

Who does Our Community News really represent?

Just to be clear to your readers, can you change the name of *Our Community News* to *Our Community News (The Political Arm of the District 38 School Board)*? Anyone that would give these people money via 4B, based on the history of their wasteful spending, is out of their mind....

Paul Lambert

Yes on 4A and 4B

The school district wants more money from me? No problem. As far as I'm concerned you could double my property taxes and I would not complain as long as I knew that the great kids in our community were going to have the tools and resources that they deserve.

The two canards I hear repeated most often are: 1) "Schools have all the money they need," and 2) "Schools waste money." Wild-eyed, unsubstantiated statements made by those too selfish to contribute to their community. My student has since graduated from LPHS, but I will never fall back on that lame excuse that I've heard since I was in junior high: "I don't have any kids in the system so why should I support the schools?" Why? Because it's your obligation.

The last time D38 put an MLO on the ballot, opponents put out professionally made signs with the laughable message, "Taxed out of our homes." However, I stopped laughing because, sadly, it was true. I saw people who were forced to live out of their Mercedes SUV's and their BMW SUV's and their Lincolns and Cadillacs. Pity. If you don't want to pay for schools, there's a simple solution. Move. Go live in a place where there are no schools. Otherwise it's your obligation.

Bill Beagle

4A and 4B are smart, sensible solutions for our community

As a resident, a father of two kids in D38 schools and a small-business owner, I wholeheartedly support 4A and 4B. The middle school is overwhelmed—can you imagine having to eat lunch before 11 a.m.? Then maybe have PE later that day and then try to concentrate on Algebra at 2 p.m.? No - they're exhausted, hungry and it's not fair to them and it's not fair to the teachers who are trying every trick in their toolbox to make it work.

Growth in our community isn't slowing down, I see it every day as I own a real estate company that focuses on the Tri-Lake area. There are new builds going in all over the Tri-Lakes area and there are a lot more coming that you probably haven't seen yet. Many of my clients work in Denver. They want a little piece of our paradise down here without having to shell out \$700,000 for a home. That's not going to decrease as the widening of I-25 happens; it's going to increase the growth.

As I take clients around the area and show them homes the conversation inevitably goes to schools. While I unfortunately am not allowed to tell them about the schools, I always point them to a few websites to do their own research. Here's the gist: Our middle school situation in this town is putting an asterix on our school district. People know about the overcrowding not just at LPMS but also at MA.

Let's think about our property values. What happens to those if people come to tour our community and they see a bunch of trailers outside the middle school and realize that the citizens of Tri-Lakes weren't willing to cough up \$9/month (for a \$400,000 home) to ensure our students' future. What will it cost us then?

Brendan Burns

A measured "no" on 4A and 4B

Just weeks ago, ballot issues 4A and 4B were all but guaranteed to pass. Deals that had been in the works for more than 18 months, details of which were often not subject to public inspection, finally came to light. Then came the signs. Banners stating public opposition gave birth to much-needed conversation and voice to a quiet, but principled group. It's easy to write off the opposition to 4A and 4B as the work of obstructionists, deniers of growth, individuals without intellect, or people who refuse support to the community and district. We are none of those things.

The issues with 4A and 4B are dispassionate arguments against fiscal irresponsibility, a demand for transparency, and a strong belief in educated voters. We have learned in the last weeks that the district had long assumed a specific outcome ahead of voter consent and their supporters are demonstrating that they'll go to astounding lengths to push it through. Advocates have disguised the true cost of the measures to voters and accepted large sums from outside influences including the Colorado Teachers Union

("Strong D38 Community" PAC Tracer Report Colorado Secretary of State—"Fund for Children & Public Education," the PAC for the National Education Association).

In this era of political divisiveness, I'm disappointed that those favoring the measures would refuse civil dialogue, instead resorting to dismissal and public bullying. At a recent public panel, a school board member was asked what the board would do if 4A and 4B didn't succeed. He stated blankly that it would reappear on the ballot next year. To him I say, "Please do." Give proper consideration to all available options, make fiscally sound decisions, and be honest and engaged with voters. If you do, sir, you'll have my vote.

Lani Glaser

Invest in our community's future

I'm not one to write to the papers or to the editors. However, my family and I feel so strong about 4A/4B passing that I am writing today. Like so many others, my husband and I chose to move into the area 12 years ago partly because of the school district. D38 was a major draw for us as we were deciding where we wanted to raise our family. This community is truly blessed to have such great schools, teachers, and professionals, but now they need our help.

Recently my husband and I were explaining the 4A/4B initiative to his father, who has been a farmer his whole life. As we talked about the pros and cons of the initiative, his father was surprised, as are we, that there is even a question on why you wouldn't vote yes. His father explained to us that in his community, like most farming communities, farmers are the property owners who carry the financial burden for paying for most of the schools, programs, etc. Even during extremely tough financial times he, like all his neighbors, always did what they could for the kids as they are the future of the community and this country.

So why can't we vote yes in Northern El Paso County? Our kids, teachers, and schools need our help now. Please vote yes on 4A and 4B on Nov. 6.

Susan Hunter-Smith

For the kids? D38's 4B construction project is full of impropriety

How urgent does a Legitimate Need have to be to obligate us to vote for an Apparent Con? That's what voters should be asking themselves as they think about what to do with 4B, the headache on this year's ballot.

Last fall, a newly-elected board member pressured administrators to obtain a second opinion on construction options and price estimates. The resulting opinion stated that 1) a full renovation of Grace Best Elementary would cost \$11 million; 2) building a new elementary school at Bear Creek would cost \$22.2 million to \$26.5 million ("total project budget"); and 3) the renovation/new-build ratio of \$11 million vs. \$22 million to 25 million "is very close to a tipping point where it almost makes more sense to build a new [facility]." (CRP Letter to Clawson, 1/30/18)

Considering the first consulting firm's estimate was \$32 million, district observers were overjoyed with a price that was \$10 million to \$6 million less, but it didn't last. Soon after, conservative stalwart Sarah Sampayo was effectively (and viciously) ousted from the board while the district allowed the same firm who had given it consulting advice to bid on the project—a conflict of interest, as defined by federal regulations [40 CFR § 1506.5(c)].

But it gets worse. After awarding the project to the second consulting firm, the district then allowed it to adjust its cost estimate from \$22 million-\$26.5 million to \$30.5 million ("Cost Summary - April Board of Education" p. 4). Not one administrator or remaining board member complained about the higher price. Nor did any of them point out that the firm was ignoring its own advice, since a ratio of \$11 million/\$30 million is too far from the "tipping point" of \$11 million/\$22 million-\$25 million to continue to refuse to renovate Grace Best.

Unfortunately for the kids, teachers, and taxpayers, an \$11 million renovation isn't on the ballot this year. A \$30 million new construction project is. Why is that?

Jeff Lampman

Is the Golden Rule dead in D38?

Our family moved here in 2015. We have two special needs children, and upon seeing this community and researching D38 we knew this was the right place for us. We bought in Monument for the schools and now we are selling and moving to Lake George because of the schools here. I have two older children, so have dealt with the public school systems since 2004. Also, I have done volunteer work since 1999. Never have I had an issue with any school or community until Bear Creek Elementary. "Do unto others" and "I'm sorry"

are not in their vocabulary and bullying is acceptable even to parent volunteers by staff and the PTO. If you as a parent volunteer are viewed as different, then your children may be affected by this in a derogatory manner. Here it is frowned upon to be different and unique. For a special needs parent that is not OK! Uniqueness and differences should be accepted.

At 40 I wouldn't have thought I'd be homeschooling my children. But I am after several attempts with administration to switch schools and repeated issues with D38 since 2015. Now our children are learning at an unprecedented pace! We believed the school was doing well with our kids, they were learning and the special needs programs seemed amazing. But after a month of teaching them, I realize how little they learned and how capable they are. They were being held back from their full potential. I'm trying to take the positive on this as they are so much more advanced than when in public schools. I would like to hear if you have had issues with D38 or another school. If you would like to hear our full story, please email me at virgopegasus@yahoo.com.

Jennie Carnes Romine

Please vote no on Palmer Lake measure 2B

The historic "Pogo" comic strip had a famous line: "We have met the enemy, and he is us." For the citizens of Palmer Lake—which don't include the proponents of 2B, by the way—this is the issue we must face for the fourth time: Will we decide to help a couple folks who don't live here make a lot of money selling retail marijuana and change our town forever?

Some folks believe that the town needs the tax revenue. Maybe retail marijuana could bring in some money, just as many other Faustian efforts could. But we have to ask: Is the money worth it? What else should we consider?

The National Institute for Health lists the following effects of marijuana use:

- Effects of short-term use
- Impaired short-term memory, making it difficult to learn and to retain information.
- Impaired motor coordination, interfering with driving skills and increasing the risk of injuries.
- Altered judgment, increasing the risk of sexual behaviors that facilitate the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases.
- In high doses, paranoia and psychosis.
- Effects of long-term or heavy use
- Addiction (in about 9 percent of users overall, 17 percent of those who begin use in adolescence, and 25 to 50 percent of those who are daily users)..
- Altered brain development.
- Poor educational outcome, with increased likelihood of dropping out of school..
- Cognitive impairment, with lower IQ among those who were frequent users during adolescence..

Is this what we want for Palmer Lake? Not the town I live in and love. Other very useful information can be found on the website www.CALMPalmerLake.org. Please take a look.

Let's not become our own enemy. Let's keep retail marijuana out of Palmer Lake. Please vote no on 2B. Thank you.

Chris Amenson

Vote yes on 2B

In the coming election on Nov. 6, I hope Palmer Lake voters will take advantage of the opportunity to bring new revenue into our town and update:

- fire protection together with
 - emergency medical service, as well as
 - improve infrastructure—including drinking water and stormwater drainage—
 - with the potential of decreasing property taxes.
- Please vote yes on 2B, retail marijuana.

Judith Harrington

Do not turn Tri-Lakes into another "Rehab Riviera"

My family moved to Monument from Orange County, California in 2012. Still going back to office in Costa Mesa, Calif., few times each year. There have been

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