

# INSIDE *Singletree*

JUNE 2022

A SOCIAL PUBLICATION FOR THE RESIDENTS OF SINGLETREE

MIKE  
AND  
LAURA  
*Kelly*

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Family Heirloom Photography

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**A**

**AGENT**  
Professional that is legally licensed to buy and sell property for their clients.



**C**

**CONTINGENCY**  
A condition that must be met in order for a real estate contract to be finalized.

**D**

**DOWN PAYMENT**  
The amount of money that a buyer must pay upfront as part of a real estate transaction.

**I**

**ICE DAM**  
Ice formation on the roof edge caused by the thawing and re-freezing of snow on the overhang.

**J**

**JOINT TENANCY**  
A legal term for when two or more people own equal shares of the same piece of property.



**L**

**LISTING PRICE**  
A list price is the price of a home for sale set by the seller and listing agent.

**W**

**WALK-THROUGH**  
The final inspection of a home by a buyer before finalizing a deal to purchase the home.



**Y**

**YIELD**  
The interest or return earned by an investor stated as a percentage of the amount invested.

**Z**

**ZONING**  
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This Index has been created to provide an easy reference for you when searching for a trusted neighborhood vendor to use; these local businesses are proud to partner with the community and to make this magazine possible. Take a minute to familiarize yourself with the businesses sponsoring *INSIDE Singletree* and be sure to call on them when you need their products or services. And of course, please remember to thank them for supporting *INSIDE Singletree*.

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### 'THE BEST BANG FOR THE BUCK'

The content of *INSIDE Singletree* is personal and relevant to all the residents of the neighborhood and thereby, I know my advertising message is seen over and over again by every member of the household - every month. In addition to the high quality publication itself, *INSIDE Singletree* offers sponsor spotlight articles and videos featuring my business, digital remarketing, social media, and private events for residents and sponsors - absolutely the most bang-for-the-buck over any other advertising opportunities. *Every* business in the valley should be advertising in *INSIDE Singletree*. - Will Theoharides, Owner, Avon Frame Shoppe

**REFER YOUR FAVORITE BUSINESSES TO INSIDE SINGLETREE TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR YOUR RESIDENT REFERRAL REWARDS!**

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**publisher's note**

# Happy Anniversary, Singletree Residents!

I am thrilled to be celebrating the sixth anniversary of *INSIDE Singletree* with you this month! Six years of getting to know families in the community, giggling with kids, following travel adventures, loving our pets, giving back to our non-profits, sharing our events, and much more! I am grateful for every story and photo that comes my way and look forward to putting together fresh and relevant issues of *your* neighborhood magazine every month.

“Just two beers...” Famous last words as Mike Kelly agreed to meet a couple of buddies at O’Dowd’s in Kansas City. Enter Laura Kelly. From long-distance love to their journey to Singletree, Mike and Laura together ultimately launched a small filmmaking company, Films for Humanity, to help not-for-profit agencies deliver their message.

Raised in the neighborhood, Bret Pilkington returns as a passionate arborist and ecologist deeply committed to preserving the beauty in the place he calls home. And Raymond Bleesz fondly recalls his

days of photographic exploration of the Sts John mining site by jeep in 1968, a tale which will inspire you to hit the road to discover the many fascinating ghost towns and historic mining sites in Colorado.

The summer season is upon us, and Vail Club 50 is excited to jump into a full schedule of activities and events for its members. Led entirely by volunteers, the group enjoys hiking, biking, tennis, and numerous social outings. Here, our Singletree members share with us the highlights of their club experiences and encourage their friends and neighbors to join the fun!



Enjoy Singletree in the sunshine... where the days are longer and the nights are stronger than moonshine!

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Meet Your Neighbors



**Uni and Jill Flanagan**  
Precious Pets



**Bret Pilkington**  
Where Are They Now?



**Raymond Bleesz**  
Celebrating the Arts



**Andie Ohde**  
What's Happening  
Inside Singletree

Many thanks to the Singletree residents who shared their experiences as members of Vail Club 50 with the neighborhood this month. We appreciate you participating in *INSIDE Singletree*!

Your neighborhood publication is by YOU and for YOU, and it is not possible without your stories and photos! We are always seeking new articles to keep your magazine fresh and relevant every month. Please contribute your story or nominate a friend or neighbor to participate in an upcoming issue. Email **holly.proctor@n2pub.com** to be part of *INSIDE Singletree*!

## Join us to celebrate the beginning of Summer!



**DON'T FORGET TO WEAR PURPLE!**  
JUNE IS ALZHEIMER'S & BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

### Put on Your Purple! Wednesday, June 8, 2022

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Graciously hosted at the home of  
Melinda and Tom Gladitsch  
10 Pinto Drive

Mix and mingle with your Singletree friends and neighbors! Learn more about the Rocky Mountain Walk to End Alzheimer's on September 24, 2022. Light bites & beverages will be served.

RSVP to [insidesingletreersvp@gmail.com](mailto:insidesingletreersvp@gmail.com) or 303-859-3369 by Sunday, June 5, 2022

## Introducing Flamingo Fridays!

Start off your weekend right and party with your Singletree friends and neighbors!

Join us for the FIRST Flamingo Friday:  
FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 2022 | 5:30PM - 7:00PM  
Hosted by Trevor and Mary Ellen Broersma  
447 Rawhide Road

Beverages and light snacks will be provided OR feel free to BYO

### Look for the Flamingos!

Contact [insidesingletreersvp@gmail.com](mailto:insidesingletreersvp@gmail.com) if you would like to learn about hosting a future Flamingo Friday!



# Welcome NEW SPONSORS

Please join us in welcoming our newest sponsors to *INSIDE Singletree*! Your neighborhood publication would not be possible without the support of our business partners. Please be sure to call on them when you are in need of their products or services.



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When The Hot Tub Guy services your hot tub, you can relax knowing your investment is in the care of experienced, professional, and reliable experts. To request a free estimate or consultation, please visit [thehothtubguy.net](http://thehothtubguy.net) or call **970-331-3822**. You will be happy you did!

**If you have worked with a professional and reliable business that you would recommend to your Singletree neighbors, please email your referrals to [holly.proctor@n2pub.com](mailto:holly.proctor@n2pub.com). We would love to introduce your favorite businesses to other residents in your community!**



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# Things to think about in *June...*

**Did you know** that you can find the Design Guidelines and Design Review applications on the website, [singletreetoday.com](http://singletreetoday.com)?

**Did you know** that the installation of mechanical equipment or an air conditioning unit requires Design Review approval?

**Did you know** that landscaping changes require DRC review and approval prior to any changes being made?

**Did you know** that duplexes require joint property owner sign off on exterior changes and that changes are required to match?

## Mark Your Calendar...

**Thursday, June 16** – Turntable Revue Duo at the Singletree Community Center

**Saturday, August 20** – Singletree's Summer Party

**Tuesdays** – 4th Tuesday of the month the Berry Creek Metro and SPOA Boards meet at 3 PM

# SINGLETREE

**Berry Creek Metro District and Singletree Property Owners' Association**

1010 BERRY CREEK ROAD AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER

[www.singletreetoday.com](http://www.singletreetoday.com)

## meet your neighbors

Article Written by **Tim Swift**, Singletree Resident  
Photography by **Family Heirloom Photography**



## Mike and Laura

# Kelly

When most adults move to the Vail Valley, they do it with a pretty clear plan. Generally, they are familiar with what we have to offer in terms of recreation, housing stock, weather, and all the other variables we all know so well. They make a couple of trips to get the lay of the land and decide on what neighborhood they want to move to and what the current housing market looks like. They engage a local REALTOR® to show them around and narrow their search. They try to determine what sort of housing is within their budget constraints. Then they head back home and put their house on the market. If things go according to the plan, their



Where it all began

house sells, they find a home here that suits them, and they call a mover, pack up, and head this way. Pretty much in that order.

Laura and Mike Kelly certainly qualify as adults, but their plan didn't unfold exactly like that. In fact, to most of us, it would appear that they had no plan at all! But what they did have was an unquenchable desire to live here.

In February of 2021, they moved from Kansas City into Mike's brother's condo in Lionshead, having sold everything: their house, their furnishings, one of their cars, everything. The whole thing sounds more like a 20-something packing some stuff into the back of a battered Toyota and hitting the road with little or no idea where the road will end!

But Laura and Mike are well past 20 something, and they did know that they wanted to be in Singletree. In 2013-14 they had rented a duplex on June Creek Road just to see if they could handle the winter and its many joys and pitfalls. Much to their delight, they found they loved every minute of it, and that spurred the great sell-off and the "don't look back" move. They found a house they loved, bought it (and a whole bunch of furniture), and moved in last fall.

But just because they didn't look back doesn't mean that we can't. Time to rewind.

Laura was born in Mexico, and in 2002, she was working for an international company specializing in industrial safety products based in her hometown of San Luis Potosi. Her job was to open up the American market for the company, and that meant lots of travel between Mexico and the United States. It was a position she was well suited for due to the years she spent here in her youth. When she was 14, her family enrolled her in the Academy of the Sacred Heart in Grand Coteau, LA, with the express goal of English fluency. That plan succeeded spectacularly.

Laura was in Kansas City on a business trip, eating dinner alone at the bar at McCormick and Schmick's, on a Tuesday evening in June of that year. Mike was working at an ad agency on that same Tuesday night when two of his friends tried to talk him into going to O'Dowd's, a neighborhood Irish pub. Mike was reluctant because of his workload, but he was also thirsty and Irish. His caveat, however, was "just two beers."

Because the "just two beers" limit did not apply to his two friends, they wandered into McCormick and Schmick's for a bit of a warm-up.



Laura with Mae Loffin from The Ride

They couldn't help but notice Laura at the bar and struck up a conversation. It took some doing, but they talked her into joining them at O'Dowd's, where Mike was patiently waiting, nursing the first of his two beers. The three of them made the short walk down the street to the pub and strode in. Initially, Mike thought one of his friends had a new girlfriend, but he was soon disabused of that idea. Three hours later, Laura



Mike on the set of The Ride

and Mike left the pub and went their separate ways. The next morning Laura headed back to Mexico, but they did manage to exchange contact information.

Oh, and Mike was left with the pleasant thought that he could "happily marry this girl."

Fast-forward to September 2002, and Laura invited Mike to join her and a girlfriend in Puerto Vallarta for a vacation. Mike had just started his own boutique ad agency and was working harder than ever to get it off the ground, but an invitation from Laura to a short vacation in Mexico was not to be passed up. Well, the beach, the sun, and the atmosphere managed to work their collective magic, and the relationship was off and running. After eight months of long-distance love, Laura and her friend moved into an apartment in Kansas City. Eventually, Laura and Mike married, and Laura began to hatch her plan for getting them both to Vail.

As a girl, she had been coming here for years with her family and loved every minute of it. So much so that she dogged Mike mercilessly until he agreed to a visit. Well, the rest, as they say, is history.

Fast-forward again to 2015. Laura had quit her job, Mike retired from his ad gig, and together they founded a small filmmaking company, Films for Humanity, that they still run today. They both saw a need for not-for-profit agencies to develop a way to tell their stories in a more impactful way. With Mike's background in advertising, he knew that a professionally produced, 3 to 5-minute short film was the best way to stir the human spirit, raise awareness, and inspire action. He also knew that most organizations lack the resources to do anything beyond the bare minimum





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*“We wake up every morning and smile because we are living in a postcard.”*

when it comes to telling their story. With this in mind, he created a unique business model whereby donors can sponsor a short film on behalf of their chosen cause ([www.filmsforhumanity.com/sponsor-a-film](http://www.filmsforhumanity.com/sponsor-a-film)).

The concept, coupled with the growth and reach of social media, was a very effective and totally affordable way to get that message to the world.

Films for Humanity employs professional Hollywood types on an as-needed basis to produce some truly memorable short films that admirably serve the not-for-profits that contract with them. Their work goes way beyond a staffer using an aging iPhone to

tell a story. They make movies, albeit short ones, that both tell a story and demonstrate a need. To do both, and to do them well, is a challenge that is rarely met by an amateur. Laura, Mike, and their production team are pros, and it shows in their work.

Since their arrival on Chaparral Road last fall, Laura and Mike have become part of the heartbeat of the neighborhood. Singletree is lucky to have them, as are their clients from all over the country. They are making our neighborhood a lot more fun, and Films for Humanity is making the world a better place.

Mike said about living in Singletree, “We wake up every morning and smile because we are living in a postcard.”





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**DEB & ROHN ROBBINS**

Debbie and Rohn Robbins celebrated their anniversary by returning to the same piece of Paradise in Hawaii where they honeymooned 33 years ago!



**LAWRENCE HERRINGTON & DAISY**

Lawrence Herrington and Daisy have been friends and neighbors for several years, spending time together on the front walk and in the back yard. When Daisy heard that Lawrence was turning 90, and that his birthday was on April 26, she squealed in delight as they were birthday twins since she was turning 12 on April 26!

A joint birthday part was planned, and while Daisy didn't partake in the caviar, foie gras, rack of lamb and shrimp to fete Lawrence, she sure enjoyed her own red velvet dog cake!



**MADISON LARSON**

Not one for cake, Madeline Larson celebrated her 6th birthday with a red cherry jello cake, a granny costume, dinner at the Gas House and a trampoline party at the Edwards field house. Sounds like an awesome birthday!



**HERE COMES SUMMER! HIGHWAY CLEAN UP**

Singletree residents and fellow Edwards Rotary members celebrated the end of the ski season by participating in the annual Eagle Valley highway clean up. Back Row (L to R): JP Powers, Rotary member Andre Wilner and his wife, Jeff Koch, and Tom Gladitsch; Front Row (L to R): Janet Hill, Linda Hill and Teri Lester.



**LINDA HILL**

Linda Hill and her Super Strikers team (Megan Talbott, Linda, Marisa Selvy and Becky Levi Cohen) celebrate their Best Costume win at the 6th Annual Sandy Treat Memorial Bowl-a-thon for Edwards Rotary which raises dollars to support youth programs county-wide.

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A sincere thank you to Pam and Dan Pennington and Sue and Dan Godec

for hosting an insightful and informative Meet & Greet with Vail Health's Eagle Valley Behavioral Health for the residents of Singletree. Co-hosted by *INSIDE Singletree*, the evening proved to be truly eye-opening for many. Chris Lindley, Executive Director of EVBH, shared the many steps they are taking to transform the local behavioral health system. These initiatives are possible because of the partnership with their valuable community partners, including Your Hope Center and Bright Future Foundation. We are truly fortunate to have the unparalleled leadership of Dan, Dan, and Chris, creating a sustainable model not only for our valley but for communities across the country to emulate. Thank you for an enlightening presentation and for all you do for our community. For resources and to lend your support, please go to [ItTakesAValley.org](http://ItTakesAValley.org).





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# OWOOOOO...

## Meet the Howling **UNI!**

Hello, my name is Uni! By the time you read this, I will be 1 year old. My parents, Jill and Brian, thought that I might be a smaller Malamute since, after all, my mom was only 75 pounds. Well, at 10 months, I weighed 97 pounds. Owooooo. I am a bit stubborn and naughty, but I go to school at Waggin' Tails. Maybe I will someday learn how to behave!



I *really* like to howl! I do it every time my mom goes upstairs without me. I also howl just to let everyone know I'm around. I pretty much want to play all day, and if you see me



### precious pets

Contributed by **Uni and Jill Flanagan**,  
Singletree Pet and Resident

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in the neighborhood, I will play with you, too. I pull on the leash a lot, but heck, I am a sled dog. I think that's what I'm supposed to be learning in school — maybe not to pull.

I bet it's not surprising that I LOVE snow. I can romp in it any which way. I really like sticking my whole head in snowbanks, too. When it comes to landscaping, all those people in trucks have nothing on me. I can dig a hole in 2 seconds flat!

I hope you will play with me next time I see you in the 'hood!



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# Coming Full Circle...

## Bret Pilkington Returns to the Home He Loves with a Mission

### where are they now?

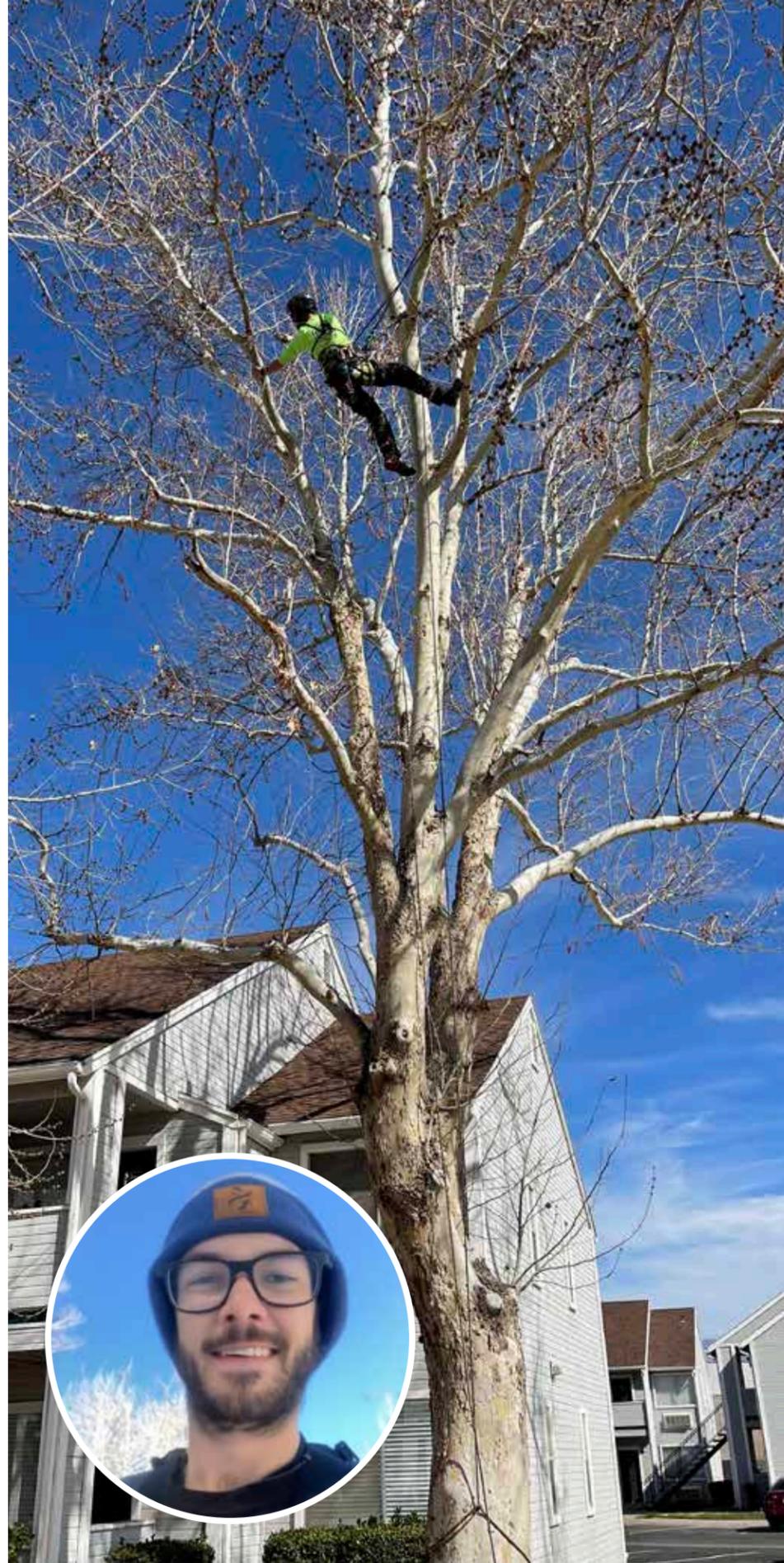
Contributed by Bret Pilkington, Singletree Resident

Growing up in the beautiful Singletree community and participating in many aspects of the Vail Valley has helped Bret Pilkington grow into the arborist and ecologist he is today. From working in entertainment on Beaver Creek Mountain with Brian Hall and the Vilar Performing Arts Center to running his family-owned business, Colorado Mattress, and eventually finding his passion in arboriculture, Bret has returned to the valley to maintain the beauty in the place he calls home.

While in school at Eagle County Charter Academy and then Battle Mountain High School, Bret lived off June Creek Road, which allowed him to form the friendships that carry on to this day. He can recall playing soccer with his friends in the park and riding bikes back and forth to each others' houses in the days when sleepovers were deemed "not an option on school nights."

"I still get flashbacks when I drive past the basketball courts and playground in the park. I miss those days, but I am happy to see kids taking advantage of the amazing community places we have available," Bret says. One of his favorite memories is playing "Hide and Seek" on the golf course, where he and his friends would run up and hide while his stepdad, Rob Rollins, held back his childhood dog, Rascal. "Upon release, Rascal would take off at a million miles per hour and find each and every one of us, tail wagging with excitement and the biggest smile a dog could muster," Bret recalls fondly. Those friendships and good memories only grew stronger as they moved from elementary to high school.

In addition, the proximity to the high school provided the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities such as soccer, baseball, track, fencing, playing music after



Upside down with Dad!



The cool kid

school in the band room, performing in and even directing plays, and many more. With thanks to Singletree resident Annah Scully, he found his love of theater by helping her with light, sound, and set development for her productions at local venues for many years.

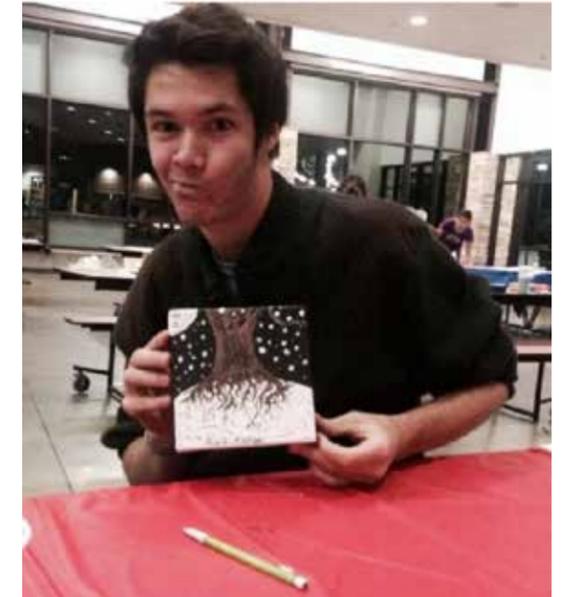
These countless activities helped him earn both local and school scholarships to the University of Colorado Boulder, where he majored in ecology and evolutionary biology with a minor in philosophy. In college, he studied abroad in both Costa Rica and the Galapagos Islands. He further pursued his passion for the arts by working as production and stage crew in the University Theatre. Combining all these experiences, Bret successfully found a new combination of the arts and his personal quest for working toward a more sustainable world with the CU Environmental Center, where he helped put on many events, including job fairs, concerts, and parades.

Bret's ties to the valley were never lost. One summer, he returned home to accept an internship with local nonprofit Walking Mountains



2013: Soccer with the boys

Science Center as a summer naturalist. "I loved showing tourists and science lovers the beauty and science behind this lovely place," he says, looking back. It wasn't all work for Bret in college — he also fell even more in love with his passion for rock climbing, backpacking, and all things outdoors that started as a sapling in his younger years in the valley. This eventually led him to his profession today.



Showing artistic prowess in 2014



Creating memories in 2016



•••

beauty I have been so lucky to experience my whole life, I just hope we can preserve that beauty for generations to come, and that's what I'm here to do!" Bret proudly proclaims.

Bret is excited to start the next chapter of his life in the valley by making old connections stronger and forming new ones. He hopes to show everyone new to the valley what beauty it has to offer and to offer his educated opinion on how they can properly manage, maintain, and grow this urban forest. Returning to the valley, he looks forward to seeing long-lost faces that warm his heart so dearly and spreading his wealth of knowledge to houses and trees he remembers playing under as a child.



The fam in 2018



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Active	141 Corral Road B	Duplex	6	6	5,457	Unfurnished	\$3,595,000	\$659	68	--	--	--
Under Contract	260 Buckboard Road B-1	Townhome	3	2	1,333	Unfurnished	\$1,095,000	\$821	24	--	--	--
Under Contract	231 Rawhide Road	Single Family	4	3	3,016	Furnished	\$1,850,000	\$613	2	--	--	--
Under Contract	141 Stagecoach Road	Single Family	4	6	3,161	Unfurnished	\$1,875,000	\$593	0	--	--	--
Under Contract	780 June Creek Road	Single Family	4	5	3,193	Partial	\$1,995,000	\$625	0	--	--	--
Closed	735 Charolais Circle	Single Family	5	6	5,943	Partial	\$3,950,000	\$665	1	\$4,025,000	\$677	3/25/2022
Closed	220 Singletree Road	Single Family	5	5	4,370	Unfurnished	\$2,460,000	\$563	0	\$2,460,000	\$563	3/31/2022

\*Properties Active, Under Contract, and Sold 3.18.22 - 4.18.22

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# SPORTS. SOCIAL. FUN.

## Vail Club 50 Offers Something for Everyone

Contributed by Linda and Dave Wilson, Suzette Newman, Connie and Throop Bergh, Andrea Klein, Paul and Gail Stone, BJ and Jim Knez, and Pat McFarland, Singletree Members of Vail Club 50 and Jimmy Arbour and Debbie Durben, Vail Club 50 Board Members

Looking to relax and smell the roses as a Green hiker? Or do you like to put a little more giddy-up in your step as a Blue? Craving more vertical and distance challenges as a Blue/Black? Or ready to truly push your limits as a Double Black? Tennis anyone? And for the cycling enthusiast, is it road or mountain biking? Does hand and foot canasta interest you? Simply looking for new social connections? Vail Club 50 offers all this and more.

Founded in 1988 by a small group of locals and incorporated as a social club in 1992, Vail Club 50 (VC50) exists for the sole purpose of organizing and promoting social events and sports-oriented outings for people aged 50-plus. The group is volunteer-based, with a 15-member Board of Directors and a talented cadre of event and sports directors, coordinators, and event organizers — again, all volunteers — who keep the club and all its activities running smoothly.

Over the course of 2017–2019, VC50 held 560 social, sport, and singles events led by 445 volunteer members. In the summer of 2021, the Club staged 31 social events alone with more than 1,000 participants and almost 100 hikes and numerous bike rides. This past winter, 115 volunteer leaders led 36 snowshoe events, 42 alpine skiing events at both Vail and Beaver Creek, 20 ski touring events, 11 uphill ski/skin events, and 22 social events.

The 2022 summer season is HERE, and it promises to be even bigger and better! VC50's calendar is full of exciting sports events. In fact, members can participate in an event almost every day of the week if they so desire. Beginning June 1 and running through September, VC50 offers biking on Mondays and Fridays, hiking on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and tennis on Thursdays.



Hiking is the club's most popular activity, and there are already more than 70 hikes planned — at various levels of difficulty. Additional hikes will be added to the schedule as the season progresses. All this fun also comes with responsibility. As heavy users of U.S. Forest Service trails, VC50 members appreciate the opportunity to give back. To that end, the group designates three days during the summer to partner with the Forest Service to do trail maintenance. Look for members of the group on the Stag Gulch trail with their loppers, rakes, picks, shovels, and saws in tow and smiles on their faces!

VC50 has about 800 members today, including many residents of Singletree as well as diverse individuals from all over the world (literally) who now live in the Eagle River Valley full- or part-time. The club offers members multiple opportunities to meet new people and enjoy an active lifestyle, both indoors and in the amazing outdoor environment in the Eagle River Valley and surrounding Rocky Mountains. Here we highlight the experiences of several Singletree VC50 members:



### LINDA AND DAVE WILSON

Linda joined VC50 first when they had a second home in Cordillera, and she would come out alone sometimes while Dave was working full-time and she had a more flexible schedule. It was great to have a ready-made ski or hiking group. Later, when they retired and moved to Singletree full time, Dave joined as well. It

was a great way to meet people and have a schedule of social and sports events. In the last few years, Linda has enjoyed hiking and leading hikes. They both enjoy the social events and sometimes participate in or lead ski groups. For the past three or four years, Linda has organized the annual Welcome New Year's Snowshoe and Brunch held most years at our very own Harvest Restaurant and Sonnenalp Golf Course. If you haven't joined yet, we highly recommend it as a great way to get more integrated into the community and meet people up and down the valley. But remember, without member volunteers planning and leading the events, there won't be any events. So jump in and get involved!

### SUZETTE NEWMAN



In 2001, my husband retired, and we moved to Vail full time. We heard that VC50 was the club to belong to for social and sporting activities. It proved beyond our expectations. We became hiking and biking leaders and led many skiing and snowshoeing activities. We also helped to organize social events.

My favorite experience was organizing a raft trip down the Grand Canyon for 28 members, absolutely a fabulous adventure. My most wonderful memory of VC50 was the support and friendship I had when my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Not only did they help me keep an eye on him; they gave me some sort of normality in my life. When he passed away, their support for me was amazing.

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Friendship is, I think, the most rewarding aspect of VC50. The club is run purely by volunteers; the dedication of the board is outstanding. My advice to anyone who joins is to get involved with volunteering... You will be rewarded in so many ways.



**CONNIE AND THROOP BERGH**

We moved to Edwards five years ago from Boston, not knowing a soul. We love to ski, and when we retired, the big question was, "move to New Hampshire or Vermont?" We certainly know Northeast snow conditions ... and so opted for the Rockies.

A mutual friend from Sugarbush, VT, advised us upon arrival that joining VC50 was a must. What an amazing organization! We signed up for at least 30 hikes our first summer. One of the best aspects is that VC50 offers, for all events, the opportunity to participate at your level of expertise.

Exposed to wonderful trails, vistas, and new friends, we ended the summer knowing the mountains and the valley. When the snow started to fly, we met at mid-Vail, matched up with our "level" ski group, and learned the mountains.

The hard-working, selfless group of volunteers who lead these outings and organize the social gatherings make VC50 an out-of-the-Red-Sox-ballpark huge success!



**ANDREA KLEIN**

I was inspired to join VC50 by my parents' wonderful experience with the club, so I am a second-generation Club 50er! My family skied here for many years. Once my parents (Thelma and Herb Rubinstein) came out in the summer, they decided to move here permanently and have lived in Singletree since 1996. VC50 was the mainstay of their social life here — they participated in just about everything the club had

to offer and made lifelong friends from all walks of life. They simply had a blast! As they became increasingly frail, I spent a lot of time here and joined the club so I would have people to hike with. It was wonderful to be able to get some breaks from caretaking, meet people, and explore the Vail Valley. I retired just before the pandemic hit, and my mom needed me, so out I came and got to spend the pandemic outdoors! What an incredible blessing!

I'm the proverbial bear who goes over the mountain just to see what is on the other side! Hiking and snowshoeing with the club have allowed me to get to know so many wonderful trails and see one breathtaking vista after another. It is so exciting! I am also in better shape than I have ever been in my life and have been pleased that the hikes have pushed me to go further and further! Yes! I can do it — 6 miles is no problem! I've even led some hikes. I've met many lovely and interesting people, some of whom have become friends, and I look forward to making more!

On days when I had signed up for a club hike, I'd ask my mom if she was sure she could manage without me for a few hours. She would



enthusiastically say, “Yes, go! Enjoy the beauty of the mountains! This is all yours now! I want you to go! Go! Absolutely!” She passed a year ago, but I know both she and my dad would be thrilled to see my husband and me living here in Singletree and loving Club 50!



**GAIL AND PAUL STONE**

We have owned our Singletree home since 2011, using it primarily on weekends. On December 31, we retired and moved to our mountain house permanently. I was originally introduced to VC50 by a member on the chairlift last year while skiing.

We joined in January 2022 and have enjoyed skiing with the club,

dinner parties, and especially being introduced to new and interesting people. I have talked up the club to dozens more since joining. We are excited for the hiking season to arrive very soon. VC50 and Singletree are perfectly complementary for those looking to maximize the benefits of living in the Vail Valley. With every sunrise, we relish our great fortune to live life to its fullest in this beautiful place.



**BJ AND JIM KNEZ**

We came to Vail for a winter wedding in 2002 and, on a whim, bought a place in Singletree. We didn’t return until Jim retired in 2003. From then on, it was ski every winter and live in Illinois for the remainder of the year.

Then Jim decided to be a mountain host at Beaver Creek, and we found ourselves staying longer and longer in Colorado. Even though BJ became a Beaver Creek mountain host as well, and we had our skiing friends here and our flat land friends coming to visit, we felt we needed to get to know people in the valley. Voila! VC50 solved the problem.

VC50 allowed us to meet people with similar interests from all walks of life that endorsed a more active lifestyle, and since we already had a house in Singletree, we decided to move here full time. It helped that our two sons had already made the move to the Denver area, so we had family (and grandkids) waiting for us here!

Since then, we have enjoyed VC50 events year-round, and in 2019, BJ became the summer Social Director for the club along with Susie Catalano, hosting 12 large social events during the three-month summer season.

We can no longer go anywhere without running into a VC50 friend. We feel at home here because of the club and the wonderful welcoming people who belong to it. Always active, volunteering, and looking for new events that our members can enjoy!

On a side note, we participated in the 2021 VC50 Christmas tree-cutting outing with our team consisting of ourselves (far left) together with Pat Cornett, Harve Latson, and George Nimmo. “Our tree was a little like a Charlie Brown tree, only it had lots of personality. Our team fell in love with it at first sight,” Jim recalls. Here we are, celebrating our 2nd place win!

To wrap it up, we turn to Debbie Durben, the current summer Social Director of VC50. Her words say it all: “We, as locals, transplants, and retirees, are so fortunate to have an organization that provides an outlet to connect with like-minded, diverse, and engaging people. We all share in similar interests and lifestyles. I can’t think of any community that offers this opportunity to bridge into the next stage of life. I have met so many new people and have forged relationships with so many fantastic new friends. It is a very fulfilling experience.”

With a tremendous variety of social and sports events covering a wide range of skill levels and interests of the VC50 members, a good time is had by all! Why miss out?

Membership requirements are simple: You must be 50 years old or older to join. If you are 50 years old or older and your spouse/partner is younger, no worries — your spouse/partner can also join. Turning 50 this year? Celebrate your 50th all year by joining VC50 anytime! Currently, annual dues are \$50 per member. For additional information or to join VC50, please visit [vailclub50.com](http://vailclub50.com).





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## celebrating the arts

Contributed by **Raymond Bleesz**, Singletree Resident



Self-portrait of 24-year-old Raymond Bleesz atop the Sts John area in 1968

# Ghost Town Allure and Photography

## SAINTS JOHN THROUGH THE EYES OF RAYMOND BLEESZ IN 1968

Explorations of Colorado's historic mountainous mining ghost towns have been a pastime that has fascinated the general public since the time of mining bonanzas in the mid-1880s. Eventually, the recreational activity of jeeping post-WWII led to further exploration and discovery of early mining sites and ghost towns of the past. Saints John ("Sts John") is one that was, and still is, particularly alluring.



A topographical map of the jeep road leading to Sts John outside of Montezuma Mining District

My interest in jeeping the high country of Colorado in my youth can be dated back to the late 1950s. But it was a specific excursion in 1968, one of which was of historical importance to me, that led me to this short story of jeeping the Sts John mining site and the photographic endeavor which, in turn, led to further research at the Denver Public Library and the Western Mining History site. The noted photographic archives of the DPL is one of the best in the country.

At the age of 24, I was in my early stages of photographic documentation as a neophyte photographer. It was eight years later, in 1976, when I made a full commitment to fine art photography. But in 1968, I had recorded some important photographic evidence that remained dormant until very recently. A film strip recently found in my archive of photographic material came to light.

I used Kodak color negative film at the time of this specific jeeping trek to Sts John, a site at 10,764 feet about sea level in the Montezuma Mining District in Summit County, adjacent to Keystone, Grays, and Torreys peaks. Color negative film has a short life span and undergoes



A Robert Brown image of the boarding house, dated 1959

film deterioration as compared to colored transparencies or BW negative film; hence the images were of rather poor quality.

On a specific summer day, with lighting somewhat dull and summer temperatures cold, I undertook a jeeping trip to Sts John. The prospector, John Coley, found silver in 1863–64 and named the site Coleyville; however, the site ultimately became known as Sts John. In my research, I learned there had been various names used for this mine — Coleyville, St. John, and Sts John. The mountainside was extensively mined with numerous mine portals, buildings, a large smelter, a flume, a brick smokestack, a large boarding house, an assay office, a guest house, and a foreman's house. The total population was 71 people, according to the census of 1870. A Boston Mining Company built the large smelter and employed numerous miners. The company town had a library but no saloons.

The mine was active into the 1880s and ceased with the silver bust by 1928. Sts John became known as a ghost town for jeepers to find and explore. Although I took numerous photographs of the mining site, its buildings, and its mining relics, it was the boarding house that attracted my photographic attention. Buildings at the time were in distressed conditions; many had collapsed, such as the assay office, or near so; and the smelter, in particular, had collapsed due to time and winter conditions. But the boarding house stood and looked quite fragile at the time in 1968.

I vaguely recalled the site as Sts John, which recently led me to dig into the photographic archives of the DPL. Due to spelling differences and various names for the site, the research took a lengthy period of time to archive and study. The DPL presently has in its archives six to seven images related to Sts John mine. Early black and white images and a few images dating from the 1950s were donated by two other photographers, Al Bachman, whose images were Kodachrome transparencies, and a Robert Brown, who likewise donated his 1957 images to the DPL.

It was Brown's photo of the boarding house which most attracted my attention. Brown's work was a nice full image of the boarding house, which upon close inspection, reveals the "portal" or "formal entry" into the building. This BW image compares to my



Raymond Bleesz' 1968 image of the boarding house

colored image, which shows the collapsed "portal," as well as the assay office, which is partially collapsed, and another building. Finally, Bachman's 1969 image portrays the collapsed assay office as well as the fully collapsed boarding house on the far right.

Many of those images are copyrighted, and usage or fees for their use are required. I set about the chore of obtaining a copy of the DPL's image of the boarding house to make a comparison of my own image to the archived version. The results, my research, are shown in this article, along with further archives. Backman's photo shows the collapsed boarding house a year after I made my image.

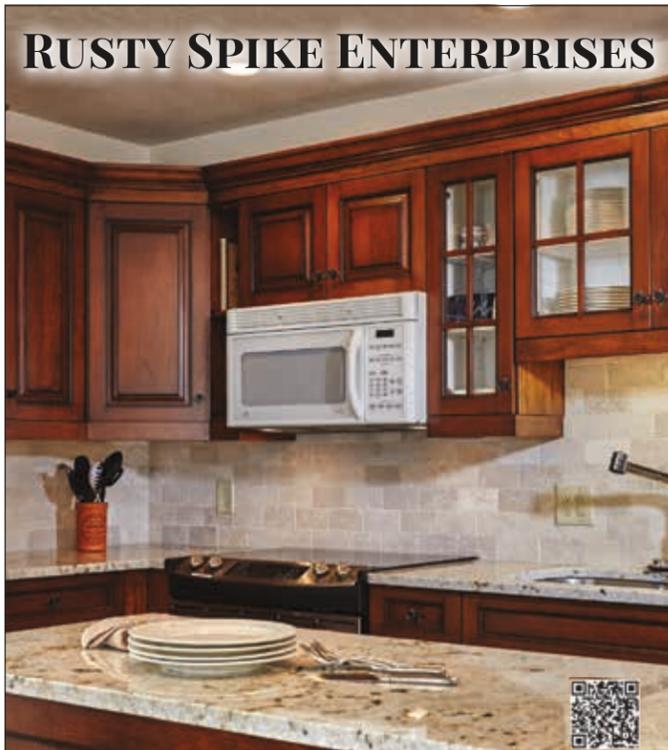
Photography has always been used for "documentation, research, and storytelling as well as art." Such is the case here. Moreover, historical images such as these also serve to inspire us to embark on our own excursions to explore our Colorado ghost towns. Adventure awaits!

**RAYMOND A. BLEESZ**  
PHOTOGRAPHER/HISTORIAN  
COLORADO PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS CENTER (CPAC) MEMBER,  
DENVER SINCE 1976  
CO-FOUNDER, VAIL VALLEY ARTS GUILD PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP



Bachman's Kodachrome 1969 image of the Sts John mining site taken from the collapsed smelter looking across the valley floor

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what's happening  
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## COOKING & CONVERSATIONS



Food. Cocktails. Conversations.

Contributed by **Andie Ohde**,  
Singletree Resident

Andie Ohde, in partnership with **INSIDE Singletree**, recently hosted a "Cooking & Conversations" gathering with Chef Lawrence Cook. The evening was dedicated to curating recipes by cooking with gourmet gadgets, including a sous vide machine, instant pot, and air fryer. The reviews are in, and let's just say the night was a total success! New and exciting topics to come...



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