

the

Mountain Monitor

Valle Escondido..... So close to heaven, you'll never want to leave.



Happy Thanksgiving!
The time of year to give
thanks for all that we have.

Words from the Prez.....

Kathy DeLucas

This is a community of volunteers and most of these folks volunteered their time, elbow grease and professional expertise that ultimately saved the Valle thousands of dollars and made it a better place to live. Some volunteers have received small stipends, but most of these hours were spent as a volunteer. There are many new residents in the Valle, and there are lots of opportunities to help your loving community if you are able. Things I'm thankful for:

- Firefighters and crews who worked to keep Valle safe by constructing fire breaks and extinguishing the Calf Canyon/Hermit's Peak fire.
- Homeowners who spent lots of money or time or both to clean up their lots and make them safe from wildfires.
- Mark Johnson whose electric and computer expertise diagnosed and solved electrical problems on broken equipment in well houses and on mowers.

In the pages that follow, you will hear more from me and other residents about things they are thankful for this year as well as hearing from committees.

Photos by Kathy



Being Thankful During this wild and crazy year, volunteers around the Valle jumped in to make sure we all had the information we needed to deal with the fire threat that we were facing. Thankfully, fire fighters from across the country came to our state and were able to keep the flames from our area. We are all indebted to the men and women who faced danger to protect us. I wanted to draw attention to the local residents who also jumped in and found ways to not only help us during the fires, but did what they could all summer long to continue the viability of our part of the world. In the pages that follow you'll meet the folks who really make our Valle run so well!

Kathy DeLucas



Thank you Kathy for your leadership in making EV a wonderful place to live, enjoy and play. Your updates during the Fire Crisis was accurate and informative. They were a blessing to all of us and especially the out-of-towners like us. We appreciate your knowledge and your time. Thank you, Bob & Cleo
We're thankful for Kathy for her tireless efforts as our president, but more importantly for her updates during the fire. She gave us the latest facts, weather updates, links to more information AND shared her personal thoughts and fears in her eloquent writings. . We couldn't possibly have had a better person to keep us informed. Her love for the Valle shines through in all she says and does.

Bill and Cindy Davidson

Kathy's photographs are always an inspiration and a joy to behold. Peggy James

Chuck Dlabaj

Chuck Dlabaj spent countless hours repairing equipment, organizing and ordering turf chemicals, mowing fairways and fringes, and directing golf course operations. Chuck flushed and fixed gummed-up machinery after 2021 employees left chemicals in the sprayer, which basically solidified in the sprayer. Chuck patiently removed all spray nozzles, replaced pump parts, and made machinery operable again, saving the Valle huge amounts of money in repairs. Kathy DeLucas

Chuck and all the other volunteers who worked for several months cleaning up the mess from people dumping inappropriately at the closed slash pile location. Suzanne Miller

It's an unusual day that I don't see Chuck working on something in the Valle. He's up early and working somewhere to help the Valle solve any problem that crops up. Be it machinery, water issues, road improvements or getting the Friday and Sunday golf groups out on the course. He is a "Jack of all trades" Peggy James

Brett Hardy

Thanks to all, especially Brett and Jen Hardy who help me and the Valley in so many ways. Bob Clift

Brett and Jen Hardy are always on the move in the Valle

and also postponed their vacation to help with a major water issue in the Valle.

Heather Thomas and Don Skwierczynski

Brett Hardy has been instrumental in researching and implementing a well house improvement project that includes generators and well house propane heaters to prevent a disaster during electrical outages and severe weather outbreaks. Brett has also been the keeper of the corporate knowledge base and has trained our new water staff Ed Strong, and preparing the Valle for the strict and stringent Sanitary Waste Water survey coming up in the next year. Kathy DeLucas

Randall Korinek

Randall Korniek, using his professional experience worked on the lake maintenance and solved some of the Valle's erosion problems, saving perhaps thousands of dollars. Kathy DeLucas
We are so fortunate to have such handy, hard working people in the Valle and Randall is one of them. He just seems to have so many skills he can use to fix problems and he is so generous to get in there and get it done! The lake we had on the main road and the willows on Aspen Lake are some of his projects this summer. Peggy



Ed Strong

Clubhouse operations and snowplowing
 Not enough good can be said about Ed Strong. If he sees that there is a job to be done, he checks in, asks questions and then completes the task. Raised on a farm, and with a solid education and background in public works systems, Ed has excelled in learning the community water system under the mentorship of Brett Hardy. Ed conducts the daily reporting tasks, monitors the wells and storage tanks for both levels and sanitation requirements, analyzes and fixes leaks, and overall, provides all of us with clean, available drinking water. It is not a small job with an aging infrastructure that has been cobbled together throughout the years with a wide assortment of plumbing materials. In addition, Ed is our snow plow operator, having done a similar job when he lived near a ski area in Colorado. That requires many early morning hours to make roads passable for our working residents. Ed's talents are many and his experience is invaluable to the Valle.

Kathy DeLucas

Ellen and Rick Robberson

Ellen and Rick Robberson, former chairs of the Firewise committee, who have worked tirelessly, especially during this challenging year, to develop and nurture important relationships with state and county officials to help Valle obtain grants and services, such as chipper days and dumpsters, to keep residents more fire resilient.

Kathy DeLucas

Ellen Robberson for her tremendous leadership (1) providing grant clearing information to homeowners, and (2) tirelessly chairing the FW committee during the Hermit's Creek Fire
 Suzanne Miller

Elaine Pacheco

Elaine Pacheco, who using her professional background and expertise, has guided a lakes maintenance program that started last fall. Elaine has also taken on the role as Water Committee chair and is working with the Office of the State Engineer to solve legacy water rights issues and create and implement a Water Development Plan for the community to bring the association up to par with state requirements and make our reporting issues less cumbersome. Kathy DeLucas

Kendra Powell and Wanda McPherson

Kendra Powell and Wanda McPherson who took on the Lakes Committee as co-chairs, installing new signage and communicating policies and helped to solve the lakes diversion issue. Wanda also is the administrator of the Valle's Facebook Page, helping us all communicate and connect with each other on social media. Kathy DeLucas

Club House Staff

Erica, Jordanne and Tiffany have brought improvements and changes to the Clubhouse.



There is a new look to the bar and better organization that allow the ladies to serve food and drinks more efficiently. New food options grace the menu and the response to them is positive. Perking up the look of things brings new life to our classic facility and the new choices in the store are selling well.

When Covid reared it's ugly head again this summer, the staff quickly responded with the appropriate protections for themselves and their customers. We are forging new ties with the RV park, which helps both of us provide amenities for the visitors there.

PS: Jordanne makes a pretty good Bloody Mary if you're interested!



Our cheerful Clubhouse staff all season – Suzanne Miller

Financial Wizards!

A lot of money passes through the Valle and keeping track of it is no small task! There is a lot of oversight by the different groups who handle money coming in and going out to make sure we are making the best out of every dollar. There are great numbers folks who help us take advantage of ways to best plan for tomorrow to make sure we have resources for our future needs. I am not a numbers girl – my husband keeps track of that for us! I am beyond thankful we have people who understand the nuances of money and keep us in good financial standing.

Jim Miller

Jim Miller, who reconstituted the Finance Committee and developed a rigorous Capital Expenditure Program with input from all committee chairs and receiving expert advice from his committee members to ensure safe and responsible spending for the future of the Valle.

Kathy DeLucas

Bill Davidson

Bill Davidson, also a member of the Finance Committee, has taken on the challenges of insuring the Valle's assets and employees. It is a monumental task and with his keen business acumen, he is a huge asset to the Valle.

Kathy DeLucas



Mark Johnson

Mark volunteered to be the Valle's treasurer. He is working with our accounting systems to help bill paying become more efficient and requiring less paperwork. Mark is developing an electronic payment system with our bank, ensuring that payments are properly automated, properly authorized and timely. Mark is also researching the ability to receive electronic payments such as dues and fees. Mark is also the brains behind our Square system which allows staff to input detailed information when a point of sale is made.

Mark not only keeps us on track financially, he also heads the Golf Committee and plans the events and facilitates all of the parties who need to coordinate to make the tournaments happen. While this may seem like all fun and games, I'm pretty sure there are a lot of folks with opinions that he has to try and make happy. We all know just how difficult that is! Weather has played all sorts of issues this year. It is wonderful to have a flexible, easy going guy at the helm who jumps in to try and make our golf course and activities a success.

Sam Bright

Sam Bright, who as part of the Finance Committee, developed a program that shows Capital Expenditures forecast and how much we need to keep in reserves. It will fluctuate when numbers change and if spending needs to increase, it forecasts, based on forecasted income, on when dues increases might be necessary or if increases are unnecessary.

Kathy DeLucas

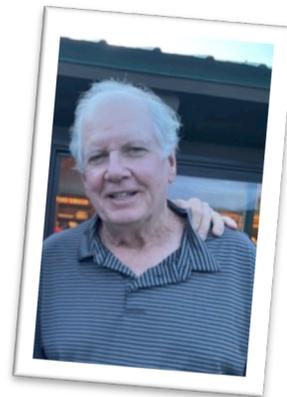
Mary Anne Fogarty

Mary Anne Fogarty was our bookkeeper for the past several years, working tirelessly to ensure vendors and employees are getting paid. This summer she left the job but has been mentoring our new bookkeeper Frankie Chamberlain. Mary Anne keeps herself available for any questions Frankie might have as she learns our systems and vendors.

Kathy DeLucas

Mike Mahoney

Mike Mahoney has organized all the user manuals for the wide assortment of equipment that the Valle uses in daily operations. He developed a maintenance plan for each piece of mechanical machinery the staff uses. Kathy DeLucas Mike is another one of those homeowners who isn't shy to roll up his sleeves and put in a hard days work to improve any area of the Valle that needs some attention. Wherever something needs to be done, he will be with the guys (or gals) who are working on it. Peggy James



Bill Record

Bill Record who was searching for volunteer opportunities, when the Valle needed a Certified Pool Operator. Bill took a two-day pool certification class and he maintained the pool chemicals and cleaned the pool twice a day, mornings and evenings, everyday, without complaint. While he received a small amount of pay, he worked harder than any amount we paid him. Kathy DeLucas

Bill Record came to the rescue for the Garage Sale helping with the set-up, picking up people's donated items and working the sale. Peggy James

Garage Sale

This year, the pool committee joined forces with the Club House group to pull off a very successful garage sale on the 4th of July. Proceeds helped both groups stretch their funds and be less reliant on the Valle for their needs. Margie Dlabaj, Sarah and Brooke Bogar, Sue Mahoney, Bill Record, Jack Hickman, Heather Thomas and many others worked to help make this a fun and rewarding project. Peggy James



Rosalinda Lacy

Rosalinda Lacy, who had the challenging task of being Clubhouse Chair this year during the fire and a Covid outbreak in the Valle. She continually makes residents' lives richer and brighter by hiring professional musicians to entertain us and provide regular Karaoke nights where residents can demonstrate their singing skills or lack thereof. Rosa also makes sure that potlucks are scheduled and everyone has fun. Kathy DeLucas

-the fun potlucks and sponsored live bands this season! Suzanne Miller

Sarah Bogar

Sarah Bogar, who is heading up the newly created Pool Committee and is taking on the challenges of researching repair and maintenance for the pool deck and guiding the budget for the popular amenity. Kathy DeLucas

Suzanne Miller

Suzanne Miller, who has taken over chairmanship of the Firewise Committee, installing new signage by the former slash pile and offering guidance and future leadership for that important committee. Kathy DeLucas

Suzanne is an organization whiz and can see the big picture! She can get you to the finish! Peggy James

Water Committee

By Elaine Pacheco



Many of us do not think twice when we turn on the water faucet and out pours water. In fact, most HOA members would agree that our water service is much more reliable than our electrical service. Water is available to our HOA members, clubhouse, pool and golf course due to the awesome efforts of the Water Committee.

Cabin owner Brett Hardy has been the key cornerstone for keeping our water system up and running. Brett has been training Ed Strong, Enchanted Circle resident, over the past year to take over operating and maintaining the water system. Many of you may also recognize that Ed plows our roads in the winter and has been a key addition for our community.

Brett and Ed can monitor the operation of our three wells remotely, which is critical for detecting leaks in the water system, especially in the winter. A special Thank You to Mark Johnson who volunteered his time and talent by setting up the remote monitoring system. Leaks in past years resulted in our HOA exceeding our water right allotment for the year. When we over divert our water, the Office of the State Engineer (OSE) can order the HOA to repay the over diversion with double the water rights. This is why it is critical for part-time homeowners to properly shut down their cabins each winter and conserve water in the summer. If a homeowner has any questions about how to properly shut down their cabins for the winter, please reach out to a member of the Water Committee.

Last winter, with the 3-day power outage in December, Committee members Brett Hardy, Matt Bogar, Johanna Sheppard, Ed Fogarty and Brian Van Nevel operated a borrowed generator to keep the Gilliam well pumping. This dedicated group went above and beyond to keep the taps flowing by babysitting the generator in a very cold well house. As a result, improvements were made to each well house and the committee is researching generators for the County well.

Matt Bogar has transitioned away from the Chair of the Committee but remains on the committee. Elaine Pacheco was added to the Committee this fall and will wear the chair hat for as long as the committee wants her.

The Water Committee accomplished the following activities this past year:

- Prepared for the Sanitary Survey required by the NM Environment Department, which was put off for another year by NMED.
- Recoated the sanitary slabs in the well houses at County and Gilliam Wells.
- Installed a power transfer switch at the County and Gilliam Wells to allow switching from electric to generator power.
- Installed heaters, propane tanks and insulation in each well house to prepare for the winter.
- Installed prairie dog fencing around each well house to prevent prairie dog intrusion.
- Installed a new "brain" at the 9 Fairway Well as a result of the power glitches, brown-outs and power outages in the Valle. The new brain allows the system to be reset remotely.
- Serviced all fire hydrants and flushed half of them.
- Capped and sealed an old abandoned well located south of Sid Road.
- Obtained daily meter readings and submitted quarterly readings to the OSE.
- Submitted quarterly water use readings to the NM Taxation and Revenue department to pay gross receipt tax for our water used.
- Researched well drillers to seal the 5 unused wells to comply with OSE regulations.
- Contracted Bo Tucker to get a proposal to get the second water tank refurbished.
- Helped homeowners with their cabin water system questions.

The Valle Escondido Board of Directors

Our Board Members have done a great job this year looking after the Valle in very trying times. While we had some changes in July with elections, I'd like to thank both of the Boards who looked out for our Valle during thick and thin. There were tough decisions to make and they rose to the challenge. Let's give all of these folks a big THANK YOU!

Kathy Delucas, Bob Clift, Matt Bogar, Brian Van Nevel, Jim Miller, Sue Mahoney, Bill Record, Jack Hickman, Jim Sorenson and Ed Fogarty.

In some communities these folks would be paid or compensated in some way. Our Board is the best! They give of their time and energy to help all of us have this little slice of heaven and the only perk is knowing your community is thriving. So, thank you for all that you do for all of us! You are the very best of the best.

To tag along on that, we have a great group of committee members and people who assist them to get a lot of territory covered. From lakes to roads, to golf and the clubhouse and more - we depend on homeowners to fill the gap and assist the board maintain a high quality of living. This work is often behind the scenes, but we see evidence of your work!

Rio Fernando Fire Department

Can we ever thank this group of Volunteers enough? They look after us 365 days of the year. Each Fourth of July they come to liven up our parade and thrill the kiddos with sirens and getting close-ups of their equipment. We honor them with our Valle Escondido Open to remind them how important they are to us! Our donation from the tournament was \$2,820 including mulligan fees. This year they have responded to more than one call in the Valle to put out fires that could easily have spread to our homes. One fire was on Rova and another was on Cielo Vista.

During the worst part of the fires they were in our Valle helping us understand the threat and to comprehend how to protect our homes and ourselves. Not many of us run toward danger, but these men and women do. Thank them any way you can. Monetary donations are always accepted and helping them improve their equipment can only help us as a community. There is a donation box in the Club house, but you can also mail a donation at: Rio Fernando Fire Department

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Ed and Mary Anne Fogarty

This twosome kept us in the good graces with our financials over the past few years and we appreciate the time and energy they gave to us!

Jim Miller might have captured the best overall concept for this special edition.

Our community is our very best asset. We are a group that has come together from near and far and the feeling of belonging is what makes this a home. We are a group of caring people that are fun and joyful. There is magic in our Valley that sits between the mountain ridges and it calls to us whenever we are away.

FireWiseCommittee

The FireWise Committee had an active season in 2022. The Hermits Peak / Calf Canyon Fire brought considerable attention to having and maintaining a defensible space around our cabins. Fire fighters toured Valle Escondido during the fire to become familiar with our Valle and to plan for resources needed to protect defensible property. Cabin owners want to ensure their cabins are considered defensible by firefighters by following the guidance made available by the FireWise Committee. Educational materials are available in the Clubhouse Annex and on the HOA website. The FireWise information also educates cabin owners on the “Ready”, “Set”, “Go” evacuation process which was activated in our community. El Valle was placed in the “Ready” mode for the Hermits Peak / Calf Canyon Fire.

The Committee hosted three chipper day events for the community. Two Taos County chipper days were held on July 30th and October 1st. Kit Carson also participated with slash reduction with a curbside chipper day on August 15th. With the close of the slash pile, residents are encouraged to take advantage of chipper days to maintain a defensible space around their cabin. Chipper days and curb side chipping are posted in advance on the HOA website and in the Mountain Monitor. Please review the website and Mountain Monitor to keep up to date with activities occurring in our community.

The Defensible Space sign project started in 2021 and continued this year. Signs were distributed to cabin owners that worked on their property to improve their defensible space. Judie Maurelli heads up the sign program. The FireWise Committee requests that homeowners complete a form of work performed to assist in the FireWise recertification process. Please reach out to Judie (judiemaurelli@msn.com) to obtain a form to document the work completed to obtain a sign.

The FireWise Committee participated as a stakeholder in updating the Taos County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for 2022. The plan allows the county to be eligible for state and federal grants related to wildfire protection. The plan follows the national Community at Risk rating system to evaluate the risk from wildfire to communities in the Wildland-Urban Interface. Valle Escondido is in a Wildland-Urban Interface and received a high wildfire risk rating. The rating for Valle Escondido was also high in the 2016 CWPP update. This rating impacts insurance rates for the community but also makes the area a high priority for grants and forest thinning projects. Many residents jumped at the opportunity to participate in a land thinning grant earlier in the year. Administrative issues are being resolved so that the county can move forward with the land thinning grant.

Each year the FireWise Committee completes a recertification process to ensure Valle Escondido remains a FireWise Community. Being a recognized FireWise Community helps with home insurance rates and educating cabin owners regarding maintaining a defensible space. The recertification process will be completed by the end of this year.

The FireWise Committee consists of Ellen Robberson, Chair and members Rick Robberson, Suzanne Miller, Judie Maurelli, Elaine Pacheco and Jeanie Bassett. The Committee would like to thank Ellen Robberson for chairing the committee the last 3 years. Ellen will be stepping away from the Committee but has graciously agreed to continue following up on the land thinning grant request by cabin owners. Elaine Pacheco will also be stepping away from the FireWise Committee to chair the Water Committee. As this article indicates, this Committee is critical for keeping our certification as a FireWise Community and participating in grants available to our community. The Committee is looking for new members. If you are interested, please contact Susanne Miller (suzannemiller5088@gmail.com).

The Golf Crew

Much thanks are due to the employees and Valle residents who managed to rehabilitate our course after a year when things went south. Michael Davenport took the lead and his experience working at Taos Country Club helped out. He was a quick learner and assistance from members with their own experience jumped in to help. High elevation courses are a different breed. He was willing to accept advice from Brett Hardy and our turf advisor John King. Michael expanded forward tee boxes without being asked and cares deeply about the course. When John King said the Valle would likely lose several greens due to the lack of fungicide from 2021, Michael worked hard to bring the greens back into better condition than they were in the previous years. Lastly, Michael predicted the first snowfall, and put the fungicide/snow mold on just before the cold frost to keep the mold from growing underneath the snow. It's clear that Michael is a dedicated worker who loves this place as much as we do.

Jason Ruscoe has learned new skills like mowing greens and fertilizing to keep the courses playing well. He was instrumental in mowing fairways, greens and fringes and trimming the course for our paying customers and homeowners. He has kept the entrance to the Clubhouse looking smart and well kept. He has a great attitude and is always willing to help in any area. He loves this area and we are very thankful to have him.

Maurice Abeyta joined the Valle as an all around handyman late summer and his technical expertise in hooking up and trouble shooting electronics has been very helpful around the Clubhouse. Without Maurice, happy hours would not be the same as we wouldn't have karaoke with the smart TV that he connected to our WiFi. In addition to his brains, he has the brawn to tackle tough physical jobs, and for us

Great times in the Valle!



Wrapping It Up!

Across the board, we've all learned some large lessons the past few years! We've focused on our health and personal connections while Covid kept us in flux. This year, the fires taught us to take nothing for granted. Fires take what they want and leave nothing but ashes behind.

Find out what matters to you and work to make it the best you can. We live in an amazing place and it will take many of us to keep it moving forward for another fifty years. Add your skills to the place you call home and we will all work together to have many years together in this beautiful place called Valle Escondido.

MAY YOUR
HOLIDAYS BE
WONDERFUL!

