

Denver JAZZ Club NEWS

Volume 64,
Number 5

July/August 2020

Denver Jazz Club in operation for 65 continuous years

Established 1954

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the Denver Jazz Club board of directors has made two decisions regarding this summer's club events. There will be **no July session** at the Westminster Elks Lodge, but we will hold our annual summer picnic in August with some changes!

With so little going on, and most music events cancelled or being offered tentatively at best, this issue of the newsletter will be pared down. Since most bands are not scheduled to play any time soon, the band listings page has been eliminated for this issue, and so has much of the other usual content. We hope to be back to near "normal" by fall. In the meantime, we hope all our members are **staying safe!**

The Denver Jazz Club is trying to improve and expand our e-mail base. Please supply your current e-mail to the Denver Jazz Club, 1801 W. 92nd Ave., Lot 327, Federal Heights, CO 80260 or 303-430-5606. Or simply e-mail the information to Kristiflesher@centurylink.net.

No Event in July

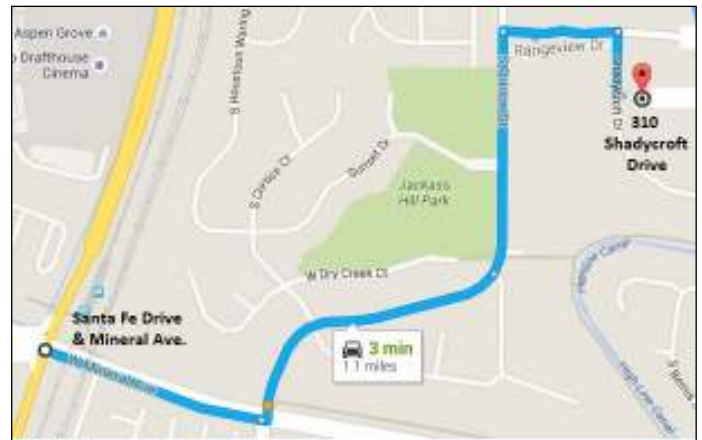
Annual Potluck Picnic with the Band Leaders Band

Sunday, August 16

It's the annual Denver Jazz Club Picnic, at the home of **Decker and Ann Westerberg** in Littleton, but it will be a little different this year. Music will be provided by The Leaders Band, comprised of the leaders of several popular metro Denver jazz groups: Trumpet: **Kevin Bollinger**; Clarinet/Sax: **Lance Acker**; Trombone: **Marti Henry**; Vocals: **Wende Harston**; Piano: **Chris Calabrese** or **Ray Leake**; Bass/Tuba: **Bill Clark**; Drums: **John Akal**.

This year, the Denver Jazz Club will unfortunately NOT furnish brats, burgers, hot dogs or drinks. We ask that you bring your own food and beverage of choice. We also ask that you bring your own chair if possible, as we will not be renting chairs this year (though a limited number will be available). It will be a different experience this year, but plan to enjoy an afternoon of great music and socializing – at a protective distance from one another.

To get there, go east on Mineral Avenue from Santa Fe Drive. Take the first left, at Jackass Hill Road, which turns into S. Prince Street. Continue north. Turn right at Rangeview Drive. Take the first right onto Shadycroft Drive, and look for the Denver Jazz Club signs.



Where, when, how much:

- Sunday, August 16; 1:30 – 5:00 PM
- The Westerberg's home, 310 Shadycroft Drive, Littleton
- Admission is \$8 per person.
- Denver Jazz Club Youth All-Stars play at 1:30 and between sets.

The Denver Jazz Club turns 65!

We will be celebrating all year! In this issue, we present excerpts from an article written by the Denver Jazz Club's then-president Alan Granruth, recapping the first Central City Jazz Festival. The festival came into being as a direct result of the club's efforts in promoting traditional jazz in the Denver Metro area. The Granruths had attended the 1976 Memorial Day Jazz Jubilee in Sacramento, and thought the Jazz Club could produce a similar event in metro Denver. This piece ran in 1977.

We attended the next monthly club business meeting (our first) in July 1976 and suggested the idea to the board. They agreed the idea was sound and suggested we explore the possibility and develop a detailed plan. This was done and was presented to the board in August. The biggest obstacle appeared to be obtaining sufficient financial support to sponsor such an event. From late August 1976 through January 1977, board member Olga Peterson and I personally visited over 35 individual businesses and foundations explaining in detail our proposed plan for a Denver Jazz Festival to be held in the Larimer Square area. Only three organizations had sufficient faith in our idea to offer financial assistance: Larimer Square Associates, the Executive Tower Inn, and Adolph Coors Foundation.

Because of the difficulty securing funding, the board decided to put off holding the festival until 1978. But then...

Shortly thereafter, Dean Peterson, owner of Bull and Bush, called me and inquired about some of the details we had put together. He asked if we thought the festival could be put on in Central City if financing could be arranged. I thought it would be an ideal location and a few days later Dean arranged for us to meet with Bob R. Baker, President of the Central City Opera House Association and Bob Lotito, Executive Director of the Central City Opera House Association.

In 1976 the Opera House Association (had) presented the Preservation Hall Jazz Band at the Opera House as part of the summer festival program. The appearance was so successful that they wanted to explore the possibility of making jazz a permanent part of the summer festival.

We discussed our original proposal and budget, made some minor changes, and proceeded to convince the Central City Business Association how great such an event would be for the city as a whole.

... Agreement was (eventually) reached on when and how to stage the event. The jazz club agreed to select musicians and bands, schedule events, and provide

volunteers to assist with arrangements. The Business Association agreed to provide playing locations, forego their guaranteed usual weekend crowds, provide schedules for the event, and promote it in the Central City area. The Opera House Association agreed to finance the event in its entirety, provide housing to all participating musicians, provide the services of their staff, and hope they would break even on an investment of approximately \$28,000. Since the Preservation Hall Jazz Band had already been booked for the Opera House on August 5, 6 and 7, we decided this would be the best weekend to stage the Jamboree.

After resolving numerous problems, the festival was presented on the weekend of August 5, 6 and 7, 1977.

Denver Jazz Club volunteers served admirably over the weekend. (They) retrieved lost musicians at the airport,... manned the doors, collected admissions, sold posters and records and performed the chores in spite of a few unruly regular inhabitants of some of Central City's watering holes. Opera House Association staff members outdid themselves in moving beds to house the musicians, moving pianos, tracking down lost instruments, and selling badges. Business Association members were most cooperative and also thoroughly enjoyed the weekend... (Attendees were) impressed with the friendliness and cheerful assistance provided by everyone involved with the event.

As a result, the Jazz Club is credited with organizing one of the best traditional jazz festivals ever produced, so we're happy. The Opera House Association lost money on the festival, but Preservation Hall attendance covered expenses and put them into the black, so they're happy. Since the weekend produced one of the largest crowds ever, the Business Association is understandably happy. Finally, and most important, the fans who attended were treated to some of the best traditional jazz available in the country, so they're happy. With all the happiness, Central City will never be the same.

The Central City Jazz Festival was successful enough that it ran from 1977 to 1992.

Remembering Walt Hewitt

By David Hewitt, Walt's nephew



Walter O. Hewitt passed away in Littleton, Colorado on June 10, 2020 after 95 fun-loving years. He was born in Niles, Ohio in 1925, a self-described “accidental” child – 14 years younger than any

of his siblings. He broke away from college to serve in World War II in the Army Air Corps in Panama (of all places) working in communications (of course).

Walt returned to Ohio to finish college and marry Norma Russell (another quick wit from Niles) in 1951, then they headed west to Colorado starting with their honeymoon. His older sisters, future nightclub singer Ruth and ranch manager/anthropologist/journalist Del, had shown him the appeal of the western life style when he was a teenager and he couldn't resist. His parents, stalwarts in the First Presbyterian Church and sober law and order civic leaders, never had a chance to keep him home. His brother E. Lee maintained the Niles community connection for the family.

Walt and Norma looped through the pool party scene of Glenwood Springs, the rugged outdoor environs of Redstone, and spent several years in Boulder before buying a brand new house in rapidly growing Aurora in the early 1960s where they lived for decades. Walt was fascinated with airplanes and rockets and had gotten a real job as a “pencil pusher” at Martin Marietta in 1959. The cocktail glasses and even the family dinnerware had rockets on them. He retired from Martin Marietta in 1988. Nobody really knows what he did there; they always got a joke instead.

Walt and Norma loved jazz and were members of Boulder Friends of Jazz and Denver Jazz Club. They traveled around Colorado and the country to listen to jazz at multi-day music parties. Walt served as Board Member and

Treasurer of the Denver Jazz Club for many years, wrote a column for the club newsletter and took thousands of photographs of musicians and friends.

Walt and Norma had one child, their son Walter Russell (Rusty), who served in the Navy but died too young in 1991. Norma passed in 2002. Walt volunteered as one of the first white-hatted Ambassadors at the new Denver International Airport where he had lots of time to interact with people, definitely his favorite thing to do.

At age 80, Walt found love again. Jo Ann Bagg, a fancy cowgirl and jazz lover captured his heart, and they lived together on her “ranchette” outside Littleton. Jo Ann frequently got Walt out on the dance floor at the music parties they attended. For his 90th birthday, more than 100 family and friends celebrated with music and dancing. At his 95th birthday party a somewhat smaller group still got together.

Walt noted that “getting old is not for the weak.” Every life has sadness and challenges, but adding some laughs and connecting with people help you make it through. The epitaph on his gravestone was almost “I told you I was sick,” but he changed his mind. Walt and his wit will be missed by many, especially Jo Ann, Peanut the Toy Poodle, nieces and nephews around the country, friends and neighbors throughout Colorado and certainly his fellow jazz club buddies. A jazz party at a later (COVID 19 influenced) date will provide an opportunity to share memories and have some fun.

The Denver Jazz Club Youth All-Stars are scheduled to appear at these events:

Saturday, July 18 (10-11:30am)

Colorado Veterans Community Living Center at Fitzsimons (1919 Quentin St, Aurora)

Sunday, July 19 (3-6pm) Q's Pub and Grille (10133 W. Chatfield Ave, Littleton)

Tuesday, July 21 (6:30-7:30pm) The Vi Retirement Community (2850 Classic Dr., Highlands Ranch)

Saturday, August 1 (5-6pm) Holly Creek Retirement Community (5500 E. Peakview Ave, Centennial)

Denver JAZZ Club NEWS

Published in January, March, May, July, September, and November

Deadline for next issue: August 15, 2020

Ed Danielson, Editor

Phone 720-683-1256

Advertising rates:

Half page (7.5" width x 4.75" depth) \$50.00

Quarter page (3.625" width x 4.75" depth) \$25.00

**Denver Jazz Club News, published every two months by the Denver Jazz Club
1801 W 92nd Ave, Lot 327, Federal Heights CO 80260**

Denver Jazz Club officers and board members

Board Officers:

- Dan Simons, President, 303-674-0641
- Kevin Bollinger, Vice President, 303-885-9665
- Paul Chamberlin, Secretary, 303-237-4619
- Dottie Sobott, Treasurer, 303-430-5606
- Kristi Flesher, Corresponding Secretary, 303-748-9498

Board members:

- Ed Cannava, 303-328-7277
- Eric Staffeldt, 303-394-4552
- Kurt Reisser, 303-333-1922
- Casey Hayes, 303-288-5869

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Name _____
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Email _____

Are you a musician? Yes No

Individual \$20/year Student \$10/year

Musician \$15/year Family \$30/year

Patron \$80/year (get 2 free jam session passes!)

Denver Jazz Club Membership Application

**Denver JAZZ Club
NEWS**

1801 W 92nd Ave, Lot 327, Federal Heights CO 80260

Return service requested

Other front range jazz clubs are not meeting this summer due to the coronavirus. The Poudre River Irregulars may play at Avogadro's Number -- by reservation only -- on Friday, August 7. E-mail Fred Smith, at: fwsmithpe@msn.com for details.

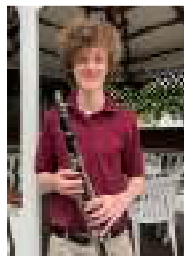
The Denver Jazz Club Youth All-Stars congratulate our graduating seniors:



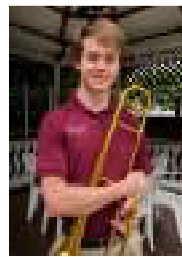
Nathan Bailey,
Tenor Sax



Ben Jablonski,
Banjo



Ivan Martin,
Clarinet



Thomas Neal,
Trombone



Carl Enger,
Tuba



Owen Metz,
Piano

Thanks for your dedication to our band and the best of luck in the future!

And thanks to our departing members:

PRESENTING THE 2020-21 DENVER JAZZ CLUB YOUTH ALL-STARS: Joanna Toy, clarinet, freshman, Golden High School; Ben Kaufman, tenor sax, junior, East High School; Morgen Andersen, trumpet, sophomore, Ralston Valley High School; Serra Claypool, trombone - junior, Legacy High School; Andrew Kaiser, banjo, sophomore, Horizon High School; Aidan Vogel, piano, junior, East High School; Jacob Brown, tuba, junior, Chatfield High School; Isaiah Kim, drums, sophomore, Grandview High School

Thanks to all of you in the Denver Jazz Club for your unending support! THANKS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE KING SOOPERS GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER – THIS PROGRAM CONTINUOUSLY HELPS OUR YOUTH ALL-STARS! Please go to:

<http://youthallstars.denverjazzclub.com/donate/> to make a single or recurring donation, or to purchase any of our 11 CD's!

Our 11th CD, "SWINGIN' THROUGH THE PANDEMIC," is now available!