

Perspective/NEIGHBORHOODS



RAY AND LIN Loen (left) enjoy the view from their Mountain Park home, near the summit of Mount Sylvania. The couple likes the fact that their neighborhood is close to the freeway and downtown. Below, Suzanne and Paul Brockmeier show the collection of photos, posters and artifacts on their kitchen wall. "I don't like yard-work, so this is great," said Paul. (Photos by Janis Miglavs)



Mountain Park: it's convenient

By JANIS MIGLAVS
 Guest Writer

Entering Mountain Park on Kerr Parkway is not unlike entering a park.

But pausing to read the directional signs — they point the way to the racquet club, the recreation center, the office and other streets — is something else again. The motorists on your tail are not on a leisurely drive through Yellowstone. They are going places, and they want to do it at least at the allowable speed.

Welcome to Mountain Park, a planned neighborhood. Sitting on the southern slope of Mount Sylvania, a volcano active a couple million years before the development started, Mountain Park is home for some 9,000 residents.

Said to be one of the oldest planned developments in Oregon, the project started as the brainchild of four developers. The originators — Carl Halvorson, Daryl Mason, Lem Nelson and Walter Aman, who are all still on the board of directors — established the Mountain Park Development Corp. in 1967.

Some time in 1971 or 1972, Far West Federal Bank (then known as Far West Federal Savings) bought half of the project, according to Ken Reecher, executive manager of the Mountain Park Home Owners Association. Far West, through a subsidiary, developed the area south of Kerr Parkway.

"When the economy came to a flat spot in 1973-1974," Reecher explains, "Far West needed to refinance the project. This was done through PFEDCO, a second subsidiary of Far West." In 1978, the Canadian-based DAON Corp. bought out most of the Far West subsidiaries.

What exactly does Mountain Park offer its residents?

"Well, first it has a most attractive recreation center," replies Reecher, who

finished building his home in Mountain Park in 1972. "It offers an Olympic-size pool, game room and a large meeting room area. It's great for social functions. It gets a lot of use for wedding receptions. Mountain Park has 115 acres of common property. We have a landscape crew of four full-time employees and an additional four during the summer months whose function is to maintain the area."

An attractive feature for working parents is the play school, kindergarten and drop-in center. Located in the lower level of the recreation center, the center is run by 10 employees. "The unfortunate thing is that it is limited to 60 kids," Reecher says. "The center is running at maximum capacity right now."

How much all of those special features cost the Mountain Park resident depends on the type of structure they live in. Inhabitants of a single-family residence pay \$32 per month, the townhouse owner shells out \$26 and the apartment or condo resident contributes \$16 per month. All of these fees, costs and expenses add up to an annual budget of \$865,000 per year for the Mountain Park Home Owners Association.

"When you realize that we have 48 to 50 employees," Reecher explains, "you see that most of the expense is in the labor force."

There is no doubt that this neighborhood is a planned community when the executive manager talks about the "yellow bible" of Mountain Park, a harmless-looking little booklet of regulations such as, "All roofing material must be approved by the Architectural Committee," an august body of at least three who do not need to be members of the association. All homeowners in Mountain Park are members of the association, so the architectural committee members do not have to live there.

The "bible" also establishes the minimum square footage that may be built for a home. But the rule that brings the Mountain Park "bible" out of the guideline league gives the association a blanket search warrant during construction or remodeling. The rule states, "Any agent or officer of the Association may, at any reasonable hour or hours during construction or remodeling, enter and inspect any of said property as to its maintenance or improvements to determine if there has been compliance with the provisions hereof."

Mountain Park residents have a variety of reasons for living where they do. Sitting in their homey kitchen, surrounded by all sizes and shapes of photographs and art work, Paul and Suzanne Brockmeier recall moving into their townhouse with their two teen-agers on April Fools' Day seven years ago.

With a track record of moving "just before the place needed painting, we've lived here longer than anywhere else." The Brockmeiers talk like they intend to stay.

And why not? "I've always been interested in a planned unit where we can escape house maintenance and not do yard work," Paul smiles. "I don't like yard work, so this is great."

Moving into their sunken living room, Paul, who supervises an accounting office for Crown Zellerbach, says he finds the location convenient. He takes the bus to work. As a man who works with tidy figures, he appreciates the land use efficiency. "Here you have high density living but yet privacy."

Suzanne says she likes the idea of being able to visit neighbors or remain isolated. "The way it's planned, there is a great deal of privacy, and the neighborhood is quiet. It's a great place to take walks,"

says Suzanne, a music teacher and former Los Angeles resident. "And it's safe."

On the other side of Mountain Park from the Brockmeiers, Ray and Lin Loen live near the summit of Mount Sylvania. For them it's a matter of convenience. "We have good access here," says Lin, "to the freeway, to Portland. We go fishing and travel a lot, so the access is important."

The Loens are comfortable in their home, surrounded by an assortment of paintings and unusual art pieces. "This is an old milk can I found on the beach at Mendocino," she says, pointing to a squashed rusty can hanging on the wall. "So I sealed the can, mounted it and stuck these eucalyptus branches in it."

"We just live in Mountain Park, not really taking part in the community," says Ray, sitting behind the computer in his office. "Again, it's the access."

He travels extensively. He has become a business management "guru" who is in high demand throughout the United States. Listed in "Who's Who in the West," Ray Loen is the author of the business classic, "Managing More by Doing Less," which has been translated into seven languages.

"Originally, when we moved here with the five children, the closeness to schools was great," Lin recalls. Now the kids are gone, and the Loens use their Mountain Park home as a base for their worldwide travels.

Looking out the front window of the Loen residence, a serene Mountain Park stretches below, apartments and townhouses nestled in the woods. But even here all is not idyllic. Down the hill, on Monroe Parkway, a shopping center under construction has many neighbors upset.

It's no panacea, maybe. But, like most neighborhoods, it's the right place for most who live there.



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