



Pine Brook Press

A Quarterly Journal for, about and by
Pine Brook Hills Residents

WINTER 2009



THE SHADOW OVER PINE BROOK HILLS

Pine Brook Hills is under attack. Although the enemy is small (about 1/4 inch), its numbers are great and growing. Its appropriate name is *Dendroctonus Ponderosae*, the tree-killing Mountain Pine Beetle.

THE UNWELCOME NEWCOMERS: The beetles that devastated the lodgepole pines in Grand and Summit Counties have arrived in the ponderosas of the Front

Range. They are abortive and ill-formed. The probable explanation is that beetles who were previously feasting on lodgepoles haven't quite adjusted to the different chemical composition of the terpenes in ponderosas. But they will.

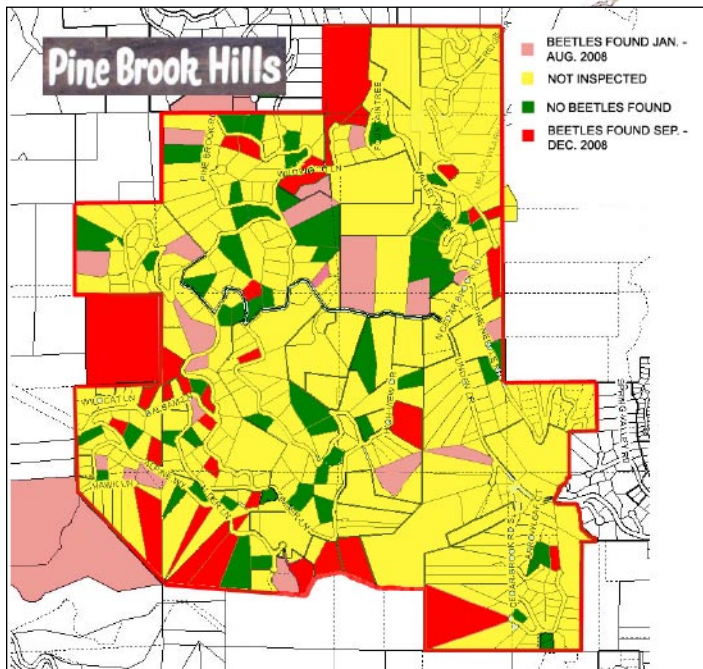
HOW BAD IS IT?

An estimated two million ACRES of trees in Colorado have been lost to beetles so far in this epidemic. And it's not just a Colorado problem. British Columbia has lost 33 million acres of trees, and the beetles, which have crossed the Canadian Continental Divide, may extend the infestation all the way to the Great Lakes. Beetles in flight over B.C. showed up on doppler radar as a big green blob 20 miles wide. Large numbers of beetles were noted 2400 feet above the forest floor! This is the largest known insect infestation in North American history.

IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO?

Yes.

1. Identify, cut and then treat infested trees before the next generation of beetles fly to attack neighboring trees. The Beetle Busters, a volunteer group originating in PBH and now operating in the whole fire district, are trained to recognize the symptoms of infestation and recommend appropriate responses.



Range. The map above shows something of the effect of the most recent beetle flight. Pink areas on the map indicate properties where we found beetle-hit trees prior to September, 2008; red areas show properties where new infestation was found during September to December. Nearly every street in Pine Brook Hills has at least one property where bark beetles have hit. Although beetles don't carry ID cards or wear identifying collars we are quite sure that some of the new hits are made by beetles transitioning from the lodgepole pine forests to the west of us because the galleries (the excavations under the bark made by the beetles)



Photo by Jim Adams

Pine Brooker Walt Musial discusses beetle hits with Beetle Busters Tom Byram and Suzanne Adams.

Write to beetlebusters@gmail.com to schedule a free Beetle Buster inspection of your property. More and more Pine Brookers are learning how to inspect their own trees. This is a good thing, as there are a lot more trees than Beetle Busters! Walk your property in the spring and fall, looking for pitch tubes, the popcorn-looking gobs of resin on the bark.

2. THE PBH SPRAYING PROGRAM

Spraying is effective “term insurance” and will protect your trees for one year. We recommend spraying in April or as soon as the snow is off the ground in order to protect against



This owner sprayed his trees.

lps, Turpentine and Mountain Pine Beetles. We have obtained a group rate from Davey Tree. The spray to be used is Permethrin; the strength, increased from previous years, will be 5 quarts per 100 gallons of water. Those who sign up by February 28 will be charged \$15 a tree for one spray and \$13 a tree for each spray if the trees are sprayed twice.

ONE SPRAY or TWO? The jury is still out on this. The U.S. Forest Service feels that one spray offers protection for one year; the Colorado State Forest Service suggests that two sprays may be necessary for protection from three types of bark beetle during the entire flight season. In 2008 the beetles were still flying in October.

TO SIGN UP: Call Davey Tree at 303.449.2525. By organizing through the Pine Brook Press, we hope to avoid some of the scheduling problems that some people experienced last year. To make SURE that you are included in the program, write to pinebrookpress@aol.com, give your name, phone number, email address, home address, and number of trees you want sprayed. Indicate what color tape you will use to mark your trees.

3. Manage your forest, and do it now! Our crowded forests need thinning. Fewer trees mean more

moisture for each. With enough moisture the trees have at least a chance of repelling the beetles. So, thin your forest NOW, but NOT in the summer when the beetles are flying. When thinning don't leave even uninfested trees or slash on the ground with bark intact. This only attracts more beetles!

This epidemic is unprecedented in size and severity, but with careful monitoring of our trees, removing infested trees and spraying ‘pet trees’ we can

SPRAYING WORKS!



This owner didn't.

definitely mitigate the extent of the problem and continue to enjoy PINE Brook Hills.



Is this Don Quixote readying his lance for the windmills? No! It's Jim Adams with his “range pole,” taking the battle to billions of little beetles!

Note: Jim explains that a range pole is used by surveyors as a reference point. A real one is about 8 feet long with 1 foot red and white alternating bands and costs over \$100.

Jim's improvised beetle busting range pole is a bright yellow foam plastic “noodle” that kids use in swimming pools, stuck on a 10 foot length of steel electrical conduit. The beetle busting purpose is to mark a property corner or the return point for a group of Busters doing a line sweep of a property, helping to ascertain that a defined area has been thoroughly covered.

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PINE BROOK PRESS

EDITOR

Suzanne Adams, 449-0997

ASSOC. EDITORS: Evie Gray, 443-4086

Anne Singh, 417-0373

LAYOUT: Param Singh, 417-0373

STAFF: Bart Adams, 449-0997

ADVERTISING: Deborah Menagh,
247-0827

E-MAIL: pinebrookpress@aol.com

WEBSITE: www.pinebrookhills.org

WEBMASTER: Param Singh, 417-0373

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Meetings are at the Community Center/Firehouse unless otherwise noted.

**HOA MEETING, January 28, Potluck at 6 P.M.,
Business meeting at 7 P.M., followed by presentation: Marie
Zanowick on "GREENING PINE BROOK HILLS."**

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE - Meets the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7 P.M.

BIBLE STUDY - Meets weekly. For info, call Greg or Donna Johnson at 449-1692.

FIRE BOARD - Meets the 2nd Monday of every month at 7 P.M. at either the Pine Brook or Boulder Heights Firehouse. Call 440-0235 for specifics.

FIRE AUXILIARY - Generally meets the first Sunday of every month at 7 P.M. Call 440-6132 for confirmation.

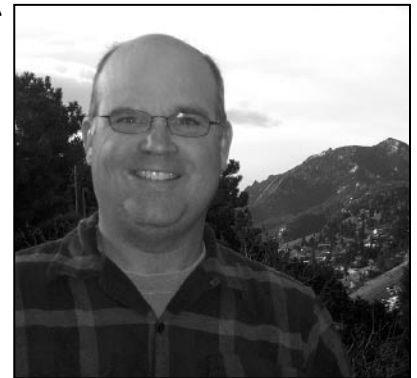
WATER BOARD - Meets first or second Thursday of every month at 4:30 P.M. Call Water Office at 443-5394 for dates.

PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS:

"Greening" the Pine Brook Hills Neighborhood

By Mark Menagh, HOA President

Have you thought about adding solar panels to your roof? Our neighbor, Marie Zanowick, has volunteered to work as a greening coordinator for our community. Our program at the HOA meeting on January 28 will focus on this new opportunity. Marie has agreed to give us an overview and we plan to have solar and energy efficiency companies come and present options to us. Boulder County just passed an innovative ordinance that will provide funding for utilizing renewable energy. County Issue 1A would allow homeowners and businesses in Boulder County to borrow money from the county to add renewable energy to their property or to make energy upgrades. The loans, which would come from up to \$40 million in bonds sold by the county, would be attached to the property and would be repaid each year as part of the property taxes. Because the loan is part of a property value assessment, the loan itself, (and obligation for repayment) stays with the property and not with the original owner. The loan payback period, 20 years, is equal to the payback period for current solar technology, so the cost of the panels could be equal to your electric bills - except without cost increases over the 20 years!



Our community has both the environmental awareness and the community

collaboration necessary to take advantage of the rebates offered for these services. Working together should make "greening" or the use of solar as an alternative more affordable and may actually result in no increase in what you pay in electrical costs. We have the opportunity to negotiate as a group by joining together the homes in PBH that have an interest in adding solar panels. We also have an advantage of potentially allowing the selected company to set up a short-term work site at our Community Center. This "bulk purchase" approach should result in a cost savings that could be spread around to all participants. This approach was successfully used by the Nyland Community in Lafayette and they received a progressive discount for solar panels on their community buildings from the solar company as more individuals signed up. Our water board uses a tremendous amount of energy and would be willing to participate also. Can you envision solar panels on our filter plant and fire station?

Please join us in hearing about this opportunity at the HOA meeting on Wednesday, January 28 at 7:00. We will have a short business meeting to cover normal HOA business including an update on what Boulder County is doing about beetles and then Marie will lead a presentation about the PBH greening opportunity. If you would like to join us for our "World Famous in Pine Brook Hills Potluck" at 6:00 please do!



WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO??

By Dave Davies, HOA Treasurer

In this trying financial time it is hard to gather up the courage to ask for annual dues, but your HOA needs you, and the good news is that we ask for a very small amount and for purposes that help us all maintain the quality of our living location, and hence our property values.

YES, it is that time again when we ask for 2009 Pine Brook Hills HOA dues.

The good news is that we are keeping the suggested dues at \$75 per year, although last year we averaged just over \$100 per household as many who donated realized that the money is used for a good cause. So give what you can.....please.

SO the first question is what did we do with the money last year (2008)?

We raised just over \$35,200; well over our target of

\$32,850. Over 300 households donated an average of \$101. The rest came from special donations, the ads in the Pine Brook Press, minor fees and interest on our savings.

We spent \$35,623; so we came very close to breaking even for the year.

Our spending was as follows;

- ★ \$10,000 on fire mitigation and fuel reduction that was matched by a grant from the State of Colorado so we were able to spend \$20,000 which we did through our own Fire Department. In 2009 we are planning a further 50% increase here.
- ★ \$1625 on Beetle Buster programs to help stem the tide of beetle infestations that, if it continues to rise, will drastically alter the appearance of Pine Brook Hills. In 2009 we are planning to increase this budget to over \$4500.
- ★ \$14,300 on legal costs to preserve the integrity of the HOA covenants. This essential expenditure was well over our forecast, but necessary. For 2009 we see a dramatic drop in this category to \$4000
- ★ \$ 3900 on the Pine Brook Press and \$1800 on the Directory; the Press did, however, earn almost \$2500 back in advertising revenue. The budget for the Press stays the same for 2009. However, there will be no Directory charge until 2010.
- ★ \$ 2057 on the "Move the Dirt" silent auction. We collected almost half this back in special donations at the event. The fundraiser was a great success and raised over \$10,000 for the water department to complete the replacement of dirt around the dam. This was matched by a generous anonymous donor.
- ★ The rest (\$1941) was spent on insurance, web hosting, mailings, supplies etc.

The bottom line for 2009 is that we are intending to increase the spending on Beetle Busters and fire mitigation, while we are projecting a decrease in other costs and an increase in collections, so that we still can come out with a small surplus. As of the end of 2008 we have about \$27,000 in reserve. This is very small amount and we hope to increase it somewhat.

SO the next question is how do you send in the dues?

Please put your check, made out to PBH, in the HOA Box at the firehouse or the HOA box on Linden Drive

just outside the firehouse. Or mail to me.....

Dave Davies Treasurer PBH
151 Boulder View Lane Boulder CO 80304-0411.

\$75 is the suggested minimum but please think about a larger amount. Last year we received many \$200, \$500 and even \$750 dues donations.

And if you have a question, suggestion, or have second thoughts about the dues, CALL ME at 303-952-2464 (day) or 303-938-0522 (eve.) or email to davedavies.sbr@gmail.com



FIRESIDE CHAT

By John Benson, Fire Chief

Have you seen my little buddy? Sometimes I can't find him either. Thanks to the snow and the plows we are encountering at this time of year it is sometimes difficult to find the hydrants even

with the hydrant signs. I am asking the homeowners of Pine Brook Hills to adopt a fire hydrant located near your driveway. There are no adoption fees, no food or watering required and you don't even need to take a hydrant for a walk. The only love and care needed is a



It's OK to hug your hydrant

quick shoveling to expose the hydrant so the fire department can quickly gain access in the event of a structure fire. Pretty easy, huh?

Although I carry a scoop shovel with me during the winter months, I am sometimes unable to get to all of the hydrant locations after our larger snow storms blow through the District. If you have a hydrant located at or near your driveway, could you please take a couple of moments to shovel the snow from around the hydrant? If you are unable to do this please give me a call at station 1 at 303-440-0235 and I will come out and dig my little buddy out. Time is critical to get water on a house fire. BMFPD thanks you for your time and effort in helping us make this a safer community.

On a different note, as we move into the winter season, BMFPD is asking everyone to make sure that your address markers are visible. Just like the



Chief Benson loves his "little buddies!"

hydrants, your address markers can become obscured by the snow next to the driveways. Please take some time and ensure that your address markers are visible. Time is critical in any emergency situation. Please help us to reach your home in a timely manner.

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REMINDER: if you have an emergency or think you have an emergency, PLEASE, PLEASE dial 911. The quickest way to get assistance from BMFPD is by dialing 911. There are times when the BMFPD staff is in the field working, responding to another incident, at meetings or not around during non-business hours. The members of BMFPD have no problems responding to an incident even if there is nothing found by the members upon arrival. Our philosophy is that we would rather respond to an incident in a timely manner and find nothing, rather than arriving on scene later to find a problem which could have been avoided if we had been toned out from the onset. The safety of our citizens is paramount to BMFPD. Please Help Us Help You in your time of need. REMEMBER, DIAL 911, not the fire station.

Until next time, stay warm, and be safe



ON THE WATER FRONT

By Bob deHaas

Board Member Resigns - The Board of Directors hopes everyone will join us in saying THANKS to Brian Hanson. Brian served on the Board of Directors from September of 2000 to November of 2008. He was a great asset to the Board and the District so we are sorry to see him go.

New Board Member Appointed - To replace Brian the Board appointed Steve Maxwell, and he attended his

first board meeting as a Director in December of 2008. Steve had expressed an interest in serving on the board since earlier this year. He has a background in water issues and has had numerous articles published in various American Water Works Association publications.

Budget for 2009 and Water Rates - The Board has completed the budget process for 2009. While the general feeling was that it would be best to adjust the water rates each year by just a little, instead of waiting and then being forced to make a major adjustment, the Board decided not to adjust the water rates for 2009. I'm sure most everyone will welcome that news!

Disinfection Byproducts - The District has completed its disinfection byproducts testing for the last quarter of 2008. The results of those tests showed that the Solar Bee is effective and the District is still in compliance with the required standards.

The Snow is Here - With the winter snows now finally arriving the District would like to remind everyone to be careful when plowing so as not to hit your meter pit or the tan box located next to it. If you use a snow blower (or even if you are hand shoveling the snow) please try not to put the extra snow on top of your meter pit or the tan box. This not only can interfere with our ability to read your meter, but if you have a water problem and we need to shut your water off at the meter pit for you, it can make it very difficult to find!

FROZEN PIPES AND FREEZING TEMPERATURES

Since with the snows we are also seeing colder temperatures we would like to remind you that you may want to take precautions to prevent frozen pipes:

1. Know where your house shut-off valve is so that if a pipe bursts you can shut off the water even before we get there.
2. If you have a sprinkler system it should be drained by now.
3. Disconnect any garden hoses from the outside faucets.
4. If you know of pipes that are vulnerable to freezing insulate them or provide heat to them OR if you can't do that, run the smallest stream of water you can from those taps to prevent them from freezing (while our water rates may not be cheap, a plumber's bill will

most certainly be quite a bit more). If you'd like catch this water in a bucket use it to water your inside plants.

5. Open cabinet doors to allow heat under the cabinets and around the pipes, i.e. the kitchen sink, the bathroom sinks, etc.
6. Never set your thermostat lower than 55 even if you're going to be gone.
7. If you have hot water heat you may not want to have the heat turn down automatically (for example during the night or when you go to work). Most hot water heat pipes are located along outside walls, and we have seen several instances where the time it took for the house to cool down enough to turn on the thermostat was enough time for the water in the pipes along the outside wall to freeze.
8. If a pipe freezes the sooner you start thawing it the less chance the pipe will split open.. Hair dryers or portable heaters can work quite well. You may want to turn off the water to the house as you're doing this, so if there is an unseen break in the pipe you do not have water spraying everywhere.

The District wishes everyone a safe and enjoyable winter. We are hoping for good snow packs not only for our water supply but to give the vegetation that was planted around the reservoir a big jump in the spring.



What is that thing in the PB Reservoir? A diving platform? (Actually, it's a Solar Bee used to inhibit algae growth.)

MOUNTAIN EXPRESSIONS, 2008

By Marysue Huckabee

Thanks to everyone who participated in Mountain Expressions 2008! I can't say a big enough THANK YOU to all the volunteers who worked over the weekend, decorating, setting up, making items for the Auxiliary table and giving their time to work at the sale.



Another big THANK YOU goes to all the bakers! We had a new record of income from the Bake Sale table. Not only did the fire department profit from the sales, but lots of people got to go home with many wonderful and yummy treats!

THANKS to all the talented artists who came and participated. We had a wonderful collection of hand-crafted items that so many shoppers enjoyed buying. Thanks to the artists who donated their art to the sale and helped fill the room with evidence of all the talents of our district.

And one last THANK YOU to all of you who came and shopped! We couldn't do it without your support too.

Enjoy the New Year and watch for our ads for Mountain Expressions 2009



EARLY ALERT FROM OUR GARAGE SALE GURUS

Art and Babette Markey

It's below zero as I write this but we all know that spring WILL get here later in the year. And with spring comes the BMFPD Auxiliary's biggest fund raiser of the year: the Annual Garage Sale, to be held this year on May 15, 16, and 17.

If you haven't already started collecting donations

for the sale, we think this would make a good new year's resolution: To find and set aside several boxes worth of great donations for this fire department fund raiser. Given the state of the economy, we anticipate that we will have more than the usual number of shoppers. So we hope you can continue to be generous with your donations.

We have already had some neighbors call us to tell us they have donations for the sale. While we encourage everyone to hold on to their own donations if at all possible until collection starts on the first two weekends in May, we do have a small amount of space still available in the storage shed that we are using in Boulder Heights.

The Auxiliary is also in need of more help from the community at large to keep this sale going at its current level. Please consider becoming a part of the team that runs the garage sale. We DO need your help!

You can contact us at 303-440-6132



Buon Appetito!

A Pine Brook Family Opens a New Restaurant

By Evie Gray

Pine Brook residents Paul and Christine Schuler of Boulder View Lane are assisting their son Alec and daughter-in-law, Gabriella, with plans to open an Italian restaurant, "Arugula bar e ristorante," in February 2009 at 2785 Iris Avenue (at 28th Street), in Boulder. (See ad on page 11).



Chef Alec Schuler (left), and his father, Paul Schuler discuss details of the menu and wine list.

The restaurant will feature a full bar and Chef Alec Schuler's menu, with inspiration drawn from

northern Italy's cuisine. The dining selections include a substantial choice of appetizers, pastas, meats and fish, with a focus on fresh, natural ingredients. An eclectic offering of wines from many Italian regions and the rest of the world has been selected to pair with Arugula's food. Nothing doctored or chemically treated will be served. "If my great-grandmother would recognize it as food, then it's food," Alec said.

Alec, a CU grad, left Boulder after graduation, and as predicted by Chief Niwot's "curse"- has happily returned to Boulder. His chef's career began at the Natural Gourmet Cookery School in Manhattan, where the emphasis was on nutrition with instruction in macrobiotics and healthful, mostly vegetarian dishes. He has served as chef or executive chef in Connecticut, Washington state (Seattle), southern Spain, Boulder and Niwot. In discussing particulars of his cooking style, Alec said that Bison Bolognese is his favorite dish to prepare and serve. He explained that it is bison in a ground meat sauce inspired from Bologna's culinary delights, and is served with linguini. Alec's idea of a garnish is a parsley leaf, not an elaborate array of non-essentials crowding out the entrée.

The emphasis on northern Italian cuisine separates the menu from "the red sauce influence of southern Italy," Alec said. "We will serve dishes from France and Spain as well as Italy, but no pizza or chicken parmigiano." He explained that the food selections in the Arugula restaurant are made using the lens of his own culinary expertise with influence of French, northern Italian and Spanish cuisine.

Why a restaurant in Boulder, where there are already many good restaurants? "There are a lot of good palettes out there, and it is an affluent region," Alec said. "As long as we are as good or better than the rest, we'll thrive."



And why the name Arugula? In Mediterranean countries, the Arugula plant has been prized since Roman times for its medicinal properties, including those of an aphrodisiac. The plant's rich, zesty, slightly sweet flavor and healthy attributes

represent the style of the new restaurant and will be included in some of the dishes served.

Details of the cuisine can be viewed on the Web at: www.Arugularistorante.com.

NEWCOMER NEWS

Compiled by Jo Wiedemann, Chair, Newcomer Welcome

After looking for a house in Pine Brook Hills for a year and a half, Shaun Minne and Martin Rybczynski moved to 901 N. Cedar Brook Rd. on September 5 from Rock Creek in Superior. Shaun is a Michigan native and Martin was born and raised in Lublin, Poland. Shaun and Martin have a son Jan who will turn 8 in January. Jan plays ice-hockey at the Boulder Hockey Club, studies the piano and currently is very interested in Legos.

Shaun practices architectural and interior design with Design House, a business she owns and operates out of her studio in Pine Brook Hills. Her 20+-year experience in architecture is complemented by education and background in industrial design and art. See Shaun's portfolio at <http://greenmountainside.com/shaun.html>. Shaun's design interests extend to drawing, jewelry making, and painting. Other hobbies include English style horse riding, skiing, travel and gardening.

Martin is a software engineer with a special interest in entrepreneurship and start-up companies. He works at Terma Software Labs in Boulder. Martin immigrated to the US in 1984 when the communist military imposed martial law in his native Poland. Martin moved to Boulder to pursue mountaineering and other outdoor activities. He co-founded Climbing for Life, a non-profit rock climbing program for youth at risk. Martin likes playing and listening to music, photography, reading, history, travel, and a good bottle of Zinfandel.

Shaun and Martin dance Argentine tango. They attend tango festivals in Denver and other US cities and have also danced in Buenos Aires and Europe. Martin frequently deejays tango events in Colorado, and they both run a monthly milonga (dance party) at the Art Underground in Louisville. They invite anybody in the neighborhood to tag along to tango events with them. For a calendar of events in the area, please see Tango Colorado's website at www.tangocolorado.org. Tango Colorado is a non-profit dance club that sponsors tango lessons and events in both Boulder and Denver.

Mike, Jean, and Kristie Hupka moved to 138 Alpine Way in August (the furniture, however, arrived in September). Mike retired from Exxon Mobil Corp. after 34 years with the company, of which 30 years were

spent living and working in Asia. The Hupkas selected Boulder as their retirement location for its great weather and outdoor activities, large university for cultural and academic pursuits, and friendly people. Their son, Brian, is a senior at University of Denver, majoring in Hospitality Management. Kristie has found a good fit at Alexander Dawson, where she is a sophomore. Her interests and activities are dance and volleyball

Mike, who has joined PBH's volunteer community as a Beetle Buster, is a keen fisherman, avid tennis player, beginner skier, and frustrated golfer and is looking to become more actively involved in the community. Jean is a keen duplicate bridge player and was a bridge director in Hong Kong. She is also a registered nurse who worked previously at the International School of Hong Kong.

There are also two dogs in their household, a Labradoodle named Spotacus and an English Bulldog named Hercules. While the Bulldog cannot take the hiking trails of Boulder, Mike and Jean are looking forward to hiking with Spotacus.

BARK BEETLE OUTBREAKS: HOW CAN BOULDER COUNTY HELP

By Ryan Ludlow, Boulder County Land Use
Forestry Education and Outreach Coordinator

In recent years a bug the size of a grain of rice has been making a lot of headlines and is on many people's minds throughout Colorado's mountain communities. This tiny bug is the Mountain Pine Beetle, a species of bark beetle that is native to the forests of Colorado.

As the bark beetle outbreak continues to spread through Boulder County, there will be a growing need for government agencies to help private property owners maintain a healthy forest and dispose of hazardous trees from their property. The County Commissioners have responded to this need by allocating resources to create community biomass sort yards along the Peak-to-Peak corridor. These **free** county-run community facilities will accept wood and slash from private property in order to mitigate wildfire risk, remove dead trees, and promote a healthy forest. Please visit the county's webpage at www.bouldercounty.org/foresthealth for further information about operating requirements, equipment used

and dates/times of operations of community biomass sort yards.

In an effort to help private landowners reduce the impacts of this bark beetle epidemic, the Boulder County Commissioners have allocated staff to promote forest sustainability through education and outreach. This is where I come in; my name is Ryan Ludlow, and I am the Forestry Education and Outreach Coordinator for Boulder County Land Use. I will be working with local mountain communities, HOAs and individual landowners to provide various tools and strategies for managing private forested lands in order to better prepare residents for the coming bark beetle epidemic. If you have questions about your forest's health and/or bark beetles feel free to contact me at pinebeetle@bouldercounty.org or call 720-564-2641. Our future forests are in your hands and it will be important for everyone to actively manage their land to create healthier forests, which are less prone to future insect and disease outbreaks.



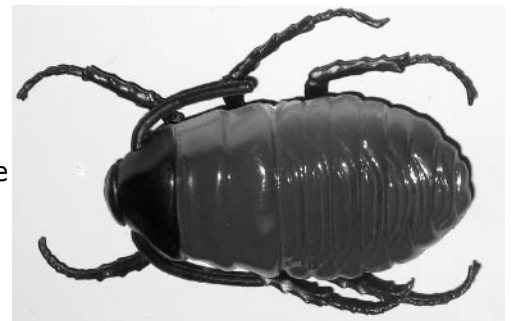
JO DAVIES WINS THE BEETLE AWARD!

Alert Beetle Buster Jo Davies is the most recent winner of the coveted BEETLE AWARD,



which is presented at unpredictable intervals to the Beetle Buster whose contributions in the Beetle Battle have been most significant. The award, a three inch long mechanical beetle, is sure to augment the décor of any Pine Brook home.

The BEETLE AWARD. It is as ugly as it looks. Wouldn't you like to win it?



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OPENING FEBRUARY 2009

arugula

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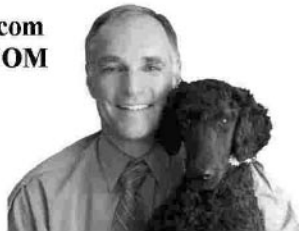
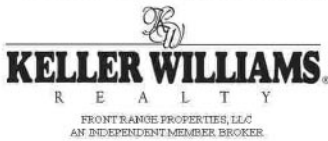
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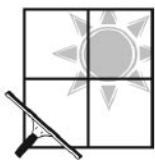
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THE REAL ESTATE MARKET IN PINE BROOK HILLS

By Ron Rovtar

When our family moved to Pine Brook Hills in July we knew we would like it here.

We just didn't know how much.

With conveniences rarely associated with mountain living, Pine Brook offers a lifestyle that is unavailable elsewhere in Boulder County. Our water system, natural gas lines, great neighbors, a short drive to Boulder and one of Colorado's best mountain fire departments combine to make this an easy place to live. Add to these features wonderful views, beautiful forests and abundant wildlife. How could one not love it?

Yet Pine Brook Hills has followed other less well endowed mountain communities into a real estate funk that threatens the values of high country properties throughout Boulder County. Which is why I, as a real estate agent, made Pine Brook the first of several communities to be featured on the web, at www.pinebrookhillsre.com.

Consider the following: just 13 PBH homes and two vacant lots sold during 2008. Last year's figures actually represent a small improvement over 2007 when 10 homes and three vacant lots were sold in the community. However, both years represent significantly reduced activity from the previous two years. In 2005, 19 homes and two lots changed hands. 20 homes sold in 2006, along with five properties. These figures come from Ires, which is the multiple listing service used by nearly all real estate agents in Boulder County. It is possible that one or more sales were made outside this traditional channel, but such sales tend to be uncommon.

In 2005, the average price of a Pine Brook home was \$884,763. That figure rose to \$889,748 in 2006, then dropped to \$842,800 in 2007. For 2008 the average was \$829,684.

The median home price for 2005 was \$695,000. This figure rose to \$758,750 in 2006, then fell to \$682,000 in 2007 and rose a bit last year to \$693,888.

Though fewer homes have been selling lately, it is encouraging that prices have not declined more. There have been significantly more available homes and lots than interested buyers. As of this writing, 16 homes

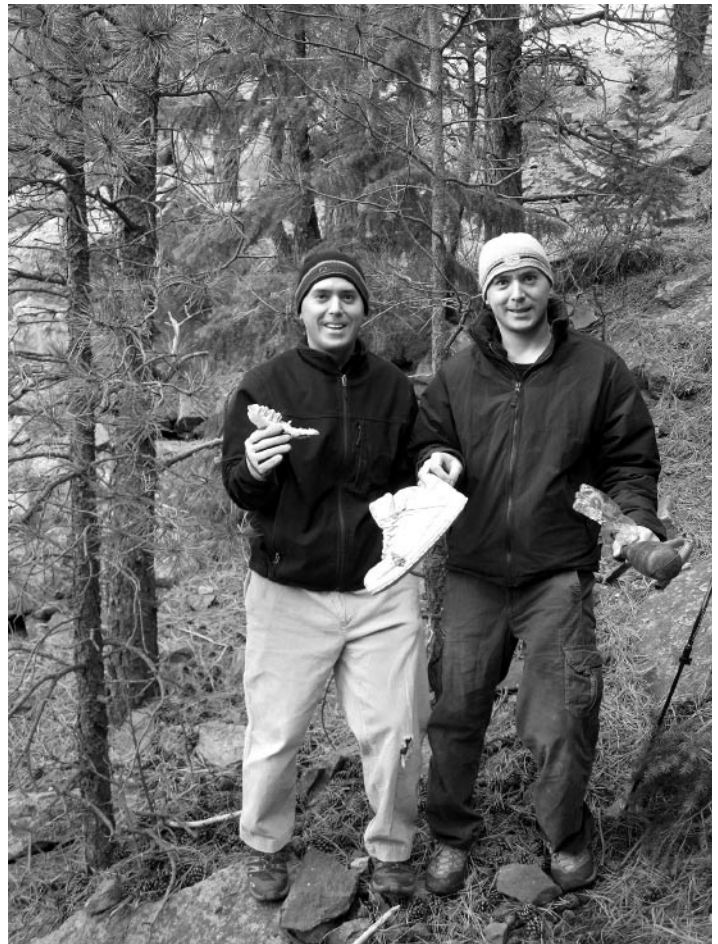
and 11 vacant lots are offered. (To make matters worse, 25 homes and two lots were withdrawn from the market at some point in 2008. Listing contracts on five homes and seven vacant lots expired. Though some of these homes went back on the market, the numbers suggest that selling a Pine Brook home can now be a frustrating process.)

Markets are sometimes hard to explain. But a real estate backlog clearly exists. So a little community public relations may be in order. This is why the Pine Brook Hills RE website home page lists all the positive attributes of this very special area.



BEETLE HUNTING TWINS

Identical twins Rob and Derek Lee share some identical goals: new homes on Fountaintree Lane. Showing a proper Pine Brook spirit, they joined a Beetle Buster



team inspecting the open space near their lots. Finding beetles was the day's intent. Rob and Derek, however, found other things - deer skulls, a baseball bat and a lone tennis shoe.

Join the Beetle Busters! You never know what you'll discover!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Press received the following from former Timber Lane residents, the Bessemers, who are currently in the Bahamas, living their dream! Daughter Ayla, 12, previously wrote the Kids Page in the PB Press. She will be "ship schooled" for the next several years.

Hi Everyone!

This past Saturday morning, November 1st at 7:30 a.m., as the sun peaked over the horizon, we slipped

recently too unsettled for us to cruise offshore, so we'll stay in the ICW until it improves). We will continue to head south, and plan to spend December-February in the Bahamas. Our extended route is on the website. Most of the time we have decent cell phone coverage and adequate Internet so we'd love to hear from you. Our physical mailing address is now 548 Timber Lane, Boulder, CO 80304, and we'll get mail drops from there about once per month.



Ayla's parents wanted to incorporate her name in their ship's name (i.e., Saylaway), but theirs is not a sailboat. Bob Olliver helpfully suggested Baylaway but somehow this was rejected.

our lines from the docks in Maryland and officially began our voyage. We are beyond thrilled!!! Our heartfelt thanks go to so many of you of who helped us make this dream a reality. Please join us along the way through our website: <http://www.ThreeAtSea.com> Ayla will be sharing her adventures through short videos, and each of us will keep a blog. Our website will evolve over time as we share our experiences and discoveries with you -- let us know what you enjoy, and what else would you like to see. Feel free to forward our website address to others.

We are currently in Norfolk, VA, soon to be heading south via the Intra-coastal Waterway through the Dismal Swamp in North Carolina (the weather is cur-

Believe in your dreams!
Kathryn, David, and Ayla
m/v Three@Sea



The five year route for "Three @ Sea"



A sea of clouds fills Sunshine Canyon, creating "Island Pine Brook."

Photo by Suzanne Adams

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