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Golden Living

An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Golden

In This Issue

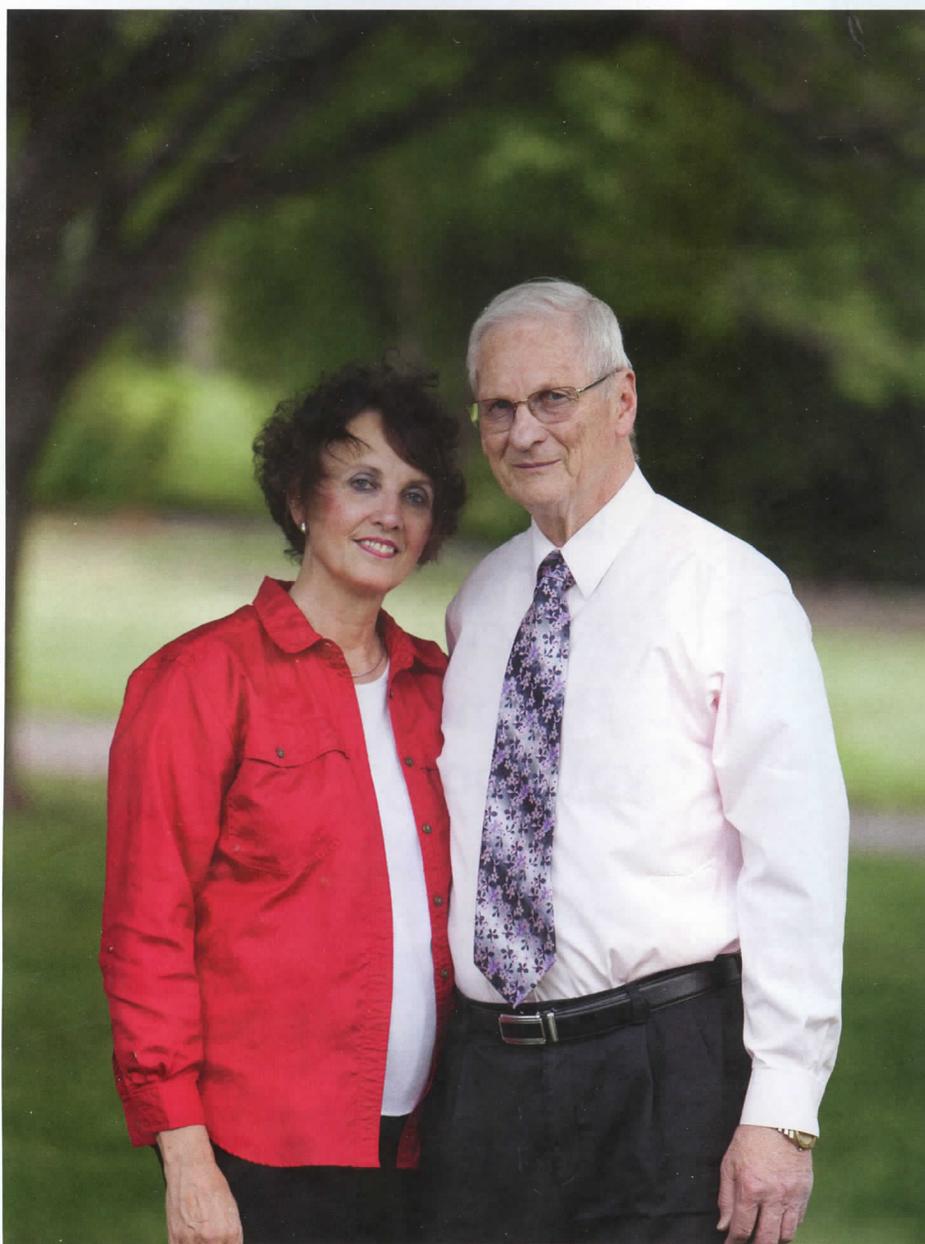
Resident Feature
Calendar of Events
Business Profile
Sandy's Travel Tips

Meet the Kuzmichs

GOLDEN'S MUSICAL MAVENS



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Photograph By: Beth Wedlake



Meet the Kuzmichs

Golden's Musical Mavens

By Sandy Bornstein

Photos by Beth Wedlake Photography

Confucius once said, "Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without." While music may be an essential part of life, only a select number of individuals become proficient musicians.

For decades, long-time Golden residents John and Roslyn Kuzmich used their musical talents, education, and teaching skills to enhance other people's lives. This husband and wife team also passed on their gift of music to their four children—Rhys, Quinn, Reva, and Dallin.

In 1987, the Kuzmich family moved to their Sixth Avenue West home. Here, Roslyn taught their children how to play piano. As youngsters, they frequently performed at sonatina festivals and in duet competitions.

Each child eventually gravitated toward an additional instrument. Rhys and Quinn played clarinet in the Wheat Ridge Marching Band, while Reva and Dallin played violin in the Green Mountain High School Orchestra and the Denver Young Artists Orchestra. Their musical talents were also on display when each of the children performed in the Front Range Youth Symphony during their high school years.

The children's interests weren't one-dimensional. Rhys, Quinn, and Dallin earned their Eagle Scout award while they were active in the Boy Scouts of America Local Troup #329. Reva had starring roles in the Green Mountain High School musicals *Oklahoma* and *Bye Bye Birdie*.

Before their kids left for college, the Kuzmichs followed many family traditions. In December, they played Christmas carol records and shared their love of Christmas melodies with nearby elderly folk. Roslyn carried on her family's tradition of having one night a week set aside for family activities. The focal point was a family-centered poem that the extended family still recites today.

As talented musicians, they gained access to college. Each pursued their individual career goals, found a spouse, had children, and moved on with their lives. Most of them served two-year overseas missions for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Presently, two out of the four children no longer reside in Colorado. Despite the

geographic distance (one in California and the other in Texas), the family remains tied to music and family traditions. The Kuzmich family uses the 4th of July weekend as a time to explore Colorado. During their travels, the three generations of Kuzmichs also play their instruments and sing together.

The source of their musical talent began when John and Roslyn were young. John played clarinet, saxophone, and oboe at his New Jersey high school. He entered Michigan State University as music major and completed his undergraduate and masters degrees at that institution. He began his career as a high school band director. Twice he took the Clifton High School Marching Band on European Tours. The end result was first place victories with five gold medals at the World Music Festival in Kerkrade, Holland.

Roslyn played violin and piano and was a staff writer and business manager for her southern California high school. At Brigham Young University (BYU), she pursued an undergraduate degree in music education.

After teaching for a few years, John pursued a Ph.D. in music education at BYU. While attending graduate school at BYU, Roslyn and John met by happenstance. For a Christmas gift, John gave Roslyn a five-night ski package at Park City, Utah. Their mutual love for skiing and the mountains was set in place. It's not surprising that the two ended up in the Rocky Mountain region. In 1972, they were married in Los Angeles.

Each accepted teaching contracts in different places. Roslyn was a newlywed in New Jersey while John was living in Missouri. Despite this rocky start, the two



reunited the next year when Roslyn moved to St. Louis. The two have remained married for 44+ years.

The four Kuzmich kids were born in St. Louis. Roslyn divided her time between motherhood and teaching general music, giving private piano and violin lessons, and being the assistant editor for the Jazz Educator Journal. John was the editor of this publication from 1978-1992.

Before moving to Colorado, the Kuzmichs lived three years in Northbrook, Illinois, a northern Chicago suburb. At this location, Roslyn taught string orchestra for the nearby Wheeling School District.

When they relocated to Colorado, the local schools benefited from their expertise. Prior to retiring in 2008, John taught concert, jazz, marching bands, and music theory at Evergreen High School and computer technology at Carmody Middle School.

John feels that some of his greatest moments as a teacher revolved around cultural exchange tours with out-of-state high school bands, participating in Battle of the Bands rock band contests, and exposing his students to big-band jazz concerts with Count Basie, Buddy Rich, Woody Herman, Don Ellis and Bill Watrous.

He currently teaches private studio lessons at Music & Arts, Broadway Music School, and the Denver Music Institute. John has authored three jazz pedagogy books and has written approximately 800 articles for professional journals.

Roslyn had an equally impressive career working with primary aged children. Before her retirement in 2010, she taught at Elk Creek Elementary, Coal Creek Elementary, Welchester Elementary,

continued on page 6...

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Wilmore-Davis Elementary, Green Gables Elementary, and Pleasant View Elementary. Roslyn was known for her red shoes, 6th grade harmonica classes, and choreographic concerts.

John and Roslyn share an interest in genealogy. For decades, they researched their respective family trees. John can trace his family history to the 1700s and is now aware of over 6,000 family members.

In 1992, John and Roslyn combined their interest in geography and their love of travel with their musical talents and interest in genealogy. They took their first family history trip that included visits to relatives in Indiana, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. Each stop along the way enjoyed a mini-concert.

Four years later, the family embarked on a 20-day trip to Germany, Poland, and Slovenia. A couple of years later their genealogy journey took them back to Eastern Europe with additional stops in the Ukraine and Russia. Additional family trips took them to a few other European locations.

Roslyn and John's travel bug also encouraged them to teach abroad. The duo taught English classes at Shandong University in Jinan, China as part of the David Kennedy BYU China Teachers Program. During school breaks, they explored other parts of China and also visited South Korea, Japan, Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Hong Kong. John proudly boasts that he has appeared four times on Chinese TV and presented jazz clinics and performed concerts on five continents.

John and Roslyn have a history of giving back to their community by volunteering



each week as employment emissaries at the LDS Denver Colorado Employment Resource Center that is run by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This organization helps the unemployed and underemployed people of all faiths to find jobs and upgrade their skills. John uses his blog <http://goldenemployment.blogspot.com> to expand his outreach initiatives.

Roslyn volunteers as music leader for preschool and primary-aged children at the Foothills Ward Congregation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She also is a member of the Board of Directors for the Sixth Avenue West Homeowners Association.

After residing in Golden for 30 years, Roslyn and John are content with their choice to put down roots in Golden. Roslyn smiles brightly when she says,

"Sixth Avenue West is a nice place to live and very convenient to the crossroads of 6th Avenue and I-70. We're close to the mountains and a hop-skip-n-jump from small-town Golden, bustling Lakewood, and big city Denver. In mere minutes, we can get away from it all. We can hike Green Mountain or up nearby canyons. Our most anticipated community activities are the annual cleanup day in June and the twice a month Food Truck Nights during the summer when residents meet in the meadow on Flora."

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