

# WOODMEN EDITION

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## Assistance League planning new building for thrift store, Operation School Bell

By DAVID VICKERS

After more than three decades in the same location, Assistance League of Colorado Springs has decided it's time to expand into a new building a few blocks east on Costilla Street, where it will have twice the space for its Bargain Box Thrift Store and its Operation School Bell, the philanthropic project that provides clothes for nearly 4,000 children in need each year.

Sandra Grese, the capital campaign manager for the project, Carmen Andersson, chair of Operation School Bell, and Allene McWilliams, spokesperson for the league's philanthropic programs, announced plans Tuesday morning to build a \$3.517 million building encompassing 22,700 square feet and a parking lot with 70 spaces on two acres. The new building's address would be 535 East Costilla St., three blocks east of the building at 211 East Costilla St., which has housed Assistance League and Operation School Bell since 1970, when the local chapter of the national Assistance League organization was chartered.

Excitement fills the small building, where the all-volunteer staff runs the Bargain Box at street level, and other volunteers are fast at work filling the basement with new clothes for the coming school year, when they hope to provide clothing for about 4,000 chil-



Assistance League members, from left, Allene McWilliams, public relations; Carmen Andersson, chairman of Operation School Bell; and Sandra Grese, capital campaign manager for the new construction project.

dren.

They hope to begin construction on the new building later this year. Grese said they plan to have Murphy Constructors of Colorado Springs, Inc., build the new building.

But first the women have some work cut out for them, Grese explained.

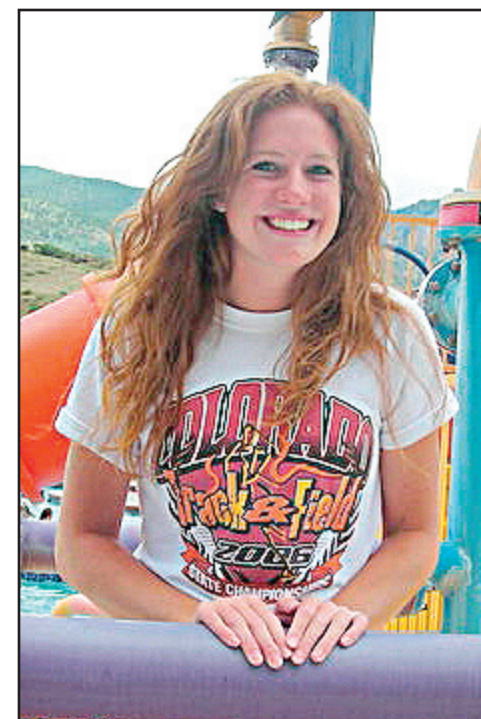
"We have received two challenge grants totaling \$325,000, but we have to raise the entire cost of the project by March and June of 2009 to gain access

to those grants," she said. The grantors have requested that they remain anonymous. The good news, Grese said, is that Assistance League members have already raised 70.15 percent of the project's total cost, so they are short of their goal by \$1.050 million.

A new building will dramatically change both operations. The Bargain Box will be housed in a space nearly double the size of its packed little shop, allowing people to donate larger

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## Pine Creek graduate earns 12 varsity letters



Holly Leonard, Pine Creek graduate and school record holder.

By DUANE SLOCUM

It's not often a person gets to be "the first" in any endeavor or activity, especially in the athletic realm. Meet Holly Leonard, the first student at Pine Creek High to garner 12 varsity athletic letters during her four years of high school.

Leonard graduated in May with honors, having a 4.1 grade-point average. She is poised, presents herself with dignity and has a winning smile to go with her striking red hair. The obvious question is: "Holly, why and when did you decide to try and get an athletic varsity letter in the fall, winter and summer seasons?"

According to Leonard, "I ran cross-country my first semester as a freshman and lettered. I wasn't that good, but good enough to earn a varsity letter. The winter season had swimming and I was already a pretty good swimmer."

She continued, "I knew I could letter in swimming since I started swimming on a club team when I was 9 years-old. And I did earn a varsity letter."

It was at this point Leonard decided to see if she could letter in some sport during the spring season. Why not track and field events as Leonard already had some experience at running? Leonard ran the 800 meter dash. Her mother, Kelly Leonard's noted, "When Holly told me of her plans, I

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## Local businessman opens Pikes Peak Radio and Electronics Museum

By PATRICIA HARVEY

A person could get lost in Norm Bernicky's Pikes Peak Radio and Electronics Museum. Never mind that the entire space is only a bit larger than a walk-in closet, there's a whole lot to see.

From the earliest piece, a wireless transformer that dates to 1910 when the Morse code was still in use, to a novelty radio that looks like an order of McDonald's fries, this collection is unique. "You can't go any place in Colorado Springs to see anything like this," said Bernicky.

The museum is at Norbern Electronics, 6735 Earl Rd., near Woodmen and Academy. Bernicky, who repairs audio equipment, stereos and amplifiers, will even tackle turntables, eight-tracks and reel-to-reel tape recorders. He owns and operates the business with his wife, Toni. He is also the father of two teen-age



Norm Bernicky in his Pikes Peak Radio and Electronics Museum.

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# Museum

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daughters.

The museum will be open to the public after June 23.

Bernicky painstakingly reconditions each radio, putting it in working order before it goes on display. "Part of what I enjoy doing is fixing them up," he said. "What's amazing is that any of these will outperform just about any radio built today."

Involved with electronics since boyhood, Bernicky built a Heathkit radio at age 12 that is now on display in the museum. "If I had to run and grab one because the building was on fire, this is the one I'd take." During his eight years in the Navy Bernicky worked on aircraft radios.

His collection comes from a variety of sources, including other collectors and eBay. He also enjoys shopping at antique stores with his wife. Many of the radios, he said, were just given to him.

Arranged on freshly stained shelves, novelty radios contrast with stately models from radio's "golden age." Some of the museum's tube radios, such as the 1930s Crosley short wave, were made of beautifully crafted wood and designed to sit on a shelf or tabletop. Others are large floor models.

"Not everybody could afford a floor model," said Bernicky. "If you had a big floor radio you were living the high life." Some models would still be pricey by today's standards, he said.

Ever hear of the Dahlberg ten-cent radio? Installed in motel beds in the 1950s, these "pay to listen" beauties had removable speakers that went under the pillow. The dial was installed upside down so a person lying on his back could look up and read it.

Bernicky also owns the smallest AM radio ever made, Sony's integrated circuit radio, invented after the transistor. Ever see radio sunglasses? Or a Tootle Loop? Created by Panasonic, the circular Tootle Loop was a kids' radio that could either open up or be worn

on the wrist.

Bernicky said that starting the museum was "just one of those things." He didn't know he was a collector until things started piling up, including news clippings and industry memorabilia. He even has a certificate of Marconi stock issued in 1918.

Considered the father of radio, Guglielmo Marconi was the first to produce and detect radio waves over a long distance. The inventor established the Wireless Telegraph and Signal Company in 1897, and opened the world's first radio factory at Chelmsford, England in 1898.

Bernicky is a virtual encyclopedia on the radio, explaining in a few short sentences why radio signals are stronger at night, and why people usually get better reception from their car radio. The first radios used crystal receivers, he said, after which came vacuum tube and transistor varieties.

In the early days there were a lot of amateurs transmitting signals, including Nicola Tesla in Colorado Springs, said Bernicky. Chicago lays claim to the first commercial station, but in Colorado, Greeley led the way with KFKA 880. Colorado Springs' earliest station, KFUM (which Bernicky said stands for "known for unsurpassed mountain scenery"), later became KVOR.

Bernicky plans to make his museum even more interesting by playing classic radio shows like The Lone Ranger.

A huge repository of old radio shows and newer broadcasts is available at [www.internetarchives.org](http://www.internetarchives.org), where selections can be downloaded at no cost. "Pearl Harbor, the Hindenberg - any of these broadcasts, they're all there," said Bernicky.

For more information on Bernicky's collection, links to radio clubs, and related resources, visit [www.pikespeakradiomuseum.com](http://www.pikespeakradiomuseum.com).

Contact the writer at [patricia.harvey@yahoo.com](mailto:patricia.harvey@yahoo.com).

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