people trying to buy even more. And as the community continued to be built, we needed many more farolitos every year.”

Walt Chapman let the residents use one of the company’s pickup trucks, and homeowners who had trucks were also recruited to help. Because there were always houses under construction, Chapman also agreed that farolitos could be stored in the garages of homes that were still in process of completion.

Christy and Butch tell me that their young son Scott and his friends “really enjoyed filling the bags and setting them out.” All these years later, their eyes sparkle as they think back to the camaraderie that was always part of what Christy calls “the spirit of the time.” She adds: “People were eager to help. Especially at the beginning, it was a great way to meet new neighbors and make friends.”

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Looking down at her hands, Christy ruefully mentions the blackened gloves and scorched jacket cuffs that were an inevitable consequence of lighting hundreds of candles. But as darkness descended on Christmas Eve, the payoff was worth the occasional burn. "We even got the public service department to turn out all the street lights," says Christy, "so the only light came from the thousands of farolitos. It truly was beautiful."

- Jane Morris

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Helpful TIP Holding the Mail

Headed out of town for the holidays? The post office can hold your mail until you return. Simply click on the link and fill out the form: <https://holdmail.usps.com/holdmail/>.



Pets of Park Plazas AWAY in a MANGER

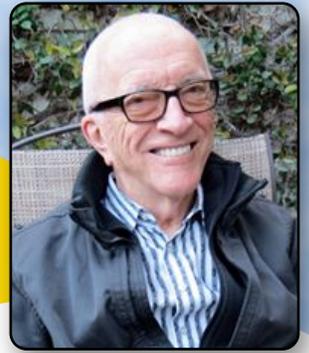


Bunny Nativity
by Contemporary Folk Artist Joe Ortega,
courtesy of Jane Morris



Bear Nativity
by Lig Paterson - Clayworks West, Cerrillos,
courtesy of Kathy Hargrave

Fenton Moore - Jumping for Joy



On December 19, Fenton Moore (Pajaro) will turn 86. And on a mid-November morning, he was headed for Belen, to cross skydiving off his bucket list. The day included an hour-long ground school, where Fenton learned the basics from an instructor named Nate. Then, they boarded a "little tin can" airplane and flew to 10,000 feet above the ground. For their tandem jump, Fenton was harnessed to Nate, sharing an oversized parachute system. With Nate shouting instructions, Fenton successfully launched his jump. They were in free fall for 30 seconds before Nate deployed the parachute. "I wasn't prepared for the violent jolt when the chute snapped open," Fenton remembers, "but overall, it was an amazing experience." Noting that George H.W. Bush went skydiving at 85 and 90, Fenton says he just might do it again—to celebrate his 91st birthday!

SPOTLIGHT
on your neighbor



CREATING CONNECTIONS

HOLIDAY HOMES in PARK PLAZAS

As part of its annual Holiday Home Tour, the Santa Fe Woman's Club showcased the homes of Kathy Hargrave (Junipero) and Trudy Eiron (Chamisa). Kathy's house was decked out for a fun family Christmas, while Trudy's was all lit up for Hanukkah.



WEAVE TRAINING for DOGS of PARK PLAZAS

Teach your dog to Weave, a specific training that promotes agility and canine enrichment. Beth Brock (Cordero) will lead classes on December 24, 26 and 28 at 10:00 AM at the Dog Park. No reservation required; just pick the session that you and your dog wish to attend. Be sure to bring some of your dog's favorite treats or a favorite toy if that is more motivational.

Dogs should be at least a year old to participate. For folks with younger dogs, you can learn the training technique, but your dog's bone structure isn't stable enough to participate until the growth plates are closed. For more information, you can contact Beth via email at beth14642002@gmail.com.

NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Board Member(s) Absent: None

Number of Residents in Attendance: 11

- Multi-Family Rentals – A resident presented a letter to the Board addressing concerns regarding multiple families living in individual rental units. Residents discussed possible remedies, including clarification of section 17 of the covenants (CCRs), updating the covenants, and the need for the Board to move forward in developing and implementing effective solutions.
- Short-Term Rentals – After extensive discussion, the Board approved, as modified, a resolution prepared by the attorney and dated November 28, 2018, which addresses the prohibition of short-term rentals (under Santa Fe law, less than 30 days) within the context of article VIII, section 17 (“Use Restrictions”) of the CCRs. The board discussed the fact that updates to the covenants need to occur, but also expressed its belief that the resolution can serve as a beginning step to address the issue. The resolution will be placed on the PPCSA website and filed with appropriate authorities. [It was not available at our press time.]
- High Turnover Rentals – Residents also discussed the need to address high turnover rentals (defined as 30+ days, unregulated and, in some cases, advertised on AirBnB and similar sites). These rentals are related to short-term rentals in that they are generally temporary.
- Nominating Committee – Jonathan Blakey was appointed as chair of the Nominating Committee for the 2019 Board of Directors election.



JANUARY
Board Meeting
Wed., January 23
6:30 pm
(Note: No December meeting.)

Your Business Is Our Business!

We will be creating a page on our website for Park Plazas homeowners/residents to list their businesses. These listings will **not** represent an endorsement by *Community Connections*, but will simply provide information. If you would like to have your business included, please send information via email to:

ParkPlazasCommunityConnections@gmail.com.

PPCSA Board Vacancy

If you're interested in getting involved with the Association at the Board level, there is currently an open seat. According to president Richard White, "We want to appoint someone to finish the balance of this seat's term as soon as possible."

For more information, contact Richard via email at rwhite@rkwenterprisesnm.com.

We'd like to write about YOU! Please send us story ideas and news to share.

ParkPlazasCommunityConnections@gmail.com.

Sharing News/Creating Connections/Building Community

PPCC Staff

Managing Editor: Laurie Glaze
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Sharon Shoemaker



Wishing Joyous Holidays and a Wonderful New Year to All!