

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters to the editor are on page 31.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer

D-38 could use some disruption

It's that time of year again! It's District-38 School Board Resignation season. Another election is coming and various members have started to resign in time for the board to appoint its choice of "incumbents" to run in the fall. The unbroken chain of appointments over the years has been quite helpful because, as the board recently told prospective candidates, the board must remain united. What better way to ensure this than to just pick the next board members themselves?

The board seems to have forgotten that the very reason we hold elections is to disrupt unity, when it becomes necessary. Disruption is the whole point. I believe this board would benefit from some disruption, considering some of the district's recent decisions:

- Closing Grace Best (kind of) and cramming one-third of our elementary population into Bear Creek.
- Forcing children to have their hands scanned to pay for their lunches.
- Paying a monthly fee for a microchip tracking service to track buses and students (were we losing students?).
- Employing 43(!) people at central administration, in addition to administrative staff spread out across individual schools.
- Electing to not renew the contracts of numerous teachers who joined with district parents to express concerns.

I will watch with great interest this fall.

Melinda Zark

The opacity of D-38's transparency

Recently, D-38 schools completed their first year of Common Core testing (Parcc, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). There has been much controversy surrounding Parcc. For the past several weeks, I have been trying to get the participation rates and testing costs for D-38 to no avail. Every time I call the D-38 administration, I get stonewalled.

I have received the participation rate and cost from Monument Academy. Less than half the eligible students took the tests at a cost of more than \$200 per pupil, or over \$100,000. If we extrapolate those figures across the district of 6,000 students (two-thirds of the students were eligible for Parcc testing), the district spent roughly \$800,000 on a testing program that the community did not want in the first place.

The Colorado Department of Education required a 95 percent participation rate. No school in D-38 was even close to that rate. What were the percentages? Rumors have the participation rates around 50 percent and lower. This is equivalent to a total failure to implement Common Core testing in the district.

Despite the overall rejection of Parcc testing, the D-38 board refuses to admit failure. Suddenly, their transparency has turned to opacity. They do not want the community to know the truth. They are embarrassed by the results. The truth is that a majority of parents in the district opted their children out of Common Core testing and many more would have, but did not out of fear of harming their children's academic standings.

If my estimations are wrong, then please prove it, D-38, by opening the books. The community has a right to know.

Michael O'Hare

Hoping for a difference on school board

My favorite quote of Mark Twain is: "It were not best that we should all think alike; it is difference of opinion that makes horse-races."

With the most recent pre-election resignation announcement of Lewis-Palmer School Board member Pike, our Tri-Lakes area is for the fourth time facing appointment rather than election of a new school board member. Perhaps this time for a change, the appointee will represent the entire community including respecting Monument Academy and our home-school families, rather than just another appointee in lock-step with the current board.

Gordon Reichal

What are we really buying ourselves?

Why would anyone want to develop the beautiful woods that we have in the Fox Run area? It is some of the last open woods we have, and is a living testament as to why Monument is a good place to live.

The incessant construction of new buildings in Monument is destructive to our quality of life. When Colorado's chief of prisons was killed, some of the media described Monument as a "picturesque place with rolling hills" and other media described Monument as "a place of urban sprawl." Would you rather live in a place described as urban sprawl or picturesque? Every time our alleged community leaders make a decision to acquiesce to developers, we lose something, and what we gain is less beauty, devaluation of our uniqueness, and loss of mental and physical health. Public health research consistently shows that people who have open space around them are healthier, both mentally and physically, with fewer psychological and medical problems. But, these alleged leaders, who profess to have our best interests in mind, tend to have a particular political orientation, and consistently disregard and disrespect scientists and scientific information.

Community members have been asleep at the wheel. We have bought ourselves low-income housing, higher taxes, less nature, more traffic, chain restaurants and big box stores. Are you really proud when visitors come? My visitors look toward Jackson Creek, sad and dumbfounded, "That looks like California Why are they doing that and who is letting them do that?" "It used to be so pretty here"

An article in the Huffington Post, "10 Terribly Overrated Destinations (And Where to Go Instead)" dated April 8, 2013, listed Colorado fifth as an overrated destination. It notes that Vail is no longer a desirable destination because of endless condominiums in suburbia, and states Colorado Springs is boring and uptight.

LeAnna DeAngelo, PhD

Monument Hill Foundation granting program

The Monument Hill Foundation is the granting arm of the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club. Its mission is to serve as a resource for the club in providing financial support to the Tri-Lakes community of northern El Paso County and its youths.

Monument Hill Kiwanis Club projects focus primarily on raising funds for club operations and on contribut-

ing sweat equity in support of many of those same causes, some of which assist the community directly while others earn funds which are provided to the foundation for direct granting. Grant recipients of these funds have included District 38 special needs children, Tri-Lakes Cares, the Rocky Mountain Youth Leadership Conference, and the Emily Griffith Center, to name just a few.

Grants are made on an annual "call" basis. That is, requests for grants may be submitted by interested parties starting May 1, and they will be due by June 30. The requests received as a result of this call will be evaluated and requestors will be notified privately of the results pertaining to their requests. Those the foundation are able to support financially will receive the funds beginning Oct. 1 and in succeeding months as funds become available.

If you are interested in requesting a grant, please see www.monumenthillfoundation.org

Along with more details regarding our granting program, a grant request form is available online at the granting page on the site. It can be completed on the requestor's computer and the completed form, along with supporting information, can be submitted electronically to the Foundation Granting committee.

Scott Ross

Director of Granting, Monument Hill Foundation

Thanks for help with After Prom event

We would like to express our gratitude for the wonderful group of community members who helped with the Lewis-Palmer High School After Prom event. The LPHS After Prom is offered as an alternative to private parties or merely driving around on the highways in the middle of the night. It is also open to those students who do not or cannot attend the actual Prom, for any number of reasons.

This year, we were especially challenged in coordinating the event, since the original date was snowed out and we had to duplicate the effort on another weekend. Upon hearing of our dilemma of having to decorate an alternate venue in a short amount of time, Palmer Ridge parents pitched in to help, as did other parents who didn't even have current students at the high school. What a great community effort!

Many school districts do not offer an After Prom event, as the planning and coordination involved takes a substantial amount of time and money. Both District 38 high schools have such a dedicated group of staff, parents and community patrons, that we have been able to make After Prom a yearly tradition.

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<p>275 Park St. * Palmer Lake \$359,000 * 4BD/4BA/2CAR Custom-built 3300 SF home with 2 decks, 2 family rooms, and quality throughout! Views!</p>	<p>60 Columbine *Palmer Lake \$269,000 * 3BD/2BA/1CAR Immaculate home w/over 2000 SF built in 2005! Great flow! Private back! Ready 6/9/2015</p>		