



## 'Peeping' at Rocky Mountain National Park? Plan ahead.

By PATRICIA LOGAN  
Editorial@lhvc.com

Spontaneity is so 2019.

In 2020, you have to plan ahead, especially if you want to visit Rocky Mountain National Park this fall to see aspen trees shimmering with gold coins or listen to the primal bugle of bull elk during mating season, which begins now and continues until about mid-October. Because of the pandemic, reservations are required and can be hard to get if you suddenly decide to spend a weekend day in the park or want to enter in the morning so that you can enjoy a full day. When you plan ahead, you have to deal with whatever weather or fire conditions you get.

Our reservation day fell at



Photo by: Patricia Logan

*A bull elk scratches his back nonchalantly in front of admiring tourists. The mating season, or rut, begins this time of year and continues until mid-October.*

the tail end of the Arctic blast that shocked Colorado out of summer. At least the smoke wasn't bad.

The number of people allowed into the park is about 60% of normal capacity because

of the pandemic. If you've ever jockeyed for position at a Trail Ridge Road overlook or stopped for a moose jam, you can understand why. Reservations are designed to limit interactions between people by

reducing numbers and distributing visitors throughout the day. Less than 5,000 vehicles and about 13,500 individuals are allowed per day. That may sound like a lot, but this is the nation's third most visited park.

There is a work-around for those who rise early or don't mind a late start. Cars can roll through without a reservation before 6 a.m. or after 5 p.m. You still have to pay, but you don't need a time slot. If 6 a.m. sounds early, consider this, a volunteer said that the Bear Lake parking lot is often full by 6 a.m.

Reservations are taken through Recreation.gov or you can access the site through the park's website. Entrance fees are paid online along with a

\$2 charge for the pleasure of making the online reservation.

If you don't see the time or day you want, you can roll the dice and go back to the site another time. I was able to book an earlier time when I checked a day later. The park holds some slots back that are released at 8 a.m. two days before a desired entry date. But the park website said those often sell out within five minutes. A silver lining of the reservation system is the lines for the entry gate are much shorter.

The Hiker Express bus from Estes Park is not operating due to Covid-19. But shuttle buses are running inside the park for the Bear Lake Corridor and Moraine Park Route. They are

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## Local commercial real estate market is evolving

By EMILY LONG  
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Before the coronavirus pandemic, the commercial real estate market in Niwot and surrounding communities in Boulder County was robust. While some properties such as the former Colterra restaurant have remained visibly vacant, generally the commercial market here sees low vacancy rates and high demand.

The Courier checked in this week with Jim Ditzel, co-owner and founder of Summit Commercial Brokers in Niwot, for an update on the local commercial market.

Summit Commercial is a full service commercial real estate brokerage and management company. Ditzel started the company with partner Tim Conarro five years ago, after

living in Boulder for 32 years, some of those spent working as a journalist for publications such as The Daily Camera.

Ditzel said, "Our generation has not had to deal with a major social disruption like this at all in the course of my life, and I've been around a long time."

The commercial real estate sector moves slowly, generally following the residential market. While some of the early impacts of the coronavirus were intense, the effects are still not fully clear. "So the market is evolving," said Ditzel. "That's really what it is, it's evolving."

Commercial real estate can be broken into five rough categories: office, retail, industrial, hospitality (such as hotels), and multi-family (five or more households in a building). Ditzel works mostly in the first

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## Rangers see more people with masks after posting signs on trails



Photo by Patricia Logan

*Boulder County rangers are seeing more people wear masks on trails after posting signs on Open Space properties such as the Monarch Trailhead in Niwot.*

By PATRICIA LOGAN  
Editorial@lhvc.com

Complaints are down and mask use is up on trails and Open Space properties, according to Boulder County Ranger Erin Hartnett.

"We were getting a lot of calls from the public, like people from at-risk populations, maybe older people, people with underlying health conditions, who really wanted to be out on the trails and weren't

comfortable with the lack of masks being worn," Hartnett said.

That led to some "unfriendly behavior," according to

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# Community Calendar

## VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

St. Vrain Valley Public Schools is hosting a virtual public meeting with officials from the Boulder County Public Health Department on Monday, September 21 from 6:00-7:00 pm to discuss potential changes to the 2020-21 learning model. Panelists will be reviewing the state of the coronavirus pandemic in the community and their recommendations regarding the potential return to in-person learning. Additionally, they will answer questions from our community as time permits during. Watch live at <http://vimeo.com/svvsd> and submit your questions in advance at <http://stvra.in/covidtownhall>

## JAY ROAD PAVING PROJECT (63RD TO 75TH)

Boulder County Road Maintenance will mill and pave the asphalt surface on Jay Road between 63rd and 75th streets from Tuesday, Sept. 8 through Tuesday, Sept. 22. Work will take place between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday. During working hours, Jay Road will be reduced to one-lane of traffic and flaggers will be used to move travelers safely through the construction zone. Both lanes will be open after 4 p.m. each day. The roadway will be milled, so surface conditions will be less than ideal. Please use caution when traveling through the area.

## TRANSPORTATION OPTION WORKSHOPS

[Mobility for All](#) is offering a series of virtual workshops in English and Spanish on how to access transportation options using your smartphone. Participants will get an introduction to Google Maps, Accessing RTD, Uber and Lyft and a demonstration of how to use them. Workshops in Spanish will be held Sept. 14 (Lyft) and Sept. 28 (Uber). Workshops in English will be held Sept. 10 (Lyft) and Sept. 24 (Uber). [Learn more and register for these virtual events at the Mobility for All Eventbrite webpage.](#)

## VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

The Boulder County Community Planning & Permitting

Department is hosting a public virtual open house on Thursday, Sept. 17 at 6 p.m. to review proposed Land Use Code updates to Short-term Dwelling Rental and Bed & Breakfast regulations in Docket DC-19-0005. The proposed changes are for the unincorporated areas of Boulder County only. To participate, [register](#) in advance. For more information, contact Jasmine Rodenburg at [jrodenburg@bouldercounty.org](mailto:jrodenburg@bouldercounty.org) or 303-441-1735, or visit the [project webpage](#).

## 2020 ELECTION INFORMATION

Important dates in Boulder County for the upcoming Nov. 3 General Election:

- Friday, Oct. 2 – Mail ballots can be issued in person at

the main Clerk & Recorder office.

- Friday, Oct. 9 – Ballots mailed to all Boulder County voters (non-overseas voters).
- Monday, Oct. 19 – Ballot-to-Go service launches and select Vote Centers open.
- Monday, Oct. 26 – Last day to register and still be mailed a ballot / last day to request a replacement ballot to be mailed to you. Note: Colorado DOES NOT have a registration deadline. Eligible voters can register and vote on the same day at any Vote Center.
- Tuesday, Nov. 3 – Election Day – Last day to vote; Ballots due by 7 p.m.

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## Distemper spreading through local raccoon population



Photo by Karen Copperberg  
On Sept. 12, Boulder County Animal Control Officers Terry Snyder and Mary Jo Montana responded to a call about about a sick raccoon at a house on Peppertree Drive in Niwort, the second call to that block in recent weeks.

By JOCELYN ROWLEY  
[Editorial@lhvc.com](mailto:Editorial@lhvc.com)

The Boulder County Animal Control Unit has confirmed that a recent rash of raccoon deaths in Niwort was caused by canine distemper, a viral disease that is sometimes confused with rabies.

“We have seen a lot of distemper in Niwort,” animal control supervisor Sarah Spensieri said. “I know that I personally was out on Franklin on a call last week, and we also had one on Centerbridge and one on Springhill. So they’re kind of

all over the place.”  
Outbreaks of canine distemper are not a threat to humans, Spensieri said, but residents should exercise caution with their pets around wildlife. The virus spreads through direct or aerosol contact with the bodily fluids of an infected animal, such as mucous, urine, or feces. As the name suggests, domestic dogs are susceptible to the disease, but only if they’re unvaccinated. According to [Colorado Parks and Wildlife](#), other animals that can transmit

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## COMMUNITY PET SPOTLIGHT

Sponsored by Niwort Rental & Feed



### Meet Minni

This delightful 11-year-old girl loves being in the company of her people and is looking for a home where her social and chatty nature will be celebrated! Minni will likely do well with another cat or a polite dog in her new home given time to adjust.

**To learn more about Minni or to make an appointment to come in for a visit please call (303)772-1232 or email [info@longmonthumane.org](mailto:info@longmonthumane.org).**

*We look forward to seeing your pets in our Spotlight. Please send your photos and a brief description to [editorial@lhvc.com](mailto:editorial@lhvc.com).*

# ▶ FAMILIAR FACES Chris Doyle

By VICKY DORVEE  
Editorial@lhvc.com

The craziness of 2020 can be quelled a wee bit with the reverent calmness of Chris Doyle's sunset serenades. The long comforting notes of his bagpipe feel like the entire community is taking deep healing breaths. We asked Doyle some questions to learn a little about his life story.

**Left Hand Valley Courier (LHVC)** – What was your hometown and how did Niwot become home to you?

**Chris Doyle (CD)** – I grew up on the east side of Cleveland and finished high school in Chesterland, Ohio. I went to Muskingum College in southern Ohio, but dropped out in 1967. The draft wanted me, so I opted for four years in the Navy instead of two years in the Army. I volunteered for Vietnam anyway and was stationed on a spy ship for a year. I did a Mediterranean tour on another ship and finished off the service on an ocean-going tug stationed in Newport, Rhode Island. It was smallish and pretty fun...we spent a lot of time at sea.

I came to Boulder County a month out of the Navy in January 1971 with a friend. He eventually moved on, but I stuck. I'm a builder and was the superintendent for a company that got a project building student housing on The Hill. There was a house on the property that had to be removed



Courtesy photo

Chris Doyle is this month's Familiar Face. Doyle poses with his wife Teri Rasmussen and their daughter Harriet.

and I was living in the trailer park in north Boulder.

I requested two weeks delay of the start of the project so I could move the house. I got a house mover lined up and searched for a place to put it. [My wife] Teri's friend had a lot on Niwot Road and agreed to sell it. It was a pretty busy couple of weeks...we put the house on the property and had to complete the project over the next year. It needed a new foundation, new electrical, lots of work. That was 1982 or '83.

Some years after that I moved a much bigger house from Bird Cliff Way to a location a few miles south and we lived there for 12 years. Eight years ago Teri and I moved

back to the Niwot Road house after our daughter Harriet moved out on her own.

**LHVC** - Tell us about your connection to music and the bagpipes.

**CD** - My mother's maiden name was McDiarmid. That's the Scottish connection. Her father helped found a pipe band in Ontario, where I was born. So I've been around pipe music forever. Although I took some lessons when I was about 13, I didn't really dedicate myself to learning to play until I came to Boulder.

I've been in pipe bands ever since, first the City of Denver Pipe Band and then the Fort Collins PB. We now call ourselves Northern Colorado

Caledonia PB. We're holding together during the current plague and will be ready for competition season when that sort of thing resumes.

I bought a tuba a few years ago and I came to the Niwot Community Band to see if I could get someone to teach me how to play the thing. Biff [Warren] said, "Just come along and play the first note in every bar." Well, that's how it started. So I bumped along quite a while trying not to make too much noise. Things are coming along much better now, however I still say that I really play the pipes and I just own a tuba.

Teri also plays a lot of music. She has a degree in music

therapy and plays many instruments competently. We have musical friends in many corners of the world. We've hosted bands from France, Hungary, and other places.

**LHVC** - What's your day job?

**CD** - I've pretty much always been a builder. At times I've also been a Housing Rehabilitation Specialist for the Boulder County Housing Authority. I have alternated between carpentry and supervision for other contractors and am still at it, although would like to take on a new challenge.

**LHVC** - How has COVID-19 affected you?

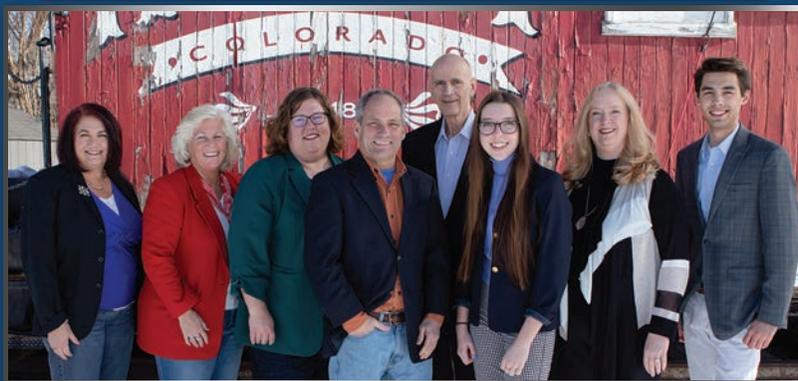
**CD** - The COVID plague has not slowed me down much. Getting bored is not an issue. My house and yard always need attention and I'm the general contractor on a house 75 miles away. On top of that I read a lot. Some years ago I got into western U.S. history and have quite a few feet of bookshelf filled with mountain man era books. More recently I have been reading a lot of WWII history.

**LHVC** - What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?

**CD** - Last year Teri and I went to Italy to tour with the Black Devils Pipe Band from Helena, Montana. Helena was home to the Army base where the First Special Service Force

*Continued on Page 7*

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# Niwot and Longmont non-profits find innovative ways to connect artists with the community

By KRISTEN ARENDT  
Editorial@lhvc.com

For over 35 years, the Firehouse Art Center has been the leading contemporary art center in Longmont, featuring national and local artists with over a dozen exhibitions a year.

Founded in 1986, the center has been a cornerstone of the Longmont Creative District where it was started by local artists to create a space for artists to create as well as exhibit their work.

"Our mission is to bring arts and culture to our community through education, exhibits and cultural events," said Elaine Waterman, executive director of the Firehouse Art Center.

Waterman has been involved with the center for over 10 years, having first taught a children's art class at the studio over a decade ago. In February of 2020, she stepped into the executive director role—a mere two weeks before COVID-19 closures started to go into full effect.

These closures posed a challenge to the Firehouse Art Center's regularly scheduled offerings. The center focuses heavily on education, exhib-



SLisa Doane Photography

Sidewalk Chalk Festival

its, and events, all of which were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

Waterman said that they immediately started thinking about different ways to connect with their community. "Because of my background as an arts educator, one of the first things we did was start art classes virtually," she said.

About two weeks after closing, the center started to live stream their children's classes on Facebook. In total, they have put on about 60 kids' classes on Facebook live throughout the summer.

"Pretty quickly, we pivoted

onto Facebook and online platforms to try to bring whatever we could of our programming, that we were losing from closing the gallery, online as soon as we could," she said. "We really took our education and our exhibitions online pretty quickly."

Anne Postle, Vice President of the Niwot Cultural Arts Association and owner of Osmosis Art Gallery in Niwot, said she has noticed a similar trend with local artists. "They're trying to make more of an online presence, really reach out to people through social media and through their websites,"

she said.

Exhibitions were another area where the Firehouse Art Center had to get creative with its offerings. Waterman noted that exhibitions are one of the largest ways they connect artists to the community, hosting about 12 to 14 shows a year alongside smaller pop-up art galleries.

"We were able to shuffle the exhibits we had planned. It was very important to us on the commitments we had made to artists to show their work," she said. Along with that they offered virtual artist talks and scheduled gallery walkthroughs.

"As far as in-person stuff, we were really eager to get the gallery open, but we had to balance that with the community's safety," Waterman said.

Postle said she feels that as the pandemic has progressed, people have become more committed to surrounding themselves with art that they love. "Once people got the stay at home order, people started caring a lot more about how their homes work. We are finding that people are making an effort to wander through the gallery," she said.

And Postle took advantage of the initial shut-down to revamp the Osmosis gallery space, giving it a fresh coat of paint and putting in new carpet. "We're trying to make lemonade out of lemons. And it feels great." The gallery show-

cases Colorado artists with a focus on artists in the Denver metro area, primarily those in Boulder County.

For events, both the Firehouse Art Center and Niwot Cultural Arts Association had to bring an innovative approach to their offerings as the pandemic progressed.

In Longmont, Waterman said they made the difficult decision to cancel the spring Second Friday ArtWalk in May, one of two major art walks the center hosted in partnership with the city of Longmont each year.

Waterman said the decision to cancel was difficult, but, at the time, they looked forward to putting their energy into their second ArtWalk event in September. "We were going to focus on the strength of the community and how Longmont was coming back even stronger than ever," she said.

But as the spring progressed into the summer, Waterman said they realized they were faced with the prospect of having to cancel the September ArtWalk, an event that usually draws around 5,000 people, as well.

"At this point, everything was being canceled for artists, for performers, for musicians, for fairs, for festivals. There are a lot of artists who depend on that kind of interaction to

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# Essential businesses seem to come out on top of COVID

By HANNAH STEWART  
Editorial@lhvc.com

When COVID hit earlier this year, the whole world seemed to be scrambling. Schools and businesses were shut down, all in an attempt to maintain social distancing and public safety; but a few businesses were able to stay open, including liquor stores and marijuana dispensaries.

These businesses, which are deemed "essential" under state and local public health orders, were not open under the same circumstances as before. Marqis Griffin, the marketing manager for Wyatt's Wines and Spirits in south Longmont said, "A large part of our business has shifted to online ordering for pickup and delivery... It was a difficult transition, but we are getting into a good rhythm and excited for the potential

of our online services."

Similarly, while Niwot Liquor owner Thomas Valdez said that there have been extra costs with keeping people safe, "We've got a lot of new customers that have began shopping locally... because of their [customers] unwillingness to go to other stores or travel out of Niwot to do their shopping."

This increase in customers, and business in general, also has occurred at Niwot's Starbuds dispensary. Starbuds required masks prior to both the state and county mandates and, even with its safety measures in place, has seen a substantial increase in business. "We were fortunate that we were deemed essential," said owner Ernie Craumer. "Initially the county required us to go to curbside operations--that lasted for about three days--then they

allowed dispensaries to go back inside."

Despite the recent success all three businesses have seen, it hasn't always been easy. Craumer explained how difficult it was to establish

Starbuds. He and his family purchased the property in 2014, but it wasn't able to open its doors until three years later in November 2017. Since then, they appear to have a healthy growing

business, despite its somewhat rocky start.

Similarly, both Valdez and Griffin said that with

*Continued on Page 7*



File Photo

Niwot's Starbuds location saw an uptick in business during the spring lockdown after being deemed an "essential business" by the State of Colorado.

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# MASK SIGNS

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Boulder County Public Health spokesperson, Chana Goussetis. Boulder Parks and Open Space wanted to put a stop to that and make the

trails a safe and welcoming place for all people. That's why dozens of signs saying that face coverings are required have popped up on trailheads and other highly visible places on county property.

Ranger Hartnett said the message is getting through.

"The phone calls have decreased. The rangers have noticed better compliance. More people are wearing masks now that we've put up a lot of signs."

The signs clarify that a face covering is necessary at the trailhead when passing others on the trail, or encountering anyone not from your household. "So that means everyone needs to have their mask available and ready to pull up when they're passing someone," Hartnett said.

She said that some people thought it was alright to skip the mask as long as they stayed six feet away from others, "We've had to correct that." The social distancing approach also caused people to move to the side of the trail, which Hartnett said has

damaged vegetation.

Colorado Governor Jared Polis issued an order requiring masks on July 16, when Covid-19 cases began to spike. Wearing a face covering reduces the spread of the novel coronavirus by up to 65%, as cited in the statewide mask order.

The order requires face coverings be worn indoors, but it doesn't specifically state that masks must be worn outdoors or in what circumstances, other than when waiting for public transportation. Boulder County clarified that on its Covid-19 webpage about masks, "A face covering must be worn whenever you cannot maintain six feet of distance from others you do not live with, including outdoors."

It's still possible for the novel coronavirus to be transmitted outdoors. It can linger in the air when an infected person exhales, talks, coughs or sneezes. But there is typically more air movement outdoors which can disperse and dilute aerosol particles.

Risks remain, but risks are reduced further when everyone wears a face covering. "The goal is just being conscientious and a good member of the community and to help protect others by wearing your mask," said Hartnett. "People of all ages and health conditions want to come out and hike and ride their bike. We want to be welcoming and inclusive of everyone."

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# COMMERCIAL

Continued from Page 1

three, and said each category has seen a different impact from the economic and social consequences of the pandemic.

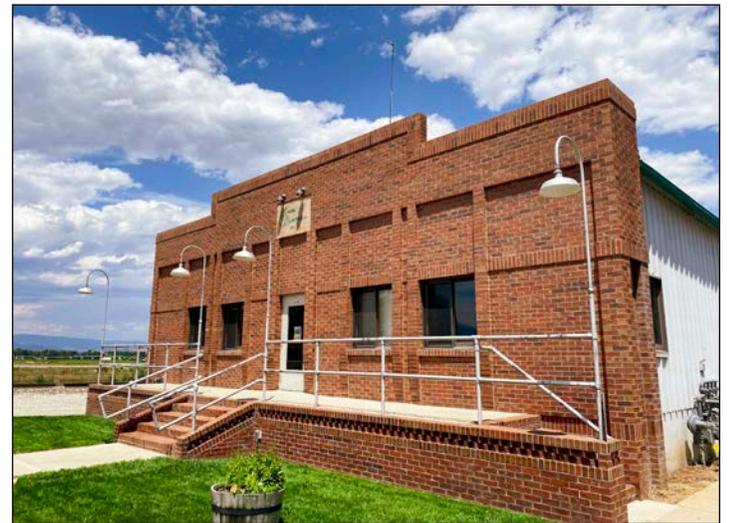
The hospitality sector, Ditzel said, "got pulverized" by the pandemic.

In the three categories most covered by Summit Commercial, the changes have been less extreme, although "retail has slowed dramatically, and office is changing tremendously."

Not everything is doom and gloom, however. "The most active and probably the best category right now is industrial," said Ditzel.

Industrial is also the category with the largest amount of square footage in the Niwot, Gunbarrel, and southwest Longmont area, around 5.5 million square feet (compared to 4.3 million square feet of retail and only about 2.9 million square feet of office space).

Ditzel is currently brokering deals for two notable local Niwot spots, 201 Murray St., the former Excel Electric building, and 7916 Niwot



Courtesy Photo

The former Excel Electric building at 201 Murray St. is one of the Niwot commercial properties expecting new tenants soon.

Rd., the restaurant space occupied by the now-closed Lucky Pie.

"The Excel Electric building is going to be totally released. We have leases we're negotiating right now for the whole thing," said Ditzel.

Before the pandemic, "open office areas were gaining in popularity, but now there's all the fear around spreading the COVID that there's all these walls being put up and barriers," said Ditzel.

"One would think closed offices may come back," said

Ditzel, but it's too soon to say.

The future for the Lucky Pie space is more uncertain, as "the restaurant market is just so tenuous." Regardless, Ditzel said there is current interest in the space.

The word that Ditzel kept returning to throughout the interview was "evolving."

"There are a lot of big creative ideas that will come out of this, but right now it's still just evolving.

We're gonna work together, we're gonna figure out how to do this and we will evolve and adapt."

# Election 2020: Proposition 115 - Abortion Ban

By HANNAH STEWART  
Editorial@lhvc.com

Colorado's first law addressing abortion was introduced by freshman Democratic representative Dick Lamm (who later served three terms as governor) in 1967, and legalized abortion in cases of rape or incest, or if the woman's mental or physical health was at risk.

Moreover, women seeking an abortion could only do so up until 16 weeks of gestation and had to present their case for abortion before a three-doctor panel. The bill was eventually passed with bipartisan support and signed into law by Republican Governor John Love. Before then, like many other states, Colorado only allowed abortion in cases where the woman's life was in danger.

In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Roe v. Wade*, upheld a woman's right to seek an abortion. Since then, abortion regulations in Colorado have loosened (there is no longer a gestational cutoff) and Colorado voters have voted down proposed abortion bans, most notably, three times within the last 20 years.

Colorado is touted as progressive in terms of abortion rights and is one of only seven states without a gestational limit on abortions. Only four

other countries globally allow abortion throughout pregnancy. However, this could change in November with Proposition 115, which would make "late term" abortions after 22 weeks illegal in nearly all cases.

"Previous measures would have banned abortion all together," said Giuliana Day, one of the sponsors of the proposition "This is not a ban but rather a restriction when the preborn baby is fully formed and able to survive outside the mother's womb while still allowing a woman five and a half months to have a choice about her pregnancy."

"There is no precise legal or medical definition of 'late-term,'" said Stephanie Clarke, a representative from Vote No on 115. "That is not a medical term, but a political construct... that has been weaponized to describe abortion later in pregnancy at the expense of women and families."

With most pregnancies lasting 40 weeks on average, the 22-week ban is barely more than half-way through the average gestational period. Opponents of the proposition argue that a blanket ban is dangerous, because each pregnancy is unique.

"Health needs should drive important personal medical decisions--not politics," Clarke

argued.

According to a Gallop poll, 74% of Americans are in support of limiting abortions late in pregnancy. "Colorado's law allowing abortion until birth is extreme and out of step," Day said.

While the law would not target the women seeking the abortions, or involved parties such as a pharmacist filling a prescription, if passed, Prop. 115 would target physicians who perform those abortions. Violation would result in a class one misdemeanor charge.

The only exception to the ban would be if the abortion is "required to save the life of a pregnant woman."

Opponents of the ban argue that this, in and of itself, is especially limiting in terms of abortion access and care where such services are already fairly limited. People from across the country and the world come to Colorado from places that systematically block women from seeking an abortion earlier in their pregnancy, as well as places where there are barriers to contraception.

For example, a Michigan woman who was identified as Margot, was unable to get an abortion in her home state due to gestational limits. Doctors first detected abnormalities with the pregnancy before the

24-week cutoff. The diagnosis was later identified as lissencephaly, a debilitating disease that has a life expectancy of no more than 10 years. However, this diagnosis wasn't confirmed until after the 24-week cutoff. Margot, like many other women made the decision to come to Colorado for an abortion.

"Many believe that late term abortion is very rare," Day said. "Yet hundreds of late term abortions are performed each year in Colorado."

According to the CDC's abortion surveillance report from 2016, which included reporting from 48 areas nationwide, the majority (91%) of abortions were performed before 13 weeks of gestation. Only 1.2% of abortions were performed at 21 weeks or later. Of the 623,471 legal abortions in 2016, those 1.2% of abortions work out to about 7,400 in total.

If passed, proponents of Prop. 115 have declared that they will continue to seek more strict measures. "We're not going to stop," said Deacon Geoff Bennett, a representative of the Catholic Church. "If we get this on the ballot and we get this approved, we're going to do like many other states. Eventually they've gotten heartbeat bills."

Opponents to the bill are diverse. The group Vote No

on 115 has been endorsed by medical and health care professionals as well as community, business and elected leaders. More than 130 faith leaders signed a letter in opposition to the bill.

Similarly, proponents of the bill are also diverse, with supporters representing both genders, and across ethnicity, race, religion and party lines.

Clarke also pointed out that a potential ramification of the proposition being approved might be a long, expensive court battle. This is because a U.S. Supreme Court decision prohibits state laws that limit abortion access without exceptions for women's health. The question of whether or not Prop. 115's exception of abortion in case of risk to the woman's life is enough to full-fill this requirement is likely to end up in court.

The Secretary of State's Office puts out lists of groups both in favor and in opposition to various ballot measures. More information can be found here.

For more information about Due Date Too Late, which is in favor of Prop. 115, visit: [www.duedatetoolate.com](http://www.duedatetoolate.com)

For more information about Vote No on 115, which is in opposition to Prop. 115, visit: [www.voteno115.com](http://www.voteno115.com)

## ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES

Continued from Page 5

changes to Colorado liquor laws, their businesses had to adapt since chain stores are now able to sell full-strength beer. "Before COVID, I think

the liquor industry in general was still adjusting," Valdez said.

Griffin added that the new-found competition of chain stores versus independent retailers will affect the industry for years to come.

Even so, these local businesses are grateful both to their

teams and the community, especially with COVID. "We strive to create an environment where everyone can be themselves, and believe that it translates into a happy staff that can provide the best customer service," Griffin said. "Some great new additions to our team have also really

helped us navigate uncertain circumstances."

"People are very comfortable coming in, Craumer said. "As far as going forward, obviously everyone hopes a vaccine is developed... We're lucky to be a family business."

Even though changes have had to be made--limited hours,

changes in store policy, cancelled events--it is clear that the success of these businesses has hinged on the fact that people have shifted to shopping more locally.

Valdez said, "We'd like to thank all of our great customers and the community of Niwot for keeping our doors open."

## FAMILIAR FACE

Continued from Page 3

(FSSF) trained in 1942. They became known as the Black Devil Brigade because of their effective exploits fighting in Italy.

On the tour we visited battle sites, cemeteries, museums connected to the FSSF. We also spent a week in

Malta. I wanted to go back there because I was there in 1969 on a Navy ship. It was an ammunition ship so we weren't allowed in the main harbor. They sent us to a harbor a few miles south that we had all to ourselves. Malta is a tremendously interesting place having been occupied by every sailing civilization in the Mediterranean for the

last three-to-five thousand years. It even has prehistoric remains. I would rather go back there than go to the usual tourist destinations.

**LHVC** - What are ways in which you connect with the community?

**CD** - I'm out and about with my shaggy dog Chester at least a couple of times a day, so I'm sort of recognized

by other dog walkers. We get to know many Niwotians that way.

Also, we're members of the Altona Grange. The members don't carry on much of the Grange traditions anymore, but they're dedicated to preservation of the hall as a community resource. It's a great little building that needs a lot of TLC.

*Doyle will continue to play at sunset on Wednesdays until the temperature drops below 45 degrees. You will find him in front of the white arbor on Niwot Road just west of Niwot Liquor.*

*If you have a suggestion for a person to profile as a Familiar Face in Niwot or Gunbarrel, please send a message to Editorial@LHVC.com*

# Niwot's Sidewalk Sale is second consecutive successful event

BY MARY WOLBACH LOPERT  
Editorial@lhvc.com

After a summer of cancellations, on Saturday, Sept. 12, Niwot saw its second week-end of outdoor events with its second sidewalk sale. Merchants in Cottonwood Square and 2nd Avenue put up tents and welcomed customers into their shops, though with limited capacity. The weather even cooperated.

Following the Friday, Sept. 4, first Art Walk of the year, the Sidewalk Sale was a smashing success, with most merchants giving the event a thumbs up. Liz Gould of

Little Bird said that people were buying and not just looking. The same was true for booths at Juniper and Twine, Fly Away Home Market, Pebble Art and Old Oak Coffeehouse.

The event was especially helpful to the Niwot Cookie Moms. Because both the Rock & Rails summer concert season and the 4th of July pancake breakfast were canceled this year, many local nonprofits that depend on the events' tip jars had to be creative while trying to raise funds. The 2019 Rock & Rails summer concert series tip jar recipients received a total of

over \$19,000, which helped 17 non-profits in the area, including the Cookie Moms.

The Cookie Moms, who send care packages to servicemen and women stationed overseas, held an estate and tag sale at the sidewalk sale, setting up outside Niwot Real Estate offices. With those donations and the hand made goods donated by Kathy Koehler, the "Moms" were able to raise over \$500.

If you enjoy reading articles such as this, support the Courier by purchasing a year's subscription to our digital paper.



Photo by Mary Wolbach Lopert

Old Oak Coffeehouse



Photo by Mary Wolbach Lopert

Juniper & Twine



Photo by Mary Wolbach Lopert

Liz Gould of Little Bird



Photo by Mary Wolbach Lopert

Niwot Cookie Moms Pat Murphy and Karen Copperberg

## VISUAL ART

Continued from Page 4

get their work out to the community, and, of course, for the financial side," said Waterman

Then when the city of Longmont created a downtown "barrier zone" to support social distancing for downtown businesses, reducing traffic on Highway 287 on Main Street to one-lane each way, Waterman and the board of directors for the Firehouse Art Center started brainstorming ideas.

"We decided that we're going to find a way to activate downtown's barrier areas and make them more beautiful, more creative, and more supportive of our creative community because Longmont is a creative district," Waterman said.

What they came up with was a transformation of the twice-a-year, one-day art walk festival into a 10-week, summer-long series of weekend mini-festivals.

"We can have music and art booths and do it in a way that is very small and contained where it wouldn't be that many people, and we could still follow social dis-

tancing," said Waterman. "It really has a very small town kind of festival feel."

In what Waterman described as a "little bubble festival," they set up small stages every half block with music, art, and little market places. This has become a very important point of connection between the local artists and the community.

"The creative community—the artists, the musicians—really want to share their art, but they have no way to do it because of all the restrictions on the bars and festivals. We wanted to make sure that they got out there, people saw their stuff, they talked to the community and that they were able to be out there doing what they love and sharing what they love," Waterman said.

Waterman also noted that while COVID-19 has posed it's challenges for the center, it has also presented some new opportunities. "We had lots of ideas but never delved into them until the pandemic forced the issue by closing the doors. So it really upped our virtual game and forced us to use these virtual tools to our advantage."

The Firehouse Art Center has additionally put on three

virtual art markets—an idea brought to them by artist member, Amanda Maldonado. "We were excited about it as well because we were looking for ways to support the artist members and our artists, but we didn't really have a direction that we wanted to go, and she gave us that direction and was a big part of getting that started," said Waterman.

The three markets showcased six to 15 artists, each hosting a live stream from their studio so community members could be a part of their process—a bit like an online open studio.

In Niwot, the NCAA chose to adapt the timeline of the "Why Not Niwot?" juried art show. The show, which normally runs in the spring, extended the deadline for public voting through the end of August, a choice that Postle said had an unexpected positive outcome. "Artists had more time to create and more time to see Niwot when it looks its best. We got more pieces and really high quality art," she said.

In total, they had 38 pieces, and the community cast 68 ballots. "We were able to do it with social distancing. We had so many people come

into the gallery with their ballots saying, 'This is so much fun.' And shop owners really appreciated it because it brings people into their place of business," Postle said. The NCAA also hosted a First Friday ArtWalk on September 4, offering another opportunity for local artists and businesses to connect with the community.

Looking ahead to the remainder of 2020, Postle noted that although the NCAA won't be able to host any additional First Friday ArtWalks as the weather gets colder, they will continue to explore ways to offer events to the community in safe environments and hope to bring their annual Let's Wine About Winter event back next spring.

In Longmont, the Firehouse Art Center has several upcoming programs including a new partnership with NEST at CU Boulder for a

winter residency for artists highlighting how science and art intersect and a dual language Spanish and English art class television series in partnership with Longmont Public Media to debut on Channel 8. The Firehouse Art Center will also unveil a new exhibit to honor the Día de los Muertos to kick off the 2020 Día de los Muertos Celebration in Longmont.

Reflecting on the year to date, Waterman said it has definitely been a team effort. "It was very much a community bonding together, what can we do as creative people in Longmont to celebrate art and creativity and show the community that there is still beauty to be found," she said.

For more information on the Firehouse Art Center, visit [www.firehouseart.org](http://www.firehouseart.org). For more information on Niwot Cultural Arts Association, visit [www.niwotarts.org](http://www.niwotarts.org).

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## RMNP

Continued from Page 1

limited to 15 people or 20% of capacity.

Bathrooms are open. The Beaver Meadows Visitor Center is being renovated, but there is a temporary store outside

the building. Face coverings are required indoors at visitor centers, per Colorado's mask order. Tourists from Maryland to Oregon seemed to get the message and took it seriously outdoors too, with most people I saw wearing masks when around other people.

Rangers hang around out-

side visitor centers, unable to do group talks, but happy to talk to folks one-on-one.

The highlight of our wild day was admiring four big bucks with big racks that chose to take their afternoon rest along the side of the road across from a small parking lot. It was as if they sought out the

spotlight, posing for a bank of iPhones in human hands. The elk were ideally situated across the road from the people, providing a safety barrier so even the silliest tourists couldn't easily get to them or vice versa. Along with admiring the elk, I enjoyed watching a five-year-old boy frozen in place, not from the weather, but from the sheer wonder.

Snow spit at my face as I watched one of the elk bend his neck around and scratch his back. The weather didn't mat-

ter. It simply added drama to the day. This was our reserved time and it ended up being perfect. My 85-year-old mom got out of the house, where she has spent the vast majority of time hunkered down during the pandemic. And I loved getting out in the world with her in a way that made us feel safe. We were able to share our lifetime passion for watching wildlife against the backdrop of the 13-thousand foot granite sentinels that shape the jagged skyline.

## RACCOONS

Continued from Page 2

the disease include coyotes, skunks, fox and black-footed ferrets. Feline distemper, which affects domestic and feral cats, is caused by a [different virus](#).

Distemper primarily attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal and neurological systems of the animal and can cause a wide range of symptoms, most notably excess eye and nose discharge. Spensieri said it usually also causes atypical behaviors, especially in raccoons.

"They will be out in the daytime. The ones we have seen this week have a lot of secretion on their faces, so their eyes are crusted shut, and they have a very distinct runny nose. They are slow to walk around, or you will see them out in broad daylight in the sunshine, and they're having seizures. So they'll just sit there and chatter their teeth or sit on their backside for a little bit and then keep moving. So that's very distinctive of distemper."

The neurological symptoms draw the rabies comparison, but the latter disease isn't as common among raccoons in

Colorado, according to [data](#) from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. It is also uncommon to see "eye goop" in animals with rabies, Spensieri said.

Currently, there is no treatment or cure for distemper, and it is almost always fatal in wild animals. Spensieri said that animal control will respond to calls of ill-looking or lethargic raccoons if they are "immobile or can no longer move."

"We will respond and humanely euthanize them to put them out of their misery, and so they don't spread the disease any further."

Unless the animal is suspected of biting a person or pet, the carcass is then disposed of without further testing.

Spensieri added that animal control does not respond to reports of dead animals, even ones with suspected cases of distemper.

"As a property owner, it's your responsibility to dispose of it, but do so in a smart way," she said. "Double-bag it, use gloves to pick it up, that kind of thing."

For more information about canine distemper, visit Colorado Parks and Wildlife's [wildlife health page](#).

# Niwot Honors Veterans

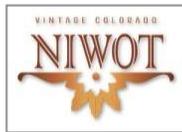


The Niwot Community Association and Niwot Business Association are sponsoring the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Veterans Day Banner Project

to honor Veterans.



Walking Tour on



Sunday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2-3pm

- ★ Honor your Veteran by purchasing a banner for display and online biography.
  - \$100 buys a 24" x 56" banner displayed in Cottonwood Square during the weeks surrounding Veteran's Day. You will receive the banner after it is displayed for two years.
  - \$75 buys a 24" x 56" banner for personal use.
  - Either purchase includes a brief biography that you can provide on the NCA and NBA websites.
  - Banners on a first come, first serve basis. Lottery if demand is excessive.
- ★ After receipt of payment, we'll contact you about picture & bio of the Veteran. Please return form & payment to:
  - Niwot Community Association PO Box 72, Niwot CO 80544
  - Online PayPal on [www.niwot.org/veterans](http://www.niwot.org/veterans)
- ★ Pictures are preferred in a high quality digital format.
  - Contact [veterans@niwot.org](mailto:veterans@niwot.org) for any questions you may have.

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# SCHOOL NEWS

## Area schools receive \$494K for new P-TECH program



Photo by Caroline Chutkow

Skyline High School student Jorge Melgoza works with an IBM mentor as part of his P-TECH summer internship at IBM.

By DEBORAH CAMERON  
Editorial@lhvc.com

Area schools received a boost to help high school students on their path to tech career readiness. The National Science Foundation awarded the Saint Vrain Valley School District (SVVSD) and Front Range Community College (FRCC) a \$494,175 grant to open a Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) program in cybersecurity.

This will be the SVVSD's, third P-TECH program, with the other programs focused on biomedical sciences at Frederick High School and computer information systems at Skyline High School. All of the programs are designed to allow students to earn both their high school and associate degrees at the same time, within four to six years.

There is no cost to students for the degrees. Many complete the program in four years, which makes them eligible to either work professionally or enter their junior year in college at the same time as their high school peers. Of the first cohorts to graduate from Skyline High School's PTECH program this past May, 15 students received both degrees.

P-TECH program students

take part in internships and hands-on work that are based on a relationship between the sponsoring school and industry partners. In the past, these partners have included IBM, Agilent Technologies, and Northern Colorado's Tolmar, inc.

The new program is expected to operate in the same way and will be based out of Silver Creek High School. According to P-TECH executive director Brandon Shaffer, "Seagate, Cisco and Comcast have shown strong support of P-TECH and are in talks to become community partners. We're open to other community partners as well."

P-TECH doesn't just benefit students, it grows a local workforce employment pipeline for much needed skill sets. According to a press release from the school district, industry partners will provide input into developing the classes that students will take so that they're better prepared to fill those roles.

Statistics underscore an urgent need for trained professionals to prevent and respond to security breaches. Last November, the ISC(2) a nonprofit international industry membership association, said the workforce would need to increase by and estimated 62% in order to close the hiring gap in the U.S. That

breaks down to 498,480 workers still needed out of a required pool of 804,700 jobs nationwide.

Since the initial study was published, the organization found that due to the pandemic, cybersecurity needs have grown as large numbers of workers began to do their jobs remotely.

The new program will start with a cohort of 30 to 35 students for the first two years. After that, group sizes are likely to expand. This compares to Skyline's program, which now welcomes approximately 50 cohorts, with enrollment flexing slightly to expand based on student interest. Once trained, students will be primed to enter a local pipeline and support area industry.

P-TECH's curriculum isn't easy to complete. Participants take college-level classes at a younger age than their peers and balance classes with workplace-based commitments. These out of classroom experiences include internships, site visits, and working with mentors employed in the industry which challenge them to grow their professional skills. Patty Quinones, SVVSD's assistant superintendent of innovation, said, "The support of parents, teachers, and industry partners is key to getting them through the program and into successful careers."

FRCC, which already offers a computer networking, cybersecurity, and cloud computing program, welcomes the chance to work with P-TECH students. "I am excited for the students who will be at the center of all of this energy, attention and detailed work to help them to see their future," said Beth Wheeler, director of high school programs at the Boulder County campus. "I've taught for a long time and I know how wonderful it is to help students to realize what their futures can be. That's one

## Boulder Country Day preschoolers get 'adventure' in learning



Courtesy Photo

This fall Boulder Country Day's preschool is taking class outside! Among the many ways BCD has adapted and is thriving this fall is the expansion of its outdoor spaces. Many new outdoor classrooms were created this summer including the preschool favorite, Adventure Island. Adventure Island is a wooded space nestled between two buildings perfect for activities ranging from music class, to story time, to scavenger hunts. Boulder Country Day School resumed in-person learning on August 20th in all grades, preschool – 8th.

of the best things about being in education."

To date, the programs have shown significant student achievement. Skyline's first graduating cohort included 33 students. Across all 241 students in that program, administrators have documented an average GPA of 3.03 and a 94.3 percent attendance rate. 100% of the students are on track to graduate high school on time.

Frederick High School's class contains 57 students and is on track to have its first graduating cohort in 2023. Across the program, students maintained a 3.4 GPA and a 98% attendance rate in the last year, and all are on track to graduate high school.

Niwot High School principal Eric Rauschkolb "doesn't expect much of an impact to students at the school. Just as students interested in our IB program need to come to Niwot for classes, students interested in P-TECH go to Silver Creek."

Any incoming freshmen in the Niwot High School attendance area are eligible to apply to the program. As a first step, they would need to open enroll in Silver Creek and complete a program-specific application process in eighth grade. If accepted, they would be responsible for their own transportation for the days they're required to take class at the school.

# St. Vrain parents group seeks return to in-person learning

By JOCELYN ROWLEY  
Editorial@lhvc.com

A growing number of local families are deeply frustrated with full-time remote learning in the St. Vrain Valley School District (SVVSD), and now they've banded together in an effort to get students back into the classroom. Earlier this month, five parents from Erie launched the St. Vrain Educational Advocates in hopes of bringing attention to their struggles and working with school and public health officials to combat the "unseen negative consequences" of keeping students isolated at home.

"We appreciate the board of health, and we appreciate the school board," SVEA founding member and spokesperson Dan Maloit said of his group's mission. "We're not trying to pressure them to a decision, we're trying to show that what's going on right now isn't working for everybody, and that they have our support to go back. We will accept some risk to get our kids back in school."

For Maloit and the other SVEA founders, Corinne Renteria, Joel Smith, Mara Harner, and Sarah Longoria, balancing the risk of keeping kids at home with getting them back into the classroom comes out in favor of the latter by a wide margin. According to a statement on the group's Facebook page, the SVVSD's distance learning plan is putting students at risk of "educational degradation, social isolation, abuse, neglect, and increased levels of stress and anxiety," by keeping them isolated and leaving them to grapple with new routines and unfamiliar technology on their own.

"We literally see the risk of them having decreasing mental health," Maloit said. "The statistics that our group will get into is the sudden drop-off in child abuse reporting, the increase in calls to the suicide crisis line, the increase in diagnoses of PTSD, depression, and anxiety within children and adults. That's real, and those are scary numbers, and that will lead to people dying or massive changes in their life as we go down the road."

Like most members of the group, Maloit and his family have experienced many of the downsides of online learning first-hand since the start of the 2020-21 school year on Aug. 18. He and his former wife, a staff member at Niwot High, currently have three students enrolled in the district—a sixth-grader at Sunset Middle, and a fourth-grader and kindergartner at Niwot Elementary. The two younger kids attend daycare at NES with other students, and log in to classes being taught by teachers down the hall. Meanwhile, Maloit's middle school student attends remote classes at home and can be alone for long stretches while his parents work.

"And it's kind of OK, but it's not OK," Maloit said. "He's not getting the education that he needs. He needs to be challenged. He has all A's the last time I checked, but I can tell he's not being challenged by it. The challenge is how lonely he is and how frustrated he is."

As for the younger two, Maloit finds their situation "logically incongruent" and said he can't quite reconcile the difference between learning at school in a small cohort led by daycare staffers or in one led by their teachers, who are already in the same building. "They've got a kindergartener and a first-grader and two third-graders in the same little daycare group, and they can't focus. Why not just have them in the classroom with their teacher?"

And it's not just his own kids that he was concerned about. Maloit acknowledged that many families, including his, are still better off than many others in the district. For families without his resources, the burdens of full-time remote learning are even more costly to bear.

"I am in one of the best scenarios that you can imagine, and I'm still watching my kids struggle. I can't imagine what it's like being a single mom, working two jobs, with two kids, and they might only have one iPad between them and a spotty Internet connection. ... They're going to fall behind... Data shows that if you disrupt education even for a few years, there are catastrophic repercus-

sions down the road. Kids who change schools more than two times have major repercussions in their academic performance."

Maloit sat with these concerns for a while, but soon noticed similar complaints showing up in his social media feed. He was initially put off by the "anger" he saw on both sides of the debate, but finally decided it was more important to speak out on behalf of students and try to engineer a solution that works for all families in the district.

"I didn't want to start a fight, and I didn't want the town to rise up and be angry, but I was kind of curious about what people were actually thinking," Maloit said. "So I found a group, and about five of us met on Sept. 1, and we decided to move forward with this. So we created the Facebook group, and within the first two days we had already grown to 150 people."

It grew by 150 more in the next two days, according to Maloit, and by Sept. 14, it was at 757 and still climbing. Most of the members are from Erie, but Maloit said there are also growing contingents of parents from Niwot, Mead, Frederick, and Longmont coming aboard. SVEA also has drawn discrete support from some St. Vrain teachers, another overlooked player in this debate, Maloit said.

"There are so many good teachers out there that want to be back in school and I know that there is pressure on them not to go back... I want them to know that there are parents and students that want to be back with them and support them. I don't want them to think that they're alone and crazy for wanting to go back to school, because they're not."

A number of school districts in Colorado, as well as some local private and charter schools, have had in-person learning since late August, with no widespread outbreaks reported so far. However, Westminster High School was recently forced to close temporarily when more than 250 students were quarantined for 14-days, after three positive cases were reported in the school population. There also have been quarantines and outbreaks

reported at colleges and universities statewide since campuses opened to students in August.

Fear of such widespread quarantines and concern around Colorado Department of Public Health rules around contact tracing played a part in St. Vrain's decision to start the 20-21 school year 100% online, and the SVEA is calling on the state to amend the guidelines. According to Maloit, the quarantining rule is "excessive in its expanse" and makes reopening schools "open to interpretation and ambiguity."

"The requirement to quarantine an entire cohort and all potentially interacted individuals for 14-days, regardless of negative tests, creates a situation where classroom attendance will be nearly continuously disrupted," he said. "We would like to see only the COVID-positive individual quarantine for 2-weeks, those in the actual class require a negative test only to return, and the treatment of symptoms alone as insufficient to require a mass quarantine."

Maloit wanted to be clear that the SVEA isn't trying to downplay the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic and doesn't consider it a hoax. Members are strongly in favor of implementing mitigation measures in classrooms, such as masking, cohorting, and strict social distancing, and have no expectations that things will "be the same as it was in January."

They also want SVVSD to leave the online option open for families who choose it, whether for health or other reasons.

"We think that there should be priority placed on both of those education programs. This is not the time to be focusing on anything else. Everything else is secondary. It's how do we get the kids back as safely as possible, and how do we provide an effective and equitable online solution for those who can't or won't come back. That's where we need to be."

That's the message SVEA members had when they spoke during the comment portion of the St. Vrain Board of Education meeting on Sept. 9, and it's the message they hope comes

through in the interviews conducted with St. Vrain families and students, and released on social media. The group is also planning to hold "distance learning in person" sessions in school parking lots in the coming weeks as a show of solidarity to teachers. Maloit said these events will be "very positive" and focused on students rather than parent complaints.

Maloit is still uncomfortable with what he characterized as "vitriol" in the wider debate, seemingly driven by polarized politics. He does his best to keep the heated rhetoric to a minimum within SVEA and the page's comment section. He stressed that the group is seeking a collaborative approach with school and county officials, and not a combative one.

"We have to be very calm and concise and show that we're willing to be collaborative. We're not mad at the teachers, we're not mad at the district, we're not mad at anybody. We're upset that our kids are hurt. We are upset that teachers aren't allowed to do what they're passionate about, and we want to support them."

Maloit is hopeful that the school board will have good news for SVEA members and supporters at the Sept. 23 board meeting, but didn't want to make a prediction. At last week's meeting, Superintendent Don Haddad suggested that the district's hybrid learning plan, which combines in-person and online instruction, could be implemented in the coming weeks, if county health benchmarks allow. While that would be a step in the right direction, Maloit and the SVEA don't expect to go away anytime soon.

"They're going to make the decision that they think is right, and hopefully, it's something that we can agree with and support, and we really want to. We're hoping it puts the kids first, and we hope it puts teachers who want to get back in the classroom and teach first. That's where we stand on that. We need something that works for the majority of people."

For more information about St. Vrain Educational Advocates, visit them on Twitter.

# Niwot sweeps team titles at Fairview Invitational

By JOCELYN ROWLEY  
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The Niwot varsity cross country teams looked formidable as they battled some friendly but fierce rivals at the Fairview Invitational on Sept. 12. Led by junior Zane Bergen in the boys race and freshman standout Mia Prok in the girls race, the Cougars claimed both team titles for the second consecutive weekend, and appear to be in great shape as they head into the most crucial weeks of the shortened 2020 season, according to head coach Kelly Christensen.

"The kids are responding to the stress we're putting on them in training, and that's always encouraging to see in two good groups," he said after the double sweep, both by wide point spreads. "The middle of the season for our juniors and seniors right now, it's hit or miss on how they're going to feel because they're dealing with a little more volume, intensity, and stress."

This meet replaces the annual Pat Patten Invitational, a 5K where a large and competitive field races on a course in the park adjacent to Fairview High School. With the City of Boulder restricting public park access, this year's course

wound around the high school and athletic fields, and the field was limited to just eight teams apiece.

## Girls

The eye-popping performance of Niwot freshman Mia Prok was probably the biggest news of the meet, though it didn't lead to much drama at the finish. In a repeat of her performance at the Battle Mountain Husky Invitational on Sept. 5, the standout opened up a big gap over her more experienced competitors about halfway through the race in Boulder, and cruised to a win in 18 minutes, 33 seconds, a full 30 seconds ahead of the second place finisher, sophomore Ella Johns of Fort Collins. Afterwards, Christensen was understandably pleased with the newcomer's time, but has cautioned her to exercise more patience on the course.

"I wanted her to wait a little longer," Christensen said of Prok's run. "Today's goal was to be patient, and I tell that to all the girls, just wait a little longer, so you're a little uncomfortable with what's happening and then respond. She'll learn, I think, after today, that it's okay to wait a little longer."

Among those in the closest pack chasing Prok were all of



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

Niwot freshman Mia Prok initially trailed Ella Johns of Fort Collins during the Fairview Invitational, but caught up to her about midway through, before leaving her behind for good.

her Niwot teammates, led by senior Lucca Fulkerson, who finished third overall (19:19.40) as a follow-up to a fourth-place finish at Battle Mountain. Next was junior Eva Klingbeil, who provided a dash of drama for the girls when she kicked down the stretch to overcome Maggie McCleskey of Centaurus and capture fourth for Niwot. Klingbeil was followed

by sophomore Maddie Schults (20:11.9) in seventh, freshman Sarah Perkins (20:22.70) in eighth, and junior Amelia Philofsky in 12th. The Cougars finished with 23 points in the team standings, more than 50 points better than second-place Fairview.

## Boys

If the girls race lacked dra-

ma, the boys race more than made up for it, courtesy of Niwot junior Zane Bergen and his close friend and training partner James Overberg of Centaurus. The two battled for the lead during most of the race, along with Lukas Haug of Boulder, another member of the training group, and

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# Expanded fall sports schedule on the table for CHSAA, Gov. Polis

By Jack Carlough  
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In a time of great uncertainty, the recent interactions between the Colorado High School Athletics Association (CHSAA) and Gov. Jared Polis have not yielded much clarity.

The rollercoaster of events began in early August when CHSAA restructured its fall sports slate; golf, softball, cross country and boys tennis were permitted while football, volleyball and boys soccer were pushed to 2021. Hope for a change in heart was minimal until Sept. 7 when it was reported that CHSAA Commissioner Rhonda Blanford-Green

would be meeting with Gov. Polis and his COVID-19 Response Team to discuss a possible reconsideration.

Two days later, with high school athletes full of eager anticipation, CHSAA's Board of Directors poured water on the fire announcing there would be no change to the schedule. Even without in-person classes, student-athletes experienced a little high school heartbreak in the form of delayed sports. All was not lost, however.

The Shakespearean epic continued on Sept. 11, with Blanford-Green changing her stance and Polis' tweeting, "We are currently working

with @CHSAA to approve variances for football and field hockey, and we will work together to develop guidelines or variances for additional sports at a later date and indoor sports when they can safely be played."

Blanford-Green and Polis met on Sept. 11, and in a letter on Sept. 12, Blanford-Green said that "modified safety implementation plans and variance requests" were proposed to Polis's team.

Additionally, Blanford-Green addressed the scrutiny CHSAA has received in handling the situation and possible renewed schedule.

"Much has occurred this

week that has put CHSAA, as well as myself, front and center," Blanford-Green wrote. "Parties have questioned our credibility, integrity, and honesty, even our commitment to the students of Colorado and those we serve yet they are doing so without all the facts before them."

Blanford-Green continued to defend CHSAA and its work with state officials to resume sports. She requested an end to the "noise and finger pointing" to allow both parties to focus on the larger goal of bringing sports back.

Another component to keep in mind is the coronavirus restrictions present in the coun-

ty. Football rosters typically surpass 50 players and that could be an issue if football is given the green light.

At the local level, SVVSD Athletic Director Chase McBride remains in limbo until Boulder County and CHSAA allow for an expanded fall sports slate. If restrictions loosen, McBride is in full support of a revised schedule.

"There's people that are in charge of health and safety at the state and local levels and if they say it's appropriate and safe for us to play, then we're going to offer our kids the opportunity," McBride said. Stay tuned for further developments.

# XCOUNTRY

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Henry Murphy of Fairview, who made the first move into the lead. Murphy and Haug fell back before the final stretch, and Overberg opened up a sizable lead over Bergen with the finish line in sight. That's when Bergen told himself to "shut the brain off and just let the legs go, and see what would happen." What happened is that the junior caught up to his senior rival, and narrowly missed beating him at the finish line. Bergen fell just two-tenths of a second short, finishing in 16:13.80 to Overberg's 16.13.60.

"I was hoping for it to work out, but that's okay," Bergen said, adding that he is satisfied with second place if it meant a team victory.

For his part, Christensen thought the finish was "awesome" because of the close relationship between the top three placers. When track practice was abruptly halted in March, the three got together to train in

lieu of team practice, and kept it up until cross country season began in August.

"It was just cool seeing those three out there running hard, along with Henry. I think whoever made the first move today was going to end up where Henry did, so we have to thank him for doing that. But Zane ran great, and that was about what we expected."

As in the girls race, the rest of the Niwot boys finished in quick succession behind Bergen, with senior Grayden Rauba (16:54.10) in seventh, junior Joey Hendershot in eighth (16:55.60), senior Curtis Volf (16:68.80) in ninth, senior Joaquin Herrera (17:02.00) in 10th and sophomore Carlos Kipkorir (17:13.80) in 12th. The Cougars scored 36 points on the day, beating second-place Centaurus by more than 20 points.

Niwot cross country will be back in action for the weekly district meets on Sept. 16 and 18, followed by the St. Vrain Invitational at Lyons High on Sept. 19.



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

Early in the Fairview Invitational, Niwot junior Zane Bergen (#78) was neck-and-neck with friendly rivals James Overberg (#90) and Lukas Haug (#160), and just ahead of teammate Joey Hendershot (#79)



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

Around the halfway point of the boys race at the Fairview Invitational on Sept. 12, Henry Murphy of Fairview made a move into the lead over Zane Bergen, James Overberg, and Lukas Haug that he couldn't maintain.



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

Niwot junior Eva Klingbeil turned on the jets down the stretch of the girls race to secure fourth place over Centaurus' Maggie McCleskey.



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

Niwot junior Zane Bergen was a narrow second-place finisher to Centaurus senior James Overberg at the Fairview Invitational in Boulder on Sept. 12.

# Niwot goes 2-2 at Berthoud Invitational

By JOCELYN ROWLEY  
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A truncated softball season doesn't leave much room in the schedule for tournament appearances, but Niwot was able to make time for four games at the 2020 Berthoud Invitational, held Sept. 11-12 at the Barnes Softball Complex in Loveland. Thanks to clutch play on both sides of the ball from Dulce Amaya, Anne Booth, and Ayva McComas, the Cougars pulled off two wins over non-conference teams, and nearly escaped with a third win over a dreaded conference rival. While far from perfect, sixth-year head coach Bobby Matthews was happy with his youthful team's 2-2 effort over the weekend, and looks forward to a strong finish to the unconventional 2020 season.

"Honestly, three and one is where we should be," Matthews said after his team held on for an 8-6 win over the Air Academy Kadets on Saturday, following an 11-2 loss to Prairie View. "We blew another lead against Mountain View, and

they seem to have our number and be able to come back against us. Overall, though, I think the way the season is going and the things we're building upon, yes, I'm very happy. We're not used to having a big lead, and we were able to shut it down, and that was huge. People were getting on base. The bottom of the lineup is really starting to put the ball into play. So overall we're growing."

That was evident especially in the Cougars' offensive production at the tournament. Four players—Amaya, Booth, McComas, and freshman Autumn Rutherford—had at least five hits for the weekend or reached base six or more times. McComas, a third-year veteran shortstop who leads the team in batting, had six hits, three for extra bases, including her first home run of the season in the 9-8 loss to the Mountain Lions.

Freshman Booth matched the junior with six hits, including three in the game against Mountain View, which she also pitched. Amaya, the team's only senior and hero of the

blowout over Thompson Valley on Sept. 3, had five hits on the weekend, while the speedy Rutherford also had five.

"We've been telling her to just get on base and use her speed," Matthews said of the newcomer, who also plays volleyball. "Her speed can be deadly and it can disrupt a lot of things."

To be sure, the Cougars still have a way to go. While they seem to have found some rhythm on offense, decision-making is sometimes still a problem on defense, and their inexperience can sometimes get the better of them. At the same time, the team fielding error rate is slowly dropping, and they managed to turn five double plays in the win over the Kadets. But they could also use some polish at the plate, Matthews said, after the team left 39 runners stranded in the four games.

"I think overall there are little things we can work on like situational hitting, being a little more aggressive in the strike zone offensively. I think we let good pitches go by that

could have possibly driven in some runs."

With two more wins and losses, Niwot moved to 5-6 on the year, a clear improvement after a rocky 1-4 start to 2020. Unfortunately, they have just five games remaining thanks to pandemic measures, and the postseason seems unlikely, Matthews said.

"Typically, in a normal sea-

son, we'd be right where we needed to be, but unfortunately, we have five games left. So it's a little different there, but we could go on a little roll. Who knows what could happen. All we can control is us, and what happens, happens."

The Cougars will be back on the diamond on Sept. 18 at home against Berthoud.



Photo by Jocelyn Rowley

Head coach Bobby Matthews conducts a socially-distanced mound conference during Niwot's game against Air Academy on Sept. 12. From left, Dulce Amaya, Anne Booth, Jasmine Aldama, Bobby Matthews, Ayva McComas and Hannah Bassett.



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