

# Our Community News

Reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area.

Volume 1 Number 9 — December 7, 2001

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# Funding for Highway 105/I-25 Interchange Reinstated

By Judy Barnes, Editor

In the August issue of *Our Community News*, we reported on some road improvements in the works for the Tri-Lakes community. One of these improvements is a new bridge to replace the existing Highway 105 bridge over Interstate 25. The new bridge, along with new northbound and southbound ramps to and from I-25, is part of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) I-25 Corridor Improvements Project. The new bridge will have a total of six lanes, two lanes each way plus turn lanes, and a 12-foot wide pedestrian-bike lane. The proposed 2nd Street extension will connect with the new bridge.

The old Highway 105 bridge over I-25 was pronounced obsolete by the Federal Highway Administration, after observation that the traffic over the bridge is far greater than the bridge was designed to handle. In the past ten years, the number of vehicles crossing the bridge has increased from 56,000 to 66,800 per day. The number of daily crossings is projected to be 86,800 in 20 years.

In September the state put on hold the \$29 million Highway 105 interchange project and other road work

around the state because of a projected budget deficit that could reach \$300 million. However, on November 16, the State Transportation Commission put the project back on track. The extension of Powers Boulevard to Interquest Parkway was also resurrected. Construction on the Monument project could begin next summer

In addition to the Highway 105 bridge and Monument interchange, Colorado Department of Transportation has three projects in the works that include the Baptist Road Interchange, Northgate Interchange, and improvements along I-25 between those two interchanges. Partly as a result of the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Air Force has limited the alternatives that CDOT could present at the public meeting originally scheduled for November 7; hence that meeting was postponed. Consequently, the Baptist Road public meeting that was planned for December 4 was postponed. Meanwhile, traffic studies are under way, as are environmental studies of wetland and mouse habitats within the Baptist Road vicinity.

# Forest Lakes hearing postponed to January 15

The County Planning Commission hearing on the Forest Lakes Residential Project has been postponed until Tuesday, January 15, 9 am, County Building, 27 E. Vermijo, 3rd Floor Hearing Room.

If the Planning Commission arrives at a recommendation for approval or denial at that hearing, the Board of County Commissioners will then hold a hearing and make a final decision. Opinions and comments concerning this project should be sent to the El Paso County Planning Department (Attn: Carl Schueler), 27 East Vermijo Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80903.

According to Schueler, El Paso County Assistant Director of Planning, the postponement came at the request of the applicant, the Schuck Corporation.

The proposal, based on a sketch plan approved about 15 years ago, calls for 467 dwelling units on approximately 990 acres located at the western end of Baptist Road, primarily on the former Beaver Creek Ranch. The land is currently zoned for five-acre parcels. The proposed Preliminary Plan and Rezoning request calls for a clustered design with areas of urban density coupled with open space and recreational use of two lakes.

Further information on the Forest Lakes Residential Project is at www.ourcommunitynews.org. *Our Community News* carried the story "December hearing planned for controversial Forest Lakes project" in our November 2 edition.

# Triview Metro District votes property tax increase for Jackson Creek

By John Heiser

At its November 29 meeting, the Board of Directors of the Triview Metropolitan District unanimously approved an increase in the District's property tax mill levy from 20 to 25. The change will cost Jackson Creek residents about \$46 per \$100,000 of property value. The increase could appear as soon as January for property owners who have property taxes included with their mortgage payments.

The tax increase does not require a vote of residents because it does not exceed the mill levy cap of 25 approved by the landowners when the District was created. According to Peter Susemihl, attorney for the District, "The decision is the Board's." Susemihl noted that the 25 mill cap was based on the 1996 factor of .108 for determining assessed value from actual value. Since the current factor is .0915, the mill rate could go as high as 29.5 without an election.

Rick Blevins of the Jackson Creek Vision Development Company reported that the bondholders requested the mill levy increase because of concerns

about possible leveling off in revenues over the next few years and increasing costs to maintain infrastructure. Blevins said, "20 [mills] was artificially low." The District has in excess of \$12 million of privately held bonds, some of which pay more than 12% interest. According to Susemihl, all of the property tax revenue must be used to pay debt service whereas user fees are applied to operations and maintenance and tap fees are applied to capital improvements. Susemihl said, "[The mill rate increase] will help with debt payments." Blevins added, "We are searching for places to help the District finance its operations."

Bud Weiss, Triview Director, said, "We need to do what is best for the District. The bonds are hanging over the heads of the homeowners."

The Triview Board discussed preparing materials for interested residents explaining the need for a tax increase.

Further information about property taxes and special districts is at www.ourcommunitynews.org.

# Three Tri-Lakes area fire organizations conduct landmark joint study

By Russ Broshous

After eight years of talking about it, the Tri-Lakes and Wood-moor~Monument Fire Protection Districts and the Town of Palmer Lake have agreed to jointly sponsor a consultant study on ways to improve emergency services throughout the Tri-Lakes area.

On Monday, November 26th, the Emergency Services Education and Consulting Group (ESECG) of Portland, Oregon hosted a kick-off meeting for Board members and other officials of the three participating entities. Bruce Caldwell, ESECG's lead consultant, noted that, while much work needs to be done, he hopes that, at least some preliminary findings of the study can be provided to study sponsors by early March, with the final report to follow a month or two later. Sponsors will review drafts and interact with the consultant group at each stage of the effort. Thus, the time schedule is as much dependent on the sponsors' abilities to do their part on a timely basis as it is on the consultant. So far, Caldwell says, the effort to gather preliminary data has been exemplary; and he fully expects that emphasis on 'getting-on-with-the-job' will continue to be a priority for all parties.

Tri-Lakes District Chairman Oscar Gillespie is "...very happy the work is finally underway." He hopes the study will provide a roadmap for emergency service improvements throughout the area. Woodmoor~Monument Chairman Dick Crowell, fully concurs, "We all have

been working on this for some time...and to finally be underway with the feasibility study is very gratifying for us all."

Mayor Nikki McDonald of Palmer Lake is equally hopeful. Among the study sponsors, Palmer Lake is unique in that most of its fire and emergency services are now provided through its volunteer fire department and through an ambulance service arrangement with an adjacent fire district. While she is, "very hopeful the study will suggest feasible ways to improve service for town residents," she understands that any such arrangement will require tax dollars from Palmer Lake residents and must, therefore, have their approval. She also does not want the study to overlook the valuable contribution of Palmer Lake's corps of volunteers.

Even though proposals to study ways to improve emergency services throughout the area have been on-going for some time, recent attention has resulted in part from the efforts of the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) that initiated petition drives in both fire protection districts. While the petitions varied in each district and were never completed in the Tri-Lakes District, NEPCO President Steve Sery believes, "Their greatest impact has been to emphasize that voters in both districts want action ...and will stand behind their respective boards if it is taken. To their credit, both Fire District Boards felt that the time was ripe for action, and they moved aggressively to follow through."

Still, there are areas of concern. During the past few months, for example, key members of the North End Fire Chief's Group discontinued automatic mutual aid to the Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District, following Woodmoor~Monument's lead in late September. *Automatic mutual aid* means that, whenever a call for service is made anywhere in the area, all available districts respond automatically. Absent such an agreement, districts will respond to help another district only when asked, potentially increasing emergency response time. With the study agreement in place, the Woodmoor Monument District has since reinstated automatic aid. However, the North End Group districts apart from Woodmoor~Monument – importantly, the Donald Wescott District in Gleneagle, the Black Forest District to the east, and the Larkspur District in Douglas County – have not.

In addition, Palmer Lake has recently cancelled its ambulance service agreement with the Tri-Lakes District, and replaced it with one with the Larkspur Fire Protection District. According to Mayor McDonald, this

action was taken based on the perception that substantial growth and the demand for ambulance service it imposes within the Tri-Lakes District has made the burden of servicing Palmer Lake more difficult for Tri-Lakes. Palmer Lake decided, therefore, to contract elsewhere. While the Tri-Lakes District vigorously disputes this assertion, Palmer Lake has already taken the action.

Finally, while not a part of the study, the Donald Wescott District has been faced with severe financial constraints over the past year – namely, the discovery that the County Assessor had overtaxed some of the District's former residents in the past, and the resultant ruling by the Assessor that these funds had to be repaid. Now, Donald Wescott Chief Bill Sheldon reports that all necessary repayments have been made this tax year, so the district is able to continue moving forward, improving service to its residents.

The important point is that the joint study effort now underway has the potential to address and resolve all of these issues and more. The study will be exploring ways (1) to avoid duplication and waste in area-wide equipment purchases and in meeting construction funding, (2) to improve emergency service training and responsiveness throughout the area, and (3) to examine service boundaries in light of the location of existing fire stations, including those facilities outside the service areas of study, to minimize the need for future capital expansion.

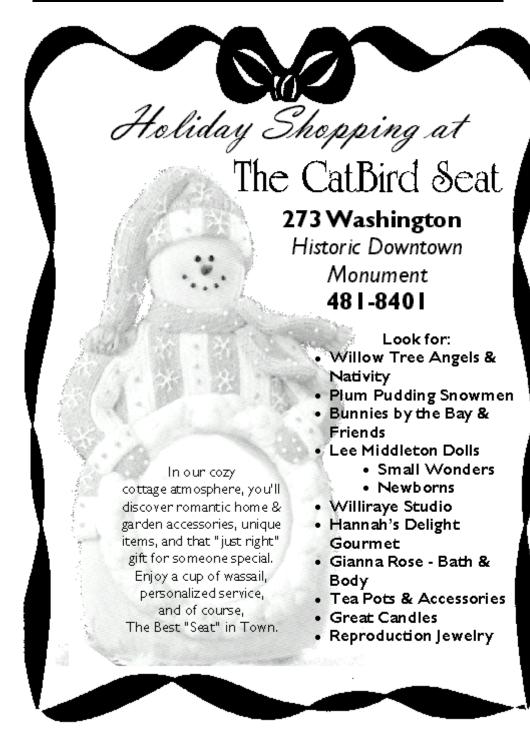
If the joint study achieves its objectives, Palmer Lake may well become part of a unified fire district, obtaining its fire protection and emergency medical response needs from its own district, not by contract from outside sources; automatic mutual aid can be restored among all parties in the area, and – above all – the quality and responsiveness of the area's emergency services can be enhanced for years to come.

This is a tall order, but the District Board Chairmen and the Palmer Lake Town Mayor are all very hopeful that this can become a reality in the near future.

The photos on the facing page show the primary stations for the Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department, Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District, and the Woodmoor~Monument Fire Protection District.







# **Triview Metro District to prepare** water study for Wal-Mart

By John Heiser

On November 29, the Board of Directors of the Triview Metropolitan District that serves Jackson Creek, unanimously voted to direct their engineering firm, Nolte and Associates, to prepare a water resource report needed as part of Goldberg Properties' possible application to El Paso County for a Baptist Road Wal-Mart Supercenter. The approval came despite Wal-Mart's refusal to pay for the cost of the study.

Ron Simpson, Triview Manager, estimates the report will cost the District \$15,000 and will take four to six weeks to complete. Preparation of the study has been delayed several months awaiting a letter of intent from Wal-Mart. A letter of intent from Wal-Mart dated November 26 was distributed at the Board meeting. It states that in the event the store is built, Wal-Mart will petition for inclusion in the Triview District. The letter makes no mention of reimbursing the District for the cost of the study or any other costs associated with the project. Such reimbursement could be covered in a future agreement between the company and the District.

If Wal-Mart fails to pay the costs, Jackson Creek residents and businesses in the District must absorb them. Peter Susemihl, attorney for the District, stated, "There is some risk there. It

is a risk worth taking." He also said, "There is better than a 50-50 chance [the Wal-Mart] will be built somewhere in Triview." Despite recent reports that one or more possible locations near Highway 105 have been discussed with Wal-Mart, Simpson reported that the company is committed to using the 30 acre parcel on Baptist Road directly across from King Soopers.

The latest site plan shows a 186,247 square foot store (4.28 acres) with grocery, garden shop, and auto center; 18.3 acres of parking lot for 922 cars; and two 1.3 acre satellite businesses including a filling station. Goldberg submitted a similar application for a 24-hour per day Supercenter on the same parcel to the Town of Monument in 1999. Goldberg put that request for annexation, zoning, and site plan approval on hold after the Public Works Committee asked that Baptist Road improvements be built prior to opening the store. The Monument Planning Commission and Board of Trustees never held hearings on that application.

One of the anticipated obstacles to building the store in the County is the need for the Town of Monument to approve use of land within Town boundaries as part of the extension of Jackson Creek Parkway south of Baptist Road to serve as a main entrance to the store. If the

project were approved in the County, the Town would not receive any tax revenue from the store and would lose sales tax revenue to the extent Wal-Mart sales were taken from stores within the Town.

Further information on the Wal-Mart proposal is at www.coalitiontlc.org/wal-mart.htm



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# Sucking on straws: The water supply in Colorado

By Chris Pollard

So everything here is beautiful. The climate is nice and the views are great. But in order to live here we rely on a fundamental resource – water. Colorado is a fairly new state and also happens to be a rather dry one. You might have noticed that we do have some water around, flowing in the Colorado, Arkansas and Platte rivers but partly because of the state's newness, that water is mostly spoken for by users downstream and out-

side of the state. Colorado Springs and Denver, having been cities for quite a long time, have managed to get the rights to some of this water so their water supply is adequate and, more importantly, renewable. Every year it snows and rains, the water and melt water flow down from the mountains, the cities purify it and the city dwellers drink it, wash in it and use it for many other purposes.

The situation for the area served by this

In order to

live here, we

rely on one

fundamental

resource —

water.

newspaper is, however, rather different. With the exception of the Town of Palmer Lake that gets much of its water from a limited supply of surface water from the mountains behind the town, the rest of the area gets its water from wells.

How does this work? It turns out that the Tri-Lakes area is above a series of very old underground reservoirs, more correctly called aquifers,

> that stretch from Colorado Springs to Boulder. They

only go up to the mountains that we call the Front Range or, locally, Rampart Range. They don't go under the mountains but end where the steep slopes begin. The water in the lower aquifers isn't renewable. It got there millions of years ago and the rain and snow we get doesn't refill the lower reservoir.

These aquifers aren't exactly like an underground tank – they are actually composed of sand, shale and porous rock. This complicates things when we try to pump out water. If we try to pump too fast, the level of water in the well goes down. The distribution of the water is also not even; there are pockets where it accumulates.

So why should we be concerned? The Tri-Lakes area is, as I said, almost totally dependent on this groundwater resource and in reality it is not infinite in size. I have tried to quantify the amount and the use through research over the past few years. I also spent time talking to Phil Steininger of the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation Dis-

trict and researching the various water resource web sites. The final pieces of the puzzle came from the USGS website that details test well water depths in the local area and a very recent conference Troubled Waters – Denver Basin at risk on water resources in the area south of Denver. With recent housing developments in the Monument area asking for increased densities, and usually getting approval for them from El Paso County Government, there have been concerns over the real availability of water. There has also been a trend away from the 'cultivated prairie' type of garden to a more typical irrigated Kentucky Blue Grass that is extremely water intensive.

According to different sources there are between 200 and 400 million acre feet of water in the combined aquifers – remember that this 'lake' does stretch all the way to Greeley in the North and out to Limon in the East. What are *acre feet*? Well, one *acre foot* is the amount of water that

would cover an acre of ground to a depth of one foot. Coincidentally, we get about one foot per acre in rain and snow.

How much is an acre foot in real terms? An acre foot is 326,000 gallons. How much do you use? On average, in a house in the Woodmoor area, where large lawns are the exception rather than the rule, a family will use about 1/3 of an acre foot or about 9000 gallons a month.

So how much is available from the aquifer?

Experts contend that only 1/5th of the water in the aquifers is available or removable so the finite supply is 40 million acre feet. Ok – but that needs to last a long time – so one number that comes up is 300 years. That seems large enough for a permanent community to survive. So we divide the 40 million by 300. That says we can use 133,333 acre feet per year. If a household were to use the Woodmoor average of 1/3 of an acre foot per year then the aquifers could sup-

port 400,000 households. How would this be allocated? The aquifers cover some 6,000 square miles (about 60 by 100) and the area served by this newspaper, County Line Road to the North, mountains to the West, North Gate Road to the South and Highway 83 to the East is about 56 square miles or 1/100 of the aquifer area. So if the aquifers were evenly spread out we'd be good for 4,000 houses. That's not good. That's much too close to the number of households already here.

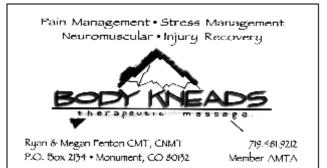
Is this then a problem? Recently, a number of articles in the Denver and Colorado Springs papers and, in late November a conference on the front range water supply, have asserted that, yes, we are starting to see problems. Wells in Douglas County are dropping in level. The towns of Castle Rock and Parker have started to look at ways to add to their water supply options by building new reservoirs.

What do we know about water in our particular area to indicate if we do or don't have a problem? This becomes more difficult. Reports on the deep wells run by the Town of Monument and Woodmoor do not as yet indicate any lowering of levels. But there are areas where information points in a different direction. The USGS (United States Geological Survey) has it's own wells in this area. The depth of water in these wells is regularly monitored and the reports are available on the Internet at http://water.usgs.gov/nwis.

Some of these wells show no reduction in level but a few show accelerating reduction in the level over the last few years.

Author's Note: Trying to come up with real numbers for water availability has been very difficult. It appears to be quite a sensitive subject when brought up. I have not been able to review the operation of our other local water districts but found that the Woodmoor system was set up around a conservation plan that had a goal of 300 year usage. There have been rumors of private wells going dry but the information is sparse and confounded by the fact that some wells were drilled in marginal areas to begin with, for example the area close the mountains. Information related to wells would be welcomed so that we can get a better picture of what is really happening in the local area. The numbers used were taken from a variety of documented sources. I have never seen an analysis like the one I presented here – corrections and suggestions are welcomed.

Watch *Our Community News* in the coming months for more on this important issue.



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# **Tri-Rec workshop yields** valuable guidance

By Russ Broshous, President Tri-Lakes Recreation District

On November 12th, the Tri-Lakes Parks and Recreation District celebrated its first year in existence by hosting a workshop in Palmer Lake. The workshop was open to all interested residents. More than forty representatives of local area governments, special districts, homeowners associations, and other interested groups were invited to attend... and did.

The workshop's purposes were (1) to present to attendees the results of a post-election survey of voters conducted by district supporters on its behalf, (2) to outline the current thinking of the District's Board of Directors based on that survey and other developments during the year concerning what, if any, ballot issues ought to be presented for voter consideration at the special district election in May of next year; and (3) to solicit input from attendees on matters presented at the workshop and any other issues they wanted to raise.

Almost all attendees were in full agreement with the Board's conclusions drawn from the voter survey; namely, the District's program presented to voters in November, 2000 was far too broad, information about the program was too little too late, and the tax issues presented for approval were thought to be too risky for property owners. The voters also felt that the ice rink and lake amenities were the least desirable parts of an otherwise too complicated program, although they strongly supported trails, open space and the recreation center, especially if it were not connected with the YMCA as was previously proposed. This latter preference did not reflect any particular voter negativity concerning the YMCA as an organization. Rather, it reflected voter preferences opposing the provision of public funds to a private entity, especially if user fees would be required of district taxpayers.

All of these were constructive observations, and the Board was listening. The District's Board presented its current view that it should present two separate questions to the voters: one aimed at the acquisition and maintenance of open space and trails, focusing particularly on the expansion of a Tri-Lakes area trail network and on the acquisition of the Ben Lomond Mountain property as publicly-accessible open space. The second question would address the construction of a TriLakes Community Center that would include a pool and other forms of indoor recreation, but would also include meeting rooms, rooms for various senior citizen activities, a home for Tri-Lakes Cares, and other community uses.

Unlike the proposal in November 2000, the Community Center facility would be available to District residents with no user fees. Those residing outside the boundaries of the District could use the facility only when it is not otherwise fully in use by residents and, then, only after payment of an established user fee not unlike the Y's. Those who had previously 'opted out' of the District could not use the facility unless they petitioned to opt back into the District and paid any back taxes.

The participants enthusiastically received these ideas, many offering constructive suggestions to improve the proposed program. For example, one participant suggested the District Board contact the Pikes Peak Library Board to see if they might want to participate in the Community Center design and operation so the facility would have yet another benefit to the community.

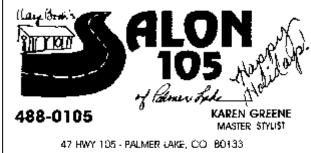
Some felt the YMCA's announced plans for a Recreation Center in the Tri-Lakes might put a damper on any Tri-Rec Community Center proposal; but the consensus was that Tri-Rec's pro-

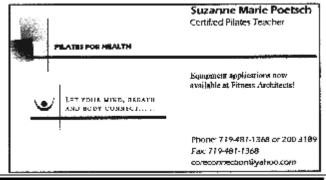
posal was significantly different from the Y's - e.g. no resident user fees; a priority of use for district residents; and a start date for the Tri-Rec facility which would likely occur in 2003/2004, some two years earlier than the best case date the YMCA has recently announced.

By any measure, the workshop was well worth the effort... and certainly a great benefit to the Tri-Rec Board. For this, the Board expresses its appreciation to all attendees. In fact, if any other residents wish to provide input to the Board on this program, they can still do so by providing

comments at any regular Tri-Rec Board meeting or by writing the Board of Directors at:

Tri-Lakes Parks and **Recreation District** Post Office Box 2246 Monument, CO 80132.







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### **Letters to Our Community**

ture improvements are not the responsibility of

A Classic Homes correction

The Jackson Creek area is part of the Regency

Park Master Plan. There are multiple landowners

in the Master Plan: Jackson Creek Land Co.

(owns the largest percentage), Western National

Bank, and Pinetree Properties that I know of,

that is ultimately responsible for the construction

and maintenance of the arterial roads and collec-

tor streets within Regency Park. For example,

Leather Chaps Drive and Lyons Tail Road fall

under the collector road classification. Triview

the tax service on the property.

Metropolitan District looks to the owner to

install the arterial and collector streets that

affect their property and then issues bonds to

pay for them that are eventually repaid by

The developer of the lots installs the residen-

tial streets and those are not reimbursed with

bonds but the District is required to maintain

One of requirements of the Master Plan was

a comprehensive traffic study that addresses how this Master Plan affects the adjoining

roads. Based on traffic counts, it states when improvements to adjoining roads need to be

completed. This plan is part of the Town's

review process and each Plat that is brought

in for approval in the Master Plan is re-

viewed against this study. If it does not con-

Where their roads meet the boundaries of the

Master Plan, i.e. the County at Baptist Road,

they have to work with those entities to

complete those improvements. The cur-

rent issue with Baptist Road is a ques-

tion regarding sight visibility not traffic

count and Mr. Glenn has said that the

County is in the process of adding a

How does Classic fit into this? Classic

Homes' has bought or is under contract to purchase parcels of land from Jackson

right turn lane to alleviate that concern.

form, a new study is required.

Triview Metropolitan District is the entity

Classic Homes.

there may be more.

As the following letter explains, infrastruc-

The November 2 Our Community News article, "An Accident Waiting to Happen," implied that Classic Homes, one of the Jackson Creek builders, should have built a right-turn lane on Baptist Road for westbound cars to turn onto Leather Chaps Drive.

As described in the article, the turn lane is now going to be funded by the Baptist Road Rural Transportation Authority, BRRTA. According to Ron Simpson of the Triview Metropolitan District, "BRRTA was specifically established to decide how to improve Baptist Road. BRRTA is the appropriate entity to construct the right turn lane." Simpson thinks there is still a chance the turn lane will be constructed before winter. The County surveyed the intersection but snow and cold temperatures delayed further work for several weeks. Work on the turn lane has now resumed.

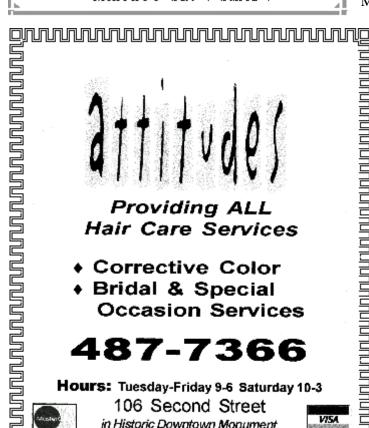
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I hope this paints a clearer picture of the basic structure and relationship between the parties involved. We appreciate your willingness to correct the past article.

Thank you.

Joe Loidolt, Classic Homes

### Some thoughts on water

I find the recent interest in water issues to be curious. First, the problem is not new, it has been addressed over the past 10 years by many groups and efforts at all different levels of government except the State, which is unfortunate, since the state is the controlling authority.

Water issues are complex and involve the basic quality of life for everyone in our state, since we live in a semi-arid climate and water makes the difference between a blooming garden and dead grass.

First, let us list some of the issues: 1) water availability, 2) water quality, 3) water distribution, 4) wastewater water handling, 5) recreational uses (lakes and golf courses), 6) fire protection, 7) ownership of water, 8) water rights for runoff, 9) water storage rights, 10) renewable vs. non-renewable water sources, 11) funding for improvements and acquisition of water rights, and 12) water tap fees by governmental agencies.

Second, let us see who some of the players are: 1) State of Colorado (Water District Commissioner), 2) El Paso County (300 year water rule), 3) Towns of Monument and Palmer Lake, 4) Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District, 5) Triview and Forest Lakes Metro Districts, 6) other water and sanitation districts, 7) Upper Monument Water Resources Group, and 8) various committees in the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG).

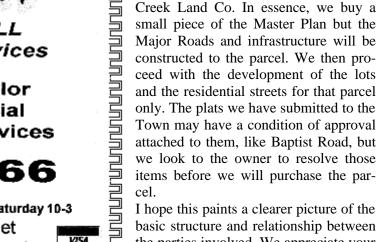
Next, let us consider how interconnected many of these issues can be. One popular issue is to use "brown" water for irrigating the Woodmoor Golf course. "Brown" water is water that reused after it has been processed by a wastewater treatment facility on Monument Creek. Some of the issues are: 1) who owns the water, 2) where will the water be stored, probably in Lake Woodmoor, recently acquired by Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District, 3) a pipeline has to be built to move the water from Monument Creek to Lake Woodmoor. It has only reached Hwy 105 and must be completed by the Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District, 4) what is the rate for the user to pay in using brown water for irrigation. It should be less than that normally charged to regular customers. However, actual 'brown' water will not be used, but the credits for the effluent will be used in lieu of the water. The actual water to be used will be removed from Monument Creek a few hundred yards upstream from the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Another issue is how much water is needed to sustain what kind of development on a particular piece of land. Unless renewable runoff water is being used, both the county and towns limit the growth by the amount of water lying underneath a piece of land. The State law dictates that the 100 year water availability rule applies, but the county has adopted the more restrictive 300 year water availability rule. Usually a water resource engineer is needed to properly evaluate the amount of water lying underneath a parcel of land. Then each type of development, say a single family equivalent (SFE) needs how much wa-

ter versus a commercial development project that needs more water. These calculations are not simple, but may involve such things as fixture unit counts. Each governmental entity has the right to use its own rules.

Needless to say, we do not need to re-invent the wheel in dealing with water issues. We have

(Continued on page 7)



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many official groups already organized to deal with these issues. The County and the Town of Monument have funded studies in the past twelve months to address some of these issues. What is needed is greater public understanding of the complexities and greater public involvement in the already established committee system.

Leon W. Tenney

# Concerns about the Monument Comp Plan update

As a participant in the Town of Monument Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, I have noticed a disturbing trend in the last couple of meetings.

Prior to these recent meetings the proceedings were part information gathering and part education. While the pace of progress was limited, there didn't seem to be any overt direction of the planning process. However, that all appeared to change when the organizer of the meeting changed.

With the change in organizer, things started to happen rather faster, but I sensed a certain amount of direction being brought to the process that was not so useful. Despite a commonly expressed goal that the areas under consideration should not become a 'North Academy' of big box stores but rather attempt to retain and amplify the present character of the Town we were rather strangely informed of the futility of attempts to resist.

The last meeting held on Tuesday December 4th was even stranger. Prior to the meeting, certain sections of the plan, together with a draft color map of the proposed future land uses, were sent out for review. I received mine the day before the meeting.

When I arrived at the meeting, it appeared

that a much larger, almost complete version of the plan was being circulated. With several members of the committee not being there and none having read this version, it was surprising that this was happening without any review on their part, particularly because it listed their names, implying they were involved with it's creation.

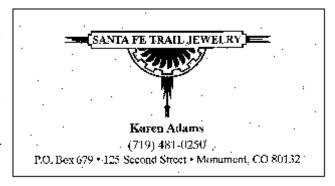
I was also suspicious of the map, given the amount of detail that can be hidden in them. One obvious sensitive issue that appeared after little review outside of the meeting was that the North Washington Street area, of concrete plant fame, that was, according to my sources, zoned light industrial in the 1983 plan, has now been proposed to change to a rather less well defined 'Planned Industrial.'

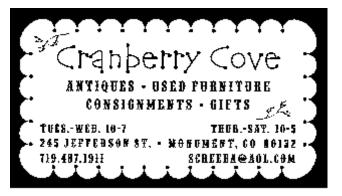
In another part of the evening's meeting, we were allowed to express opinions about interest in potential areas for annexation into Monument. This is a reasonable part of a development plan, but the areas we were directed to had been predetermined. Not only that, but it was stressed that the emphasis for annexation should be on 'fiscal' grounds, implying industrial and commercial areas to improve the tax base. I am not aware of towns or cities planning their growth with the goal of financial improvement as being the singular aim. For a town to be at its best, it should be a healthy mix of different types of housing, commercial, and industrial development. It also seemed to reflect no desire to annex any of the current mature housing developments, like Woodmoor, into the town. Ignoring the fact that residents of these developments probably make up the largest part of the sales tax revenue to the town, but yet receive no direct services from it in

I am concerned that the plan is possibly being driven by sources other than the committee in

a direction that is different than was originally hoped for. In order to make sure that the plan is for the future benefit of all people in the Monument area and not for selected parties, I encourage people to be very active in reviewing and commenting on the plan and to make sure that in the end it reflects their wishes. Too often, the review process has been hijacked to take away any effective contributions. The CDOT road planning procedures have gone from open public forums to open house one-on-one meetings where the motive appears to be divide and conquer. The planning of the large undeveloped areas in the midst of the Tri-Lakes region is critical to us all. Let us make sure there are no surprises and make sure, at least, that you study the map of proposed land uses. Copies are available at Town Hall.

Chris Pollard





# Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore The Jeremiah Mouse Series and the woman behind them

By Judith Pettibone

She was writing the ninth book when she died. For a writer, that's akin to a cowboy dying with his spurs on. And when you're 87 and didn't begin writing until retirement, that is quite a legacy.

Grace Best (1908 – 1995) was a pillar of the Tri-Lakes community; she taught second grade in the Tri Lakes Area for 27 years. During the naming of the Monument Elementary School, her name was a sentimental favorite. Always wanting to write children's books but without the time, she waited for retirement. Her old friend and current owner of the copyright for the Jeremiah Mouse Series, Ellen Fahnauer says, "Grace lasted about a year in retirement before she began to write."

And then the 'Mouse Ladies' were born. In about 1975, Bea Clarke moved here from Minnesota with her collection of handmade mice. Her mice were all that Grace needed to find her Jeremiah character. Tricia Cedarleaf entered the scene as the illustrator and scribe. The first book in the eight book series was self-published and titled *The Mouse at Elephant Rock*. Handwritten with charming illustrations, this book introduces Jeremiah and the local landmark, Elephant Rock.

In the same year, *Jeremiah's Yule Log Mystery* was written. It is the perfect description of the Yule Log festivities in Palmer Lake, from the mouse point of view. In fact, an animal Yule Log celebration is carried out, replete with all the

'human trimmings' such as the tiny red and green capes and the wassail.

The fourth Mouse Lady is Ellen Fahnauer who lovingly continues to publish this series of books. She says Jeremiah has traveled to Korea, Japan, Germany, France, and even to the British Embassy. She was also the proud maker of nearly 5000 tiny felt Jeremiah Mouse character mice dressed by Bea Clarke. Sadly, the character mice are no longer produced but those who own them cherish the tradition.

In the busy world of book publishing, titles rise and fall with great regularity. Interesting that in just over four years Covered Treasures Bookstore has sold nearly 130 copies of the Jeremiah Series. Fahnauer keeps the bookstore and the Vaile Museum in Palmer Lake stocked with these charming local treasures.

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# **Historic Monument's "Small Town Christmas"** was a great success

By Lucy McGuire, Owner, Folk Art Gallery There is no greater sense of America than a very big Christmas party in a very small town. The Historic Monument Merchants Association hosted one fabulous party this year. The Small Town Christmas celebration was a roaring suc-

With perfect Colorado weather, the day got off to a festive start as former Monument Mayor Si Sibell drove Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus around town in a wonderful antique carriage. The drive ended at Limbaugh Park where Santa received requests from almost three hundred children.

Garland - Swags

Christmas Cactus Garden Bowls

big hug at the top of their list of Christmas wishes, and more than a few said what they wanted most for Christmas was peace on Earth. A number brought gifts for Santa that they had made themselves along with their letters asking for special gifts and health and happiness for their

From the park, Mr. and Mrs. Claus went to the town hall where the children's craft hour was under way. There were photos with the Clauses for children and dogs and family groups. While Vicky Elliot from The Office Center and Cindy Petersen and the Girl Scouts of Troop 393 helped the children make a variety of fun ornaments for

> their Christmas trees, Anne Holliday, the Town Clerk, and her helpers baked cookies and served them fresh from the oven. Lucy, the longhaired dachshund, wore her Christmas sweater and helped the cause by eating all of the cookie crumbs off the floor.

Meanwhile, back at High Country Feed and Garden Store, load after load of children and adults enjoyed a free hay ride around the downtown area. The Center for the Prevention of Domestic Violence sold hot dogs at

the end of the ride.

Talented potter Richard Pancrantz offered demonstrations of his art at his studio from 10 until 12 o'clock. Author Jim Keen signed copies of his book, Colorado, Rocky Mountain Wide at Covered Treasures Bookstore.

At 1:00, children listened to master storyteller Max Hale at Toys 4 Fun, while adults enjoyed a walking tour of historic Monument with Jim Sawatski.

Local watercolor artist Joseph Bohler showed another of his skills during this very full day. He took his keyboard to Folk Art Gallery and Covered Treasures Bookstore and treated passers-by to a concert of ragtime and rhythm and blues. The kids especially were entranced with the music and the chance to see Bohler playing the notes. One young man confided shyly that he was taking piano lessons. Joe asked him what kind of songs he played and he answered without hesitation, "Easier ones."

From time to time, groups of children and adults appeared on various street corners and sang carols. Andrew Barnitz and the Grace Best Choir, The Sound Beariers, were among them. The Methodist Church had a marvelous cookie walk. There was a coloring contest sponsored by Stone Mountain Trading Post. Every store in town had something special to offer for the day. Some had big sales; many served refreshments. It's hard to beat the community spirit we all feel when participating in an event like this one.

It was a great day!



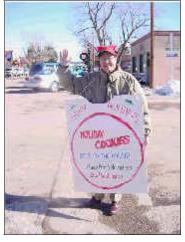
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Photos above: Mr. and Mrs. Claus, the Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church "Cookie Man," and Joseph Bohler performs at the Folk Art Gallery.

Photos on the facing page: free hayrides sponsored by High Country Feed & Garden - "hayride horsepower" and "former Monument Mayor Si Sibell gets ready to go."

Photos courtesy The Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce and Russ Broshous



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# The Taste of Tri-Lakes: **Jackson Creek Chinese Restaurant**

By George Barnes

Despite the culinary reputations of such countries as France, Italy, and Mexico, there is probably no other cuisine in the world today that can match the universal appeal and accessibility of Chinese cooking. Indeed, of the nine nations this author has visited or worked in since 1980, only two, Japan and Belarus, did not feature local Chinese restaurants. To the food purist, much of the popularity of Chinese cooking is undoubtedly due to the fact that it is considered as much an art form as it is a craft. To the ordinary consumer, however, it's more a matter of simple taste. It was with these thoughts in mind that several OCN staff members and friends recently compared dining experiences we've had at the Jackson Creek Chinese Restaurant, located at 1054 West Baptist Road in the King Sooper's Shopping Center.

Entrance to the restaurant is at street level and is handicapped accessible. The interior décor is attractive, with various oriental-style paintings on the walls. Diners can sit at booths along the walls or at chairs and tables. The speed at which the menu items are prepared and delivered to the table seems to vary depending on how crowded the restaurant is and whether appetizers are ordered. Generally speaking, on a weekend evening, a party of four might expect to place their orders within ten minutes after being seated and to receive appetizers within 15 to 20 minutes. On a weekday evening when we have ordered only entrees, they have arrived in as little as 10 min-

The menu is well designed and features a large selection of meat, seafood, and vegetarian dishes. Many items are available in a "Hot & Spicy" style. Favorites of ours and of the diners we interviewed for this article include the *Orange* 

Chicken ("spicy, but not too spicy"), Chicken with Garlic Sauce, Crabmeat Cheese Fried Wonton ("very good, smooth"), Mongolian Three Delights, Egg Drop Soup ("Good, not salty"), Broccoli with Oyster Sauce ("crisp, bright green broccoli; we always request the garlic sauce, which is a bit spicy"), Mixed Chinese Vegetables ("we request the brown sauce, which is not overpowering"), Vegetable Lo Mein ("good; noodles are flavorful and not mushy"), Moo Shu Vegetables ("delicious!"), Vegetable Egg Foo Young ("good, generous amount; the sauce is a little sweet, but good"), and Szechuan Tofu ("Don't laugh. I'm a meat eater and I order this every time I visit. It's seriously good!").

The food is prepared without monosodium glutamate (MSG), and overall, the food is less salty than at many other Chinese restaurants. We have always found the staff to be cheerful and accommodating about "customizing" our orders. At dinner, prices for entrees range from \$6.95 to \$12.95, with most being under \$9.00. Quick lunches are prepared from 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P. M. Monday through Friday, and from 12 noon to 3:00 P.M. on Saturday. Most of the lunches are under \$6.00. Also, an eclectic selection of alcoholic beverages is available at reason-

The Jackson Creek Chinese Restaurant is open six days a week, Monday through Saturday, for dining in or to go. Opening times are 11:00 A.M., Monday through Friday, and 12:00 noon on Saturday. The menu states that large groups can also be accommodated. Plenty of convenient parking is available.

able prices.



# Share the holiday harvest

By Joe Kissell, Chief, Monument Police Department This holiday season, all Tri-Lakes emergency service providers have joined together in support of the Tri-Lakes Cares Holiday Harvest. The participating agencies include: The Monument Police Department, Palmer Lake Police Department, Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department, Tri-Lakes Fire Department, Woodmoor-Monument Fire Department and the Woodmoor Public Safety.

The primary objective of the drive is to encourage residents of the Tri-lakes area to support their local organization, Tri-Lakes Cares, by using the emergency service providers in the area as contact points for donations. This year the Harvest Drive will assist over 100 families and 140 children, insuring their chance of having a joyous holiday.

Residents wishing to donate to this cause may drop off nonperishable food items, new unwrapped toys, Tri-Lakes Merchant's gift certificates or checks made payable to Tri-Lakes Cares at any of the service providers listed above between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Tax receipts are available on request from each of the sites.

Thank you for helping us make this a memorable holiday for as many people as possible.

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Joe Beggs to Differ

### **The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District**

Third in a Series by Joe Beggs
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Part two is at www.ourcommunitynews.org/v1n8.htm#beggs



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OK, so we left off last month talking about special districts: How much they cost, how they affect our lives, etc.

The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District has been chosen as the first sample district primarily because it is an easy-to-understand, straightforward service district, and it's easy to see where the money comes from and where it's going.

#### History

The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District was organized August 5th, 1964 to provide water and sanitary sewer services for the Woodmoor area.

The initial Petition for Organization stated that the purposes of the District would be to supply water for domestic purposes for the District and its inhabitants by providing a complete water supply, storage, treatment, transmission and distribution system; and also to supply sanitary sewage services.

Since it's organization, the District has furnished water and sanitary sewer services for the area generally described as the Woodmoor Subdivisions. The District provides sanitation services to its customers, and has wastewater collection lines and mains that are connected to the

Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility located just south of Monument. The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, the Monument Sanitation District and the Palmer Lake Sanitation District jointly operate the Wastewater Treatment Facility for the treatment of wastewater and sewage.

#### **Facilities**

Water—The District has 18 wells, water treatment plants, storage tanks, and a myriad of mains, lines, valves, meters, hydrants, manholes, vaults, motors, pumps, power lines, control lines, and

other equipment to supply water to residents. The wells tap the Dawson, Denver, and Arapahoe aquifers, with the Arapahoe wells requiring treatment for iron and manganese removal. There are two one million gallon storage facilities located in the northern and southern part of the District. There are four booster pump stations that are used to facilitate moving the water throughout the distribution system as well as

maintaining system pressure.

The distribution system is divided into four pressure zones with fourteen pressure-reducing stations located between the zones in order to provide relatively constant and manageable pressure throughout the system.

Additional wells will be required in the future, and the District is making provision for water service for the complete build-out and occupancy of the water district subdivisions.

Sanitation—The sanitary sewer collection system is a network of pipelines that gravity-flow from the Woodmoor community to the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Plant. Because of the mountainous terrain, there are six lift stations that pump lowlying areas to high points where the flow can become part of the gravity system.

#### **Boundaries**

The District's boundaries encompass the areas within the Woodmoor Subdivisions, including the Woodmoor Subdivisions lying south of Highway 105. Over the period of its existence, there have been a few areas included within the boundaries of the District, but no areas have been excluded.

#### Management

The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District is governed by its Board of Directors consisting of five publicly elected Board Members. Elections of the 4-year-term positions are held every 2 years in a staggered sequence of 2 and 3 openings, to ensure that the board will not entirely consist of new members.

The Board meets regularly, and is charged with appointing and employing a District Manager. Together they oversee the operations of the District. The District Manager, in turn employs the District Staff, currently consisting of 9 people, to carry out the operations set forth by the Board and the District Manager.

Board of Directors: Joe Howard (President), James Heintz (Treasurer), Paul Grogger (Secretary), Richard Durham, and James Taylor District Manager: Phillip A. Steininger Office Manager: Hope Winkler

#### **Monthly Rates**

The District rates for the year 2001 are as follows:

Sewer: \$19.97 (monthly flat fee) Water: \$22.03 (up to 6,000 gallons of water) Total: \$42.00 (minimum monthly bill) 6,000 to 12,000 gal/month: add \$3.74/1000 gals. 12,000 to 20,000 gal/month add \$4.15/1000 gals. 20,000 to 35,000 gal/month add \$4.67/1000 gals. over 35,000 gal/month add \$4.98/1000 gals.

Now, does this make you feel as if your money is going to a good cause? I hope so, because, if you use less than 6000 gallons of water per month (meaning you have no lawn), and your home in Woodmoor is valued at \$300,000.00, your annual 'contribution' to the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District is around \$768.00, which comes from fees AND property taxes (about 1/3 is from property taxes).

I must say that this district is well-run and professional at every turn. Thanks to Board President Joe Howard and Board Member Dick Durham for their guidance, and thanks also to the district's excellent website: http://www.woodmoorwater.com

So...Do I think it's worth the \$768.00 yearly charge? Definitely!

Next Issue: The Tri-Lakes Metropolitan District

# Tri-Lakes Chamber After Hours and Annual Meeting

When: Where: Why: Tuesday, December 18, 5 pm - 7:30 pm Peoples National Bank in Monument Special Christmas "After Hours" and Annual Meeting

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# Is it location or promotion?

By Marylou Doehrman, Executive Director of the *Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce* 

The marketing gurus have always said that location is the most critical factor when one contemplates opening a retail store or restaurant. However, many small towns and out-of-the way places would have gone belly up if it were not for risk taking entrepreneurs. Thus, promotion plays a sizable role toward creating a viable business community. The Historic Monument Merchants Association is more determined than ever to draw the locals and others to their small town. The merchants have taken pro-active steps in the past year to do so. This article will focus on those efforts as examples of how to market a particular

When Suzanne D'Innocenzo opened Petal Pushin' in downtown Monument in May 1990, she was taking a huge risk. The Coffee Cup Café, Mountain Air Beauty Salon, and Pottery by Pankratz were the only other businesses willing to brave the 'yet to develop' commercial area of downtown Monument. D'Innocenzo decided to open a shop after her home-based custom silk and dry flower business bloomed. She had an established client base when Petal Pushin' came on the scene, and trade shows supplemented the earlier and leaner years. Still, D'Innocenzo recalls a teacher at Lewis Palmer High School who used Petal Pushin' as an example of how not to start a business. Despite the example, D'Innocenzo is going strong 11 years later and credits her success to persistence and hard work. Petal Pushin' has the history now and the individual niche, but how important is the bigger picture to business owners? Do we market an area or rely solely on self-promotion?

Woody Woodworth, owner of High Country Feed and Garden, doesn't miss a beat when it comes to promoting the store. "Self promotion is important, and I put my name in front of everyone, everywhere I go," said Woodworth. He adds, "Every business owner needs to be responsible for promoting his or her wares; flyers, business cards, and Web sites create visibility, and educating current customers to changes, promotions, etc. is vital." Woodworth is certainly an advocate of an area's promotion as well. Woodworth, along with the HMMA, was a driving force behind the colorful green signs touting downtown Monument that are now strategically placed along Third Street and Highway 105. We'd be remiss if we failed to mention that Les Kowalski of Monument's Avian Construction built and painted the signs. And Woodworth, Carl Tillberry (Expectations Salon), Skip Morgan (Monument Planning Commission) and Kelly McGuire (Folk Art Gallery) were responsible for their placement. "It takes a village" is nothing short of the absolute truth when it comes to area marketing. Woodworth believes that the 'village' has to be a destination area in order to attract people to the locale. "If you have it, they will come," said Woodworth. Partner and wife, Catherine Woodworth, echoes those words and adds her own, "If we start at the core of our center, we will create a ripple effect for the entire Tri-Lakes community."

Dee Bates, new Tri-Lakes resident and owner of Stone Mountain Trading Post in downtown Monument, believes the creation of a village niche is the key to success for a single business community. "For example, there is a town just north of San Diego called Julian that is world renowned for its apple cider and apple pie," said Bates. She adds, "There are three apple pie businesses in the town, and everyone serves apple cider; people come from all over the world to get their cider and pie." Bates opened Stone Mountain Trading Post last July and immediately surmised a need to further promote downtown Monument. She noticed a blank billboard along I-25 and decided to explore the possibilities with the sign owner and local merchants. Bates rallied

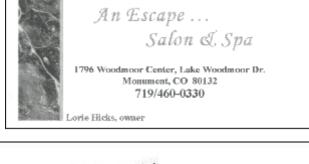
the commercial entities, and, after much legwork and steadfast persuasion, the sign is now a reality as big bold letters promoting downtown Monument catch the attention of southbound interstate travelers. Although happy with the billboard, Bates still thinks that Monument needs a marketing niche that no one else has. "I am not sure what it is that we need to capitalize on, but we need to do it," said Bates.

So is it location or promotion? The obvious answer is both. And what about that niche? Manitou Springs has tourism, Breckenridge has skiing, Taos has art, Glenwood Springs has a giant hot tub, and Cripple Creek has gambling. All of these small towns have location and promotional efforts. Does downtown Monument have enough history to bring in the people based on that alone? Does Palmer Lake have enough quaint little restaurants or a popular enough lakeside attraction to bring them in? Maybe, but it comes down to picking that flavor and marketing it to meet the tastes of the people. Monument has a start with the new signs, the billboard and efforts by local historian, Jim Sawatzki, who wants to provide historical walking tours through downtown Monument.

I remember a poster I found in a Colorado bookstore that promoted San Francisco. The poster featured unique, inspired and Bohemian-type front doors from homes and condominiums throughout San Francisco. The poster was colorful and evecatching and simply said, "The Doors of San Francisco." It did make one want to catch a plane and visit the rows of renovated and new homes in the popular city by the bay. So, perhaps we should get out our cameras and take pictures of unique and inspired historic windows in downtown Monument. Or we can shoot pictures of the old

porches in Palmer Lake, starting with the deck at O'Malley's. Promoting the individual assets of each community within the Tri-Lakes district and finding each niche is our key to bringing the people to the place.







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# Serving our community: Tri-Lakes Women's Club sponsors Adopt-a-Doll

By Diana Woods, Publicity Coordinator, Tri-Lakes Women's Club

Tri-Lakes Women's Club is a service group organized for charitable and educational purposes. The Tri-Lakes Women's Club, which has 150 members, is open to all women living within School District 38. Monthly luncheon meetings are held September through May. In addition, several interest groups are active throughout the year; these include cooking, quilting, card playing, touring, gardening, hiking, mah-jongg, wine tasting, and book groups. The Tri-Lakes Women's Club sponsors the annual Pine Forest Antique Show that, over the past 15 years, has

raised \$304,000 to benefit local nonprofit groups.

Another yearly tradition of the Club is the Adopt-a-Doll program. Sallie Johnston, who is still the driving force behind the program's success, began Adopt-A-Doll seven years ago. Throughout the year, program participants seek out used dolls and stuffed animals from garage sales, thrift stores, and donations. At the September meeting, members of the group *adopt* one or several worn dolls and stuffed animals. They wash, groom, repair, and outfit their *adoptees* and bring the beautifully resurrected dolls to the November meeting. The restored dolls are then given to Tri-Lakes Cares for distribution to chil-

dren who might not otherwise have a Christmas present. Approximately 200 dolls were donated to Tri-Lakes Cares for this year's distribution. In addition, members who are not handy at repairing and revitalizing contributed new toys that can be given to boys.

We are in need of dolls for next year's Adopt-a-Doll program. Anyone with dolls or stuffed animals to contribute may call Sallie Johnson at 481-8430 or Diana Woods at 488-3135. Anyone with questions about joining the group may call Elaine Myers at 487-7523 or Bobbie Spearel at 488-3364.

Look for our next issue
Friday, January 4th.
Visit our web site and
read all the back issues at
www.OurCommunityNews.org













Photos: Top: Sallie Johnston with Jim Bergeron and Robin Davis of Tri-Lakes Cares. Left: Sallie Johnston. Right: Paula Johnson's Doll. *Photos courtsey the Tri-Lakes Women's Club* 





### **Caring for your holiday greenery**

By Woody Woodworth, Owner, High Country Feed & Garden

The most common question we hear as a retailer during the Christmas tree season is, "When were these trees cut?" Well, I've got news for you folks, it wasn't last month or the month before yes, that's right, most trees are cut in September! Most come from the upper Midwest and Northwest coastal areas. They are then bundled and shipped all over the US and distributed by the beginning of November. The tree lots get them and you, the customer start to purchase and decorate your tree around Thanksgiving. With Thanksgiving coming early this year, and with the warmer temperatures we've had, we will find ourselves with a lot of our greenery drying out. Different shipments won't matter - everything was cut the same time, so proper care is in order to maintain good-looking greenery throughout the holiday season.

When Christmas trees are cut, they naturally seal over the injury with sap until it hardens, let-

ting nothing penetrate the wound. That is Mother Nature's way of protecting the tree from any insects or disease. Since Christmas trees are cut all the way through on the bottom, we need to open the cells again to insure the tree takes up water. Cut about two inches off the bottom of the tree and immediately place it in a tree stand or bucket of water. Once your tree is securely in a stand, keep the reservoir full of water at all times, frequently checking the water level. There are products available to 'preserve' your tree. These are packaged in small bottles labeled Tree Preservative. There is usually enough concentrate in the bottle for preserving the 'life' of your cut tree and some folks swear by the stuff. I am somewhat skeptical if there is anything in the bottle to really help preserve your tree - after all, the tree is already dying and will continue to do so. As with cut flowers, changing the water is important - so do that every few days.

Try to position your tree out of the sun, or away from any heating vent. The Colorado sun is strong and the high temperatures created through your window will quickly dry the tree out. It's the same with all of the other greenery. Wreaths, garlands and swags can be misted with water to keep their fresh aroma and feel. We use a spray bottle and try to mist them with some water daily.

So follow the basic rules on keeping your holiday season full of supple greenery.

- 1. Pick your greenery wisely. Look for the freshest you can and make sure the needles and leaves feel supple.
- 2. Keep your tree in plenty of water and don't let it dry out.
- 3. Mist your greenery as often as you can. High Country Feed & Garden wishes you a safe and joyous holiday season!





### **Star Wars: Combating light pollution**

By Emily Hale

Homeowners who value their view of dark night skies should know the causes of light pollution and should understand ways they can preserve their stellar horizons.

People living in urban and suburban areas typically accept light pollution as a fact of life. However, those living in semi-rural and rural areas usually experience the decided luxury of a clear night sky unspoiled by the oppressive glare of building, street and parking-lot lighting. For many such residents, a dark night sky peppered with millions of twinkling stars is an important part of the quality of life they sought by moving to and living in less-populated areas.

According to Astronomy.com, *light pollution* is "light, typically from artificial sources, that reaches the night sky, obscuring the view of faint astronomical objects." Lighting from sports stadiums, retail complexes, outdoor advertising, streetlights, schools, and airports contribute to the glowing haze seen over Colorado Springs at night.

Every night, billions of bulbs direct their illumination skyward where tiny bits of matter - air molecules, airborne dust, and water vapor - reflect much of the wasted light back to Earth. The astronomers of the International Dark Sky Association fully realize that dark skies will not be attained by turning out all the lights; rather, the key to having dark skies is raising public awareness of reasonable means to control light pollution and thereby minimize the human impact.

On November 17, thousands of people in Colorado watched the Leonid meteor shower between the optimum viewing times from 2 to 4 am. Most experts claim that this was the most spectacular Leonid meteor storm since 1966. In Jackson Creek, my husband and I sat on our deck and watched hundreds of meteors streak across a clear, dark sky. We were considerably more fortunate than friends in Colorado Springs who had to drive 30 minutes to find skies dark enough to view this amazing phenomenon.

For hundreds of years, the night sky has inspired humans to explore various aspects of science, literature and philosophy. Many generations have looked to the night sky to navigate, to explain their history and to relay stories. Light pollution can change that forever. What will the

children of this generation have to inspire them? Having a dazzling view of the night sky should not be an unusual experience.

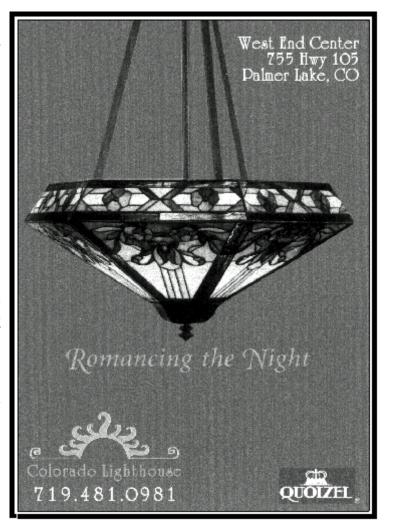
Light pollution not only potentially affects humans' ability to dream about the universe, it also can affect nocturnal animals' ability to respond to their natural biorhythms, according to an article published by the Royal Astronomical Society's *Monthly Notice*. It is important to appreciate the global impact of light pollution on species other than our own. We have the incredible ability to affect the ecosystem around our housing areas, our business complexes and our open spaces. It is important to set priorities regarding the nature that surrounds us, so our fragile biosphere is not damaged beyond repair.

Fortunately, the effects of light pollution can be minimized if we take the appropriate steps to insure that we reduce excess light from our households and businesses. Technology ex-

ists to reduce excess light shining into space. Well-designed lamps have protective shields to direct light downward improving energy efficiency. Another option to reduce excess light is to have motion sensors set on outdoor lights so they are only illuminating when necessary, rather than all night long. Still another option is using security cameras that use the infrared range of the electromagnetic spectrum to detect motion rather than light in the visible spectrum. Home security lights that are night-sky friendly can also increase security by eliminating shadows and reducing glare, again also lowering the amount of energy expended.

If you are interested in more information about light pollution and about specific light fixtures that reduce light pollution, visit http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2001/ast01nov\_1.htm.

The light from the stars and galaxies in our Universe can take thousands of years to reach our planet, let us not lose sight of the light of those celestial bodies on the last moment of its journey!



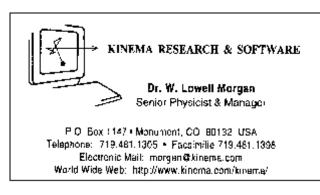
## **Indoor air pollution**

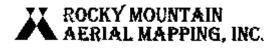
By Sean Tucker

Many of us live in the Tri-Lakes area because we value clean air. The sky certainly is bluer here than in many other regions. But does that mean that we are safe from the health hazards of air pollution? Read on and find out.

Closing up our homes during the winter can trap air pollutants inside, resulting in poor indoor air quality. Indoor pollution sources that release gases or particles into the air are the primary cause of indoor air quality problems in homes. There are many sources of such air pollution in any home. Some common sources are

- Combustion sources such as oil, gas, kerosene, coal, wood, and tobacco;
- Building materials and furnishings as diverse as deteriorated, asbestos-containing insulation, carpeting, cabinetry or furniture made of certain pressed wood products, and foam filling in furniture;
- Products for household cleaning and maintenance, personal care, or hobbies;





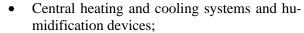
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Outdoor sources such as radon, pesticides and outdoor air pollution.

The relative importance of any single source depends on how much of a given pollutant it emits and how hazardous those emissions are. How old the source is and whether it is properly maintained can be very important. For example, an improperly adjusted gas stove or furnace can emit much more carbon monoxide than one that is properly adjusted.

Some sources, such as building materials. furnishings, and household products like air fresheners, release pollutants continuously. Other sources, related to activities carried out in the home, release pollutants intermittently. These include smoking, the use of unvented or malfunctioning stoves, furnaces, or space heaters, the use of ozone generating air cleaners/purifiers, candles and incense, the use of solvents in cleaning and hobby activities, the use of paint strippers in redecorating activities, and the use of cleaning products and pesticides in housekeeping. High pollutant concentrations can remain in the air for long periods after some of these activities.

If too little outdoor air enters a home, pollutants can accumulate to levels that can pose health and comfort problems. Unless they are built with special ventilation devices, homes that are designed and constructed to minimize the amount of outdoor air that can 'leak' into and out of the home may have higher pollutant levels than other homes. However, because winter weather can drastically reduce the amount of outdoor air that enters a home, pollutants can build up even in homes that are normally considered 'leaky.'

There are three basic strategies to improve indoor air quality:

- Source control,
- Improved ventilation
- Air cleaners.

Usually the most effective way to improve indoor air quality is to eliminate individual sources of pollution or to reduce their emissions. Some sources, like those that contain asbestos, can be sealed or enclosed; others, like gas stoves and furnaces, can be adjusted to decrease the amount of emissions. In many cases, source con-

trol is also a more cost-efficient approach to protecting indoor air quality than increasing ventilation because increasing ventilation can increase energy costs.

Another approach to lowering the concentrations of indoor air pollutants in your home is to increase the amount of outdoor air coming indoors. Most home heating and cooling systems, including forced air heating systems, do not bring fresh air into the house. Opening windows and doors, operating window or attic fans when the weather permits, or running a window air conditioner with the vent control open increases the outdoor ventilation rate. Local bathroom or kitchen fans that exhaust outdoors remove contaminants directly from the room where the fan is located and also increase the outdoor air ventilation rate.

It is particularly important to take as many of these steps as possible while you are involved in short-term activities that can generate high levels of pollutants - for example, painting, paint stripping, heating with kerosene heaters, cooking, or engaging in maintenance and hobby activities such as welding, soldering, or sanding. You might also choose to do some of these activities outdoors if you can, and if weather permits.

A third strategy is to use an air cleaning device. There are many types and sizes of air cleaners on the market, ranging from relatively inexpensive tabletop models to sophisticated and expensive whole-house systems. Some air cleaners are highly effective at particle removal, while others, including most tabletop models, are much less effective. Air cleaners are generally designed to remove particles, not gaseous pollutants. The effectiveness of an air cleaner depends on how well it collects pollutants from indoor air (expressed as a percentage efficiency rate) and how much air it draws through the cleaning or filtering element (expressed in cubic feet per minute). A very efficient collector with a low aircirculation rate will not be effective, nor will a cleaner with a high air-circulation rate but a less efficient collector. The long-term performance of any air cleaner depends on maintaining it according to the manufacturer's directions.

Whatever method you choose, it's important to take steps to keep your indoor air clean, especially during the winter.

# Calendar of public meetings

- Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District Board Meeting, Tue., Dec. 11, 1 pm, Conference Room, District Headquarters Building 1845 Woodmoor Drive. Info: call 488-
- Monument Planning Commission, Wed., Dec. 12, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: call 481-2954.
- Palmer Lake Planning Commission Workshop, Wed., Dec. 12, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Info: call 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Triview Metropolitan District Board** Meeting, Thu., Dec. 13, 8:30 am, District Office, 174 North Washington St. Info: call 488-6868.
- Palmer Lake Town Council Regular Meeting, Thu., Dec. 13, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Info: call 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting.** Mon., Dec. 17, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: call 481-2954.
- El Paso County Planning Commission, Tue., Dec 18, 9 am, 27 E. Vermijo, 3rd Floor Hearing Room. Info: 520-6300.
- tee, Tue., Dec. 18, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: call 481-2954.
- Palmer Lake Planning Commission Meet• The Friends of Ben Lomond Mountain ing, Wed., Dec. 19, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town

- Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Info: call 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Woodmoor Improvement Association** Board Meeting, Wed., Dec. 19, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Drive. Info: call 488-2694 or visit www.woodmoor.
- Monument Police Advisory Committee, Wed., Nov. 28, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: call 481-2954.
- Palmer Lake Town Council Workshop, Thu., Jan. 3, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. Info: call 481-2953 or visit www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting.** Mon., Jan. 7, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Info: call 481-2954.
- **Woodmoor Improvement Association** Board Meeting, Wed., Jan. 9, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Info: call 488-2694 or visit www.woodmoor.org.

The following December meetings will be cancelled or rescheduled:

- Woodmoor-Monument Fire Protection District Board Meeting, Info: call 488-
- Monument Parks and Landscape Commit- Tri-Lakes Fire Protection District Board Meeting Info: call 481-2312.
  - will not meet in December.



### **The OCN Story**

Even though we have been publishing OCN for six months and this is our ninth issue, some of you may have never seen OCN before, so some explanation is in order.

#### **Background**

Our Community News was launched in June 2001 by a group of Tri-Lakes area residents after concerns arose regarding coverage of Tri-Lakes area news. Many stories including the proposed Wal-Mart Supercenter project and the Monument Recall were being given biased or scant coverage by the local media. While the primary local newspaper covered service clubs, etc., it didn't publish a calendar of upcoming public meetings. Residents only heard about major decisions after the meetings had been held. We concluded there was an urgent need to provide residents information so they could get involved in the public process of addressing the significant issues facing the Tri-Lakes area.

Unlike the major local newspaper that is staffed almost exclusively by people who live outside the Tri-Lakes area, everyone at *Our Community News* lives or owns a business in the Tri-Lakes area.

*Our Community News* is an **all-volunteer effort**. The ad revenue is used to pay for the cost of printing the paper.

#### **Mission**

Our mission is to give Tri-Lakes area residents:

- Accurate, objective community-based and area-wide news to help them reach sound conclusions and contribute to a successful future for our area
- A forum for the free exchange of ideas and opportunities that may impact their daily lives
- A guide to Tri-Lakes area shopping through Tri-Lakes-focused classified and commercial advertising

#### What We Ask of You

We ask that you take the time to go to public meetings and get the facts first-hand.

We want to hear from you. Send your thoughts to our\_community\_news@hotmail.com or P.O. Box 1742, Monument, CO 80132-1742.

This is your community and your voice matters. You can make a difference by working to ensure that we hold on to the things we love about living here.

And, we ask that you support our advertisers. Their willingness to advertise in *Our Community News* makes free distribution of this newspaper possible.

#### **Help Wanted**

Our goal is for our volunteers to distribute this free newspaper door-to-door throughout the Tri-Lakes area. To meet that goal, we need your help to expand our distribution network. Here is that paper route you always wanted. No experience necessary, just a willingness to get out, get some exercise, and meet your neighbors.

If you like to write, here is your chance to have your work seen by thousands of Tri-Lakes area residents. Maybe you have an idea for an article or a column.

Like to take pictures? Want to justify to your spouse that fancy new digital camera? We need digital or print photos to illustrate future articles.

So don't just sit there, opportunity is knocking. Give us a call, drop us a note, or send us an e-mail.

Roth Hyland, Publisher
Judy Barnes, Editor 481-4164
our\_community\_news@hotmail.com
John Heiser, Advertising, 488-9031
our\_community\_ads@hotmail.com
P.O. Box 1742
Monument, Colorado 80132-1742

### **Advertise in OCN**

We offer very inexpensive classified ads and display ads. Thanks to the all-volunteer effort that supports OCN, our rates are a fraction of what you would pay in local commercial newspapers. We go all out to keep the rates low so small local businesses can afford to advertise thereby promoting Tri-Lakes area shopping. Our advertising rates are set to just cover our out-of-pocket printing costs.

Our current guaranteed circulation is 6,000. We printed 8,000 of this edition. We distribute door-to-door throughout the Tri-Lakes area.

We publish on the first Friday of each month. Our deadline for all submissions, changes, and cancellations is Friday, 5 pm, one week prior to the publication date.

#### **Classified Ads**

10 words or less costs \$1.00. Additional words cost \$0.05, e.g., a 30-word ad is \$2.00. Anything separated by a space is considered a word. Legitimate hyphenated words count as one word.

Type or print your ad legibly. In addition to the ad copy, include your name, address, and phone number. Indicate in how many issues you want the ad to run. Unless otherwise specified, it will run once.

Payment by cash, check, or money order must be received when the ad copy is received. Make checks and money orders payable to *Our Community News*. If you want the ad to run more than once, include payment for all appearance of the ad. For example, to run a 30-word ad for three issues, send \$6.00.

Please send ad copy and payment to:

Our Community News P.O. Box 1742 Monument, Colorado 80132-1742

#### **Display Ads**

Special rate for business card size (3.25" x 1.75") is **\$6.00**.

All others are **\$1.25 per square inch**, e.g., 2" x 5" (10 sq. in.) is \$12.50, 4" x 5" (20 sq. in.) is \$25.00, quarter-page (5" x 8", 40 sq. in.) is \$50, half-page (8" x 10", 80 sq. in.) is \$100, full-page (10" x 16", 160 sq. in.) is \$200.

Payment for all ads must be received at the time artwork is approved. Make checks payable to *Our Community News*. Buying insertions in advance will lock in the current ad rate, which is expected to increase somewhat as our circulation increases.

We will gladly scan your artwork and work with you to prepare your ad for the paper. Please contact:

John Heiser Advertising Editor 488-9031 FAX 488-3455 P.O. Box 1742, Monument, CO 80132-1742 our\_community\_ ads@hotmail.com

Our Community News reserves the right to determine which ads will be published. In support of our effort to promote Tri-Lakes area businesses we do not seek advertising from outside the Tri-Lakes area.

### **Classified Ads**

#### **Lost and Found**

 Found: One blanket; dropped in the street during Trick-or-Treating in downtown Monument. Call 481-2665, or stop by Covered Treasures Bookstore to claim.

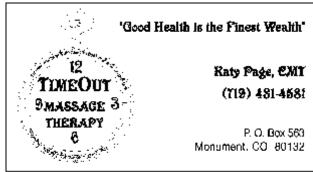
#### **Help Wanted**

 Hair Dresser—full-time or part-time. Booth rental \$210 per month. Apply in person to Advanced Hair Tech or call 481-9090 and ask for Heather.





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