



MONTROSE, COLORADO

Every Day is a New Adventure

A WESTERN WONDERLAND

by Paul Sage

Peggy and Tom Piccirilli lived and worked in the Denver metropolitan area amidst all the traffic and trappings of a big city. When it came time to look for a place to spread their retirement wings, they looked for a smaller town with a lower cost of living and access to the mountainous beauty of their home state—the Piccirilli's choice: Homes at Cobble Creek in Montrose in western Colorado. Montrose has a population of just over 20,000 and is 60 miles from Grand Junction. Peggy describes Cobble Creek as "just perfect." "Sometimes I pinch myself," she says. Peggy and Tom chose Montrose for its easy access to outdoor activities, from golf to snowshoeing. Because Montrose is in a valley at the base of the San Juan Mountains, the town doesn't get much snow, and golf can be played almost year-round. Still, the nearby mountains and Uncompahgre National Forest provide classic Colorado winter scenery, endless trails for hiking and biking, and lakes for stand-up paddleboarding.

The Piccirillis are newcomers to Homes at Cobble Creek, a planned community that was started in 1997.

The community clubhouse is the place to go for parties, dining, dancing, and drinking, all with a spectacular view of the surrounding snow-capped mountains. In addition to an 18-hole golf course and pro shop, Cobble Creek offers tennis and pickleball courts, five fishing ponds, a kids' playground, and a fitness center with a sauna and steam room.

What does a day in the life of the Piccirillis look like? It might include a round of golf for Tom, a yoga or Pilates class at the fitness center for Peggy, some volunteer work in the Montrose community, and a gathering at the clubhouse with friends. Peggy says Cobble Creek is 70% retired people and that many residents have come here from elsewhere, from California to Maine.

Even when you live in a paradise like Cobble Creek, sometimes you want to get away. The Montrose Regional Airport is served by all the major airlines with direct flights to Denver, Dallas, Phoenix, Houston, Chicago, Atlanta, and New York.

"Sometimes I pinch myself... it's just perfect."

Peggy Piccirilli | Cobble Creek

Southern Comfort for Folks From New Jersey

by Paul Sage

"What are we doing today?" That's the question Sharon and Scott Johnson ask each other often at their home in Woodside, a gated community of 2,500 homes in Aiken, SC, a 35-minute drive from Augusta, GA. For the Johnsons, there are many answers to that question, and their only challenge is deciding among so many options.

The Johnsons lived in New Jersey, 35 miles west of Manhattan, before moving to Woodside in 2020. One of the first things they noticed was the hospitality of their new neighbors. Sharon noted, "The community is as presented, no false advertising. It's as friendly as it appears to be." She describes herself and her husband, Scott, as "Type-A all the way," explaining that they researched retirement communities in three states. The Johnsons built a spreadsheet to evaluate selected communities against their preferences. "Woodside checked off all the boxes, with good weather and access to good medical care and grocery stores. None of the other communities were undesirable, but they were all missing one important

element: we needed to feel comfortable."

Scott Johnson plays golf three times a week, 12 months a year, at the Reserve Club, one of Woodside's private clubs with two golf courses, fine dining, and sports facilities. Scott is a member of the Reserve Club Men's Golf Association, a group that organizes monthly golf events and welcomes those new to the game. Golf, along with the frequent walks the Johnsons take with their two retriever-doodle dogs on Woodside's trails have helped the couple enjoy good health in their retirement. "We're in better shape than we were in New Jersey," said Scott.

For Sharon, living in Woodside is "like going to camp every day. It's like college with money." Sharon is an active member of W.O.W., Women of Woodside, a fundraising group that supports the local community with donations of more than \$100,000 every year. Sharon also plays mahjong with friends and volunteers every Monday at the local elementary school in Aiken. She helps second graders improve their reading skills.

"[It] is like going to camp every day. It's like college with money."



A Quiet Little Town Full of Fun and History

by Paul Sage

Small towns in out-of-the-way places can be hidden gems, taking you back to a simpler lifestyle you might have thought was long gone. The state of Mississippi's Retirement Attraction Program has certified 14 communities as ideal locations based on these towns' affordable cost of living, low taxes, low crime rate, quality medical care, recreational opportunities, continuing education, cultural opportunities, and their warm, welcoming culture. One such town is Aberdeen, with a population of 5,600, located 36 miles south of Tupelo, the birthplace of Elvis Presley.

Janet Sotille and her husband Ed wanted a historic home, so last year they bought Lenoir Cottage, one of approximately 500 buildings in Aberdeen on the National Register of Historic Places. For the Sotilles, Aberdeen is a big and welcome cultural leap from where they lived in New Jersey. "We wanted a quiet life," Janet explained.

Quiet, but not boring. Janet is an active volunteer in Aberdeen, offering her talent and energy to the Main Street Art Gallery and the Save Aberdeen Landmarks Association. "They needed me," she said. Janet explained

that many homes and buildings in Aberdeen that were built before the Civil War have remained unscathed because homes in Aberdeen were used as hospitals for soldiers during the war.

What makes Aberdeen the right place to retire? Tina Robbins, Executive Director at the Aberdeen Visitors Bureau, says people are attracted to her town for its engaging quality of life. Aberdeen had its fourth annual Mardi Gras parade in February, and its 46th Aberdeen Pilgrimage in early April. The Pilgrimage features tours of historic homes, gardens, churches, and public buildings, along with carriage rides and a Boy Scouts Pancake Breakfast. Festivities at the Pilgrimage conclude with a Southern Chic Soiree on Saturday night, featuring live music and wine tasting.

Robbins told us that in the summer of 2022 alone, Aberdeen welcomed 20 new households of retirees from other states, including Utah and Oregon. Retirees in Aberdeen get together at parties and picnics, making it easy to make new friends in a beautiful old town.





Watersong at Rivertown | Saint Johns, FL

Walking Trails Let You Enjoy Your Community

“Let’s go for a walk.” When you live in a planned community, that energetic suggestion takes on a new and delightful meaning. When Ideal-LIVING surveys its readers, walking trails are the number one requested amenity. And, consequently, most ideal-Living communities offer a variety of walking and hiking trails. Some communities have miles and miles of sidewalks, making walking and meeting your neighbors exceptionally easy.

Trails aren’t just for people. They’re a fun, safe, and healthy way to walk your dogs, away from traffic and abundant in squirrels and other creatures for Fido to focus on. Many communities allow bicycles, trail bikes, and golf carts on their trails.

Are you into bird watching, photography, stargazing, or simply smelling flowers? Trails can be the perfect path to new hobbies and ways to enjoy nature. There are trails with bridges, trails over and around hills, and trails along lakes, rivers, and creeks. Some community trail networks total 30 miles or more in total trail distance. There are

even trails that pass scenic waterfalls and beautiful mountain vistas.

In warm weather, wooded trails offer shade and the chirping sounds of birds. Depending on the location, a community might have a mix of flat and hilly trails ranging from easy to strenuous, so you’re bound to find a trail that’s right for you. With apps like Strava, you can map and measure your daily walks and build up your distance and stamina. Trail walking is great for your heart and soul!

Trails offer a chance to socialize – not just with neighbors you see along the way, but with organized hikes and walking clubs. Many communities keep their trails clear and safe by forming volunteer trail committees. This is a great way to make new friends and contribute some light labor to make your part of the world the perfect place to go for a walk.

So, grab your walking stick and your best friend (two- or four-legged) and hit the trail!



It's Time to Be Social

Think back to your freshman orientation on a large university campus, when you were thrilled to see all the clubs, sports, and events that were ready and waiting for you. But there was just one problem: school. You had to attend classes, write essays, and study for exams. Education was getting in the way of your good time. Flash forward to today, and you can experience all the fun without the term papers. It's time for you to make more friends than you have had in your life.





Lakewood Ranch | Lakewood Ranch, FL

Let's get this party started!

Get your groove on, whether it's the samba or line dancing. Or just sit and enjoy the barbecue. Dozens of clubs host social gatherings. Whether you're married or single, country or jazzy, there's a party for you. You'll even find a group that's just people from your home state.

It's all fun and games

Card clubs deal everything from bridge to pinochle to poker to euchre, but cards are just the beginning of the fun. No matter the game, there's a group that plays it: mahjong, chess, Rummikub, Scrabble, and even Mexican Train Dominoes. Or get up and stretch your legs playing cornhole, horseshoes, or shuffleboard.

Get Back to Nature

Whether your community is coastal or up the country, there's a whole world for lovers of the outdoors. Woodside in Aiken, SC, has a club for the preservation of Monarch butterflies, and another just for friends of bluebirds. On Top of the World in Ocala, FL, has an orchid club.

It's showtime, and you're in the show!

Were you in the drama club or marching band in high school? Rekindle your love of the arts and perform again. There's a club for players of every instrument from dulcimer to ukelele, and theatrical groups for those with acting chops.



Southern Springs by DelWebb | Spring Hill, TN

Planes, trains, and automobiles

Fly a radio-controlled airplane, build model railroads, or motor around with dozens of fellow Cooper Mini owners. Whatever your hobby, you'll find a group of like-minded enthusiasts. Photographers, woodworkers, quilters, stamp and coin collectors, and computer geeks gather to share their secrets.

You said there was no math on the test

There isn't -- unless you happen to like math. There are book clubs and groups that dive into every subject, from genealogy to Bible study, history to astronomy. Many groups invite experts and authors to visit and speak at their meetings.



On Top of the World | Ocala, FL

Find Your Inner Child

Fitness Director Helps Rekindle Passions

Haley Kinne-Norris is the INSPIRE Wellness and Enrichment Coordinator for Liberty Senior Living, a collection of 21 continuing-care retirement communities for active adults. INSPIRE stands for Inclusive, Nutritional, Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, and Engaging. It's that "E" word – engaging – that captures Haley's mission: to create a robust opportunity for Liberty residents to discover old passions and rekindle them or to find something new they've never done before. "One in six older adults in the USA is at risk of social isolation, which can be as dangerous as smoking 15 cigarettes," says Haley. With a Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science and a Master's in Gerontology, Haley is well-suited to keep everyone in their communities engaged and active. "Everyone has a kid inside of them," Haley says, explaining that any activity, from riding a surfboard to playing water volleyball, can be adapted to a person's abilities and needs. "People who haven't been in a pool in 40 or 50 years can be encouraged to get back in. Water exercises help with daily movement," Haley explains. "People can sometimes minimize older adults. If you think they can't do something, they won't." Haley has even created the Liberty Games for residents of eight communities. In March 2023, the Liberty Games included events from water polo to bridge. In addition to all the fun and games, Liberty Senior Living gives its residents many opportunities to enjoy local entertainment and volunteer at schools, soup kitchens, Boys & Girls Clubs, and wherever they can lend a hand and heart.





Sharing and Caring

St. James Plantation in Southport is North Carolina's largest planned community. The St. James Service Club, with a mission to support the quality of life for those most in need in Brunswick County, has raised and donated more than \$2.4 million since its founding 25 years ago. "Our Service Club is like a miniature United Way," says John Thompson, Community Manager for the St. James Plantation Property Owners' Association. The Service Club's annual fundraising activities include food and school supply drives, and Celebrating the Holidays in St. James, a tour of festively decorated homes.

St. James CARES (Community Action for Recycling and Environmental Services) is a team of active volunteers who help keep the area's highways and beautiful beaches litter-free.

St. James has ways for everyone to serve the community by donating their time and talent. Mike's Garage Band, a group of local musicians, rocks and rolls at fundraising events.



An Island of Caring and Giving

Residents of Dataw Island in Beaufort, SC, have a great time doing great work. Recognizing both the historical and environmental significance of their coastal community, Dataw Island homeowners have a History Club and a Conservancy to protect the man-made and natural treasures of their island. Every year, the Dataw Island Women's Golf Association has an annual fundraiser to support the local cancer center, and the Dataw Island Quilters create a blanket for each child in a nearby preschool. The Visual Arts Club provided paintings to decorate the community's new in-patient hospice. Dataw Islanders support veterans' organizations and many local causes with their time, talent, and treasure. Additionally, residents are well-known for helping Dataw Island employees with annual holiday giving and ad hoc efforts to support employee families in a time of crisis. Friendly, philanthropic, and fun is the spirit of Dataw Island.

