



**Above:** At the Dec. 10 Monument Board of Trustees meeting, Greg Coopman presented the trustees with information about senior needs in the Tri-Lakes Community. He warned that 40 percent of baby boomers have “hardly any money saved at all,” and he said that Medicaid insurance will not pay for long-term care costs, and there is no state or federal program in place to fill in the gaps. See the Board of Trustees article for Coopman’s ideas to create “age-friendly” communities and for a list of local resources for both senior citizens and caregivers. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

He warned that, in addition to normal living costs to be paid for in retirement, the average senior citizen will also need a minimum of \$250,000 to pay for additional out-of-pocket medical costs including skilled nursing care, assisted living, or nursing home care. He said 70 percent of people turning 65 can expect to use some form of long-term care during their lives. Currently 80 percent of all care is being provided by unpaid family caregivers, he said.

However, 78 percent of seniors have saved less than \$250,000 and are not financially prepared for living costs during retirement, much less the additional long-term health care costs. Coopman said 40 percent of baby boomers have “hardly any money saved at all.”

Ironically, the vast majority of seniors say they would like to stay in their homes as long as they can. “The only barrier to ‘aging in place’ is financial,” he said, since all services that seniors might need would come to their home, for a price.

He explained that Medicaid insurance will not pay for long-term care costs, and there is no state or federal program in place to fill in the gaps. He said the number of senior citizens who cannot pay for their care but still do not qualify for Medicaid includes 30 percent of seniors now and will increase to 90 percent of seniors in the next decade.

Coopman said that to become eligible for Medicaid, the only program that would pay, individuals have to first completely exhaust their own financial assets. The “best thing” that can happen to them then is to go in and out of the hospital system, “spending down” all their savings so they can become eligible to live in Medicaid-eligible long-term-care facilities, which

are “bad.” He said, “We are going to have a real problem in next 10-12 years. It is heartbreaking.”

Mayor Rafael Dominguez asked about Colorado House Bill 15-1033, signed into law in June, concerning long-term strategies to address Colorado’s aging population. Coopman said very limited funding is available, but that bill might spark conversations and a road map to create a solution about long-term care and its costs.

Because of the change in demographics in our area, he said communities need to plan for the aging of the current baby boomer population by focusing on age-friendly communities. Areas of focus included:

- Outdoor space and buildings that are pleasant and safe, contain green space, seating areas, smooth pavement, elevators, escalators, ramps, wide doorways
- Access to public transportation, ride

- sharing
- Housing adequate to safety and well-being
- Social participation in intergenerational activities and community centers to combat isolation and loneliness detrimental to health

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# Lewis-Palmer School District #38 SCHOOL NEWS

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January 2016

## Teacher Spotlight: Mary Gregory

Mary Gregory decided to study space upon discovering that her car had been broken into and her belongings stolen. She was an exchange student, far away from home in Billings, Montana, and the stars promised answers. This strange but true story resulted in a great addition for Lewis-Palmer School District. Mary began teaching earth science at Lewis-Palmer High School in 2007. She added Astronomy to her repertoire, which is now Advanced Astronomy, so her students can earn college credit. Since knowledge of space, planets, asteroids and stars increases every year, she enjoys the ever-expanding educational climate around these topics.

Mary’s first love, the study of dead things, paleontology, led her to Paris where she became fluent in the language of paleontology, French.



After growing up in Ohio and getting her BA and MS from Bowling Green, there were moves to Rhode Island, California, Hawaii, and the Pentagon in DC (in time for 9/11) and then a move to Colorado. After 26 years of marriage, she tries to keep up with her four kids. She is happy that her kids are working to realize their dreams, wherever that leads them.

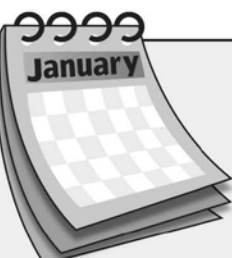
Mary is passionate about education and believes that each child has unlimited potential, some just need encouragement toward personal responsibility in order to find it. When asked how she would feel if she couldn’t teach astronomy, her face falls, and she replies, “I wouldn’t know what to do on Star Party nights.” Star Parties are usually in October on the soccer practice fields at LPHS. Students, parents, and community members are invited to peer into telescopes and come face-to-face with the worlds above. Hopefully, Mary Gregory’s October Friday nights will remain booked for years to come.



## Scout Initiates Robotics Club

The Lewis-Palmer Middle School Robotics Club came about due to an interesting set of circumstances. First, as part of cleaning out storage cabinets, Dwayne Mayo, LPMS technology teacher, discovered multiple boxes of Lego robot kits in various conditions of completeness, some needed work or repairs. Then, Cailin Foster, a Girl Scout and robotics student at Palmer Ridge High School, approached Mayo with a desire to start and support a robotics club. The club started a little late for a November competition, but the team came together well and placed sixth out of 35 teams.

Foster, a scout since kindergarten, enjoyed robotics clubs in Alabama prior to moving to Colorado. She wanted middle school students to have the opportunity to explore engineering via the fun vehicle of robotics prior to entering high school. She sees robotics as a gateway to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). Three other PRHS juniors assisted the club: Jimmy Gammell, Kirk Lobban, and Sean Bowers. Her involvement also contributes to earning her Girl Scout Gold Award, which requires scouts to spend at least 150 hours on a project that serves the community in a sustainable way. Mayo and Foster plan to continue working with the club next year.



## Upcoming Events

January 1	District Closed
January 5	Students Return
January 18	District Closed
January 27	LPMS/LPHS/UNC Band Concert