

Heather Ridge Metro Matters

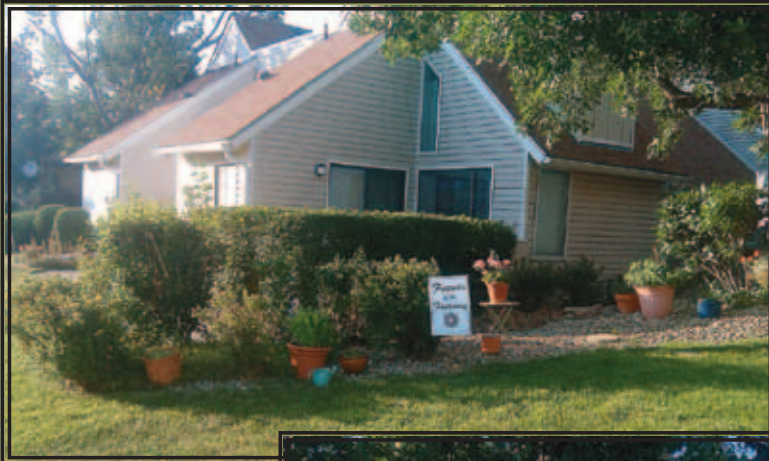
VOLUME 2

SEPTEMBER 2011

NUMBER 3

Preserving the Heather Ridge open space –

- **Maintained best as a Golf Course**
- **Protecting real estate values**
- **Promoting a positive way of life**



Residents who line the Golf Course fairways once again worked hard to create colorful landscaping. They are Friends of the Fairway!



Friends of the Fairway
(from top to bottom):
Pam Bjerke (two views),
Burgundy;
Lori Samuelson,
Strawberry.
(More photos, page 21)



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Heather Ridge Metro Matters is published monthly for the residents of Heather Ridge.

Metro District Board Members

(Visit HRMDco.org, HRMD button) Contact Vinny Roith for questions: 303-755-3660; 720-246-0306 info@hrmdco.org; HeatherRidgeColorado.org

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It is the intent of the editor and HRMD to provide information of interest to its readers, to afford persons with varying and differing views opportunity to air responsible opinions on matters of community interest, and to promote community and enjoyable life pursuits.

Heather Ridge Metro Matters welcomes letters and other articles concerned with community issues. Letters must be signed, dated and include the writer's phone number. Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send to LynnNeu@comcast.net

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 Vice President Scott Dunham (Chimney Hill)
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 Chimney Hill
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 Heather Ridge South, Heatherridgesouth.com
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Heather Ridge Metropolitan District: News and Happenings

HRMD Meetings. The HRMD Board meets the third Thursday of every month at the Golf Club at Heather Ridge facility. The time is 4 pm. The meeting is open to the public. Please come and observe how your district operates, using your tax dollars to keep the open space best operating as a golf course.

If you are considering running for HRMD elections in 2012, there will be three seats open. If you are interested, now is the time to be involved — and educated.

Heather Ridge Metro District No. 1 is a member of the Colorado Special Districts Association (SDA). This year's convention will be Sept. 14–16 in Breckenridge, CO. On Sept. 14, SDA will conduct a day-long university-sponsored training program for new and old members. It is an excellent opportunity to learn! Anyone interested in going should contact Van Lewis, van.lewis@hrmdco.org. The cost is \$150 for the class only.

Developing the outdoor pool facility. Based on the idea introduced by Rob Lanphier that Noonan's Tavern could do more catering business if it could have outdoor banquets, wedding receptions, or golf tournaments, a proposal has been made to HRMD. More details to follow.

Noonan's Tavern. If you missed their Movie Night on the Green, July 30, you missed more than the movie *Caddy Shack*. Live music, featuring songs from the 1960s and 1970s, prompted sing-a-longs and dancing. Noonan's served a fabulous BBQ beef, hot dogs, and burgers along with adult beverages. The weather was perfect, the beer was cold, and the large crowd was eager for a great time. Don't miss the next one!

Noonan's Tavern, at its own expense, plans to triple its outdoor smoking deck. Recognizing a market catering to smokers, the present "new" smokers' deck has been jam-packed and successful from the day it opened. Even non-smokers are going out for the cool breezes under large shade trees. Rob will complete the expansion as soon as city permits are issued.

Financial Reports, Records, Statements. For data- and detail-oriented residents tracking HRMD operations, please visit the website, hrmdco.org. Once open, click on the left side box *HRMD*. Once open, click on red lettered *Link to HRMD01 Meeting Minutes/Financials*. Posted are all the latest news, reports, and documents. Contact Errol Rowland with any questions or concerns, Errol@hrmdco.org.

– Van Lewis

United Associations of Heather Ridge: Public safety meeting

On July 5, the UAHR committee hosted a well-attended public safety meeting at the Heather Ridge County Club. Speakers included Ward IV Councilwoman Molly Markert and Aurora Police Area Representatives (PAR), Captain Jim Puscian and Sergeant Damon Vaz. Heather Ridge is in Police District No. 1. The officers outlined police operations, procedures, and policies. Concerned residents asked many questions. The underlying question was how safe are we?

Councilwoman Market emphasized her strong belief in and support of Neighborhood Watch programs. She emphasized that citizens have to participate in their own safety and be pro-active.

Officers Puscian and Vaz compared crime statistics through 2011, clearly showing a downward trend for District No. 1. In fact, 2011 could be the district's safest year in a decade.

Officers Puscian and Vaz further explained

See *UAHR...page 6*



Pete Traynor
 Double Tree
 303-877-9538
 Ptofcolo@aol.com

Real Estate in Heather Ridge

The big news is shrinking home inventory. As Metro Denver's average single-family prices rise slightly, and condo prices nudge down, fewer homes are for sale. What's happening?

Presently, there are approximately 19,500 homes and condos for sale in metro Denver, down 20 percent from this time last year. Over two years ago, inventory exceeded 30,000 as foreclosures flooded the market. Today, lenders and government programs are holding inventory back from the market to stabilize home prices. Secondly, but not by much, the avalanche of paperwork is drowning the foreclosure system.

For sale inventory in Heather Ridge is down, too. As of Aug. 8, there were only 15 units for sale. A year ago, that number approached 40. Three years ago, it was higher.

Shrinking inventory doesn't mean real estate problems are going away. Similar to unemployment figures, unsuccessful sellers are withdrawing their homes from the market, thus skewing statistics by not participating. Out of frustration, many are giving up

and awaiting the sheriff's knock at their doors. In a growing number of cases, before foreclosure happens, owners continue to occupy their homes for years without making loan payments, paying property taxes, or keeping it insured. Called "the phantom inventory," once foreclosed, there is now talk at the federal level to rent foreclosed homes to low income and homeless people versus going to market.

If you own a Heather Ridge property and are thinking of selling it, Pete and Van have their fingers, hands and souls around today's real estate market. Having seen most Heather Ridge homes for sale, they can help you understand how yours fits into it. Please remember this isn't Pete and Van's first rodeo. They know how to make your home, neighborhood and community stand out and sell!

(The Following Properties May Have Been Listed or Sold by Other Companies)

Homes for Sale in Heather Ridge, New Listings June 1 – July 7

HOA	Price	No.	Street	Baths	Beds	SqFt	Gar/Spaces	Style
Chimney Hill	\$125,000	13645	E Evans Ave	3	2	1,344	1-Garage,Att	2 Story
Chimney Hill	\$136,500	2021	S Worchester St	3	3	1,344	1-Garage,Att	2 Story
Chimney Hill	\$137,500	2052	S Worchester St	3	2	1,337	2-Garage,Att,Oversized	2 Story
Cobblestone	\$80,000	2101	S Victor St A	2	2	1,208	1-Carport, Det	2 Story
Cobblestone	\$93,000	2152	S Victor St F	2	2	1,392	1-Garage	2 Story
Cobblestone	\$115,000	2101	S Victor St C	2	2	1,208	1-Det, Off-Street, Resv	2 Story
Cobblestone Crossing	\$114,900	13598	E Asbury Dr	2	2	1,208	1-Off Street	2 Story
Country Club Ridge	\$177,000	2230	S Vaughn Way 101	2	2	1,196	1-Garage,Att,Off Street	Ranch
Country Club Ridge	\$223,000	2240	S Vaughn Way 202	2	3	1,806	2-Garage,Att,Oversized	Ranch
Fairway 16	\$146,200	2680	S Vaughn Way - B	4	4	1,650	2-Garage, Att Oversized	2 Story
Heather Ridge South	\$119,900	2824	S Wheeling Way	4	4	1,633	2-Garage, Att	2 Story
Heather Ridge South	\$155,923	2787	S Xanadu Way	3	3	1,633	2-Garage, Att	2 Story
Sausalito	\$109,900	2417	S Victor St C	2	3	1,300	2-Garage, Att	2 Story
Sausalito	\$147,923	2408	S Victor St A	2	3	1,273	2-Garage, Att	2 Story
Sausalito	\$163,900	2511	S Worchester St A	2	2	1,273	2-Garage, Att	2 Story
Strawberry I	\$55,000	13657	E Yale Ave C	1	1	856	1-Carport	2 Story
Strawberry I	\$64,500	2658	S Xanadu Way D	1	1	856	1-Carport, Det	2 Story
Sausalito	\$93,000	2500	S Victor St F	2	3	1,273	2-Garage, Att	2 Story
Sausalito	\$109,900	2417	S Victor St C	2	3	1,300	2-Garage, Att	2 Story
Sausalito	\$139,500	2458	S Victor St D	2	3	1,300	2-Garage, Att	2 Story
Sausalito	\$163,900	2511	S Worchester St A	2	2	1,273	2-Garage, Att	2 Story
Strawberry I	\$55,000	13657	E Yale Ave C	1	1	856	1-Carport	2 Story
Strawberry I	\$64,500	2658	S Xanadu Way D	1	1	856	1-Carport Det	2 Story



Van Lewis
 Heather Ridge South
 303-550-1362
 van@vanlewis.com

**Homes Sold in Heather Ridge
July 2011**

HOA	List Price	No.	Street	Bed Bath	SqFt	Garage	Style	Sold Date	Seller credit	Sold Price	Type Seller
Burgundy	\$71,900	2623	S Xanadu Way E	2 - 2	1,315	Off Street	2 Story	7/6/11	none	71,900	Gov't
Chimney Hill	\$109,000	2063	S Worchester St	3 - 2	1,513	1-Garage,Att	2 Story	7/18/11	3,000	106,000	Gov't
Cobblestone	\$85,002	13396	E Asbury Dr	2 - 3	1,392	Off Street	2 Story	6/26/11	none	85,002	Bank
Cobblestone Cross'g	\$83,000	13314	E Asbury Dr A	2 - 2	1,208	1-Garage,Det	2 Story	7/18/11	none	83,000	shortsale
Cobblestone Cross'g	\$135,000	13266	E Asbury Dr	2 - 2	1,392	Off Street	2 Story	7/29/11	5,000	130,000	Normal
Country Club Ridge	\$202,500	2220	S Vaughn Way 102	2 - 3	1,722	2-Garage,Att	Ranch	7/21/11	none	202,500	Normal
Fairway 16	\$142,000	2558	S Vaughn Way C	4 - 4	1,650	2-Garage,Att	2 Story	7/22/11	5,000	138,000	Normal
Fairway 16	\$146,000	2426	S Vaughn Way A	4 - 3	1,650	2-Garage,Att	2 Story	6/28/11	1,000	145,000	Normal
Heather Ridge South	\$105,320	2888	S Wheeling Way	4 - 4	1,633	2-Garage,Att	2 Story	6/29/11	none	105,320	HUD
Heather Ridge South	\$129,900	2845	S Xanadu Way	3 - 3	1,633	1-Garage,Att	2 Story	7/25/11	4,000	125,900	Normal
Sausalito	\$92,605	2437	S Victor St F	2 - 2	1,273	2-Garage,Att	2 Story	8/2/11	none	92,605	Bank
Strawberry I	\$67,000	13605	E Yale Ave A	1 - 1	856	1-Carport,Det	2 Story	8/6/11	none	67,000	Fix-Flip

**Homes under Contract
in Heather Ridge**

HOA	Price	No.	Street	Bed.Ba	SqFt	Gar/Spaces	Style
Burgundy	\$124,900	2635	S Xanadu Way - D	2 - 2	1,162	1-Garage,Det	2 Story
Cobblestone	\$69,900	2121	S Victor St A	2 - 2	1,392	1-Garage,Det	2 Story
Cobblestone	\$85,000	2122	S Victor St C	2 - 2	1,208	1-Garage,Det	2 Story
Cobblestone Crossing	\$88,000	13426	E Asbury Ave 202	2 - 2	1,208	Off Street	2 Story
Fairway 16	\$155,000	2610	S Vaughn Way C	4 - 4	1,650	2-Garage,Att	2 Story
Fairway 16	\$163,500	2578	S Vaughn Way B	4 - 4	1,650	2-Garage,Att	2 Story
Sausalito	\$93,000	2500	S Victor St F	2 - 3	1,273	2-Garage,Att	2 Story
Strawberry I	\$44,900	13633	E Yale Ave B	1 - 1	856	None	2 Story
Strawberry I	\$69,000	2664	S Xanadu Way A	2 - 2	1,144	1-Carport	Ranch
Strawberry I	\$37,800	2696	S Xanadu Way B	2 - 2	1,144	1-Off Street,Resv	2 Story
Strawberry I	\$59,900	2690	S Xanadu Way C	2 - 2	1,144	1-Carport	2 Story



Bob Roth

Aurora City Council, Ward 5

My Promise to Aurora

"I strongly endorse Bob Roth. Bob Roth listens to citizens, then he rolls up his sleeves to work on the local issues that matter most -- jobs, safety, transportation, wise budgeting -- quality of life issues that affect us all day-to-day."



Sue Sandstrom
Arapahoe County Treasurer
former Aurora City Council
Member, Ward 5

- create jobs and financial stability through economic development
- use tax dollars wisely so we can maintain and enhance basic city services
- ensure safe neighborhoods by supporting our police and fire departments
- provide a strong voice that honors our seniors and veterans
- work with neighborhoods, HOAs and citizens on issues that affect quality of life: water supply, libraries, code enforcement, property values, transportation, parks and open space

UAHR...from page 3

the importance of Neighborhood Watch programs and how they help the police apprehend perpetrators. This program is the eyes and ears of the police. Without it, neighborhoods are less safe.

The police officers emphasized the following points when reporting a crime:

- If a crime has been committed without any suspects, please report it via Internet whenever possible. You can go to www.auroragov.org then and click on Departments, then police reports.

- Online Crime Reporting: This system allows you to file a non-emergency police report in cases where there is no suspect information and no immediate danger to persons or property, such as a vehicle break-in that happened overnight. The following options are available for online crime reporting:

- Lost or Missing Property
- Damaged Property with no known suspects

- Theft, under the felony threshold, with no known suspects (excluding firearms, explosives or motor vehicles)
- Vandalism to a Vehicle
- Larceny from a Vehicle
- Supplemental Report of Stolen Property from a Burglary

For a crime in progress, call 911 and stay on the line so the responding officers can ask you questions via the 911 operator. This is important because you now become the eyes and ears of the police.

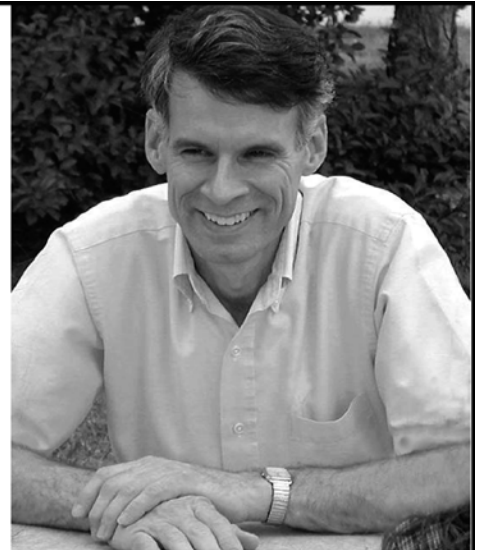
At the conclusion of the meeting, volunteers were asked to help form Neighborhood Watch programs in Heather Ridge. There was strong support with many wanting to participate. The PAR officers emphasized that Neighborhood Watch programs should be separate from their HOAs. Neighborhood Watch programs work under the Aurora Police Department, not HOAs and their policies.

Next month's "In the Spotlight" feature will interview Pete Traynor from Double Tree.

- Josie Spencer

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Heather Ridge Community Affairs

Neighborhood Watch was the dominant theme at the July meeting. Veda White was guest speaker. She organized a Neighborhood Watch program in her community at Summit Park five years ago to address their rising crime issues. Her area was experiencing a rash of burglaries, an active pedophile, car break-ins, tampering with mailboxes and a small group of teenagers who were vandalizing property.

Currently, Veda has 80 percent participation from residents in her HOA. This year, Summit Park has experienced only the theft of one bicycle. This is truly a testimony to the effectiveness of a Neighborhood Watch Program.

Veda also stressed that once the program is in place, hardly any time, effort or meetings were involved in its upkeep.

Beverly Brown from Strawberry II is heading up the Neighborhood Watch for Heather Ridge. She will take over the "Safety, Crime and Security Report" in *Metro Matters*. Bev can be reached at brownbe_nwatch@comcast.net. Already, 13 residents have signed up to attend a Neighborhood Watch Orientation Class. With everyone's help, this overdue program should be successful! .

The annual **Cocktail Party** for HOA boards was discussed. Many members were unable to attend due to summer travel or the early time frame. It was decided to move the date to September and change the time to 6–7:30 pm for next year's event.

HRCA meets each month, the second Tuesday, at 6 pm, in the 19th Hole at the Golf Club of Heather Ridge. Its goal is to promote the economic and social interests of the community through communications. So far, business has been brisk!

The flagship of this effort is *Metro Matters* magazine. Now in its second year, it is budgeted under the HRMD General Fund. Its mission

Friends Of The Fairway

Due to only 5 entries, it was decided to postpone the contest until next year. However, HRCA will give a gift certificate of \$25 from Nick's to those 5 entries in appreciation of their participation and effort.

is simple – to bind together the Heather Ridge communities through common interest. *Metro Matters* is now mailed to 1500 residents and owners each month.

HRMD's official website www.HRMDco.org comes under HRCA's mission to inform. Errol Rowland, President of HRMD, developed and maintains it under a contract with HRMD. Information goes back to 2005 when citizens rallied to save the open space.

Heather Ridge Real Estate. Real estate is critical to the HRMD and its residents. One of the purposes in creating the district was to protect real estate values along with promoting its way of life.

Volunteers are needed to develop the following topics: research Heather Ridge model names and their floor plans; research and comment on the growing number of rental units here; and coordinate links and information about each community in HRMD, their boards and their management companies. Someone is needed to write about the Heather Ridge real estate market for a better understanding by owners, buyers, tenants, and realtors.

– **Bette Secord**

Aurora's Citizens' Planning Academy

Learn about city planning in depth from the experts and get answers to those tough questions that you've always wanted to ask through the city of Aurora's 2011 Citizens' Planning Academy. Applications are due Sept. 2. The Academy takes place on Thursdays from 5 to 6:30 pm Sept. 22 to Oct. 27 at the Aurora Municipal Center, 15151 E. Alameda Parkway, in the Aspen Room. Participation is free and open to all Aurora residents and business owners.

Following each presentation, participants may ask questions and discuss issues with key city staff managers and directors, who elaborate on the topic of planning from an Aurora perspective.

Only 20 people will be selected to participate. For an application, call 303-739-7107 or visit www.auroragov.org/planning and click on the right side link.



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- Community College of Aurora Foundation, President
- Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority
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Your Heather Ridge Neighbor!

Golf Club at Heather Ridge Monthly Update

www.golfclubatheatherridge.com



Mother Nature is amazing. The grass that was so dry, and had gone dormant in the spring and early summer, has bounced back and turned lush and green again! Bob and his crew are doing some fine-tuning to get the sprinkler heads adjusted uniformly throughout the front nine, but the system is working well, and the long-term benefits are beginning to show.

HR Golf Course has been on TV, radio and all over the internet, trumpeting the fact that the course is one of the best values in the metro Denver area. The irrigation system is complete and the course is free of construction mess. Now is a great time to tell all your friends, neighbors, co-workers and families to come out and enjoy a great round of golf at Heather Ridge.

Goose News. Linda Neely, a Heather Ridge resident, is also a member of Wild B.I.R.D., a bird rehabilitation organization here in Colorado. She asked me to pass



on information about problems caused by feeding the geese on the golf course with any kind of food meant for humans.

– Mike Ritter
Golf Pro and Clubhouse Manager

I WISH I COULD FLY

This Canada goose has a condition known as angel wings or slip wing. It is normally seen in geese and ducks that reside in parks and other public areas where they are fed bread, popcorn, cereal, chips and other human foodstuffs, by well-meaning people.

This condition starts when the goose or duck is young and its wings are developing. It is not reversible and as a result, this beautiful bird will never be able to fly.

– Linda Neely

HR Men's Golf League

Individual Net Tournament – July 30 Winners

1st Flight

Low Gross: Robert Arnold, \$75 golf shop credit
1st low net: Bruce Larson, \$75
2nd low net: Andy Schmidt, \$55

2nd Flight

1st low net: Pinky Gonzales, \$102.50
2nd low net: John Fortune, \$61.50
3rd low net: Jerry Henson, \$41

3rd Flight

1st low net: Russ Barrett, \$102.50

2nd low net: Don Blosser, \$61.50

3rd low net: Michael Harris, \$41

4th Flight

1st low net: Morris Hoole, \$102.50

2nd low net: Gary White, \$61.50

3rd low net: Jack Geminhart, \$41

Closest to the Pin (\$30 each)

Hole No. 5 – Steve Gonzales

Hole No. 8 – Jack Geminhart

Hole No. 10 – Andy Schmidt

Hole No. 14 – Larry Wagner

HR Ladies' 9-Hole Golf League

The member/guest day on Tuesday, July 19 had 56 participants. The theme was 1950s Rock and Roll with pink and black apparel, hamburgers, french fries and root beer floats. A fun time was had by all, especially the winners:

1st Place: Pidge Gonzales, Sheri Diner,
Audrey Romero, Christi Clay

2nd: Sally Simon, Liz Clancy,
JoAnn Oswald, Maria Giblin

3rd Place: Ruth Wade, Donna Johnson,
Barb Wehmiller, Paula Hudson

(See photos, page 20.)

Homeowners' Association News

Strawberry by Jan Lucas

Important Message from Brownstone Services. In the past few months, there have been many crime issues in the Heather Ridge area. Despite these unfortunate events that appear to be random acts and because Strawberry is part of a large area of properties affected on each occasion, there are many things that you, as residents, can do to keep possible thieves out of your neighborhood and avoid break-ins to your property and vehicles.

- **Auto Safety:** After the last set of break-ins, Brownstone inspected every vehicle on the property and found that several had cracked/open windows and unlocked doors. Many vehicles had various electronics (cell phones, navigation units, mp3 players, etc.), detachable face stereos (still attached), CD cases/books, TVs, various bags (shopping, backpacks, duffel bags, etc.) and mail — all clearly visible. While these items are extremely enticing to thieves, the theft of your mail can be one of the most destructive to you. Identity theft, among many other fraudulent activities, is possible when criminals get hold of the information contained in your mail. Making sure that your car is locked, your windows rolled up, and any electronics/personal items or mail are out of sight or removed are essential steps in making your vehicle and this property less of a target for thieves.

If you are a victim of theft, PLEASE file a report with the police. Whether you believe that the culprits will be caught based on that report or not, this information is key for the police department when establishing areas affected by crime (along with any trends associated with) and in charging criminals with those crimes. If these warnings are not taken seriously, and the current trends continue, the vehicle theft/break-ins will get much worse before they get better.

- **Windows and Doors:** Make sure you keep ALL first floor windows closed and locked at night. Yes, it's hot, but better a little toasty than waking up to an uninvited guest.

- **Lights On:** Consider keeping your porch and patio lights on at night. A burglar's best friend is the dark. Using a little electricity is way

cheaper than the cost of a break-in. Consider adding motion detectors to your outside lights.

- **Be Aware:** If you see anything at all that does not look right, call security and the Aurora Police Department.

Privacy or Safety. In our cozy settings, everyone loves their privacy. Aurora Police and Fire Departments ask that you be aware of the following:

- That big shrub that provides privacy for your patio and/or windows may also provide cover for unsavory folks who watch and wait for an opportunity. Your shrub should have a limited trim and be cleaned at the bottom to allow visibility.

- Walks must be clear to allow emergency personnel, equipment and gurneys.

- Drives must be clear for patrol cars, ambulances and fire trucks.

- Some addresses are hard to locate because the unit numbers are hidden by overgrown trees or bushes.

The board and Strawberry's landscapers know what the city has asked be done in the community. Privacy will be preserved as much as possible. However, a primary obligation is the safety of the community and to comply with Aurora Police and Fire Departments. When the landscapers trim overgrown trees and bushes, they are acting on a work order from the board. Please do not interfere with their work. They cannot and will not stop the trimming on a homeowner's demand.

Pools. Pools will be open through Labor Day. Take advantage of this while you can. Locks will be changed, so save your key to swap for a new key next year. New umbrellas at the family pool were broken. There will be new umbrellas and furniture next year. If you see anyone misusing pool furniture, notify security.



See facing page

BEE-utiful. With summer comes some not-so-welcome insects like yellowjackets. Reusable yellowjacket traps that are non-toxic and will NOT trap beneficial honey bees are available through your HOA. Call CAP to get a trap set up in a problem area.

Keeping Cool. With 15 straight days (and counting) of 90 degree plus temperatures, everyone is looking for ways to beat the heat without the pain of a HUGE electric bill. There is, of course, the pool, but you can only stay in there so long without looking like a prune. Portable air conditioners are a great alternative.

Looking for a place to hold a monthly meet-

ing for your business, club or organization? Why not the Strawberry Clubhouse? For more information, call John Krajewski at CAP.

Strawberry Board

President Jan Lucas
 Vice President Alan Stitelman
 Secretary/Treasurer Victoria Torok
 Director - Bev Brown

Important phone numbers

CAP - 303-832-2971 x 2, x3
 CAP - Emergency - 303-215-3323
 Brownstone Security, 720-879-4568
 Police - Non-Emergency - 303-627-3100

Chimney Hill by Pamela Akira and Lana Gutnik

Our Xeriscape is Complete!

Our xeriscape project was completed by JBK Landscapers in early July. It is a beautiful improvement over the previous water-hungry turf. Residents have responded positively and no complaints.

There is plenty of variety and plenty of green. The green should increase dramatically by next year as the plants grow and expand. There should also be more color when the plants produce flowers and turn color in the fall. As of now, water use has decreased only slightly. Next year, with better control of the clock monitors, the community will need to water only one or two times a week. Each watering will be longer to encourage

Two zones that were updated with xeriscape plants



roots to grow deeper.

The growth of the blue grama lawn is noteworthy. It was started by seed, not sod. It grew fast and now presents a soft spring green carpet. It is lovely to look at, but it is not suitable for people walking all over it. In Chimney Hill, people rarely walk on the grass because the slopes are too steep and strips are too narrow. Keep your bluegrass turf for areas with lots of traffic (like the golf course). The blue grama needs to be weeded this first season and watered slightly. It is supposed to be allowed to grow to 6–8 inches, which means that it will need only one mowing a year — in mid October — and only one watering a week thereafter. Imagine that!

Although many people may equate xeriscape with “rocks,” only one of the four xeric See Chimney Hill...page 13



August 2011

14	15	16	17	18 4 pm HRMD Board Meeting – GC at HR	19 8 pm Healing Force at Noonan's	20 Noonan's Car Show Meet the Pro
21	22	23	24	25 6:30 pm Ward IV Meeting at Noonan's	26 8 pm Healing Force at Noonan's	27 Noonan's Car Show UFC: Silva vs. Okami
28	29 BUFF Brothers' Cops Fighting Cancer Golf Tournament	30	31			FIRST QUARTER: 6 FULL MOON: 12 LAST QUARTER: 21 NEW MOON: 29

September 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	FIRST QUARTER: 4 FULL MOON: 12 LAST QUARTER: 20 NEW MOON: 27			1 TFO Trivia at Noonan's 8 pm	2 Locals Club All Day Live Music 7 pm	3 Bloody Mary Bar Ladies Night 6 pm
4 Bloody Mary Bar Service Industry Discount Night	5 Poker at Noonan's 6 pm Labor Day	6 6 pm UAHR Board Meeting – GC at HR Ladies Night 7 pm Karaoke 8 pm	7 Country Music & Dancing 6 pm Banquet Room (no cover)	8 TFO Trivia at Noonan's 8 pm	9 Chimney Hill Garage Sale, 8 am–3 pm Locals Club All Day Live Music 7 pm	10 Chimney Hill Garage Sale, 8 am–3 pm Noonan's Car Show Live Music • Games • Prizes
11 Patriots Day Grandparents' Day Chimney Hill Garage Sale, 8 am–3 pm	12 Poker at Noonan's 6 pm	13 6 pm HRCA Board Meeting – GC at HR Ladies Night 7 pm Karaoke 8 pm	14 Country Music & Dancing 6 pm Banquet Room (no cover)	15 4 pm HRMD Board Meeting – GC at HR TFO Trivia at Noonan's 8 pm	16 Locals Club All Day Live Music 7 pm	17 Halfway to St. Patty's Day Live Music • Games • Prizes • Bagpipers • Step Dancers
18 Bloody Mary Bar Service Industry Discount Night	19 Poker at Noonan's 6 pm	20 Ladies Night 7 pm Karaoke 8 pm	21 6:30 pm Ward IV Meeting at Fire Station #11 Country Music & Dancing 6 pm (no cover)	22 Out to Lunch Bunch at Noonan's TFO Trivia at Noonan's 8 pm	23 First Day of Autumn AUTUMN BEGINS	24 Bloody Mary Bar Ladies Night 6 pm
25 Bloody Mary Bar Service Industry Discount Night	26 Poker at Noonan's 6 pm	27 Ladies Night 7 pm Karaoke 8 pm	28 Country Music & Dancing 6 pm Banquet Room (no cover)	29 Rosh Hashanah TFO Trivia at Noonan's 8 pm ROSH HASHANAH	30 Locals Club All Day Live Music 7 pm	

Chimney Hill...from page 11

zones was covered with 4–8 inch cobble. This was because the narrow, steep, sunburned strip was just bare and ugly. Nothing grew there. The cobble stabilizes the slope. In the other areas, there is a mixture of attractive mulch, impressive boulders and lovely dry-adapted plants.

The biggest problem has been rabbits! They have totally overpopulated the community. There have been three crops of rabbit babies to date. They are eating the Echinacea and the northern sea oat grass plants in the xeriscape areas (as well as the flowers and veggies in residents' gardens). Aside from the rabbit-ruined plants, all other xeriscape plants are doing really well.

The plants used in largest numbers were two species of Mahonia. Mahonia repens, a creeping grape holly, likes sun, grows into a large shrub and looks great in all seasons. Mahonia aquifolium compacta, a compact Oregon grape holly, is a low growing shrub that is especially good in shady areas.

Other plants in the xeriscape garden include Lonicera korokowii, a blue velvet honeysuckle, which is a lovely shrub with pink flowers in spring and summer and red berries in late summer that are loved by birds like robins. (Barbara Stein describes this shrub in her story, "A Patio with a View," on page 23.) The plant loves sunny areas or partial shade.

A lovely grass is Chasmanthium latifolium, or northern sea oats. It grows 18–24 inches and at maturity, is topped by lovely green oats. (Unfortunately, it is also an occasional rabbit food.) Some of the best flowering species are Coreopsis, Salvia, (catmint), and a favorite low growing species, Artemisia (silver mound sage). An edge plant is Thymus (thyme), which spreads a beautiful mat of pink, purple, yellow or white flowers in late spring and early summer. These are 10 of the most common plants in the xeriscape zones. If, as you pass by, you like any particular plants, you can see what they are and buy some for your own garden. All are available at Nick's Garden Center.

Water Audit. ReSource of Boulder did a water audit on Monday, July 18, starting at 8 am. Board President Melissa Miller and Marc from Perfect Landscape were there. They walked most of the property with the two irrigation audi-

tors. They spent the whole day checking every clock and zone, then doing catch can tests on 10 zones to estimate the DU (distribution uniformity) — a measure of the efficiency of the irrigation system.

Previously, a DU for the xeriscape grant areas was 36 percent (average), based on 11 zones with 451 catch-cans. According to Scott Kolowitz of Aurora Water, anything below 50 percent is inefficient. This audit is free, but you have to call Misha Delaney, 303-999-3820 x217, to get a place in line. Call now for an appointment for next summer. They are busy.

•••

Dates to remember. One is for the Chimney Hill Pool Party at 4 pm Sunday, Aug. 28. Scott Shaeffer volunteered to organize it. Please RSVP to Scott by emailing to SkotyBob@yahoo.com. Don't forget to bring a dish of your choice.

• **Garage Sale** is scheduled for Sept. 9, 10, and 11 (Friday, Saturday and Sunday), 8 am–4 pm. Set out your stuff and see what happens. Everyone is invited to participate.

Now, a few things about what's going on in Chimney Hill.

On July 19, the **HOA meeting** convened on-time. As always, there were a lot of important issues to discuss — some leaking chimneys and a sinkhole between two townhouses were a couple items on the agenda. The sinkhole will be filled. How to handle the leaks is being discussed.

New siding was installed on the north side of 2021 S. Worchester because the old siding there had rotted all the way through. The contractor used HardiPlank instead of Masonite. It is more durable, and should last longer.

The **annual Town Hall meeting** is on Nov. 15. Even though it seems far away, I would like to ask all residents to plan on attending. There are a few things that the community and HOA need to decide. At the last meeting, we decided to re-evaluate contracts with the landscape and management companies. To save money, and get timely service, we are looking to hire a handyman for the odd jobs around the property.

During the meeting, a suggestion was made to put together a committee to concentrate on these issues. We anticipate that it will take a few weeks to come up with the decision. The board is looking for one or two people in the

See Chimney Hill...page 14

Chimney Hill

...from page 13

community who would like to participate.

Chimney Hill has 116 homes, but only six board members. This sparse representation of the community is not good. It is also difficult to make important and urgent decisions during the board meetings when several people are on vacation, ill, or attend school in the evening. Ideally, we would like to have at least one person from every cul-de-sac on the board. This way it will be easier to spread the good news and get help within the community when needed.

Even if you do not want to become a board member, I encourage you to attend a few meetings. You'll learn how the meetings are conducted, can make suggestions, and offer your expertise.

Our townhomes are 30+ years old. They require a lot of preventative maintenance in addition to some urgent repairs. HOA boards set and maintain budgets, and raise fees based on projected expenses. Therefore all residents must be conscientious about what is going on, to keep the HOA dues low.

The board tries to use the money for meaningful upgrades that will help beautify and improve Chimney Hill. Everyone should report to their HOA manager or members of the HOA board any infractions, including inappropriate water use, running sprinklers, and pool temperature being too hot or too cold. Water costs are high. Water can do a lot of damage to building foundations and personal belongings. Money spent to repair these damages could have been used for property improvement instead.

In May, Burgundy neighbors held a "painting" party that saved their community a \$1,000! I know that a lot of people in Chimney Hill already contribute. Some people plant beautiful flowers and bushes. I saw my neighbors spread mulch around protruding tree roots to make a common area look better. A little extra effort by a few will add up into savings for all!

On a personal note. Even though this is not the board's opinion, and it has not been discussed, I would like to see that in the future the HOA use the services of people who live in the community — electrician, plumber, painter, handyman, etc. Even if a payment for their services would be the same as now, I hope these people would treat us as their family, since they

have a vested interest here.

Here is an example of how one resident's experience helped in interpreting the results of the job for which we hired a professional company. Mark Carapella has over 30 years experience working for Denver and Aurora, specializing in waste management. He spent hours evaluating a sewer lines report, pointing out some shortcomings in the report. We are in the process of presenting these findings to the company that did the job. Mark also spent some time creating a map of the Chimney Hill sewer system that we'll be able to use in the future.

• **Landscape policy:** Residents are reminded that the landscape policy stated in the Declaration of Condominium is:

"Any resident wishing to make major changes in the landscape near their townhouse, for example, the removal of junipers, trees, turf, etc., must submit a request with a diagram and/or clear description of the changes the resident wishes to make, to the HOA Board for its written approval. The Board must reply within 30 days or the request is considered approved. Failure to get approval may result in the Board revising the new landscape at the owner's expense."

This is in accordance with the Declaration of Condominium. Changes already made are "grandfathered" in. Minor changes to aprons, sidestrips, small areas adjacent to the steps and patio do not need approval.

As much as possible, and for all major changes, xeric plants (species adapted to Colorado's dry climate) should be used to save on water costs. Nick's has an entire section of xeric plants and very knowledgeable personnel.

• **Please Recycle!** Alpine may be putting smaller 95 gallon recycle containers (see photo) in the trash enclosures to make it easier for everyone to recycle. Thanks to all those residents who are filling the big recycle dumpsters.

Please Recycle!

Be A Guest Writer: *Metro Matters* will be initiating a new section entitled "Guest Writers." You are invited to submit an article, 500 words or less, for acceptance in the next publication. Send to Bette Secord, Fairway 16, bettesecord@gmail.com; or Lynn Donaldson, LynnNeu@comcast.net or 13731 E. Hamilton Drive, Aurora, CO 80014.

Cobblestone by Kay Griffiths

Recycling. There are still issues with the recycling bins. When they have a lot of trash in them that does not match the list of items that are allowed for recycling, the company does not pick up the entire bin. There are 3 bins located at the top of the complex: one for trash and two for recycling. Please sort your trash from the recycling, and put the trash in the trash bin and the recycling in one of the other two bins.

Acceptable items for recycling are listed on the front of each bin. One board member delivered a list of acceptable items to each homeowner's door. Even so, trash is being placed in the recycle bins. The board is concerned that the service will end. If anyone has ideas about how to best solve this problem, please email REL at Daniel@relmanagement.com.

Security. The new security company has begun working to make the community safe. I hope you have received your magnet with the number of the security company, 303-552-9027. Please call the company and REL to report any suspicious activity and/or thefts. Also remember to report concerns to the police, as they will try to keep a closer eye on the community.

The entire Heather Ridge community is taking steps to form a neighborhood watch. A meeting will be held on Aug. 10, which will have taken place by the time you read this. In the next newsletter, the results of that meeting will be reported. The more residents who participate in this endeavor, the more effective it will be for the security of the community.

Homeowner and Renter Responsibilities. The new dog station has been effective in keeping dog poop off the lawns of Cobblestone. The board hopes that this continues, as it is a big improvement and ensures a clean, healthy neighborhood.

I would like to thank the residents who took it upon themselves to help keep the pool area clean and orderly. I saw people picking up items and trash that were not theirs. I hope the people who left things behind are appreciative.

Other responsibilities that come with living in a small, shared community include following parking regulations, avoiding unnecessary noise, and keeping exterior areas and patios neat and orderly. It is advisable to keep a fire extinguisher on the patio if you have a grill near

your siding or divider fence.

Management Responsibilities. If you are interested in receiving information from the management company, go to the website for REL www.associationonline.com, click on the homeowner link, type in Cobblestone, and enter your email address.

Noonan's Banquet Facility. I would like to take this opportunity to tell everyone about a wonderful facility that is within walking distance of Cobblestone. Noonan's Tavern, in the clubhouse, has a beautiful banquet facility. It is reasonably priced and excellently run to make your party a delight. Cobblestone has held two important functions there, each hosting about 70 people. Both functions offered delicious food, great service and exceptional ambiance. The Garden Room overlooking the golf course, the large dance floor and stage, and the great presentation of the food were highlights of the evenings.

Because of Meredith Lanphier and her



Above: Guests enjoy a banquet at Heather Ridge Golf Club, catered by Noonan's Tavern.

staff, there were no last minute concerns at both events. Everything ran like clockwork. The guests at each function were quite impressed. As one of the hosts, I just relaxed and enjoyed the evening.

Please Remember to Drive Slowly through the Community!



Who's Who?

Mary Lou Braun lives in Cobblestone and is a member of its HOA board. She also serves as an Assistant Secretary on the Metro District Board (HRMD), and volunteers on the Heather Ridge Community Affairs Board (HRCA).

Q. Mary Lou, you're not a Denver native are you?

A. No. I was reared in Minnesota.

Q. Did you attend college in Minnesota?

A. Yes. I received a nursing degree from Hamline University and a public health degree from the University of Minnesota.

Q. Would you tell me a little bit about your career in nursing?

A. I worked for the Public Health Department in St. Paul for two years, doing follow-ups on tuberculosis clinics.

I was also a school nurse where I conducted vaccination and vision clinics for three-quarters of the schools.

I was then employed by the University Hospital for 12 years where I began as a staff nurse, moved up to head nurse and finally became the nursing supervisor.

Q. I have heard that you have a passion for travel.

A. Yes. I think it all started when I quit my job in public health in 1958. A girlfriend and I decided to travel Europe. We had saved \$1,500 each, and decided to travel until our money ran out. We bought



friends. Our 3-month journey took us to England, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany and Italy.

Q. How did you and your husband meet?

A. My husband was studying for his Ph.D. in English at the University of Minnesota. My roommate met him while playing on a coed volleyball team. She brought him home to meet me.

We were married in 1968. We shared the same love of travel and would go on 3-week skiing trips to Italy, Austria and Germany.

When our daughter was only one month old, my husband was offered a job teaching English at Sheffield University in England. It is about 150 miles northeast of London.

During our two years in England, we spent the summers traveling to such places as Vevey, Switzerland, above Lake Lauzanne, Holland at tulip time, Israel and Zermatt, Switzerland.

From England, we moved to Denver for two years, to start up a business. When that failed, we moved to Connecticut where my hus-

band worked in New Jersey for 12 years. The last year there, I accepted a nursing position at the local psychiatric hospital.

band worked in New Jersey for 12 years. The last year there, I accepted a nursing position at the local psychiatric hospital.

Q. What brought you back to Denver?

A. In 1983, after my divorce, my daughter and I moved back to Denver where I was hired, as a nurse, by the Colorado University Hospital, Psychiatric Department. We moved into Cobblestone in 1987.

Q. Does your daughter still live in Colorado?

A. Yes. Andree lives is Parker. She is a professional photographer.

Q. Does she share your love of travel?

A. We have gone on quite a few trips together: Peru, Columbia, Italy, Paris, Thailand and our most memorable — Bhutan.

Bhutan, located in the Himalayas, was a closed city until the 1990s. In order to travel in the country, you have to have a visa, guide and pay \$200. Much of the tour was conducted on horseback and on foot.

Q. Do you have any other travel plans in the future?

A. The next place I would love to visit would be Africa.

Q. What are your interests other than traveling?

A. I do volunteer work for Hospice, Habitat for Humanity and local schools.

I also ski, am an avid reader, a member of two book clubs and belong to a gourmet cooking group.



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Heather Ridge South by Van Lewis



President's message. It is hard to believe the summer is almost over, but such are our four Colorado seasons. My tomatoes were good this year, but nothing like Larry Wagner's Early Girls, or John Hartnett's "tomato trees" on steroids. I hope others had a good tomato season, too. Remember to clean up and put to rest your gardens for the winter.

Summer season highlights. This year's luau was the best every! Almost 100 people brought hors d'oeuvres, side dishes, and a large helping of community fellowship to fete the guest of honor — Porky the Pig. As in past years, Porky arrived at the party smoking hot — sporting Rayban sunglasses, a Hawaiian lei, and a world-class tan. Porky and roasted chicken meant no one left the party hungry — or thirsty. For the first time since HRS started the summer luau parties eight years ago, we ran out of beer! An emergency run to Chambers Liquors saved the evening. Later on, party goers chatted by a new gas fireplace pit, roasting marshmallows.



Special thanks to board members Linda Hull, Dave Elgin, and Ronni Jones for putting together these annual events, which includes the Christmas season party. Also, special thanks to the volunteers who helped set up and take down party tables and decorations.

The Coyotes are Back. On Aug. 7, around 7 pm, an HRS resident lost her pet dog to coyotes. Living next to the 14th fairway and backing onto McQuire Park, the coyotes jumped her split rail and wire fence to attack "ABBE." Not a

small dog at 16 pounds, the coyotes left her outside the fence mortally wounded. With fall and winter coming, coyotes are attracted to our large rabbit population and pets. Coyote protection is more defensive than offensive, so please Google the topic for further safety tips.

Projects done; projects under study. So far in 2011, all the roofs have been replaced, along with many gutters and downspouts. In addition, construction of new concrete drain pans along interior roadway to improve drainage during the summer or winter were completed.

Two Studies are Currently Ongoing. In September, the capital reserve study on engineering will help determine future HOA fees and reserve needs. The board is quite eager for this report, because it will be used to formulate the 2012 budget, an annual event that is fast approaching.

Another study specifically addresses interior asphalt maintenance. Initial reports indicate that HRS asphalt is in reasonably good condition, but needs corrective measures to prevent further deterioration. One asphalt problem is its buildup in front of garages. This may cause water to backup into garages. A possible solution is to remove the old asphalt in front of garages and replace it with a concrete apron extending outward. More information to follow.

Security issues, violation notices, parking. Board Director John Hartnett oversees these issues and others (architectural control). Working with Covenant Security Services, John has had a busy summer trying to make HRS a safer and better community.

Aurora police report less crime in the Heather Ridge area than in previous years, yet there have been incidents. In HRS this summer, John posted three warning notices about break-ins, suspicious people knocking on doors and one

See facing page

Did you know?



Right and top right: Garden Room in 1979.

This is what the Garden Room in the Heather Ridge Country Club looked like in the late 1970s early 1980s. *Below right: This is a picture of the back porch off of the banquet room that eventually became the Garden Room.*



serious incident that took place in a neighboring community, Sausalito. He works closely with Covenant Security, walking and driving the area. In particular, open garage doors have been a constant safety and rules violation!

At the board's direction, Westwind is mailing out Violation Notices about open garage doors, debris left in front of units and on interior streets, and repairs needed for fences and garage doors. If you received a violation notice, please accept the board's good intentions to protect the community.

Parking congestion is still a problem.

Owners and tenants are strongly encouraged to park in their garages. Garages are for cars, not storage. In particular, large vehicles parked outside of their garages must not overlap onto neighboring driveways. Residents are encouraged to report such issues to Westwind as well as problems or violations. At the board's direc-

tion, Security is aggressively ticketing violators. Please review your Rules and Regulations concerning parking.

A number of residents own three vehicles. If you park outside your garage because of this, please store the least used vehicle in your garage. Also, please review your insurance for liability and claims issues. Lastly, please keep all vehicles locked, especially outside ones.

Rental properties and tenants. HRS has always welcomed its residents whether owners living here or their tenants. The board's policy is tenants must uphold the same rules and standards expected of owners. As more and more unsold properties are converted to rentals, or bottom-dollar foreclosures converted to rentals, there's a growing concern that tenants must be told what is expected of them. The board is reviewing current policy and procedures for better clarity and enforcement.

"OUT-TO-LUNCH-BUNCH"

Any HR Metropolitan District resident who is interested in joining a monthly lunch gathering at Noonan's Tavern, fourth Thursday of the month, to meet old and new friends, please contact:

Ginny Lewis, ginny.lewis@comcast.net

303-337-6118 • See you Sept. 22

**HRMD, UAHR and
HRCA
meetings are open to
residents!**

Heather Ridge



The Ladies 9 Hole League at the Golf Club @ Heather Ridge had their member/guest day on Tuesday, July 19, with 56 participants. The theme was 1950s Rock & Roll with pink and black apparel, hamburgers, fries and root beer floats. A fun time was



had by all, especially the winners:
1st Place (top left): Audrey Romero, Sheri Diner, Christi Clay and Pidge Gonzales (Golf Pro Mike Ritter (far right) helped with the presentations.)
2nd Place: Sally Simon, Liz Clancy, JoAnn Oswald and Maria Giblin
3rd Place (left): Barb Wehmiller, Ruth Wade, Donna Johnson and Paula Hudson
 Sally Simon (above) won "closest to the pin."



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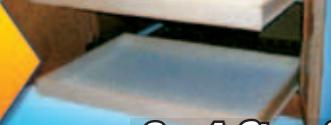
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Photo Album



Friends of the Fairway (from below, clockwise): Elizabeth and Gregory Van Dell (two views), Chimney Hill; three views of Tom Benz's home in Chimney Hill; Ruth Fountain, Heather Ridge South.



Below: an area in Chimney Hill that was planted with blue grama grass.



Letters

Metro Matters,

My wife and I live in Heather Gardens and own two rental homes in Heather Ridge. Over the years, we have led efforts and supported programs to enhance the community in which we live. We enjoy volunteering and participating in activities that bring joy to others.

Recently, I had the pleasure of dining at Noonan's Tavern at the Golf Club at Heather Ridge. I met Rob and Meredith Lanphier. I was impressed with the clubhouse and the beautiful dance floor.

Immediately, I had an idea. One of my passions is Country and Western music. I recently purchased a series of CDs including over 200 dif-

ferent songs featuring music from the 50s, 60s and 70s. They include such singers as Johnny Cash, George Strait, Reba McEntire and more. It is great music for dancing the two step, waltzing and slow step.

This is my proposal to the Heather Ridge community and the public: I would like to volunteer my time and CDs to host a Country Music and Dancing night every Wednesday, 8-11 pm in the Banquet Room at Heather Ridge, with no cover charge. (Beverages and food would be available for purchase.)

I am willing to make this opportunity available every Wednesday night from Aug. 23, through September. At that time, I will evaluate the interest level and feasibility of

continuing.

So, all you country music fans, come join me on Wednesdays for a free evening of dancing and entertainment. Let's see if we can make a go of it.

"Opportunities are never stopped, they're just passed to the next person."

George Lucky Highfill

Metro Matters,

Noonan's advertisement, in the "Smart Shopper Value Pack," of the image of the back of a man holding his coat open with the comment, "expose yourself to something new," I find offensive. It makes me angry. A flasher is one step down from a sexual predator.

Too many victims endure assaults yearly. The assaults cause many to suffer negative
See facing page

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Letters...from page 22

emotional, long-term effects. I personally know of several victims and have seen the effects it has had on them. Also, both genders can be victimized.

Noonan's use of black humor may make many people, like myself, choose not to go to Noonan's restaurant.

Please address the black humor issue with the Heather Ridge Golf Course management to see if they can find a positive image to use in their advertising.

Thank you

– Georgia Dorr
Heather Ridge South

Letters to the Editor: Send or deliver your letters for Metro Matters to Bette Secord, Fairway 16, bettesecord@gmail.com; or Publisher Lynn Donaldson, 13731 E Hamilton Dr, Aurora, CO 80014; LynnNeu@comcast.net by the fifth of each month. Letters must be signed, dated and include the writer's address and phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or space.

Chimney Hill: Patio with a View

I love to sit on my patio in summer. Sometimes I am listening to the sounds of birds in the environment: Canadian Geese, Mourning Doves, Mallards, House Sparrows, Crows, Black-Capped Chickadees, Goldfinches, House Finches and the American Robin are some of the birds I hear flying by or stopping.

Watching their behavior is entertaining. Take one example — the sometimes taken-for-granted robin. This bird, a member of the thrush family, runs along the grass and often stops at my bird bath for a drink. After drinking, it jumps into the bath and splashes with abandon while other robins wait their turn. The robin is a noisy bather. The splashing water sounds are delicious.

Now that the red/orange berries on the honeysuckle bushes next to my patio have ripened, robins run up to the bushes, stand a bit, seeming to gauge the distance or angle of the berries on the bushes above them, planning their approach. When they are ready, they jump onto the deli-

cate branches. While in the branches, they eat as many berries as they can. My husband Marc says that this would be comparable to a man jumping three stories high onto a high wire and then grabbing a tiny piece of fruit in his mouth. The robin is quite the athlete.

Yesterday, three robins were jumping on the honeysuckle bushes, chirping excitedly. One may have been in training because, at some point, they all relaxed on the bird bath ledge while one fed berries to a younger one. Its breast feathers were mottled rather than red/orange.

I pretended to be nonchalant, focusing only on grading my students' papers, trying to avoid any eye contact. (I don't see you.) They ignored me as if I were just inanimate patio furniture. They were more entertaining than my papers, which is why I do my grading outside during the summer.

Next time — squirrels. Why not see you what you notice and hear when you look and listen to your environment?

– Barbara Stein

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