



FROM TIME TO TIME

A Quarterly Publication of the Commerce City Historical Society

JAN-MARCH 2024

Volume 15, Issue 1

Honoring Our Past – Celebrating Our Future

2024 LEGENDARY LOCALS

JAN-MARCH 2024



Larry Lobato Sr.

Jackie Reynolds

David Rolla

Victor Rolla

Stop by the museum to read
their bios.

Nominate your Legendary
Local by visiting the
museum!



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT...

Rene' Bullock...

Rene' Bullock is a founding member of the Commerce City Historical Society. He is also one of the museum volunteers and works on Monday's from 10-2pm. Rene' moved to Commerce City In 1984 and has been involved in the community since that time. He is currently serving as the Executive Director of the Commerce City Chamber of Commerce. He has always been interested in ways to make Commerce City a better place to live. Rene' would like to see Commerce City take an active role in partnering with the Historical Society to preserve places in the city that can also be an opportunity for Economic Development. When Rene' is not serving on a board, or working at the museum he enjoys reading, and spending time with his granddaughters.



UPCOMING EVENTS...

Saturday May 18, 2024-Rummage Sale

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Phone: 303-288-2590 Website: www.cchistoric.com

Email: cchistoricalsociety@yahoo.com

Address: 6505 East 60th Avenue, Commerce City, CO 80022

FOR THE NEWSLETTER

All submissions are welcome, including obituaries. Send submissions to Debra Bullock (photos or stories).

SEND TO: cchistoricalsociety@yahoo.com, or call 303-288-2590

BOARD MEMBERS

Debra Bullock Barb McMillan Sheila Harris Candy Machuga Michelle Claymore



WELCOME VISITORS

**We are open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday
from 10 am – 2 pm**

Tuesday and Thursday by appointment!

CCHS CHARTER MEMBERS...

Joy Bishop

Gary Drotar

Dustin McIntyre

Hester Bonnell

Reba Drotar

Loretta Petty

Debra Bullock

Samantha Ford

Don Sater

Rene' Bullock

Sean Ford

JoAnn Stevenson

Thelma Cole

Esther Hall

Dick Stevenson

Cindy Comstock

Bob Hutchings

Janet Union

Gary Comstock

Dorothy Hutchings

Norm Union

Kristi Douglas

Gene Leffel

June Younger

Steve Douglas

David Lutter

Troy Younger

History has no boundaries-Come celebrate yours!

DOTTE BAKKE HOUSE
UPDATE



THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS!

OUR GOAL WAS 18,000.00 BY DECEMBER 2023!

We raised \$23,000 January-December, 2023



FOR 2024, We are still raising money for operating costs which can include the following...
paying internet, rent, utilities, storage costs for our memorabilia and funding for new displays.
We are also meeting with a professional fundraising group to create a plan for future fundraising.

Please mail donation to:

Commerce City Historic Society

6505 East 60th Avenue
Commerce City, CO 80022

MEMBER PROFILE – Meet Wayne Maddox...

Former Owner and CEO at **Maddox** Vintage Autos & Parts / **Maddox** Propane.



Wayne grew up in a family business that sold propane (Maddox LP Gas-Commerce City). He also had a jewelry business and after many years in the jewelry business, he came back to the family business in 1984. Wayne is retired and lives in Westminster, Colorado. Wayne drove his vintage autos for many years in the Commerce City Memorial Day Parade. He sold his business to Aaron & Shannon Zbierski with Jayhawk Trailers in 2022. Wayne says that he has been a car nut since he was 6 years old. He always concentrated on cars made between 1955 through 1972. Wayne is one of our members and he is a great supporter of the CCHS!

OUT & ABOUT IN COMMERCE CITY...

GREYHOUND GROUNDS COFFEE SHOP OPENING

Thursday Jan 25, 2024

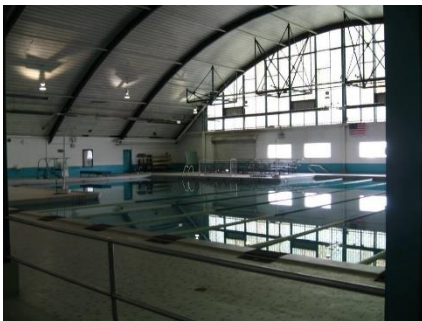
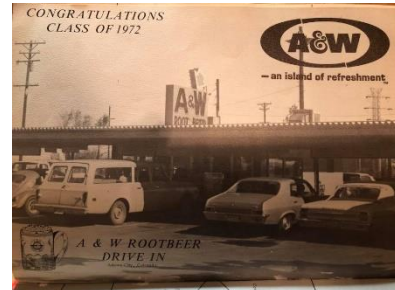


ADAMS 14 STATE OF THE SCHOOLS

March 8, 2024



HISTORIC PHOTOS OF COMMERCE CITY...



Krogh Fieldhouse Pool

Headquarters on the Rocky Mountain Arsenal



Tea at the Dottie Bakke House

**THERE ARE 5 THINGS IN LIFE YOU CANNOT
RECOVER:**

- 1. A stone...after it's thrown.**
- 2. A word...after it is said.**
- 3. An occasion...after it's missed.**
- 4. The time...after it's gone.**
- 5. A person...after they die.**

**Life is short. Break all the rules. Forgive quickly.
Kiss slowly. Love truly. Laugh uncontrollably. And
never regret anything that made you smile! Enjoy
Life!!!**

CCHS APPRECIATES OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS...

MAGNOLIA ENTERPRISES Harlow Leeper, Owner 7290 Magnolia Street	Commerce City Chamber of Commerce 
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Hi-Lo Employees Corporation



**7887 East 60th Avenue
Commerce City, CO 80022
303-289-3761**

MICHELLE CLAYMORE

STATE FARM INSURANCE



Eddie Olivas



ADAMS 14 EDUCATION FOUNDATION



Josh Gold



INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS:

Dan Clark
Keith & Vicki Davis
Karen Osburn
Dale & Teri Mingilton
Nina Riddle
Rick & Raita Jergensen

NEW MEMBERS:

Manny Rutinel
Logan Souder
Keith & Vicki Davis



THANK YOU RENEWING MEMBERS

JANUARY – MARCH 2024

Shelly Bonnel
Susan Carabajal
Terry Coon
Genice Landers
Ann Emerson
Chuck Frauenfeld
Sheila Harris
Darrel E. Horan
Mary Lou Joselyn
Carolyn Kerls
Mary Krenzer
Wayne Maddox
Karen Osburn
Donna Robbins
Marilyn Teto
Rick & Raita Jergensen
Craig and Candy Machuga
Dale & Teri Mingilton
William Shelby Family
Domenic Teto Family

MEMBER & SPECIAL FRIENDS OBITUARIES...

Jeanette Roybal

Oct 11, 1963 – Mar 26, 2024



Jeanette was born in Denver, Colorado on October 11th, 1963, to the most amazing and loving parents Press and Lilly Roybal. She attended Denver public schools and graduated from Montebello high school.

After high school following in her heroes' footsteps, she went To Barber school and her life changed forever.

Jeanette began a career she loved. She was making people look their best. And she was doing it with her best friend, her rock, her dad. The Barbershop was her life. So many friends and connections were made in and through the shop, so yes, it's easy to say she had a Barbershop family that she cherished.

The next joy of her life came in 1994. When her daughter Lilly (Katie) was born, no words could explain how happy and overjoyed she was. She looked amazing while being pregnant *best shape of her life*, she said! There was no happier mother to be than Jeanette!

Jeanette was a free spirit and lived life to the fullest from riding on the back of Harley's to singing and dancing with her friends and family. Her sense of style was one of a

kind, the wild hair. The nails all the way down to the cowboy boots!

In 1998, Jeanette was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. This would be the hardest fight of her life. But she did it. She was in remission and celebrated her cancer anniversary every year on March 9th. Can you believe she was 27 years cancer Free! Amen!

Family was the most important thing in her life. Jeanette did anything and everything for the ones she loved. Holidays and birthdays were a big thing in her book. It's safe to say she was

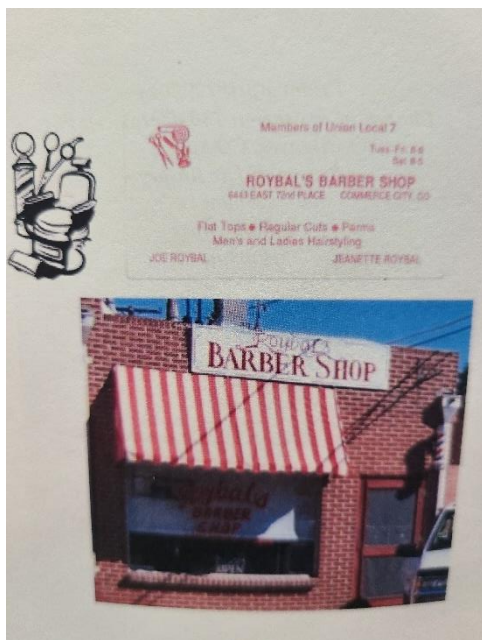
always the life of the party. Do you remember all the crazy crafts and activities She would make us all do? No? let me remind you of everything from the gunny sack races to the pop-up baseball on Easter. Even if you were in a dress, everyone took a swing, but Christmas was her absolute favorite. The lights, the tree, the togetherness. If she could do Christmas all year long, she would. In fact, she enjoyed watching Christmas Hallmark movies all year round.

Jeanette was very talented and liked to keep busy outside of working. She enjoyed going to sporting events. She was the biggest Bronco fan! She couldn't wait to meet John Elway. She had a million things to tell him, and in that moment all she could manage to say was you're a legend and God bless you LOL! Gambling was also a hobby of hers. It was something she could enjoy with her family from either playing poker or going up the hill. She really enjoyed it so if you make a trip up there, go play at the century casino and think of Jeanette



When the Rocky Mountain Arsenal got a new look. It also got bison and other wildlife Jeanette could go and sit for hours Just watching The Bison and deer. It's an experience to suggest it to everyone.

She impacted so many lives and is going to be deeply missed. She prayed daily to saint Anthony. He is known as the patron saint for lost things. He was her guardian angel and always helped her find numerous misplaced items. As you all know, Jeanette could lose her glasses if they were on her head. I hope Press is waiting at the gates of heaven for her with open arms.



Jeanette went to be with the Lord. On March 26, 2024. A life taken way too soon. Now she is reunited with her dad, and they are both looking down on their Lilly's.

Jeanette will now be her mother and her daughter's guardian angel. Thank you. Everyone who had a part of Jeanette's life. The Barbershop family, immediate family, and the church family.



Rhonda Lorraine Hathaway

February 10, 1964 ~ April 9, 2024



Rhonda was born February 10, 1964, in Denver, Colorado to Ronald and Virginia Werth and was the oldest of four siblings. She married her high school sweetheart and love of her life Kevin Hathaway September 14th, 1985.

Rhonda grew up in Commerce City, Colorado. She attended Adams City High School and started her working career at our family's restaurant Gala Gardens. Rhonda always had a creative spirit whether it was in graphic design, drawing or crafting with her grandchildren. She loved it all. She also had a high interest in law enforcement and worked for Brighton and Commerce City Police Departments before retiring in 2000.

After retirement she couldn't stay still and found herself back working at our family restaurant where she helped run and established many forever friendships. A few years after that Rhonda and her mother Virginia opened an event center in which she enjoyed. She loved to embrace the small-town community and extended her heart to the residents of Commerce City. She was a highly respected member of the Commerce City Business Association and the Commerce City Rotary where she contributed and enriched the sense of community.

Rhonda always needed something to do so she took up gardening. She planted a beautiful garden in her backyard in which she took great pride in maintaining it year after year. She also loved to travel whether it be on cruises with her husband to the Caribbean or camping in the Colorado mountains with her family. She loved it all! Her biggest joy was juggling her grandkids' sports and activities. She would travel the world for them. Her love for them was monumental.

Rhonda was a fighter, who never gave up or gave in. She was strong, resilient, stubborn, full of energy and would always challenge everyone. There was never an obstacle too big, a hurdle too high or a mountain too big that she couldn't beat, her limitations were never her weakness but her strength.

Rhonda is survived by her husband Kevin, mother Virginia (Ray), her three kids, Sarah (Chris) Sisneros, Chris (Amanda) Hathaway, Kayla (Bradd) Kothe and her beloved six grandchildren, Julianne, Diem, Emma, Kinley, Brayden, and Micah and her brothers Ronnie, Vince, and Brett. Plus, many nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and numerous friends whom she loved very much. She is preceded in death by her grandparents and loving father Ronald Werth.

When we lose someone
we love, we must learn
not to live without them,
but to live with the love
they left behind.



InspirationCabin.com

Bertha Mae Harpin

May 22, 1947-March 30, 2024

Rich Rennaker-June 4, 1963-February 25, 2024



Ricky “Rick” E. Rennaker, 60, of Thornton, Colorado passed away on February 25, 2024, from complications due to Multiple Myeloma and Plasma Cell Leukemia. He was diagnosed on November 13, 2022, and courageously fought the cancer for almost a year and a half before the disease took his life.

Rick was born on June 4, 1963, in Denver, Colorado to Mary Lou (Padilla) Rennaker and Ernest Rennaker. He was the oldest of three children, and is survived by his mother Mary Lou Rennaker, sister Lana Rennaker-Fernandez (spouse Earl), brother Eric Rennaker (spouse Gabriella), seven children June, Victoria, Elisa, Ernesto, Larissa, Ricardo, and Estrella, and five grandchildren Laylah, Joshua, Vincent, Jordin, and Noah.

Rick grew up in North Denver and attended Denver North High School. He lived his entire life in the North Denver, Brighton, and Thornton areas having multiple careers in the manufacturing and distribution industries before eventually landing a 26-year career with the United States Postal Service in Commerce City, Colorado.

Rick had a heart of gold and was an amazing and beloved father, son, brother, cousin, uncle, and friend to many throughout these areas. He also established close, caring, and special relationships with many of his co-workers and customers on his post office routes. He was an extremely

knowledgeable and avid sports fan, especially regarding Colorado sports. His favorite teams were the Denver Broncos and Denver Nuggets (enjoying the first Nuggets NBA Championship in 2023) but also followed most of the professional and college sports teams.

Rick's Memorial Service was held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church on 11385 Grant Drive, Thornton, Colorado, on Thursday, March 21st @ 6:00 pm.

BACK IN TIME...

Denver Pet Cemetery and Crematory



Denver Pet Cemetery and Crematory has been a staple of the local community for more than 80 years, after opening in 1939. A number of noteworthy pets including Geronimo, a dog that served in the 507th Parachute Infantry during World War II are buried on the grounds. In 2015 Paul and Everett Gidlund decided to buy the land to prevent the cemetery from being bulldozed. After doing some upgrades, in 2016 reopened the cemetery.

Sergeant Geronimo VETERAN

BIRTH – 1941 DEATH 1947 Age 5/6-Denver, City and County of Denver, Colorado

BURIAL – Denver Pet Cemetery and Crematory – Commerce City, Colorado



Sergeant Geronimo was a canine member of member of the 507th Paratroop Infantry Regiment. He was the parachuting war dog of WWII, and he was the mascot to his fellow soldiers. He was named for the famous "jump shout" of the paratroopers, he did his job as well as any proud soldier of the 507th.

Geronimo was believed to be part coyote and part German Shepard, and he had been picked up as a stray by Sergeant Kenneth Williams who was a soldier with the 507th. The men trained him to jump from airplanes and he had his own parachute. It has been known that Geronimo loved jumping so much that he often had to be restrained from leaping out of the airplanes to soon. Such a brave dog he was!

He was trained and used in demolition work during the war. Starting early in 1943 when the 507th began training at the Alliance Base, Geronimo made several appearances as a paratrooper. He made jumps from Omaha, Nebraska and even over Denver, Colorado. Everywhere Geronimo went he pleased thousands of crowds everywhere by doing his exhibition jumps. He was even featured in many magazine and newspaper articles including "Life" magazine. During his career the Army saw how popular the dog was and he helped raise millions of dollars in war bonds.

Geronimo was considered a hero by his fellow soldiers, and he really proved his heroism when Kenneth Williams was badly injured on maneuvers to destroy a bridge. Geronimo alerted his fellow paratroopers who came to the aid of Kenneth Williams. After nearly a year, Kenneth Williams recovered from his injuries and both he and Geronimo were given honorable discharges. They retired in the Denver area together.

Geronimo lived with Kenneth Williams until one day in 1947 Geronimo got out of his yard and was tragically killed by a hit and run driver. He is buried at the Denver Pet Cemetery in Commerce City, Colorado. Over the years since then, two markers have been placed for this brave dog by subsequent members of the 507th Paratroop Infantry Regiment.



Memories of the Rose Hill P.O.W. Camp

Between 1942 and 1946, more than 375,000 Germans and 50,000 Italians who had surrendered during fighting in Europe, were transferred as Prisoners-of-War to the United States.

The first to arrive in Colorado showed up in 1943. Over the next three years, several hundred were incarcerated at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal at the POW camp known as Rose Hill.

The camp was set up at the RMA because it was a secure military installation. The camp was built beside the motor pool and railyard. The Prisoners of War were trucked in. The camp itself was composed of several dormitory barracks in a compound surrounded by barbed wire and tall sentry posts.

Their work was governed by the strict guidelines of the Geneva Convention, written in 1929. The Geneva Convention was drafted to give military victors rules on how prisoners should be treated.

The Prisoners worked in the Salvage Yards at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, separating damaged material from salvageable material that could be sold. When the war ended in 1946 the camp was closed, and the German prisoners were sent back to their country for repatriation. The camp was buried under Stapleton's north-south runway which was located on the southern boundary of the Arsenal known today as Beeler Park.

There were several other camps in Colorado to include Walden, Gould, Deadman Montair, Kremmling and Fraser.





WHY JOIN THE COMMERCE CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY...

- To learn and understand about the history of the community in which you live.
- To help preserve the history in the community in which you live for future generations.
- Meet new people.
- Be involved with the community.
- Attend events sponsored by the historical society.
- Get involved helping the historical society educate people about the history.
- Volunteer opportunities to help preserve your history.
- Gain an appreciation for where you live.

Membership Application

Commerce City Historical Society

Application for Membership

	NAME: _____
	Address: _____ _____
	Phone Number: _____ home _____ cell _____
	E-Mail _____
	Business Name _____

Annual Dues

***Please make checks payable to: Commerce City Historical Society,
6505 E. 60th Avenue, Commerce City, Colorado 80022***

Individual	\$20.00	_____ (per year)
Family	\$30.00	_____ (per year)
Memorial	\$50.00	_____ (per year)
Business/Corporation	\$100.00	_____ (per year)
Life Membership	\$500.00	_____ (one time)
Senior Lifetime Membership (Age 65 Plus)	\$250.00	_____ (one time)

Are you a Veteran? Yes ___ No ___ What Branch? _____

DATE PAID _____

How would you like to be notified of meetings and the Newsletter?

Email Phone Mail

For questions, please call the museum office 303-288-2590

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Phone Calls _____
Work at the Museum _____

Working at Events _____
Moving Items _____