

Our Community News

Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area



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Issue #229 — Volume 20 Number 3 — Saturday, March 7, 2020

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Local Events

See pages 28-31 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- **Benet Hill Concert: Colin McAllister, Classical Guitar, Sun., Mar. 8, 2:30-4 p.m.**
- **Meet the Monument BOT Candidates, Tue., Mar. 10, 6-8 p.m.**
- **WMMI Lecture: Colorado Pegmatites, Tue., Mar. 10, 7-8 p.m.**
- **Screenagers Next Chapter, Wed., Mar. 11, 6:30-8 p.m.**
- **Water-wise Gardening: design and plant selection, Fri., Mar. 13, 10-11:30 a.m.**
- **Oasis Band at Jackson Creek Senior Living, Fri., Mar. 13, 6:30 p.m.**
- **Benet Hill Free Film: Lessons From a School Shooting, Fri., Mar. 13, 6:30 p.m.**
- **Black Rose Acoustic Society: The Cody Sisters, Fri., Mar. 13, 7 p.m.**
- **Moors & McCumber Concert at TLCA, Fri., Mar. 13, 7 p.m.**
- **NEPCO Meeting, Sat., Mar. 14, 10 a.m.-noon**
- **TL Chamber: To Catch a Thief, Mon., Mar. 16, 9:30-10:30 a.m.**
- **Celtic Steps at Jackson Creek Senior Living, Tue., Mar. 17, 3:30 p.m.**
- **AARP Driver Safety Class, Thu., Mar. 19, 11:45 a.m.**
- **PLHS: Pikes Peak Trolleys, Thu., Mar. 19, 7 p.m.,**
- **The Historic Age of Antarctic Exploration, Fri., Mar. 20, 10:30 a.m.**
- **WMMI Family Day: Science, Sat., Mar. 21, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.**
- **Benet Hill Concert: Crystal Creek Folk Ensemble, Sun., Mar. 22, 2:30-4 p.m.**
- **Suzy Bogguss Concert at TLCA, Sun., Mar. 22, 7 p.m.**
- **Bill Nance Memorial Blood Drive, Thu., Mar. 26, 1-5:30 p.m.**
- **Friends of Fox Run Park, Thu., Mar. 26, 5:30 p.m.**

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Circulation

Print Run: 21,550
Mail Delivery: 20,765
Stacks: 785

Our free circulation area now includes over 1,600 mailboxes in Black Forest!

Methodist Church EPG wins national award



Above: Megan Fitzgerald-McGowan of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) (center) presented the National Wildfire Mitigation Award, co-sponsored by the National Association of State Foresters, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, NFPA, and the U.S. Forest Service, to recognize volunteers of the Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Emergency Preparedness Group (EPG) for innovation, dedication, and leadership in wildfire mitigation. The award was presented to leaders of EPG, André Mouton and Lisa Hatfield, at the church Feb. 22. The EPG was formed in response to the 2012 Waldo Canyon Fire and received Community Emergency Response Training. After the Black Forest fire in 2013, the EPG received additional training and helped residents of Black Forest recover from the damage. The group is expanding its role to also help neighborhoods with fuels mitigation to reduce wildfire hazards. Contact them with questions at epg@tlumc.org. Photo by Steve Pate.

Monument Board of Trustees, Feb. 18

Intense discussion of radium in the water supply

By Allison Robenstein

During the Feb. 18 Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting, a discussion of radium in the water supply prompted angry comments among the members leading to a public water workshop, Feb. 28 (See page 28). Police Chief Sean Hemingway took the oath of office, Rosa Ooms was named employee of the month for January, and Public Works Director Tom Tharnish updated the board on plans for the new Public Works facility.

Trustee Jim Romanello was noted absent by Deputy Town Clerk Erica N. Romero.

Radium discussion turns ugly

During Trustee Comments, Trustee Jeffrey Bornstein thanked Town Manager Mike Foreman for a letter he sent out to all board members regarding radium in the town water supply. Bornstein stressed the need to fix the problem, and Foreman said, "This is something that has been going on for a long time, not just here, but across the country and is something the town has already addressed based on the state's requirements." See www.ocn.me/v16n11.htm#mbot1017.

Although it is unclear what was contained in the letter, the discussion became quite contentious. Trustee Laurie Clark asked that the EPA determine whether the town is in compliance and the risk is addressed. Clark was concerned to know from where the radium was coming because her attorney had recently told her about a similar issue in Mesa County that was caused by mining tailings. "we don't need to reinvent the wheel, but should determine the source of the radium," she said.

Bornstein said twice that he wanted to be on the record by saying, "Anybody living in this town, I would not drink the water." He continued, saying he has information from the EPA in-

dicating there are other substances in the water that are out of compliance. When Tharnish, a water professional operator, certified by the Water Quality Control Division within the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), asked for the report, Bornstein refused until Tharnish provided him with data first. Clark agreed with Bornstein, saying, "We do need to be sure we are in compliance with EPA guidelines—when I talked with my attorney, he said we are not."

"I would appreciate as a senior certified water professional that you provide me with any information you received," said Tharnish.

Bornstein said, "This should be priority number one with this town. We are not in compliance. Other elements [in the water] are not in compliance," although reports on the town's website contradict this statement. See water quality reports posted on the town's website at <https://townofmonument.org/373/Water-Quality-Reports>.

An ordinance was supposed to be brought to the board during the Feb. 3 meeting for radium reduction, but the meeting was canceled due to weather. In the request totaling \$81,360, Tharnish said, "The Town of Monument Water Department has been tracking radium levels being discharged out of Water Treatment Plant (WTP) 3/9 for the last two years as part of [the] CDPHE compliance quarterly sampling plan. The radium levels have been rising slowly on average and we feel it is time to be proactive and pursue a more aggressive approach of removal instead of the current dilution method approved by the state. The town is currently in compliance, but we anticipate that the running average of radium will exceed the Maximum Containment Level (MCL) sometime in this next

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Feb. 10

Board discusses change in start time, hears MA annual report

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education held a work session and a regular meeting on Monday, Feb. 10. The work session centered on discussion of school start times. The regular meeting included the Monument Academy Annual Report and a Safety and Security briefing.

School start times

The Ad Hoc Committee on School Start Times presented a report on its research during the work session. Created in April 2019, the committee consists of 12 members, including representatives of elementary, middle and high schools, parents, and members of the departments of student services and transportation.

Co-chairs Cynthia Fong Smith and Renee Gargas reported on their research and proposals on the subject.

California has ruled that beginning in 2022 high school can start no earlier than 8:30. In the local area, Cheyenne Mountain District 12 will change its start time in the 2020-21 school year. Academy District 20 has already changed their times.

Studies have shown that elementary school students can begin school at 7:30, but following puberty students tend to go to bed at 11 and would naturally sleep until 8 a.m. In districts where start times have changed, bedtimes have tended to remain the same, allowing an extra hour of sleep.

These studies were based on a national survey titled Teen Sleep Habits