

THE VILLAGE VOICE

Rocky Mountain Village Estates • March 2020

Meet Joan Ball

At a recent potluck, Joan Ball discovered two other attendees living right here in Bergen had graduated from the same high school as she back in Arlington, Virginia! Mary Leeper was even in the same class, while Valerie Walker graduated a number of years later. "It's such a small world, isn't it?" she says with such surprise.

Born in Washington, DC, her family lived in Falls Church early on, then moved to La Paz, Bolivia when she was eight. It was in Bolivia that her father was tasked with finding ways to connect the population center high in the Andes mountains to the fertile agricultural center in the Amazon Valley. The family lived in La Paz for two and a half years, and Joan was forced to learn Spanish at an early age, as the elementary grades at the American Institute were taught in Spanish.



She admits to knowing very little all these years later. (The high school level learned in English.)

"They were unique living conditions," she says with a pensive look on her face. "There was no middle class." Despite having servants, it was very hard on her parents. "It was not an easy time. We went through three revolutions in the two and a half years there, and we had to go into hiding because my father's name came up mistakenly on a list...." And with a bit of embarrassment she admits her nine-year-old perspective at the time was simply that she wanted a pet monkey like a friend of hers.

During her high school and college years she spent summers in Canada at Algonquin Park — first as a

camper and then as a counselor.

While attending college at Oberlin in Ohio, she had the opportunity to spend two months traveling Europe "when it was really inexpensive," she says, thinking the entire trip only cost \$500. "We stayed in student housing," she explained.

Completing Oberlin with her degree in Government, Harvard University was busy recruiting graduates to get their Master's degrees in education. "They were desperate for teachers...." In nine months she received her teaching credentials as well as a Master's degree. Initially, she taught civics/history at the high-school level.

While studying in Cambridge, she met her husband-to-be, who also was getting his Master's at Harvard. He took a job with the federal government, and they spent a year in Washington, DC, before relocating to Oregon where they raised a son and a daughter. "I loved it there," Joan says, adding "we had big gardens!"

1974 brought a transfer to Colorado with a move to Evergreen in 1976. Another "small world" experience occurred when she discovered she had a cousin who also lived in Evergreen! Once settled here, she turned to teaching elementary school, first at Wilmot and then at Marshdale, which opened in the middle of the school year (January 1981). "We had good, supportive parents; a good principal; and good staff," she recalls. She retired from teaching fourth grade after 18 years.

Having taken many a fourth-grade class to the Hiwan Homestead for tours as they studied Colorado history, giving those tours herself became a favorite thing to do when she retired, working with both youngsters and the general public. While giving her dad a tour of the museum, there was another small-world moment as her dad pointed to a picture of Eric Douglas, who had grown up at the Homestead (for those who have visited the museum, Eric's House is the enormous stone playhouse up on the hillside designed and built by Jock Spence). Her dad exclaimed that he'd worked with Eric

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**"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time,
they just have the heart."**

-Elizabeth Andrew

Memo from the Manager

Be reminded that feeding bird seed is not allowed as it attracts rodents to the buildings.

Mark your calendar for the board meeting on Friday, March 13th at 5:30 in Genesee's Mountaineer Room.

Please continue to do your best to keep your decks clear of snow and ice.

-- Kathy



Katrina of Ovation West sang a song from "Lend Me A Tenor" entertaining the Potluck crowd in February. The musical runs through March 8th.

Joan Ball continued

in his adult years and that Eric had even been a guest in their home on several occasions when Joan was a child.

Because of his early familiarity with computers, the Bureau of Land Management tapped her husband to come up with a way to survey the state of Alaska, and he developed a system using helicopters and then satellites to map the state's 663,268 square miles. The system evolved into what we now refer to as GPS (Global Positioning System).

During their 58 years of marriage, Joan and her husband spent five or six lengthy summers on Lummi Island, an eight-minute ferry ride from Bellingham, Washington, with its fewer than 1,000 year-round residents.

Joan settled into Rocky Mountain Village about six months ago after her husband had passed away, needing to downsize from a big house. Besides discovering fellow alumnae at potlucks, she's participated in the exercise class. She still volunteers at the Hiwan Homestead Museum and belongs to more than one book club. "I'm a reader," she says contentedly with her cat curled up nearby.

The next time you hear someone say "It's such a small world," think of Joan Ball.

Editorial note: As just another small-world aside, Joan was my daughter's fourth-grade teacher at Marshdale....

Profile and photo by Linda Kirkpatrick.

Reminders from Darlene....

Some of our 2nd floor residents in Genesee have been sprucing up the halls by hanging more pictures on the walls, even in the stairway! There are scenic photographs, needlework, cars, and many others. Come and enjoy the new look! The 4th floor is still an art gallery with many of Carolyn Seymour's and Carolyn Campbell's paintings. What better place to walk and enjoy the "scenery"!

Maren at Evergreen Park and Recreation has a "Cultural Excursion" planned for March 10 for dinner at the Forest Room 5 Restaurant in Denver. Time 4:30-8:00 p.m. If you have not experienced one of Maren's excursions, you are missing a good time. Cost is \$10.00 for transportation. Dinner is on your own. Call 720-880-1100 to make a reservation.

Wednesday, March 11 will find Mary Ellen Putnam hosting the March Birthday Tea honoring March birthdays in both buildings. Everyone is invited to join this party serving ice cream and cake. If your birthday is in March, and you would like to furnish a cake, please call Mary Ellen as soon as possible.

Lisa from Elk Run conducts a chair yoga class once a month in the Mountaineer Room in Genesee starting at 1:30. The class focuses on stretching, balance, and strength. Just show up!

The pot luck in Bergen is Monday, March 9th at 5:30. Monday, March 23 is the monthly pot luck in Genesee at 5:30 p.m. Bring your own plate and utensils, and a surprise delicacy to share.

On Friday, March 6 Betty and Charlie Carcano will host a "Stew Tasting" for residents in both buildings, to be served in the Genesee Mountaineer Room from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Everyone is asked to sign-up on the sheets posted in both buildings to ensure enough food is prepared. Bring your own place setting along with eating utensils and your own beverage.