



June 2009

President's Column

-Ike Eastvold



How Does Your Garden Grow?

"Gardening is all about sharing," said Dewey Potter, one of our speakers for this month's membership meeting. Truly, gardening does bring people together, especially if it is in the front yard where neighbors stop to chat. "The #1 deterrent to crime is people in their front yards or out walking," said John Edward, whose family draws much of their food from a front yard garden. Front yard flower, fruit and vegetable gardens are a powerful agent in building a safer, friendlier community (p. 2).

Gardening also can be done very successfully in a multitude of different containers. Chuck O'Herron-Alex, another of our speakers this month, will show us a unique container garden that allows growing vegetables year round to feed a family with 2-3 children (p. 3).

In keeping with our program on gardening, we will raffle door prizes for our members: organic warm and cold season seeds, plant sets ready to plant, and a book on gardening in New Mexico. If you're not yet a member, we will raffle several FHNA memberships. How easy can it get to join?

Please read on p. 3 about our successful FHNA Earth Day clean up of the neighborhood.

The planning & zoning updates on p. 4 underscore how local and state governments all too often violate their own laws and policies. Also, all our letters and cards to Mayor Chavez and Sen. McSorley on making Carpenters Union Hall into a community center went unanswered.

Finally, Susan's Biz Buzz on p. 5 tells the fascinating story behind another FHNA business, Eyecatcher.

Enjoy the newsletter, help us build a stronger, safer community, and come to the June 20th meeting.

See you there!- Ike Eastvold, FHNA President

General Meeting: Sat., June 20th, 1PM

Marble	Cardenas	Fair Plaza Shopping Ctr.	San Pedro ↑
Alice			
Union Hall 1021 Cardenas NE			Lomas

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*Next Meetings: Oct. 2009, Feb. 2010



**Carpenters Union Hall,
1021 Cardenas NE
FHNA Membership Meeting,
Saturday, June 20th, 1-2:30PM**



"Recovery Gardens: How to Survive the Recession"
Presented by Dewey & Deb Potter: Front Yard Gardeners
and Chuck O'Herron-Alex of Veggie Grower Gardens

To trade or give away your garden produce, bring it along!
Door prizes and refreshments for everyone!

Front Yard Gardens: Two Approaches

By Ike Eastvold, FHNA President

There are a surprising number of backyard gardens in Fair Heights. Corn, chili, tomatoes, basil, mint and other herbs are popular. There are also productive fruit trees, figs and apricots to name just a couple. There is some exchange and sharing of crops among neighbors. On Cagua, apricots picked from a neighbor's tree return as apricot jam!

Front yard gardens, however, are a rarity in Fair Heights. This year, Sharon and I have our usual herb garden in the front yard, but we also have three small patches with lettuce, carrots, zucchini, and leeks. The 2' X 3' mixed lettuce patch alone has given us many great salad lunches, been given away to almost ten neighbors, and is still producing.



Dewey & Deb Potter & garden

Two of the finest, and most instructive, front yard gardens in Albuquerque are located in the Ridgcrest neighborhood: Dewey and Deb Potter at 806 Morningside Pl SE, and John and Gayle Edward at 620 Parkland Cir.

SE. Feel free to visit.

The Potters love chili, especially when blended with garlic, onion, tomatoes, and limejuice to make salsa. Although they grow many things, their 30' X 30' front yard garden produces close to 1000 pounds of chili some years. Half of this bounty is given away to friends and neighbors. Most of the rest is frozen. "We have red or green chili almost every day," observed Dewey. "It's good for you."

"We meet all the neighbors as they walk by, and share recipes. People come over to roast chilies on the grill. Gardening is all about sharing, and it's a lot of fun," said Dewey. "We have the neighborhood kids help plant and weed. It's a life lesson they need to learn."

The Potters follow a 3-year cycle of soil preparation, rototilling in steer manure, wheat straw, and fine blow sand. They plant from indoor starts, and use



John, Gayle and Jack Edwards & garden

soaker hoses for watering.

John and Gayle Edward's front yard garden only measures about 30' X 15', but the variety of crops is amazing: beets, carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, soybeans,

peanuts, artichokes, rhubarb, and more.

John and Gayle have found that front yard gardening builds a safer, friendlier community. "The #1 deterrent to crime in a neighborhood is people in their front yards or out walking," said John. "We meet our neighbors. Strong friendships develop. Kids begin to learn that the food they eat doesn't come from a store."

Other advantages of a front yard garden: 1) it might be better than the backyard due to sun exposure. You need a site with 6+ hours of sun; 2) you can view it as you come and go, and from inside of your house; 3) many veggie plants are beautiful, a kind of edible landscaping. Plant an artichoke and let one or two go to bloom; and, 4) the water used is more functional. It helps feed you and brings beauty to your front yard.

John recommends starting small and enlarging your garden each year. Prep your soil with aged manure and compost. Dig deep, at least 12 inches, but 18 inches is better. If the soil has no worms, add them. It will take a couple of years to get soil in good shape with natural organic materials. Until then, use a fertilizer like Miracle Grow.

John and Gayle use a drip irrigation system for optimum water use. "Water appropriately," advises John. "Don't be stingy, but don't over water either."

"Rotate your garden veggies. Vary the location of your plants from year to year. Have fun. Experiment with new plants. Some veggies are best eaten as you thin them: lettuce, beets, spinach, etc."

"Some plants get disease. Throw them away. Don't compost or leave them in the garden. Pull weeds when small and before they go to seed."

"Accept that you will make mistakes," he concluded. Just get good advice and start again.



From “**Veggie Grower Gardens,**” by Jason Obten, Spring 2008 issue of *Edible Santa Fe*.

Veggie Grower Garden's storefront on Silver Ave in Nob Hill is as unassuming as its owner. Both have a relaxed, easygoing feeling. Proprietor, Chuck O'Herron-Alex, was trained as a Methodist minister. He has, however, chosen a different path of service. His business has become a vehicle for change.

He started by building 30 4' X 4' container gardens for use in the colonias of Juarez, Mexico, making food production available to those without the land to grow. With a protective cover that allows growing year-round, each garden allows food production for a family with 2-3 children.

At St. Joseph's Community Health Care, the gardens are used in a health care program for diabetics. “Instead of just saying you need to stop eating donuts and start eating vegetables, they actually had me build a garden for each of the fifteen participants and deliver it, set it up, train them, so that they can begin growing some of their own produce,” said O'Herron-Alex.

At Mt. Mahogany Community School, students work in the gardens and afterwards harvest a snack. “The kids go bonkers. They're pulling up radishes and lettuce, and it's a real treat, so it's a totally different way of looking at a snack. It's not cookies, this is something they helped plant, they helped water, they helped care for, and now they're eating it,” he explained.

Whether it is a garden he sells or a garden he installs as part of one of his many projects, ultimately, the philosophy is the same. “It's fresh, you harvest it, and you eat it. It's local, it's not trucked in from anywhere. There's satisfaction and security in knowing how to grow your own food.”

FHNA Earth Day Cleanup A Success!!

By Sharon Eastvold

April 25th was a perfect day for our cleanup. Nine FHNA neighbors showed up at 1pm in the Carpenters Union Hall parking lot to help clean up the trash, weeds and debris in key places around the neighborhood.

Suzanne Beeman and Vic Crowe bagged the trash along the San Mateo Sound/Art wall, as well as the cul-de-sac's at Rosemont and Granite. Susan DeRosa and Joan Davis tackled the alleys behind the car dealerships on Lomas and behind the Democratic Party headquarters on San Pedro.

Russ and Celinda Hall sprayed weed killer along the curbs and gutters of the southwestern part of the neighborhood, while I sprayed the worst sidewalk weeds in the northwestern end.

George Chavez and Ike Eastvold rolled up their sleeves and took on the alley between Valencia and Alvarado south of Mountain. Russ and Celinda Hall and myself later joined them. All five of us worked until about 5pm, totaling around 20 person hours. The weeds didn't stand a chance with Celinda wielding her weed eater like a samurai warrior. Ike attacked the overhanging tree branches with a bow saw. And George Chavez was like the Eveready Battery Bunny: he just kept working and working.

This alley, pictured below, has been a magnet for vagrants to hide their drinking and other activities. Getting it cleaned and opened up, and keeping it that way, discourages these activities.

Several neighbors who live along Alvarado showed their appreciation by presenting donations to the FHNA. Many thanks to them, and to the hard work of our nine samurai volunteers!!



Sharon Eastvold, George Chavez, Ike Eastvold, Russ Hall and Blanca. A few of the FHNA clean-up helpers



Please support the businesses that support your neighborhood association and make this newsletter possible.

Two Story Apartments Rise Above Noise Wall

Last March, we just happened to notice construction beginning in the backyard of 5304 Summer NE, immediately adjacent to the San Mateo Sound/Art wall. Unknown to us, a two-story, multiunit apartment complex had been approved by City Planning, complete with second story units rising above the protection of the 10’ noise wall.

Although the R-3 zoning for this area allows for such development under normal circumstances, we believe the City’s permit for this development should have been limited to one story by noise policies of the City’s Rank One master plan, the Comprehensive Plan. These policies require that noise analysis and mitigation be done before any development is allowed adjacent to an arterial highway like San Mateo. This was not done.

Had the City followed its own legally binding policies, we believe the conclusion would have been that the only noise mitigation for the second story would be raising the 10’ noise wall to the 23’ height of the apartments. That option clearly is a nonstarter. The 2nd story should have been denied.

When we asked City Planning to notify us of any future applications for similar development, they refused, saying notice was not required because of presumed consistency with the R-3 zone.

The traffic noise levels along San Mateo are extremely high. The City spent 3/4 million dollars building a wall to protect residents from this toxic noise; and now they have approved development which would undermine that investment, and expose people to loud traffic noise 24/7.

Freeway Sign Built in Workers Memorial Park

The huge freeway-type sign recently erected in Workers Memorial Park along San Mateo came as another surprise. Although we had participated in hearings for the San Mateo/I-40 interchange construction, this sign was never mentioned, and the project area did not include any of the Worker’s Memorial Park.

The FHNA made a public records request to the NM Department of Transportation to discover how this happened. It appears that NMDOT violated State and Federal laws, did not publish any public notice, did not solicit public comments, and did not consider other locations or designs. City Parks may have agreed to the sign, also.

Exercise Stations in Workers Memorial Park Lost

The City lost \$75,000 appropriated by the 2007 State Legislature for this PAR course project. They allowed the money to sit unused until the 2009 Legislature recalled it. The FHNA had worked hard on this for over two years.

Dewey S. Potter Jr.: Associate Broker

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Susan's Biz Buzz *By Susan DeRosa,*
Eyecatcher: Creative Photography,
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Sandra Layne opened Eyecatcher because of her love of and commitment to quality photography. This quality is what you see immediately when you visit her studio in Fair Plaza, 6001-N Lomas NE. Hung on the walls are inspired samples of what can be done with photos, posters or lithographs.

Sandra photographs weddings, special events, families, and pets, as well as doing portraits in her studio. One of her specialties is restoring old photographs.

With help from Sandra or her assistant, Amanda Winthrop, you can browse through different matts and frames to find just the right one for your image.

Sandra's photography may be viewed and purchased in her studio or on line at www.eyecatcher-sl.com. Ask about her new book of fine art photography, *The Eyecatcher*.

If you are an Albuquerque Isotopes fan, you may have seen Sandra. Shooting the Isotopes' games is one of her favorite pastimes.



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Wendy & Tim Ashby are the Coordinators for signs and newsletter distribution.

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FHNA, 1208 San Pedro NE #103, Albuquerque, NM 87110
 To volunteer, please call 255-7679

Fair Heights Neighborhood Association Membership Form

Name: _____ Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work/Alternate Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Resident –Resident Memberships per voting member is \$5.00. Business—Business Membership per business is \$15.00.

...Please make check payable to "Fair Heights Neighborhood Association" or "FHNA." Enclose with this form and mail to the address below. **Thank you!**

Fair Heights Neighborhood Survey

Your comments and concerns will be the basis for the direction this Association takes over the months to come.

1. What are your main neighborhood concerns? _____
2. A Street Captain is responsible for distributing information in a timely manner to one street (2-3 blocks). Would you be willing to be a Street Captain for your street? Yes No
3. Please check the Committees which you would be willing to help:
 Social Zoning & Planning Public Education Civic Betterment Fundraising
4. What are some topics for general membership meetings that would be of interest to you? _____

Mail to: FHNA: Membership, 1208 San Pedro NE #103, Albuquerque, NM 87110