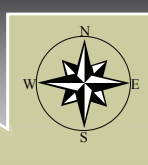


# Our Community News

Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area



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## Local Events

See pages 28-31 for details of these and many other local events.

- **PLAG Winter Art Show & Sale at TLCA**, Tue.-Sat., noon-4 p.m. Ends Fri., Feb. 23,
- **D38 Deliberates: Community Engagement Opportunity**, Mon., Feb. 5, 6-7:45 p.m.
- **Tri-Lakes Land Use Committee Meeting**, Mon., Feb. 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- **High Altitude Gardening**, Wed., Feb. 7, 5-6:30 p.m.
- **CDOT Listening Session for I-25 Gap Project**, Thu., Feb. 8, 6:45-8:15 p.m.
- **12th Annual Free Chess Tournament**, Sat., Feb. 10, 8:15 a.m.-2 p.m.
- **Random Acts of Kindness**, Sat., Feb. 10, 1-4 p.m.
- **CDOT Listening Session for I-25 Gap Project**, Tue., Feb. 13, 5:30-7 p.m.
- **WMMI Lecture by V. Larry Frank, Jr.**, Tue., Feb. 13, 7 p.m.
- **PLHS: Restoration of D&RG 1889 Tourist Sleeper Car 470**, Thu., Feb. 15, 7 p.m.
- **WMMI Gold Mining Exhibit Opening**, Thu., Feb. 15, 7 p.m.
- **Lorrie Morgan Concert at TLCA**, Fri., Feb. 16, 7-9 p.m.
- **Landscape Design Principles**, Wed., Feb. 21, 5-6:30 p.m.
- **Winterfest on the Lake**, Sat., Feb. 24, 4-8 p.m.
- **Visions of Light Judge's Seminar at TLCA**, Thu., Mar. 1, 7 p.m.
- **Visions of Light Photography Exhibition Opening Reception**, Fri., Mar. 2, 6-8 p.m.

## In this issue

- Fire District News 1-7
- D38 School District News 1, 7-10
- Monument News 11-16
- Palmer Lake News 17
- Water & San District News 17-20
- County News 20-21
- WIA News 21
- Weather 21-22
- Letters and Columns 22-25
- Snapshots 25-27
- Notices and Calendar 28-31
- OCN Information 27, 31

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Above — The Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) community service group "took to the hills" on Jan. 17 and worked three community service projects. One was a Palmer Lake-area leaf cleanup

and a second was a Mt. Herman-area horse stable work party. Shown here, RAK community volunteers worked at picking up trash along I-25 and Highway 105 on the long slope from the McDonalds/Village Inn and I-25 bridge area. Car parts, cardboard, more cups and wrapper stuff than you can count, and general debris most probably blown in from Utah in our high winds ends up next to I-25's slope up to the Palmer Divide. Many thanks to RAK folks for helping clean our community for a better view by folks traveling past Monument on I-25. Residents who either want to give RAK help or ask for help can contact Melinda Reichal at 719-313-0688 or mreihal@aol.com. Photo courtesy of Gordon and Melinda Reichal.



### Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education, Jan. 18

## Alternative uses for Grace Best facility debated

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education discussed uses for the Grace Best Education Center and received reports from the Gifted Education program and the English Language Learner program, along with an operations report from Monument Academy, at its Jan. 18 meeting.

### Grace Best discussion

The board held a lengthy discussion of alternative uses for the Grace Best Education Center. As part of the long-term planning process, some alternatives were to demolish the entire building, demolish only the older part of the building, or repurpose the building into an elementary school.

The Long Term Planning Committee recommends adding two new elementary schools in the next few years. During a recent public deliberation meeting, attendees voted on the desirability of returning sixth grade to the

middle school and reconverting Bear Creek to a middle school, as it was originally built as a middle school. See [www.ocn.me/v17n12.htm#d38-1116](http://www.ocn.me/v17n12.htm#d38-1116) and [www.ocn.me/v17n12.htm#d38-1106](http://www.ocn.me/v17n12.htm#d38-1106).

The attendees at that meeting felt they did not have sufficient information to decide on the use of the Grace Best facility.

Board Treasurer Chris Taylor said that he appreciated the work of the Long Term Planning Committee but suggested that the administration seek a second opinion on the costs and use of Grace Best.

Superintendent Karen Brofft said it is difficult to get bids on such matters without extensive research, and it would be particularly challenging to get such information by the Jan. 30 deadline of the board work session.

Director Mark Pfoff said Grace Best was closed in 2010 due to the economic

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Jan. 16

## Residents question, or attempt to question, Wescott board

By Jennifer Kaylor and Jim Kendrick

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District (DWFPD) board mourned the deaths of former firefighters, contested one resident's comments and questions and refused to let another resident speak at all at the Jan. 16 meeting. The board also received kudos and settled regular business matters.

One brief mention was made of the May 8 board election in which four positions are up for election.

Director Bo McAllister was excused from the meeting.

### Mentor and comrade mourned

Chief Vinny Burns expressed sorrow at the loss of former Wescott Chief Bill Sheldon, who died Jan. 4. Sheldon helped establish the fire district in northern El Paso County, transitioned the district from all-volunteer to paid, and served as Wescott's chief for 15 years before retiring in December 2005. Burns announced that Wescott would lead a fire apparatus procession to the U.S. Air Force Academy where Sheldon would be laid to rest with full military and firefighter honors on Jan. 19. Burns remarked, "Chief Sheldon was . . . a father figure to a lot of people, myself included . . . his loss hurts quite a bit."

Burns noted that former firefighter Lt. Gasper Blea also died recently. Blea had volunteered with Wescott during the 1990s and became a career firefighter for the Woodmoor/Monument Fire Protection District before Woodmoor/Monument consolidated into the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (<http://www.ocn.me/v4n12.htm#fajwg>). Wescott firefighters attended his funeral Jan. 13.

### One resident questions 2018 budget and approval process

Gleneagle North Home Owners' Association Treasurer Gary Rusnak asked about the upcoming board member election and then posed three basic questions. Had Wescott "only operated out of the one station, on Gleneagle," had response times degraded because of this, and had Wescott solely served the northern sub-district during 2017?

Burns replied, "There are some times that we did open up (Station 2) when we had extra volunteers," and, besides the northern sub-district, which is the main part of Wescott now, "the area that [Director Joyce Hartung] lives in, we still respond to," Ridings added that when only one station was open, "our response times would increase to different calls."

**Note:** The southern portion of the current DWFPD service area Burns referred to is south of Old Ranch Road as

D38 (cont. on page 7)

DWFPD (cont. on page 2)