

Our Community

NEWS

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

Mid-July 2001

Volume 1 Number 2

Interview with Trustee Smith

by Ray Bedingfield

Glenda Smith has owned a home in Monument for more than twenty years and has served on the Monument Board of Trustees since 1998. Along with her husband, Don, Glenda has given thousands of volunteer hours to the Town of Monument. She takes a lot of pride in our community and in the Town Board as it is now configured. Asked to mention achievements of the current Board, she didn't hesitate in coming up with four main items.

The 90-day Moratorium - "I think the 90-day moratorium on new development applications was necessary for the Town and was a great help to developers. It gave the Town an opportunity to restructure a Planning Department that had been overwhelmed. Approval for a project used to take a lot longer than the three months it takes now. We established check-lists and made it a simple procedure to get water taps, setbacks, etc. Everybody's working from the same sheet of music, and - this is important - no developer is favored over another. All the rules are clear-cut and the procedures are followed. It's the same for everyone. I believe it's very important for a community to do that for itself and for those who want to develop property."

The Second Street Extension - Glenda is also very proud that the Board obtained approval for the Second Street extension. "It will become the main entry into Town from the new I-25 interchange," she said, "replacing the current Third Street entrance. The I-25 project starts this fall - and it's funded with Federal tax dollars. Monument will build the extension, and right now, we're in the process of acquiring the right-of-way. I'm very happy with this because traffic will run much smoother with easier access to I-25."

Addressing Town Finances - Town finances are a particular specialty for Glenda, who spends many hours

studying the Monument budget. Putting Monument's financial house in order with an in-house audit is a high priority, one she has supported and repeatedly asked for since 1998. Even though the audit is far from complete, significant problems have come to light, including indications of missing or improperly assigned funds, tax statements left unfiled, and employee benefit costs left unpaid. On the Board, Glenda has stressed the importance of retaining an accounting firm to help bring order to the Town's finances.

The Home Rule Charter - "I also take a lot pride in the Home Rule Charter. It was very complex, and it was worked out with the help of a dedicated group of citizens on the Home Rule Committee. You know what it really comes down to? It's a plan for self government, a plan that would have allowed the people of Monument - instead of the Legislature in Denver - to run our community. The Committee begged people to come and make suggestions, but not many came forward for something that would have positively effected everyone's lives. Yet some property owners, including Ernie Biggs and John Dominowski who contributed significant input during the Committee meetings, didn't agree with certain provisions and began attacking it, using 'too much power in the hands of the Board' as a rallying cry. That power would have been in the hands of the people, and that was something that big property owners didn't want. It seems to me that they don't want others developing anything around them. But if you give them rules to follow for developing their own property, they go ballistic. I'll say it again: I'm proud of the Home Rule Charter. It would have been a good thing for the people of this community."

"Let me add that we on the Board of Trustees are just volunteers, that we use our best judgment, and that we work very hard for Monument. The kind of character assassination, lies and innuendo that come from the *Eye on Monument* and the *Tri-Lakes Tribune* is not just one-sided, it's wrong, and I'm going to fight it every step of the way."

"...we use our best judgment and...work very hard for Monument."
- Trustee Glenda Smith

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Recall Appeal Filed

by Andrew Keating

Editor of the new E-Magazine, PalmerDivide.com

Despite the decision of independent arbiter Karen Goldman that the recall drive met its obligation, Monument Trustees Steve Wilcox, Kristi Schutz, and Glenda Smith, have taken their objections to the next level. They are filing an appeal with the 4th Judicial District.

While Goldman did throw out some of the signatures obtained by the recall committee for technical violations of the laws surrounding the solicitation and obtaining of those signatures, she verified enough of them to force a recall election. The total number of signatures must be equal to or greater than 25% of the number of votes cast for each specific position in the last general election. The recall vote is scheduled for September 11.

"It was a principle thing," Wilcox said. "It irritated me that I'm expected to obey and follow laws, but they (the supporters of the recall drive) think they don't need to."

"It would be nice to have this over with, but I feel (Goldman) ignored some key parts of the law," said Wilcox. "I think it would be the right thing to appeal. Violations that occurred like the ones here in Monument have caused entire petitions to be axed. Their lawyer and witnesses all agreed that they had violated these laws. They think that's OK. Our attitude is that it is not."

"My opinion is that I'm not the one who's corrupt," Wilcox added. "I'm fighting against the ones who are corrupt, who are behind the recall. I'm not going to give up to the old regime, who looked out for developer's interests and not the citizens."

The Mayor and two other trustees who are subject to the recall decided not to file legal appeals, for several different reasons. "I don't plan to (appeal) at this time," said Mayor Leon Tenney. "I intend to stand for recall, and put all my time and energy into that. I don't think my side has been given its due."

Trustees Ed DeLaney and Lowell Morgan agree with Mayor Tenney. DeLaney feels that a drawn out legal fight would be detrimental to the town. "(An appeal) would just draw this thing out, and that's not what we want. We want what's good for Monument. That's what is most important, at least in my mind." DeLaney feels that the recall committee has unfairly targeted him. "I'm actually tired and upset that these people (the recall committee) are acting this way," said DeLaney. "They're not isolating certain people, they're targeting

everybody."

DeLaney did not vote for the termination of Monument Police Chief Al Sharon. That event was the catalyst that set the recall drive in motion.

DeLaney also said that if the recall committee gets its way, the Town may suffer for it. "If they vote a whole new Board in, they will have a long learning curve," he said. "I have ten years in learning how the city operates."

Letter: In Support of Glenda Smith

The Tribune refused to print the following letter:

I am writing this letter in support of Glenda Smith who is a Trustee for the Town of Monument. I have known Glenda personally for over twelve years, and she was a neighbor for the first five years that I lived in Monument.

Glenda is an honest and hardworking public servant. She is an extremely nice and caring individual, as well as an independent-minded and assertive woman. These are

all qualities that I admire greatly about her.

Glenda is not a wealthy person, nor does she have anything to gain financially in her role as a Trustee. She is committed to the preservation of the quality of life in this unique and beautiful community, and I have appreciated her greatly over the last few years in her willingness to take some difficult stands for the sake of preservation of the rural beauty of Monument. I believe that her values towards the role of

development represent the majority of citizens of Monument. Her positions on issues support the small businesses of our community, as well as protect individual, middle-class homeowners from entities such as Transit Mix. I find it ludicrous that she is criticized for asking her constituents why they signed the recall petition. Not only is there nothing wrong or improper about her inquiry, but I would hope that it would be expected that a trustee would want to solicit that information. I greatly appreciate an elected official who is willing to ask for what may be difficult feedback.

I urge citizens in this community to look in depth at all of the issues in the possible upcoming recall process. I do not believe that the firing of one employee is at the heart of this recall. I believe when researched thoroughly, strong evidence exists that some of those who have worked unceasingly to undermine the good work of this Board are primarily interested in their own financial gain through development of this area. This is not in the best interest of the majority of those of us

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"I'm fighting against the ones who are corrupt, who are behind the recall. I'm not going to give up to the old regime, who looked out for developer's interests and not the citizens."

- Trustee Steve Wilcox

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living in this community.

Thanks to all of the Trustees who have served over the years with the interest of preserving the quality of life in this area.

Donna Merrifield

Letter: Sibell Fights Annexation

Former Monument Mayor Si Sibell has often proclaimed his fondness and concern for the Town of Monument. Some of his recent actions bring that into question.

Recently, some Chaparral Hills residents petitioned the Town to hold an annexation election for annexing their area to Monument. The residents' stated primary reason for seeking annexation was to gain greater control over their surroundings including the thirty-acre parcel proposed for the Wal-Mart supercenter.

Almost immediately after word of the proposed annexation got out, Mr. Sibell spoke with several of the residents of Chaparral Hills spreading stories about "the dire consequences" of annexation. He warned that the Chaparral Hills residents would have to pay to have their gravel roads paved. He said they would have to give up their beloved horses. He said they would lose their water rights and have to pay hefty tap fees to connect to Monument utilities. He said they would be burdened with yet another set of rules to comply with and another layer of government. He said they would be subject to especially high taxes because their lots are five acres or more.

The truth is the road, horse, and water issues would be established in the annexation agreement. There is no reason the roads cannot remain gravel as long as the residents are happy with them. Likewise, they could be allowed to keep horses. They could retain their water rights as have other areas that have been annexed. They could continue to use individual wells and septic systems and wouldn't need to connect to Monument utilities. The only truth he told was about the tax issue. The Chaparral Hills residents would pay the same seven mil Town property tax and 3% Town sales tax as all the other Monument residents including Mr. Sibell. In short, the stories he spread seemed designed to scare the residents into withdrawing their petition for annexation election.

The real question in all of this is why the former Monument Mayor is doing this. He is happy to be a Monument resident but is doing everything he can to discourage Chaparral Hills residents from annexing. When I confronted him, Mr. Sibell's response was that he had not misled the residents; however, when challenged point by point with the facts, he finally

admitted he was wrong. He then went on to say that he opposes whatever Mayor Tenney supports. Aside from spite toward his successor, another factor is that annexation of Chaparral Hills might force the Wal-Mart developer to come back to Monument to seek approval of the project. The results of the April 2000 election showed that the voters of Monument do not want uncontrolled development, yet to satisfy his anger over being turned out of office, former Mayor Sibell is willing to punish the Town by doing everything within his power to assist Wal-Mart while making sure no tax dollars flow Monument's way. Apparently, the good of the Town doesn't figure in his thinking.

Dale Turner

[On June 18th, the Chaparral Hills residents withdrew their petition for annexation election.]

Save Ben Lomond

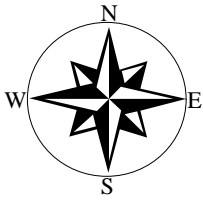
Courtesy of the Friends of Ben Lomond

Ben Lomond Mountain is a long, table-top mountain in northwestern El Paso County. Part of the Palmer Divide, it sits at the end of the Santa Fe Trail in Palmer Lake and is considered "drop-dead beautiful" by many. The Friends of Ben Lomond (FOBL) is a group of concerned citizens who want to help acquire parcels totaling 190 acres on top of the mountain and extending north to County Line Road. The land is privately owned.

FOBL is working with El Paso County Parks and Recreation, the Tri-Lakes Recreation District, the Town of Palmer Lake, the Trails and Open Space Coalition, and the Trust for Public Land to purchase this gorgeous land for about \$1.5 million and keep it as publicly accessible open space. There is \$530,000 already earmarked for this acquisition from Great Outdoors Colorado, a Conservation Trust Fund, and the Town of Palmer Lake. Fund raising efforts are underway for the remainder.

As this front range area continues to explode with growth, we all need to be reminded of the need for beauty and space to enjoy freely. To all those who appreciate trails and open space: If you would like to be part of this effort, please make your tax-deductible donations out to the Trails and Open Space Coalition, earmark for Ben Lomond, and send to the Friends of Ben Lomond, P.O. Box 654, Monument, CO 80132.

If you would like to get involved in the action of this project, please contact Sue Buell at 481-2474 or e-mail suebuell@earthlink.net. The next meeting: Thu., July 27th, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent.



Our Community News

P.O. Box 273
USAF Academy, CO 80908

Reporting on Tri-
Lakes Area Issues

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Our Community News

Nick Leibovitz' Resignation

Former Jackson Creek resident Nick Leibovitz was appointed to the Monument Board of Trustees on June 1, 2000. The following are excerpts from his letter of resignation that was read at the Monument Board of Trustees meeting on May 21st.

It is with great regret that I am resigning from my position on the Board of Trustees....My wife and I will be moving to California, where I have taken a new job. This is a great opportunity for me, but I am sad to leave this town...This is a great little town with fine people and I hope that it continues that way. It is my hope, in the midst of controversy, that the people of Monument see beyond the vindictive cries of people who have been against this administration from day one and make judgments on firsthand knowledge that they gather for themselves and not secondhand knowledge from others. I truly love this town and hope only the best for it and the people who live here.

Nicholas R. Leibovitz

[On July 2nd, Faye Elbaum was appointed to fill the vacancy left by Nick's resignation.]

Calendar

- **Monument Board of Trustees**, Mon., July 16th, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd.
- **Monument Planning Commission**, Wed., July 18th, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd. Syntes expansion and three Jackson Creek subdivisions.
- **Palmer Lake Planning Commission**, Wed., July 18th, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent.
- **Monument Comprehensive Plan**, Thu., July 19th, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd.
- **Monument Board/Triview Metro District Board**, Mon., July 23rd, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd.
- **Triview Metropolitan District Board Meeting**, Thu., July 26th, 8:30 am, Dist. Ofc., 174 N. Washington.
- **Friends of Ben Lomond Mountain**, Thu., July 26th, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. For info, call Sue Buell at 481-2474.
- **Palmer Lake Town Council Workshop**, Thu., Aug. 2nd, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent.
- **N. El Paso County Coalition of Community Assoc.**, Sat., Aug., 4th, 9:30 am, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr.

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