



Sanctuary Sentinel

For and About the Sanctuary on the Park Community

December 2008

Barbara Sydow Elected To Homeowners Board

Barbara Sydow was elected to the Sanctuary on the Park homeowners' association board of directors at our annual meeting. Barbara lives at 6274 S. Blackhawk Ct.



Barbara Sydow joins HOA board.

While this is her first HOA board position, Barbara has vast business experience, primarily in management positions. She has been self-employed 3½ years as the owner of a consulting business for operational process improvement and as owner of a personal chef business – Deliteful Tastes. Barb has been a member of the Social Committee.

Before that she was responsible for multibillion-dollar budgets in a 30-year

career as a mortgage operations executive with companies such as Countrywide, JP Morgan Chase and Lehman Brothers. In fact her position with Lehman brought her to Denver as executive vice president, national operations, for Aurora Loan Services, a Lehman company.

She is a 30-plus-year member and a past "Woman of the Year" of the American Business Women's Association chapter.

After having traveled extensively in her jobs, Barb says she was looking for a "small, intimate neighborhood that was well maintained, secure and easy to maintain myself." That would be us. She's lived in Sanctuary since 2003.

Homeowners Favor Mowing, Straw-Vote Tells Board

Can residents mow or not mow grass in common areas behind their homes? Sanctuary on the Park homeowners succinctly voiced their views on this issue as the homeowners' association annual meeting wound down to the required 9-o'clock closing of their meeting room.

This contentious issue began in midsummer when a resident complained mowing in the common area conflicted with neighborhood covenants. The board drafted a policy allowing homeowners to continue to water but not mow in the common area. Thus the stage was set for a full discussion.

A nonbinding 15-4 "expression-of-interest" straw vote favored allowing "mowing as presently done." Now it's up to the board to decide if and how it will implement the consensus.

The discussion about mowing began with Malcolm Jones, president, summarizing the relevant sections governing documents and the history of the dispute that lead to the July 17 decision of the board. No one disagreed that the maintenance of this no-man's-land common area isn't precisely covered, and that's what prompted one homeowner to ask: "What's the violation?"

Dale Jensen, treasurer, observed, "Some covenants are clear. For example you can't paint your garage door pink," he said. "As for mowing, I can't say. When we look at the covenants they are not clear. They don't say 'don't mow.' Here we need to apply some common sense."

Roseanne Robinson confessed to being "a violator." She added, "I never read the governing documents and never thought of it as a violation. We've mowed this area for eight summers. No one until now said 'don't mow.'" Mureil Leff agreed with Roseanne. "People need to be in compliance with (governing documents)," she said. "But we can't make up rules as we go along." Goeff Race agreed as well. "Personally I don't see anything being done that is offensive or bothersome," Goeff said.

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Sprinkler System Upgrade May Cost Around \$15,000

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Stan Massey suggested a compromise of “grandfathering” in the homeowners who’ve been watering and mowing common areas, but successor owners would not be able to continue the practice.

That’s when Malcolm called for the straw vote.

Homeowners without so much as a whimper took no action to reject the board’s approval in November of the 2009 budget. It requires an increase in monthly dues from \$150 a month to \$165 beginning in January 2009. The budget projects a \$3,748 deficit after transferring \$14,533 into the reserves for future capital repairs or improvements. Covering that deficit depends somewhat upon the cost of snow removal, budgeted at \$10,000. It projects operating expenses of \$94,135 and operating income of \$104,940.

The board in 2008 authorized the completion of a landscape master plan for HOA-owned common areas. The Grounds Committee recommended giving highest priority to renovation of the common-area sprinkler system. Harvey Starr, vice president, summarized the proposed sprinkler modifications. He said these would conserve water and more efficiently and effectively water the landscaping. Phase One of three recommended phases of work would include installing 31 new irrigation heads along Jordan, Maplewood and Carson, installing new drip irrigation for shrub beds and using the existing remote control valves where available. The cost of this is around \$15,000. If the board were to adopt the three phases in their entirety the cost could be \$45,000, Harvey said. The board later will decide what portions to undertake in 2009. The budget includes using \$20,000 in reserves for “master plan improvements.”

Barbara Sydow, 6274 S. Blackhawk Ct., was elected to the board to succeed Malcolm. The board will elect officers in January. One other candidate for the board was Joe Dirks, a former board member and president.

Allan Kortz, who headed a three-person committee charged with reviewing HOA documents, reported on its findings. The bulk of the work was correcting typographical errors and inconsistencies, Allan said. But other than Article 9-Enforcement, the changes eliminated a clause allowing the board to amend bylaws and a clause allowing voting by mail. They also changed a clause that will now permit a board member to be

elected to two consecutive three-year terms. Homeowners voted approval of these. But the legality of language concerning alternative dispute resolution and the increase in the amount of fines for violations of Rules and Regulations were challenged in a discussion of Article 9. The committee recommended increasing the fines from \$25-\$50-\$75 to \$100-\$200-\$500 for second through fourth violations (after a warning). Article 9 will be taken back to the HOA’s attorney for another review before being submitted again to homeowners for approval.

This year’s annual meeting was held in the Cherry Creek School’s C.A.R.E. Alternative Middle School, and that required the meeting to end promptly at 9 p.m. It was a squeaker. Homeowners asked why the meeting could not be held in November or earlier in December? Dale said the earlier the meeting the less certain he would be about budget numbers; however, the board will look at this concern.

Grounds Committee Head Voices Concern About Direction

A fracture in the relationship of our Grounds Committee and board of directors surfaced in the homeowners’ association annual meeting with the report of Carol Race who’s chaired the committee for three years.

Carol announced her resignation as chairperson and recognized her committee’s accomplishments and frustrations.

”During this past year it has become apparent that this board continually questions and second guesses our decisions as a committee,” Carol said. “There are many subjective decisions about maintenance and snow removal that need to be made by individuals, and those decisions need to be trusted to be thoughtful and professional. At some point someone must be willing to trust their neighbors to do the right thing for the neighborhood.”

Harvey Starr, a board member with one year left in his term, said after the meeting he has individuals in mind to fill any vacancies on this important committee. Its duties include oversight of snow removal on our association-owned streets, the work of our contract maintenance company and the appearance of entryways and common areas.

Elegant, Yummy Food, Carolers Spice Cup O' Cheer

If you enjoyed this year's neighborhood holiday party, known as the Cup O' Cheer, just get on the scales with the rest of us. It was that good, thanks to our own Barbara Sydow's Deliteful personal chef service.

The Social Committee this year forewent the usual bring-your-own-dish thing in favor of Barb slaving over the hot stove for us. Good call, Social Committee, and our community agrees. Sixty of us were there.

Carol and Geoff Race hosted the event. They and their home cheerfully greeted everyone. Barb was waiting at the door with zesty tomato bisque or sweet pea soup.

There were nice Black Forest ham sandwiches with Gruyere cheese, Kentucky bourbon steak sandwiches, Southwestern chicken wrap bites, cheeses, crudités (veggies, sil vous plas) and dainty little chocolate mousse shots or pomegranate lime-glazed cake bites for dessert.



Sandy Hill, Janet Hanna, Linda Massey and Anne Murlin (from left) choose among the many food choices . That's Michele Wilson and son Carter listening to carolers (bottom left). They and Courtney live at 6230 S. Carson.

Midway through the buzz of conversations, a group of accomplished carolers arrived. They were the Grandview High School jazz ensemble who didn't exactly sing the old favorites straight from the hymnal. These were complex jazz melodies sung from the balcony.

Giving Barb a hand with serving us were Bryan Arnston, the barkeeper, and Chris Arnston, Barb's sister. Deliteful Tastes is the name of her personal-chef business.



This N' That

Traffic lights at Jordan and Arapahoe will be changed when CDOT's workload and weather permit. The change in traffic lights will allow concurrent left turns and through movement for both northbound and southbound traffic.

Someone smashed the window of a locked car in a driveway on South Carson on Dec. 11 and took cash from a purse on the floor behind the driver's seat. Then overnight Dec. 14, Steve Jeffries found a purse and checkbook in the street and traced its owner to someone living on Caley where these items were taken from an unlocked car in a garage. The garage door was inoperable. That same time Jeff Ploen found a backpack

in a neighbor's driveway and it had been taken from a car belonging to a college student living in the Valley Country Club Estates. We all need to be more alert.

The prairie dog families who blithely are sitting on death row in Cherry Creek State Park just might be home for Christmas. The park people have to await the propitious moment to do something bad to them when weather and time permit. And once that's done, their cousins who've set up housekeeping on our land north of Maplewood will be dealt with. There's not a nice way to say this, but...

Today's Math Lesson, ACWWA Style, and It Sure Adds Up

Water, water everywhere and not a drop for free.

That's what our Arapahoe County Water and Wastewater Authority (ACWWA) seems to be saying after once again adjusting our water and sewer fees. Some bills may go down but mostly they will go up for the third-straight year.

"This targets high water users," a nice woman named Ruth at ACWWA patiently explained. Ruth tends to lump retirees in the low water-user category in defending the increase, and excusing its impact. She doesn't know us very well.



Let's look at our bill dated Nov. 26 as an example. The total is \$73.49. Next year that same bill would be \$74.31. That's up just a swig and a flush.

We at our home used 3,000 gallons of water and sent unmeasured sewage to ACWWA in that period. Today's bill is a flat \$34.83 for sewage and a flat \$34.72 for the first 2,000 gallons of water, and \$3.94 per thousand for the next 1,000 gallons. That comes to \$38.66 for water.

Next year, that same 3,000 gallons would be \$34.72 for nothing and \$3.03 per 1,000 gallons. Thus \$3.03 times 3 equals \$9.09 plus the \$34.72. The sewer next year is a flat \$18.20 plus \$4.10 per thousand of water. That comes \$12.30 plus \$18.20 or \$30.50 for sewer. Add that to the \$43.81 for water and you get \$74.31. Is your head throbbing yet? By comparison, our 3,000 gallons of usage in November would have cost us \$10.14 in Denver and \$14.90 in Aurora using their 2009 rates.

But, last July we used 12,000 retiree gallons of water. That bill ka-changed at \$110.99 in 2008. Next summer that would be \$138.48, a 25% increase. This suggests we might need to reset our sprinkler controls and not be quite so flush with water usage.

Rob Studer, 6211 S. Blackhawk, first brought this to our attention several months ago. Rob said he intended to bring a crowd to this year's ACWWA budget meeting, and waited for an announcement of it. None. So he called ACWWA. "Oh, it was in very fine print at the bottom of your last bill," Rob was told. "This is just outrageous," he said.

Wile E. Coyote Tips From Road Runner

Some of us revel in watching coyotes lopping along, head up, businesslike, as they make their snack runs to prairie-dog city.

Others among us aren't quite so sanguine about our wily neighbors, and wonder if they're dangerous. The facts are these: Among wild animals in urban settings coyotes adapt well to city life, and they are certified carnivores.

They kill for a living if they need to. In doing so coyotes help



maintain a balanced system by reducing rodent and pest populations. The Denver Parks and Recreation Department has sent along some coyote common-sense does and don'ts.

When you see a coyote:

- Don't ignore it. Yell, clap, whistle, spray with a hose, honk your horn.
- Don't turn your back on it.
- Don't let it get between you and a pet or child.
- Don't allow pets to play with it.
- Never feed it.

To keep your pets safe:

- Keep small dogs close to you.
- Check your yard before letting pets outside, especially between dusk and dawn.
- Cover garbage and compost; pick up fruit, clean under bird feeders and BBQ grills.

Interestingly, the City of Centennial is looking at coyote issues and held a study session early in December after fielding three complaints about aggressive coyotes. Andrea Suhake, a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, said it's way too early to say much except as the next step Jacque Wedding-Scott, city manager, wants specific data about who's calling and what was the nature of the citizen's coyote complaint. Andrea says the hope is the ado about danger will calm down, and at the very limit of action the city may "put down" a specific aggressive coyote, not just any ol' coyote, if it can be tracked down. The next study session will be at the end of January. She added after the first study meeting the severity of the problem is "not where it started."