



## Candidate Loachamin hopes to make history and change in Boulder County

BY HANNAH STEWART  
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In school, students are taught the basics of government; there's a president for the country, governors for states and mayors for cities and towns. There are various boards who oversee different aspects of communities, but these boards are often overlooked when teaching civics. "What is a county commissioner?" Boulder County residents constantly ask Longmont resident Marta Loachamin.

Loachamin is, arguably, a prime candidate for this question. This is not only because she is currently running for one of the two open commissioner seats, but also because of her vast experience as a teacher and in local government since 1992.

"The actual role of county commissioner is truly a management, leadership position,"

she said. "It has a small slice of legislative work, instead focusing on that allocation of the budget and figuring out how to provide the best service to people locally."

In Boulder County, there are three individuals who serve as leaders for the county government. They are elected at-large by residents to serve the whole county for four-year terms. If Loachamin, the first Democratic candidate to qualify for the June primary race, were to be successful in her campaign, she would be the first woman of color to ever serve on the board.

"The potential of supporting [the] community in a way that can be highly impactful is really the driving force," said Loachamin. "There's a piece of equity that we have to do better with, [and] the county commissioners have the opportunity to really lead that in a completely



Courtesy Photo

*Loachamin has found that in addition to questions of equity, matters of climate action and housing are of particular concern to Boulder County residents.*

new way."

Loachamin, who has experience in finance, real estate, education and various volunteer efforts, has run a number of programs for the City of Longmont and Boulder County. She has worked as a cultural broker and committed much of her career in reaching out to un-

derrepresented communities, often through interviews and focus groups.

After the 2013 flood, she coordinated a recovery program for the state that was doing focus groups and interviews with folks affected by the flood and involved in recovery. Specifically, the group's aim was to find the barriers in the state's ability to reach out to communities.

In one of these sessions, she spoke to a group of high school-aged Latina students who said to her, "Miss, tell them to let us speak for ourselves." It was this moment that made her realize that she wanted to take part in helping raise up these voices.

Throughout her volunteer work, Loachamin has found that in addition to questions of equity, matters of climate action and housing are of particular concern to Boulder County

residents. That is why she has made those central to her goals for if she is successful in her campaign. "As county commissioner, the role is to address these needs. The piece that's still missing is the theme of equity and how do we include everyone in the community."

Since inclusion is so important for Loachamin, she has focused much of her campaign on getting in front of groups, taking their questions and listening to their concerns. However, in light of the COVID-19 crisis, she has had to shift gears. In March, she took the campaign virtual, setting up Zoom and Facebook Live meetings to reach out to constituents. She said that an unexpected result of this has been the fact that more people are becoming aware of unfair accessibility in the community.

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## The story behind the place: Lagerman, Nelson, and Ryssby—Swedish Legacies

BY AMY SCANES-WOLFE  
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The Homestead Act of 1862 turned the American West into a promised land for religiously and socially repressed Swedish Lutherans, who were coming off three years of crop failure. Around 1.3 million Swedes immigrated to the United States between 1862 and the early 1900s.

But not all Swedish immigrants in Longmont acquired their land through the Homestead Act; at least one earned it by gratitude.

In 1870, August Nelson accepted a job in the Blackhawk smelter. With help from his two brothers, Nelson saved



Photo by Amy Scanes-Wolf

*Lagerman Reservoir, former "prastgard" of a Swedish reverend.*

up \$1,000 to buy land. He was passing through present-day Hygiene when he came upon a disturbing scene. Several men were attempting to hang a 15-year-old boy who had set fire to the Pella schoolhouse. Vigilante justice decided the boy and his family must depart

within 24 hours or suffer the consequences. Nelson offered the father \$1,000 in exchange for his homestead, shed, plow, and already planted fields. The father accepted.

You may be able to guess the location of the homestead

*Continued on Page 4*

## 2nd Ave Hair says goodbye to Niwot after 24 years

BY PATRICIA LOGAN  
Editorial@lhvc.com

The quiver in Nancy Armstrong's voice tells the story. She knows it's time. But she is still struggling with her choice to close the hair salon she's owned in Niwot for nearly a quarter of a century.

"I'm sad about leaving Niwot. It's been a very, very hard decision," said Armstrong. "It's just a cool little town. It's been really good for me, and to me, for 24 years."

A lot has changed since 2nd Ave Hair Studio first opened its doors. For years, she had a contingent of ladies who came in every week, their hair in fat,

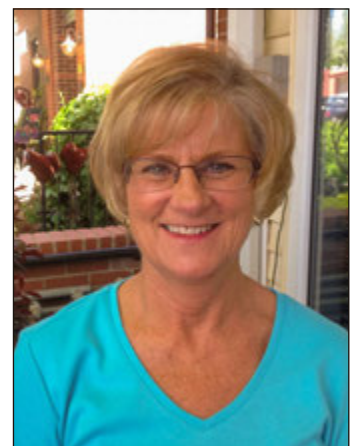


Photo courtesy of Nancy Armstrong

*Nancy Armstrong is closing her business, 2nd Ave Hair Studio.*

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# NBA offers support to struggling Niwot businesses



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

Some businesses along Niwot's 2nd Avenue are "getting creative" in order to survive during the state mandated lockdowns to stop the spread of coronavirus.

By JOCELYN ROWLEY  
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The coronavirus pandemic and resulting lockdowns have taken a steep toll on Niwot businesses, and the path to recovery is still uncertain. But Eric Bergeson and the Niwot Business Association are working to get their members started on that path and hopefully back to a thriving downtown commercial district.

"The NBA Executive Committee has been trying to

respond to this and provide whatever assistance we can," said Bergeson, who was elected to his first term as NBA president in February. "We're trying to brainstorm ways that we can help businesses that are suffering during this time. We put together a portfolio offering different types of resources to businesses.... And what has been successful, from what I understand, is the information we've put out there about PPP [Paycheck Protection Program] loans and the EIDL [Economic

ic Injury Disaster Loan] and things like that that are out there."

But there aren't any easy answers for businesses struggling to survive. Bergeson said it's hard to quantify the economic impact so far in Niwot, but he said, "Certainly a majority" of restaurants, stores, and offices are closed. Many have continued to operate through online ordering and expanded pick-up and delivery services, but retail locations especially have found it difficult to replace

foot traffic and are scrambling to adapt.

"Retail has definitely been the hardest hit," Bergeson said. "The jewelry shops—Kate and Pebble Jewelry and at Niwot Jewelry—they're actually doing delivery service now. So I think people are getting creative."

Unfortunately, that might not be enough for some beloved local establishments, and the NBA is already concerned about permanent closures, including 2nd Ave Hair. Bergeson expects that number to rise if, as seems likely, restrictions continue into summer.

But the news isn't all grim. A few businesses, including Niwot Market and Niwot Tavern, have held steady or seen an increase in sales. That includes Bergeson's bike shop, Niwot Wheel Works (124 2nd Avenue), an exception in the retail sector.

"I'm fortunate, being a bike shop, and being considered essential," he said. "We've always done [pick up and delivery], but it's doubled or tripled from what we were doing before. I think we'll see more of that, now that people realize it's a lot easier and more convenient."

For business owners not so fortunate, the NBA and Niwot Economic Development Director Catherine McHale have prioritized tracking down state and local programs in addition to the federal PPP and EIDL loans. One such resource is the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade's (OEDIT) database of small business relief programs, which is "designed as a resource for Colorado's small businesses to find access to alternative funding sources beyond EIDL, PPP and other federal loans and programs." Ranging from municipal tax deferrals to private grants, the relief targets not just stores and restaurants, but also artists, performers, sole proprietors, and the otherwise self-employed.

The NBA has also urged its members to interact with county-level resources as much as possible, starting with the Small Business Development Center. A division of OEDIT, the Boulder SBDC is providing remote consultations to business owners with

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## COMMUNITY PET SPOTLIGHT



Meet Nolan, canine companion to Sam French. French writes, "He is a 3-year-old yellow lab/German shepherd mix. He is currently working as an essential employee at Table Mesa Hardware and enjoys naps and squeaky toys. Nolan was adopted from an Indian reserve where he was a stray. He was so skinny and sick when we got him, but look at him now."

*We would love to feature your pets in our spotlight. Please email your photos and captions Editorial@lhvc.com.*



## Groundbreaking on Jack's Solar Garden imminent

By EMILY LONG  
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Here is a ray of sunshine in these dark times; a ray of sunshine, shining on a solar panel, producing energy locally in Longmont for residents of the Left Hand Valley.

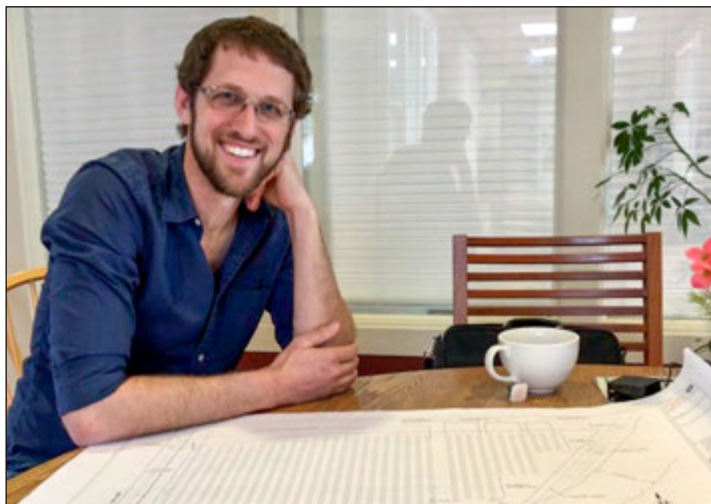
Jack's Solar Garden, the community solar project created by Byron Kominek on his farm in south Longmont, is on track to be built, connected, and producing power by fall.

In early April, Kominek signed a contract with Namasté Solar to build the panels. Namasté is a local solar developer, and as Kominek pointed out, also a certified B Corporation. B Corps prioritize equity, environment, and people as much as they value profit, the primary metric used for most for-profit companies.

Namasté is set to begin construction of the 1.2 megawatt (MW) solar installation in June, with the goal of completing interconnection with Xcel Energy's electricity grid by September.

Kominek points out that all of this depends on the situation with COVID-19 remaining stable, however, all indicators at this time are positive.

Namasté has given the project a green light and a timeline.



File Photo

Jack's Solar Garden founder, Byron Kominek, during the planning stages of the future community agrivoltaic farm on the outskirts of Niwot

Critical infrastructure, including construction and electricity generation, are on the list of essential businesses under the current rules in Colorado, so workers can build the system.

The installation will be a similar size and will include similar components to the IBM installation that went up last year near Niwot. It has a different tracking system, and Kominek will be elevating the panels to two different heights, six feet and eight feet, "simply to give researchers the opportunity to study growing crops underneath the both and see how the microclimate changes between the two elevations."

While one obvious goal of the project is to produce renewable energy for local consumption, that's only a small element of Kominek's plans.

"To me, the idea of community solar is not just providing solar back into the community, but getting the community involved in production of the solar," said Kominek.

"What we want to accomplish here is being able to bring folks out on a regular basis, to come out to the farm, see the solar panels, see what's going on, see how energy is being produced locally."

To achieve this goal, Jack's Solar Garden is partnering

with a variety of researchers, nonprofits, and other regional organizations. These plans are barreling forward, as well.

"If you've driven by the farm in the past couple of weeks, you'll have seen that the Audubon Rockies has already started their work on the pollinator habitat that'll go around the perimeter of the solar array," according to Kominek.

There are plans in the works for a community planting day in late May, depending on current COVID-19 rules and restrictions.

Some other organizations involved include NREL, Colorado State University, Sprout City Farms, and Arizona University.

Boulder County has committed to purchase 10% of the energy produced, and Kominek is negotiating with a handful of other local businesses to come on board for more.

Anyone can take part in the program, whether an individual, household, business, or other organization, and Kominek says they are still signing up new subscribers.

The hope of the project, according to Kominek, is to take the idea of agrivoltaics, or the practice of co-developing land for both solar production and agriculture, to create a body of research that others can follow. Kominek is hoping researchers will learn things like "how moisture content is stored, or how temperatures are different" under solar panels, in order to help others "figure out what they want to do on their land."

"We're bringing the idea of agrivoltaics here in Colorado to scale."

Read more background on the project in LHVC articles [here](#) and [here](#) or visit [Jack's Solar Garden](#) online.

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## Vapor Distillery makes and donates sanitizer to community

By ABIGAIL SCOTT  
Editorial@lhvc.com

It can prove difficult to spot a silver lining amidst the current global pandemic. Daily news bombards us with rising infections, death rates, and unemployment stats. Our lives are upended and new daily routines require patience, compassion and understanding just to make it through. However, catastrophe and disaster often have a way of bringing out the best in humanity. People want to lighten the load for those with heavy burdens and Boulder County is no different.

The folks at Vapor Distillery in East Boulder are stepping up to fill a severe need in a unique and personal way. Since the business is based around making alcohol, Vapor Distillery creates



Courtesy Photo

Alastair Brogan distributes his company's hand sanitizer to Boulder Fire Department's Brigade #6.

ethanol - the key ingredient in hand sanitizer. Owner Alastair Brogan explained, "When you add glycerol and hydrogen peroxide in accordance with WHO

recipes, you are able to make hand sanitizer."

As the oldest distillery in Boulder, Vapor Distillery is widely known and celebrated for its

spirits, specifically its American single malt whiskeys, bourbons, and gins. With 61 awards won from 54 competitions, it's no secret that Boulder Spirits by Vapor Distillery are a favorite of our Boulder County community and beyond.

When Brogan first founded the business 12 years ago, he commissioned a 1,000-gallon copper pot still from the Forsyths - a world renowned and long tenured maker of distillery equipment for the Scottish whisky industry. Not only does Brogan select his equipment with love, but he continues to pour his heart and soul, along with some barley and yeast, into each batch he creates.

Now, he's pouring that same commitment into helping his community. So far, Vapor has

filled 500 bottles of hand sanitizer and plans to fill 2,000 more in weeks to come. Brogan said, "I felt that, due to the local and world wide shortage and how effective hand sanitizer is to curb the virus, this was something I could do for the community." While the distillery has access to plenty of ethanol, it has had trouble sourcing plastic bottles - which are in short supply thanks to the pandemic.

So far, Boulder Spirits by Vapor Distillery has donated hand sanitizer to the Boulder Fire Department Brigade #6 and Bridge House Community Kitchen. Once they've filled additional hand sanitizer, Brogan and his team will continue to donate this necessary product to others serving our community during the crisis.

## LAGERMAN

Continued from Page 1

Nelson inherited. In partnership with his brothers John and Louis, Nelson homesteaded a large part of the land now bisected by Nelson Road. In fact, the Boulder County Fairgrounds used to be a part of this family's agricultural domain.

But the Nelson brothers weren't the only Nelsons in the area, or even the first. The first Swedish settlers in Boulder County included Samuel Gumeson, Sven and Bengt Johnson, Aaron Peterson, Sven Magni, Peter Johnson, Lars Larson and Johannes Nelson. The latter was affectionately called "Canyon" Nelson to distinguish him

from others with the same last name.

This entrepreneurial contingent of Swedes took up residence in the vicinity of present day Lagerman Reservoir between 1870 and 1871. Like many homesick pioneers, they named their settlement after the one they had just left in Ryssby, Sweden. Timbers were hauled from the mountains for homes, sheds, and a 12-mile livestock perimeter fence. The community helped dig the Swede, James, Tollgate, Lake, Table Mountain, and Holland ditches to irrigate their land.

Despite their best efforts, the first years were trying. Drought was exacerbated by plagues of Rocky Mountain locusts, a now-extinct grasshopper species that descend-

ed in biblical proportions and destroyed everything in their path.

But religion held the Swedes together. In the early days, Sven Johnson's commodious house doubled as a church and school for the Lutheran congregation. Both migrated into a log cabin at the edge of his farm in 1875. And finally, in 1878, the school district gave the Lutherans permission to organize a church.

The same year, Frederick Lagerman arrived in Ryssby to serve as a spiritual leader for the Swedish Evangelical Congregation of Ryssby. According to the Swedish custom, the congregation purchased 160 acres of land as a "Prastgard," or preacher's garden. The community farmed this land, and its profit went to pay the reverend's salary. Among the additions to the land--a reservoir known locally as Swede Lake but officially as Lagerman Reservoir.

It is ironic that the reservoir still bears this name, because Pastor Lagerman didn't last long. Paying his \$300 salary was difficult enough for the congregation, never mind supplying the promised parsonage and church. The parsonage was even-



Photo by Amy Scanes-Wolf

Lagerman Reservoir west of Longmont was named for the short time spiritual leader of the Swedish Evangelical Congregation of Ryssby.

tually built, but Lagerman resigned before planning for the church began.

It is a tribute to the difficulty of life on the frontier that the congregation could not find another minister for two and a half years. The entire church was planned, built, dedicated, and used for one year before L.J. Sandeen became Ryssby's next minister in 1883.

The church was modeled after the church in Ryssby, Sweden. It was made of local sandstone and sat on three acres donated by Hugo Anderson. The dedication took place on June 24, 1882, a Swedish holiday called

Midsummer Day. Residents from Longmont, Hygiene, and the Niwot United Brethren Church all attended the dedication.

Eventually, many of Ryssby's residents abandoned their homesteads for better land and work in Longmont's sugar and canning factories. In 1914, the church merged with the Elim Lutheran Church of Longmont. But the legacy of this community lives on in Lagerman Reservoir, Nelson Road, and the Ryssby Church, which still opens its doors for Midsummer Night Festival, Christmas services, and special events.

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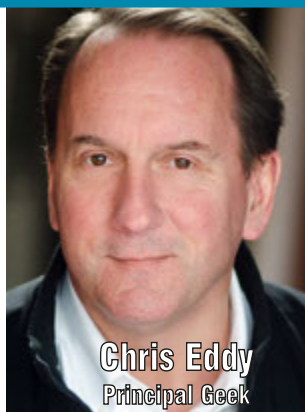
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## Niwot park and ride to receive renovation

By HANNAH STEWART  
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Buses are a common sight for those living in Boulder and Longmont, but they are easily forgettable since they seem to simply blend into the daily landscape of Colorado traffic. For those living in Niwot, perhaps the primary source of exposure to public transit may come from the park and ride lots on either end of Niwot Road, at Highway 287 and Highway 119.

So, it may come as a bit of a surprise to discover that Denver's Regional Transportation District serves close to 3 million people across eight counties in the Denver Metro area.

"We work with cities and their transit plan," explained Lisa Trujillo, project outreach manager for RTD. "There's a lot of moving parts," she said when asked how locations for bus stops and park and rides are determined.

Much of the consideration

behind location has to do with safety. Knowing street business—from both pedestrians and vehicles—is crucial to keeping people safe. Ultimately, it depends on the area to determine if a park and ride is established at any location.

When it comes to safety, however, it often extends past the simple aspect of location in relation to traffic around it. Safety and accessibility of the space, which is generally tied to age, is a consideration for if and when a particular park and ride or bus stop might be renovated.

"Really, it's the age of the infrastructure at the facility. Maybe it could be expanded or needs a few more ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] spaces, there are a lot of different reasons," said Trujillo.

Money became available within RTD's budget, which led to Niwot's park and ride on Highway 287 being chosen for an upgrade. As such, crews have been sent to the location

to update it for the community's growing needs.

"We want to be mindful of the folks who mind our system. We don't want them pulling out into traffic, but we want to be mindful of our construction crews too." As an unexpected silver lining from COVID, since construction is considered an essential service

and ridership/general traffic has decreased, RTD has been able to renovate the stop with a relatively limited impact to its patrons.

That said, RTD has also updated its guidelines for its riders. In a press release from Sunday, it announced that service will be reduced by 40% and there will be rider limits to promote social

distancing. They have gone so far as mandating buses to skip stops if these rider limits are reached.

"We still want to provide safe, reliable service to our patrons to get them to where they need to be," Trujillo said.

For more information and updates, visit [www.rtd-denver.com/](http://www.rtd-denver.com/).



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

RTD is renovating its park and ride facility at the corner of Highway 287 and Niwot Rd.

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Eddie Spaghetti sings Peter Cottontail virtually before Easter, but the Hunt goodies went off to the troops overseas thanks to the Niwot Cookie Moms. Dr. Mikki Hand delivers prizes and goodies to Salvad Clinic. Thanks Niwot kids for sharing this year!

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# Returning to our roots

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By AMY SCANES-WOLFE  
Editorial@lhvc.com

It has been a source of immense frustration to me for many years that I can't be a hunter-gatherer.

And it all began with a degree in cultural anthropology. Wading back through the annals of our agrarian past, and studying the marginal hunter-gatherer groups that existed into the 1900s, I had a glimpse of the life humankind evolved to live. Did you know that most hunter-gatherers lived to about 70 years of age, ate approximately 2000 calories of nutrient dense food a day,

avoided infectious disease, and worked about 30 hours a week? Not to say this lifestyle didn't have its drawbacks--intertribal warfare claimed more lives than homicide does today, infant mortality was high, and ecological disaster hit these communities hard.

Having spent eight years now in the organic farming and food production world, though, it is ironic to me that the dawn of human suffering seems to be the dawn of agriculture. With its advent came crowding, inequality, disease, a sharp decline in nutrition (with a boon of calories), and the beginning of the environmental destruction that, 10,000 years later, has finally caught up with us.

The biggest difference in the diet of hunter-gatherers

and modern humans was not, as we often say, "paleo" versus "grain." It was perennial versus annual. Annual plants live out their entire life cycle in one season, whereas perennials such as trees, shrubs, and herbs come back year after year. In nature, annual plants are relatively rare. Important, but rare. All ecologies suffer period disturbance--flood, fire, tornado, mud-slide. The plants that are poised to occupy this gaping ecological niche are good at establishing fast, taking up nutrients fast, reproducing fast, and spreading fast. Sound familiar? We often call these plants weeds.

Native weeds set succession in motion. As they grow and die back and grow and die back, their biomass accumulates and creates the perfect

conditions for perennials to take hold. Eventually these perennials--forbs [a herbaceous, flowering plant], grasses, shrubs, trees, whatever the regional precipitation allows--establish. The deep roots and dense canopies crowd out the sun-loving, short-lived weedy species. And, until disturbance hits again, you have a more or less stable community of perennial plants that are diverse, self-reliant, low-maintenance, carbon sequestering, topsoil-creating, and good at supporting diverse life, including our ancestors. Forests. Prairies. Sagebrush.

Where do our food crops fit into this picture? They're the weeds! Almost all our major food crops are annuals--grains, beans, vegetables, canola. And the problem with this is that in order to keep growing them, we have to keep re-disturbing our environment year after year. We stop succession in its tracks, creating an endless pit that requires more water, more nutrients, and more labor. Hence the environmental

destruction our food system is presently causing.

When I first realized this, I felt modern humanity was doomed, its swelling population dependent on an unsustainable food source. Luckily for me, I stumbled into a design science called permaculture that gives us the toolkit for re-creating an ecologically based food system. A perennial food system.

Often, when I discuss permaculture with people, they respond with the whole "we have to feed the world" argument. Just for fun, say we are trying to feed Niwot's population entirely in Niwot. Often, we think of farming as growing vegetables. Bad news folks. Vegetables have a lot of nutrients, but not a lot of calories. If we're going to survive on what we grow, no annual food crop is more efficient calorie-per-space than potatoes. To feed Niwot 2000 calories a day year-round on potatoes, we would have to productively use about 17% of Niwot's land area.

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## COMMISSIONER

*Continued from Page 1*

"The bigger question for me is, 'Who's not in the room?', and we're seeing more and more of the disparities."

Loachamin hopes to see involvement in the primary. She realizes how it's overwhelming right now with the constantly updating information around the pandemic. So she hopes that the importance of the primary isn't lost in the noise, saying that if it does, participation--and therefore the ability to make change--could be severely affected.

"With COVID, we're in a situation where we're not going to have to rebuild, but recreate [especially how county leadership interacts with county residents]," she said. "A community-driven experience is how, I believe,

that we'll come out of this successfully."

So, even though she cannot get up in front of people, she hopes that community members can see that her commitment to the community is sincere. In fact, City of Longmont Councilman Tim Walters has already endorsed Loachamin, saying that the county would be in good hands with Loachamin as commissioner.

"My background is not from state legislation, that's what we've historically done in Boulder County," said Loachamin. "My public service to the community is really deep but also really broad. That's part of the reason my candidacy is so unique."

For more information about Loachamin's candidacy, please contact Hillary Hall, Campaign Manager, at 303-884-0593, or visit [www.MARTA2020.org](http://www.MARTA2020.org).



## 2ND AVE

Continued from Page 1

pink rollers as they thumbed magazines under the giant helmets that dried their hair. She'd back comb, fluff, spray and send them on their way. Back they'd come the next week.

"Come hell or high water they were in your salon every week. Nothing stopped them," said Armstrong.

Now, most of her clients come every month or six weeks for cuts, perms or color. "We are a little more independent and we can do our own hair now weekly. I don't think people take that much pride in their hair as much anymore."

2nd Ave Hair is right on the main drag of Niwot where Armstrong used to get a lot of foot traffic. That slowed down over the years, even before the coronavirus pandemic temporarily closed so many businesses.

"We don't have retail anymore. All we seem to have is pizza and real estate. We don't have the restaurants we used to have. It was just busy all the time," she said. "It is almost eerie now. It's really sad."

And then there is the cost of doing business, which has steadily gone up. "Expenses are just eating me alive," she said. "They're just out of sight. Rent in Niwot is ridiculous, product, insurance, utilities—everything has gone up except our prices."

Armstrong takes with her memories of the Niwot parades that her business used to be part of and her unique window into what was happening in a small town. But she'll keep the most important asset she's ever had—her customers.

"I'm retirement age, but I'm not ready to hang it up yet," she

said. She's going to continue cutting hair, just at a different salon. She'll have a seat at Cutter's Edge in Gunbarrel. Her 2nd Ave stylists are going with her.

The venue will be different, but conversations she's had during thousands of haircuts will continue as they always have, under the apron, scissors in hand, eyes connecting through a mirror.

"They start as customers, and they end up being really good friends. They've heard about my kids growing up and I've heard about their kids and grandkids growing up," she said, grateful for her loyal customer base that has helped her through difficult times in her life. Like when she was in a life-threatening motorcycle accident six years ago.

"Stopped at a stoplight and a lady hit me from behind going 55 miles per hour in her van. It was up in Loveland. I had several more people working for me at that time. Everyone just pitched in and helped and my customers were wonderful. I came back to work after about six months. I couldn't have done it without the support of my friends, staff, customers and my family," said Armstrong, who chokes up thinking about it.

Thirteen screws remain in her leg. There are broken bones the doctors couldn't even fix. She has arthritis and other aches and pains. But she said she counts her blessings every day. "I'm glad to be here. I'm glad I can work and have a great life."

Armstrong is grateful that her customers still want to put their locks in her skilled hands. "I've been hearing from a lot of them. That makes me feel better," she said.

It may still be a while before salons are able to open up again due to the coronavirus restrictions. But once that happens and new protocols are in place, Armstrong will get back to doing what she does best.

"I think I listen to my customers and I try to please them. I try to get what they want. I'm not afraid to fail. So if they want to try something new, we'll try

it," she said. But experience has taught her to also listen for what isn't said. "Sometimes what they're saying isn't what they really want. So you have to explain it to them before you do it so you don't end up with a disaster."

Change has its risks whether it's a hairstyle, closing a business or opening a new chapter of life. Armstrong is caught

between emotions as she closes the salon that has been such an important part of her life.

"It doesn't feel real good. Nobody likes change, especially not me. I guess it's just time," she said as she tries to pivot away from the past and toward the future. "It will be nice to have a change. It's just time to close up and move on to the next chapter."

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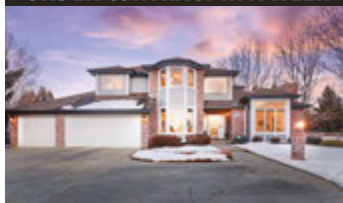
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## NBA

Continued from Page 1

COVID-19 issues, and can assist with finding emergency loans or grants.

"Catherine McHale has been a tremendous resource for the NBA executive team and myself during this time," Bergeson said of McHale's prodigious efforts to gather these sources over the past month. "She has been a valuable source of information,

perspective, and hands-on work during the transition into my new role as NBA President. She was quite helpful before COVID-19 entered the picture and is even more valuable since."

More locally, the NBA is preparing to launch a local delivery service to assist businesses transitioning to a remote business model. Both Bergeson and Bert Steele of Niwot Market will be lending vehicles to the effort, which is expected to get underway

soon. The NBA is also considering redirecting some of its future LID funding requests.

"We're likely going to have to postpone certain parts of Rock & Rails, if not the majority of it," he said "We're hopeful that we're still going to be able to have it and that we can push that out until September. There may be some other things we've planned that won't happen, so we might have some funds available that we might be able to use to benefit some businesses

more directly, but we haven't developed a methodology for that yet."

So far, Bergeson has been pleasantly surprised by the county's efforts to help Niwot as a whole, and he thinks it could lead to smoother relations down the road. McHale has put together a survey on behalf of the NBA, asking members how Boulder County can help local business owners, and Bergeson is hopeful their concerns will be heard.

"Summer Laws, a Policy Analyst with the Boulder County Commissioners Office, has reached out to us on multiple occasions...I had a call with her and Denise Grimm, a senior planner, about ideas on how they can help facilitate a rapid and effective recovery for businesses in unincorporated Boulder County."

Potentially on the table are personal property tax and real estate property tax relief, quicker permitting and land use review processes, or a loosening of the restrictions on LID tax funds.

"I'm looking at this as an opportunity for the Niwot business community to reshape our relationship with the county and to look for opportunities to make some adjustments around how we do business with the county," he said. "I'm seeing a very receptive audience around them trying to help us out. We've been through this whole moratorium, and a lot of disruption here in Niwot, and I think

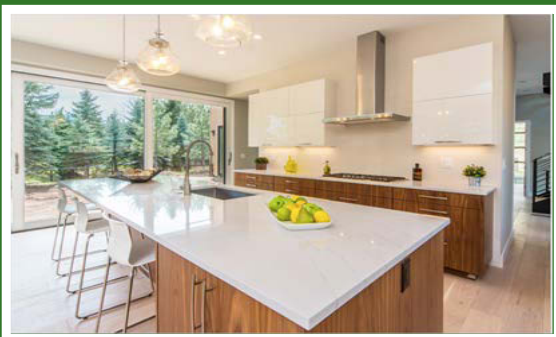
there's some healing that can go on. I think coming out of this, there might be an opportunity to regroup."

Bergeson ultimately has a positive outlook for Niwot's future recovery, though he warned it could be prolonged, and the town might not look much like it did before March 2020. Large indoor gatherings might be slow to return, he predicted, and families will likely replace their former routines with remote work and food delivery.

"I am optimistic that the Niwot business community will get through this and we will eventually be stronger than ever," he said. "But that is going to take a lot of energy, creativity, cooperation and a willingness to adapt. It will also take a tremendous amount of support from the wider Niwot community."

"Now is the time that all businesses in Niwot need to come together to support one another," he continued. "It is a fact that each business thrives when its neighboring business thrives. It is likely that we will lose some local businesses during this fight and that is a shame. My heart goes out to anyone who has worked so hard and sacrificed so much to make a business go here in Niwot. However, I firmly believe we must look at this as an opportunity to create a deeper and stronger critical mass of business activity here in Niwot. Frankly, that is our only option, and we should focus all of our energy toward doing that."

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## Retail

Some stores are open as usual and others will be open by appointment, or via online and telephone sales.

Let's bring back the days when you called the store and discussed what you are looking for and our store holders can make recommendations!

We want for our downtown to survive these times and come back stronger so please consider where you could shop in Niwot where before you might have gone elsewhere - we have apparel, books, gifts, homewares, art, pet supplies, groceries, liquors, jewelry and bikes! Practice social distancing and all of the recommended hand washing and health protocols if you are coming into stores.

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# 1950s artifacts donated to Niwot Historical Society

By JOCELYN ROWLEY  
Editorial@lhvc.com

Last week's surprise winter storm might have seemed out of place in April, but as a recently donated artifact to the Niwot Historical Society (NHS) attests, spring blizzards are nothing new in the area. According to the April 6, 1957 edition of the Niwot Tribune (1921-1958), the area was "buried" under 18 inches of snow, which disrupted local phone service for four days.

The Tribune clipping was one of several items donated to the NHS in March by longtime member Judy Gould Dayhoff, who has been doing some spring cleaning of the Gould family history files, and decided it was time the items went "to a good home."

"My great grandfather, James B. Gould, was a brother to Jerome F. Gould, a Niwot pioneer," Dayhoff wrote in an email interview with the Courier. "James B. lived near

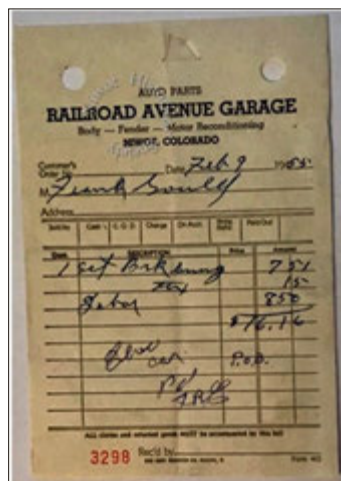


Courtesy of the Niwot Historical Society

Rev. Taylor of Niwot was the local representative for the Cownie Tanning Company, a custom hide finisher in Des Moines. This pamphlet was donated to the NHS by Judy Dayhoff Gould.

Jay Road and 75th Street. My father, Frank E. Gould, whose Railroad Avenue Garage receipts were given to the NHS, lived on the North Foothills Highway (US 36) and not in the Niwot area. In the 1950s, Dad would sometimes bring his vehicles to be repaired by Francis Curtis, owner of the Railroad Avenue Garage in Niwot."

Dayhoff's donation included the raft of newspaper clippings, dated from 1950-1958, as well as other documents from



Courtesy of the Niwot Historical Society

Judy Gould Dayhoff donated this receipt, dated Feb. 9, 1955, from Railroad Avenue Garage, an auto repair shop formerly located on 2nd Avenue.

everyday life in Niwot seven decades ago. For NHS President Kathy Koehler, the Gould family artifact items provide a welcome boost to the group's mid-20th century collection.

"We would like to gather more items and information from the 1950s forward," Koehler wrote. "We don't have

much information on Francis Curtis and the Railroad Avenue Garage, so we would appreciate any stories from folks who were in Niwot and visited the shop."

Also among the Gould family items was an order booklet from the Cownie Tanning Company, a custom hide finisher headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa.

"The Cownie Tanning Company operated from 1888 for five generations in the mid-west," she wrote. "For hides to make their products, they had representatives of the company throughout the United States, and Rev. Taylor was the Niwot area representative. The notebook is clean and unmarked. The one page in the book lists the prices paid for hides so it brings reflection on the types of hides that would warm and protect pioneers."

Dayhoff is already planning a future donation, thanks to a lifelong habit she picked up from her family.

"My grandmother, Lena Moll Gould Baker, clipped and saved many items from local newspapers in the 1940s and 50s. I carried on that "tradition" from the 1960s through the mid-1990s."

Among her clippings are several obituaries of Niwot pioneers, such as Ereck C. Ereckson (who was born in Ward in 1870), as well as Margaret Remley and Flora Sherman, daughters of Jerome F. Gould.

Koehler said that the NHS receives donations "periodically," and Dayhoff's is the first since member JoAnn Bell donated items related to the former Niwot School, which was razed in the 1960s to make room for State Highway 119. Two years ago, Dave and Cheryl Armstrong donated several items from George and Walter Atkinson, Niwot's longtime blacksmiths.

"We appreciate any items that share and help document Niwot's history. It is best for an

*Continued on Page 12*

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# Local nonprofits get creative to stay afloat

By ABIGAIL SCOTT  
Editorial@lhvc.com

Our local nonprofits do tremendous work in supporting the Boulder County community. However, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and market drop, they have taken a hit. Many have had to shift day-to-day operations and get creative with funding to ride out the current storm.

Via Mobility, which provides free or reduced cost transportation for older adults, people with disabilities, and others living with mobility limitations, has noted a 50 to 70% ridership decrease across its four ride divisions, of which three are income earning. The decrease has eaten into the non-profit's earnings significantly.

Through February, Via was on pace to double the number of rides it provides in Niwot from 2019, when 169 trips were provided. Typically, the group is able to subsidize the high cost of driver-assisted transportation and wheel-chair accessible vehicles by acting as a social enterprise. Via accepts contracts with government entities and applies the revenues to its mission. The organization also depends on individual and corporate donations, grants and local support.

While business has taken a hit and Via has had to furlough many of its drivers, they are covering both the employer and employee portion of the furloughed drivers' health insurance. Via's communications manager, Lyndsey Morse, described the current state of affairs at this necessary non-profit by email. "For now, we're up and running - and ready to help others when/where we can - but it's anything but 'normal.' Any staff who can work remotely is now working from home. All other staff that can't work from home - most of our folks, drivers, dispatchers, maintenance, detailers, etc.- are required to wear provided masks, both PPE for drivers on duty and cloth masks for all others, and abide by appropriate social distancing measures." Via is providing rides only in its larger vehicles so that it's drivers and riders may be six feet apart.



Courtesy Photo

Via Mobility has recorded a steep drop in ridership that threatens the nonprofits revenues.

Looking towards the unpredictable future, Morse described the transition Via hopes to make. "I do foresee a shift to more localized on-demand transportation - a goal that we'd already been working towards pre-pandemic - as our communities realize the importance that accessible, affordable transportation options for all. We are also planning to continue to work towards a smaller carbon footprint by converting our fleet to electric and using our solar array (plus a lot more solar!) to power this fleet."

Another local non-profit, The Mwebaza Foundation, usually performs its daily operations remotely but is closely tied in with area elementary, middle, and high schools as well as working closely with its partner schools in Uganda. Outreach Manager Diedre Paterno Pai was inspired by many donors who stepped up to support Mwebaza and its mission. "Several of our donors jumped right in and made unsolicited gifts right away and that show of solidarity and support was really inspiring and gave us a lot of hope," she said. "It is hard to say at this point how impacted our ongoing fundraising will be."

As far as the non-profit's work in Niwot and Uganda is concerned, Pai said, "We are rescheduling fundraising events and delaying projects and important site visits. We also aren't meeting one on one with individual donors and are looking more towards foundations now."

Pai also stated that Mwebaza will continue to work on current projects as much as possible with the social distancing and travel restriction so they can be ready

to roll when it is safe to do so. "While we are able to stay safe here in Colorado by continuing to work remotely, we worry more about the students and teachers we care about in Uganda. We hope that the situation there remains controlled and the kids can safely resume school next month. Ugandans are resilient and used to disruptions but we know the importance of education and that schools are a place for minds and bodies to grow. We don't know when we will be able to visit and plan projects that include buildings, solar power, computer labs, etc. The delay in our programming and the students not getting what they need is our biggest concern. We are working to make sure we are ready to launch the second danger has passed."

Meals on Wheels in Longmont has seen a significant uptick in their deliveries - adding 71 new clients. Communications Director Katie Wiser noted that, while MOW is doing alright financially, their food costs have nearly doubled because of operational changes due to COVID-19. In regards to funding, Wiser explained, "Almost half of our income is from individual donations, which is just remarkable! It shows a real level of support from the community, which we especially need right now. We also receive private and public grants and two competitive local government grants from the county and city."

This necessary service supplies food to a sector of our community in great need and has had to totally transform its daily operations to meet new regulations. Wiser stated, "Our

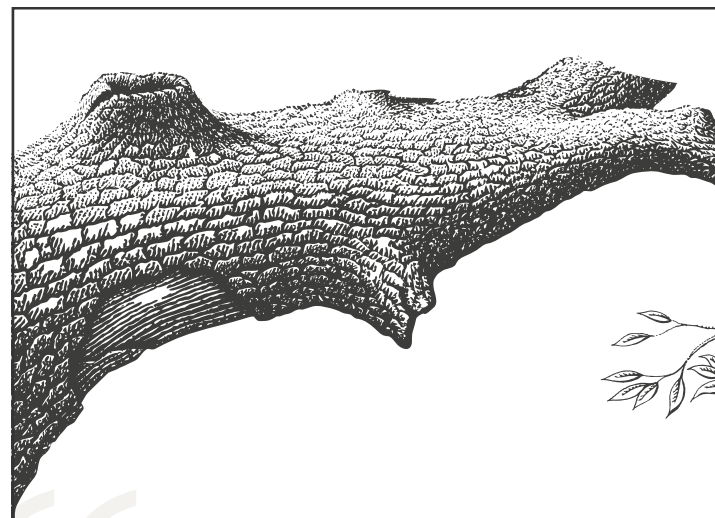
model has completely changed. First, of course, our community lunches have been canceled. People who were regular patrons at these locations can now get home delivery. We're also taking on new clients who meet our regular requirements, older people in Longmont and Niwot or people with disabilities who struggle to prepare a meal for themselves."

Meals on Wheels usually relies on a bevy of volunteer kitchen aids to prep, cook, and pack meals but now is getting by with only three staff members. However, there is a silver lining in this - MOW and local restaurants are partnering together in order to feed the community. Wiser elaborated on this group effort, "Longmont Meals on Wheels is asking that these restaurants charge us as low as they can without hurting themselves, but we have budgeted that it will double food costs. Partnering with restaurants now not only helps social distancing efforts today but prepares partnerships should there be a quarantine in

our kitchen in the future."

To help local non-profits, The Longmont Community Foundation's Neighbor-to-Neighbor COVID-19 Relief Fund granted \$100,000 to various organizations in and around Boulder County. Of this \$100,000 raised, Xilinx in Longmont donated \$68,000 to the fund. In total, 33 non-profits received support money from the COVID-19 relief fund. Groups that local Niwot residents hold near and dear were among the recipients. Attention Homes, Boulder Shelter for the Homeless, Longmont Meals on Wheels, and others will undoubtedly benefit from this additional financial aid during the economic shift.

While the end to this pandemic is uncertain, our community remains consistent in its support and care for one another. Compassion and understanding can help pull us through, even in the most trying of times, so that when we arrive at the other side, it's brighter and more hopeful than ever before.



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.

Bob Ross

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# Coronavirus creates challenge for college-bound Niwot athletes

By Jack Carlough  
Editorial@lhvc.com

Playing collegiately is a goal for many high school athletes across the country. It takes talent, hours of work, and equally important, the ability to get recognized and connected with a college coach.

Niwot High School counselor and Head Track and Field Coach Kelly Christensen has not let the coronavirus prevent him from helping student athletes connect with colleges.

"We're doing more than we normally would as far as really reaching out to coaches of these programs that kids want to go to and trying to make sure they're heard and they're not being ignored," Christensen said, "whether that's our coaches reaching out to contacts that might know the coaches or the recruiters. It is different and it is heartbreaking for some of these kids that might not get a chance who could've definitely competed at the next level that won't be."

Christensen was thrilled when he found out his senior track and field standout Jack Kenkel was able to find a match with Princeton University amidst the pandemic. For other athletes, a missing senior season could be devastating.

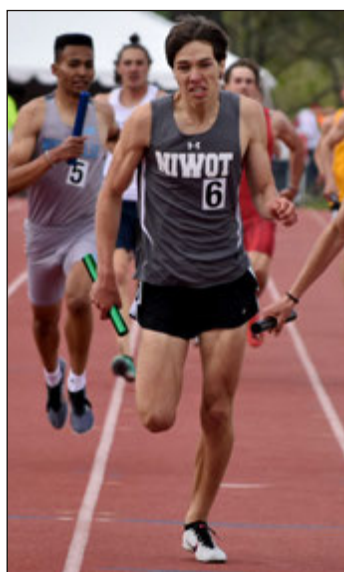


Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

A dramatic finish by Jack Kenkel in the boys 4x400 secured Niwot's team title at the 2019 Class 4A state track and field championships.



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

Milo Ostwald competed for Niwot's title winning 4x400 team in the 2019 Class 4A state track and field championships.

Senior track and field athlete Milo Ostwald has struggled to find a fit according to Christensen. Ostwald has even been training, and outperforming college runners during his time off. But with no senior season, it's nearly impossible for him to gain the exposure he needs at meets.

"It's been challenging," Christensen said. "Luckily, a lot of our seniors were already committed, but there were still some that needed a final season to showcase their fitness or at

least that they belong at the level they were hoping to get to."

Niwot's class of 2021 will also feel the effects according to Christensen. He believes with both potentially an absence of fall sport revenue and a smaller incoming class, colleges may have less financial flexibility to hand out scholarships.

Another adjustment colleges will be making is how they are forced to evaluate talent. With the ever-important eye test to evaluate character out the window, Christensen

said college coaches are relying on projections. Relying on previous race times and other metrics is risky, but a route that colleges are willing to take.

"It's just going to be interesting, especially even just for the junior kids," Christensen said. "There is no season for them, it looks like, to show their improvement and right now, I've had a few college coaches reach out to me. ...They're using data to see if they can predict the trajectory of these junior athletes to take their best guess on where they would be if there was (in-person) recruiting."

Fortunately for Niwot's student athletes, they have plenty of support. First-year Niwot Athletic Director Joe Brown also won't let the coronavirus impede his students' futures.

"I still think that this opportunity that's presented itself in a unique way has given us the opportunity to look at things from different lenses, and recruiting is definitely one of those lenses, but we are still actively working as hard as we can contacting coaches and promoting our kids through all of this," Brown said.

Monitoring the St. Vrain Valley School District's athletic department is former Niwot Athletic Director Chase McBride. McBride believes that

from the college's perspective, not much will change in acquiring student-athletes. The NCAA recently allowed its spring sport athletes an extra year of eligibility that will play another factor according to McBride.

"I don't foresee much changing in that realm of things," McBride said. "There's athletes that certainly could return, but that still wouldn't change the impact numbers of the amount of scholarships that a program is allocated."

These are still unprecedented times in the world of recruiting and Niwot's goal won't shift from helping its athletes any way they can.

"My heart goes out to all of our kids and coaches," Brown said. "We just love all of them to death and we want to help them and support them in any way, shape, or form that we can, and as coaches and as an athletic director, that focus hasn't changed. We're still loving and helping and working with our kids to talk with (college) coaches about them and what their potentials are."

CHSAA reconfirmed that it will announce a decision on spring sports on or before May 2.

## DONATION

Continued from Page 10

item to share the date, people, information and any story related to the item or photograph," Koehler wrote. "When items are donated, board director Vivian Knaus assesses the artifact and the item is carefully stored in appropriate preservation containers. In the past couple years, Vivian has created an outstanding database for all the recorded artifacts."

### New Board Members

The NHS had to postpone its public lecture series for the spring, but the local preservation group has been growing behind the scenes. Before the Feb. 26th Now & Then public lecture, the NHS elected Niwot residents

Kirk Stewart and Amy Scanes-Wolf to the Board of Directors.

"Sadly, Kirk and Amy were welcomed onto the Board of Directors at the end of February and the pandemic has put a halt to us having a group meeting to welcome them and really getting to find a niche for them," Koehler wrote of the pair. "I know they will offer fresh ideas and suggestions, fit in well and are great additions to the board. There is always something that needs a volunteer in an organization, and the more helping hands make the job easier on all volunteers."

Both will bring extensive experience to the position, according to Koehler, and, "both share a respect and have an interest in our Niwot history."

"Amy and Kirk have hosted

at times when the Fire House Museum is open. Amy has Boulder County Heritage Center experience and Kirk is an accomplished wood-worker, so he might help with some displays in the Museum. Kirk will also possibly be of tech help with Leonard Sitongia (NHS Webmaster/Director) because he has some technology experience. They both will have a 'home' on the Board contributing to something they enjoy."

Scanes-Wolf, a contributor to the Left Hand Valley Courier, is a lifelong history buff who is eager to connect with her hometown community on a deeper level.

"When I was a child, I wanted to grow up to be a pioneer," Scanes-Wolf said. "I used to diligently milk my rubber glove cow at the expense of my real

chores. What started as just a fascination with homesteading became really a fascination with how history shapes where we are today. I got to work for a couple of years as a docent at Thomas Jefferson's house, and I realized I loved historical interpretation. I think knowing the stories of the people that came before us makes us feel invested in the future and gives us a lens for looking at our own place and time. So naturally, living in Niwot, I have a desire to participate in learning and sharing its history."

Scanes-Wolf echoed Koehler's regrets about the pandemic delaying her work with the board, but is looking forward to getting started, whenever health guidelines allow it.

"If it is possible, I'd love to

explore connecting with kids. I volunteer with Boulder County's public history programs, so I've done a lot of historical tours, butter churning, one room school sessions, corn grinding, etc... with kids, and I love doing that kind of thing."

The NHS will be back in action in September, with the Now & Then series lecture on The Switzerland Trail, an historic narrow gauge railway. The second lecture of the 2020 series, originally scheduled for April 29th, has been postponed to Nov. 11.

For more information about the NHS, its collection, or to make a donation, visit <https://niwothistoricalociety.org> or send inquiries to [info@niwothistoricalociety.org](mailto:info@niwothistoricalociety.org).



## STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

# Quinn Gossett

By JOCELYN ROWLEY  
Editorial@lhvc.com

By the time she reached high school, senior keeper Quinn Gossett thought her soccer playing days were well behind her, but an impulsive decision to try out for the Niwot girls team as a ninth-grader resurrected a long buried passion for the game, even if it took a few days to surface.

"I stopped playing in fourth grade, and I really don't know why," Gossett said, recalling her return to the sport at the invitation of former Cougar junior varsity coach Jeremy Drake. "On that first day of tryouts freshman year, I got hit in the face, and I cried in front of Coach Dimit. I thought I was going to get cut from the team, and I was trying so hard to hold it in. But I didn't get cut, and that was good. And then goalkeeping just kind of clicked for me. That's the position that I kind of forgot that I loved."

Gossett made her debut on the Cougar varsity roster as a sophomore, playing in four games, and finally ascended to the starting job in 2019. After a productive off-season, she was looking forward to capping off her high school career in 2020 under first-year head coach Jenna Machado, and competing for the Northern League title one last time. With the season now likely to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, Gossett is lament-

ing what could have been.

"We have a lot of young talent, and they see the field really well," she said. "Under coach Jenna, she has a lot of expectations for us fitness-wise, and is definitely going to make us put in the work, and we were going to be a much stronger team fitness-wise. She did a really great job those first two weeks teaching us some defensive plays, and how we're going to play out of the back. That's really important for me—having a team that can play out of the back that I can support through that. We were trying to get that locked in, and it was looking really good."

Gossett was initially drawn to the high-profile keeper position due to its privileged status on the field, and admits that's part of the attraction even now.

"I thought it was the coolest thing to get to touch the ball with your hands, and I wanted to do that," she said of her first stint in soccer back in elementary school. "I still think it's cool, and it's kind of funny that's how I got started."

Naturally, Gossett's understanding of the keeper's role is more sophisticated these days, thanks in part to a regular diet of CU women's soccer during the fall. But she still relishes her position's singular authority during the game.

"Goalkeepers are really essential to the team communication-wise. We are active for the whole game; we see the field play out in a much



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

Keeper Quinn Gossett signals her defenders during Niwot's game against Mead on March 15, 2019.

different way. We're looking for those patterns of attack from the other team, and we're also watching how our team is playing, and how we can start counter-attacks. I think a lot of goalkeeping is looking for patterns."

Goalkeepers are also subject to a lot of scrutiny, and ultimately shoulder the blame for opposing goals and losses, whether justified or not. Gossett has learned to deal with the pressure by pouring it into her play on the field, but sometimes she can't help but give voice to it.

"I have a pretty aggressive style of goalkeeping, coming off my line, but I try to channel that energy to everything," she said. "Sometimes I need my teammates to remind me to calm down a little bit and

take a deep breath. Because sometimes I might not be active for the first 20 minutes of the game, but when I am, it's 100 percent. That energy might come out when I'm talking and communicating with my team as well."

While Gossett is waiting for CHSAA's final whistle on the 2019-20 season, she has a career at the collegiate level to contemplate. Earlier this month, she committed to play keeper for the women's soccer team at Chapman University in Orange, California. In 2019, the Panthers recorded seven shutout wins and ended at 11-4-3 on the year to take third in the NCAA Division III SCIA Conference, their best finish since 2016.

"They're super competitive," Gossett said of her future team. "Their goalkeeping program is really strong, and the coaches are really confident in this next recruiting class."

Chapman and the soccer program came to Gossett's attention via her parents, and she fell in love with the campus during a visit last fall. As of now, she plans to study engineering with an emphasis in design, but is still deciding on a potential career.

"I kind of want to design hypercores and look at alternative fuels that can be used that are more sustainable; not necessarily electric, but how can we take waste and turn it into a fuel," she said.

If that doesn't work out,

Gossett may have a career in sports photography. For the 2019-20 season, she served as chief photographer and social media coordinator for the Niwot boys basketball team, and some of those shots found their way into the Courier.

"That was really fun," she said. Gossett's father, Mike, has been on the basketball coaching staff since 2017. "I really like watching basketball, and being right there watching the action and capturing it was really amazing. I hope I can maybe continue that at Chapman, and work sports photography into my schedule when I'm not in season."

Still, Gossett said, an exciting future at Chapman can't entirely replace what she, her senior teammates, and all high school and collegiate athletes around the country have lost during the worldwide pandemic.

"I really miss the community—when your teammates are on the field with you, and you're in class with them as well, and having community support and parents out there, and having our classmates cheering us on—it's an amazing community in the spring. I love the energy that comes out—sometimes the track team will come down and support us during our games. It's really cool to see. I definitely miss playing on that field. I think it's one of the prettiest fields I've ever played on, and probably will ever play on."



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## It's all just ducky



Photo by Mary Wolbach Lopert

*Just because it's been the snowiest winter on record, it doesn't mean that spring isn't right around the corner. April snow has one great quality; it holds a lot of water. While Colorado champagne powder is great for skiing, anyone who grew up in a more humid climate knows that means the snow packs well. Gunbarrel Estates has the perfect example. This mother ducky and her chicks illustrate what can be done with good snow and an eye for detail.*

## GARDENING

Continued from Page 6

How does that compare to a perennial? Let's say apple trees, plagued by fire blight as they are. If we had a mature monoculture of moderately productive apple trees, we would need to use--you guessed it--17% of Niwot's land area.

Now, some people reading this might say, well, obviously the potatoes are a better choice. You don't have to wait 25 years for them to mature, they yield right away. But let's think about this. An apple tree does need irrigation here, but four times less than potatoes. Moreover, while potatoes only use fertility, apples help create fertility with leaf litter. Their roots support

soil life year round and at a deeper soil level. They sequester carbon. You don't have to replant them every year. They provide nectar for pollinators, habitat for birds, squirrels, and other critters, a playground for children, and shade for us.

And, if you've ever seen a tree growing in the wild, what can you observe about its understory? Is it bare? The understory of a mature tree can support many other plants--including food plants. On the southside of an apple tree's understory, you can plant rhubarb, fennel, chives, mint, thyme and a host of other perennial vegetables we've forgotten about in the last 200 years.

By mimicking nature, we can create low-maintenance, self-sustaining "food forests"

all over the place. And guess what--they look good. Really good. Just like those ornamental landscapes you're already spending a lot of time and money caring for.

I want to create a future when my children and grandchildren know the joy of foraging for their own food in their own backyard. Participating in the intense joy and gratitude of being taken care of by the places they inhabit. Rekindling that lost relationship. Biting into an apple whose juices have been warmed by the Colorado sun.

If you'd like to join me in creating this future, please get in touch! Left Hand Landscaping is planting food forests in Niwot and can help you with all aspects of growing your own food and fertility.

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