



Letter from the SPNA Board president

By Valerie St. John

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's been a busy year for the Spruce Park Neighborhood Association, and I'd like to mention some of the highlights. Last summer's yard sale gave us all a chance to clean out our closets and to help SPNA raise over \$900 for various expenses we



incur throughout the year. Many of us caught a great bargain or two while at this sale. Our annual Halloween party and parade gave folks of all ages a chance to show off their costume creativity. Pictured at the left is my vote for best dog costume.

Councilor Isaac Benton and our own Dan Laird were instrumental in helping several neighbors get

some "re-leaf" from not having any shade on their lawns. The trees provided through this program, along with watering rings, are now looking good as the weather warms. Speaking of landscaping, the cheerful new flowers and plants at the corner of Las Lomas and University are seeming fresh for spring. A big thank you to Lisa Parker for making this planting something of which we can all be proud.

A good crowd attended our annual Easter egg hunt on April 23rd. Thanks so much to Jeff Hoehn and Charlotte Itoh and their helpers for organizing this event. Our youngsters hardly left an egg untouched or un-found in the park, as the cleanup crew can attest.

Thanks to Ann Cloud, an SPNA web site will soon be up and running. Look to it for postings of interest and upcoming events.

It's been a while since we distributed a newsletter. Much appreciation to Peter Feibelman for making it happen now.

Your neighborhood association works hard towards the preservation of our neighborhood and its special character. As we did in the past year, we will continue to stay actively involved with zoning issues that impact area properties and with development

plans proposed by UNM.



In closing, it's been a pleasure and honor to serve as your neighborhood association president for these past two years. I appreciate the support of the SPNA Board of Directors and the

many helpful suggestions, thoughts, and advice provided to me by Spruce Park residents. They have helped me better serve your needs.

Spruce Park Community Garden - an update

By John Egbert

Despite the hot, dry summer of 2010, most gardeners succeeded in growing tomatoes, peppers, swiss chard, and some people amazed themselves with large sweet potatoes and yellow and blue potatoes, as well as state fair-sized giant pumpkins.

After last year's moist winter, a handful of us grew Spring gardens of radishes, lettuces, arugula, and spinach, but so far the community garden mainly seems to come to life through summertime interest. Maybe the warm, cool, hot, and cold Albuquerque Springs play with our desires and raise concerns about entering the fray too easily. More

than once we've seen tomatoes planted too early or fruit trees plummeted by a late frost. Nevertheless, an early March through early April window of generally cool weather suggests greens, peas, and the planting of carrots and onions,

By mid-July, we began harvesting some peaches, plums, and nectarines, and later on, ample quantities of grapes. The long hot dry conditions slowed tomato development and contributed to an infestation of spider mites; tiny black living "specks" wiped out our bean crop. In July, various summer squashes began maturing and persisted into October. Suddenly gardeners were picking zinnias, various spicy peppers varieties, okra, and yes, lots of tomatoes. For many, swiss chard proved to be the overall winner by producing from late Spring through fall.

Because of prolific wintercress mustard in the alleys and yards in the neighborhood that follows winter rain and snow, we added a white veil of Agribon over our tomatoes until early July to discourage leaf hoppers carried by the mustard; and it worked. Unlike the failure of heirloom varieties in our first year, our plants did well, especially after cloud cover and occasional rain increased humidity.

This year's very dry winter and deep cold snap have minimized mustard, and some gardeners may bring back the interesting, flavorful heirlooms. (FYI, over 50 varieties are available at Alameda Nursery.)

Successful ingredients have proven to be:

continual soil enrichment with garden produced compost, heavy alfalfa mulch, drip irrigation, and regular maintenance. (Notably, these same methods would work well on any reasonably sunny neighborhood patch of ground. Any sprinkler or drip system can be dedicated; one water riser or more can be cheaply converted with pressure regulation to grow a small plot.)



In terms of conservation, the garden used \$400 worth of water last year, or \$20 per family. We have raised awareness about drip irrigation and mulch, and, of course, that growing our own flowers and food not only adds to simple pleasures and a healthy diet, but saves money, too. For everyone, the community rows provide a supplemental benefit by alleviating the need for individuals to grow beans and squash, as well as adding a backup supply of tomatoes.

All gardeners are required to participate in Spring and Fall preparation and cleanup days, actively garden their rows, and in small groups, cooperatively manage community rows, compost and mulch, water timer, and orchard and vineyard functions as well as to stay current on dues and possible assessments. Standard gardener fees are \$100 for the first year and \$50 for continuing members.

This third year, we have grown to 22 households, including three new to the garden. The community garden is located on private land at 615 Cedar NE. Visitors or prospective gardeners for 2012 should contact John Egbert (341 -9753) or Diane Glenn (246-0067).

Living Sustainably in Spruce Park:

An Interview with Bruce Milne, neighbor and UNM Professor of Biology and Sustainability

by Gayle Thayer

Q: How would you define sustainability and why is it important to strive for a sustainable lifestyle?

A: From the Brundtland (1987) commission, sustainability is the satisfaction of our basic needs - health, food, shelter, and transportation - without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy theirs. It is important to strive for a sustainable lifestyle because we live in a world where 2 billion people survive on two dollars a day or less. In New Mexico, one in six do not know where their next meal is coming from. In the U.S., we use about 40 percent of the world's resources although our population is just 4.5 percent of the total. In today's economy, every dollar of activity requires about one coffee mug's worth of oil, which is, or will soon be, on a global decline of availability. Transitioning to more aggressive energy conservation is the most cost effective response to higher fossil fuel costs, followed by green energy.

Q: What sustainable lifestyle choices have you implemented in your Spruce Park home/life?

A: In 1988, Diane and I chose to live within walking distance of work. Right away it was part of a greener lifestyle. Based on the average commute, that choice kept about 40 tons of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere while providing us exercise, sunshine, and contact with neighbors. Nineteen years ago we plowed up the front lawn and put in desert shrubs and cacti, which cut our household water use to one-third the average at the time. We subscribe to wind power through PNM and buy carbon offsets for our house and car. In January we had a solar electric system installed and now PNM owes us money! I resist flying as much as possible, especially for trips less than 450 miles. I'm about 99% vegetarian, which cuts my CO₂ emissions roughly in half (I make exceptions when my body tells me I need bison or salmon). We've had a small vegetable garden most years. I love to hang my clothes on the line and love to roast eggplants from the garden in my solar oven. The last



two years, in the Spruce Park Community Garden, our \$50 fee returned \$300 in vegetables and fruits. The social interactions with other gardeners were delightful.

Q: Which are the easiest to implement and which have the most impact?

A: They all seem easy to me because they fit my values. I like to ask two questions of others: (1) How much are you willing to spend to be more sustainable (nothing, a little, a lot); and (2) How effective do you want to be (take baby steps, be pretty effective, or be a green hero)? Once you answer those questions, you can dial in activities that fit. No-cost, baby steps? OK, then recycle, walk more, start a compost pile. Expensive, green hero? Then start an eco-village.

Q: Have you any specific advice for Spruce Park neighbors on sustainable home maintenance?

A: Start by swapping out those incandescent bulbs for CFLs. Consider adding insulation, window upgrades, an efficient furnace, water heater jacket, more efficient appliances, especially refrigerator. Put appliances on power strips that you can switch off to kill the phantom load, which is up to 15 percent these days. Turn off the computer when not in use. If you like to grow food, consider converting your yard into an edible landscape. Fruit trees do really well here. Make jam from your trees or those of generous neighbors. A drip-irrigated, mulched garden would use less water than a lawn.

Q: Anything else?

A: Recycling is great, but let's not confuse it with choices that make a bigger impact. Reduce electricity use, insulate, consolidate road trips, and shift to a more vegetarian diet.

Bruce T. Milne, Professor of Biology at the University of New Mexico since 1986, specializes in landscape ecology and applications of fractal geometry and scaling in complex systems. Professor Milne recently founded the Sustainability Studies Program at the University of New Mexico, which offers an undergraduate minor degree in sustainability studies through partnerships with the community. Off campus, he leads Foodprint New Mexico which champions the use of clean energy in the production and distribution of local, organic food as ways to build economy, improve health, and benefit biodiversity. This interview was conducted by Gayle Thayer in September 2010.

LEAST WANTED: TREE-OF-HEAVEN

by Gayle Thayer

Also known as Weed Tree, Stink Tree, Chinese Sumac, and Ailanthus, it grows throughout the Spruce Park Neighborhood (particularly in the alleys), and is an invasive threat. It is opportunistic, fast-growing (3-6 ft per year) and a prolific seeder (over 300,000 seeds per year when mature), which replaces native plants and landscaping, and forms dense thickets. It produces chemicals (one is ailanthone) that impair other plant species nearby, and are toxic to humans, causing skin rashes on contact. Its root system can be extensive and has been known to cause damage to sewers, pavement, and foundations, as it often establishes itself in crevices (i.e. next to the foundations of homes). It also spreads aggressively by root sprouts and re-sprouting rapidly after being cut.



For four years, I have been battling this tree on my property here in Spruce Park by pulling juniors out of the ground after they reach 12 inches or so in height. However, *this practice is not sufficient to get rid of the tree*. Even 12 inch-high plants have a root that can be large (in one of my recent battles, the size of a large sweet potato) and unless the entire root is pulled out of the ground (using a shovel) it will grow back! Owing to the difficulty in eradicating it, ailanthus is also sometimes nicknamed "tree from hell," or, because of its propensity for growing on abandoned and poorly maintained properties, the "ghetto palm."

Here are methods for getting rid of it:

1. **Diligent weeding and digging out roots.** Young seedlings are pretty easy to pull out of moist ground. Use a trowel to ensure you are getting the entire root.
2. **Application of herbicide.** For more established plants, or those found in places where digging is not an option (in sidewalk crevices), use a chemical called Triclopyr, which is selective for broadleaf and woody plants and will not kill grasses contacted by the spray. This herbicide is the active ingredient in Fertilome Brush Killer and Stump Killer as well as other products. Mix the product with water (dilute to 0.5% triclopyr, or as per label) and spray onto leaves and green stems, including sprouts and suckers, until thoroughly wet but not to the point of runoff. Be diligent, it has required more than one application of triclopyr to kill plants in my experience. Similarly to Roundup, this chemical is toxic and should be handled and stored as described on the label of the container in which it was purchased.
3. **Cutting down.** For larger plants and those that are mature trees, cut them down and immediately brush a Triclopyr containing product on the remaining stump (yes, the herbicide must be applied immediately after making the cut to ensure it is brought down to the root and that root sprouts don't

get a start). After cutting, for trunks less than 2 inches in diameter, drill a couple of holes down into the center stump and then apply full strength Fertilome Brush Killer and Stump Killer. For larger stumps, drill holes along the circumference of the stump (about half an inch in from the bark/edge) and then apply the herbicide. Wait a month or so to ensure the plant is dead, then grind down or dig out the stumps.

4. **Establish a thick cover of landscaping** over bare ground to minimize germination opportunities for seeds.

Regardless of the method you use, be diligent. Treated areas should be rechecked one or more times per year and any new suckers or seedlings treated (cut, sprayed or pulled) as soon as possible, especially before they are able to rebuild root reserves. Targeting removal of large seed producing female trees for control will help reduce spread of ailanthus by seed.

The SPNA needs your help to eradicate this tree from the neighborhood.

If you have questions, or need help getting rid of this invasive and toxic tree, please contact me via email: gayle.thayer@gmail.com.

Spring Cleaning? RECYCLE in Albuquerque

City of Albuquerque curbside recycling takes place for Spruce Park Neighborhood on Wednesday mornings. More information can be found at <http://www.cabq.gov/solidwaste/recycling/residential-curb-side-recycling> and below.

Newspaper, Magazines, Miscellaneous Paper Products:

Use strong twine or rope, recycling bags, or small plastic shopping bags to contain newspaper. If you use plastic shopping bags, double bag to avoid spilling.

- Place remaining paper products in recycling bags.

Plastic:

- Clean and lightly rinse the containers.
- Remove and throw away lids, caps, and pumps - they are not recyclable.
- Labels don't need to be removed.
- Crush plastic bottles so that they take up less room in your recycling container.
- Use clear plastic recycling bags, small plastic shopping bags (double bag to avoid spilling or tie in a bundle) or a 19-gallon plastic bin to collect.
- Do not include plastic bags; cling wrap; toys; medical supplies; containers that held motor oil, solvents, paint, adhesives, pesticides, or herbicides; yogurt or margarine tubs, ice cream pails, flower pots, or garden plastic.

Tin, Steel, Aerosol Cans, or Aluminum Cans:

- Clean and lightly rinse the containers.
- Labels don't need to be removed.
- Use clear plastic recycling bags, small plastic shopping bags or a 19-gallon plastic bin to collect. If you use shopping bags, double bag them to avoid spilling.

Corrugated Cardboard:

- Flatten or fold clean corrugated cardboard and tie with strong twine or rope into bundles weighing less than 50 pounds.
- Bundles should be no more than 4x2 feet.

Glass:

Because of the potential for worker injury, glass is not collected curbside. However, you may drop your glass off at one of city-wide recycling drop-off sites (<http://www.cabq.gov/solidwaste/recycling/dropoff>), the closest for us right now is at the Hilton Hotel (University & Menaul) at the NW corner of the hotel (1901 University NE).

Fluorescent light bulbs

Fluorescent light bulbs contain mercury vapor that is used to produce the light, which may be dangerous to your health and the environment, and should not be thrown in the trash. To dispose of fluorescent bulbs and other household hazardous waste such as batteries, gasoline, paint, pest poisons & herbicides, and cleaning agents take them to:

- Rinchem Company, Inc, 6133 Edith Blvd NE. Open to the Public: M-W-F 8:30AM to 4:30PM; Sat 8AM-3PM. Call 345-1650 for more information
- Or call 311 to have them picked up by the Environmental Health Department. Fluorescent lights bulbs will only be picked up from Residential properties not Commercial properties.

Electronics

Electronics contain lead (Pb) based solders and other toxic materials and therefore should not be thrown into the trash. To dispose of them safely take them to:

Enchantment Electronics Recycling
 4121 Prospect AVE
 Albuquerque, NM 87108
 (505) 232-9483

\$10 for televisions or monitors all other electronics are recycled free of charge.

Absolute Computing Solutions
 7401-C Manual Blvd NE
 Albuquerque, NM 87110
 (505) 889-0756

Recycles computers, printers and monitors- \$10 for computers and \$5 for monitors older than 2002. Otherwise free of charge.

Staples
 110242 Coors Bypass Blvd. NW
 Albuquerque, NM 87114
 (505) 890-8822

Recycles computers, laptops, printers and fax machines for \$10. Cell phones, pagers, digital cameras, keyboards, mice, and speakers are free. No television sets or floor model copiers.

Concerned about city ordinance compliance?

Submit Weed, Litter, Zoning, and Housing Code Enforcement complaints (anonymous is OK):

- Call 311 or 505-924-3450 to file a Housing Code Enforcement Complaint. Call 311 or 505-924-3850 for a Zoning or Weed and Litter Complaint
- Fill out the on-line complaint form <http://www.cabq.gov/planning/formsvcs/rescomplaint.html>

To report loud parties (UNM graduation May 14, 2011):

- Call: (505) 242-COPS (non-emergency)

Land use & zoning news

by Robert Westfall

A key responsibility of neighborhood associations is to represent the opinion of the residents before all city agencies, including the Office of Administrative Hearings (Zoning Hearing Examiner). Accordingly, SPNA continues to be involved in various land use issues.

In the last few months, there were two: The owner of 449 Ash petitioned for a special exception-variance and conditional use. After soliciting the opinions of all directly affected neighbors, the association expressed opposition this request. Still, the zoning hearing examiner

granted the special exception. The SPNA board then appealed to the City Board of Appeals, with the result that the examiner was overturned. The second issue involved two requests for special exception-variance at 1310 Marquette. Once again, after seeking the opinions of affected neighbors, the board opposed these requests. In this case, the zoning hearing examiner concurred, and the variances were denied. Subsequently, another request for special exception-conditional use was submitted for this property. Your board has taken a position of opposition to this request. The matter is pending.

... and in conclusion, from Lisa Oz, a delicious gazpacho

Yields: 4 servings (from <http://www.realage.com/eat-smart/recipefinder/lisas-gazpacho-recipe>)

- 1 can (28 ounces) crushed or diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 cup diced unpeeled cucumber
- 1/4 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1 bunch cilantro leaves, chopped
- 3 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Optional garnishes: chopped fresh parsely, diced avocado
- 1 cup tomato juice
- 1 cup diced red or orange bell pepper
- 2 green onions, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar
- 2 dashes (or to taste) hot red pepper sauce
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper (optional)

Directions

1. Place all ingredients except salt, pepper and garnishes in large bowl and combine.
2. Coarsely puree about half the mixture in a blender or food processor and return it to the bowl; stir well.
3. Season to taste with salt and pepper if desired.
4. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to 8 hours before serving.
5. Garnish as desired.

Roster of SPNA board officers and street representatives:

Ash	Valerie St. John, 441 Ash NE, SPNA board president
Roma, East	Bart Chimenti, 1502 Roma NE, SPNA board vice-president
Roma, West	James W. Carroll, 1116 Roma NE, SPNA board secretary
Spruce	John W. Rebstock, 619 Spruce NE, SPNA board treasurer
Cedar	Dan Laird, 603 Cedar NE
Las Lomas, West	Peter Feibelman, 1309 Las Lomas NE
Sigma Chi, West	Robert Westfall, 1329 Sigma Chi NE
Las Lomas, East	Pat White, 1409 Las Lomas NE
Sycamore	Gayle Thayer, 454 Sycamore NE
Ridge	Caroline Kay, 409 Ridge NE
Maple	Lorraine Doyle, 422 Maple NE