

## MAY 2021 NEWSLETTER

### NEITHER SNOW NOR RAIN NOR STORMS OF HAIL ...

stay us Adriel Hillians from our appointed rounds of golf and enjoyment of life. Spring seems to have come—and gone—several times this past month. It seems we can't safely put away our winter clothes, but we have to get out our summer ones. Maybe the best prepared among us have a closet of spring clothes: fleece lined Bermuda shorts, a sunhat with ear flaps, and a down golf shirt.

As usual, the Newsletter offers a variety of reads this month. In addition to informative reports on the state of the community from Ralph and Danny, you will find Greg and Lydia Augustine's profile, two more nice people we are lucky to call neighbors, and several other pieces contributed by residents. David Cunningham, inspired by the recent fee increases, has updated a study he did a few years ago to educate his appraiser when he and Merete were buying their AH house. (Miranda and I used it when selling our Kedron house.) It puts values on the services our HOA provides us to help us determine for ourselves whether we are getting good value for our fees. Mike Kohler then reports on the small person and mysterious snowman who appeared after the great April snowstorm.

Finally, Judy Keiss provides her true story from Western Mule Magazine, "The Mule Skinner's Wife," about her life in Leadville when Bob was stationed at Camp Hale.

#### **Wanted: Items for publication**

As usual, don't forget to drop Chris a line if you are willing to write or be profiled for an upcoming newsletter. He'll help you whip it into shape.

#### **Need help with a small household task?**

Mark Kenning and Chris Wells are available for free to do small handyman chores. Need grab bars installed, light bulbs changed, pictures hung, walks shoveled, stereos wired, holes drilled, nails pounded, someone to hold your ladder (or to climb up on one), or other minor tasks done not requiring a real pro or formal HOA approval? Ask Chris or Mark.

Mark Kenning: [patamk7@gmail.com](mailto:patamk7@gmail.com)

970-889-5226

Chris Wells: [wells\\_dc@law.mercer.edu](mailto:wells_dc@law.mercer.edu)

478-361-2691

## **Announcements from Bonita**

**Adriel Hills Community Directory:** Many of you have requested and received a hard copy. If you did not receive the Directory (hard copy or e-file) and would like one, please contact the office via email [adrielhills@gmail.com](mailto:adrielhills@gmail.com) or phone 970-484-3098. Hard copies have been or will be distributed per request.

New residents may be listed in the Newsletter. If you are a new resident and would like to be listed in the Newsletter, please contact the office. Other residents can make a note of the new residents in their directory. For revisions, please contact the office via email [adrielhills@gmail.com](mailto:adrielhills@gmail.com) or put a note in the Adriel Hills drop box. Revisions received for the Directory (new phone number, new owner or non-owner, etc.) will be posted in the monthly newsletter as "Directory Update."

**Electronic Funds Transfer:** March Newsletter mentioned the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) and that ultimately, to maintain timely dues payments and office efficiency, homeowners will be required to sign up for Adriel Hills' EFT. There will soon come a time when personal checks for monthly dues will not be accepted.

Please note; the EFT is for monthly dues only. EFT is not used for insurance premium or Adriel Ct. maintenance/utility payments. These items must be paid via personal check, cashier's check or money order.

**Still Urgent: Adriel Hills Website Manager or Designer Needed.** The Adriel Hills website needs to be upgraded or redesigned soon. **Without an upgrade or designing a new website, Adriel Hills website will no longer be available.** The Board of Directors and the community are looking for someone who can take the lead on this project; research options and costs for review by Management and ultimately present to the board. Please contact the office, if you are interested or know someone who might be.

**Units for Rent:** The following units are for rent in Adriel Hills. The best sources for information are current residents. If you know someone interested in these long-term rentals who would be a good fit for Adriel Hills, please pass the word. As you may know, several current owners initially rented a home in Adriel Hills.

**1564 Adriel Court:** 3 bedroom or one bedroom two offices, 1.5 bathrooms. Just remodeled. Great view of the golf course. \$1,595/month. No pets no smoking. Call Jim O'Neill 970-222-8564

**1560 Adriel Court:** 3 bedroom, 1 ½ bath on 1380 sq. ft. It features wonderful views of the golf course and grounds, central air, a fireplace, carport, patio and access to golf, a clubhouse and pool. Washer and dryer are included. \$1595/month. One pet 25 lbs. or less, is allowed with a \$300 pet deposit (half is nonrefundable & dog breed restrictions apply). Please call All Property Services 970-636-0357.

## **Volunteers Still Needed to Help Keep Fort Collins Clean**

Have you ever driven south on Timberline and looked out the window to see litter along the side of the road? If you have ever said to yourself, "Someone should pick that up." Well, that someone could be you!

A few Adriel Hills residents volunteered last year (as Adriel Hills Plus) to help that problem out. They had the full support of the city, and you could join them. You will just be making a three-times-a-year commitment: one spring, one summer, and one fall pick up. The agreement is to do along both sides of Timberline between Vine and Mulberry. If you are interested, contact Connie Dedon at 970-586-4078, and she will give you more details. It is fun!

## **Adriel Hills Newsletter Quiz - Win Little Prize!!**

First (and only) prize is a new fountain pen and ink. Hankering to recall the days of writing with liquid ink on paper and giving your letters and cards a personal touch? A handsome pen and ink go to the first person who can email or call Chris Wells (contact information above) with the correct answers to TWO questions:

- (1) Which Adriel Hills resident gave up a possible future as a rodeo clown?
  
- (2) Which tiny person became an Adriel Hills resident on April 16, 2021?

## **Interested in Creative Writing? Writing Family History?**

Judy Keiss asks if anyone is interested in forming a creative writing group. Adriel Hills used to have a group, but most participants moved away. One possibility is working on the story of your life or shorter stories from your life, then meeting once a month to discuss what you and others are writing. If you are interested or would like to know more, please call Judy at 970-493-1583. (And read some of Judy's writing in this newsletter.)

## **Pickleball and Tennis**

Outdoor court sports are ramping up, so don't be bashful if you would like to play or learn. Pickleball is easy to learn, especially if you have ever played ping-pong, racquetball, or tennis. All you need is a paddle and some court shoes, and you are fully equipped. Tennis requires a little more skill but can still be fun for beginners.

Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays are usual pickleball days. Tennis is (or will be) Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. In the spring, times vary according to temperatures and wind conditions. In the summer, we play early morning to avoid the heat. Call or text Chris Wells at 478-361-2691 or Miranda Pratt at 478-951-2704 for more information.

## MANAGER'S REVIEW

As always there is quite a bit happening this time of year, from building repairs to budget adoption.

**Projects:** The moisture we have had the past couple of weeks has been very beneficial, but it has played havoc with scheduling spring work. In many cases, work has been rescheduled a couple times or more. Thank you for your patience and understanding. We also appreciate our service providers working when they can and rescheduling as needed. It is also difficult for them to meet scheduling challenges and deadline requirements for their services. See attached calendar for tentative scheduling and of course, watch for the latest email updates and signs on entry drive.

### **2021-2022 Fiscal Year Budget Adoption:**

The Board of Directors adopted the new May 1, 2021 Fiscal Year Budget at the April 20, 2021 board meeting. The Board of Directors made the unpopular decision to increase dues. Although no one like increases, I sincerely believe the majority of you understand the need to do so, as only a small handful of the 177-unit owners provided comments of concern regarding the dues increases.

**COVID-19/Amenity Use:** Looking back at the May 2020 Newsletter, I had said, "As much as we would like to go back to normal, it may be a while." I also said, our community members are blessed to have the many benefits and amenities our retreat of a community offers, to weather the virus. I sincerely believe this to be the case and the crew coming to work each day and facing

the additional challenges of COVID, is better in our minds, than not having the opportunity to work. It's a little tough to accomplish physical property management working from home.

If state and county COVID-19 guidelines continue to relax, Adriel Hills will continue to relax restrictions as we look forward to outdoor pool opening, Annual Golf Tournament & Picnic, etc. Whether it is a community function or a private function in the clubhouse or BBQ area, the county and state required COVID-19 measures at the time of the event, will be followed. If you are scheduling a private function, it will be your responsibility to know and accommodate the state and county requirements in place at that time. The Board of Directors will visit the situation at the May 18<sup>th</sup> board meeting and adjust guidelines accordingly.

**Your Dues & Reserves at Work:** Our Reserve Plan called for the purchase of a new/used rough mower. By the way, a new rough mower of this type costs \$38,000. The old mower, a 2007, had 4,700 hours which is equivalent to almost 350,000 miles. Danny has been laying the ground work for a new/used mower for over a year, and it paid off. With his perseverance and contacts, he found what we believe is a "cream puff." L.L. Johnson, the TORO distributor, brought a mower up for a demo straight from the school district it came from, for Danny and Adriel Hills to have first shot at this nice unit. The mower checked out solid and was taken back to L.L. Johnson for a full service, fine tuning and adjusting. This also resulted in replacement of some parts with no upcharge from our agreed price. With our trade-in

mower, the cost was \$12,500, considerably less than the budgeted amount. Way to go Danny, finding us this "cream puff"!! P.S. the new mower has 1,700 hours and should serve Adriel Hills well for years to come.

**Well #2:** We have had to pull our well #2 pump and install a new pump. Unfortunately, we do not have a new well pump in this year's Reserve Plan. The life expectancy was at least seven years, but we got just five years out of this one. Fortunately, we do have the resources for this expense and why these things can't be more cooperative with our plan is beyond me. 😊 The savings on the mower will amount to about two-thirds of the new well pump expense.

**Homeowner Improvements:** Many of you recently and over the years have taken on substantial improvements to your home, both interior and exterior. I want to talk about the exterior improvements, but as a side note. There was unprecedented (at least for Adriel Hills) interest and demand for a unit that was listed briefly for sale, which had been professionally remodeled in the past few years. This home sold very quickly for an undisclosed amount that makes it sound like a lot to me, a very positive sign for our entire community. Exterior upgrades that owners undertake and fund increase the owner's enjoyment, their home's value, and the home values and appearance of the entire community, which benefits all owners. The Association continues to be proactive in maintaining the exterior of the homes, but improvement and upgrades (e.g., updated decks, metal deck and courtyard railings, new windows, etc.) are beyond our HOA scope and budget.

Thank you to those that have or are planning upgrades. This is also an encouragement for you to give consideration to improvements for your home. Management and many of the owners who have undertaken these improvements are happy to share input with you regarding improvements for your home.

**Covenant Enforcement:** I am sure since the April Newsletter notice of ramping up covenant enforcement, particularly inappropriate or unsightly exterior storage, you have thoroughly read the Adriel Hills Rules and Regulations, By-Laws and Declaration regarding this subject. I am also sure many of you have or are planning to take measures accordingly regarding these concerns around your home. A prevalent unsightly issue is unplanted flower pots, planter boxes, planting racks, etc. Two or three pots (decorative or not) might be under your deck tucked in a corner of your home or patio etc. The word is "plant them, stash them or trash them." If a flower pot planter box, etc. does not contain thriving plants by July 1<sup>st</sup>, it needs to be removed. This was not intended as a plug for Sue (Morning Glory Gardening) or others listed in directory, but they could be a source to plant your pots etc. for you. We do not like sending out violation letters any more than you like receiving them. Please take the time to address these concerns if they apply to your home or contact Management if uncertain. Your neighbors thank you; Adriel Hills Board of Directors and Management also thank you.

Ralph



## OPERATIONS REPORT

May brings new life to Adriel Hills foliage and with it comes summer fun. When the irrigation pump is up and running, work cranks up to a hummingbird pace. Water management is a big part of my job and the summer season brings many challenges. But with the great crew we have, the job always gets done right. We are a proud bunch, and the morning conversation is almost always around how the property looks and what we can do to better it.

We will be doing applications on the golf course greens twice a month. The golf course will be closed until afternoon usually on Tuesday and Thursday. The dates will be posted on the sign as you drive in. It's always a real treat to drive onto our property and see the golf course in all its beauty. We are fortunate! Landscaping is always on our plate. We will continue forging forward to beautify Adriel Hills even more than it is. We will be headed to the quarry to hand pick the buff stones we use. We look forward to a great summer and fall. We are fortunate to live in this special place. Enjoy it!!!!

"It's easier to try than to prove it can't be done"

Peace,

Danny

## Golf Course Report

That athletic wonder of nature known as Merl Bachman celebrated his recent hole-in-one with his golfing partners in the traditional way, by rehydrating. Merl was reported to say that it was the first hole-in-one he has had since the one he had before, if he had had one before. Everyone else said that they want to be like Merl when they grow up.

## Swimming Pool Report

Swimmers report that the pool water remains remarkably wet.

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## Weeders United

In past growing seasons, you might have noticed an intrepid band of women bent on eliminating weeds in the flower and rock beds around the community. They do it weed by weed, by hand, with no harsh chemicals. If you would like to join them on occasion or as a regular, they would welcome your helping hands. Just contact Connie Dedon, Sara Fry, or Miranda Pratt to find out more. Of course, if you would like to freelance, that would be fine, too ... as long as you know which ones are weeds.

## Meet Lydia and Greg Augustine

Lydia Augustine was born in Clinton, Oklahoma, between Oklahoma City and Amarillo. Clinton is the home of The Oklahoma Route 66 Museum.

Greg Augustine was born almost 500 miles away, in Warrensburg, Missouri, not far from Kansas City. The phrase “man’s best friend” is said to derive from a trial in the Warrenburg Courthouse concerning the killing of Old Drum, whose statute now stands in front of the courthouse.

It took Lydia and Greg about 30 years to find one another, in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, on a double date with other persons. Greg was already established in the Brown’s Shoe Fit store there. Lydia was working for a florist and delivering flowers. Greg, the shy but sly dog, was apparently smitten at the first meeting but too cautious to ask Lydia out (Greg’s name derives from “Gregorios” in Greek, meaning “watchful, alert.”). So he ordered some flowers for his store, knowing that Lydia would make the delivery. The rest is history. They were married at 3:25 p.m. on 3/25/1995, and just celebrated their 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

So, what were Lydia and Greg doing in those first 30 years? Lydia’s mom was from Okmulgee, Oklahoma, but didn’t like the humidity and weather, so after she married Lydia’s father in 1941, a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant in the Army Air Corps (now Air Force) and began to raise a family, they moved. A lot. Including Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, Peoria, Illinois, Derby, Kansas, etc., her parents eventually moved 27 times. Lydia spent much of her later school years in Derby, Kansas. After

graduating from high school, there, she enrolled just down the road at Wichita State University to study graphic design and music. After two years, she married a band director and moved to Michigan. But she soon decided that she didn’t like band directors that much. Newly divorced, she moved back to Kansas to work in the booming oil business. She says she “discovered that it took a lot of liquor to find oil.” Not wanting to find oil that badly, she returned to college in Missouri to get her BA in Equestrian Science. That degree prepared her to take dangerous and low-paying jobs around horses. Feeling all too mortal in her early 30s, she returned to her family town of Okmulgee. And she began delivering flowers.

Greg’s grandparents had emigrated from Austria. Greg’s parents were Iowans and Texans, and during much of Greg’s youth, his father managed a Brown’s Shoe Fit in Denison, TX. When Greg was still a teenager, his father had a heart attack, so Greg filled in at the store until he recovered. He impressed the Brown’s Shoe Fit executives so much that they convinced him to take Brown’s training course to learn to manage a store.

[Editor’s digression: Brown’s Shoe Fit Company, headquartered in Shenandoah, Iowa, has about 80 stores, mostly in the Midwest—Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas—and a few farther west. Their Fort Collins store is one of the largest and most successful, no doubt due to Greg’s experience, knowledge, and dedication. If you haven’t had the pleasure of buying a pair of shoes at Brown’s

Shoe Fit from Greg, you have missed something. ]

As we know, Greg eventually moved to Okmulgee to continue his shoe store management education and run one of Brown's smaller stores. And one day, he decided the best way to meet Lydia a second time was to order flowers for the store ....

After they married, Greg and Lydia moved to Liberal, Kansas, where Greg owned and managed the Brown's Shoes Fit store for nineteen years. At the local junior college, Lydia taught Tai Chi, yoga, Boot Camp, and Zumba (which we learned is not a little round device that vacuums your floor while you are playing pickleball). After Lydia's sister died in 2002, Lydia's parents moved to Liberal to be near Lydia and Greg. Her mom died in 2015, and soon after Greg, Lydia, and her father moved to Fort Collins. Greg took over the Brown's Shoe Fit here. They settled Lydia's father into Golden Peaks assisted living, where Lydia did a lot of volunteer work, played piano and painted murals. Lydia has been playing piano for years – "meandering on the piano" she says. The move to Fort Collins brought Lydia closer to family on the western slope and to her love of horseback riding. Greg fell in the love with the Rockies on first sight, so he was happy to hike and golf. They consider Fort Collins to have been a great move for them – in their word, a real "vacationland."

Choosing Adriel Hills involved a little drama, perseverance, and luck. Lydia recalls trying to buy in Fort Collins "like bidding on Ebay." Every time they liked a house and made an offer, someone slid in with a higher offer. After raising their

budget several times [sound familiar?] and seeming to lose out on their chosen condo, competing offers soon fell through, and they had their new home.

Lydia stays busy with music and art. She has played bassoon in the Loveland Concert Band, and besides piano also noodles around on French horn, clarinet, and flute. She would like to learn guitar, mandolin, and banjo, all instruments she has inherited from her uncle, a professional musician all his life, from Grand Junction. Since moving here, she has maintained certificates in Tai Chi, yoga, and Zumba. Her media include quilts, fabricated canvases, and other painted and fabric pieces. In non-pandemic periods, she and her pop-up art cart appear on the Square. You can check some of her work out online and in-store at the Blue Moose Art Gallery. She's also online at Redbubble.com (search for LeJay) and on Instagram at free\_spirit\_studio\_foco.

In addition to hiking and golf, Greg enjoys reading and, we can imagine, listening to Lydia playing piano and her several woodwinds.

Greg and Lydia look forward to a return to social normality, joining their neighbors for social events in their back yard, and getting the shoe business, music, and art back on track.

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## **A Comment on the Adriel Hills Fees**

**By David Cunningham**

The primary feature of the 2021 budget is the board of directors' recognition of the need to increase the monthly fee from \$280 to \$290 and the Reserve Fund fee from \$110 to \$130. These increases should accommodate monthly maintenance expenses and also our predicted future expenses, including the looming replacement of the irrigation system, currently estimated to cost \$1.3 million. This is a wise decision that minimizes the risk of large cash calls.

The increase in the HOA fees did, however, prompt me to revisit my value assessment from 2016, when Merete and I bought a property here and faced an appraiser's concern that the HOA fee might drop the valuation below the asking price. I argued that if we were to buy a \$340,000 free standing house instead of the Adriel Hills property, we would have to budget for many of the services that AH HOA fees cover, and those costs should offset the HOA fee threat to the appraisal.

My calculations assumed that we would buy a 20-year-old, 2,500 sq. ft. house with a modest yard and flower garden. I then calculated the costs for the basic maintenance, repair, and replacement events that we would experience over a ten-year period following the purchase. (The ten-year period was designed to account for variables like weather and long-term but infrequent expenses.) The events and costs were comparable to those covered by Adriel Hills's HOA: roofing, gutters, siding, painting, fences, decks, main sewer

connection, driveways, landscaping, irrigation, pruning, spraying, mowing, snow removal, leaf blowing, and trash removal.

This exercise gave me the opportunity to assess the probability of each of the cost items actually occurring. For instance, costs associated with the yard, snow removal, and garbage, would occur every year, while an average 20-year-old house would need exterior paint just once in ten years. Similarly, there was no certainty that a roof would need replacing, so I estimated that risk of a roof replacement on a 20-year-old house was 40% in the ten years.

My updated comparison in 2021 shows that the equivalent costs of our HOA services for a freestanding house are \$330 per month. That is \$40 more than the HOA operating expenses at \$290 per month. (For a copy of my spreadsheet with calculation details, email [david.damer@gmail.com](mailto:david.damer@gmail.com).) In other words, my calculations estimate that if we consider only the monthly HOA fees, we are saving about \$40 per month over the costs we would likely experience if we were to own and maintain a comparable house elsewhere in Larimer County.

"But wait!" you might say. "Isn't our Reserve Fund designed to cover some of the long-term maintenance costs, like roofing?" Yes, it is. So, to make things simple, I then added the entire \$130 Reserve Fund Fee to my calculations. That tells me that we are now paying \$420 per month for maintenance and services that I calculated above to be worth \$330 per month. Are we paying \$90 too much? Does that make Adriel Hills a bad deal? That determination depends on

your personal and very subjective valuation of the other benefits and amenities our HOA provides:

1. Parkland environment with 800 or so mature trees and large green spaces
2. Indoor-outdoor swimming pool, with adjacent grill and firepit
3. Golf course
4. Clubhouse with library, kitchen, sauna, meeting rooms, etc.
5. Tennis/pickleball courts
6. Full-time management that eliminates the independent homeowner's obligation to negotiate with and supervise multiple service and repair vendors.

And I would be remiss not to include:

7. A congenial community of residents

Are these things worth \$90 to Merete and me, even though we might take advantage of only a few of them? I say an unequivocal "Yes!" All told, I think this is a good deal.

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## Adriel Neighbors Welcome New Baby at Height of Winter Storm

By Mike Kohler

Competing countdown clocks were ticking, with a major winter storm and the expected birth of Alex and Sara Theiler's baby looming. Both the expectant mom and Mother Nature were at the mercy of baby Halle!

The Adriel property staff were on the alert and made a special effort to keep the Theiler driving path clear for the expected dash to the delivery room. This was not a job for Door Dash!

Thanks to teamwork, everything went according to plan, as Halle proved to be the proverbial "good baby" from the start. A healthy 7-lb, 12-oz Halle was born on the morning of April 16, her due date ... and the day after the storm.

As the Theiler family arrived back at home, they were greeted by the jolly sentry in the photo below, adorned with the "It's a Girl" sign. Was it magic? Or was it the thoughtful handiwork of nearby neighbors? (Hint: Maybe, just maybe, they live within 2 doors of the Theilers.)

As Alex and Sara attest, "The snowman out front of our place was adorable - we really enjoyed the welcome and all the cheer around it. We have great neighbors!"

Great neighbors ... that's what Adriel is all about!

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# The Mule Skinner's Wife

By Judy Keiss

“Mom and Dad, you’re going to have a muleskinner for a son-in-law.” While my parents sat there dumbfounded, I rushed on to explain, “he’s a Lieutenant in the 4<sup>th</sup> Field Mule Pack Artillery and will serve in the U.S. Army for two years and be stationed here in my birthplace, Colorado Springs. Because of his experience working on a ranch over the previous summers, Bob was assigned to this Army unit instead of going overseas to Korea.”

So went my introduction of my soon-to-be husband to my parents and so went my first step toward becoming a mule skinner’s wife. Our marriage took place in Colorado Springs on June 19, 1955. My husband’s fellow mule skinner welcomed our marriage and another newly married Lieutenant with a day of celebrations at Fort Carson. This started at 7:30 a.m. at the main entrance with a band playing and the two couples riding on chairs mounted on mules with eight 4<sup>th</sup> Field Officers as escorts. Of course, this was published in The Colorado Springs Gazette with the caption, “Newlyweds will be given rides at Fort Carson.” The article also stated, “The brides riding on their mules will be blushing alright!” This was a scene you wouldn’t believe unless you were there! You bet I was blushing while riding on the mule, with my flushed face matching my red sundress. This procession on the mules continued on to the Officer’s Club for a Champagne Brunch. In the evening we went back to the club for dinner, dancing and gifts. What a welcome to the rowdy Mule Packers!

We lived in a small apartment, which required little care, so I found a job as a receptionist at a large department store. I had no skills as a housewife since I had been away at college for four years. Bob even made our first cake and his uniforms had to be sent to the laundry, as my first try at ironing them was a disaster!

The fact that this was the last animal unit in the Army made them very popular for parades, rodeos and gymkhanas. The parades exhibited the mules in lead lines loaded with their full weapons, usually with their white mule, Hambone in front. The officers wore spiffy khaki colored uniforms with

boots, breeches and helmets and rode on horseback. I never missed the parades, as my muleskinner was the best looking! The men and animals carried out a historical 225-mile march from Fort Carson to Cheyenne, Wyoming for the famous Cheyenne Frontier Days. In Cheyenne, they participated in two weeks of parades and rodeos. This march was carried out during the two summers Bob was participating.

## Newlyweds Will Be Given Mule Rides at Carson

Something new in wedding celebrations will be staged Saturday at Ft. Carson, Colo.

Members of the 4th Field Artillery Battalion (Pack) — one of the Army’s two remaining mule pack outfits — will honor two recently betrothed colleagues with a mule ride across the post.

Also astride the mules — not bareback, to be sure, but on mounted chairs — will be the brides. Odds are they’ll be blushing, all right.

Singled out for recognition in the first such dynamite-laden ceremonial of modern times will be 2nd Lt. and Mrs. Samuel Halliday, who were married June 18, and 2nd Lt. and Mrs. Robert Keiss, married June 19.

Halliday and Keiss, new arrivals at the mule unit, are affiliated with Battery A. The battalion last week commemorated its 48th anniversary.

Eight 4th Field officers will serve as escorts.

The ride will start at 7:15 p.m. Saturday on the corner of K St. and O’Connell Blvd. at Carson. It will end at Carson building 1050, across from the Officers’ Open Mess, where a party will follow.

At last report, the mules hadn’t been invited to the soiree. A lot will depend, apparently, on their prior etiquette.

At the end of the summer, Bob went to Camp Hale in the Colorado Mountains near Leadville. The Mule Pack practiced cold weather training there for six months. I returned to Colorado A&M as I had one quar-

ter left to get my degree to teach Junior High Social Studies. The placement office had a job listed for a sixth grade teacher at Leadville, so of course I applied even though my degree wasn’t in elementary education. The Leadville School District offered me the sixth grade position. This wasn’t a desirable teaching assignment because not too many people wanted to live in this high altitude (two miles above sea level) where the temperature is usually 40 degrees below zero, in a historic mining town.

Bob was an officer and could live off the base but the problem was: “Where can we live together?” The school needed my warm body to teach so the Superintendent of Schools found us an apartment in the Bank Annex building on the third floor. This apartment was about 100 years old and was furnished with antiques from the early silver mining days. The heating system was also in the antique category as it was radiator steam heat that often exploded with steam and water, gushing out like a geyser! To stop this, we learned to throw rugs over the radiators. Also, the roof leaked due to the heavy snow melting on top; so we put large pans down to catch the leaks. I backed into a radiator in our very small bathroom after a bath, which caused extreme pain whenever I sat down! Cooking was another challenge at that high altitude on a very ancient gas stove. Thank goodness someone gave me a high altitude cookbook as a wedding present. I found out that water boils at a lower temperature at two miles above sea level so cooking time takes much longer.

Our social life was Friday night skiing at Climax and Saturdays at Cooper Hill. We also played cards and had dinners with other officers and their wives. The Leadville High School basketball games were popular and the team even won the league championship thanks to their living at a high altitude while the visiting teams were zonked in the elevation. We never missed a game. The Golden Burro was our favorite restaurant in town and we usually ate there two times a week so I could have a break from the antiquated stove. We learned to avoid the Silver Dollar Saloon, as fights would break out between the Mule Packers, (who were non-coms) the Special Forces and the hard rock miners. The fights usually started with a





*Top window are our apartment.*



*The Bank Annex Building.*

local miner saying, "I smell mule —," and the fight was on! I only got to go there once because all the men wanted to dance with me (due to there being a shortage of young women in Leadville) so that was the end of our visits there. Many famous people have eaten in these restaurants, which are still there today.

We attended St. George's Church, which was built in 1880. I was confirmed in Episcopal Church at the Camp Hale Chapel with a fancy dinner of hotdogs afterward. I regret that since most of my time was spent teaching and preparing lessons, there wasn't much time to explore all the Leadville history. Leadville was a booming silver mining town in the 1850's and many famous people made their fortunes there. Numerous hotels and landmarks were built there as well.

I quickly gained the reputation at Pitts Elementary and around town as, "that rugged Mule Skinner's wife who rides on mules"



*Mrs. Keiss and her sixth grade class.*

(which I didn't do). The story was that my husband took care of mules and horses in the deep snow at Camp Hale and wore those funny breeches and boots! Many of my students skied at Cooper Hill and would sometimes see me there, which helped my reputation. However, reality set in when one Sunday I fell, sprained my knee and had to be hauled off the hill in a toboggan. I was sure every kid in town saw me, and that they were breaking up with laughter.

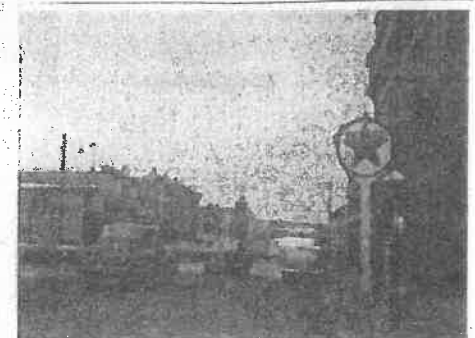
I became used to snow and cold as I walked eight blocks to school when the temperature was 30 or 40 degrees below zero. I didn't realize there were sidewalks until May! Another challenge to toughen me up was eating the school lunches, which were usually Army surplus food, which resembled dog food. The thirty, sixth graders with various learning and behavior problems were very demanding. Four previous teachers had quit for different reasons and here I was taking over this class! I had nightly homework and was learning new subject matter not covered in my college classes. I knew this first teaching job would either make or break my teaching career. I also had to prove myself as a strong teacher by breaking up fights on the playground. These mountain kids were tough and some carried knives that I bravely confiscated and

thus gained their respect. Although the other sixth grade teacher was a man, he was afraid of the students so I became the mean old teacher they feared!

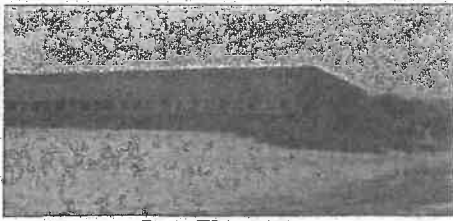
Three very mature girls decided they weren't going to like me due to their close relationship with the previous teacher. I started using some psychology I had learned in college course and in a few weeks they were my buddies and couldn't do enough for me. They started showering me with presents, which I suspected were shoplifted from the local Woolworth's Store so I had



*Downtown Leadville.*



*Main Street, Leadville.*



*Pitts Elementary.*

to tell them I couldn't accept any more gifts. The teacher next door yelled, "Shut up!" as her favorite way to control her fifth graders. I vowed never to use those words on any class and instead would just say, "Stop," which worked fine. This particular teacher was even sent home one day because she came to school pickled.



*Mining Hills.*

I did make it through five months with positive recommendations from the school system. Bob's Army Unit was sent back to Fort Carson and I stayed on in Leadville to



*St. George's Church*

finish six more weeks of my teaching contract. It was sad to leave my thirty students as we became very good friends and most advanced in their learning as I also did. When school was over, I went back to Colorado Springs where we found a cozy apartment and I taught second grade. Bob finished his Army career as the last Battery commander of an animal unit and thus ended my title of Mule Skinner's Wife. Deactivation Day of the Mule Pack Artillery was a sad occasion as most of the animals were sold. One stipulation of the sale was that only two mules could be sold to each buyer, which eliminated the pet food processors. One exception was made to the Shriners Al Kaly Mule Train, as they could buy more for their parades. The famous Hambone and Trotter were sent to West Point to serve in the Color Guard and many horses were sent to Fort Meyers to serve in Military Funerals at Arlington National Cemetery. Many of the Warrent Officers were also assigned there. Bob's story, *The Last of the Best*, which is about the mule pack, was published in three magazines in 2008 (*Western Mule Magazine*, January 2008). He has received many calls and letters from men who were in the Mule Pack Army who read the story. Our children and



*The article "The Last of the Best" was written by Robert E. Keiss, the author's husband was published in the January 2008 issue of Western Mule Magazine.*

seven grandchildren wanted me to relate my role as the Mule Skinner's Wife prompting me to write this story. I can truly say that being the wife of a mule skinner was an exciting way to start a marriage and I will never forget this experience.

*Bob's article will appear in a future edition of the newsletter*



# MAY 2021 CALENDAR

## Administrative and Management Office Hours

Administrative Office	Open by Appointment Only
Administrative Office Hours	M-F 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. <u>by Appointment Only</u>
Management Office Hours	M-F 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Lunch approximately 12:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Offices Closed	Monday, May 31, 2021 for Memorial Day

## Community Activities/Events

Indoor Pool	<b>Open Seven Days a Week</b> 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. (up to eight {8} people maximum)
Indoor Pool Closed	Thursday, May 20 <sup>th</sup>
Reopen Indoor & Outdoor Pool	Friday, May 21 <sup>st</sup>
Tennis* Pickle Ball	TBD
Pickle Ball	Tuesday & Thursday 9:00 am @ Tennis Courts (women)
Library	Open Seven Days a Week 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. <b>(access through library door only)</b>
Clubhouse	Open Seven Days a Week 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

## Maintenance Projects

*Scheduling may change due to weather or other factors*

Greens Aeration	Monday, May 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Building Repairs	Residents will be notified of pending schedule

## Board of Directors' Meeting

Board Meeting	Tuesday, May 18 <sup>th</sup> , 6:00 pm via ZOOM
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(connection to zoom meeting will be available on the Board agenda the week prior to the meeting); agenda and Treasurer's Report will be emailed or distributed to pigeon holes for homeowners and posted on the website.

*This information is intended for the benefit and education of our community members.*

