

Foxridge Swim & Racquet Club (FSRC)

History

It was a hot, 90 plus-degree day on Friday, August 1, 1980, when Charlie Anderson, Ed Anderson, Mark Scott and Rick, Jan, Stephani and Stacy Bennison members of the Foxridge Swim and Racquet Club (FSRC) grabbed hands, took a breath and made a leap into the waters of the newly built pool. Such was the opening of the FSRC. Take a minute to imagine the neighborhood in 1980, new homes under construction, young trees and landscape, new families starting to establish a new community. The board members in 1979-1980 were James Flynn (Chair and President), Marvin Yeager (Vice President), Rick Bennison (Treasurer), Dorothy Littell and Tracy Holmes (Secretaries), Ed Anderson Sr. (Operations), Peter Eggleston (Assistant Secretary and Attorney), Charlie Anderson (Construction Manager).

The developers of the Foxridge filings did not develop a community center, or a facility like the one our neighbors have in Homestead Farm II. At one time South Suburban and Saint Thomas More had discussed plans for a pool. When plans fell through for a pool sponsored by either of these two organizations a grass roots 'movement' was launched in late 1978 'to establish a swimming/recreation facility for Foxridge.' Charter members pledged \$25, with a guarantee of reduced annual dues and the ability to participate in an Advisory Council. Per the FSRC bylaws, there were 39 charter members. What was to follow were initiation dues between \$800 and \$1300 and seed money of \$34,000 from Hillside developer, Ben Carter. With the sale of an original Hilltop home, the buyer received a membership.

The purpose of the club was to "to organize, equip and operate a swim and tennis club for the pleasure and recreation of its members, and to provide for the mutual enjoyment, entertainment and improvement of the members socially and physically by establishing and encouraging participation in various social, community, educational and athletic activities." (From Articles of Incorporation, 1979).

As with many things in life, the initial grass roots committee met with some roadblocks but was tenacious in their quest to build a club. Initially, plans were for a club on Dry Creek Road, named the "Dry Creek Swim and Racquet Club," which was incorporated January 15, 1979 as a nonprofit corporation. Plans to buy land on Dry Creek Road from South Suburban across from Homestead elementary eventually fell through. Fortunately, the land on Mineral Avenue was secured, and Dry Creek Swim and Racquet Club became Foxridge Swim and Racquet Club on January 15, 1980. Originally, the land where the club is built was slated for an elementary school, and some say it is the highest point in the neighborhood; one could then see all the way down to downtown Denver. The Board asked Ben Carter for ideas on how to obtain a parcel for the pool. Ben Carter had an idea to rezone the current property from a school zone and change the zoning to allow for a club. Ben Carter then sold the land to the FSRC for a \$1 and loaned the money for the parking lot, curbs and gutters. Carter was then able to develop additional homes in Hillside. It was a winning solution for both parties.

Those that had signed up for the pool worked to market the club to various neighborhoods, such as Walnut Hills, Acres Green and outside businesses. These efforts allowed the club to prove the proposed plan was viable in order to receive the bank financing needed to build the club. Marketing was continuous to help fund each phase of the construction. The club cost approximately \$380,000 but it was estimated that \$100,000 was saved by the virtues of the volunteers work on project management of the construction, landscaping and marketing of the club. Work weekends, late afternoons and evenings were the norm for the first few years.

When the club opened, the bathhouse, baby pool, tennis courts and volleyball pit were not yet built. The FIA was concerned about the dirt piles! Yet, the board members felt it was important to show progress and opened the club with only the pool functioning on August 1, 1980. Within the next two years, the courts were finished, landscaping added, and the bathhouse completed.

The club would not have opened without the countless volunteer hours. One area that stands out today are the donations and work effort to plant our outstanding landscape with trees (\$25 for each honey locust), bushes (24 golden elders), and 100 spreading fitzers. Paul Moulder, with his landscaping connections at Valley Crest Landscaping, helped the FSRC immensely in setting up the entire landscape including the sprinkling system. Many of the plants were not in the best shape, but look at them now with all the good care! Many people comment on our landscaping that is now “mature” and provides a beautiful backdrop to the facility. The tall blue spruce tree, planted in 1986 near the entrance, is in memory of Ed Anderson who passed away in the Japan Airlines Flight 123 crash of 1985. Every year volunteers and staff continue to plant the flower tubs, set-up the courts, and put up the tents. Some years volunteer days are scheduled, other years people just show up to help. Critical to the managing the construction of the club is Charlie Anderson. Charlie worked in construction and it was not unusual to see him hauling equipment and tools to and from the club site. Charlie made it happen.

Technology has certainly affected the club’s operations. Where mimeographed and hand written notes were initially taken and newsletters mailed, we are now communicating via email and the website. Newsletters are still provided at key times, but members are often directed to the FSRC website (started in 2005) <http://www.foxridgeswimandracquetclub.com/> - for swim team, tennis and club information. Also, look for Dan’s Daily Updates.

Social events, tennis and swim programs started in earnest in 1982. An interesting note in the minutes was the pool’s temperature was to be maintained at a constant 82 degrees in the first few years of operation. The concession stand started operating on the weekends with hot dogs and chips and possibly wine and beer. The board researched a liquor license but decided against the liability. Swim team started practices in April 1982 with 52 swimmers. Swim and Tennis lessons were available as they are today. By the end of 1982 there were 237 active memberships. The bylaws cap memberships at 350, but most years the membership level fluctuates between 220-250 member families. Different levels of memberships have been added, most notably the adult membership that debuted in 1996.

The social group started activities off in the early 1980's with a May Ladies Fashion show. Social events through the years have included teen nights, children's parties, fiesta dinners, Casino nights, and volleyball events. One year a favorite past time was ping-pong. Traditionally, the club hosts Memorial Day, July 4 and Labor Day events. Fourth of July is a highlight each year, with many games from mini-balloon toss, rubber ducky tot toss, racing games with rafts, wet t-shirts and greased watermelons. The events are capped off with the kids' coin and pop toss and the adults' beer toss (some years a belly flop contest). Whoosh!

The club is open for private parties (in non-operating hours) and small parties during operating hours. Many memories have been created, as the club has been the site for numerous birthday parties, team parties, school parties and even weddings. In 2006, our re-established social committee has hosted dive-in movies, trivia contests, volleyball matches and an adult martini-party. This year we are celebrating our founding with the Founders Day Splash – a member potluck.

As noted, the FSRC swim team started up in April 1982 with practices at Arapahoe High School. Anecdotally, it was noted they were first known as the "Frogs" with green team suits, which soon changed to the Foxridge Foxes with the team colors of black and red. Swim Team is a program that supports boys and girls from 4 to 18 years of age. In 1982 the team had 52 swimmers and in 2006 over 150 swimmers. The Foxes started out in the Colorado Country Swim League in 1982 and moved to the Mountain Hi Swim league in 1984. Mountain Hi Swim League is broken into four Divisions (A, B, C, and D) with 6 teams in each division. Currently practices start at the end of May and the season runs through the end of July with 5 dual meets, preliminaries (by age), Championships and the League All Stars Meet – held with all 24 of the Mountain Hi Swim League teams.

The Foxes Swim team focuses on developing positive athletic competition and sportsmanship. They also like to have fun with such activities as fun meets, ice cream socials, families (older swimmers mentoring younger swimmers) Swim Under The Stars, the recent fun night at Pirates Cove and of course the end of year banquet that seems to go too long for the adults, but is just fine for the swimmers! Other traditions dating back to 1985 are the gag awards, and the Coaches awards. The trophy case was built by the Head Coach Lynn Amos's husband. Teams have trekked to Rockies games, bowling and Water World. The Foxes are known to have the best concessions in the league for home meets. Swim team graduates receive pool water, yet several years ago received roses. Volunteers are key to the success of the swim team program as it takes approximately 85 volunteers for each home meet; swim team parent reps are a committee on the board.

Great swimming has been the standard for Foxes, as they have won many age group trophies, three Championships (1993, 2000 and 2005), and the coveted of all trophies the Sportsmanship Award. They won their first Sportsmanship trophy in their inaugural season in 1982 in the Colorado Country Swim League and twenty years later in 2002 in the Mountain Hi Swim League- Division B, and most recently in 2006 in the Mountain Hi Swim League-Division A. Regardless of the trophies, swimmers are encouraged to swim their personal best. Pool records are maintained for Foxridge

swimmers having the best time in their home Foxridge pool. Foxridge Swimmers still holding Mountain Hi League records are Mike Lucas – Boys 15-18 200 IM set in 1995, Matt Cole – Boys 15-18 100 Back set in 1996, Scott Dawkins – Boys 15-18 50 Yard Free set in 2006, relay team of Scott Dawkins, Max Mullins, Ian Francis and Grant Dawkins – Boys 15-18 200 Yard Medley Relay set in 2006, relay team of Scott Dawkins, Max Mullins, Ian Francis and Grant Dawkins – Boys 15-18 200 Yard Free Relay set in 2006 besting the teams' own record set in 2005 by Scott Dawkins, Grant Dawkins, Max Mullins and Alex Reed.

The Tennis program for both Adult and Junior tennis programs have seen tremendous growth from the start of the club to 2006. Adult and Junior programs, include lessons and USTA play. A dedicated set of volunteers has kept the programs going strong. FSRC has had a variety of tennis pros through the years and even out-sourced the tennis program for two years to Game Set Match. After the experiment with Game Set Match, the board and the tennis community reaffirmed its belief in continuing to manage our own programs with a dedicated FSRC tennis pro. For a period of time years John O'Connell was both the pro and the club manager. Today, over 70 adults and close to 100 juniors play tennis or take lessons. Adult FSRC tennis players enjoy traditional get togethers as the Margarita Mixers and tennis socials. Several Junior Tennis teams have made it to the Colorado state districts in 2004, 2005 and 2006. Tennis ladders have been provided over the years, and recently a volunteer has re-instituted the tennis ladder for the club via an on-line method. In the last several years, both adult and junior tennis tournaments have been run at the club and allowed for participation of our community.

Maintenance of the facility has been in the forefront since the club opened. It would be interesting to have a time machine reflect the differences since the club first opened! Minutes from the early years reflect concerns of mud flowing to the street and neighborhood drainage issues, the need to update concrete decking, new roofing, how to handle the ground shifting, and bench remodeling. On the west side of the pool, rock was placed near the fence and eventually concrete decking was extended to replace the rock. While originally an awning was to be placed on the west side of the bathhouse, a pergola (trellis) was placed instead, in 2002 the pergola was demolished and a tent put up for shade. The wooden swim team bench at the north end of the pool was painted, carpeted, painted again many times – with it finally being replaced with low maintenance grey plastic benches in 2004. The main pool was renovated in 2002.

As many board members can attest, conversations on court resurfacing are almost a yearly conversation. The courts were re-slip-sheeted in the late 1986 with an asphalt overlay, and the courts have been resurfaced in 1995, 2001 and 2006. The boiler is key to the comfort of the pool and the 1998 boiler had been monitored carefully until it finally gave out and was recently replaced at the end of 2005. In 2005 we purchased pool covers to help insurance costs and cleanliness of the pool. Believe it or not, the bathrooms have been updated several times, but do receive lots of use and receive member comments on the surveys. Many have inquired about a tennis backboard, an all surface play area in replacement of the volleyball pit. A serious evaluation of adding a \$150,000 clubhouse was done in 1988! Recent maintenance activities are new concrete entrance, entrance and parking lot lights, new carpeting on the tennis stair and a new tent canopy. With the non-profit status of our club, our funds are carefully managed to maintain our current facilities, but let us know if anyone

would like to endow the club! Money is saved by our management and volunteers by doing what we can on our own.

Weather plays an important role in our club. When it is hot, memberships go up! Many events have been planned for months only to be rained out at the last minute, and searing heat makes one wonder why we are at the courts or pool during matches and meets, and not in the water ourselves. Fortunately, many activities go on even if a bit damp or hot! Drought has raised our water prices, and one year – we wondered if we should even drain the pool to keep the water available for the next year. Now that our landscape has grown up, even major snows have affected our tree line. There is no better place on a nice summer evening to have a barbecue and relax at the club!

Originally, a pool management company managed the club. In the late 1980's the FSRC moved to having our club managed by our own employees. Initially, club members could not be staff. Today, we employ many of our Foxridge member teens in their first jobs at concessions or guarding. Surveys have been submitted over the course of the years with many suggestions, and with the club board responding to many of the concerns at hand. Absent a survey, please continue to let the board and management know of your concerns.

The focus of the FSRC board continues to be on membership satisfaction. The original board wanted to insure that those that were members and who paid the initiation fees and annual dues received the value for their money, time and effort. Initially, Foxridge residents, if not members could not even be guests. This policy has relaxed to allowing members to bring up the same guest only four times in a year. In last year's survey, members continue to want a large differentiation between members and non-members to protect their investment in the club. The Board takes this balance very seriously in their discussions and decisions in support of the club. Marketing of the club continues every year with a ½ price Winter Sale, new brochures, advertisements in the Foxtales and the best of all kinds of marketing, "word of mouth."

A hallmark of the club is the Foxridge Fox, created by the Foxridge tennis pro Steve Campbell in 1993. Steve, who has graphic design experience, sat down one day under one of the tents at a picnic table and created our fox with the sunglasses. The Foxridge Fox has been on many t-shirts, sweats, hats and has that quirky quality that defines a cheerful spirit of the FSRC community. Alex Mitoma of swim team, designed a stand-up version for the 2006 year swim team t-shirts, see the Fox "hanging 10."

August 1, 2006 was the start of a new activity – Founder's Day. The night started with a small potluck hosted by the Social Committee and attended by several board and permanent members with honored guests of two families that had been members since 1980 (Hanlon's and the Zimmerman's). Before you know it, a Colorado weather event was occurring. Small raindrops started falling and then within a matter of minutes, the rain deluged and the thunder and lightning clapped and sparked above us. The able Foxridge staff kept us dry with 'brooming' the volume of water away from the Potluckers and Tennis goers' feet. Soon the sun came, out and we dried the tables and resumed our dinner. The sun shown down and in the sky was a double rainbow, the staff kids enjoyed the moment by jumping from the swing set in to "Lake Foxridge" that had formed, for just that moment in time, in the lower level. Afterward, in the quiet of the night, with just a few of us left, we all joined hands and jumped into the....baby pool! Another memorable event at the FSRC!

As in any written history, there may be errors and many omissions, especially of the many, many people who made it happen within the FSRC community. Please let me know if anything represented may be incorrect.

In 2006, five families are members from the kick-off year of 1980. Please extend a hand of thanks to the Bennison's, Cain's, Zimmerman's, Smalle's and Hanlon's. Special thanks to the Bennison's, Smalle's and Speirs for help with this history.

We appreciate your support of the FSRC and hope you enjoy the club for many years to come.

Respectfully submitted – Carolyn Melphy, 8/1/2006 – FSRC Secretary

