

The SUNSHINE Fire Protection District Newsletter



It is my pleasure to reintroduce this newsletter. Our last newsletter was published in the summer of 2010, and much has happened since then. I'm only going to cover the last few weeks here.

I accepted the position of fire chief at the July board meeting. I want to begin by recognizing and thanking our previous fire chief, Brett Haberstick, for his generous service. He started service as chief shortly after the Fourmile Fire, and his accomplishments are greatly appreciated by all of the people in the department.

One of those accomplishments was to work with the county and with Boulder Mountain Fire to improve the passage from the saddle at the end of County Road 83 up to Boulder Heights, so that it can be used as an escape route or as a way for us and Boulder Mountain to come to each other's aid. This project had been on our wish list for a long time, and it is wonderful to have this passage available.

Keeping the department running and ready to handle emergency calls is a team effort. Our deputy chief, Henry Ballard, has served in many roles for many years. He has been a firefighter, medical officer, board member, and treasurer. Our officers are Peter Beresford, Rick Lansky, and former fire chiefs Eric Bader, Bruce Honeyman, and Steve Stratton. In addition to being well-trained firefighters with ample experience, these are some of the people most likely to respond when their pagers go off in the middle of the night.

In the five weeks since I became chief, the department was paged to five emergency calls: a medical call, an auto accident, a smoke report, a small wildland fire, and a gas leak. We also provided mutual aid to Gold Hill and Four Mile for several of their calls. In the previous month, we

were paged for eight calls; all but one of those were smoke reports or wildland fires due to lightning.

To keep our skills sharp, we had five trainings. We joined Four Mile for training with live fire in the burn building at the Fire Training Center at the Boulder Reservoir. The following week, we held a driver training at the Star House property, and were joined by firefighters from Boulder

Mountain Fire. We then had classroom training privilege to be able to come to the aid of our neighbors when they need it. Nationally, the number of volunteer firefighters has been declining for the last two decades. Many causes have been cited: two-income households, longer commutes, year-round youth sports, and increased training requirements. Whatever the causes are, the result is that we are always looking for new volunteers. Please consider joining to help support your neighbors and our community.

Steve Waltman, Chief

LETTER FROM THE CHIEF

training on structure firefighting tactics, and later a medical review at our Station 1. Finally, we had a joint training with Gold Hill and Four Mile, where we again practiced structure firefighting using live fire, but this time with the transportable burn trailer.

You may think this sounds like fun, and for those involved, it is. But it is also an honor and

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS: THE FOURMILE CANYON FIRE

By Marty Dick

My interviews with twelve members of the Sunshine community about their experiences in the Fourmile Canyon Fire were very diverse. As a volunteer interviewer for the Maria Rogers Oral History Program of the

Carnegie Library, I contributed these interviews to a collection of over 1,000 recordings of people and events significant to Boulder County history.

To provide the broadest perspective, I selected people with various involvements

with the fire. Of course, firefighters and affiliates were included. But so were folks who lost their houses, others whose homes were spared and many who were evacuated. The overall impression I had was just how different people's experiences were.

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MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**Deirdre Damron
(President)**

I have lived in Sunshine since August 2005. Soon after arriving in Sunshine, I became involved with the CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) Committee, which is a group of neighbors that works to assist the fire department with fire mitigation projects. I first joined the board as a CWPP representative, and then became an official member in June of 2011. I love living in Sunshine and feel that being on the board is a central way to give back to my community. Fire mitigation and the safety of our community are very important to me. We have a great fire department and I'm privileged to be a part of their continuing efforts to keep our neighborhood a safe and wonderful place to live.

**Jen Lansky
(Secretary)**

I grew up in Vienna, Ohio and received a Bachelor's degree from Bowling Green State University. After college I became a business analyst with Ernst & Young, and transferred to Colorado in 1997. I married Rick Lansky in 2000 and we bought our home in Sunshine Canyon in 2002. I have twins born in 2003, Jack and Samantha. I have been a member of the board of directors for the Sunshine Fire Protection District since November 2006. In my free time, I enjoy snowboarding, swimming, water skiing, wake boarding, and gardening.

**Sam Mishkin
(Treasurer)**

I moved to Sunshine with my wife Aimee in 2009. I joined the Sunshine fire board as treasurer in June 2011 to become more involved in and contribute to

"The Sunshine community is a closely-knit network of neighbors all connected by the fire department."

- Jim Peacock, Board Member

the community I have come to greatly appreciate and enjoy. I also joined the fire department in March of this year. My goal for Sunshine is to help find unity and alignment between community needs, community wants, and the fire department. I believe we are extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated group of volunteers on our department and board and I think the group we have today is very capable of providing Sunshine with the resources needed to protect against and mitigate risks of future fires. I feel privileged to be a member of such a great group.

**Gene Fischer
(Board Member)**

I have lived in Sunshine since June 2005. I joined the fire department board in May 2012. My reason for joining is to do my part in helping the community. I believe my extensive experience serving on private sector boards will be helpful in guiding the fire district.

**Jim Peacock
(Board Member)**

The weekend after Martha and I moved to our Sunshine Canyon home, our

new neighbors, Ron Rovtar and Katie Offen, dropped by with a homemade apple pie and invited us to the 2005 SFPD Community Fest that weekend. As we began to befriend some of our neighbors, we soon realized that the Sunshine community is a closely-knit network of neighbors all connected by the fire department. Soon, we started attending fundraising events, FACs, and Martha, Bunko, and I started an annual tradition of our own, Peacocks' Annual Wine Party. After the Four-mile Fire, I felt compelled to make a deeper commitment to the community, offering my many years of business experience. So, I am now serving as a member of the SFPD Board of Directors.

Martha and I have lived in seven or eight different communities in our 37+ years together and never have we resided in a neighborhood with such wonderful neighbors who genuinely care and support each other. I hope my business experience will support the district in this transitional period as we move through the Fourmile Fire period and into our next phase of growth.

**THE SUNSHINE
RECOVERY**

14 HOMES REBUILT

9 HOMES IN
PROGRESS (REBUILDS)

1 NEW HOME UNDER
CONSTRUCTION

FIRE MARSHAL'S LETTER

Driveways, D-Space and Water – Oh, My

As the Sunshine Fire Protection District's Fire Marshal, most of the things that I do in my 'official' capacity are to work with builders and the County to make sure that home sites meet our access and safety needs. The County's building inspectors take care of the home itself. Currently, if a home is larger than 3600 sq. ft., the County requires the installation of a fire suppression system (i.e., residential sprinklers). The size trigger will change in 2013 when **all** residences, irrespective of size, will be required to install such systems. For my part, I'm concerned about three main things: 1) fire department access; 2) defensible space; and 3) water supply.

Fire department access really comes down to the driveway. There are four attributes of driveways with which we are concerned: grade, width, quality and pullouts/turnarounds. Typically, we have little control over the driveway grade, as it is determined by topography and the County's view is that as little grading as possible should be done. Most fire codes have a grade limit of 8% (water trucks have a tough time making steeper grades) but the County allows grades up to 14% for short stretches. The grade specification is one of the most contentious issues for me when I'm dealing with the County.

The standard driveway width is 10 ft., and we need an overhead clearance of around 14 ft., so I require tree branches to be trimmed along the path of the driveway. We also need driveway curves with a radius sufficiently large to accommodate the turning radius of our largest trucks – 35 ft. Ten feet for a driveway width is pretty narrow when looking down from an engine cab, so I encourage widths of at least 12 ft., with hard shoulders beyond that.

Our heaviest trucks weigh upwards of 20 tons, so the driveway needs to be constructed to support that weight in all types of weather.

Turnouts are necessary so that in emergency operations, vehicles can pass each other. The spacing between turnouts is determined by line-of-sight, but generally turnouts are spaced no more than 400 ft. apart on the longest driveways; often with our complicated driveways the pullouts are much closer together. Of course, we need to be able to turn vehicles around at the home, so part of my job is to help with the siting of

One of the best things that you can do is to get an estimate from a reliable contractor as to the actual cost to rebuild your home in the event that it is destroyed.

'hammerheads' and 'Y's near the structure. The siting of the turnarounds is often difficult because of the usually limited space near homes. If driveways are short enough (say, 200 ft. or less) we will back our trucks in, but for many of our homes, the only safe way to approach is to drive in and then turn around at or near the house.

Defensible space is a long topic and one that I've written about on a regular basis for this newsletter. However, there is one thing that needs to be kept in mind: in a major wildfire there will simply not be enough resources to have equipment and firefighters at every home. So, when you think of D-space, imagine what needs to be done so that your home is 'stand-alone' – that is, that it can survive a wildfire with no one present. This means that the fuels that can carry the fire need to be removed. In a creeping fire, it is the grasses that carry the flames; one of the best things that you can do is to weed whack a 10 ft. area around your home. Obviously the construction of your home is a fundamental factor in its survivability and new construction standards emphasize fire-resistant building materials. Nevertheless, I am a strong advocate of moving

the tree-free zone away from the house to at least 1 ½ times the height of the average trees. This means a tree-free zone of **at least** 50-60 ft.

As most of you know, we do not have pressurized water systems in our district, and instead rely on a distribution of cisterns. For new construction (the exceptions are homes being rebuilt from the Fourmile Fire within the 'grandfather' period) the County allows the option of either contributing to the community cistern plan or having an on-site cistern. (If you are rebuilding, we do not require a contribution to the cistern fund.) The decision of what to do depends on the location of the home (i.e., distance from one of our cisterns), the quality of the access, and so on. The size of the on-site cistern depends on the access, home size, etc., but the minimum size we accept is 5,000 gal. The District has the final decision.

Finally, one of the best things that you can do is to get an estimate from a reliable contractor as to the actual cost to rebuild your home in the event that it is destroyed. Make sure that your insurance policy limit reflects this cost. Assessed home values or realtor estimates should not be used, as they will likely be too low. Ask for the appropriate policy limit in writing. If your insurance agent refuses to insure your home at the appropriate level, get his or her rejection in writing and look for a new insurance company. Do it this week!

If you have any questions about any of this, please give me a call.

*Bruce D. Honeyman, Fire Marshal
(303) 704-0162*

EVACUATION PREPAREDNESS: WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

By Kerry Webster

Situational awareness of fire and early response are the two most important components to ensuring life safety of residents and firefighters during a wildland fire. The purpose of this article is to share how to gather information about a fire, when it's time to evacuate, and what to take if you have to evacuate.

Knowing where to get information is critical when living in the wildland-urban interface. This can be difficult for residents and first responders during a wildland fire. One of the best local resources is the Boulder County Office of Emergency Management website:

[http://
www.boulderoem.com/](http://www.boulderoem.com/)

In addition to information about any current emergency, this site has a link that you can follow to sign up for



The Flagstaff Fire, view from Sunshine
June 26, 2012

cell phone, text message, or e-mail alerts for future emergencies.

If a fire threatens our community, being prepared to evacuate as early as possible will be the safest action

you can take for you, your family, and the incoming first responders. Preparing a list of what you need to take will allow for easier evacuation. Critical documents such as birth certificates, legal documents such as mortgage papers, passports, insurance contracts, and vehicle titles should be compiled and kept in one location to ensure nothing is forgotten. Building a list of the other critical items is another way to ease the chaos of an evacuation. Medicines, computer equipment, family heirlooms, pictures, your child's favorite stuffed animals, pet necessities, and a few changes of

clothing should be part of this list.

The website Unclutterer gives additional information on exactly what you might want to consider and actions that can be taken prior to a wildland fire. Visit this link for more information:

[http://
unclutterer.com/2008/07/09/
how-to-be-prepared-in-case-of
-fire/](http://unclutterer.com/2008/07/09/how-to-be-prepared-in-case-of-fire/)

Ready.gov is another site with lots of good information on how to prepare before a fire, and how to prepare your home if you need to evacuate:

[http://www.ready.gov/
wildfires](http://www.ready.gov/wildfires)

The safety of you and your family is the top priority during a wildland fire. By maintaining your situational awareness of the fire danger, as well as taking a few simple actions to allow for a quick evacuation, you will better protect both your family and the incoming responders. Pre-planning and early evacuation help reduce the sense of panic that often accompanies a wildland fire. For more information on any of these components, do not hesitate to contact the fire department.

CHIPPING

The Sunshine CWPP Committee will be organizing our second annual Community Chipping Program for sometime in late October or early November. More information and an opportunity to sign up will be emailed to all residents closer to that time. All who sign up will be included; the number of participants will simply limit the number of hours the crew will spend at each property. Please note that your slash will need to be piled neatly with the cut end facing and in close proximity (arm's length) to a road or driveway that the chipper can access.

NOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP) COMMITTEE

On July 26th 2012, the headline in the *Daily Camera* read “**Study: Fuel treatment ineffective. Thinning did not change fire’s behavior in Fourmile burn area.**” But reading past the headlines, the final analysis of “our” fire is much more nuanced. Although thinning and other mitigation measures were unable to impact the behavior of this particular fire on a landscape scale, it was critical in saving individual homes, including my own.

While mitigation is not guaranteed to save your house, it’s the most powerful tool any individual landowner has to help protect their home.

The researchers who analyzed the Fourmile fire note that at a certain point, the severity of any firestorm can trump all efforts at fire mitigation. Fires can burn so hot that even the most fire resistant materials will fail. Sparks can be blown so far—in Sunshine’s case up to half a mile away—that several hundred feet of thinning provide no barrier to its progress. And in some cases, mitigation efforts are incomplete when burn piles and slash piles remain, adding fuel to the fire.

All these conditions contributed to the destruction that we experienced in Sunshine. Fire-resistant homes set in fields of mown grasses were overwhelmed by the wall of flames. Far from the inferno, wooden homes surrounded by trees were ignited by blowing embers. But it is also true that some threatened homes survived due both to luck and to successful mitigation efforts. In our own case (recent construction located on CR 83 and built in compliance with county thinning and fire-resistant materials regulations), the crown fire that was burning downhill became a ground fire when it reached the mitigated trees near our house, and burned to the gravel fire barrier

By Abby Silver
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around our home without causing any structural damage.

I share my own story in no way to brag, but to encourage all of us to help make our own good luck. The point is that, while mitigation is not guaranteed to save your house, it’s the most powerful tool any individual landowner has to help protect their home. With that in mind, I encourage us all to look around our property and evaluate how we can improve fire safety. This includes mowing grasses and raking up pine needles around our homes; removing flammable debris or firewood from contact with walls and decks during fire season, thinning trees near the home as needed, and either safely burning (with a burn permit), chipping, or removing the resulting slash piles.

There are great resources to be found online at the CSU Cooperative Extension website:

Creating Wildfire Defensible Zones: <http://www.colostate.edu/pubs/natres/06302.html>

Fire Resistant Landscaping: <http://www.colostate.edu/pubs/natres/06303.html>

Forest Home Fire Safety: <http://www.colostate.edu/pubs/natres/06304.html>

Firewise Plant Materials: <http://www.colostate.edu/pubs/natres/06305.html>

Grass Seed Mixes to Reduce Wildfire Hazard: <http://www.colostate.edu/pubs/natres/06306.html>

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or to schedule a walk-through of your property.

THE CWPP—WHAT AND WHERE

WHAT IS THE CWPP? THIS DOCUMENT IS THE RESULT OF A STUDY THAT OUR COMMUNITY UNDERTOOK IN 2008, OUTLINING MEASURES WE CAN TAKE AS A COMMUNITY THAT WILL ENHANCE THE MISSION OF OUR FIRE DEPARTMENT. YOU CAN FIND THE DOCUMENT ONLINE AT [HTTP://WWW.SUNSHINE-FPD.ORG/CWPP/DOCS/CWPP-2008.PDF](http://www.sunshine-fpd.org/cwpp/docs/cwpp-2008.pdf).

TO DATE, WE HAVE WORKED ON THINNING ALONG DISTRICT ROADS; CREATING AND IDENTIFYING EXISTING EMERGENCY EGRESS ROUTES WITHIN THE DISTRICT; AND ORGANIZING COMMUNITY CHIPPING DAYS. LATER THIS FALL, WE WILL BE ORGANIZING ANOTHER CHIPPING PROJECT, AND WORKING TO IMPROVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE BY PROVIDING REFLECTIVE ADDRESS SIGNAGE THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY. MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON THESE TWO UPCOMING PROJECTS WILL BE COMING SOON TO EACH HOUSEHOLD.

COMMUNITY PROFILE: CHIEF STEVE WALTMAN

By Johanna Hurley

Our new fire chief, Steve Waltman, has always been fascinated by the power of fire. While an electrical engineering undergrad at Caltech, he became so accomplished at pyrotechnics that the university funded a trip to the Mojave Desert so that Steve could test his many inventions in an environment that was safer than the college campus.

However, once Steve moved to Sunshine Canyon in 1990 with his wife-to-be, Felicity Wong, he realized that his focus would need to change from creating fiery displays to learning how to put them out. Soon after his move to the fire district, Steve joined the Sunshine Fire Department and served as its chief from 1995-97.

Steve began his second tenure as the Sunshine Fire Chief this July, when Brett Haberstick resigned. Steve speaks highly of our former Fire Chief: "Brett stepped in when we really needed him. He raised money for the fire department and helped to

fill a hole in our budget. He gave 100% of himself to the job and I am grateful for his successes."

Steve does not dwell on the frustrating details of the Fourmile Canyon

has had a goal to transform Sunshine from an undisciplined group of volunteers into a department of respected, well-trained, and professional firefighters."

He is proud of the Sunshine Fire Department and spoke about the "unique nature of our volunteers. Many of our firefighters are professionals who work from home," making them available when a call goes out. "They are highly educated, successful people," he says. Steve feels that this contributes to the high degree of competency, dedication, and decision-making skills that characterize the department.

Currently, Steve works from his home on CR 83 as a consultant, designing custom electronics for quantum physics research. He and Felicity have two daughters, Stephanie and Amelia.

A Community Profile will be a regular feature in this newsletter. Suggestions are welcome.



Chief Steve Waltman

Fire of 2010. He remains thankful that no one was hurt or killed when "the Big One" roared through our canyon.

Steve has a unique view of the Sunshine Fire Department's history. "Every fire chief since Doug Young

BEAR ACTIVITY LOG

They're baaaaack

Ruby Heflin reports that she has recently spotted the first black bear on her property since 2010. It was a medium-sized black bear, and he took a dip in Ruby's fish pond.

Bear vs. Honda

Misty Vale Court has seen a spate of bear activity this summer, including weekly trash patrols. But by far the most intrusive event was at the Ballard household, where Brian's Honda was paid a late-night visit by a wayward bear. Once co-

zily inside the vehicle, the bear found it had locked itself in. The ultimate result was a thoroughly ransacked and ultimately "totaled" car...and a souvenir.



*Above: Brian Ballard's Honda: the Aftermath
Left: Anyone Seen a Bear Minus a Tooth?*

Please send us your submissions: Megan.Joseph@Joseph-Management.com

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS: THE FOURMILE CANYON FIRE

Continued from Page 1

Each person's emotions, reactions, and responses varied. Even firefighters, all from Sunshine, had vastly different perspectives.

Individuals willing to talk of their experiences for a one-hour tape had an initial conversation with me to review what they wished to share. After time to reflect, they were able to focus on their most significant memories for the hour-long videotaped interviews. As the interviewer, I had no agenda or questions to ask – this was to be their experience in their words.

While people who lost their homes grieved, others whose properties were spared suffered survivor's guilt. Firefighters, lauded as heroes, felt overwhelmed by a fire they were unable to fight. Everyone mourned the loss of our green vistas and close-knit community.

Some impressions were held by everyone. All agreed that it was chaotic. Smoke obscured familiar roads and homes and even firefighters weren't always able to be sure of their location. Evacuees hurried from their properties, trying to

decide what valuables to take and how to provide safety for their animals. Some followed carefully planned lists and others left feeling they'd be back in a few hours. In fact, it took several days before even a few residents knew the status of their homes.

Despite the diversity of people's experiences, there remained a feeling of community unity. We were more than a collection of houses, and so with the Sunshine spirit we knew we would survive, somehow. We have all been changed. Some have rebuilt,

some have moved, but all have gone on with their lives. Rebuilding Sunshine into the strong and supportive community it has been is the most successful outcome of this tragedy.

Marty Dick



View from CR 83, Summer 2012

To View/Hear an Interview

Are you curious about the experiences of residents of Sunshine Canyon during the Fourmile Canyon Fire? Marty Dick volunteered to interview 12 members of the Sunshine Community. The audio/video tapes are part of the Maria Rogers Oral History collection of over 1,000 tapes about Boulder County history. These tapes are available online for public access by following these directions:

1. Click on this site: nell.boulderlibrary.org/search-S8/
2. In the keyword box, type: oral history fourmile

Of the 12 interviews completed, 8 are currently available, with the remaining ones being processed. New interviews will be added as the volunteers complete the process of transcribing and entering the video and audio portions into the system. You Tube addresses are shown for the first three; others will be added when available. The ones currently available are shown below with the call number:

Henry Ballard	OH 1690-V	http://youtu.be/Nl_nDsqxQEg
Dee Spencer	OH 1706-V	http://youtu.be/wSM1lqikpsA
Doug Young	OH 1717-V	http://youtu.be/DtDgjR23G9Q
George Woodward	OH1728-V	
Steve Stratton	OH 1732-V A-B	
June Howard	OH 1685-V	
Wanda Stratton	OH 1752 -V	
Steve Waltman	OH 1751-V	

The interviews currently being processed include: Eric Bader, Bruce Honeyman, Janice Wheeler, and Nate Wheeler.

The system at Carnegie Library does not have the capacity to hold many videos, so online access usually has just the audio and a summary of the transcript. However, all the interviews were videotaped, and the DVDs and audios are available for viewing at the Carnegie Library, located one building west of the corner of Pine and Broadway.



CALENDAR

September

- 5 EMS Training, 7 p.m., EMS CE @ Sunshine
- 8 Sunshine Community Fest, 4-8 p.m., Fire Station #2 (SCD)
- 8 Firefighter Training, 9 a.m., TBD @ Sunshine
- 11 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- 13 EMS Training, 7 p.m., EMS CE @ Four Mile
- 26 EMS Training, 7 p.m., EMS CE @ Boulder Rural
- 27 Firefighter Training, 7 p.m., Pumps @ Four Mile

October

- 6&7 Sunshine Schoolhouse Arts & Crafts Show, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 9 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- 11 EMS Training, 7 p.m., EMS CE @ Four Mile
- 13 Firefighter Training, 9 a.m., Moving water/water relay @ Four Mile
- 17 EMS Training, 6:30 p.m., EMS CE @ Lyons
- 24 EMS Training, 7 p.m., EMS CE @ Boulder Rural
- 25 Firefighter Training, 7 p.m., TBD @ Sunshine



The Sunshine Schoolhouse Annual Arts & Crafts Show

Featuring the work of local residents

Date: Saturday October 6th and
Sunday October 7th
Free Admission & Refreshments!

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. both days

Place: Historical SUNSHINE SCHOOL
387 County Road 83

For inquiries contact:

Dee Spencer 303.443.0121

Linda Luchangco 303.444.6589

10% of all sales will go to the Sunshine School & Cemetery Fund.

Cash & Checks only, please.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Sunshine FPD is an all-volunteer department. We are always looking for new volunteers. Our members take classes at academies to become certified as Structure Firefighters, Wildland Firefighters, and Emergency Medical Technicians or Responders. We have trainings each month to maintain and improve our skills. Many have deployed to a fire in Colorado or other states to gain experience on a major fire.

If you are interested in joining, please contact Chief Steve Waltman or Deputy Chief Henry Ballard.

(Steve Waltman: (303) 786-9414 or chief@sunshine-fpd.org; Henry Ballard: (303) 449-8619 or deputy-chief@sunshine-fpd.org)

Births

Elliot Mae Lockhart—August 3, 2011
Elizabeth Evelyn-Catherine Joseph—November 9, 2011
Nolan Carl Grow—June 20, 2012
Jack Damron—August 25, 2012

Deaths

Danny Williams, 52—January 23, 2012

Thoughts? Compliments? Criticism?

Your feedback is welcome and encouraged.

Advertisements and announcements
are also invited.

Please contact Megan Joseph at
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