

Snapshots of Our Community

WMMI Geo Day, Jan. 5



Above: From left, Dr. Steven Wade Veatch and students Jonathan Hair, 15, and Ben Elick, 14, share information with visitors about Earth Science programs, activities, and field trips on Geology Day at the Western Museum of Science and Industry on Jan. 5. They represented Pebble Pups, a rock hound group for kids that meets monthly in Teller County. Pebble Pups kids conduct research that is published in periodicals, work with lab equipment, and go on field trips. Remarkably for their young ages, Hair will speak at a Kansas meeting of the Geological Society of America in March and Elick will speak at the New Mexico Mineral Symposium on the campus of the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, presenting a paper on the Cresson Mine of Cripple Creek.



Below: Presenters show various ways of prospecting for gold and other minerals. *Photos by Janet Sellers.*



Strong D38 Community, Jan. 17



Above: On Jan. 17, the Strong D38 Community group hosted a community event at The Barn in Woodmoor. The theme was "Continuing the Conversation" and had a goal of listening to attendees' top concerns about issues related to the D38 School District. About 30 attendees, facilitated by resident Matt Vineyard, wrote their top concerns on Post-Its, which were placed on sheets around the room. Each participant read aloud their concerns and answered questions from the audience. These Post-Its were then collated into larger groups with a goal of using them to drive future meetings exploring each topic in order of priority. Strong D38 Community is an independent, all-volunteer group that believes we have a strong community because we have strong public schools in D38 and we have strong schools because we have a strong community. The group is focused on educating the community about the issues related to the school district. For more information, see <http://strongd38community.com>. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

Crime and safety, Jan. 16



Above: Brent Ambuehl, crime prevention coordinator with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, provided a Crime and Safety briefing at Wesley Owens Coffee on Jan. 16. Nearly 45 people attended the event, which was organized by local resident Gordon Reichal. Local responders from fire and safety organizations in the community also attended and weighed in during the discussion. Ambuehl spoke about the Neighborhood Watch program. There are two active groups including one in the Promontory Pointe area with 265 homes. The sheriff and Monument Police are working on increasing participation. To find out more or start a Neighborhood Watch, email neighborhoodwatch@elpasoco.com. Ambuehl gave a quick recap of some of the recent incidents in our area. The primary problems are property crimes such as burglaries. He suggests contacting the sheriff with any reports of concerns so that they can look for patterns. Additional resources on Crime Prevention and the Community Video program are available at <http://bit.ly/epcso-cp> and <http://bit.ly/epcso-video>. The non-emergency number for the Sheriff's Office is 719-390-5555. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

Pinewood Derby, Jan. 26



Above: Racers and their supporters rally for their cars as they approach the finish line at the Pinewood Derby race held by Pack 17 Jan. 26. *Photo by Jennifer Kaylor*

By Jennifer Kaylor

Cub Scout Pack 17 hosted its annual Pinewood Derby on Jan. 26 at Lewis-Palmer Middle School. This family-oriented event draws a crowd of 50 or more Scouts, family members, and friends to a morning of fun and innovative competition. Racing is not exclusive to Scouts—parents and siblings may race their own pinewood creations and compete in the subjective categories: paintwork, uniqueness, patriotic décor, and best cub-built (a category exclusive to the Scouts).

Cars registered for the digitally timed race met weight, rolling accuracy, and calibration specifications that were established during a check-in process conducted the previous evening. Some of the physical restrictions included: A 5-ounce maximum weight, a 2 3/4-inch maximum width, a 7-inch maximum length, a 3-inch maximum height, a 4-inch ground clearance, and a 4 3/8-inch wheel base. During check-in, Scouts and others enjoyed the movie *Down and Derby*, a campy story about dads who just can't resist the allure of pinewood derby competition.

Racers competed in four consecutive heats and had the least favorable of the four race times eliminated. Scores reflected the lowest cumulative total time. Pack leaders used a rotation system—each car raced each of the four lanes of the derby track to prevent unfair track lane advantages—to help prevent ill will among the fierce competitors.

Camaraderie, snacks, door prizes, and good-natured fun remained the focus of the event. Initiated by Don Murphy in 1953 in Manhattan Beach, Calif., the Pack 17 Pinewood Derby of Monument continues to flourish in popularity. Top pack winners were: first place, Jeremy Newmaker with his car Grim Reaper; second place, Beckett Urban with Red Reflector; and third place, Ryan Clark with Da Gren Bananana.

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