

## Emergency Manager Nate Whittington bids farewell to Gilpin

**Mindy Leary**  
Gilpin County

After five years of unwavering dedication, Nate Whittington, the first full-time Emergency Manager of Gilpin County, bids farewell as he embarks on a new chapter with Jefferson County Emergency Management. Whittington leaves behind a legacy of resilience, coordination, and innovation.

Whittington has a diverse background and years of experience, making his transfer a loss to the County. Whittington has a background as a wildland firefighter and ran a dive recovery team in Pueblo.

Up until this year, he was in federal service and was in every major national disaster since 9/11. He was field-deployed to 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, Ebola outbreaks in Africa, and the earthquakes in Haiti.

Ideally, his team would be in the area before an incident so as to stabilize health and medical resources after a disaster. He was on St. Thomas before Hurricane Maria made landfall, stayed at the hospital, and waited out a category 5 hurricane to ensure the hospital was back up and running. He said the one thing those disasters showed him is the strength of the human spirit, which truly reveals itself the day AFTER a calamity. He said the joy of the job has been seeing people coming together to help one another after a disaster strikes.

When Whittington arrived in Gilpin County, there was no established Emergency Operations Center (EOC). However, under his leadership, the EOC became a reality, constructed with funds awarded by the Congress. This center stands as a testament to his vision, designed specifically to coordinate emergency response efforts, bringing together fire, law enforcement, and EMS services.

One of Whittington's notable achievements was the implementation of wildfire detection sensors strategically placed throughout the county. These sensors, in collaboration with United Power, are capable

Continued on page 33

## An Eagles victory: How sweet it is



PHOTO BY DAVE GIBSON

### Saving their best for last

Eagles Dacio Pina (#26) and Connor Holloway forcing a Justice player out of bounds. See story page 15.

## Gilpin volleyball pays tribute to their seniors



PHOTO BY DAVE GIBSON

**Dave Gibson**  
Gilpin County

The varsity home volleyball match on October 24 against Lyons was the Gilpin Eagles' twenty-third and final match of a long and fruitful season that began with a 3-0 victory over Kiowa on August 18. The girls would register a 12-11 record that included a 7-4 mark in league play. An outstanding showing for a team that lost several starting players from last year's squad to graduation. They pulled together as a team. Improving each week, one of the key components to their success came from the girls' unwavering support for one another. A tight-knit operation from top to bottom as you'll ever see, the C Team, Junior Varsity, and Varsity all rooted for each other. Although they needed no coaxing, Head Coach Topher Rouse called it "a requirement."

Gilpin would lose their match against

### All for one and one for all

The Gilpin volleyball teams know how to pull for each other.

Continued on page 11

Music of the Mountains - page 2, 3  
Peak Perspectives - page 4, 5  
Puzzles & Letters - page 6, 7  
School Zone - page 8 to 15  
Art News - page 20, 21  
Food Pantry News - page 22, 23  
Home Maintenance - page 24

Forest Service News - page 25  
Nederland Night Skies - page 26  
Mountain Critters - page 27  
In Memory of Barbara Lawlor - page 32  
Allenspark News - page 28  
Government - page 33 to 39  
Classifieds - page 33 to 39

### - QUOTE OF THE WEEK -

*"Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love."* Mother Teresa

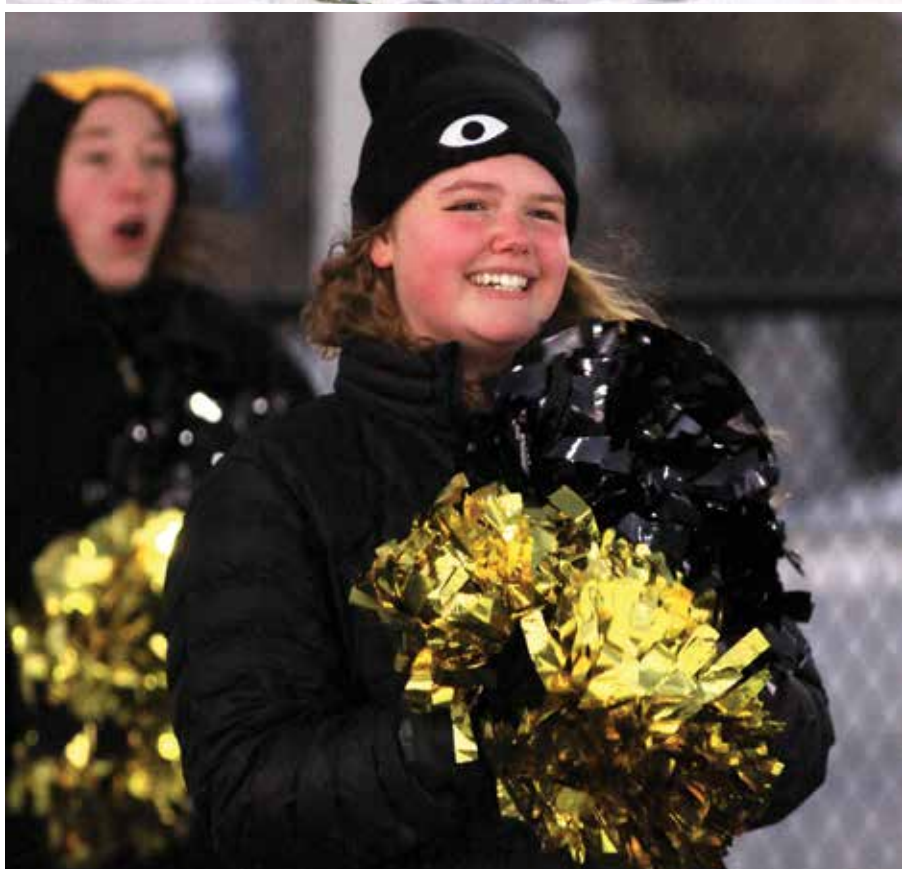
# An Eagles victory: How sweet it is



PHOTOS BY DAVE GIBSON

### Hard work pays off

Top, left: The sun sets on Gilpin's football season as Ryan Marr breaks up a pass attempt. Top, right: Drew Starkey fends off a defender. Bottom, left: Leo Simpson-Wilhelm cheering on the Eagles.



### Dave Gibson Gilpin County

You can talk all day about determination and moral victories, but for the players and coaching staff nothing is quite as sweet as registering a game in the win column. It validates the hard work and dedication and satisfies in a way that effort alone cannot. For the Gilpin Eagles varsity football team, that euphoric feeling came on October 30 against their archrival, the Justice Phoenix.

It was to be the fourth meeting between the two programs in the last two years. The last time the Eagles beat the Phoenix was on September 15, 2022, at Gilpin County Stadium in an exciting 20-8 victory. The home team won the last three matchups. Pouring everything they had into this game, Gilpin hoped that trend would continue.

Originally scheduled for Saturday, October 28, that game was postponed until the following Monday because of a snowstorm that dropped ten inches on our area. In preparation for the contest, the field had been shoveled by Gilpin and Justice

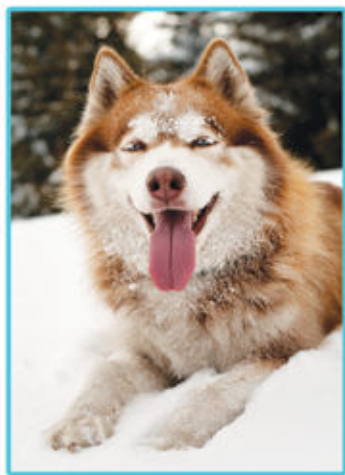
players, but a thick layer of crusty snow and ice still remained on the playing surface. With a gusty wind at its start and temperatures dipping into the twenties, the conditions would make for interesting football.

Before the last game of the year in all of Gilpin's sports is when they honor their senior athletes. Caleb Hopkins was the only senior on this year's football team. A transfer from Lake Charles, Louisiana, at 6'3" and 300 pounds he was hard to miss. Playing at defensive end and noseguard, he did an admirable job clogging up the middle during the course of the season. He was also a force at offensive tackle, opening up holes for Eagles' running backs. A leader on and off the field, Caleb was voted student council president by his peers.

In the first quarter the Eagles put together one their longest sustained drives of the entire year. Justice Johnson and Ben Bushey racked up most of the yardage through fullback dives with pulling guards Mason Sechler and Drew Starkey leading the way. Ryan Marr scored a touchdown

Continued on page 15

## What's that? Pet of the Year is HERE!



That's right, it's time to find those photos of your four-legged friends and get ready to submit them. And don't forget your reptiles, fowl and farm animals. In the meantime, we are looking for sponsors for this furry fun-filled contest.

Submit pet photos November 1 to 17. The contest is open to current subscribers of *The Mountain-Ear* (print or online). Categories include "Pet of the Year" and "In Memory Of." No previous winners please (share the love). The winning pet will get a feature story in an upcoming edition of *The Mountain-Ear*.


Vote online for your favorite pet from November 23 to December 15.

Winners announced in the December 21 edition of *The Mountain-Ear*.

Questions? Email [info@themountaineer.com](mailto:info@themountaineer.com) or give us a call at 303-810-5409. (No late photos will be accepted.)



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# An Eagles victory: How sweet it is



PHOTOS BY DAVE GIBSON

### Putting an exclamation mark on their year

Top, left: Justice's star quarterback was kept well contained during the contest. Top, right: Senior Caleb Hopkins is a leader on and off the field. Bottom, right: Old Glory blew horizontally before the game.

### Continued from page 14

on a 12-yard wave sweep to make the score 6-0 in favor of the Eagles.

A defensive struggle through the second and third quarters, Dacio Pina and Landon Church stood out on that side of the ball. In merely his second start at the center position, Cameron Thomason's shotgun snaps were virtually flawless. Score at the end of three quarters: Gilpin 6, Justice 0.

Rising from the ashes, the Justice Phoenix put their first points on the board with a long pass play and ensuing touchdown. The 2-point conversion put them ahead by a score of 8-6 at the beginning of the fourth quarter. With three and a half minutes left in regulation and the game seemingly slipping away, the Eagles caused a fumble that was scooped up by Landon Church and run back to their opponent's 1-yard line. A Connor Holloway wham play touchdown made the tally Gilpin 12, Justice 6. Another fumble recovery at midfield and subsequent drive and

Holloway rushing touchdown was the frosting on the cake. Final score: Gilpin 18, Justice 8.

Winning Coach Craig Ball shared after his team's fulfilling victory, "Our Monday night game was a thrilling conclusion to our football season. We emerged victorious in the final game and made plays down the stretch. The game showcased the dedication and teamwork that defined this year's football season. Looking ahead to the 2024 season, our commitment remains strong. We'll be kickstarting our preparation with a football camp in Nebraska early in June and a summer weightlifting program as we prepare for our first day of football practice on August 12. As a team and community, we are resolved to hit the weightroom, participate in other sports like track and wrestling, and push ourselves to become faster and stronger for football. Together, we're determined to elevate our game and compete at the highest level next year."

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2<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
**SILENT AUCTION**  
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 Preserve Local History  
 Friday, November 3rd, 2023  
 6pm – 9:00pm  
 Hub Ned  
 80 Big Springs Dr #202, Nederland, CO 80466

Join us for a night of fun to support our town's history!  
 FREE Food & Drinks – Donations encouraged  
 Open to the Community!

All proceeds donated to the  
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