

THE VILLAGE VOICE

Rocky Mountain Village Estates • October, 2017

Frances Sorensen

Although she didn't move into her Bergen unit until January of 2000, Frances Sorensen had been visiting Evergreen since 1978. She and her husband had lived in Denver after many years in Lake Forest, Illinois. "My husband was a Westerner," she says, "from Salt Lake City. We met when we both worked for Pepsi Cola" where he was a vice president.



Before Denver, the couple had spent parts of their married lives living in the Washington, DC area; Stamford, CT; and Bloomfield Hills near Detroit. Along the way her husband would become president of Vernor's Ginger Ale.

Frances recalls having a carefree childhood growing up in a typical little southern town – Concord,

NC – now a suburb of Charlotte. It was incorporated in the 1700's, "part of the segregated South – genteel, kind," she remembers fondly but half-apologetically. "Everybody was kind to each other – the blacks and the whites got along." Although her mother died when she was just 10, she recalls a wonderful school system where the teachers were a part of everything, families were more stable than they are nowadays, and all the kids were friends with one another.

Frances pursued a commercial course of study at the Women's College of the University of North Carolina.

She was a stay-at-home mom until the younger of her two children was in fourth grade. At that time she went to work at Lake Forest College as assistant to the president of the adult education division where men and women worked on their Masters degrees.

With a daughter and son-in-law in Evergreen, it made sense for Frances and her husband to move "up the hill" to be closer about the time of the change of the millennium. Her husband enjoyed part of the first year here before he died. Twin granddaughters came along a few years later.

With an interest in antiques, she enjoyed working part time at the Cobweb Shop in downtown Evergreen and later

Jean Johnson

Jean Johnson is one of the few artists who've been able to make a living at it. "I've been an artist my entire life," she says. As a teenager, her mother (an artist who'd never been able to pursue her love as a vocation) made it possible for her to take lessons. Both parents encouraged her artistic pursuits – "I was very lucky that way."

Her formative years included living in Medford, MA; Altoona and Pittsburgh, PA; Washington, DC; and Pitman, NJ. Her dad's job as a research engineer took them to



places where the oil companies were located. "He did tests on oil on machinery," she explains, referencing the era of trains.

Jean studied at the Philadelphia College of Art, which has since morphed into the University of the Arts, majoring in illustration under Henry Pitts, a famous illustrator. "Teachers trained students to earn a living.

They would guide from their experience. Students had to be serious to stay in the course," she says of the four-year program.

Working with Pitts's agent, she landed her first paid job as an artist her second year of school – illustrating pamphlets about people in other parts of the world, geared for Sunday school students. It would lead her into a career of illustrating children's story books, grade-school text books, and Jack & Jill activity books.

Jean grew up during the Depression and the second world war. "During the war when you got a job, you were frozen, not allowed to go anywhere else," she pointed out. "You had to stay in the same job." After the war, the art director introduced Jean to designing album covers for RCA records and allowed her to move on.

"Everybody had a war job to support the war effort," she said, recalling the period when women began building ships. "Get a war job and support our men" was the slogan. We worked *together*, not like what they're doing now. It makes a big difference!"

Over the years Jean worked for Winston Publishing, Curtis, Platt & Monk, and Saalield – all publishers of

Articles continued on back side

Memo from the Manager

Congratulations on passing the updated Articles of Incorporation and the Declarations.

--Kathy

WELCOME!

Juanita Stott - 115 G

Sharon Gobel - 111 G

Josie Brown - 105 G

Ann Redwine - 218 G

Walt and Marka Weiss - 315 G

Reminders from René

Join us for RMVE's *Annual Appreciation Luncheon* to honor Kathy, Jacque, Brac and the Board of Directors on October 16th at The Wild Game banquet Room. The meal starts at noon; there are four selections plus tea and coffee, salad, and cupcakes.

Active King Soopers card members' meals are free. For others \$15.00; this includes tax and gratuity. Sign-up sheets are on the table for both buildings where you can also designate your meal choice. Please pay MaryEllen Putnam (Bergen unit 115), Diana Aldridge (Bergen unit 314) or Jeri Dufford (Genesee unit 317) by October 11th. If you need a ride, please indicate on signup sheet.

The *Evergreen Chamber Orchestra Guild* will meet October 21st in the Bergen Community Room to hear Betsy Schwarm's program highlighting the Orchestra's upcoming Fall Concert. The coffee starts at 9:30 a.m. and the program at 10:00 a.m. There will be a short meeting at 11:00 a.m. \$10 cash donation.

Game Night every Friday night at Bergen game room 1st floor. 7:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome, lots of fun. Call Jan Thurling for information

Aces Bridge 2nd Wednesday 1:00-3:00 p.m. Call Nickie Meinert or René Kilmer.

"Genesee" was proud and pleased to have hosted two of our well known regional artists over *Open Door Studios* weekend in September. The creative artworks of Carolyn Campbell and Carolyn Seymour graced our gathering room while visitors enjoyed the art and getting a peek at our "campus."

The lobbies are decorated for Fall, thanks to our Social Committees.

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as a receptionist – first with Coldwell Banker and then with Sotheby's. Her Southern-belle personality made customer service a natural. "Working was a good reason to get up and get dressed up with nice jewelry," she comments. "I met so many nice people!" She's also volunteered as a receptionist at the Hiwan Homestead Museum.

Having a little patch of garden outside her unit was a selling point for Rocky Mountain Village. "I'd always had a garden..." When she was better able to do the watering, she'd have flowers spilling over the balcony. She joined the Evergreen Garden Club and appreciated having fellow members as resources for learning what would grow at this altitude. Hospitality was her niche for the Garden Club as well as at home.

For awhile Frances was part of a group of six who got together to have dinner in their respective units. Entertaining was part of her life, but nowadays she does more reading. Having someone come in three days a week enables her to continue living right where she is, and she's grateful for that.

JOHNSON • continued

books and/or magazines.

A book compiled by her son shows hundreds of the paintings Jean has done over the years. He has the originals of what she's done for pleasure – watercolors of boats in marinas, historical buildings, and more. Back in the early days, it was impossible to make copies; color photography hadn't yet begun, so she has no copies of many of those one-of-a-kind illustrations.

At 95 Jean still paints often, although she admits what she used to do in an hour now takes her a couple of days. "I didn't think I'd ever live so long..."

Jean's paintings have been part of the Evergreen Fine Arts Festival at Heritage Grove, and they've been on display at Frames for All Reasons in the past, but she's never worked at marketing her artwork. She's also done some commissions. Former RMVE resident Lois Lange recruited Jean to do some paintings for the Humphrey Museum.

She's been part of the book club. "I still enjoy hearing about the books even when I'm not able to read them."

She's thrilled with the new Center for the Arts Evergreen just down the street and is eager to spend more time studying at the National Watermedia Show now on display.

Jean and her late husband had been visiting Evergreen since 1979, as their son lived here. They bought a place in Genesee in 1996 when the place was new – she's one of those original owners who still call it home.

Autumn, the year's last, loveliest smile.

William Cullen Bryant