



Pine Brook Press

A Newsletter for, about and written by
Pine Brook Hills Residents

SUMMER 2000



MAJOR LOSS TO FIREFIGHTING COMMUNITY

Peter Dennis Slack, 51, an architect, long term resident of Pine Brook Hills and an active member of the firefighting community, died from a heart attack on June 24th while biking in his beloved hills. Survivors include his wife, Jill, a daughter, Jocelyn, and two sons, Andrew and Jeremy.

A Front Range Firefighters' memorial service was held on July 1 at the Regional Training Center where Peter served as Director. The following remarks are excerpted from the eulogy by Don Whittemore, Chief of the Boulder Mountain Fire Authority:

As firefighters and medics, we train to put out structure fires, we practice auto extrication, we learn how to stop bleeding and we prepare for large wildland fires. We prepare contingency plans to address almost any type of emergency we may encounter. But nothing has adequately prepared us to deal with this loss, mitigate the grief or lessen the sorrow. And so, rather than speak to our loss, I'd like to talk about our gift, for those of us who knew and worked with Peter consider the experience a remarkable gift. These hills were part of Peter's district. This training center is the site where Peter spent countless hours training to protect that district.

Peter was a volunteer firefighter with the Pine Brook Hills Fire Department and subsequently with Boulder Mountain Fire Authority for 19 years. He served as chief, assistant chief and most recently as Wildland Battalion Officer. But simply listing the positions he held or the years he served is wholly inadequate.

Peter was an architect—by training, by profession, and most importantly, by nature. He was a dreamer, a designer and a visionary. He tended to see things a little farther, he tended to see things a little broader, than the rest of us.

Five to ten years ago, Peter believed that the multitude of fire protection districts in Boulder County would

need to consolidate. His vision led to Pine Brook Hills and Boulder Heights merging to form the Boulder Mountain Fire Authority, with a full-time Chief. He began the crusade for mitigation, defensible space and fire-wise construction just as most people were becoming aware of the urban interface. In numerous conversations with people about Peter, words like friend and mentor stand out. He was one of the good guys, always encouraging, supportive and forgiving of mistakes. One person said he was a hero's hero.

A few years back, membership on the department was a bit thin. Peter was one the few people to respond to calls. One day, there was a particularly

disturbing trauma call. A man lay severely bleeding on his living room floor; his wife was hysterical. After the medical responders had attended to the patient they realized that Peter was nowhere to be seen. Upon searching the house they found Peter in an upstairs bedroom with the young son of the victim, attempting to console him, comfort him and explain why bad things happen to good people. Peter saw the bigger picture. He saw that the real tragedy was not for the man, nor the spouse, but for that young boy.



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The call was much bigger than the moment, the trauma much deeper than the wound.

Perhaps what makes the Peter Slack story most compelling, however, was not that he had the big picture quality, but that he also had a marvelous appreciation for the present. Recently he was advising BMFA medic Donna Spinelli on mitigation and defensible space. When told that the trees he had recommended to be pruned were not on her property, Peter replied with a devilish look in his eyes that he frequently pruned his neighbor's trees at night, using a hack saw so they wouldn't hear him. He said he "found it to be sort of a meditative thing."

Just a week or so ago, while responding to a smoke report, Peter scanned the forests he loved, and remarked, "There are worse places to look for smoke."

Believe me, I could go on. But what you'd find is not the typical hero story of a firefighter rushing into a burning building to save a child, but rather the story of a man whose heroism was a culmination of many small acts of grace, a Frank Lloyd Wright in the art of being human.

During the public eulogy for the 9 Prineville Hotshots killed in the South Canyon Fire in 1994 in Glenwood Springs, then Governor Barbara Roberts remarked, "There are only two assets we have – love and time. Lives are measured by how we spend our time and how we spend our love." Peter gave us all the two things he had the most: time and love.

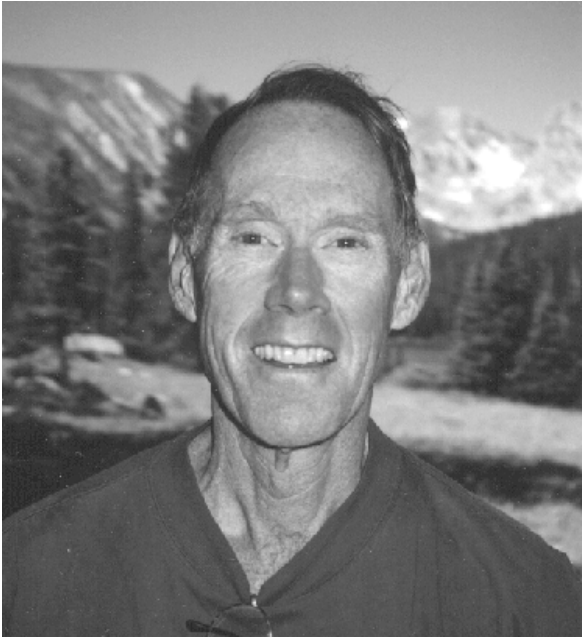
Contributions may be made to the Peter Slack Memorial Family Fund. For more information call Jody Williams at the Wells Fargo Bank, Boulder (303) 441-0266.



Fire truck formation following memorial service for Peter Slack

ALuminations

By Al Gerrish, HOA President



The Grand Opening for the newly remodeled PBH Community Center and Firehouse was held Sunday afternoon on April 30, 2000 and was a great success for all who attended. The event provided an opportunity to appreciate the experiences and contributions of the early settlers of Pine Brook and featured a video, "Remembrance of Pine Brook Past." In answer to many requests, copies of the video will be available at the August 5 meeting for \$15. Thanks to all who helped put the program together, especially all the early residents who contributed their time, effort and memories.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

The next HOA Quarterly meeting will be a POTLUCK AND SQUARE DANCE, scheduled for SATURDAY EVENING, AUGUST 5th. The last Square Dance was a lot of fun for everyone, veterans and newcomers alike. The only business item scheduled for the meeting is the election of new officers. This year Jack Walker is stepping down as Treasurer, but fortunately he has agreed to serve on the Board as Member-at-Large. Al Whitfield has been nominated to replace Jack as Treasurer. Eric Erickson will vacate his present post as Member-at-Large but will continue as HOA Liaison with the Boulder Mountain Fire Authority. Both Jack and Eric have made great contributions to Pine Brook and

are greatly appreciated. All the other officers of the HOA Board have agreed to serve another year. However, if you would like to throw the rascals out, please call Nominating Committee Chairman Jim Hembd (449-1692) with suggestions for replacements. The PINE BROOK HILLS HOME TOUR, SEPTEMBER 9th and 10, will feature five beautiful Pine Brook homes, several of which have undergone extensive remodeling. Proceeds from the tour go to reduce the payoff for the Fire Station remodeling project. The PBH CHIPPING AND FIRE MITIGATION PROJECT will be held during the two week period starting September 11th. Get ready to sign up and put all your slash up on the roadside for collection and chipping during these two weeks. This is a free service provided by the HOA for dues paying members of the PBH Homeowners Association and is a great benefit to all of Pine Brook.

ON THE WATERFRONT

With Bob deHaas

The Pine Brook Water Board wishes to thank Frank Schuller for his seven years of service on the Board. Unfortunately, he has resigned from the Board, meaning that there is now a vacancy that needs to be filled. Serving on the Board involves meeting (on average) once a month, normally on a Thursday night, for three to four hours. The Board reviews and approves bills to be paid, makes policy decisions and handles miscellaneous other matters. If you are interesting in serving please feel free to contact the office at 303-443-5394, or any of the other Board Members: Kirk Hendricks (President of the Board), Marie Zano-wick (Treasurer), Mel Beauprez (Secretary), or Art Markey. This is your opportunity to become involved with your water district.

The Pine Brook Water District also wishes to announce that it was the recipient of an Environmental Achievement Award from the EPA for the membrane filter plant that was installed in 1997. This plant allowed us to stop using pre-treatment chemicals and to reduce by nearly tenfold the amount of sludge produced. It certainly is nice when the EPA recognizes the achievements of even the smaller systems in their efforts to produce high quality water with minimal impact on the environment!

DO-SI-DO and DINNER TOO!

By Nancy Tamura

Two years ago, the Homeowners Association held a family social event which was one of the best-attended in our history – a combination potluck dinner followed by...Square Dancing. Even though there was a torrential rainfall that night which drowned our so-well-prepared dance surface in the parking lot, we all (over 90 of us of all ages) joined hands, squared up, hooted and hollered, and had a grand time dancing inside the Fire House to the spirited directions of our caller. So, we decided it was time to revive the energy and relive the fun.

WHEN: Saturday, August 5

TIME: 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. (Dinner 5:30 to 7; dancing 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.)

PLACE: Pine Brook Fire House

DRESS: Pine Brook Casual, but the two people who actually have square dance attire are encouraged to wear it.

RSVP to: Nancy Tamura (303-448-0225).

The HOA will furnish the main course and beverages.

We are asking you to provide the following:

SALAD or SIDE DISH (if your last name begins with A – P)

DESSERT (if your last name begins with Q-Z).

And, of course, we need people to assist with decorations, set-up and clean-up. If you can help with any of these, please call Nancy Tamura at the number noted above.

Please mark your calendar and come prepared to have a high stepping good time with your family and Pine Brook friends.

PLEASE NOTE: Pete Palmer's article in the Spring 2000 Pine Brook Press, "Humanity Has a Problem," in regard to our ecological footprint, has stimulated interest in learning more. If you would like to pursue the question, further information is available at the website bcn.boulder.co.us/basin/local/sustainintro.htm.

"Toward a Stewardship of the Global Commons: Engaging 'My Neighbor' in the Issue of Sustainability." Eight of twelve parts of the series are currently available.

CHIPS AWAY!

By Larry Tamura

Our trees and brush have flourished beautifully once again. Now with fall approaching and conditions ripe for fires, it's time to consider what needs to be cleared from our properties for fire mitigation purposes.

The Homeowners Association is pleased to sponsor a chipping project for Pine Brook Hills residents. The chipping will begin on September 11. It will be free of charge. In order to participate, we ask that you sign up by calling Cecile Duray-Bito at (303) 442-7471.

Please adhere to the following rules:

1. SIGN UP BY AUGUST 15.
2. Cut all chipping material into small sections for easy staging and handling.
3. Move the material to the roadside near your residence. The chippers will be unable to maneuver down driveways.
4. Stack the ends of the material in one direction so that the chippers can process it quickly.
5. No lumber, no hard wood trees, and no tree limbs or trunks larger than six inches in diameter.

This free chipping project is a great chance to reduce the fire danger in Pine Brook Hills. Please take advantage of it!

NEWCOMERS WELCOME PARTY PLANNED

By Sally Powell-Ashby and Shoni Kahn

WHEN: Tuesday, September 12, 2000

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

WHERE: at the Pine Brook Community Center, 1905 Linden Drive

All newcomers are warmly invited to join us for a newcomers gathering. Get to know your neighbors and discover what's what in Pine Brook Hills. Give us a quick call to let us know if you will be able to join us: Sally Powell-Ashby (303) 440-0507 or Shoni Kahn (303) 786-8919.

NOTES FROM NEW NEIGHBORS:

Dennis and Terri Giannetti, 86 S. Cedar Brook Road. We are both originally from Michigan. We moved to Colorado in the early eighties. We have lived just down the hill, in Wonderland Hills, for the past 13 years.

Our main motivation for moving to PBH was to gain a better view - we couldn't be more delighted.

Art and Sue Rancis, 125 Meadowlook Way. We moved up here with our children Nick (17) and Adele (13 1/2). Adele is a certified babysitter and would be delighted to look after your Pine Brook children. 303-517-5569.

Adam and Jane Sak, 163 S. Cedar Brook. We are happy to be in Boulder after spending the last 7 years in downtown San Francisco. Adam is an intellectual property attorney and Jane is an architect specializing in resorts and high end residential.

PINE BROOK HILLS HOME TOUR SEPTEMBER 9 and 10

By Deborah Springer

Plans are brewing!

The biannual Pine Brook Hills Fall Home Tour will be held September 9th and 10th, the weekend after Labor Day. This year the focus will be mostly on remodeled homes, and we have fabulous homes to see. Three of the homes have spectacular views of the Continental Divide, and others are full of creative and innovative ideas for improving and up-dating. Brochures will be out with more information. Tickets will be available at the Firehouse Square Dance on August 5th, by calling either Home Tour Chairperson Deborah Springer (443-7939) or Suzanne Adams (449-0997), or at any of the houses on the days of the Tour. We look forward to a great turnout as proceeds go directly to pay off the Firehouse renovation debt. We will need volunteers to monitor the homes during the tour, so give us a call. It's fun!

Architectural Review Committee Mid-Year Report 2000

By Genna Murphy

The mission of the Architectural Review Committee is to help homeowners/landowners successfully build in Pine Brook Hills in a manner that enhances the overall aesthetics and quality of life of our unique mountain neighborhood. We meet on the second Tuesday of every month at the Fire Station and heartily encourage your participation in the review process. Any changes of meeting times or locations will be

posted at the Firehouse.

The ARC reviews anything that affects the visual impact of a property. We encourage landowners and home owners to show us your plans early in the planning process and keep us updated as to changes to avoid expensive and time-consuming rework and controversy.

The following are listings of the most significant projects we reviewed over the last 6 months.

333 South Cedar Brook Lane

There were many debates over the plans of this Pinebrook neighbor in respect to his desire to build a pool along with his house addition. Over several meetings this winter, the homeowner and surrounding neighbors debated the issues of noise and light impact associated with the pool. In the end, the homeowner decided to table the pool plans and proceed with the approved addition, which will be less than 1000 square feet. The committee approved this addition.

925 PineBrook Road

The property owner submitted extensive plans for a general remodel of his house and gave the committee some background information on the project. According to the owner, the county noted that his driveway, although grandfathered in at its existing grade, was too steep to allow him to scrape off the house and reconfigure the existing house footprint. The owner gave the committee preliminary color samples. The rock fascia will be a cultured stone, river rock. The roof will be tree-green and the wall panels a beige color. The plans were approved.

230 Bristlecone Way

The committee is responding to a Boulder County request for comments on the Barber's plans to add a 3148 square foot addition to their existing 2409 square foot home. The preliminary plans were reviewed and no adverse impact was noted. The stucco and trim samples were submitted and the project was approved at the May meeting.

A Synopsis of Other Projects

36 Ridge Rd

Paint and roof color will not change, nor will height or

square footage. He is adding windows on both sides. Plans were approved.

28 Pine Needle

This homeowner is adding 800 square feet: 12 foot extension on the main level and 12 foot extension on the garden level. There will be no change in elevation. Siding will be stained darker green. Plans approved, conditional on submission of color samples and fee.

2064 Timber Lane

The county has approved plans for this addition, which will result in a 4000 square foot house. The colors are the same. All neighbors are in accord. They will bump out living room roof and add bay, rebuilding deck, and using natural cedar shingle on gables. Another chimney will be added. Plans were approved.

230 Timber Lane

The property owner submitted possible color samples for addition and remodel of his existing house. The addition entails enclosing the existing carport and adding two studies, adding a stairwell in the front, and totaling 450 net visible feet. The owner states that he will be staying with the existing blue-green color of his house. Ken Larkin requested he bring the final color samples when they were known. Plans were approved.

168 South Cedarbrook Rd.

Owner stated his intent to soften the existing angles of the house, which currently provide a harsh visual impact. He wants approval for wrap-around decking and pop-outs to create this softening of angles. Plans were approved.

1901 Linden Dr.

Homeowner is building a studio below his current home. His property is actually exempted from ARC covenants, but he would like to work with us as a "good neighbor." The studio would be used as a workshop to build precious metal birdcages. The committee approved the studio.

101 Pine Needle

Owner is requesting committee approval for a retaining wall along the existing driveway. One picture of the material to be used was presented to the committee. The colors and rock will match the existing house.

Please feel free to contact ARC by any of the following means:

Ken Larkin: ARC Chairman at 303-440-8280
Pine Brook Hills Architectural Review Committee, 1907
Linden, Boulder, Co 80304
or, attend any of our meetings on the second Tuesday
of each month at the Fire Station
Have a Great Summer!

MAILBOX VANDALISM:

Just a Childish Prank?

By Suzanne Adams

Pine Brook Hills has recently experienced a number of incidents of mailbox vandalism. At the last HOA meeting, fifteen homeowners reported smashed and destroyed mailboxes. Subsequently the Pine Brook Press has learned of eleven additional cases. In two instances mail was stolen.

The Press interviewed Sheriff's Deputy Lieutenant Phil West, who covers our mountain area. He stated that the Sheriff's office had received only six reports of mailbox destruction; he was surprised that our reported total was twenty-six. He said that too many people feel, "Oh, I don't want to bother the Sheriff about this," adding, "But that's what you are paying us for. We need to be called. You never know who'll give that last bit of information that leads to apprehending the culprit." During a recent incident in Niwot, a neighbor happened to see the perpetrator attack a mailbox and immediately called the Sheriff. It so happened that a deputy was a block away! The vandal was apprehended and that situation was resolved. To the Sheriff's department, destruction of mailboxes and interference with mail delivery is not simply a minor annoyance. Mail theft is punishable by as much as five years in prison and \$250,000 in fines. In the Pine Brook cases, some information involving one particular vehicle was noted and reported. A license number would be invaluable. Lieutenant West was enthusiastic about the idea of installing a hidden video camera when there is a suspect.

The destruction of mailboxes is distressing. Many Pine Brook mailboxes are characterful, often hand painted, sometimes cleverly engineered. Allowing wanton destruction of property does no one any good,

least of all the vandal. So, watch out. If you see a vandalized mailbox, report it, or urge the owner to do so. Note time of occurrence and whether other neighboring mailboxes have been attacked. CALL THE SHERIFF, and then notify the Pine Brook Press (pinebrookpress@aol.com). When mailboxes and mail are destroyed, it's actually more than a childish prank. It's a federal crime.

Burying the Electrical Lines in PBH: Pros and Cons

By Anne Singh

Recent fires caused by downed power lines here and elsewhere have raised the question of burying all the electrical lines in PBH. The frightening middle-of-the-night Fountaintree Fire in March and a 20,700 acre fire in southern New Mexico, in which 14 buildings were destroyed and 125 people evacuated, were caused by power lines blown down by high winds. In addition, winter power outages in PBH of up to several hours often have been caused by downed lines. We, the editors, decided to find out what would be involved in such a project and whether it might be feasible to consider the possibilities of carrying it out.

When interviewed, PBH Fire Chief Don Whittemore stated that burying the lines would be a LOT of trouble, with very much liability as well as ground and road disturbance. He said large boulders and rocks up in the hills are a major obstacle and their removal would drive up the cost. He guessed that the cost would be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars and said that not that many fires are caused by fallen power lines. In fact, he said that the Fountain Tree fire was the only one he knew of in recent history caused by downed power lines in this area. When I brought up the issue of the potential liability of the Public Service Company of Colorado when a fire was caused by live fallen lines Don said that this kind of fire was much more likely to be considered an act of God rather than the fault of Public Service Company. Therefore downed lines couldn't be the only reason for burying electrical lines.

I also spoke with Mark Staggs, the Boulder area distribution engineer for the Public Service Company of Colorado. He also stated that very few fires are caused by fallen electrical lines and even when

they do come down a series of protections are in place which will cause the line to go dead and protect the integrity of the system at the same time. However, in the case of the Fountaintree fire the lines remained live, contributing to the fire and inhibiting firefighting efforts for several hours before the Public Service Company turned the power off. This would suggest that the whole pole or poles went down with the lines, in which case the intact positive and negative wires might have caused the fire.

According to Mark Staggs, cost is the largest obstacle to burying electrical lines because it is too rocky in PBH. The road would have to be dug up, entailing blasting. Then rocks and large boulders plus all the old road material would have to be hauled away, resulting in a cost of approximately \$200 per linear foot versus \$25 - 30 in less problematical areas. When asked if Public Service would consider footing any of the bill Staggs said that when it involved private owners, the owners would be responsible and why should Public Service pay for PBH? Winter power outages are also a concern. Mark explained that they are now better covered as well with the recent addition of a second line up Linden feeding into PBH. Until recently we had only the Lee Hill line but now the Lee Hill line and the Linden line can switch, closing the gap which previously existed in the system. The two lines meet at North Cedar Brook and Linden and if a problem develops in Lee Hill, PBH is now covered by the new line. Staggs believes that aesthetics is the sole reason for burying power lines, although it is a valid reason. However, on an individual basis in PBH it can cost from \$15,000 to \$30,000 if it involves digging up driveways or crossing a road, or as little as \$1500 if there are no major difficulties.

In conclusion, we have to say that although some fires are caused by electrical lines blown down by high winds, probably there are not enough to justify the extreme expense and disruption this project would involve. The best prevention is, as always, fire mitigation, a watchful eye and an immediate call to 911 if a fire is seen or even suspected.

HOA BUSINESS: Thanks to all who have paid their annual \$50 HOA dues, and a gentle reminder to those who have not. Also, if the signature form approving the 1992 revisions to the PBH covenants is still on

your desk, please sign and return to Jack Walker, 1530 Timber Lane, Boulder, CO 80304.

The Sluggish Pace of High-Speed Access

By John Nairn

Chairman – PBH ZIP Committee

In the last issue of Pine Brook Press, Bob Olliver told you about the effort that is underway to get high-speed Internet access into Pine Brook Hills. For any of you who “surf the net”, you know the agony of waiting while web pages trickle onto your screen at the glacial 30-50Kbps rate that your standard telephone modem is capable of delivering.

He also told you how a group of Pine Brook residents have gotten together to form the Pine Brook Hills High-Speed Internet Connectivity Task Force – for which he coined the acronym “ZIP” (Zestful Internet Procurers). To quote him, “Sounds better than PBHH-SICTF!” A lot has happened since that article, and I would like to take this opportunity to bring everyone who is interested up to speed on the recent developments.

One of the first things that the ZIP group did was to determine what all the options were for getting fast Internet access into Pine Brook Hills. We looked at several technologies including DSL (Digital Subscriber Line), ADSL and IDSL (variants of DSL), Cable Modem (using your cable TV line), Satellite (using a TV dish antenna), and several forms of Wireless Networks. Vendors for these and other technologies were contacted to determine what their plans were for bringing their services into mountain communities such as Pine Brook Hills, and what the associated costs and capabilities of each service would be.

DSL is currently the most popular alternative among our flat-land cousins, with the best combination of high-speed and low cost. However, US West informed us that because of certain restrictions about distance from the central telephone hub, and the type of switching equipment currently installed, it would not be available in PBH for some time yet. Satellite is available today, but has several drawbacks. It is more expensive than a wire link, requires direct line of site to an equatorial path (lets out anyone without a southern exposure) and only works at the moment

on PCs (sorry, Mac fans!)

Several vendors were interested in providing other solutions such as IDSL and Cable Modem, but only if there were a sufficient number of households interested to make it worth their while. In Bob’s first Pine Brook Press article, he asked anyone who was interested in high-speed access to contact me. I also sent an e-mail solicitation of interest to everyone who listed an email address in the Pine Brook Directory. Between these two sources, we got a total of 76 responses of interest in high-speed access. I found it interesting that of the people who responded to the PB Press article, most did not have an email listing in the PB Directory. This says that there are a lot of “unlisted” web users out there beyond the 127 who have directory listings. Given that not everyone saw the PB Press article, and that there are more web users who are not listed in the directory, there could be 100-150 of our neighbors who use the Internet. If you have not yet responded and are interested in high-speed access, please send me an e-mail at John.Nairn@worldnet.att.net. The more interest we have, the more leverage we will have with the vendors.

As for the status of the various service options, it appears that the Cable Modem option is the current front-runner. AT&T (our current cable provider) is upgrading their service with new fiber-optic lines – capable of providing a lot more bandwidth (i.e., signal traffic on the line) than the current copper coaxial cable that we now have. If you have been wondering what they are doing tearing up the street along Linden and why you have to play the “one-lane-at-a-time” game, that’s what they are up to. Their main reason for doing this is so that they can bring us new and improved TV service (more channels and support for digital and high-definition HDTV). But as a bonus, it will also support high-speed Internet access. They tell us that after the cable is laid, it will take a couple of months to provide the high-speed access. Also, there is a rumor that the service may only go to where Linden first splits into Linden Loop to Timber Lane. However, the ZIP Committee will continue to work with the vendors to determine what is actually happening, and when you can expect to surf the net without a coffee break between pages. Stay tuned!



WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Compiled by Deborah Springer

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN, by John N. Maclean
Reviewed by Robert J. Smith

Fire on the Mountain delves into the saga of the Storm King Mountain fire near Glenwood Springs in 1994. While the fire was set by a lightning strike on July 2nd, dueling egos at the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service gave the fire three days to grow before any fire crews were even sent in. The next day, the fire blew up, killing 14 fire fighters, including four women. As a member of the Boulder Mountain Fire Authority, I was most struck by the price paid for these bureaucracies' inertia. As we move into this year's fire season, I am thankful for the autonomy of the BMFA, which can truly let us make a difference, as it did on the March 8th Fountaintree fire.

THE PILOT'S WIFE, by Anita Shreve
Reviewed by Dinny Seward

Anita Shreve has written a very readable and absorbing tale. Kathryn's quest is to find out the truth about her husband, an airline pilot whose plane mysteriously crashes. With each revelation and rumor the reader looks into a secret life and is made to wonder how well we really can know another person. Easy reading and a page-turner, it's a perfect book to read on a hot summer day.

PBH WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB MEETS TUESDAY, JULY 25. If you are interested in the continuation of the book discussion club, be sure to attend the 7:30 P.M. meeting at the Firehouse on July 25. We'll be discussing Wallace Stegner's **Angle of Repose**. No need to R.S.V.P. – just drop in. You'll be welcome!

STAR PITCAIRN: 1961-2000

On May 1, 2000, a star departed from our sky. On that date Star Pitcairn died after a long and painful battle with cancer. At a ceremony on the hillside near the Star House, where she and Bob Wampler were married in 1996, friends and family shared memories of her love for people, animals and nature. Her minister, David Roth, remembered that Star was always positive and was even able to view her illness as a chance to learn to focus on what is important in life. Star "listened with her whole body." She had wonderful enthusiasms – when she found a book that seemed to have something important to say, she wouldn't just buy one. She'd buy multiple copies to pass on to others. She loved Pine Brook Hills and its wildlife and had names for all the deer. Bob has a photograph of the fourteen deer who, amazingly, gathered outside the Pitcairn/Wampler home on Balsam shortly after Star's passing.

As the minister concluded his comments a bird broke out in song. Bob, in a deep purple shirt, held a white balloon tied by a long purple streamer. He slowly let the balloon float higher and higher. Letting it go, he watched the balloon ascend until it was hidden by the clouds.

Memorial donations may be made to the "Star Pitcairn Scholarship Fund," and mailed to Billie Watkins, 2895 18th Street, Boulder, CO 80304.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:
PINE SPURGE HILLS???

If we don't pay attention to a rapidly growing problem in our community, that's what we may be calling ourselves and a lot sooner than you think! I am referring to the little green plant that has a yellow bloom with the quaint name of "Donkey Tail Spurge," currently spreading unabated through the land. Jo Noble, a volunteer naturalist with Boulder County Open Space, wrote an all-encompassing article on this plant and its established position in Pine Brook Hills, in the last issue of the Pine Brook Press. If you haven't already done so, I strongly urge, no, even plead for you to read it.

Some residents plant this charming little destroyer

believing it to be a delightful ground cover, and others, having been the recipient of it taking root on their property, just allow it to grow and multiply. This mistaken philosophy and attitude needs to change. The longer we wait the more difficult it is to remove those little suckers. I know, having spent the better part of four hours digging up a healthy patch of the stuff. You will be amazed at the length of the root systems! Let us not underestimate the seriousness of this situation. This is an unwanted and dangerous plant. You need do no more than drive through our hills to see how extensive the problem really is.

Read Jo's article and let's get to work!

Don Baer

Editor's note: copies of Jo's article are available upon request.

Dear Editor:

This week very early in the morning I watched two German Shepherds (one with standard coloring and the other with lighter coloring) chase a deer down the hillside next to our home (168 S. Cedar Brook). As many of you know a deer will not fare well in this type of situation. Dogs naturally tend to create packs and deer are fun to chase. When the pursuit is over, the deer may also be finished. Dogs are great but not when pursuing our Pine Brook deer for breakfast. If these were your dogs, please grab a leash and join your dogs for a beautiful fresh air walk.

I encourage others to write to the Pine Brook Press describing dogs that are seen running loose. Perhaps it will make the guilty take more responsibility for their animals and therefore keep Pine Brook's animals safer.

Shoni Kahn

168 S. Cedar Brook Road.

Dear Editor:

I returned home today following a slow-moving car of young men. Suddenly, I watched in horror as the passenger seat occupant extended his arm out the window and rested it on the door as he clutched a burning cigarette in his fingers! Impotently, I watched the car disappear down Pine Brook Loop.

This little scene triggered the following question: does the community of Pine Brook have, or could it obtain, authorization from the County to display, under certain fire conditions, a NO SMOKING AREA sign? Perhaps it could come from the Sheriff's Department,

which would give it the added weight of law enforcement. It could be attached to our fire conditions sign or it could stand free and closer to the road.

Concerned Pine Brooker

WILDFIRE:

PINE BROOK AWAITS THE BIG ONE

This has been a great season – if you are a wildfire. The last few months have brought us horrifying fires in Los Alamos, north and south of us in Colorado, and the scary Fountaintree Fire which Pine Brook survived partly because of a fortuitous wind change. And here we are in our wooden houses deep in a pine forest. “I don't know what it will take before the public demands something be done,” says Chris White, Boulder County's fire prevention specialist. “Will it take the loss of 100 homes or 1,400 homes?”

But what COULD be done? We live here; we like it; we don't want to move. To address the question, let's look first at what constitutes the “Fire Environment,” then consider the mitigation possibilities that might be instituted on a district-wide basis, and finally what we can do on our own, to “participate in our own rescue,” as some fire department people put it.

The “Fire Environment” has three components: weather, topography, and fuel. Pine Brook is dry and windy during much of the year; summer heat further increases fire risk.

Our topography increases our vulnerability. Fire on a 30% slope can produce flames twice the length, traveling 1 ½ times as fast, as fire on flat ground. Therefore, the “defensible space” around a mountain house must be a different order of magnitude than the space needed for a flatland home. Defensible space is that area between a house and an oncoming wildfire, where the vegetation has been modified to reduce fire threat and to provide an opportunity for firefighters to defend the house. Had you heard, as I had, that defensible space should involve an area 30 feet from the home? That's for a flatland house. A house on a 25% grade needs defensible space of 150 feet because of that increased flame length and the speed of fire on slopes. Chimneys, or steep, narrow drainages, also

increase the risk. Houses on south and southwest slopes are even more vulnerable. Steep terrain not only accelerates fire spread but also causes difficult access for fire fighting equipment.

Well, we can't level the mountains, and nobody has done anything yet about the weather. Fuel, that third component of the Fire Environment, is different. Pine Brook has been fortunate to avoid the fires that have ravaged our neighbors. We haven't had a major fire in over 100 years. As a result, our forest is overgrown. The trees are too close together. Their roots compete for the meager moisture, which not only increases fire risk but also makes them more vulnerable to Pine Beetle attacks. Reducing the fuel risk doesn't mean clearcutting; it means breaking up the continuity of fuel. We need to do that.

There are two issues involved in reducing the fuel load in Pine Brook. One involves defensible space, and that we can do as individual homeowners –although the efficacy of defensible space is magnified if neighbors work together. But we have to recognize that a roaring crown fire backed by high winds could overcome even scrupulous individual preparation. We need district-wide action. All the authorities agree that it is necessary, and nobody is doing it. Why? A couple of reasons: first, the public has not demanded action. We love our trees and we are resistant to cutting them down. Second, extensive fire mitigation is expensive. A few years ago, a small portion of upper Pine Brook was very fortunate to be awarded "The Unit 7 Project," wherein the Forest Service, the County, several neighboring fire departments, and Americorps participated in a project to reduce fuel around houses and to create a "Shaded Fuel Break" between Sunshine Canyon and some houses on Alder and Alpine Way. This fuel break will allow planes to drop retardant to force a fire from the tree crowns to the forest floor, where it could be more easily controlled. The project, though very limited, was expensive. A rough estimate puts the cost at \$45,000. On the other hand, in the USA during the last 30 years, 10,000 homes and 20,000 other structures have been lost to wildfire; 6 billion dollars have been paid by insurers. And year 2000 fires are not included in those figures! If fire mitigation is expensive, consider the cost of not mitigating.

The creation of the Boulder Mountain Fire Authority was a sensible idea, providing us with a full time

and highly capable chief in Don Whittemore. We could go farther and do as Cherryvale has done: hire a couple of full time firemen who would be available in case of fire but who would spend the majority of their time on mitigation activities. But before losing a couple of guys with chainsaws, we obviously need a plan. We need an analysis of where the major fire risks are and where mitigation would be most effective. The Four Mile Canyon Fire District has a great program. They used a grant from the Forest Service to create a fire behavior model. Fed into a computer, the project takes the digital image of a neighborhood from an aerial view, and adds the known behavior of fire under different scenarios, to see which houses might survive. This is not only an effective educational tool for a community but also a prospective real time fire behavior model which firefighters could use. Wouldn't you be interested in seeing the results of such a study for your own house?

So what can we do right now? First, we have to "participate in our own rescue" by creating defensible spaces around our houses. **PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN PINE BROOK'S FREE CHIPPING PROGRAM THIS FALL!** (See Larry Tamura's article in this issue). Eliminate ladder fuel (low branches, or shrubs adjoining trees). Remove branches within 15 feet of your chimney. Remove dead vegetation (including pine needles) from around your house. Chipping is the safest way to reduce fuels, and the price is right.

Do you need help in limbing or removing trees? Here are some contractors who may be qualified to formulate and implement a Defensible Space plan:

- Colorado Safescape (John Robbins), 303-772-3136
- Colorado State Forest Service, 303-442-0428
- Diamond Tree Service (Brett Thomas), 303-541-9595
- Firewise Landscaping (Joe Turner), 1-800-800-8664; Pager number 303-890-9151
- Front Range Forest and Fire, L.L.C. (James White), 303-332-8922
- Highline Forestry (Kevin Thomas), 303-332-8922
- Lumberjacks Logging and Firewood, Inc., 303-642-0953
- Native Ecology, Inc. (Barry Bennett), 303-258-1753
- Pine Mountain Contractors (Ron Garland), 303-931-6253 or 303-415-1293

WHAT'S NEWS?

By Anne Singh

What features would you like to see published in The Pine Brook Press? We have prepared a short questionnaire which we hope you will take the time to fill out and mail back to us. Please feel free to add your own ideas as this will help us produce a newsletter that will reflect the interests of as many of you as possible. Many thanks.

1. Pine Brook Hills-related articles (history, flora and fauna, biographies of residents, etc.)?

Yes _____

No _____

Comments:

2. Reports by various PBH organizations (Fire, Water, HOA)?

Yep _____

Nope _____

Comments:

3. A column of tidbits citing the various doings of Pine Brook Hills residents?

Absolutely! _____

Spare me _____

Comments:

4. Travel, perhaps focusing on the Southwest?

Si _____

No _____

Comments:

5. Book Reviews

More _____

Nevermore _____

Comments:

6. Cooking and Recipes

You bet _____

No Way _____

Comments:

7. A column by and about the children of Pine Brook Hills

Cool _____

Lukewarm _____

Comments:

160 Bristlecone Way**For Rent**

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- Unfurnished

\$3,000 per month**Pets negotiable****303-443-2689**

8. In-depth articles on subjects other than those exclusively concerning Pine Brook Hills?

Why not? _____

Why? _____

Comments:

9. The Ever-Important Other – Please list and/or describe ideas of additional articles:

Please mail this to The Pine Brook Press, 25 Alpine Way, Boulder, 80304. You can also send comments to pinebrookpress@aol.com or fax them to (303) 449-2534. THANKS FOR YOUR THOUGHTS.



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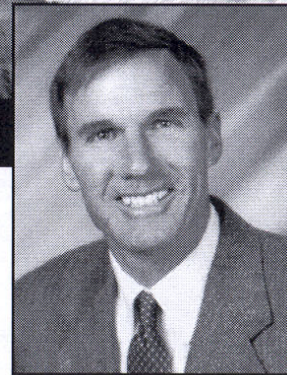
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Need a babysitter?

Alex Caukin, age 15

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American Red Cross Cert.

303-447-9420

BIDDING IS OPEN FOR LOVE QUILT

The "Cathedral Windows" quilt pictured here will be the subject of a silent auction, set to culminate at the Square Dance on August 5th. The handmade quilt, 97" wide and 107" long, is composed of 2 1/2 inch squares, each caught in the center and mounted on larger squares to create a three dimensional effect. It is currently on display at the Firehouse, where you can enter a bid at any time up to and including August 5.

The quilt is the gift of R.D. and Mildred Swartz, Pine Brook residents for over 31 years. R.D. was given the quilt by a tailor whose life he saved over 40 years ago. Although the quilt is washable and Mildred was encouraged to use it, she only brought it out for special occasions. The result is that it is as bright and colorful as the day it was created. When R.D. and Mildred left Pine Brook because of R.D.'s ill health, they wanted to contribute something to the community. The quilt, given twice now with love, awaits your bid. Proceeds will benefit the Firehouse.



Pete and Pat Palmer celebrated their 50th anniversary, Pat wearing her 1950 bridal gown.

Where are your priceless photographs?

Imagine

*that your photographs
are safe and
organized in albums.*

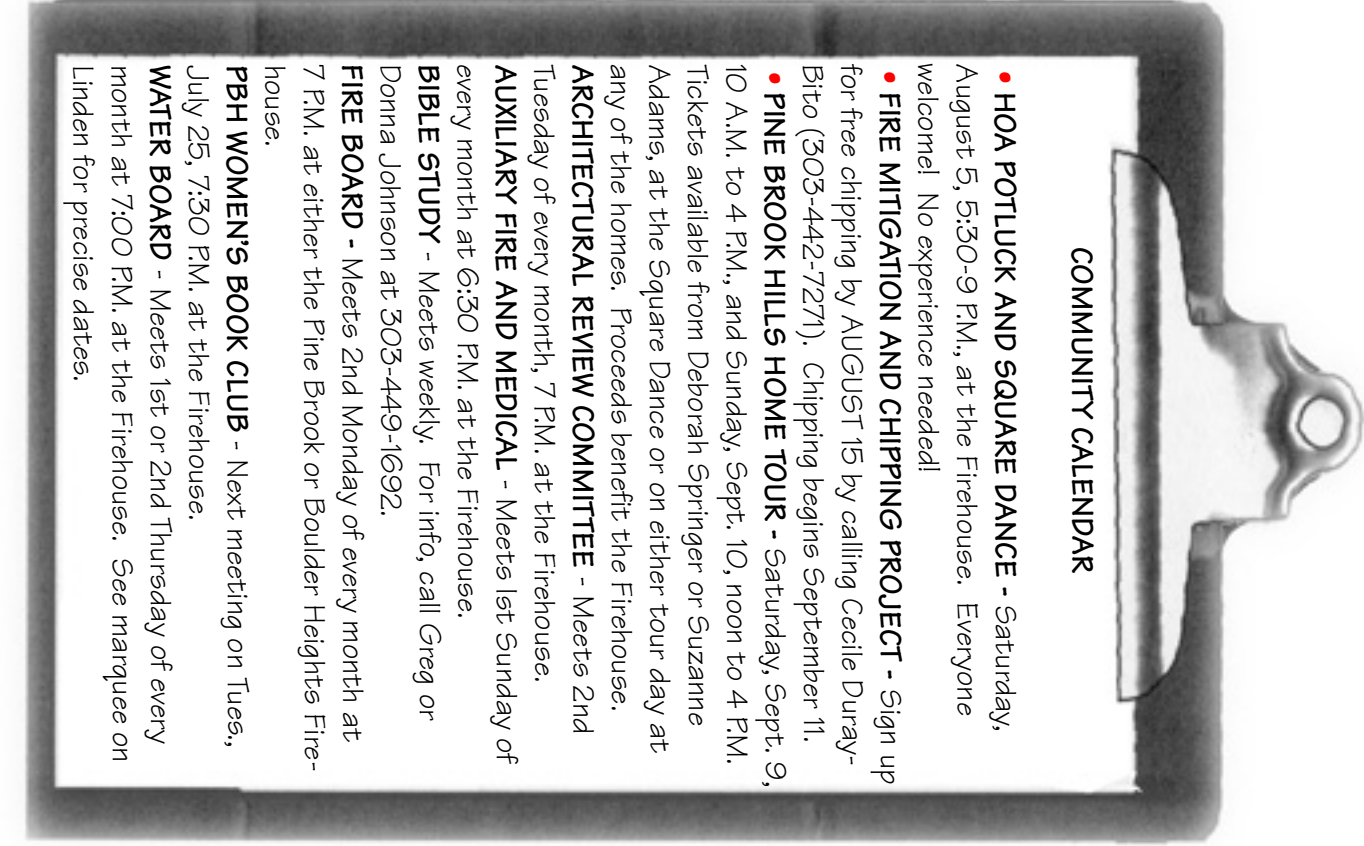
*Imagine the lifetime
of enjoyment.*

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for you professionally.*

**For supplies, albums
and advice, call:**

Paula Connolly
771 N. Cedar Brook
449-9799





COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- **HOA POTLUCK AND SQUARE DANCE** - Saturday, August 5, 5:30-9 P.M., at the Firehouse. Everyone welcome! No experience needed!
- **FIRE MITIGATION AND CHIPPING PROJECT** - Sign up for free chipping by AUGUST 15 by calling Cecile Duray-Bito (303-442-7271). Chipping begins September 11.
- **PINE BROOK HILLS HOME TOUR** - Saturday, Sept. 9, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M., and Sunday, Sept. 10, noon to 4 P.M. Tickets available from Deborah Springer or Suzanne Adams, at the Square Dance or on either tour day at any of the homes. Proceeds benefit the Firehouse.
- **ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE** - Meets 2nd Tuesday of every month, 7 P.M. at the Firehouse.
- **AUXILIARY FIRE AND MEDICAL** - Meets 1st Sunday of every month at 6:30 P.M. at the Firehouse.
- **BIBLE STUDY** - Meets weekly. For info, call Greg or Donna Johnson at 303-449-1692.
- **FIRE BOARD** - Meets 2nd Monday of every month at 7 P.M. at either the Pine Brook or Boulder Heights Firehouse.
- **PBH WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB** - Next meeting on Tues., July 25, 7:30 P.M. at the Firehouse.
- **WATER BOARD** - Meets 1st or 2nd Thursday of every month at 7:00 P.M. at the Firehouse. See marquee on Linden for precise dates.

Pine Brook Hills Homeowners Assoc.

PINE BROOK PRESS

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