

PARK PLAZAS

Community Connections

Landscape Committee

NEW FOCUS, NEW GROWTH

Our recently revitalized Park Plazas Landscape Committee has been working hard—and making excellent progress—in bringing our common areas back to life. As spring and summer fast approach, it is time to spotlight the committee members and their activities, featuring some of their own words.

MISSION: Preserve and maintain common area landscaping with generally accepted xeriscape, sustainability, and safety principles and best practices for our region

PRIORITIES: Increase safety for drivers and pedestrians; reduce fire risk



Reid Michaels, chair (Molino)

One of the reasons I bought in Park Plazas was the beautiful settings that the houses were surrounded by. I was on the original landscape committee for five years as co-chair. I have been chair of the current committee since it was reconstituted. My vision for Park Plazas includes a natural, water-wise landscape that maintains the incredible grounds that led to my purchase here in the first place.

Nora Haskins, board representative (Fresa)

Shortly after moving to NM I took a two-week intensive permaculture design course, and it changed the way I looked at the world. That led me to work on an organic farm and on the organizing committee for the start-up of a credit union, based on earth-care ethics, which was called the Permaculture Credit Union. I also served on the board of the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association. I have been active in the community garden since it began.

Art Ireland, documentation specialist (Relampago)

I was a federal employee for 40+ years, most of which were spent as a field archeologist here in the Southwest—3½ years with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and 33+ years with the National Park Service. Much of the work I did required mapping of archeological sites and familiarity with the flora and fauna of the area.

Bill Glaze (Chamisa)

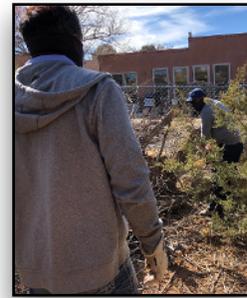
Since moving to Park Plazas, I have volunteered my time to a variety of projects, ranging from graffiti abatement and painting utility boxes to bringing our 14 fire hydrants into City of Santa Fe compliance. My professional background included high levels of organizational skill and accountability factors.

Carole Mathison (Paloma)

While helping take care of almost an acre of grounds around our North Carolina house, I learned a bit about pruning (a short seminar at Duke Gardens), planting, and caring for shrubs and trees. My first two years in NM were at Ghost Ranch, and I was drawn to Park Plazas for our 'natural' landscaping. I am dedicated to protecting our precious water supply, including seeking out more xeriscape methods to support our beautiful land.

Charlie Wilson (Narciso)

I grew up on a farm in Mississippi where you could put a stick in the ground and it would flower the next day. Needless to say, I had a huge learning curve when I moved to NM. One of the things that attracted us to Park Plazas was the landscaping and tall trees. I love to watch things grow and flourish. I love to stay busy. Being on the Landscape Committee has really allowed me to get to know Park Plazas and many of the residents.



Oscar and Arturo clear dead trees and debris at fence line behind community garden as Art Ireland observes.



Q Did you focus on specific areas and/or issues of landscaping?

- ▶ Common areas—both open range and near residences, cul-de-sacs, arroyos and culverts

Q How did you begin your committee work?

- ▶ Board of Directors approved committee members
- ▶ Drafted a Landscape Committee Charter that was approved by the Board
- ▶ Mapped out entire property
- ▶ Inspected street/cul-de-sac areas for line-of-sight issues related to vehicle and pedestrian traffic
- ▶ Identified areas of overgrowth, especially near residences within the cul-de-sacs
- ▶ Evaluated conditions on trails, bridges, culverts and benches
- ▶ Developed process for Common Area Landscaping Applications to be submitted by residents
- ▶ Created a comprehensive property report, *The Park Plazas Path System*, which illustrates the relationship of walking paths to cul-de-sacs and also pinpoints areas such as the community garden and tennis courts (<https://www.parkplazas.com/info.php?pnum=12>)

Q What are some of your current projects?

- ▶ Developing multi-year phased plan for new and/or restorative projects
- ▶ Developing policies for work—trees, irrigation, foliage trimming and replacement, and common area planting
- ▶ Developing a scheduled Common Area Maintenance Plan

Q What work has been or is currently being done?

- ▶ Tree trimming and, in the case of diseased trees, tree removal
- ▶ Shrub trimming (lots of chamisa, and lots of time, including heavier trimming this winter to improve spring and summer growth)

Q Park Plazas is a very large area. Will additional resources be brought in?

- ▶ As appropriate, PPCSA will seek professional expertise regarding recommendations and decisions and also to perform specific work. This year an outside firm has been contracted to clean up and remediate the pocket gardens in five cul-de-sacs. A second company is currently working on tree trimming, removing dead trees, and assessing fire risks. A third company has been hired to work on projects that address rain catchment.

Q Did PPCSA approve a budget for landscaping?

- ▶ In January 2021, the Board approved a landscape budget (details in meeting packet, https://www.parkplazas.com/editor_upload/File/Minutes_Financials/2021_01BoardMtgPkg.pdf)



Before clean up



These photos showcase some of the tree trimming done last fall by Chris Blea's Tree Service. Most of the "before" pictures were taken in October, while most of the "after" pictures are from late December. We are grateful to Art Ireland for taking almost all of the photos and providing caption information.

GENERAL CLEAN UP on WALKING PATHS

These photos highlight tree trimming and overall clean-up work near the tennis court parking lot and the walking path south of the pedestrian tunnel under Plaza Blanca.

Path about 40 feet south of the tunnel, looking southeast to the corner of tennis court parking lot.



Before



After



Before



After

Path from the tennis court parking lot about 30 feet east of the intersection with the path from the tunnel, looking northeast.

Just south of the tennis court parking lot, looking south.



Before



After



Before



After

Path about 25 feet south of tunnel, looking SSE.

Drainage bottom about 50 feet south of tunnel, looking SSE toward the culvert under the path from tennis court path.



Before



After



Before



After

East side of the area that was cleaned up, on the path south from the tennis court parking lot about midway down to the curve in the path, looking west.

SAFETY Tree trimming improves line-of-sight visibility for drivers and pedestrians.



Before



After

Chamisas were trimmed to improve visibility at the corner of Plaza Amarilla and Plaza Blanca.



Before



After

Chamisas were trimmed to improve visibility at Plaza de Junípero and Plaza Verde.



Before



After



At the exit from Relampago Plaza, piñon limbs blocked a driver's view of vehicles coming south onto Plaza Blanca from Rodeo Road. In addition, visibility for walkers on the path south of Relampago had their visibility blocked by a large juniper. Trimming that tree now allows pedestrians to see if there are vehicles coming.

Helpful TIP



TIME TO GET GROWING!

As the pandemic enters its second year,

springtime in New Mexico offers many opportunities for sheltering in place and enjoying the beauty that surrounds us. Follow the link for outdoor gardening tips—including watering, fertilizing and planting warm-season vegetables—from one of our favorite Albuquerque nurseries:

<http://osunanursery.com/monthly-gardening-tips/>.

Remember, outdoor watering accounts for 40% of Santa Fe's total water use. It's important not to waste this precious resource—whether you have a fancy drip system or a plain old garden hose. We live in a continuing era of drought, making adequate moisture a necessity for many special plants. Deep-watering trees is a must. When you turn on your irrigation system, be sure to check for line leaks, missing emitters and misaligned heads. Birdbaths and even hose bibs can cause problems. Finally, while you're outside working, it never hurts to say a little prayer for health and well-being, with rain at the top of your wish list!

SPRING IS COMING!

Phil Vergamini (Fresa) shared Before/January and After/July photos of the community garden, reminding gardeners that growing season will be here soon!



BITTEN BY A BULLDOG

On Sunday morning, February 28, a man and woman were walking a brown and white English Bulldog on the path south of the tennis courts in Park Plazas. An 88-year-old woman walking on the path was bitten by the dog and required 10 stitches at an urgent care facility to close three wounds. Not realizing the extent of the wounds, the group failed to exchange contact information.

The urgent care facility has reported the event to Animal Control, which is looking for the dog to (hopefully) make sure it has a current rabies vaccination and is not a dangerous animal. If you have any information that would help identify the dog and its owners, please contact PPCSA president Tom Carr, cisnelawyer@gmail.com.

Important lessons to be learned:

- Do not assume your dog won't hurt someone. You never know what can upset your dog.
- It's vital to have your dog under control at all times.
- For folks who are approaching a dog on the walking path — no matter how friendly that dog appears, don't risk being bitten by reaching out to greet it.

BOBCAT, BOBCAT, BLOOMING BRIGHT

Just try to imagine a warmer day in August, sitting on your patio with the paper and a cuppa on the table. You're watching the hummingbirds as they flit from flower to flower sipping that precious nectar from the agastache blooms.

Maybe you even have a camera in hand, as I do all the time—and perhaps the zoom lens is extended.

Slight thump sound comes just to the right. As you turn, you see a four-legged creature slipping over the four-foot fence. Sandy Nelson-Price and I had that fence built to accommodate the big branch of the piñon tree that graces both our yards.

Two eyes stare back at you with as much surprise as you must have shown. Barely move the camera to the right and click, click, click—three pics and the creature moves to the right, behind the corner of the house.

Step up slowly and move to see. There stands the bobcat in full view, posing perfectly behind the buds of the cotoneaster. Few more click, clicks, the cat looks around, jumps up onto the fence and saunters along between the neighbors' houses.

Only later (much so) do you realize that there are two separate cats. You never see where the kit went, but the mother surely would have known.

Whether the sound of filling the birdbath or the scent of water drew these cats in, who knows. But thank God they did, bringing another taste of the wild right into our own backyards.

*The author of this charming little essay is **Pat Luiken**, a talented wildlife photographer who lives in Cisne Plaza.*



Patricia K. Luiken Photography

CREATING CONNECTIONS



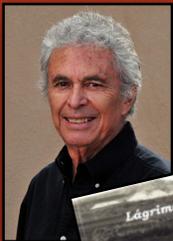
Gophers Are Gone!

Many thanks to **Deirdre Stiles** and the PPCSA board for their efforts to remove gophers from around residents' homes. Deirdre's report, which includes some helpful educational information from The Gopher Trapper, can be found near the bottom of the January board of directors meeting packet,

https://www.parkplazas.com/editor_upload/File/Minutes_Financials/2021_01_BoardMtgPkg.pdf.

Streetwise Dog Walking

Our community's miles of paved, tree-lined walking paths are ideal for exercising our dogs, but here's a friendly reminder from former Girl Scout **Ann Moon** (Ristra): When walking with your dog in the street, always walk **FACING** the traffic. To better protect your dog, be sure to walk with your dog on your left side. After all, that's proper heeling technique—good practice for the show ring!



Lágrimas: Ringing Out with Truth

Lágrimas: Poems of Joy and Sorrow is the third bilingual collection of poetry by renowned folklorist **Nasario Garcia** (Papagayo). It was released late last year by Judith Literary Press, <https://judithlitpress.org/index.html>. *Lágrimas* (Tears) explores the unique yet transcendent qualities of life in New Mexico's Rio Puerco Valley. Written in dialect, the poems breathe life into a culture and history Nasario has championed in many other acclaimed works. As reviewer V.B. Price wrote, "These poems ring out with the truth of the world and the reality of the human heart. One of New Mexico's greatest poets, Nasario García speaks to the interior life of those who are honored to be New Mexicans, who are fascinated by life and its irony, and those who feel blessed by our homes, our families, and the gifts of friendship."

Harper Harris Returns

Fans of **Dennis Jung** (Clavel) will be happy to know that his latest novel, *States of Exile*, was published in November. In it he resurrects the character of Harper Harris, the photojournalist and foreign correspondent who is the protagonist in three of his earlier books. "I guess I wasn't quite finished with the arc of her story," Dennis says. If you're not familiar with Harper, you can read the first chapters of her stories in the sampler section of Dennis's website, <http://www.dennisjung.com>. *States of Exile* is available on amazon.com both in softcover and as a Kindle e-book.




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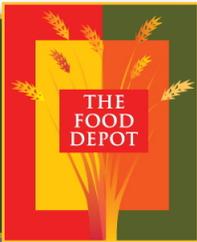


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Photos by Art Ireland, Bill Glaze, Mary Needham, Kathy Bell Hargrave.



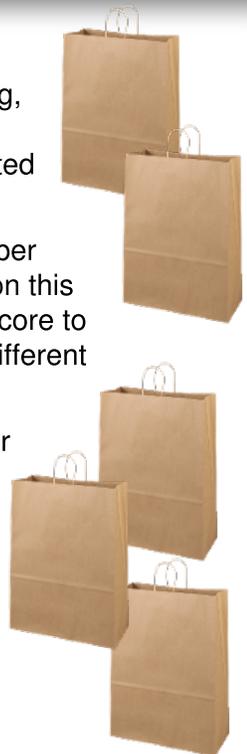
IT'S TIME FOR ANOTHER COLLECTION EFFORT TO PROVIDE THE FOOD DEPOT IN SANTA FE WITH BROWN PAPER GROCERY BAGS!

The Food Depot is one of those special organizations that truly makes a difference, especially in these very difficult times. Hunger is a growing crisis in Northern New Mexico. With the long-lasting, ripple effects of COVID-19, it was projected that one of every five people and one of every three children were affected by food insecurity in our state in 2020. Last year, The Food Depot distributed a grand total of 9,654,929 meals, more than 800,000 meals each month.

And the needs continue into 2021. One of the ways we can help is by saving our clean brown paper grocery bags and donating them to The Food Depot. As you can well imagine, meal distribution on this scale requires lots of brown paper bags! **Mary Needham** (Luna) is championing this effort, an encore to the incredibly successful drive she organized last year. Her plan is to hold the collection on two different days, basically splitting up the potential quantity, given the overwhelming response last summer.

On the morning of **Thursday, March 18**, between 8 AM and noon, folks with Plaza Blanca in their address are invited to drop off their paper bags at the parking area between Cisne and Cordero (across from Paloma). On the morning of **Wednesday, March 31**, everyone else will have their opportunity to participate. An additional drop off site may be added if a volunteer wishes to support a second location.

Stay tuned for more details, which will be sent via email and posted on our website as plans are finalized. If you'd be interested in volunteering—either to assist during a collection morning or to help transport the bags to The Food Depot (the bigger your vehicle the better!)—please contact Mary at fruitlady@gmail.com or text her at 970-208-4879.





MAILBOX THEFTS

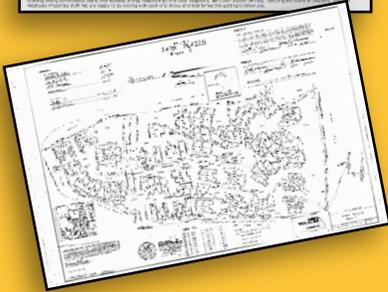
Several neighbors have reported through nextdoor.com the recent theft of mail on Nieve and Puesta del Sol. Be aware of what you place in your outgoing mail and be sure your mail is picked up regularly. Through USPS, you can also sign up for Informed Delivery, which enables you to digitally preview mail that is being delivered to you: <https://informedelivery.usps.com/box/pages/intro/start.action>.



NEW PARK PLAZAS WEBSITE

PPCSA is rolling out a new website—a valuable online resource for news, scheduled events, governing documents and much more. Registration is required to take full advantage of the website's resources, so don't delay, get yourself registered now! You can register by following this link, ParkPlazas.org. Look at the upper right corner and you will see the REGISTER button. Click and scroll down to enter your information. Most information on the site is also available to renters as well as to folks who are considering our special community for their next home.

Plats of our community are available on the new site under RESOURCES → DOCUMENTS.



**Annual
PPCSA Meeting
and Board Election**
Wed., March 24
Details at ParkPlazas.org

Park Plazas Real Estate

A SELLER'S MARKET—AND THEN SOME!

Here is a quick update from **Lise Knouse** (Clavel), our Park Plazas real estate specialist.

Over the last 15 years, there would typically be around 2,000 Santa Fe homes active on market at any given time. That's a pre-pandemic statistic. This February, there were 271 active listings one week and 276 the next.

Clearly, demand is outstripping supply, which drives prices up. And with interest rates at historic lows, many prospective buyers can afford bigger, better homes than they ever thought would be possible. So the challenge for me and my team is helping each of our buyers find the right house. One of my clients has been house-hunting for almost a year.

Low inventory also means that sellers are receiving multiple offers. One property here in Park Plazas had nine offers within a few days of going on market.

As to price, the Park Plazas townhouse that was once listed at \$200,000—and languished on the market for several months—is now selling quickly at around \$350,000.

This year, there have been only three active listings in all of Park Plazas. Our community is unique in many ways, with all our trees and walking paths—plus amenities not found elsewhere, including our dog park and even a community garden. Small wonder Park Plazas real estate is very much in demand. I feel lucky to live here—and I know my neighbors feel the same way.

Sharing News/Creating Connections/Building Community

Mission Statement:

To produce a warm, personal, engaging and timely community-focused publication that creates and nurtures connections among all residents of Park Plazas. *Community Connections* is about people — highlighting what makes our neighbors interesting, makes them real, and makes others want to learn more about them.

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