



# Sanctuary Sentinel

For and About the Sanctuary on the Park Community

January 2009 - Visit our web site at [www.dcmi.com/onthepark/sanctuary.htm](http://www.dcmi.com/onthepark/sanctuary.htm)

## Barb Sydow to Take Lead in Mediating Mowing Dispute

Our Sanctuary homeowners' board has taken two positions on that festering question of mowing grass, or not, on common areas in our community.

First, Harvey Starr, board president, said at the outset of the Jan. 22 meeting, the board's position on covenants and rules and regulations is: "We will enforce covenants as they are currently written."

Second, Barbara Sydow, newly elected to the board, will take leadership in mediating disagreements between homeowners who've been watering and mowing common areas behind their homes and the strict-constructionists who want no such violations of covenants.

The second of these may be of greater importance in that if there is to be a compromise, changes may be needed in our governing documents, and that will take a two-thirds vote of the community if they are made in the covenants. However, a tone of conciliation pervaded the discussion, but no one was holding hands and singing "Kum Ba Yah" just yet.

"Our goal and purpose is to enforce the covenants whether we like them or not," Harvey said, "because we represent all homeowners and certainly the covenants are representative of what homeowners want and why they were established." If homeowners wish to change them, "it is incumbent upon them" to bring that to the attention of the community for a vote.

Later in the meeting Barbara talked about her role in the mow-don't mow conflict.

After reviewing documents and talking to the board's attorney, she said, "our goal is to create a compromise that works for both parties. We still have some work yet to do in order to approach the parties, but I unofficially or officially have been designed as the PR person on this board, particularly on this matter. Over the next couple of weeks I'll be getting with all the individuals and

hopefully we'll be able to come to an amicable, comfortable conclusion.

"We want to do it quickly," Barbara said, "and it may include modifying some resolutions or memorandums that have been previously used and could effect whatever decision the outcome is. I want to make sure that we have all the paperwork in its proper order and all the information and proper opinions in place and we can get to an amicable conclusion."



### On Guard

A bald eagle scans Cherry Creek State Park for a morsel from its perch in a cottonwood above the bike path.

Then a figurative peace pipe was offered. Carol and Geoff Race among others spoke in appreciation of Barbara's efforts to conciliate this matter. Barbara said in response "one of the major reasons I joined the board" was because "it is very important to me that we have a comfortable community" and she would use all her resources to get this resolved.

Geoff applauded the mediation stance as a favored option to litigation. It's always best to mediate matters before getting litigious, he said, speaking first-hand as an attorney. "What I hear you saying is that you want to try mediation to bring a compromise ... that is acceptable to the parties and community as a whole," Geoff said. "That is totally consistent with what our real process (in the community's documents) advocates, one of the purposes being to eliminate overuse of hiring attorneys.

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## Snow Removal Policy Up for Another Survey, Review

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I applaud you for what you're doing. And my suggestion is we as a community wait and see what the resolution of this mediation is before anybody gets all bent out of shape," he added.

Two other major matters were discussed.

The board will again survey the community about snow removal. As of now, the general rule is The Green Plan's \$45-an-hour crews won't be called upon until there's four inches on the street and two on the driveway and sidewalks, but with discretion in the hands of the Grounds Committee about other factors.

Harvey voiced alarm that these standards could wreck our budget if a major storm or two hit, telling the group of a neighboring community being hit with a \$1,500 special assessment for snow removal. He seemed to be favoring deeper snow before action is taken. Stan Massey, a former Grounds Committee member, reminded everyone that the depth for action was changed not only because of cost, but also because the deeper the snow standard the farther down the list our community gets on the plow queue. "It doesn't matter where you put the snow levels," he said, "you won't avoid that."

Carol also reminded the board of safety factors and that ours is a managed-maintenance community in winter as well as summer. "It's not worth a chance of a slip and fall on a driveway on solid ice because we didn't shovel in order to save money," she said. Thus, the Grounds Committee is to work on the survey.

By the way, Dale Jensen, our treasurer reported the highest bill for snow removal ever in 10 years was \$10,341. The board budgeted \$10,000. Unspent money remains to pay other budgeted expenses.

The board approved implementation of Phase 1 of the irrigation system renovation, a project expected to cost something less than \$20,000. This will involve renovating the existing system that waters common areas. Future phases would require installing new state-of-the-art controllers and more efficient sprinklers.

The bidding and bid review process will be in the hands of the newly constituted Grounds Committee, now headed by Joe Dirks. Harvey said three contractors recommended by the irrigation consultant retained to design the renovation plus TGP are expected to bid.

There were questions about whether the committee process would be transparent. Harvey assured the concerned that he, as a committee member, would attend all meetings; notes and minutes would be taken, and the process would be run as a committee. Members of the committee so far are Harvey, Jeff Ploen, John Palley and Mureil Leff. "This board is making the assumption this committee operates in accordance with how committees generally operate," Barb said as reassurance.

Other things:

- This issue of the Sanctuary Sentinel and other community communications will be sent by e-mail and posted on our website to save postage and effort. Dale said nine of 53 residents haven't provided e-mail addresses.
- The reserves plan will be revised this year based on current costs. The reserve account had \$187,000 at the end of December.
- The board is looking at the possibility of replacing its law firm, Long & Long.
- The board wants alternative bids for the company maintaining entrance flowerbeds.

### Sanctuary Board & Committee Members 2009

|                                       |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| President – Harvey Starr              | 720-514-9383 |
| Vice President – Barbara Sydow        | 303-680-8595 |
| Treasurer - Dale Jensen               | 303-627-2632 |
| Design Review Committee - Anne Nelson | 303-690-6177 |
| Grounds Committee – Joe Dirks         | 303-699-9439 |
| Social Committee – Joan Liebchen      | 303-400-3389 |
| Newsletter Editor – Jim Banman        | 303-690-1073 |
| Caron Realty, Community Mgmt. – Ron   | 720-283-3300 |

Please call Diane Miller at Caron Realty with any additions, changes to the Directory information or e-mail address.

### Sanctuary Website

Don't forget our website for information and pictures. All personal information requires a password to access. Send your contributions to Sam Searcy at [demi@ix.netcom.com](mailto:demi@ix.netcom.com). The website address is: [www.demi.com/onthepark/sanctuary.htm](http://www.demi.com/onthepark/sanctuary.htm)

### Your E-Mail Address Please

**Please call Diane Miller at Caron Realty to add your e-mail address to our community's list so that you too can be included in information about your Sanctuary on the Park community**

## Visitors Loving Cherry Creek Park to Death

One of our nearby neighbors last year had 1.6 million visitors, and they weren't out-of-town in-laws.

This was Cherry Creek State Park, the sprawling 4,400 acres at our back doors. As Tim Metzger, the park manager, said, "Our visitors are loving it to death." The park, he said, needs to weigh two countervailing forces: Use and protection. "They're at odds with each other, and somehow we need to balance visitor use and protection of our natural resources."



**Tim Metzger, park manager**

Metzger, the manager since August 2007, came to Cherry Creek from the 71,000-acre State Forest State Park near Walden, the home of 600 moose. No moose here. Just mule deer, coyotes and an occasional bald eagle. Oh, and lots of boats, dogs and people.

The park is at the midpoint or tail end of what Metzger calls a cost-share improvement program with the U.S. Corps of Engineers, the owners of the park. Among the projects in 2009 are trail connections at Belleview and Peoria where the Cottonwood Creek channel improvement and road work were completed, as well as restoration work such as dredging on the Cottonwood pond, a water collection and wetlands area near the model-airplane landing field.

The park is now down to 16 full-time employees, with one added to the staff to enforce laws and regulations regarding preventing infestation of zebra mussels. This means that every boat is inspected carefully before entering the water. Zebra mussels are filter feeders. They can grow so densely that they block pipelines. So far the mussels have been found in Lake Pueblo State Park and authorities are working hard to keep them confined to that lake and protect against their spread to other Colorado lakes.

We neighbors often see reckless abuses of the park – new runner and bike trails cut into the prairie, trash and leftovers of dog visits. There are rules concerning dogs and horses. Except for the dog park east of the river, dogs must be on six-foot leashes and under control, and waste

must be picked up. "We take harassing of wildlife very seriously," Metzger said. As for horses, the park "recommends" that riders use designated trails, but in fact they may ride anywhere.

## This 'N That

Our first round of prairie-dog extermination on Sanctuary on the Park property has been completed, but the work within Cherry Creek State Park has not. Tim Metzger, park manager, said this week the park has completed an "initial round" of treatment. The park is letting some time elapse to observe any "additional activity" and the park expects areas to be retreated.

The Aurora Planning and Zoning Commission has approved the oft-discussed Valero automotive service center on the east end of the Shoppes at Arapahoe Commons (northeast corner of Jordan and Arapahoe). Meanwhile we now will have Jimmy Johns gourmet sandwich and Mega Wraps pita sandwich shops. A coffee shop won't be far behind. Oh, by the way, JJ's Pepe 8-inch ham and cheese sandwich packs 687 calories, 37.35 grams of fat and 1,658.78 mg of sodium. By comparison you could enjoy a McDonalds' double quarter-pounder with cheese at 740 calories, 42 grams of fat and 1,380 mg of sodium. Good thing the medical clinic is across the street.

Just in case you missed her e-mail, Joan Liebchen, Social Committee chairperson, said the committee will meet in February to lay out plans for 2009. The committee consists of Joan Liebchen, Joan Searcy, Anne Nelson, Winnie Kortz, Gail Ploen and Barbara Sydow.

The South Suburban Recreation District tells us it's having bargain days. On Feb. 13, 50¢ Friday will be held at the Family Sports Center, 6901 S. Peoria St. Ice skaters can attend the 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. and 8 p.m. public sessions for 50¢ as well as rent skates for 50¢. Let's all get out there and flop backwards onto the ice. Dunno about ambulance service for 50¢.

The neighborhood book club has a fascinating schedule of upcoming discussions. They'll talk about "Mountains Beyond Mountains" on Feb. 9; "The Good Thief" on March 9, and "The Infidel" on April 13. You could call Joan Liebchen for details on joining this group.