



Lookout Alliance presents effects of oil & gas production



Photo by Abby Scott

At a recent presentation sponsored by the Lookout Alliance, Dr. Beth Ewaskowitz argued that fracking sites like the one pictured here can emit harmful compounds.

By **ABIGAIL SCOTT**
Editorial@lhvc.com

In February, Colorado State University played host to the Medical Symposium on Health Effects of Oil & Gas Development in Colorado, which

featured multiple speakers in the scientific, legal and health communities. On Sunday, Aug. 18, The Lookout Alliance, in partnership with the Colorado branch of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), showed video recordings of the sym-

posium at the Boulder County Public Library.

Presenters included Dr. Beth Ewaskowitz and Dr. Detlev Helmig. Last month, Helmig gave an in-depth presentation at The Left Hand Grange in Niwot on the impact that oil and gas production has on Boulder County's air quality. His findings explained the myriad negative aspects that fracking in Weld County has, even across county lines.

Ewaskowitz's presentation focused on Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) testing and sought to analyze health impacts while investigating the credibility of VOC blood testing offered by Genova Diagnostics.

Ewaskowitz, who has a PhD in pharmacology, lives in Erie, with her family, but recently

sought to move further away from fracking operations. She believed that Boulder County's five-year moratorium would prevent fracking operations from encroaching across the county line and found a new construction home not far from her previous residence.

After purchasing the home, she found out that her son's school in Erie was very close to a fracking site. Ewaskowitz was deeply disturbed by the proximity of the well but, before making any big decisions, decided to do a scientific investigation of her own.

Ewaskowitz began to research oil and gas development and decided to order a blood test on her son before the drilling of the Erie well took place. She expected his VOC levels to be low or zero prior to

the start of this project. Ewaskowitz planned to order VOC compound blood test after the drilling was underway, and compare the findings, but, as this scientist and mother so candidly puts it, "The problem that we ran into was that I didn't know what I didn't know."

Ewaskowitz was shocked to see the results of the first test, indicating that her son's levels of VOC compounds were in the 80th percentile for benzene and ethylbenzene. Ewaskowitz now had a new objective - to figure out the source of her son's high VOC levels.

After meticulous research, she discovered that high VOC levels in the blood can be generated by new construction, indoor air quality, proximity

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New NUMC pastor takes community to heart



Photo by Mary Wolbach Lopert

Pastor Walter "Skip" Strickland stands beside a banner made by Mrs. Lois Sampson, who was both his first grade elementary school teacher and his first grade Sunday school teacher. Mrs. Sampson gave Strickland the banner when he was ordained as a pastor and an elder in the United Methodist Church. He always hangs the banner in his office, no matter where that office is.

By **Mary Wolbach Lopert**
Editorial@lhvc.com

Pastor Walter "Skip" Strickland has known what his calling was since he was a high school junior in Tacoma, Wash. Strickland, the new pastor at Niwot United Methodist Church (NUMC), was very active in youth ministry and served as the conference youth president for the Conference Council of Youth Ministry for Washington and northern Idaho.

It was this drive that brought him to Colorado in 1977 after he obtained a degree in urban planning from the University of Puget Sound. Strickland enrolled at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver and was ordained by the United Methodist Church soon after graduation. He's been in Colorado ever since and is a member of the Mountain Sky

Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Prior to coming to NUMC, Strickland served as District Superintendent for the area encompassing Niwot, and was previously the full-time pastor at Mountain View United Methodist Church in Boulder.

Strickland retired a year ago after serving as an ordained pastor for 40 years. "But when there's a need," he said, "the bishop ... often call(s) to see if we can fill in for a period of time, until they can appoint the next full-time pastor."

Strickland is familiar with the area and lives in the south Longmont Creekside subdivision. He is appointed as an interim pastor at NUMC through June 2020. Rev. Laura Hehner, the previous NUMC pastor, is on medical leave and doing well, according

Continued on Page 9

A blast from the past



Photo by Joe Brown

Longtime Niwot High Football Coach Paul "Tiny" Koehler (left) was a surprise visitor to the Niwot High Media Day Aug. 17. Koehler visited with current head coach Jeremy Lanter following the team's first full-pads practice, which was followed by a barbecue and silent auction, as well as a water balloon fight among players, parents and fans. For more coverage of the 2019 Niwot Cougars football team, see page 13.

Community Calendar

FREE MOVIE NIGHT AT LEFTY'S

Come join friends and neighbors at Lefty's Pizza (364 2nd Ave, Niwot) on Wednesday, Aug. 21 for a free showing of Ferris Buhler's Day Off on the big screen out back. The show starts at 8-ish (depending on how dark it is), and chairs are provided. This event is free and open to the community.

ROCK & RAILS

Niwot's summer concert series, Rock & Rails, continues its 14th season on Thursday, Aug. 22, at Whistle Stop Park. Jenn Cleary will take the stage around 5 p.m., followed by headliner Zimbira. The Mweb-

za Foundation and Boy Scout Troop 161 will receive donations from the tip jars for the evening. The Thursday night concerts are free and open to the public.

DANCING UNDER THE STARS

Dancing Under the Stars continues in Niwot on Friday, Aug. 23, at 7 p.m. in Cottonwood Square (7980 Niwot Road). Join fellow dancing enthusiasts for a free 45-minute swing dance lesson, followed by dancing until 9:30 or 10 p.m. The free community event continues on Friday nights through August, alternating salsa and swing dancing. Sponsors are Niwot

Business Association, Cottonwood Square, Niwot Tavern, Porchfront Homes, DRF Real Estate, and Catherine McHale Marketing.

YESTERYEAR FARM SHOW

The 2019 Yesteryear Farm Show will be held on Aug. 23-25 from 9:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Dougherty Museum (8306 N 107th St, Longmont). Admission to the outdoor show and exhibits is free; food and beverages are available for purchase. The Slepicka family of Niwot will have a dozen of their vintage vehicles on display, including a newly restored 1936 Case CC.

REMEMBER IN SEPTEMBER FESTIVAL

The third annual RISE Music & Art Festival benefiting The J.A.R.E.D. Foundation will be held on Saturday, Sept. 7 from 12pm - 7:30pm at the Boulder County Fairgrounds (9595 Nelson St., Longmont). There will be two music stages, local artisans, food trucks, petting zoo, 300 Suns Brewing beer tent and more. The J.A.R.E.D. Foundation is a Colorado non-profit that provides music lessons and scholarships to students in need. For more information, call 720.375.2870 or email surinder@educateDrummers.org.

GREEK FESTIVAL

The third annual Remember in September Music & Art Festival benefiting The J.A.R.E.D. Foundation will be held on Saturday, Sept. 7, from 12 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at the southwest pavilion of the Boulder County Fairgrounds (9595 Nelson St., Longmont). There will be two music stages, local artisans, food trucks, 300 Suns Brewing beer tent and more. The J.A.R.E.D. Foundation is a Colorado non-profit that provides music lesson scholarships to students in need. Volunteers are needed to help with the event. For more information, call 720-375-2870 or email surinder@EducateDrummers.org.



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Letter to the Editor

For quite some time, the little town of Niwot has been unsettled. Just wanted to acknowledge some folks that have been doing the right thing and keeping our town as it should be, a community. Michael and Patty at Old Oak Coffee have created such a special atmosphere in their shop. You walk in and you feel you are at home. Music is in everyone's soul and it's great that they have music on the weekends.

Bruce Rabeler - thank you for bringing the Songwriter's in the Round to the Old Oak! Always such a pleasant crowd that gathers and everyone enjoys listening to the artists tell their stories. You get absorbed in that, and for awhile, people can forget about everything that is going on in their world and the world in general. Our newest addition to Niwot, Willowdale, a non-profit put together by Andy Mann and

Nick Dunbar. What a great turnout for their first event held at the Grange on August 9th. Keep an eye out for monthly events that they will be hosting. Thanks to all the businesses that host First Fridays as well. The magic and charm that Niwot is known for is coming back. Thanks to everyone that is making that happen.

Cindi Kelly, Niwot



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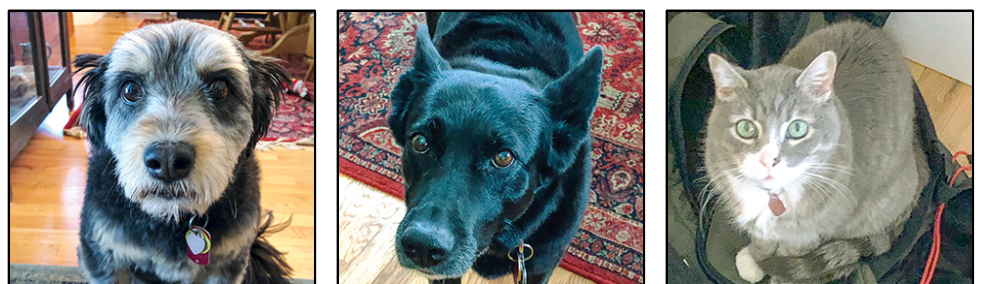


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COMMUNITY PET SPOTLIGHT



Niwotians Rooney, Katie and Looby live with owners Mona Lilien and Bob Olsen. Rooney loves her toys, walks, and swimming, Katie loves walks and cookies, and Looby likes to sit on things

We look forward to seeing your pets in our spotlight. Please email your photos and captions Editorial@lhvc.com

▶ LEFT HAND LAUREL Emily Sewell



Photo by Eleanor Sewell

This month's Left Hand Laurel goes to Gunbarrel resident Emily Sewell for her volunteer work with Voices for Children, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of children who are victims of abuse and neglect in Boulder County.

By VICKY DORVEE
Editorial@lhvc.com

Editor's Note: Due to a production error, an incomplete version of this article appeared in our August 14 print edition. The full article appears here.

Gunbarrel's Emily Sewell, this month's Left Hand Laurel, is a round-the-clock mother, with a full-time career. For the last eight years, she's also given her time to Voices for Children as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), transform-

ing the lives of abused and neglected children in Boulder County.

Program Director Dana Walters said, "Emily has quietly worked to help victims of child abuse and neglect recover from trauma. She never seeks recognition and she doesn't require much direction, but she's always been one of our most effective advocates. Other volunteers love working with her and staff depend on her."

Boulder County's Voices for Children program was established in 1985 by members of the Junior League of Denver following the launch of a national CASA program. It's eye-opening to know that more than 1700 Boulder County children experience neglect or abuse annually. It's legally mandated that every child found to be a victim must be assigned a CASA to advocate for the child's best interests.

Sewell and her husband Andrew are native Texans and met in junior high. Andrew, a graduate of CU Boulder, went

back to Texas to get his degree in dentistry. Emily earned her undergraduate and master's degrees in anthropology from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. The couple would often take camping trips to Colorado and in 2001 they decided to make Gunbarrel their home. Their ten-year old daughter, Eleanor, is a fifth-grader at Boulder Country Day.

Sewell is the Chief Financial Officer for Bull Publishing in Boulder, a health and nutrition publishing house primarily focused on chronic disease and self-management.

Her positive experiences working with children on literacy through the Junior League of Dallas fueled Sewell's desire to continue volunteering. The CASA program was exactly what she wanted - to work with one child or family of children at a time and have a positive impact on their lives.

Having the responsibility of advocating for children can seem daunting at first, but Sewell said VFC is successful

because CASAs go through a comprehensive training program and have a solid expert support system.

"It was probably the best training I've ever done for life in general," Sewell said. "It teaches you how to talk with people and work through issues."

Neglect is the most predominant issue with the children in the program and many have parents with mental health and/or substance abuse issues. Some children have been abused physically or sexually, and some have parents who have committed crimes. Those problems may also be compounded by poverty.

CASA volunteers get to know their assigned children and then make recommendations about what they need to succeed, whether it's finding the right living situation, therapist or educational support.

Time together can take many forms - visitations with

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LOOKOUT

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to highways, gas stations or industrial projects. She ordered an indoor air quality

test of her home and eliminated this option based upon the results. Her home was 10 miles from I-25 and her son was not often around gas stations and their pumps. When she began to look at fracking as an option, Ewaskowitz

discovered that her son lives and plays within a one-mile radius of 158 wells, of which 72 are active.

With these results and information in hand, Ewaskowitz testified at a Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation

Commission meeting in Denver on April 30, 2018. She presented the results from the VOC compound test and waited for a response.

Eventually, the Colorado Department of Public Health disputed certain aspects of

the test, namely the treatment method, or lack thereof, for the rubber stopper that capped the test tube. "As we continued to talk for several days, they took issue with the diagnostic method that was used by Genova Diagnostics. At first, I felt that they were trying to poke holes in this, to find some way to explain it to make it go away, discard it."

Ewaskowitz knew she needed to look into the CD-PHE's concerns by comparing the methods from the CDC and Genova Diagnostics. She found that the CDC methods for VOC testing and the Genova Diagnostic testing differed in a few distinct ways, including in the way they treat the rubber test tube stoppers. "They (the CDC) feel that the rubber stopper in this vacuum tube has the potential to off-gas, to an extent that they feel that there is a need for a special cleaning method...that's able to prevent some of that contamination."

She spoke with multiple scientists unaffiliated with the CDC and Genova Diagnostics that also perform VOC testing and was told that the rubber stopper was not an issue. But the CD-PHE refused to accept her rebuttal.

But there may be a silver lining. Ewaskowitz has uncovered a possible solution. It may be possible for the CDPHE to request use of the CDC labs to conduct tests that follow up on environmental concerns. Ewaskowitz explained that if the CDPHE does ever decide to move forward with this process, it would most likely test a subset of people. "As for my family, we're not looking at moving right now, until this is better understood," she said. "And I've been asked that before, 'Will you move?' but here's my question, where?"

For more information on The Lookout Alliance, including upcoming presentations, visit their Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/lookoutallianceboulder>.



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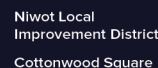
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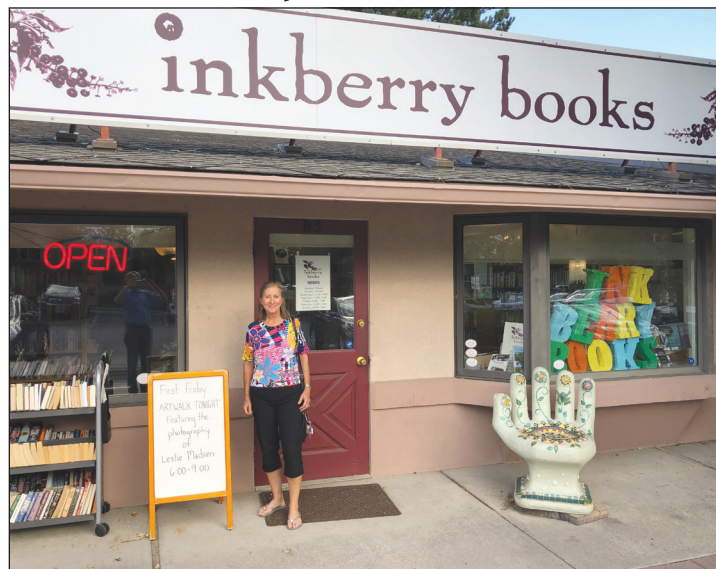
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Inkberry Books' exhibit focuses on wildflowers



Courtesy photo

Nature photographer, Leslie Madsen is August's featured artist at Inkberry Books in Cottonwood Square Shopping Center in Niwot.

By VICKY DORVEE
Editorial@lhvc.com

Avid hiker Leslie Madsen used to march along to get to the top of a mountain and back down, treating it like a task to be completed. But retirement brought a more leisurely pace to her treks, allowing her to be in the moment and observant of her surroundings. That's when she fell madly in love with the splendor of flora in the high country and wanted to bring it home with her by way of photos.

Madsen's talent for capturing

the beauty of wildflowers is on display at Niwot's Inkberry Books in Cottonwood Square Shopping Center where she is August's featured artist.

"I play tennis and snowshoe and guide for SkiMeisters, a private ski club, and swim and bike, but my happy time of the year is summer hiking for flowers," Madsen said.

A lot of those flowers are now Madsen's old friends. When she meets a new one, she researches it to become better acquainted, and if she learns of a wildflower she hasn't seen, she's likely to go traipsing off to see it in person. In fact,

traveling to faraway places in search of wildflowers has become her passion.

In this, her first-ever exhibit, there are close ups of the carnivorous Alpine Butterwort in Slovenia and the Snow Everlasting Daisy from her trip to Tasmania, along with landscapes from around the globe. A recent tour of Mont Blanc helped to satiate her floral hunger for a bit, and resulted in weeks of identifying new wildflower varieties.

But for that month-and-a-half when the Colorado high altitude becomes an explosion of blooms, you'll find Madsen heading up to Indian Peaks or James Peak Wilderness area early in the morning, either on her own or with a few friends, in search of flowers until night falls. Environmental changes like beetle kill and climate change have altered habitats and that means Madsen's searches take her higher and higher in the mountains.

"These flowers are tenacious and you have to be tenacious yourself to find them," Madsen said. "And depending on the flower, whether it's an orchid or a high alpine flower, it can take them anywhere from a few years to a decade to store enough energy to bloom. The more you research it, the more

you understand what it takes for them to bloom and survive."

Spoken by the ultimate flower enthusiast, the devotion to her art form is evident in the photos she takes as they impart the reverence and gratitude she feels for each flower's beauty.

Each of Madsen's dozens of framed photos on display (from \$75-\$200) is accompanied by the name of the flower variety and where it was photographed. Mostly self-taught with some photographic workshops under her belt, the iPhone 10 with add-on lenses has become her go-to camera.

"Wildflowers are gorgeous, they're colorful, they're expressive, they have personalities," she said, "like the Yellow Lady's Slippers. This is a very tiny two-inch flower and they fool the bees into coming into the pouch thinking that there's going to be nectar. These are smart little plants."

Ten years into her hobby,

Madsen has become a naturalist and an educator, stopping to talk with others on the trail to point out unique plants they may not notice, like the toxic Elegant Death Camas. This summer she's making it a point to find the Pygmy Wood Nymph and she's risen to the top of a two-year waiting list for an orchid hunt in Madagascar.

Another fascinating part of Madsen's life is a volunteer gig she's had for ten years with the nonprofit Audio Information Network of Colorado (AINC), where she records readings of magazines and newspapers for the blind and visually impaired. The Left Hand Valley Courier is one of the weekly papers she reads for her recording of the Boulder County News show, so while she's not a resident of the area, she is very much in the know.

AINC is based in Boulder

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siblings or parents, going to a playground or sharing a meal. Sewell devotes about eight to ten hours a month to the children she works with.

Sewell is very matter of fact in explaining why she does this work. It's because children need to be heard and cared for and, as she says, "Why wouldn't I help a kid who needs that?"

"With my current case, the child has made huge strides

in his own abilities to interact normally in the world and be a thoughtful person," Sewell said. "It can take a lot of therapy and a lot of work to get a kid on track. That's when I think, 'You're going to be able to go out and have a good life because you've learned these

skills.'"

Between cases, Sewell is a peer coordinator overseeing four or five other CASAs, interfacing with her fellow volunteers and reviewing their case logs.

"CASA volunteers like Emily help build a stronger community in Boulder County by advocating for the needs of our most vulnerable children," Walters said. "The work they do helps young people who have been abandoned by their parents to build healthy and

productive lives and prevent bad outcomes like youth homelessness, truancy, unemployment, and addiction. Emily is a leader in this work and we are so pleased to be able to honor her work as a Court Appointed Special Advocate."

To learn more about Voices for Children and becoming a CASA, visit: www.vfccasa.org. The next volunteer training sessions begin in October. Voices for Children's annual Night of Hope fundraising gala is Thursday, Sept. 5, at Oskar Blues Brewery, Longmont.

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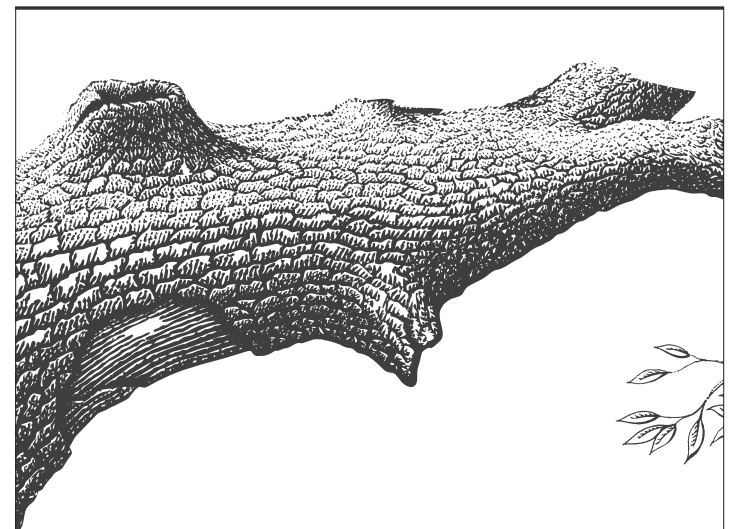
LESLIE MADSEN

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and is a free service – www.AINColorado.org. The organization provides 24/7 programming that's downloadable covering hundreds of publications. Boulder County News,

which includes the Courier, is aired on Fridays at 7 a.m. and is also available via podcast and streaming.

Madsen's photography exhibit will be on display through the end of August. Visit www.InkberryBooks.com for store hours.



You know me, I think there ought to be a big old tree right there. And let's give him a friend. Everybody needs a friend.

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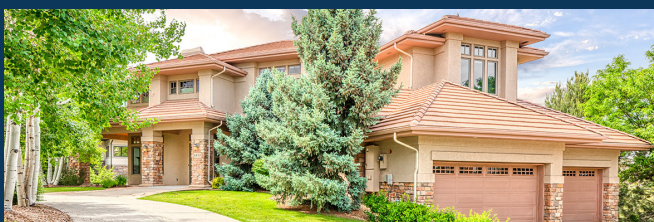
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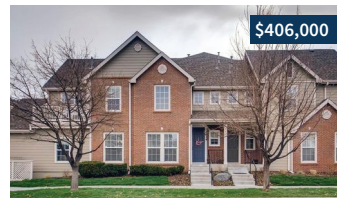
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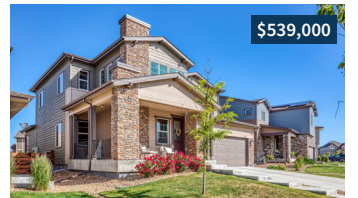
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SCHOOL NEWS

Projects take wing across Niwot thanks to Eagle Scouts



Photo by Greg Hult

For his Eagle project, Niwot junior Brandon Hult oversaw a two-day build of an outdoor seating area for Left Hand Grange No. 9.

Special to the Courier

Niwot's Left Hand Grange No. 9 (195 2nd Ave.) has been a community gathering spot for more than seven decades, and now it's just a little more welcoming, thanks to Brandon Hult and the Boy Scouts of Niwot Troop 161. Earlier this month, the Eagle Scout candi-

date oversaw the construction of an outdoor seating area in the rear yard, so patrons will be able to enjoy the hall's many charms from a sunnier (or starrier) vantage point.

"Members of the grange just wanted this area cleaned up a little bit, so we talked, and then came up with the idea of a flagstone patio and picnic table," the Niwot High junior said. "The

grange had a couple of projects in mind for Eagle projects, and I was the first one to talk about this one with them."

Completing a large-scale service project is one of the last hurdles Hult has to clear before earning BSA's highest honor, the Eagle Scout Award. To fulfill the requirement, the scout has to lead each phase of the undertaking and it must benefit an organization other than the BSA. For Hult, this meant not just planning and designing the 10' x 10' patio, but also scheduling, procuring materials, and recruiting a reliable team of volunteers. Fortunately, he had one at the ready, made up of his fellow Troop 161 members.

Hult also had to earn at least 21 merit badges as he made his way up the rankings. As a final step before earning the Eagle Rank, he will have to undergo a BSA board review, a process that sounds a bit like

defending a doctoral thesis. "I have to go in front of five or six people, and they'll question me and go through all my scouting skills and what I've learned."

Hult will receive the award in a formal ceremony next spring, where he will be in good company. The older Niwot scouts have been hard at work in 2019, and the 2020 convocation of Eagles will be bursting at the seams.

Spring was especially busy for Troop 161. In March, Niwot junior Evan Law led an effort to spruce up the Grange kitchen, with the installation of new beadboard and a fresh coat of paint. Each troop member who assisted with this project inscribed his name behind the board, hoping to leave a curious find for a future remodeler.

In April, Niwot junior Jesse Horn worked with The Inn Between of Longmont to build raised garden beds to use for growing vegetables. The Inn provides transitional housing and support services to aid homeless individuals and families, and the gardens are an important addition to those efforts. Horn was even able to provide starter plants to the residents, courtesy of Growing Gardens.

Niwot sophomore Raaghav Agarwal completed his Eagle project on May 11. A pilot-in-training, Agarwal planned the repair, replacement and

painting of the red and white "dog houses" used as navigation aids at the Longmont Airport.

Then, in June, Ben Jones and the troop repaired the batting cage and painted the storage shed at Niwot Youth Sports' Biff Warren Baseball Complex. On Aug. 24, Silver Creek junior Cade Weihe will lead a team in fabricating hammocks from used fire hoses for the inhabitants of The Wildlife Sanctuary.

"We've been a particularly strong class," Hult said of the Troop 161's numerous Eagle Scout candidates. "We're all pretty close, and we've all advanced at the same rate, and right now we've been getting our Eagle projects done around the same time, which is awesome. We're hoping we can get as many Eagles out of the younger generations coming up as we have right now."

In addition to supporting Eagle projects, troop members have also been busy this year assisting other community organizations and events, including the TLC Learning Center and the Niwot Community Association.

Niwot Boy Scout Troop 161 is slated to receive the proceeds from the Rock & Rails tip jars on Thursday, Aug. 22. Funds raised there will help the troop offset costs related to scout camp, campground registration fees, and Court of Honor expenses.

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STRICKLAND

Continued from Page 1

to Strickland, but will not return to Niwot when her leave ends.

Strickland chuckled that the church is known as the Niwot United Methodist Church on Lookout Road, in Gunbarrel, with a Longmont zip code. But he added that the joke was indicative of the church's history because it started on what is now the west side of Highway 119, then moved into the town of Niwot. In the late 1960s, when subdivisions were being established in Gunbarrel, the church moved to its current location.

One reason Strickland is excited to be at NUMC is because it is celebrating its 150-year anniversary next spring. He's looking forward to celebrating the church's rich history. "It also allows the church to look at its ministry now." He's looking at how the church can reaffirm its mission and vision and what steps are necessary to achieve those goals.

"First of all, we have a real variety of perspectives and views, so we celebrate that. But at the same time we want to be an open and inclusive church. Our goal right now is to be an open church, a friendly church, a church where people can experience community and can feel value for who they are and for whom God has made them to be."

He added, "That in a world that seems to value polarization, we are a church that is working towards unification."

He also plans to continue the church's long-standing efforts in community outreach. "We're trying to focus on helping different non-profit agencies in the area." These nonprofits include Attention Homes in Boulder, which was the beneficiary of this year's Soup, and More fundraiser, the Boulder homeless shelter and several international projects.

Going back to his under-

graduate days, Strickland has always been involved in "community," serving as an assistant football coach at Pagosa Springs when he was a pastor there, and currently playing mandolin in a local bluegrass group.

One of the Niwot church's slogans is, "Embrace the community and transform the world." "The congregation takes that seriously and I do too...." he said. "This church is really active in trying to make sure its community is

strong and cared for."

For Strickland, a strong church helps make a strong community, "where people are cared for, their rights are respected. It becomes a more healthy community."

That's something from

which everyone can benefit.

The Niwot United Methodist Church is located in Gunbarrel at 745 Lookout Road. For more information call 303-530-0241.

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Sunset Middle teachers enjoy the first week back



Photo by Abigail Scott

Sunset Middle School in Longmont bustles with incoming students ready to start a new school year.

By ABIGAIL SCOTT
Editorial@lhvc.com

Heading back to school is often a mix of emotions for students

and teachers alike. For many students, the end of summer is bittersweet, nostalgia for mid-week sleepovers and late night pool parties setting in as soon as

August rolls around. But there's also something to be said for heading back to school. With each new year comes the chance to see old friends and start fresh with a new teacher, a new classroom and a new perspective.

Teachers get excited to see coworkers again, catch-up on summer happenings, and meet a batch of new students, alive with energy and ready to learn. We caught up with some teachers from Sunset Middle School in south Longmont to learn what their favorite back to school moments are and what they most look forward to about the first week.

Principal Anthony Barela describes his favorite part of the

school year as witnessing the students change since the end of the last school year. "I love seeing the kids. I love seeing their faces. You'll have kids that start off with us in sixth grade and they just blossom into these amazing people."

Eighth-grade teacher Sean McMullen, who earned teacher of the year recognition for Sunset Middle School in 2018, delights in the excitement and eagerness that a long summer vacation generates, stating that his favorite part about the beginning of the year is "the enthusiasm that the students have. It's fresh. You get to start over and learn from what you feel like you could improve on."

Most teachers agreed that

Sunset's hallways take on this palpable energy that seemingly fills the entire school. Assistant Principal Mary Ellen Graziani explains it perfectly, "My favorite feeling is that buzz, that energy of all the kids coming in. They're nervous and excited, they haven't seen each other for a while. The whole building vibrates with life, that's my favorite feeling about going back to school, when they all come back."

For other teachers, they remember what it was like to be a kid with a new school year on the horizon. School counselor Pedro Linsenmeyer remembers the feeling like it was yesterday, "Growing up in the midwest, going back to school was closure to the wonders of the Missouri summers - the fireflies, the nights playing tag in the heat, fishing in the evening for catfish. School was just closure to those wonderful, fun summer days as a kid playing outside. I think it is bittersweet. On the flip side, it was always a pleasure to be back at school, reconnecting with friends."

Middle school art teacher Jason Turner recalls fondly, "As a kid, I was excited when my best friends were in class with me, and finding out my class schedule. As a teacher, I appreciate the schedules, the regimine. I like going back to school and being refreshed after the summer."

Other teachers enjoy reconnecting with their "work family", catching up on summer stories, and sharing the excitement of a new year. Sunset Middle School is more than an educational institution, but a home away from home. Teachers and staff consistently strive to make each and every student feel welcome, respected, and cherished.

Erika Schimmel loved blank notebooks. "I always liked blank notebooks because it was the beginning of something and I was going to fill it in." A new school year provides a similar table --- tabula rasa --- each student's mind clear from a relaxing summer, ready to absorb lessons from favorite teachers, who are also recharged after a much-deserved break.

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Local Girl Scout troops Reach for Peak



Courtesy Photo

Local girl scouts Gracie Summers, Sophia Jones, Kennedy Banks, Karissa Murra, Claire Arveson, and Bennett McDannell competed in the 32nd annual Reach for the Peak scout competition earlier this month.

Special to the Courier

Girl Scout Troops 70179 and 73928 joined forces and spent the weekend at Sky High Ranch in Woodland, Colo., competing at the 32nd annual competition, Reach for the Peak. Six Boulder girls Gracie Summers, Sophia Jones, Kennedy Banks, Karissa Murra, Claire Arveson, and Bennett McDannell joined 20 other teams in a test of

scouting skills that included first aid, orienteering, lashing, fire building, campsite set-up, survival skills, knots, blade skills, and a cooking competition. Their 50s themed dinner included five cooking methods and a "TV dinner" menu of Salisbury Steak, mashed potatoes, green beans, biscuits on a stick, and cookies baked in a cardboard oven.

It was the first year these

12-year-olds competed against other girls ages 11 to 19. Their months of preparation and years of studying paid off as they had a great finish, winning the Marmot award. They utilized teamwork and tapped into their strong leadership skills without any assistance from adults to "Reach for the Peak." The girls all plan to return to the competition next year.

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Flagstaff Academy's pride front and center this year



Courtesy photo

Second grade teacher Kimberly Lewis displayed the new Dragon PRIDE poster to an assembly of students on the first day of school at Flagstaff Academy in Longmont.

BY VICKY DORVEE
Editorial@lhvc.com

Flagstaff Academy (K-12) of Longmont is beginning its new school year with the launch of a unique initiative - a PBIS, which stands for Positive Behavior Incentive System. The school-wide program was created to dovetail with five

essential qualities the school will be bringing to the forefront. Dubbed Dragon PRIDE, an acronym for perseverance, respect, integrity, dependability and empathy, these core values will be stitched into every aspect of the school from classroom curriculum to extra activities and will consciously focus on character education.

Flagstaff communications director Lisa Trank-Greene said reframing the school's core values through Dragon PRIDE was the result of direct input from parents and students who wanted to better represent and promote the school's virtues.

Trank-Greene said the new program is fun and approachable and kids will have an easy time connecting with it. The PRIDE program will become very familiar by way of new graphics and posters throughout the school. Another advantage of espousing the PRIDE program is how well it supports the school's restorative justice process at all grade levels.

Flagstaff middle school principal Katie Gustafson said, "Dragon PRIDE will be highlighted each month in school assemblies and lessons, which are age-appropriate. We will also feature service opportunities, aligned to the school's strategic plan, which

will incorporate grade level and classroom projects, as well as service opportunities from our student leadership groups - Student Council and National Junior Honor Society."

Trank-Greene said she could see through social media outlets that the summer break wasn't all vacationing for teachers. Lots of posts were of staff attending training programs so they could come back well prepared for the new school year.

In June, Gustafson, Executive Director Wayne Granger and other middle school staff members traveled to Washington, DC to attend the National Schools to Watch Conference and formally receive the honor of being a national School to Watch. The school was one of five Colorado middle schools to be awarded this honor in 2019 and is the only Colorado charter school with this designation.

"We continue to grow and

strengthen our technology education," Trank-Greene said. To that end, the school has hired teacher JR Kerbel to work with elementary students in the SMARTlab, and it has expanded opportunities to develop robotics skills. In addition to offering an after-school robotics club, Flagstaff has added a robotics class to its elective options.

"We've got such a fantastic robotics program that we've sent at least one to two teams each year to the world robotics championships out in Kentucky. We participate in the district's robotics tournaments and we're one of the hosts of the tournaments, which is always incredibly well attended and well received."

This year marks the second consecutive year that Flagstaff's special education program has been awarded the title of an "Exceptional Charter

Continued on Page 14

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FLAGSTAFF

ACADEMY



SPORTS

Niwot football prepares for 2019 season



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

Seniors for the 2019 Niwot Cougars football team are (from left) Erick Fernandez, Jonathan Miranda, Jarrett Noterman, Liam Flanagan, Blake Bair, Andrew Greve, Zach Coblenz, Matt Bitterman, Liam Flanagan, Izaiah Golden, Julian Molina, Daniel Torres, Jovani Lopez

By Jack Carlough
Editorial@lhvc.com

When head coach Jeremy Lanter took over Niwot's football program, he began a mission to build great young men and to get students involved. Now in year three, he is doing just that. More students are coming out to play football and there is a buzz around the program.

In Lanter's mind, a successful season isn't necessarily determined by wins and losses. These student-athletes aren't playing for multi-million dollar contracts and Lanter's perspective is often forgotten at the high school level.

"I tell our kids all the time, it's not about the results, it's about the person we become in the process," said Lanter. "...If we judged everything based on a record, I don't think

that guys like Thomas Edison would've ever changed the world because he certainly had more losses than he had wins."

Coming off a 3-7 season, the Cougars are trending upwards with a renewed sense of purpose. Their belief is growing as a squad while using the lessons of last year to develop into better football players, and people.

"One of the biggest things I feel like our kids learned is that they can be successful,

that they can have confidence that what they're doing and the work they're putting in has a direct connection to the results that they want," said Lanter. "A lot of the buy-in and the hard work came because they got to experience what success was."

The success that Lanter speaks of came from an impressive season at the junior varsity level. According to Lanter, the lower level team compiled a 6-4 record, which was the first winning season in 12 years. A talented young group of Cougars is a great sign of future success and brings hope to the program.

"That was a great group of

kids that we had, and we still have a lot of expectations of them doing well at the varsity level," Lanter said. "Hopefully, the added confidence helps."

At the varsity level, the talent starts with junior quarterback Ayden Bartko. The third-year starter possesses a great arm and has shown improvement reading his progressions according to Lanter. Complementing Bartko will be senior running back Liam Flanagan who ran for 702 yards and 5 touchdowns last year.

"We had a great summer

Continued on Page 16

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5 p.m. — Cross Country @ Vista Nation 2-Mile Invitational

Monday, August 26

4 p.m. — Softball @ Frederick
8 a.m. — Boys golf @ Highland Hills G.C.

Tuesday, August 27

3:30 p.m. — Softball vs Longmont
4:30 p.m. — Boys tennis @ Thompson Valley
7 p.m. — Boys soccer @ Brighton

Thursday, August 29

6:30 p.m. — Boys soccer @ Air Academy

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Niwot boys soccer has the leadership to go far



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

2019 Seniors: (back row, from left) Austin Borncamp, Connor Carlson, Andy Worrell, Jared Osteen, Nicholas Haratsaris (front row) Ethan Hansen, Caleb Serrette, Manuel Soto, Chris Yan, Daniel Cho (front) Pancho Rodriguez (photobomb) Keegan Stobbe

By Jack Carlough
Editorial@lhvc.com

A strong upper class will help the Niwot Cougars boys soccer team vie for a Northern League championship. Led by head coach Stephen Dimit, the Cougars have the leadership and work ethic to make 2019 exciting.

Finding consistency was

something the Cougars struggled with last year. A talented but young team produced a 9-7-1 record, good enough for fourth in the Northern League. Fortunately for the Cougars, they'll be returning their leading scorer from last year, junior Keegan Stobbe, as well as juniors Ismael Dominguez and Aidan Martin.

"They've been playing together for a number of years

now," Dimit said. "...They're a really dangerous trio, they're quick and they're smart, and they're all really, really aggressive, I think I'd put them up with anybody in the state."

Along with the dangerous trio is junior Connor Grant. According to Dimit, he's developed into a strong midfielder and big things are expected in 2019. Senior Jared Osteen is also one of Niwot's more talented players.

"Osteen is another player who started a lot of games but he's never looked better," Dimit said. "The game has just kind of slowed down for him, he does something pretty amazing every practice right now."

One of the few question marks for the team is the goalie position. The team graduated three-year starter Mario Munoz last season and according to Dimit, the spot is up for grabs in 2019. He's looking towards senior Panhco Rodriguez or junior Malay Gangwar to battle for the position. The Cougars will have about a week of

practice to determine who will claim the ever-important goalie position.

"These guys worked really hard in the offseason to become better," said Dimit. "It's been exciting to kind of see a lot of that new skill and that new understanding of the game kind of show up, particularly between the sophomore and junior year."

A strong season is well within this team's capabilities, and so is the drive to improve. "I think the expectation to win is always there," said Dimit. "But you know for me, this is what I tell the guys, a successful season is more than that, you're just getting better every single game and generally you know we're in a spot where if we can do that, the wins are gonna come."

At Dimit's side will be veter-

an assistant coach Brett Butrick and first-year assistant with the boys, Belle Morel. Butrick will head the junior varsity program and Morel, who also coaches the girl's soccer program, will be leading the freshman/sophomore squad. Dimit will have a little more time this year, as he will be stepping away from the girl's program where he was head coach for three seasons.

"I think people should come out and watch us because we're fun," said Dimit. "...We play entertaining soccer, I think anybody that wants to come out and enjoy a game, we go out and try to win every single game, we win or we lose in style."

The Cougars will kick things off next Tuesday, August 27th at Brighton High School.

FLAGSTAFF

Continued from Page 12

School in Special Education" by the National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASSET). Flagstaff Academy is one of 21 schools across the nation to be given this award.

The NASSET website states that this recognition "is the highest honor a charter school can achieve through our professional association. The recognition is bestowed

on charter schools that meet rigorous professional criteria and have demonstrated truly exceptional dedication, commitment and achievement in the field of special education."

"Our goal is always that we want to do better and keep serving our community as best as we can," Trank-Green said. "The challenges of education these days are multi-faceted. We're trying to really up the social-emo-

tional learning component for all of our students, as well as wellness, and having a healthy work and learning environment."

Prior to the start of the school year, more than 300 lunch bags were assembled by teachers and staff during a team-building exercise. The lunches were donated to HOPE for Longmont, a nonprofit organization that works to help the homeless population.



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FOOTBALL

Continued from Page 13

with our offense," Lanter said. "We've looked more explosive than we have in the two years since I've been here....Our kids are

growing, the offense is becoming more familiar to them, and they're figuring out how to make plays."

Offensive coordinator and quarterback coach Stan Matsunaka will have plenty of weapons to put points on the board. Seniors Jovani Lopez and Erick Fernan-

dez will anchor the offensive line and the receiving corps will be highlighted by senior Jarrett Noterman and juniors Isaac Fisk and Julian Bell.

On the defensive side of the ball the Cougars are resetting their line with four of their five starters

graduating. Senior linebacker Julian Molina is expected to lead the group, but will need a few less experienced starters to step up. Of those include junior noseguard Jesus Amaya, who racked up 24 solo tackles last season. Also expect junior safety Jordan Byers to make an impact.

On the sidelines, Lanter is fortunate to have a total of 14 coaches on his staff, including his younger and older brother. It's a family affair at Niwot and the Lanter's hope to spread their wisdom. Jeremy will be aided by his younger brother Link Lanter, and the oldest of the three, Cory Lanter. Also notable, Link comes to Niwot this year from Roosevelt High School, where he was nominated for assistant coach of the year. The two will be splitting defensive coordinator duties.


"We basically had to start over with our defensive group," Lanter said. "That's been interesting to

watch, and having Link on staff has added a whole different dimension to what the line is doing. They look as good as they have since I've been here."

The expectations are set and the Cougars are ready to get started. A solid group of student-athletes will be representing Niwot in hopes of building their character and winning a few games along the way.

"The thing that gets me excited is we have, and every coach that we have come on says this, we just have really wonderful kids, win or lose," said Lanter. "I don't put all my stock in winning and losing football games, but building good men and we have a bunch of just really really great young men."

The Cougars will kick off their season Friday, August 30th at 7 p.m. at Everly Montgomery Field, taking on George Washington High School.




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