



INSIDE
Meet Niwot's
homegrown florist
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Affordable housing project in Gunbarrel raises trust issues with Boulder planners

By PATRICIA LOGAN

Boulder Housing Partners is now free to close a real estate deal to buy a property for an affordable housing project in Gunbarrel. But concerns about the development were centered more on the process of the land use change, rather than whether it's a good site for affordable housing.

Last spring, Boulder City Council allowed the city planning staff to move forward with a proposed land use change after the deadline had passed. At the council meeting last week, citizens and some council members were still expressing concern about the decision to bend the rules, saying it had the ap-



Photo by Patricia Logan

Parking and density will be part of future discussions about an affordable housing project proposed near Spine Road and Lookout Road in Gunbarrel.

pearance of preferential treatment for government proposals versus those by the public.

The purchase of property at 6500 Odell Place by Boulder Housing Partners was contingent on changing the land use designation from mixed use to

residential. The city council recently approved the change as part of the midterm update of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP).

"We support what's going to be done there, but it's important to follow the process. It is a

concern," said Council Member Rachel Friend at the meeting. Council Member Adam Swetlik agreed, saying the project seems like a good one, but how you get there matters, "I understand things pop up and you have to jump on them but there is a balance there with the public trust, for sure."

The three residents of Gunbarrel who spoke at the hearing all thought the site near Spine Road and Lookout Road was probably suitable for affordable housing, but took issue with the process. "I was very concerned about the irregularities about how this managed to slip into the BVCP midterm update. I think it sets a very bad precedent," said Kit Fuller.

Council Member Mary

Young asked questions about whether there are certain exceptions in timing that are made for staff-initiated proposals. After a long pause, Senior Planner Jean Gatz said, "I don't know if we've really had them before."

Young said that, in the end, the decision is "on council." She said they made the decision because affordable housing is a top priority and that council has that authority to make exceptions unless an issue has to do with a law or ordinance.

"When we make a decision or give direction to staff, that direction or decision should stand," said Young, adding that if community members have an issue with anything that comes

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Driver does a 'handy' job of parking on 2nd Avenue

By COURIER STAFF

Two of Niwot's iconic Left Hand chairs were damaged on Dec. 17 when a driver attempting to park in front of the Slater Building on 2nd Avenue accidentally accelerated towards

the sidewalk.

According to a witness at Niwot Jewelers, besides disabling the vehicle, damage was limited to the two chairs and some holiday lights on the property. The crash also left behind spilled motor oil after the car's engine was damaged.

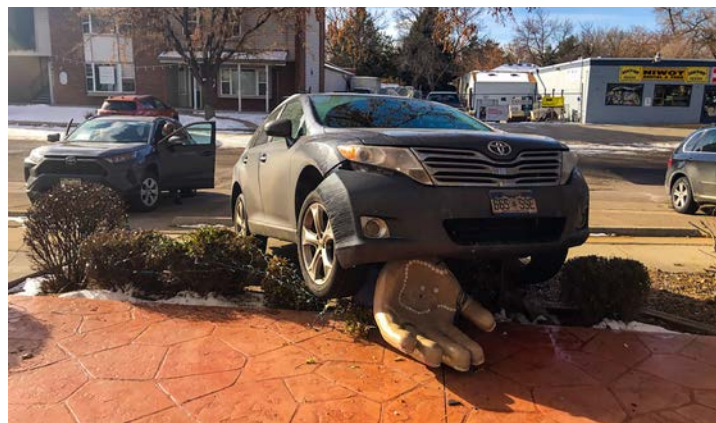


Photo courtesy of Jan Kahl

On Thursday, Dec. 17, an errant driver caused damage to the sidewalk and decorations along Niwot's 2nd Avenue.

Bootstrap Brewing brings home medals for beer and seltzer



By Deborah Cameron

Bootstrap Brewing Taproom

By DEBORAH CAMERON

This past month, Niwot's Bootstrap Brewing received some positive news to finish out its year. The brewery medaled three times in a pair of some of the most well regarded beverage competitions in the country: the U.S. Open Beer Cham-

pionships and its counterpart, the U.S. Open Cider and Beverage Championships.

In the beer competition, one of Bootstrap's most well-known beers, Wreak Havoc Red, took home gold in the Imperial Red Ale category. As more of a welcomed surprise, the brewery's newer offering, a non-alcohol-

ic IPA called Strapless, took home bronze in its category.

The recognition for Bootstrap's products extended to its seltzers, as Bootstrap's Sparkalicious Greyhound Seltzer took home gold in the fruited seltzer category at the beverage competition. The win gave a boost to the company's seltzers, which is one of Bootstrap's more recently developed product lines.

"We're always thrilled to medal in the U.S. Open Beer Competition because it's so unique in terms of being the only competition that includes beers from professional brewers worldwide, plus beers from gold medal winners from the National AHA Homebrew Competition," said co-owner Leslie Kaczeus.

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Community

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NIWOT IN THE NEWS
The Veteran’s Banner Project, sponsored by the Niwot Community Association, will be featured on the 30-minute holiday special “Positively Colorado: Good Stories From a Bad Year,” hosted by longtime 9News (KUSA) personality Gary Shapiro. The show is scheduled to air on Dec. 25 at 8:30 a.m. on Channel 20.

COVID-19 UPDATES
The Boulder County Department of Public Health is hosting the weekly COVID-19 update virtually and by phone every Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. Future updates will focus on current disease status in local communities, possibilities for a less restrictive level on the state COVID-19 Dial, and updates on vaccine. Spanish interpretation is available. For details, including the video link and phone number for future sessions, visit www.boco.org/COVID19CommunityUpdates.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS FOOD DRIVE
From sunset to 9:30 p.m. through Jan. 6, Chuck Rodgers’ drive-through holiday light extravaganza at 5980 79th Street in Niwot is on display for free to the public. For the fifth straight year, Rodgers will be accepting donations of money or canned food on behalf of Longmont’s Meals on Wheels program, a service that provides meals to the elderly and disabled in the area.

LID BOARD SEEKS NEW MEMBERS
Boulder County is accepting applications for three openings on the Niwot Local Improvement District (LID) Advisory Committee, a nine-member panel that oversees expenditures of the LID sales tax revenue. The committee meets monthly to consider requests for funding and discuss other district-related business. New five-year terms for a residential and two business community

representatives will begin in March 2021. The application period is open through Jan. 15, 2021. To apply or view other open positions, visit the county’s [board and commissions vacancies page](#).

WINTER COAT DRIVE
[Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church](#) (7077 Harvest Rd., Boulder) has partnered with Rejoice Lutheran in Erie and Scouts of America for a winter clothing drive to benefit those in need. Donations of new and gently used winter clothing will be accepted at Shepherd of the Hills through January 31, 2021. The items will then be distributed through Deacon’s Closet in Boulder and Precious Child in Broomfield. Shepherd of the Hills is also accepting food donations for its [Little Free Pantry service](#). For more information, visit the church [website](#) or call 303-530-4422.

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LHVC PET SPOTLIGHT

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Meet Sugar. She is a SUPER friendly and sweet, three-year-old Carolina Dog mix. She is currently residing at Bowhaus through the Bowhaus2ANewhaus foster program. She is loving pets from the staff and playing with all the other four legged friends. Farfel's Farm, a local Boulder rescue will be handling her adoption. **If you are interested in meeting this lovely girl please call (303)443-7711 or visit farfels.com for more information.**



Slupik Mini Farm: One family's labor of love

By KRISTEN ARENDT

Like many first-time business owners, Stacey Slupik didn't know exactly what to expect when she started her flower farm business in 2020.

What started as a passion project for Slupik, a mother of three who discovered flower farming in her search for a fulfilling creative outlet, quickly grew into a way for Slupik to share her newfound love of home-grown flowers with the local community.

Unknowingly, she picked a year to start her flower farm when people were actively looking for ways to bring joy and beauty to their "new normal" in-the-midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Slupik's flower farming story doesn't start in 2020. It really began in 2014, when she and her husband fell in love with and purchased their current family home on a small plot of land just west of Niwot in Oriole Estates.

"This is our dream, our landing place. This is where I've dreamed of raising a family and having some land and trees for them to climb and a connection to the outdoors," said Slupik.



Courtesy Photo

Niwot resident Stacy Slupik turned her passion into a flower farm business earlier this year.

When they purchased the home in 2014, the property and house needed some work, lining up a long line of projects that the Slupik family tackled over the ensuing years, in what Slupik calls a "labor of love."

"The first spring, my husband and my young son were out there spading out grass so we could throw down a few seeds in the garden. It was all weeds and overgrown. That's kind of how the whole yard and property and house was. We've worked non-stop on it for six

years, inside and out," said Slupik

Over the years, the Slupiks transformed their home and property, starting with the interior of the house and working their way to outdoor projects, doing as much of the work as they could themselves. The two-acre property along Niwot Road slowly but steadily transformed from an overgrown, nondescript yard to one that turns heads as folks drive or bike by, thanks to the beautiful wrap-around porch, epic

treehouse, and eye-catching greenhouse.

This home-built greenhouse is just one example of how Slupik approaches her passion projects—with a designer's eye and a mother's patience. With the end goal of a greenhouse in mind, she spent several years collecting unique windows from flea markets and salvage yards.

Much of the rest of the greenhouse's construction materials were salvaged from another project—re-doing the home's front porch. The Slupiks even found a way to incorporate a stack of old bricks they inherited along with the overgrown yard, which now makes up the floor of the greenhouse.

With the help of her husband and children, Slupik pieced together the one-of-a-kind greenhouse like a big puzzle, structurally planned around the windows. "That kind of determined the style of the greenhouse. We designed it around the windows," she said.

Now, Slupik said, passing drivers will stop and get out of their cars to take pictures and cyclists yell compliments on what is definitely a one-of-a-kind structure born of a several-years-long project.

So in 2020 when Slupik started to entertain the idea of starting a flower farm, it should come as no surprise that she was able to take the idea and run with it. "We definitely had a dream of growing things, but the flower farm idea wasn't in our minds first off," she said. The family instead grew vegetables and herbs and planted trees and berry bushes.

Then Slupik found and started following Floret Flower Farms, a flower farm based in Skagit Valley, Washington, on social media. She became intrigued by the farm's short video tutorials.

"When I saw those clips, I just felt such a connection. There was something in me that felt so excited," said Slupik.

Slupik signed up for a six-week online course about how to start a small flower farm. Next thing she knew, Slupik, with the help and encouragement of her husband, was tilling up a big part of their two-acres to plant a flower garden.

"My husband's super supportive," she said. "He just told me to go for it."

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COVID woes add to holiday stress

By MICHAEL RICKICKI

It is often most difficult to feel happy or excited, at times when everyone is pressured to do so. The holiday season has always marked a time of joy, peace and hope; thus, it is expected of everyone to share such sentiments. However, amidst all of the polarization

of this year caused by the global pandemic, widespread riots and one of the most divided elections in U.S. history, it is sometimes difficult for any individual to exhibit the traditional spirit of the holidays.

There are two obvious stressors that are affecting families across the nation as we approach the holidays this

year. One stress factor is the financial burden brought on by coronavirus, especially for families with kids. The pandemic has only added weight to our shoulders as many parents have lost jobs or have had to settle for a lower income position than previously expected.

The psychological effects of this loss in financial stability can wreak havoc on those who consider themselves to be providers of their household. This is evident in our nation's history from men abandoning their families during the Great Depression due to losing work, or the increase in suicide since the pandemic started. In an article titled "COVID-19 and the risk of suicide," the Mayo Clinic Staff reported under 'work-related concerns' that one reason people are led down this dark road is the "worry about how you'll provide basic needs for yourself and your family if you're out of work for an unpredictable amount of time or if you lose your job." This fear of providing can cause a sense of hopelessness and failure, especially during a time where even our nation's leaders don't seem to have sensible answers. Thus, the addition of the cost of Christmas presents to the family budget only adds to this year's finan-



Photo by Sam Wordley @123rf.com

Financial and public health worries are making the 2020 holidays more stressful than usual.

cial and mental turmoil.

With the financial burden brought on by the pandemic, the most valuable and often most difficult solution is to reach out for help. There are multiple organizations from non-profits to churches that hold gift drives each year to help out families that are struggling.

Boulder County offers its Family-to-Family Holiday Program which donates gifts to financially struggling families. Boulder County also has a Share-a-Gift Toy Drive with multiple locations throughout the area. There is also the

Kindness for Kids organization, which gives out gift cards for toys for kids in the Longmont area. Another solution is to build your own gifts from materials already in your house or that are really cheap to buy.

There are a ton of resources online with great ideas to make your own gifts that are functional and meaningful. One place to start is on YouTube with a video titled "10 DIY CHRISTMAS/HOLIDAY GIFTS (that people can ACTUALLY use)."

The other burden heading into this year's holidays is the

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Write a short story a day for a month?

Challenge accepted!

By HANNAH STEWART

American fiction writer Lorrie Moore said, “A short story is a love affair; a novel is a marriage. A short story is a photograph; a novel is a film.”

While Niwot resident Gabriel Merithew’s ultimate goal is to write and direct a feature film, this past November he said, “I decided to put aside the novel I’m writing so that eventually, I would be able to do it justice. I had reconnected with a good friend Emma Schaefer [who did a 30-day songwriting challenge] and I was very quick to use that to create my own 30-day challenge,” explained Merithew.

His self-imposed rules boiled down to this: a story had to be created and written on the same day.

He said the writing process was an interesting one--there were days where stories just came to him, but on others, he’d sit staring at his computer, waiting for inspiration to hit. “On a particularly challenging day, I went and sat on a bench at Coot Lake with a notebook ready in my lap. I told myself to not feel discouraged, and by the time I got back, I had an idea I was incredibly excited about, it became one of, if not, my favorite of the month.”

While he did have a six-day

series of children’s stories, a number of them fell within his favorite genre of dark comedy. He said his creative writing journey began in a high school history class, where, instead of writing down notes, he wrote poetry and short stories.

“My passion lies in storytelling. It is of the utmost importance to keep chasing the next story,” he said.

Merithew shared some stories with friends and families as they were written and has been posting the stories on his personal site as well as wattpad, a site that aims to connect readers with writers in a community-centric setting. He also plans to have his series of six children’s stories illustrated and published.

“In the past, I’ve struggled with the endgame, but completing this challenge was proof to myself that I can not just start but finish these stories.”

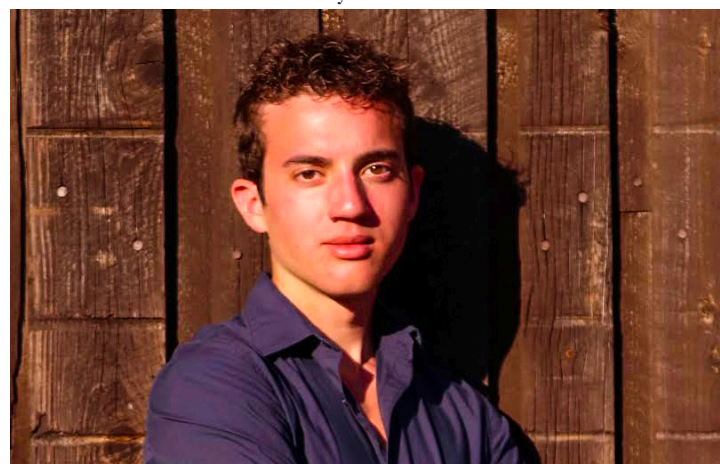
It’s a good thing too that he did finish this challenge. Merithew writes in a delightfully odd style: full of twists and turns; switching between past, future and perhaps some sort of alternate present. Some of his stories do have some swearing, but other than that, none that are currently on his site are particularly gruesome or inappropriate. In fact, they are reminiscent of the slightly scarier stories from the Brothers

Grimm, or the weirder Twilight Zone episodes.

Based on his 30-day chal-

lenge, Merithew is a talented author with a bright future ahead of him. To read some of

his stories, you can access them at <https://www.gabrielmerithew.com>.



Courtesy Photo

Gabriel Merithew spent his November exercising his creative muscle and produced 24 independent short stories and a collection of six series which are linked. “I created a series for a much younger audience who are actually my stuffed animals turned into characters. They live on an island and go on exciting adventures together. I’m hoping to publish this as a short story collection. They’re a product that I’m most proud of and I can’t wait to share.”

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HOUSING

Continued from Page 1

before council, they need to get involved from the start. "People should understand that they need to engage earlier to have an effect."

The planning department proposed the land change on behalf of Boulder Housing Partners, the housing authority for the city. The opportunity to buy the property came up after the deadline for public submissions for land use changes had passed, according to Senior Planner Jay Sugnet.

Council Member Mark Wallach defended the timing, "These things, they come when they come and they can't be held in stasis forever. There were simply time limitations."

Allowing the exception struck a nerve with some Gunbarrel residents who feel the community is not given the same treatment as Boulder proper.

Resident Donna George asked why neighbors of a similar land use change in north Boulder were given a survey asking for their input while Gunbarrel residents were not. Planner Gartza said all the proposed land use changes in the midterm BVCP review had ample opportunities for public input and that the north Boulder project was near a school, warranting additional input.

George worries that the land use change for Odell Place is another example of government telling the Gunbarrel community what needs to happen, rather than having the community share ideas and work in partnership. "The comp plan has become something more that the staff authored rather than the community bringing it in. It's just like done, you didn't offer options to the citizens in the area, what they might want to see in that area, nothing," George said.

Gunbarrel resident Julie Dye

said she wants a more holistic approach to development than chipping away. "It's time for a true subcommunity plan before rubber stamping a development," she said. She wants to see Gunbarrel get some of the same amenities as Boulder proper. "It should not be that the closest playground is a 48-minute walk across the Diagonal [Highway.]

Several council members agreed it's time to create a new subcommunity plan for Gunbarrel. The current plan is nearly 30 years old, according to Council Member Young. She expects that to happen within the next five years, though other council members indicated they would prefer sooner than later.

"I think the primary thing council and staff can do for Gunbarrel residents is prioritize their subcommunity planning process so they can have their voices heard in a comprehensive way, not just when a single parcel pops up for de-

velopment," said Council Member, Swetlik, in an email to the Courier. "This can rebuild a lot of trust through a dedicated and robust public process. Their subcommunity is an extremely important and different part of Boulder, and it needs the attention and community amenities that more central Boulder has access to."

Boulder is currently working on a subcommunity plan for the east part of the city. Gunbarrel is one of the areas that will be considered for the next subcommunity plan, though that decision has not yet been made.

For now, the affordable housing project on Odell Place will move forward. The next step in the planning process for the one-acre site will focus on zoning, which will determine details of the project such as building height, density, which would be between 20 and 35 units, and parking.

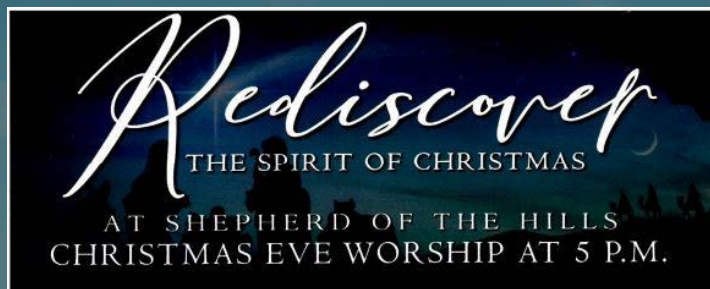
Parked cars already line Spine Road daily, indicating

there is currently a tight supply of off-street parking in the area. Several residents asked questions and made comments through emails to the city and comments on BeHeardBoulder.org, concerned that more residences could add to parking problems. It's not clear yet whether on-site parking will be required of the development.

Boulder Housing Partners Director of Real Estate Laura Sheinbaum tried to reassure citizens and council members that they will listen to Gunbarrel residents, "As with all of the BHP projects, once we start the process to develop, we will run a robust community engagement process."

Gunbarrel residents will be watching to see if their opinions will be given serious consideration. "I believe you can have citizens and government work together," George said, "But the government has to truly listen to the citizens."

Special Holiday Services



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Lorne Jenkins named to local foundation board

By JOCELYN ROWLEY

Last month, Lorne Jenkins, a former Niwot resident and CEO of Mini Money Management, was named to the Board of Trustees for the Longmont Community Foundation, a public charity dedicated to “improving life in the St. Vrain Valley.”

“It was kind of a no-brainer for me,” the former Cougars track star said of his decision to accept LCF’s invitation. “I’m joining at a unique time because it pretty much is primarily Covid-based, and the basic things are planning around what’s going to happen with Covid in the coming months.”

In fact, it was through a pandemic-related grant program that Jenkins started working with the LCF. In May, the group worked with local government and business leaders to launch the Strongmont Fund grant initiative, aimed at helping small businesses impacted by the spreading pandemic. With donations from the City of Longmont, the Longmont Downtown Development Authority, the Longmont Economic Development Partnership,

and community members, the fund awarded \$223,000 to 23 businesses on May 29.

However, both the initiative and the LCF received backlash from minority businesses owners who felt that their unique concerns had been overlooked by the organizers.

“A lot of people in the Spanish-speaking community weren’t aware that it existed and there wasn’t an application in Spanish,” Jenkins said. “There was actually a lot they didn’t get right.”

That prompted the organization to do some soul-searching, and a public apology from LCF Executive Director Eric Hozempa soon followed.

“I’m not proud of the fact that I (we) didn’t do enough to help provide grants to businesses of color in Longmont,” read a statement released by Hozempa on June 24. “Put simply, I’m guilty of hubris, and I apologize... I did not recognize the inherent biases with the Strongmont grant process, and how that would affect who was selected.”

Jenkins was one of the numerous business community members Hozempa reached out

to in an effort to “make it right.” He was then invited to advise LCF on the launch of a second round of granting, Strongmont 2, that would give preference to “businesses of color” facing COVID-19 related impacts. Launched in late June, the new program included an updated application, which Jenkins helped design, as well as additional support for applicants and a video application option. That effort eventually awarded more than \$100,000 to another 23 small businesses.

Jenkins was impressed by Hozempa and LCF’s willingness to own up to its “critical missteps” in the initial Strongmont program, another reason he was happy to accept their invitation to join the organization on a more permanent basis.

“It’s very easy to either put the blame on somebody else or not admit fault, but he just told me extremely candidly, we didn’t do a good enough job the first time,” Jenkins recalled. “Honestly, I don’t think it’s the mistakes people make, we always laugh and say it’s the doubling down. And for him to recognize that what he did and what everyone did wasn’t



Courtesy photo

Former Niwot resident and one-time Cougar track star was recently named to the Board of Trustees for the Longmont Community Foundation, a public charity that assists local non-profits and other organizations with philanthropic giving.

for kids launched earlier this year.

“We’re really starting to get some traction in schools and with teachers,” he said. “We’ve started teaching classes, and we’ve had social media pushes that have gone super well, so really there are no complaints here. Just a lot of people are getting excited about learning about money, so it works out well.”

As for future LCF initiatives, Jenkins expects the pandemic and secondary effects from the lockdowns to take primary concern, probably for at least the next year. He said the pandemic has provided an opportunity for the organization to learn to “listen” to community concerns and let those guide decisions.

“I think a lot of people didn’t know how to help, but they just knew that they wanted to help,” Jenkins said. “Which I think was a good place for them to be because then they had to turn around and listen. And so I think it’s getting out into the community and seeing what the community needs and getting some ideas to put forward.”

the best thing to do, whether or not it was intentional, was huge. That’s the kind of work I can get behind.”

Jenkins officially assumes his three-year term with the LCF on January 1, and he is getting to know the organization and his duties in the interim. He also continues to helm Mini Money Management, a financial literacy application

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Slupik

Continued from Page 3

Early on in 2020, with her first batch of flowers on the way, Slupik was able to sell several spring and fall flower subscriptions and collaborated a bit with Ollin Farms to reach new customers before the pandemic effectively shut down in-person events for the summer. It became evident that “business as usual” was not likely to happen, and Slupik had to think creatively.

“After the pandemic hit, we had this little cart that we had made for our kids to sell vegetables and do little lemonade stands, so we threw that out there with some flowers to see what happened,” said Slupik.

“My daughter is very artistic so she painted my sign for the flower cart to put out on the corner of the road. And people found it, and word started spreading. I went from not knowing what I was going to do with all these flowers to many weekends I was selling out of flowers. I couldn’t keep my flower cart stocked,” she said.

On a busy weekend, Slupik said the stand would sell up-



Courtesy Photo

The Slupiks have invited the community out for a socially-distanced walk around their property, where you too can visit Santa’s Workshop, take a stroll through the sea of swirly, twirly gumdrops, enjoy the world’s best cup of coffee, or visit the candy cane forest. Check out Slupik Mini Farm on Instagram or Facebook for more information on how to visit.

wards of 30-40 bouquets. Her customers expressed gratitude for being able to buy flowers and vegetables with the contactless purchasing system Slupik set up via a cash box and Venmo information at the Slupik Mini Farm’s end-of-driveway farm cart.

“I’d be out working in the flower field, and people would bike by yelling, ‘Thank you! I love your flowers! I love your greenhouse!’” she said.

On the day that I spoke with Slupik in mid-November, her family was busy putting up Christmas decorations. She

said that they normally wait until after Thanksgiving to put up their lights, but decided to get an early start this year.

And the Slupiks didn’t stop there. Thanks to the artistic skills of her oldest daughter and the handiwork of her entire family, the Slupik’s two acres have been transformed into a walkable winter wonderland, drawing inspiration from the Christmas movie Elf.

For anyone who might need a little extra Christmas magic this year, the Slupiks have invited the community out for a socially-distanced walk around

their property, where you too can visit Santa’s Workshop, take a stroll through the sea of swirly, twirly gumdrops, enjoy the world’s best cup of coffee, or visit the candy cane forest. Check out Slupik Mini Farm on Instagram or Facebook for more information on how to visit.

For visitors who are interested in making a small donation, the Slupiks are collecting donations for A Woman’s Work, a local non-profit dedicated to helping women in the St. Vrain Valley who need financial support for immediate needs that cannot be met by other sources.

Looking ahead to 2021, Slupik is busy planning next year’s flower crop, an off-season project that for her involves plotting her flower garden on a huge, post-it grid planning board and starting slow-growing seeds in her basement under grow lights. For Slupik, the ever-changing process and variability of seasonal planning required to successfully grow flowers is all part of the fun and challenge of the creative process.

“There are a lot of things I want to fine-tune,” she said.

“Last year was such a learning experience, I planted so much stuff and a bunch of different varieties to start learning what I like and how things grow. This year, I’m excited to start honing in on my style, the colors and flowers I love.”

Regardless of what the coming year holds, it’s a safe bet that Slupik Mini Farm will continue to bring joy—and flowers—to the Niwot community.

“It’s cool to do something that people feel moved by,” she said. “Photography, interior design, flowers — all of it has a way of making people feel something. You see a photograph or walk into a space or hold a bunch of flowers and it makes you feel something. I realized that’s my gift and my mission, especially in a world where we spend so much time in front of screens, a lot of the feeling and emotion and appreciation for the beauty in the world is lost. My gift is to be able to make people feel those things.”

For more information on Slupik Mini Farm, visit their website at www.slupikmini-farm.com.



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Which to choose?



Photo by Patricia Logan

Santa came early for the dogs at the off-leash park at Gunbarrel's Twin Lakes.



BOOTSTRAP

Continued from Page 1

“It’s great to keep getting affirmation that Wreak Havoc is a strong beer, but this was the first competition we entered our new Strapless Non-Alcoholic IPA and it was fantastic to medal for that as well,” Kaczeus added.

The U.S. Open Beer Championships are one of the largest and most eagerly anticipated beer contests in the country. There is stiff competition for medals. According to a press release, judges evaluate more than 6,000 entries in 140 categories.

By comparison, this was the first year of hard seltzer competitions at the newly re-formatted U.S. Open Cider and Beverage Championships. The six previous years of the competition were limited to cider categories only, including dry, sweet, hopped, and aged ciders. Moving into seltzers was new territory for the event’s managers and judges.

While Strapless is a particularly new offering from Bootstrap, consumers are more familiar with Wreak Havoc Red

and Sparkalicious Greyhound Seltzer. Both have been on the market for long enough that drinkers know what they appreciate about each.

Wreak Havoc Red is a classic in its category, with a crisp color and enough hops to provide interest without going into the taste profile of a much more hop-forward IPA. The fan favorite has won fifteen previous medals, including Bronze at the 2018 World Beer Cup, and silver and bronze medals at the 2015 and 2016 Great American Beer Festival Awards.

While crafts seltzers have emerged on the market in the past few years, Sparkalicious Greyhound fruited seltzers have held their own as consumer options grew. Greyhound has a fresh but light fruit taste, that is drinkable on its own or works well to lighten up cocktails as a mixer. It also took home a silver medal in this year’s Fizz Fight seltzer competition.

All three drinks are easy to find locally. They’re available at Niwot Liquors and are on tap at the beer maker’s taproom in the former Times Call production space in Old Town Longmont.



Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.

Warren Buffett

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STRESS

Continued from Page 4

decision whether to let people into your home, or to close your doors due to the reasonable fear of contracting the coronavirus. State governments and health organizations have all issued rather similar guidelines since before Thanksgiving.

Some states have enacted strict guidelines to out of state travelers making it nearly impossible for any out of state family members to join the holiday celebration in person. Parents longing to see their children have ultimately been put in a position where such gatherings may not be feasible under the umbrella of public safety. And to add to the challenge of making this decision is the plethora of officials creating these guidelines that have been caught breaking them -- from California Governor Gavin Newsom hosting an indoors and non-socially distanced dinner party, to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi snagging a maskless haircut in a San Francisco salon when the rest of the city was barred

from doing so, to Denver Mayor Michael Hancock traveling out of state for Thanksgiving when others were told to stay at home, to New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announcing that his mother and two daughters would be travelling to his residence for Thanksgiving, while everyone else in the state was told not to do so.

Amidst the confusion that's kept us in the dark for the past nine months, one truth still remains when it comes to having people over or not -- it's your choice. The only considerations to make are the consequences of choosing to have people over or not. The obvious negative consequence is the spread of the coronavirus which can keep people from work for weeks, or put certain people, particularly the elderly, in the hospital in a fight for their lives. A positive consequence could be the psychological effect of spending time with people you love.

The question is, what is the actual cost? This is a problem you'll have to solve yourself. The choice is yours, and if you need help guiding your decision, read "Moral Responsibility"

by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Even if you receive help from others financially or you decide to carry on with Christmas as normal, the mental toll that the pandemic and this year have brought on the public is tremendous.

One resource is an article titled, "Stress, depression and the holidays: Tips for coping," by the Mayo Clinic Staff. "Acknowledge your feelings," the staff wrote. It's normal to feel sadness and grief during these

times and it's ok to express that.

Another tip from the staff is to "reach out." If you're feeling helpless, alone and afraid, talk to a family member, friend, pastor or whoever you trust and express exactly how you're feeling.

"Learn to say no," the staff wrote. If family or friends are pressuring you to go somewhere and you don't feel safe, it's okay to say no. It's better to stay safe than to go somewhere and feel overwhelmed with

anxious thoughts.

Finally, "Seek professional help if you need it." Sometimes our efforts simply aren't enough to combat the emotional turmoil. If you're experiencing a prolonged decline in mental health, talk to your doctor.

Don't allow outside conditions of the world to determine your inner conditions. Plan ahead, make informed decisions, do your best for your families, and set your own expectations for Christmas this year.

Thank You Niwot Cookie Moms!



Photo by Karen Copperberg

The Cookie Moms sent care packages containing home baked treats, a copy of the LHVC, and letters from Julie Breyer's third grade students at Niwot Elementary School.

By COURIER STAFF

Each year, the Niwot Patriotic Cookie Moms send out special holiday care packages to military members stationed overseas, hoping to give those soldiers, sailors, and airmen away from their families a little reminder from home. They have no expectation of being recognized or thanked, but

they often receive notes like those below from grateful soldiers, sailors, and airmen who appreciate being remembered this time of the year.

Received in thanks for the Halloween care packages, mailed in late October.

Good afternoon!

My name is SGT Marshall and I am in the

Army. I am currently deployed and have been since June of this year. I just wanted to let you know that my Battalion received your box full of Halloween goodies and we are so thankful for the thoughts and donations of all involved in putting these boxes together as I am sure this is one box of many! This is my first deployment and I have missed so many things such as my daughter's first day of 2nd grade, her 7th birthday, Halloween, Thanksgiving and soon to be Christmas. I will also be celebrating my birthday here as well. Little things like these boxes truly make this experience that much easier. Each box is like opening up a little bit of

Continued on Page 14

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SVVSD plan in play for in-person learning

By HANNAH STEWART

On Wednesday, Dec. 16 the St. Vrain Valley School District Board of Education held a special meeting to discuss the return to school in 2021 and on Friday, Dec. 18, sent out an email to all parents, including a roadmap to in-person learning.

Don Haddad, the superintendent of SVVSD, along with the counsel of many others, has created a plan to get students back in-person and ready to learn. In short, the plan is to have elementary students to be fully in-person starting Wednesday, Jan. 6, but middle and high

schoolers won't see the inside of classrooms yet.

The current plan for the middle schoolers is to initially start fully online and then proceed to the hybrid schedule the following week. High school students will be learning fully remotely from the start of semester (Jan. 6) to Friday, Jan. 15. After that time they will transition to their original hybrid schedule.

"The crux of the message [from the Colorado and Boulder Health Departments], as we've heard all along, the recommendation was very strong that elementary students should be in-person," said Haddad.

"That's based on data they've seen throughout the year, we heard that very clearly. We also heard that middle and high school students should return in-person as well. As they get a little older, the risk increases."

Some of the speculation around this trend is that elementary students are not able to leave their houses and mingle with peers as easily as some middle and high school students. Senior Jazz Mueller commented, "When in school I felt like most of my fellow students took the health precautions seriously. I heard a couple stories of people not being safe outside

of school though."

It's also worth noting that the district is setting up options for students to receive academic support for students. "We will have opportunities for academic support on the days you're scheduled or the days you're not scheduled," Haddad explained. "It may not always be your teacher, but a teacher in that area. We also have set up counseling support in every school." Some of these opportunities may also be available on the weekends, once the district is fully engaged in the new semester.

The district is still offering the Fully Synchronous and

LaunchED learning to allow students concerned about hybrid and in-person learning to take classes remotely. These options are being offered to protect students' health, but also the health of students' families.

Sophomore student Stephanie Mow said, "Going to school not only could affect my health but also my family's. I don't want to be the one to carry COVID-19 and risk someone else's life."

Despite the variations in online/hybrid/in-person classes, students at all levels will have

Continued on Page 14

	LEVEL GREEN: PROTECT OUR NEIGHBORS	LEVEL BLUE: CAUTION	LEVEL YELLOW: CONCERN	LEVEL ORANGE: HIGH RISK	LEVEL RED: SEVERE RISK	LEVEL PURPLE: EXTREME RISK
P-12 Schools	In-person	In-person	In-person suggested	In-person suggested Counties are encouraged to prioritize in-person learning by considering suspending other extracurricular and recreational activities in order to preserve effective cohorting and minimize disruptions to in person learning	P-5: in person suggested Middle school: in-person, hybrid, or remote suggested High school: hybrid or remote suggested	In-person, hybrid, or remote as appropriate

Courtesy Photo

COVID Dial guidance as it relates to schools; in-person leaning is still encouraged if "appropriate."



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Sports

Mental health becoming a focal point in high school athletics

By JACK CARLOUGH

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health has become a strong area of concern in high school athletics. Last week, the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) hosted three webinars, "Taking Care of You, when Your World has been Turned Upside Down."

The webinar featured JC Pohl, a licensed therapist, author and advocate for improving school culture, and Caleb Campbell, a former NFL player and mental health speaker. Student-athletes were given self-care strategies and advice on managing mental and physical health.

Niwot High School counselor and head cross country coach Kelly Christensen said he has seen an uptick of students reaching out to him for help. With SVVSD shifting to remote learning, students are missing out on social interactions and forming bad habits, according to Christensen.

"Even when they have a chance to come back to the school for a lot of them it's not



Photo by boggy22 @123rf.com

The Colorado High School Activities Association is bringing awareness to potential mental health concerns for athletes in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

just a fear of COVID, it's just they don't want to be around people," Christensen said. "They forgot how to socialize. I'm curious (to see) the waterfall effect to this because even when you go through all age groups, it's affecting everybody a little bit."

Christensen believes that SVVSD had been "ahead of the curve" in terms of mental health resources with Superintendent Don Haddad approving the addition of a counselor to every school about the time the pandemic began. Although Christensen believed that more could have been done earlier in

the pandemic, he was pleased with the efforts being made to help students.

"I definitely feel like everybody is learning from this on what could have been done differently and where we failed in," he said. "It's definitely encouraging because I think even from an athletic standpoint, the fact that they're pushing out communication on mental health, normalizes mental health."

On a statewide scale, CHSAA Commissioner Rhonda Blanford-Green was hopeful that the webinar series could be a step in the right direction:

"We, as educational leaders, need to provide our students with coping strategies and resilience in navigating their current world that has been turned upside down by decisions out of their control as a result of the negative impacts of COVID-19. We are excited to offer this webinar series that complements our current mental health initiatives."

For students who are struggling, Christensen recommends simply beginning the conversation and reaching out to support outlets.

Scholarship opportunities limited as colleges face revenue shortages amid COVID-19



Photo by Jack Carlough

Just over 500 fans (mostly limited to friends and family) were in attendance during CU's Nov. 7 home opener and no fans have entered Folsom Field since, meaning the program will not see a significant portion of its projected 2020 revenues.

By JACK CARLOUGH

This is part two of a three-part series on how the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on high school athletics have impacted college recruiting for the Class of 2021. Read part one [here](#).

The effects of COVID-19 on recruiting have hit the University of Colorado football program and head coach Karl Dorrell. The Buffs' 2020 season was pushed back two months and they will miss out on significant ticket revenue with Boulder County health regulations limiting fan attendance.

"We have a really good recruiting class right now -- that's the '21 class we're real excited about," Dorrell said. "The frustrating part of it is, they're all so antsy to get here and meet coaches and meet their teammates and see this place physically and all that stuff, and we've really eliminated that this fall. There's a dead period that's been extended all the way to January."

Just over 500 fans (mostly limited to friends and family) were in attendance during CU's Nov. 7 home opener and no fans have entered Folsom Field since. College programs around the country have missed out on significant ticket revenue because of these restrictions. CU earned over \$14 million in ticket sales in 2019, approximately 80% of which came from football. Other numbers that could be impacted include the \$16.7 million in football media rights and the \$775,312 in recruiting expenses.

In 2019, CU's athletic department reported \$4.9 million total in aid for 98 football student-athletes. Over 150,000 college-committed high school athletes have a pool of almost \$3 billion in scholarships at the D-I and D-II levels, according to [CollegeFinance.com](#).

Boulder High School head football coach Ryan Bishop predicts a stagnant situation in terms of his players getting

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Student-Athlete of the Week

Ashton Campie

By JOCELYN ROWLEY

Ashton Campie is passionate about the non-American version of “football”, so when the 2020 high school boys soccer season was postponed until spring 2021, the otherwise idle midfielder decided to try out his kicking skills on the gridiron. In the end, both Campie and the Cougars got more than they bargained for, and now the athletic senior has a new appreciation for teamwork and dedication.

“I was doing cross country, and then football started up just when cross country ended, and one of the football coaches asked if I’d be a kicker, so I said ‘why not,’” Campie said of his modified fall plans. “I started as kicker, and kept practicing in different positions while we were doing special teams, and then ended up playing the full field.”

Like his team, Campie’s 2020 football season started slowly, as he struggled to learn the unfamiliar game. Prior to joining the Cougars, he admitted that he didn’t have much interest in American football, and only watched “two or three games a year,” usually at the behest of his family. That started to change once he started working with Niwot’s first-year coaching staff, headed by Nikolas Blume.

“I’m brand new to football but I come from a football family—my dad, uncle and grandpa all played at



Courtesy photo

Senior Ashton Campie has yet to play a sport he didn’t like, although he has been wary of tennis since breaking his ankle on the court during the summer of 2019.

a highish level,” he said. “The Niwot coaches and staff made it really easy to get into and improve quickly. I would not have been able to learn as quickly as I did without the coaching

staff, which is great.”

As Campie improved, his role on the team expanded, and he eventually wound up taking both sides of the field for Niwot, as wide receiver on offense and cor-

nerback on defense. Playing the former garnered him a timely touchdown against Cheyenne Mountain in the penultimate game of the year, a play he called his top personal highlight. But it was playing defense that he found the most satisfying, and where he felt he made the most impact.

“I like to play corner a lot, because there’s more thought that goes into it than just taking out the corner like you do when you’re a wide receiver,” he said.

Overall, Campie was impressed by how the Cougars came together as the season progressed, and believes the coaching staff has Niwot football poised for more success down the road.

“We kept getting better and better and better as the season continued,” he said. “The improvement from the beginning to the end of the season was phenomenal and I have not seen anything like it in any of the sports I’ve played.”

And that’s not a short list. In addition to year-round soccer, Campie has competed in cross country, track, volleyball, club swimming, and club tennis, many of which he plans to continue in some fashion after graduation.

“I’ll play any sport,” he said. “I’ve been playing soccer since I was three, and then every summer I used to do both tennis and swim team... I started playing volleyball my junior year on the suggestion of some friends, and it’s really

fun.”

But soccer remains his primary focus, and he is eagerly anticipating its return in March. Off-season workouts have been limited during the fall, and he is definitely looking forward to being back on the pitch with his Niwot teammates.

“I really enjoy the speed of play,” Campie said. “The game never stops, there’s always so much unpredictability and anything can be changed by one mistake. It’s not an individual sport and is highly team reliant, which is nice because if you have to work with your team to win.”

Juggling his numerous athletic pursuits doesn’t leave Campie with much free time, especially when combined with his academic demands as a student in Niwot’s challenging IB program. So far, his senior year in the classroom has been “not fantastic,” thanks to the changing rules and schedules, though he is looking forward to presenting his IB CAS project.

“I don’t know if anyone would be able to call this year a good year to be a senior,” he said. “It will be nice to graduate.”

Once he crosses that milestone, Campie plans to study geological engineering, hopefully at the Colorado School of Mines, where his early application is pending. He has also applied to CU, Western State, CSU, Montana State, South Dakota School of Mines, and Montana Tech.



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Scholarships

Continued from Page 12

financed to play. "Colleges are not losing money by not playing now, but they're not gaining money either," he said.

Oddly enough, roster sizes have actually increased in college baseball throughout the pandemic. The NCAA granted an extra year of eligibility for players who lost their spring season, forcing rosters to grow.

"Nobody knows what's going to happen in the next couple months," Bishop said. "All these colleges are sitting there going, 'Instead of 89 scholarships, right now we're going to go to 86, and then we'll see what happens in the spring.'"

Prior to their fall season, Niwot head football coach Nikola Blume mentioned senior quarterback Ayden Bartko and senior wide receiver Cooper Ackerman as potential college prospects. Through all the chaos of the pandemic, Bartko produced a solid senior season. The All-State honorable mention QB said he would be grateful for an opportunity to keep his career alive.

"It's a very big deal to me trying to go play college football, trying to get a scholarship (and) trying to get some of the education paid for," Bartko said. "As for where I want to go, it's all over. I'm really open to where I want to go."

Colorado-based recruiting advisor Louis Birch predicts that the high school class of 2021 could be most impacted by the entire situation. He said that some college coaches aren't even planning on recruiting the 2021 class and will stick with its 2020 redshirt freshmen. The Next College Student Athlete (NCSA) confirmed Birch's notion when it found that 46% of college coaches have delayed recruiting its 2021 class. Fortunately, that number drops to 34% for the class of 2022.

"When the NCAA first shut down the season (in the spring) and they had indicated that the seniors could come back and play a fifth year, you had a fair amount of seniors that did come back," Birch said. "Compound that with the recruits from the 2020 classes as an example. This fall, you had seniors coming back and you had all the

incoming freshmen that were recruited so they're (college programs) having to juggle those numbers."

At the D-1 level, \$200 million was given to programs, but the scholarship pool hasn't increased much for smaller schools, Birch said. The direct impacts of this are yet to be seen, but it could spell disaster for smaller programs who weren't given a similar financial boost.

However, Birch believes that sub-Division I programs could benefit from talented student-athletes who may be D-I in a normal year, but now have to settle for a lower division. Additionally, the number of athletes hoping to transfer to another college with better roster flexibility has skyrocketed as a result of the pandemic. In May, approximately 1,500 college athletes entered the NCAA transfer portal but just 22% of college coaches are looking to recruit more transfers.

"It's crazy out there," Birch said. "The supply of athletes is huge, but the demand for roster spots is small."

recommend face shields as a substitute for masks.

"We'll be ready to go... We will maintain all the mitigation efforts [deep cleaning at schools, hand sanitizer at all classrooms, etc.]," said Haddad at Wednesday's special meeting. "We have ordered face shields for all our staff. We will also maintain our [COVID] testing at the Innovation center, we've opened it up free of charge to students as well as adults."

"Masks are required at all times and you were suggested to take your temperature at home before going to school. Hand sanitizer is set out everywhere and there were disinfecting wipes given to every classroom so that students could wipe down their desks before and after class," Mow said.

But she also expressed concerns, "I got at least one email every week saying that there has been a student exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. It terrified me and after a while my parents pulled me out of hybrid learning and I started to do full

online learning for the rest of the semester. If Niwot High School got an email almost every week then I can't imagine what the rest of the district looked like."

The school district deems in-person learning so important that even at "extreme high risk" levels of covid concern on the Safety Dial, in-person learning should still be considered for students "as appropriate." (See photo.) While children are not seen as a part of the high risk community, they can still be infected and affected by COVID. The schools are taking their precautions and if they are followed as intended, believe there should not be a problem.

Paula Peairs, the board's vice president said, "I'm very confident in this plan...I imagine there will be little tweaks

Longmont's view of the Great Conjunction



Photo by Brian Kimball

Clear skies allowed for wonderful viewing of the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn Monday night Dec. 21. This is the first such event since 1563. While the planets appear to be very close, they really aren't. The event is called the great conjunction, because it is the rarest conjunction, when Jupiter overtakes Saturn, that can be seen with the naked eye. The photo was taken at the Sandstone Ranch by Brian Kimball of the nonprofit Longmont Astronomical Society. To learn more about area astronomy or to make a donation to support local astronomy, visit longmontastro.org.

Cookie Moms

Continued from Page 10

home and I want you all to know just how much it is appreciated, not by just me, but by my brothers and sisters serving beside me.

Forgive me for this email being a little late, but I hope you and your families enjoy the upcoming holidays and know that we here are very thankful for all that you do for us!

V/R

*S G T Marshall,
Shaleeah
Behavioral Health
NCO*

Received in thanks for Christmas care packages sent on December 8, 2020:

12/16/20

I hope this email finds

you all safe and well.

I received your care package today, and let me just begin by saying it filled me with tears. It personally is my first Christmas overseas and to have so much love and support from back home is a feeling I don't know how to describe.

I wish you could see the smiles on everyone's faces while we opened your box! We are all very thankful and truly blessed.

Thank you again from the bottom of my heart. I hope you all and everyone who helped make this possible have a wonderful holiday season full of love.

God Bless you all.

Very respectfully,

*P02 Crain, Georgia
USN*

SSVD

Continued from Page 11

their Fridays stay asynchronous--learning from home. The district hopes to promote social distancing beyond the health precautions implemented in schools.

Between the board of education's special meeting last Wednesday and the letter Superintendent Haddad sent last Friday, the district has emphasized that health precautions are taken very seriously. It has been reported through the Roadmap to Learning, the state has given "1.6 million medical grade masks to every school in Colorado."

But the definition of medical grade mask is still somewhat ambiguous. Does this mean the schools are providing sufficient masks for teachers and students to use, such as the KN95 mask? Superintendent Haddad did say that all staff members will be given the option to get face shields, but the CDC does not

along the way, there always are, [but it'll keep everyone safe]." "There's an explicit risk with opening schools," said senior

and student body president Ben Goff. "Overall, I think they did the best they could."

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