



Village East Update

February 2019

published by the Village East Neighborhood Association for its residents and friends

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Signs, signs, everywhere a sign

UPCOMING EVENTS!

Look for our distinctive yellow signs around Village East informing you of activities. The announcement signs are posted about a week in advance.

Tuesday, April 16
Quarterly VENA Meeting

Saturday, June 1
Neighborhood Yard Sale

Saturday, June 8
Neighborhood Cleanup

Sunday, August 4
Annual VENA Picnic

Year-round
Adopt-A-Street Cleanup

VENA Monthly Meetings are open to all residents the third Tuesday in JAN, APR, JUL, and OCT, at 7 pm, at either Village East Elementary School or Fire Station #11. Come by and check it out!



Thanks to a Beautification Grant from the City of Aurora (and our hardworking Beautification Grant Committee), we have a host of new signs in and around the neighborhood to keep you updated on VENA events and meetings. (Clockwise from top left: The Canterbury Park sign, Board member Mike Wolford at the sign at Peoria and Mexico, the sign at Village East Park, and the sign on Moline across from Ponderosa Elementary School.)

A Letter from the President

As I'm writing this letter, it's about -6 degrees outside with wind chills even lower and only a couple of days after a winter heat wave of temperatures in the 50s.

Coloradoans are used to the unpredictable weather, so it doesn't stop us from being festive. That includes participating in our Holiday Lighting contest. Congratulations to the 2018 Winners the Alegria family (Christina and Alberto), 1st Runner-Up Mary Turner, and 2nd Runners-Up Joe and Janet Corona.

It was great to see the increase in the number of residences putting up holiday lights this year. I'd like to think the new neighborhood signs placed near our parks and schools at Canterbury Park, Village East Elementary/Park, Utah Park, and Ponderosa Elementary had something to do with it.

Thanks to the Antebis, Zimmermans, and Parks & Recreation for allowing us to post on their easements and parks, respectively.

The Sign Committee continues to work hard on providing the best and most informative signs to keep our neighborhood in the know. Since they are being specifically designed to address the needs of our neighborhood, this will at times leave the sign frames empty until all signs are finished, which is better than inserting a generic sign and wasting our grant funds.

Our apologies for any eyesore it may create, but it is better to take a little extra time to get the signs right the first time. After all, the Lighting Contest signs turned out great, and we want to make sure the rest of the signs do as well.

VENA continues to be the voice for our neighborhood. A couple of concerns from residents were handled swiftly, including a maddening traffic signal that was beeping throughout one of our residences thanks to VENA and Councilman Richardson.



VENA President Robin Bruce (*center*) and Lighting Contest Winners the Alegria family.

No matter how insignificant the matter may seem, feel free to run it by us so that we can determine where we can be of help.

Concerns can also be voiced at the meetings when our public servants are in attendance, such as Councilwoman-At-Large Allison Hiltz and

former Councilman Ryan Frazier, who both stopped by the last VENA meeting on January 15th.

Please mark your calendars. VENA has scheduled quite a few events for the neighborhood this year, so please keep a lookout in the newsletters and on the neighborhood signs. Until then, stay warm...or cool.

Robin Bruce, President
Village East Neighborhood Association

Mark Your Calendars!

It's a new year, and we have a year's worth of exciting neighborhood activities to look forward to. Join us as we meet, clean, play, and pitch in to keep Village East the lovely neighborhood it is. Keep an eye on the newsletter and on our new neighborhood signs for upcoming events.

Tuesday, April 16, 7 pm **VENA Neighborhood Meeting**

Join the VENA Board at Village East Elementary to hear from Aurora representatives, meet neighbors, and learn about what's going on in the neighborhood and city.

June-September **Yard of the Month**

Each month this summer, our Yard of the Month Committee will bestow this honor on one of our neighbors. Winners receive a \$25 gift card and are featured in the Summer and Fall newsletters.

Saturday, June 1 **VENA Annual Yard Sale**

Take advantage of Spring Cleaning season and join us for a huge neighborhood yard sale!

Saturday, June 8 **VENA Annual Cleanup Day**

Each year VENA provides a dump truck and drop-off where you can bring yard and household items you'd like to get rid of. This free event starts at 8 am and continues until the truck is full. This year the truck will be at Arkansas and Oakland---and this year there's even a special walking cleanup event. See the next newsletter for details.

Tuesday, July 16, 7 pm **VENA Neighborhood Meeting**

The July meeting will take place at Fire Station #11. We'll discuss the picnic and other upcoming events.

Sunday, August 4 **Annual Neighborhood Picnic**

Mark your calendar for a summertime picnic in the park, with food, games, and activities. Have a snack, mingle with neighbors, let the kids run, and relax in the August sunshine. Details to follow later this year.

Tuesday, October 15, 7 pm **Annual VENA Meeting & Board Election**

The October meeting will take place at Village East Elementary School. Board elections will be held and holiday festivities will be planned.

Sunday, December 15 **Deadline, Holiday Lighting Contest**

Have your lights up by Sunday, December 15, to be eligible for our annual lighting contest! (See next page for this year's winners!)

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Village East's Brightest

Congratulations to the winners of this year's Holiday Lighting Contest! These houses were chosen for their creativity, breadth, and beauty. Well done to all, and thanks for your efforts to keep Village East festive!



The winners are...The Alegria Family (Christina and Alberto)! The Alegrias live at 1448 S. Lansing Street and have been VE residents for two years.



Holiday Lighting Contest, cont...



1st Runner-Up: Mary Turner of 1501 S. Moline Street, a 25.5-year VE resident



2nd Runners-Up: Joe and Janet Corona of 1645 S. Kenton Street, 13-year VE residents



Behind the City Scene

February 2019

We are a month into the New Year and I have been reminiscing about Aurora's important community issues. Many years ago the hot button issues were: save Fitzsimmons Army Hospital, fix the dirt medians, stop the Stapleton airport over flights, City and County of Aurora, the "blue line" limit on Aurora's future boundaries, a new City Hall yes or no, the pit bull ban, a proposed E. Jewell Ave. bridge over I-225, when would I-225 extend beyond E. Iliff and Dave Perry at the Aurora Sentinel.

Fast forward decades later to some of today's big issues and challenges: ethics rules for elected officials, registration of lobbyists, location of oil and gas facilities, traffic congestion, affordable housing, homelessness, City Council monetary donation campaign limits reform, a pedestrian bridge at the former Regatta Plaza and Dave Perry at the Aurora Sentinel.

Other situations and issues remain consistent through the ages as reflected by the constituent's interaction with me: Code Enforcement – too little or too much, crime, the maintenance of our roads – prudent funding or pay now or pay way more later, multi-family housing, group homes in single family communities, speeding in our neighborhoods.

Under our form of municipal government the City Manager is responsible for the provision of City services. I have been very impressed with our relatively new City Manager Jim Twombly. He is diligently getting to know the pulse of our City. Will the strong "political winds" at the Federal and State levels of government impact our municipal election in November? We are 10 months away from our next Mayoral race and we are already seeing several folks expressing interest in running. This is amazing to me since we, unlike Denver, are not a strong Mayor form of government. It is an honor to serve as your Ward IV Council Member as we move our City forward.



**Charles "Charlie"
Richardson
Council Member
Ward IV**

crichard@auroragov.org

Ward IV Town Meetings

Held on the third Thursday of each month from 6:30-8:30 pm at Fire Station #11 on northwest corner of E. Iliff and S. Joliet St.

Letter from a Concerned Neighbor

Hi neighbors. I have lived in Village East 30 years and enjoy regularly walking around the neighborhood. It has, however, come to my attention that the amount of trash lying around our neighborhood is increasing. If we all spent just five minutes a couple of times a week picking up trash in our yards and the gutters and streets directly adjacent to our homes,

Village East would look so much better! I also would like to remind all Village East residents that snow needs to be shoveled from all sidewalks surrounding your property within 24 hours of when the snow stops. It is much easier to walk on cleared sidewalks! Thank you in advance for helping to make Village East a beautiful neighborhood.

Signed,

A Concerned Neighbor

PS If you're interested in helping keep the neighborhood clean, please join our Cleanup Crew! There will be a special tidying event during our annual Neighborhood Cleanup Day on Saturday, June 8. To join, meet Christina Anderson at the canal path on Arkansas & Oakland at 10 am. For more information or to Adopt a Street of your own, contact Christina at VENAcolorado@gmail.com.

Meet Your Neighbor

Meet Arnie Schultz, long-time Village East resident and Aurora volunteer, activist, and community leader. Arnie's going on 23 years as a member of the VENA Board, so we thought it was a good time to sit down and ask him a few questions about what he loves and remembers about the neighborhood.

Coming to Village East

Arnie and family moved to Aurora from the Chicago area in 1975 after spending a year in Denver. They were attracted to Village East because of its proximity to the VA hospital, where Arnie worked for 32 years, and inclusion in the Cherry Creek School district. His kids ended up attending (and loving) Village East Elementary, Prairie Middle School, and Overland High School.

A Young Neighborhood

Village East was much smaller when Arnie moved in. Fewer than half the houses between Mississippi, Florida, Havana, and Peoria existed. Canterbury Park was a favorite for the neighborhood children with its Cinderella Pumpkin Coach. Mississippi Ave. was a one-lane road in each direction with a bike path and turned into a dirt road at Chambers. City Hall was down the street in the Bella Vita Building (E. Florida Ave. and S. Joliet St.). The big regional draw was the Buckingham Mall (now the Gardens on Havana), which hosted events like car shows, scout rallies, concerts, and dog shows in its courtyard every weekend.

VENA Is Reborn

In 1988, plans were drawn to widen Florida Ave. into a four-lane road and have it cross Havana. The VENA meeting considering the proposal attracted 300 neighbors to protest the plan. The effort galvanized Village East residents, who shortly thereafter reformed the Village East Neighborhood Association (VENA). Arnie has been on the board since 1994 and has helped with many efforts to retain the neighborhood's character as a quiet, pleasant place to live.



Arnie with the family's Border Collie, Hurley, and Captain Jack, one of their three cats

A Life in Service

Arnie has always given back to the community, as a band booster for Overland High; as a Scout leader; as a member of countless boards, committees, and organizations; as a political campaigner; and now as founder of his non-profit, Recreational Opportunities for Aurora Residents (ROAR), dedicated to providing young Aurora residents access to recreation facilities and classes throughout the city. And he's not alone---Arnie shared that Village East has always been home to civic-minded residents, including City Council members, State legislators, political activists, and even a former mayor.

A Changing Neighborhood

Though much about Village East has stayed the same (many of Arnie's original neighbors are still in residence, and the original owner of his house actually stopped by recently for a visit), he's enjoyed watching the neighborhood change over the years. He's taken by the neighborhood's growth and all the traffic and density that comes with it, but has enjoyed how the demographics have changed over the years as well. According to Arnie, Village East's central location and dedicated residents make it a great place to live, and he has no plans to leave.



Help Us Contact You...

It's easy for all VE residents (owners AND RENTERS) to stay informed. We just need your preferred:

- ☐ Mailing name _____
- ☐ Mailing address _____
- ☐ E-mail address _____
- ☐ A check for \$20 dues made out to "VENA" (sorry, no credit cards)

Please print out and CLEARLY complete this page, include check, and mail to:

VENA Membership
1155 S. Havana St. #11-373
Aurora, CO 80012

*Newsletter e-mail reminders provided upon request. E-mail addresses NOT used for any other purpose. **Contact the Treasurer (below) with any contact info updates.** We're trying for 100% participation among neighbors. Please send in TODAY. Thanks for your support of Village East!*

Bookmark Our Website: www.VillageEastAurora.org

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VENAColorado>

Connect on Nextdoor: <https://nextdoor.com/neighborhood/villageeastco--aurora--co/>

Email us with your questions, comments, or suggestions: VENAColorado@gmail.com

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To submit articles for the *Village East Update* newsletter, please contact Village East Update Newsletter Editor Megan Berens at meg.berens@gmail.com, (480)818-7559.