

Lila Horton: historic hospitality

Growing up in Morrison, Lila Horton and childhood pal Dianne Chirichigno (now Druley) climbed among the Red Rocks every chance they got. They attended the old Morrison Schoolhouse, then graduated from Bear Creek High School in 1955. Lila's childhood energy is intact, and she still dashes from one project to the next, with Dianne helping on most of them. BCHS reunions at her gardens each August attract as many as 100 graduates from the 1930s-50s. Her annual "barn sale" (July 1-3, 2006) is a must, and she dances, mostly ballroom style, or practices several nights a week. "Dancing replaces both meditation and exercise," she reports.

Lila Horton serves the small community of Morrison in ways unnoticed by the majority of residents. One of her biggest contributions is as the owner and long-term manager of historic artifacts displayed at the town's Heritage Museum. Her interest in history is a dominant part of her life, and she is also one of Morrison's long-term business owners. Lila inherits both interests, as the daughter of the Museum's founder, who was also a businesswoman, and owner of several historic buildings in Morrison. Having successfully raised three daughters (Lorene, Dotty, and Cindy), Lila returned to her childhood home to care for her ailing mother, Lorene Horton, who died in 1992.

Lila's first Morrison business was an antique store, in the 1980s when she still lived in Denver. Her mother managed the museum on the porch of that historic house, where Lacey Gate Antiques now offers décor and memorabilia. As

the museum gradually took over, Lila shifted to a hair styling business in the house next door. In 1994, she opened Horton House Bed and Breakfast at the one-acre streamside property where she grew up, once the home of James and



Amy Abbo. She preserved the surviving Abbo & Lewis Livery and stagecoach buildings much as they were in 1900.

In the 1970s, Lila helped her mother rescue artifacts from old Morrison homes. Today, besides "carrying on Mother's quest to preserve Morrison's history," she serves on the Board of

Adjustment and Historical Commission, and is one of few who can be counted on to organize or assist town events. Over the years, she's supported activities as diverse as Cider Days (still held in October), the Cowboy Celebration, town Christmas parties, and other ceremonial events. On request, her amazing collection of table décor and serving pieces adds thematic elegance to town occasions any time of the year.

"I would love to see my efforts encourage Morrison to come together as a closer community; to get more people involved in maintaining our small-town sense of belonging and participating." This year Lila will be heavily involved in events marking the town's centennial, which triggers her sense of history as well as community spirit. Once again, her gift for hospitality will serve the town's residents and visitors.

Lorene "Reenie" Horton initiated the Morrison Historical District Museum in 1981, after her success as the driving force behind the downtown area's designation as a National Register Historic District in 1976. She researched and described 70 historic sites and structures, and produced a "Memory Album" of historic photographs that is still sold today. For her efforts, she was named to the Jefferson Co. Hall of Fame in 1989. See www.historicmorrison.org

Her daughter Lila said, "Keeping Morrison's rich history alive and generating more interest in it is my focus."

—Sally White



Abbo & Lewis Livery in Morrison, Colorado, circa 1906.



Abbo & Lewis Livery 100 years later, on the Horton House Bed & Breakfast grounds.

Horton House Bed n Breakfast— “A Stay in the Past”

105 Canon St., 303.697.8526 www.hortonhousebnb.com

The Horton House Bed and Breakfast occupies the historic home of Dr. Frank Luce, Morrison’s early “horse-and-buggy doctor.” Since 1994, Lila Horton has welcomed Red Rocks concertgoers and other area visitors, and she is now Morrison’s only innkeeper.

Stepping into the Bed and Breakfast is like visiting a museum, with salvaged treasures of three generations of Lila’s family on display or furnishing this home business.

Passersby are welcome to stroll through the grounds under stately concolor firs planted by Lila’s mother. The garden and historic grounds are an integral part of the attraction to her bed and breakfast, with quaint landscaping, sunny lawns, and hidden shady nooks where guests enjoy sitting by the stream.



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