

November 2024 Vol. 40 – No. 11

Unit numbers shown in parentheses

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President - Jim Stewart (7)
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Treasurer – Charles Ewing (14)

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Claudia Mitchell (5)
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Community Service & Membership
Committee (CS&M) – Elizabeth Edgren
Covenant Support Committee (CSC) –
Arthur Romero
Environment & Safety Committee (E&S) –
Kathleen McCaughey
Finance Committee (FC) – Randy Tripp
IT Committee (ITC) – Heidi Komkov

Nominating Committee (NC) – Eric Faulring

#### Office Staff

Lead Administrator – Trish Lovato Administrator – Hope Fryer

#### **SHHA Office**

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

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

Fri, 9 AM – noon

Closed on federal holidays.

**Phone:** 505-797-7793 **Fax:** 505-856-8544

Website: <a href="www.sandiahomeowners.org">www.sandiahomeowners.org</a>
Email: <a href="mailto:shha@sandiahomeowners.org">shha@sandiahomeowners.org</a>

## Message from the President, November 2024 Jim Stewart

Howdy Neighbors,

When I accepted the role as president, one of the areas in which I wanted to focus my attention was on our finances. Our monthly dues are extraordinarily low, but that fact does not obviate the need to be prudent. Our treasurer put on his eye shades, sharpened his pencil and provided some recommendations...so at the October 9 Board meeting, the SHHA Board of Directors voted to provide you with a holiday from monthly dues for the months of November and December. This action was made possible due to revenues being slightly greater than budgeted, while expenses were less than budgeted. Thank you and Happy Holidays.

Update on traffic in and around Big Horn...we reached out to Sheriff Allen and his team and asked for a 'close patrol' of the affected areas, particularly around the school bus stops. They were on it within days...we cannot expect daily patrols of that sort, but it will be ongoing, and we should see some reduction in the issues about which we are concerned. From BernCo Public Works, "Thank you for your patience in getting back to you about the study on Big Horn Ridge Road. We did observe one instance where a vehicle was traveling between 50-55 MPH along this roadway at 1:00 AM (!!!) on 9/24/24." I have the details on the traffic study. If you want a copy, drop me an email. More to come...

The monthly rant...a column does not go by without one of you firing off an email to me, thanking me for my efforts as the SHHA president. But thanks should go to your fellow neighbors who do the work of a homeowners association. I am forever grateful that I have had the opportunity to work with these people...they are the best!

Remember our office staff (Trish and Hope) are available five days a week. Please reach out to them via email or a phone call with your issues or concerns. Of course, you can also reach out to me at <a href="mailto:president@sandiahomeowners.org">president@sandiahomeowners.org</a>. I promise you will receive a response.



#### A Sunday for Sundaes Claudia Mitchell, Editor

The first day of autumn was a perfect day for the second annual "Neighborhood Afternoon Out" (take-off of Neighborhood or National Night out, promoting community partnerships and good old neighborhood camaraderie), with an old-fashioned ice cream social in the park.

Over 150 folks—kids, parents, grandparents, neighbors, and friends—came to W.L. Jackson Park on September 22 to enjoy custom sundaes. SHHA Board members dished out several flavors of ice cream, and folks spooned out their choice of toppings, complete with whipped cream (and sometimes the cherry on top).



Family fun at the ice cream social

Greg Lobberegt, SHHA member and realtor with Coldwell Banker Legacy, generously donated the ingredients. Our Bernalillo County Firefighters and emergency first responders brought a fire engine and emergency vehicle, giving tours and occasionally running their lights and sirens to the delight of the kids, young and old. A BernCo Deputy Sheriff was there, along with a representative of Sandia Heights Security to complete the array of critical services that support Sandia Heights.

BernCo Emergency Management staffed a table to check if you were signed up for Everbridge - Emergency Notification System. (If you missed this and would like to sign up, the link is:

https://www.bernco.gov/ emergency-management/sign-up-for-emergency-nixlealerts-from-bernalillo-county/)



L to R: Brett and Austin Gray-Nellums with mom Laura Nellums



Ice cream, toppings, and just maybe a sugar overdose



Greg Lobberegt ice cream donor



Bernalillo County Emergency Management

#### ... continued from page 2

Environment and Safety Committee members Kathleen McCaughey (chair), and Cheryl Wieker filled a table with emergency readiness information, including maps to plan emergency egress, what to put in a "Gobag," and info about BernCo's Citizen Address Response Enhancement (CARE) program (where we can notify Emergency Services before an emergency if we are not able to drive or leave our home without assistance). Cheryl even prepared a display of how to pack a pet's go-bag.

We thank the SHHA Community Service & Membership Committee, chaired by Elizabeth Edgren, and the Environment & Safety Committee for organizing this event, with the reliable support of our SHHA office staff, Trish and Hope.



The firetrucks were a hit with young and old.

And in case you were interested, there was some ice cream left, and it went on dry ice back to the fire station in the fire engine!

As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. See if you recognize your neighbor in these photos from the event.

## 2025 Directory Cover Photo Contest: Deadline, November 8

It's not too late—but hurry!

The deadline to submit your photos for the annual photo contest is coming up. The winning photo will be

on the cover of the 2025 Sandia Heights Resident Guide and Directory and the photographer will be acknowledged. Subject matter should reflect something about living in Sandia Heights. Submission deadline is November 8. Submission criteria are as follows: • You must be a homeowner in Sandia Heights and an amateur photographer. • Photos must be related to the Sandia Heights area. • Photos must fit reasonably on the cover without loss of the composition. • Photos must be in color and may be submitted digitally to shha@sandiahomeowners.org or as a hardcopy print to the office. • The resident must submit a statement that the photograph is an original taken by the homeowner, that they are not a professional photographer, and that they grant permission to SHHA to use their photo(s) in the Directory or on the SHHA website and GRIT newsletter.

#### **ACC Activity Log**

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

1106 San Rafael	Raise roof line		
867 Tramway Ln Apt. F	Add plantar w/ retaining wall		
1603 Quail Wood Dr	Re-stucco		
513 Roadrunner Ln NE	Stucco repair		
218 Spring Creek Ln	Install a pool		
795 Tramway Ln Unit N	Re-roof, replace skylights		
8225 Raintree Dr	Re-roof		
518 Black Bear Loop	Landscape		
941 Bobcat Blvd	Re-roof		
102 Juniper Hill Loop	Trampoline safety net		
2434 Tramway Terrace Ct	Landscape		
1164 Laurel Loop NE	Repair retaining wall		
1905 Quail Run Rd	Repaint garage door trim		
1862 Tramway Terrace Lp	Repaint garage door		

#### Covenant Support Violations as of September 30, 2024 Received: 3 Open: 8 Closed: 9

(3-landscaping/trees, 1- shed, 1-white roof, 1-floodlights, 1-new construction, 1-stucco color, 1-wall/trampoline)

#### SEPTEMBER 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 (505) 856-6347, mobile (505) 263-4654.

September 2024	# of calls		# of calls
Alarms	17	Snake call	1
Customer assistance	3	Special extra patrol	3
Lost/found item	1	Special request/vacation	94
Loud music/party	1	Suspicious person/activity	4
Miscellaneous call	1	Suspicious vehicle	6
Neighbor dispute	2	Utility co. assist	3
Miscellaneous call	2	Vandalism	2
Newspaper/package pick up	8	Vehicle burglary/ Break in	2
Noise complaint/suspicious noise	4	Welfare check	3
Open window/door/garage	1		
Pet Nuisance	2		
		Total:	161

<u>Useful Numbers:</u> 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: (505) 798-7000 Bernalillo County Fire Department Non-Emergency: (505) 468-1310 SHS Water/Sewer Emergencies (M-F 7AM – 4PM): (505) 856-6345 SHS Water/Sewer Emergencies After Hours: (505) 888-5336 NM Gas Co. Emergencies: (505) 697-3335 PNM Outage & Emergencies: 1-888-342-5766

#### **Announcements & Notices:**

- Office hours: Mon Thur 9 AM 4 PM. Fri 9 AM Noon.
- **Board Meeting:** the next board meeting will be held at the SHHA office on November 13, 2024 6:30pm.
- Office Closures for Holiday(s): Monday November 11th for Veteran's Day, Thursday November 28<sup>th</sup> for Thanksgiving.
- Notary services (Tues-Thurs, by appointment), copies (20 per month) and faxes, e-mail alerts, and contractor evaluation binder, free to members.
- Committee meeting dates are posted on our website calendar: www.sandiahomeowners.org
- Classified ads can be found on the website on the top bar menu under Notices and Information/Classifieds.
- Tram passes for sale in the SHHA Office. \$10.00 per ticket for members on a first-come first-served basis. As of November 1<sup>st</sup>, we will be going cashless. We will accept credit cards and checks as a form of payment.

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Sharon's Sandia Heights Market Update Past Year 11/2023 to 11/2024
6 Larger homes For Sale on Larger Lots | Avg Asking price \$1,466,983 Avg Asking price/sf \$332.35
8 Homes Pending | Avg Asking Price \$828,983 Avg Asking price/sf \$263.22
50 Homes Closed past year to date | Avg Sold Price \$886,602 Avg Sold price/sf. \$248.63

8 Smaller homes on smaller lots | Avg Asking price \$437,417 Avg Asking price/sf \$257.93 7 homes pending | Avg Asking Price \$345,486 Avg Asking price/sf \$263.93 36 Homes Closed past year to date | Avg Sold Price \$463,753 Avg Sold price/sf \$263.93 Note Every Home Is Unique. Price is always based on condition, updates, market appeal, location and views. Current Interest rates hovering around 6.625% for 30 year conventional & 6.125% 30 year VA!



1114 San Rafael Ave NE



1726 Quail Run Ct NE



730 Tramway Lane NE



1723 Quail Run Ct. NE

#### ANOTHER GREAT SANDIA HEIGHTS HOME SOLD!

2027 QUAIL RUN CT NE | ASKING PRICE \$475,000 | 1886 SF | 3BR | 2 BATHS 2 CAR GARAGE





**Custom Home!** 



**Understated Elegance!** 







Views!

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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

Avg Price per sq.ft. \$261.99

Avg Days on Market 29

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#### Trees-of-Heaven—Not so Heavenly Stan Davis, CSC Committee, and Kathleen McCaughey, CSC Committee and Chair, E&S Committee

The tree-of-heaven originated in China; hence it is also called Chinese Sumac, among other names. According to the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service "Field Guide for Managing Tree-of-heaven in the Southwest" (TP-R3-16-09, September 2014, available online), tree-of-heaven is considered an invasive tree in the southwestern states and has also been listed as a noxious weed in New Mexico. This tree is extremely competitive and fast-growing, and once established can overrun native vegetation by developing dense thickets of cloned trees. The Nature Conservancy describes these trees as devilishly invasive! These trees even produce a chemical in the leaves, bark, roots and seeds that is toxic to surrounding plants, inhibiting their growth and germination. Many other reputable websites further describe the invasive and detrimental aspects of trees-of-heaven and how difficult they can be to eradicate. As co-stewards of our high-desert foothills environment, we in Sandia Heights should be on the lookout for these trees and remove them. Homeowners with large properties that extend into the major arroyos that pass through the neighborhood should be especially vigilant.

Figure 1 shows examples of trees-of-heaven growing in the neighborhood, and a closeup showing the distinctive leaf pattern, which has pairs of elongated pointy leaflets growing on either side of a central stem plus a single leaflet at the stem end.

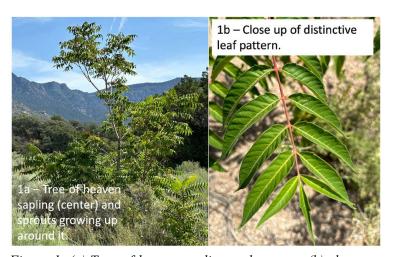


Figure 1: (a) Tree-of-heaven sapling and sprouts; (b) close-up showing leaf pattern.

Our Unit Covenants explicitly prohibit invasive elms and cottonwoods, but do not mention trees-of-heaven. However, Covenants do say, in part: Natural vegetation is to be left undisturbed, where practical. Trees-ofheaven do not leave the surrounding native vegetation in peace. Additionally, the Architectural Control Committee Design Guideline for Landscaping (revised 01-31-2022) states that non-native trees shall be planted only in areas adjacent to the house or building (paragraph 2b) and explicitly lists tree-of-heaven as one of 10 trees/plants that is prohibited (paragraph 6). This Guideline says that the reasons for prohibiting this tree are that it suckers badly, reseeds everywhere, litters excessively, and has weak wood, poor structure, and invasive roots. For these reasons the Covenant Support Committee (CSC) considers the presence of trees-of-heaven a violation of Covenants and ACC Guidelines, and will seek their removal from properties for which formal complaints have been submitted to the CSC. There is another name used for tree-of-heaven—tree-of-hell—and we certainly don't want those messing with our little slice of heaven!

#### Look Out for our Children! Claudia Mitchell, GRIT Editor

Our neighborhood is changing, and parents accompanying their children to their bus stops have become a common early morning sight.

The Albuquerque School System changed its bus routes and bus stop locations this fall. Now some young students and their parents must leave their homes earlier and walk farther than ever before. You may see them walking to bus stops as early as 6:30 AM to make it on time. In the winter, even with the end of daylight savings time, the sun will barely be up at this hour as the days grow shorter and shorter, making pedestrians of all sizes hard to see. In areas of our neighborhood closest to the mountains, especially along Big Horn Drive and environs, there are blind curves and hills, and even children accompanied by parents equipped with flashlights and safety vests can't easily be seen by commuters racing to work.

To make things even more dangerous, these "bus stops" are simply designated locations. Since we have

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no sidewalks in Sandia Heights, there are also no benches, shelters, or even areas on the side of the road where kids can wait safely. So sometimes they spill over onto our roads while waiting, wandering, and/or greeting friends, creating obstacles for vehicles (driven either by parents rushing to jobs or contractors determined to arrive at our residences on time).

Thankfully our SHHA president and chair of the Environment and Safety Committee have brought this situation to the attention of BernCo officials, in hopes studies of our situation will result in recommendations for solutions.

Meanwhile, the least we can all do as residents is to drive more slowly during the hours of school bus pickups and drop-offs, and also caution visitors and contractors to do likewise.

#### The Artist Next Door Claudia Mitchell

When you are walking around your home or hiking on a trail, you are often taking in the vast and varied New Mexico views of sky and land. Rebecca Whitecotton sees that too, but her intense focus is on the bark, leaves, dried seeds, and twisted stems of the plants and trees along the path, or a stone in an intriguing shape. "I get excited when I see an unusually shaped stick or rock. I am definitely the girl who comes home with pockets of them." She will empty her pockets to add to her extensive collection where curious finds may sit for months until she suddenly sees just exactly how they could be worked into one of her unique creations.

Rebecca grew up building fond memories of New Mexico. Rebecca's mother, who grew up in Belen, New Mexico, relocated to Peoria, Illinois, but she and her husband would go regularly on what Rebecca described as "art trips" to visit her New Mexico family. They budgeted a modest amount and visited galleries to buy art for their home. Growing up surrounded by the New Mexico-inspired art that her parents brought home, and regularly visiting her grandparents in Belen instilled in Rebecca a "love for the New Mexico landscape."



Rebecca Whitecotton

Raised by art lovers and surrounded on all sides by art, Rebecca and her two brothers have developed an artistic bent. Rebecca explained, "Even though my parents were not artists themselves, they loved their art and the artists that created it. We all learned to be creative. I have done artistic projects all my life." After earning a degree in journalism, and a masters (at the University of New Mexico) in Sociology of Religion, she worked in fields that required creative thinking: a reporter, an editor, a graphic designer, a public relations specialist, and a writer.

Rebecca married an Air Force officer thirty years ago, and, ironically, his first duty station was Albuquerque. But not for long! They moved eighteen times during those nearly thirty years in the service and had two children (one of which was born during that first assignment in Albuquerque).

She recounted how at a pivotal time during the pandemic, she was walking her dog regularly in a park in Shreveport, Louisiana, and became fascinated with the bark and leaves of the magnolias and oaks. She began to experiment using epoxy resin to preserve them (she assured me that in her experimentations she only "ruined one table"). She became excited about these natural materials, thinking "Oooh, what could I make with

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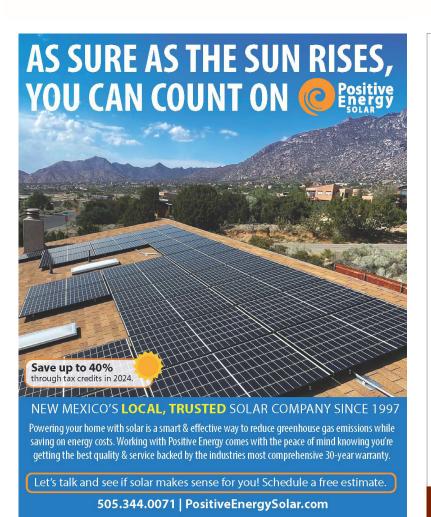


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Eventually, her husband retired from the Air Force in 2022, landed a job in Albuquerque and they moved in April 2023. Rebecca, with her life-long connections here, was happy to be in an area she had always loved, and even happier to find a home in the "gorgeous community and natural landscape" of Sandia Heights. To add to her excitement about her new neighborhood, she saw signs asking for artists to join the Sandia Heights Artists. She visited the tour that year, liked what she saw, and joined.

The pull to focus more time on art came when Rebecca took a pottery class in 2022. "I fell in love with it completely," she told me. "The pottery is clay—essentially wet dirt—mud. Putting my hands in mud, I felt connected to the earth. I had made things out of natural objects, and I followed my instincts to figure out ways I could incorporate the pottery into my ideas." Rebecca began doing just that. Although she does make traditional mugs and vases, she specializes in earthy assemblages that defy cataloguing. They are unusual and intriguing objets d'art for table and wall that often include a whiff of whimsy. Rebecca's hope is that "people feel a connection to nature through my art."



Rebecca explained to me that she is just starting out on her artistic journey. She participated in her first Sandia Heights Artists (SHA) tour this September. "I am really thankful to the SHA for providing a venue for my art. It is inspiring to meet residents in the community so creative and helpful, and I also appreciate my neighbors who save interesting sticks and leaves to add to my creations."

"My art comes from the joy of the feeling of being one with nature and wanting to help people bring some of that joy into their home. I take natural objects, preserve them, and put them into a piece of art so that they can be appreciated in a fresh context. And, making my art is really fun for me. I will stop doing it if I stop having a good time!"

You can contact Rebecca and view her work at <a href="https://rebeccawhitecotton.com/art/">https://rebeccawhitecotton.com/art/</a>.

#### **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 <a href="mailto:dcbcbridge@gmail.com">dcbcbridge@gmail.com</a>, or visit <a href="https://dukecitybridge.com/">https://dukecitybridge.com/</a>

#### Sandia Heights "Cork & Fork" Dining Activity:

Cork & Fork has resumed 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.

#### Fall Colors We Loved – A Photo Essay Stan Davis

(Note: The full-color GRIT is always available at <a href="https://www.sandiahomeowners.org/grit-newsletter">https://www.sandiahomeowners.org/grit-newsletter</a>)



Grandaddy Oak, Embudo Trail



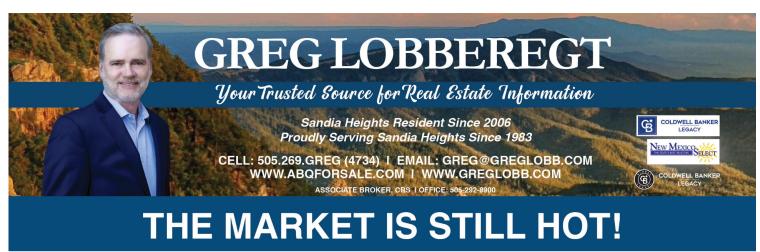
Aspens, Middle La Luz Trail



Cottonwood, Juan Tabo Canyon Trail



Oaks and Aspens, North Crest Trail



GREG: WHAT'S THE REAL ESTATE MARKET DOING IN SANDIA HEIGHTS?

I get asked this question all the time! My short answer is "It's still doing great" I've heard other parts of town aren't doing so well, but we are!

Here's what I believe to be true:

- We still have a low inventory of homes (about 40% of normal) which is a big advantage for sellers.
- Buyers in Sandia Heights aren't as interest rate sensitive. In my world, about 50% of my transactions up here are cash.
- We still have some of the nicest homes, greatest views, and accessibility to the Open Space more so than any other areas of town.
- Other big differences are the size of lots, lower property taxes than the city, and some of the better schools are big drivers. In other words, we live in an area that's one of the most desirable places to live in the city and surrounding areas. In all of my years in Real Estate, Sandia Heights has done well, no matter what the market throws at us.



656 ROADRUNNER Lane NE 2151 SQ FT 3-4BR 2BA .74Acres



152 JUNIPER HILL Road NE 2,294 SQ FT 3BR 3BA .56 Acres



1 SANDIA HEIGHTS Drive NE 3,316 SQ FT 3BR 3BA .60 Acres

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NEW MEXICO.

## The GRIT Online—Search and Rescue! Stan Davis, CSC and C&P Committee Heidi Komkov, Chair, IT Committee

We have more to celebrate regarding access to information in *The GRIT*! In last month's edition Susan McCasland described how back-issues of *The GRIT* have been essentially rescued from falling into obscurity, and all known issues can be found online. In addition to having access to all the *GRITs*, we also have powerful online search functionality.

First, to find all editions, select "GRIT Newsletter" on the top gray menu banner on the main SHHA website, and then select "GRIT Issues" from the drop-down menu (Fig. 1). All available *GRITs* going back to 1979 will be listed in reverse chronological order. Accompanying each posted edition is a high-level summary for all editions and a list of articles and authors for editions back through 2015. These summaries and the authors can be searched using the search box functionality to the right side of the website page (note: do not confuse this *GRIT* search box with the high-level search box in the top blue banner on the overall SHHA site).

For example, type "radon" into the search box, click the magnifying glass icon, and six editions of *The GRIT* will be posted that each contain something on the subject of radon. Note that this search functionality is not interrogating specific text embedded inside individual articles, even for the most current editions.



Figure 1: SHHA website interface showing how to access current and past issues of The GRIT newsletter

Another new feature of the *GRIT* webpage is the "GRIT Index". Returning to the upper gray menu bar on the main SHHA website, select "GRIT Article Index" from the drop-down menu and the Index will pop up (fig. 2). The Index is displayed as a table, with columns for Title, First Author, Topic, Date (year, month) and a direct link to the GRIT edition in which each article can be found.

For now, the Index goes back through only 2015, and with time will be extended further back. Each column also has sort buttons located next to the column heading. The "Topic" column contains a single main topic out of a total of 41 that was assigned to each article upon uploading. If you sort the "Topic" column, you can scroll down to see the types of "topics" that were assigned to articles, such as "Art," "Outdoor Lights," and "Wildlife(Bears)" [sic]. In the Figure 2 example, the index has been sorted by topic in reverse alphabetical order.

A search box is available for the Index as well, which will allow the user to search on any of the column entries. For example, if you type "wildlife(bears)," or simply "bears," 16 articles related to bears will be listed. Try your luck! How many articles can you find on "wildcat," "bobcat," and "mountain lion" (or just "lion")?

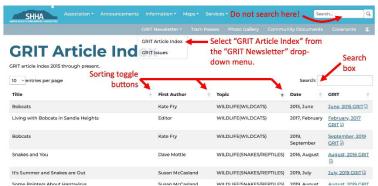
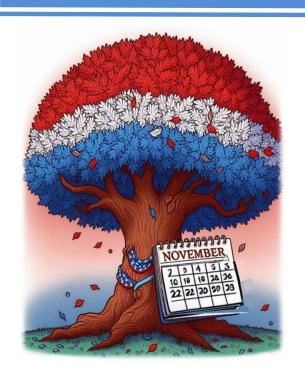


Figure 2: SHHA website interface showing how to access The GRIT searchable index

Much thanks go to our webmaster, Ryan Showers, who worked closely with us to make our searchable archive of GRITs available!



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



"We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate."

—Thomas Jefferson

## ELECTION DAY IS HERE!! November 5, 2024

Whether you're for red or green...err, red or blue, something old or something new, the time has come to vote! Remember, there is **no** public record of which candidates you voted for. Your vote is completely private; only the fact that you voted is publicly accessible.

Last Day of Early Voting: Sat., November 2, 10 am – 7 pm

**Election Day Itself:** Tue., November 5, 7 am – 7 pm

**Closest Polling Locations:** 

Caracol Plaza: Tramway and Montgomery
12500 Montgomery Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111

**Holly Plaza:** Holly Ave, between Louisiana and San Pedro 6500 Holly Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113