

# Our Community

NEWS

Reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area.

August 10, 2001

Volume 1 Number 4

## Interview with Trustee Schutz

by Ray Bedingfield

Kristi is a bright, vocal, high-energy woman. A resident of Monument since 1987, she was originally appointed to the Monument Board of Trustees in 1995 and was later elected twice by Monument voters to four year terms after campaigning hard with door-to-door efforts. Both times she was elected, Kristi was the 'top vote-getter.' She has given many volunteer hours to Monument's committees, and to the Baptist Road Rural Transportation Authority, an entity trying to solve some of the growing traffic problems in the area of I-25 and Baptist Road.

Kristi knows growth is inevitable but believes it to be manageable. She says, "The real question is whether we can grow in a way that protects the virtues that attracted us to this area in the first place: small town atmosphere, a safe place to raise our children, excellent schools, a quaint commercial district, beautiful views, and friendly neighbors. I believe we can.

We need to combine the strengths of our existing community with our new subdivisions and move forward in a united direction. We must continue to move forward with developers to see that developments are done with quality and thought to the future. We can keep this a nice place to live."

Asked about accomplishments of the current Board, Kristi answered, "I'm most happy about the 2nd Street extension. There's no question that the traffic into and out of Monument will flow much better. I've also enjoyed working with the downtown merchants on such events as the concerts in the park and beautification projects in the downtown area that are all about preserving the small town flavor."

What does Kristi think about the recall attempt? "Heartbreaking. The attacks on the current Board members have been vicious and malicious. Some of the people behind it are the same people who lost in the last

election, the same people who wanted the concrete batch plant and other projects the community doesn't support. I think they represent a minority who wants to throw out people who really care about the quality of life here in Monument. The recall has been aimed at six people on the Board, but I believe they really want just enough seats to control it. That's why I and two others are mounting a legal challenge to the recall. This recall and the tactics of those behind it have been personally hurtful to a dedicated Board that shares a vision of moving forward, working hard, and taking on new projects."

"If they are successful in the recall, they will be unstoppable, as they almost were before. They will see it as a mandate for growth at any cost. I would be unhappy

*"If they are successful in the recall, they will be unstoppable, as they almost were before. They will see it as a mandate for growth at any cost."*

- Trustee Kristi Schutz

to live in a place such as the one they would create. Unfortunately, a few of the people behind the recall, because they are fairly new to the community, don't realize how things were before. I don't believe they want to see rampant, unmanaged growth here either."

And, how does Trustee Kristi Schutz sum it all up? "Our main job is in this question: 'What's in the best interest of the community?' It's not 'What's in my best interest.'"

## Interview with Trustee Wilcox

by Ray Bedingfield

Trustee Steve Wilcox is intelligent and well-spoken, and he is angry. Steve is a long-time Monument resident, known by many people in the Town and throughout the Tri-Lakes area. He was a community leader before he was elected to the Board in April 2000. Steve's anger is directed at those who use, to quote Mark Twain, "lies, damned lies, and statistics" to regain political control for their own benefit, people who have consistently misled the voters of Monument in their effort to recall an unprecedented six Board members.

(Continued on page 2)

### inside...

Letter: Sunshine Law Rumor vs. Fact.....	Page 2
Road Improvements: In the Works.....	Page 3
Calendar .....	Page 4

## Interview with Trustee Wilcox

*(Continued from page 1)*

“The corporation behind the concrete batch plant told everybody, in writing, that they didn’t intend to pay for the necessary improvements to the Highway 105 and Washington Street intersection. The same ex-politicians and big landowners, now yelling about our Board spending money, wanted the people of Monument paying those expenses with their taxes. [John] Bailey, [Ernie] Biggs, and [John] Dominowski all wanted us, the Town and its people, to pay extra taxes for the privilege of having a concrete plant in Monument! This same group constantly complains that the current Board is spending too much on this or that, and yet they all supported this plant - with the citizens paying the bill.”

“This current Board is looking out for the people on taxes. The basic problem with people no longer on the Board is that they stopped listening to the citizens. Why, when there was such a public outcry against the concrete plant, would they just ignore it? That’s why I ran for office last year and won. We’re not perfect, but we are honest, we listen to people, and we’re fair to everybody, developers - everyone.”

Steve added, “Extremists, I think Skip Morgan used the term, are arrogant. They don’t care about the impact of development or land usage on anyone other than themselves. Property rights are important, but civilized people know that the overall good of the community and its people has to be considered when developing property. The rules are in place because we cannot have, for example, a pig breeding operation in the middle of Monument just because someone wants one.”

“If all the destructive energy these people have paraded out were put to good, there’s no limit to what we could do in this Town. One example of destructive energy is the group that calls itself the Monument Bigots’ Association. The members, including former Mayor Sibell, former Trustees, and their friends, used to sit around for hours over in Sibell’s barn discussing Town business, then go straight to the Board meetings where they would vote on issues that had already been decided back at the barn, and do their best to insult the women Board members.”

What about the *Eye on Monument*? “Are they insane? It makes my blood boil that they would publish, without his permission, a letter from the acting Police Chief to the Town Manager. We are put into a corner trying to take the high road while listening to Bailey, Biggs and Dominowski. We’ve tried over and over again to extend

the olive branch and for our effort we are stabbed in the back with their continuous attack mode of name calling and innuendo. Some people don’t want to know both sides of the story, but you hope they’ll make an effort anyway.”

What’s really behind all the strident name calling? “You have to ask, ‘What’s in it for them? I think the whole scenario is just good, evil, and money. Biggs needs his friends in power. For instance, he tried to convince us that we should give him twelve or thirteen water taps! At \$9,000 each, that would have been around \$100,000 benefit going to Ernie Biggs while others have to pay for their water taps. Six of his buildings are wholly or partially on Town property. Why does he want to get rid of us? Because the decisions on those matters have been temporarily tabled, a legal move on his part, until after the recall election. With his friends in power, there’d be no question the vote would go his way. In addition, he wants a boat ramp built for him by the Town and a new general plan, again for his benefit. We cited him for several violations of ordinances; for instance, the

buildings on Town property. That’s when he put in a request to change the date it was to be voted on by the Board. Now it will be after the recall election, to be voted on by whomever is on the Board at that time. In other words, his plan is to get rid of us, put his friends in power, and they’ll approve whatever he wants! The whole scenario by Biggs, Bailey and Dominowski becomes one of money, old-fashioned greed, and

back-to-the-power days.”

“These people have attacked me, attacked my family, attacked my friends, and attacked this community. I’ve been a Boy Scout leader, church leader, and community volunteer. I love this place, and it bothers me that some people I’ve known a long time believe these lies about the current Trustees.”

*“Bailey, Biggs, and Dominowski all wanted us...to pay extra taxes for the privilege of having a concrete plant in Monument!”*  
- Trustee Steve Wilcox

## Letter: Sunshine Law Rumor vs. Fact

In recent months, the local media has printed a lot of misinformation about purported violations of the Sunshine Law by members of the Monument Board of Trustees. Colorado State Statute 24-6-402 is known as the *Open Meetings Law* or the Meetings section of the *Sunshine Law*. Local website [www.palmerdivide.com](http://www.palmerdivide.com) has the full text of the Open Meetings Law including

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

highlights of the pertinent passages and sections.

Here is a Rumor vs. Fact Review of the Open Meetings Law:

**Rumor:** All gatherings where more than two Monument Trustees are present is an official meeting, notice must be given, and the meeting is illegal if these two conditions are not followed.

**Fact:** For the purposes of this Law, a *meeting* means any kind of gathering *convened to discuss public business* [see Section (1)(c)]. This *does not include* meetings for information exchange with citizens, social gatherings, or other meetings where there is no expectation or intent to conduct the Town's public business. In fact, there are other references to this definition. Twice in Section (1)(c), it says that this law "does not apply to any chance meeting or social gathering at which discussion of public business is not the central purpose."

Under this definition of the Law, the meeting held in Jackson Creek a few months ago was a social gathering with its "central purpose" being dialog with the citizens of Jackson Creek. No public business was considered or transacted at that meeting.

**Rumor:** The members of the Monument Board of Trustees are "devious and secretive," because they hide behind closed doors and conduct Town Business in secret.

**Fact:** In Part (4), Subsections (a) through (h), the Open Meetings Law provides for *executive sessions*, and gives specific guidelines as to how they are to be conducted. According to the Law, the following subjects are allowed to be considered in executive session:

- Sale or purchase of property by the Town
- Conferences with the Town Attorney for legal advice
- Matters of legal confidentiality
- Matters concerning negotiation of Town Business
- Security considerations
- Certain personnel matters
- Consideration of legally mandated undisclosed documents.

It appears these rumors were aimed to intimidate the Trustees of the Town of Monument, because the "rumor" interpretation of the Sunshine Law would severely restrict the Trustees' ability to do normal Town business. In fact, the opinion in a precedent-setting case concluded that "the Open Meetings Law was not intended to interfere with the ability of public officials to perform

their duties in a reasonable manner." [Benson v. McCormick, 1978].

Our next logical consideration is: Why are these people spreading these rumors? Some of them are the same people who were voted out of office because they were in favor of a concrete plant that would have polluted the environment. Is it possible that these people don't give a tinker's damn about the people of the Town of Monument and are only looking after their own interests? Furthermore, is it possible that these people are representing the interests of some other people who don't care about the community, and actually want to overrun the Town with massive development?

Let's assume, for the time being, that Joe Beggs is just starting a little rumor of his own, and let's see how the facts develop in the next few weeks. In the meantime, take a real close look at the motives of the people who have been doing all this attacking. Do any of their concerns really have to do with the citizens of the Town of Monument? You be the judge.

*Joe Beggs*

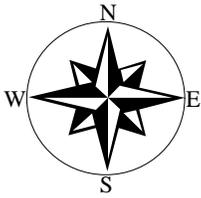
## In the Works

*by Judy Barnes*

This fall, work will begin to extend 2nd Street from Beacon Lite Road to connect with the Highway 105 bridge over I-25. This Town project will greatly improve the traffic flow through Monument. For a while, we'll still be able to use 3rd Street the way we do now, but in the near future we won't be able to turn left onto 3rd from Highway 105, nor left from 3rd onto 105. Those maneuvers have become more and more difficult and dangerous with the increase of traffic over the past few years. The 2nd Street extension will make it safer, less stressful, and more direct to drive through Monument and will improve access to the downtown area. The current Board of Trustees and Town staff have worked long and hard toward acquisition of 2nd Street for this extension, negotiating with landowners and with the State, which provided a grant of \$200,000 for this project.

The extension concept wasn't new, but it took the current Monument Board of Trustees to make the vision a reality. Eventually, 2nd Street will connect with the new bridge, part of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) I-25 Corridor Improvements Project which includes constructing new I-25 northbound and

(Continued on page 4)



**Our Community News**

P.O. Box 1742  
Monument, CO 80132

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MONUMENT, CO  
PERMIT NO. 57

**Reporting on  
Tri-Lakes Area Issues**

**inside...**

Interviews with Trustees Schutz and Wilcox  
Rumor vs. Fact on the Sunshine Law  
Road Improvements: In the Works

**August 10, 2001** **Our Community News**

**In the Works**

*(Continued from page 3)*

southbound ramps. The bridge will have a total of six lanes, two lanes each way plus turn lanes. In addition, there will be a 12' wide pedestrian-bike lane. When the Tri-Lakes Recreation District develops the trails they have planned, the bridge will be an essential part of the system.

Because the 2nd Street extension will be completed before the new Highway 105 bridge, a 200' S-curve will temporarily connect to the existing bridge. When the new bridge is in place, CDOT will replace the segment and build the new stretch of road to connect to the new bridge.

Also in the works is the extension of Beacon Lite Road to connect with the Old Denver Highway. And yet another project is the construction of Jackson Creek Parkway from Highway 105 to Higby. This project is a collaborative effort between the Town, the Triview Metropolitan District, and CDOT.

These road improvements will make traffic in our area more safe and direct, benefiting all of us.

**Calendar**

- **Palmer Lake Planning Commission Hearing**, Wed., Aug. 15, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. The Transit Mix concrete batch plant proposal will be heard. For information, call 481-2953.
- **Monument Board of Trustees**, Mon., Aug. 20, 6:30 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St. Proposals for two new Jackson Creek subdivisions will be heard. For information, call 481-2954.
- **Triview Metropolitan District Board Meeting**, Thu., Aug. 23, 8:30 am, District. Office, 174 N. Washington. For information, call 488-6868.
- **Friends of Ben Lomond Mountain**, Thu., Aug. 23, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. For information, call Sue Buell at 481-2474.
- **Labor Day**, Mon., Sep. 3.
- **Palmer Lake Town Council Workshop**, Thu., Sep. 6, 7 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 54 Valley Crescent. For information, call 481-2953.
- **Special Monument Recall Election**, Tue., Sep. 11, 7 am to 7 pm, Monument Town Hall, 166 2nd St.

*If you have questions or comments regarding this newsletter, please contact us at [our\\_community\\_news@hotmail.com](mailto:our_community_news@hotmail.com) or our new address: P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132. © Copyright 2001, Our Community News*