



Police bust up meth lab

■ Three arrests made; two more at large

By JAY GENTILE

A long-term undercover operation conducted by the Estes Park Police Department has resulted in the arrests of three suspects, with two more being sought, on felony drug charges, including distribution of marijuana, distribution of cocaine and distribution of methamphetamine.

In addition, police uncovered a small methamphetamine lab inside an Estes

Park residence at 341 Fall River Lane, which was searched on Feb. 23 after police obtained a search warrant from Larimer County District Court Judge R.L. Schultz.

"We obtained a search warrant based on an undercover operation," said Lieutenant Mike Van Deutekom of the Estes Park Police Department. "Officers suspected there was a clandestine drug lab, which was seized by the Larimer County Drug Task Force."

Deputy Police Chief Gregg Filsinger said methamphetamine labs are very dangerous labs containing chemicals that require state certification to handle, hence

the need for the Drug Task Force.

He said the methamphetamine seized, which was in powder form, has been sent to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation where it will be tested for verification of intended purpose.

This is the third methamphetamine lab broken up by the Estes Park Police Department in the past two years. Van Deutekom said there were no labs discovered in town before that time.

"In the mid to late '90s, the popularity of meth really took off," he said. "In some states, meth is the Number One drug problem."

Filsinger said the lab contained glass

tubing, beakers and chemicals used to manufacture methamphetamine, also known as speed and crank.

He said the drug is a stimulant with effects similar to cocaine, yet meth is entirely chemically derived while cocaine comes from a plant. Its effects tend to last longer than the effects of cocaine.

"It gives you a rush," Filsinger said. "People become highly agitated and it can lead to violent behavior in some individuals that use it."

This lab was smaller than the other two meth labs that have been uncovered in Estes Park.

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Judging the Shooz



Photo by Walt Hester

Superintendent Dr. Richard Kastendieck, (left), Estes Park Assistant Administrator Randy Repola, (center), and Mayor John Baudek, (right), judge the finalists out of 45 pairs of shoes, the largest number decorated so far in the three-year-old contest. The shoes will be used to decorate the stage at the Cool Shooz concert Friday, March 9, at 7 p.m., at the Estes Park High School theater.

Just don't fence 'em in, volunteers say

Group assists with barbed wire removal

By JAY GENTILE

Fence removers, unite! Saturday is the day for volunteers to tramp around the Estes Valley and take out abandoned barbed wire.

Every year, about a dozen deer and elk are killed by the barbed wire fencing that is scattered across properties in the Estes Valley.

"They get caught in like a trap to die a slow, torturous death," said Madeline Framson of the Colorado Mountain Club's Shining Mountains Group, which is organizing the fence removal project along with Rick Spowart of the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

The day-long event will kick off at 8:30 a.m. Participants will meet at the far east end of the McDonald's parking area and split up into groups in order to hit several locations in the Estes Valley.

"We've got 30 volunteers," Framson said, "but we won't turn anyone down. There's lightweight and heavier work. Everyone does what they're capable of."

People interested in volunteering should call Framson at 586-6623 before Saturday.

She said the event could be canceled if there is heavy snow, and she needs

To volunteer:

To volunteer to help with the removal, call 586-6623.

phone numbers to call people if that becomes the case. But the group will go out in light snow.

"We've been doing this for 15 years," Framson said. "We have taken miles and miles of barbed wire out in the (national) Park and in the valley."

She said the group loads up the wire in a trailer and hauls it down to Eco Cycle in Boulder where it is recycled.

"We do all the labor and dispose of it," she said. The fence owner can ask the group to keep the fence post in, otherwise they will be removed also.

The group asks people to bring their own work gloves and tools if they have any. Some tools will be provided.

Besides large animals, like elk and deer, smaller animals, like gray-horned owls, also tend to get caught in the barbed wire.

If the weather is bad or the group doesn't remove all the wire, the group will make another fence removal run Saturday, March 17.

Know your trash Larimer County starts education program

By LUCIE R. WILLISIE

- What is the life span of the county's current landfill?
- How much trash is taken in by the county's landfill every day? (Hint: think tons)
- How much of residential waste is paper products?

If you don't know the answer to these or other questions concerning trash and/or recyclables, then you may want to visit the planned education center the Larimer County Natural Resources Department has planned to open — at least partially — this summer.

"Trash ... is a fact of life," said Cheryl Kolus, environmental educator for the county's Natural Resources department, "but there are solutions. We as individuals have an impact."

The department has hired a consulting group to develop a master plan for a new solid waste education center to be housed in an empty building at the county's landfill that is currently unused.

Similar centers exist across the country, some just holes in the wall, according to Kolus, others extremely

For more information

Call the Larimer County Natural Resources Department at 498-5760 or e-mail koluscr@co.larimer.co.us.

elaborate. This center will be somewhere in between.

She hopes that this center will educate people on issues and have them leave knowing that they can make things better.

Not only will this center provide information and interactive displays, it will also include an outdoor display featuring demonstrations and samples of materials made from recycled products.

Everyone is welcome.

"As the population of Larimer County grows, so does the amount of waste generated," said Janelle Henderson, Natural Resources director, the originator of the idea for this center. "Education is the key to helping residents make responsible choices when it comes to disposing of trash."

As to the answers to the trivia

questions are concerned, here they are:

- What is the life span of the county's current landfill?

The life span of the current landfill is roughly between six and eight years. Ten years might be possible, depending how much recycling can be accomplished.

Another option might be to expand the landfill vertically, but more research by the county is required. Currently another landfill site is being studied that meets all the criteria.

- How much trash is taken in by the county's landfill every day? (Hint: think tons)

800 tons or 1,600,000 pounds of trash per day is taken in.

- How much of residential waste is paper products?

About 44 percent of residential waste is in the form of paper products. Much of this could be recycled and drastically reduce the waste.

For more information or to give comments, call the Larimer County Natural Resources Department at 498-5760 or e-mail Kolus at koluscr@co.larimer.co.us.

Board to discuss Lake Shore annex, fire district

The Estes Park Town Board will consider approval of a resolution stating intent to annex Lake Shore addition and set a public hearing for April 24 during its March 13 meeting.

Then it will consider approval of a resolution stating a change of class liquor license application filed by Local's Grill Inc., from Beer and Wine to Hotel and Restaurant License, and set a public hearing for April 10.

Action items include discussion of an automatic aid agreement with Pinewood Springs Fire Protection District, after a presentation by Estes Park Volunteer Fire Department Chief Scott Dorman.

The board will also dis-

cuss Office on Aging grant agreements at the Senior Center, following a presentation by Town Administrator Rich Widmer.

The board will then discuss a site approval application for modification and expansion of the Estes Park Sanitation District's Wastewater Treatment Plant, after a presentation by Widmer.

Finally, the board will introduce Pete Brandford as the Town's new finance director. It will also approve appointments of Town treasurer, building authority secretary, firemen's pension board treasurer, and policemen's pension board.

After a report on other Town business by Widmer, the board will adjourn.

New Gazette ad rep sees through customer's eyes

By LUCIE R. WILLISIE

For 15 years, Troy Bickel, along with his wife, Tricia, owned and operated a retail clothing store in south central Kansas, near Winfield.

This gives Bickel a unique perspective — from the customer's point of view — in his newly found career as an ad representative for the *Trail-Gazette*.

"I did all the advertising for my retail store," he said. "I know (it) from the customer's end as a previous customer of the media."

Bickel is also a previous "customer" of Estes Park, having vacationed here with his wife and two kids — Tyler, 12, and Tyslie, 11 — for the last 10 years.

"We were looking to move," Bickel explained further. "(So), we threw caution to the wind .. and we up and left." The Bickels were tired of retail, anyway, and when he saw the ad in the paper, he took a shot — and got the job. The family has only been in Estes Park officially for nine days.

But, it seems to be just what they hoped for. And he hopes it'll be the last time he moves. "It's a nice place to retire and a great vacation spot for the kids to bring their kids," he said.

And, "I've seen enough wheat fields," Bickel added. "I like not seeing 300



Bickel

miles (away) ... I like seeing from here to the mountains.

Plus, allergies — to wheat, what else — was becoming more and more of a problem for both him and his kids.

Thirdly, "I very much dislike summer," he added. "... I just hate to sweat." He was tired of having the air conditioning on from May to October every year.

Bickel and his wife, both, like to play golf. He said he is a 13 handicap — "on a good day." He also likes to fly model airplanes.

He's a big KU basketball fan and both he and his wife are big Kansas City Chief fans.

He'd also like to take up a new hobby — fly fishing.

But, "the whole family would like to take up hiking," he added. "I bought a book the other day. Eventually I'd like to (climb Longs Peak)." At least, he thinks he'd like to do that. He'll wait and see.

But basically, "I'm happy watching TV — (especially wildlife programs) — or outside playing golf," he added. "There's no particular thing I have to be doing to be happy."

Sometime in the near future he'd like to get a chocolate lab, but he'll have to be content for a little while longer with the furriest member of the Bickel family — eight-year-old "Snowball," the family cat.

"I'd like to see when the cat sees the first elk," he said. That should be something to witness, he confessed, as he chuckled to himself.

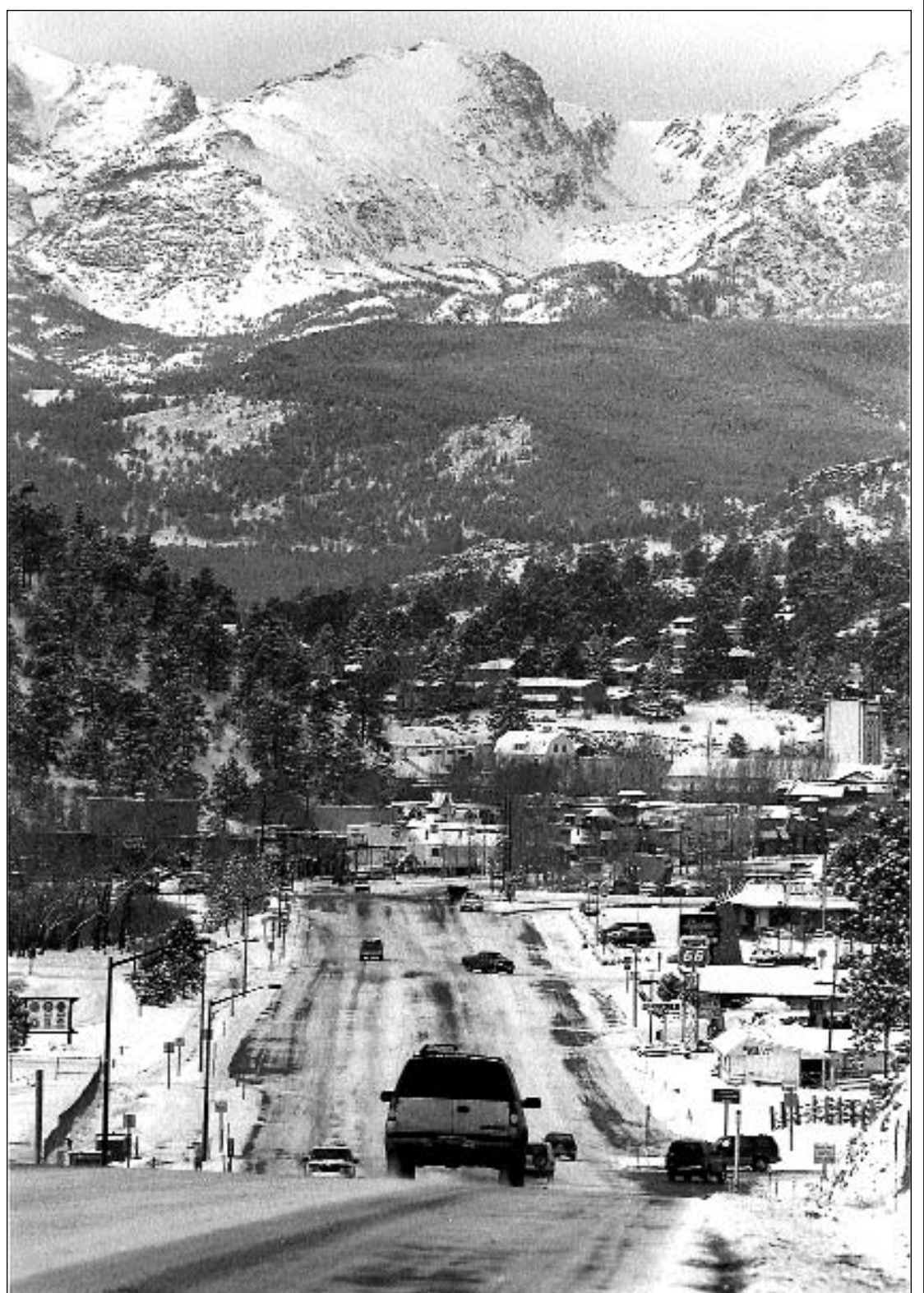


Photo by Walt Hester

Marvelous March

Otis Peak looms over another winter day in Estes Park last week. Now the temperatures are beginning to feel more like spring, though the season is still officially a couple weeks away.

Public Agenda

Monday, March 12

Library Board 6:30 p.m., library conference room.

Tuesday, March 13

Estes Park Sanitation District 1:30 p.m., 1201 Graves Ave.

Town Board 7 p.m., Municipal Building.
Upper Thompson Sanitation District 2 p.m., 2220 Mall Road.

Wednesday, March 14

Estes Park Housing Authority, 8:30 a.m.,

Municipal Building.

Thursday, March 15

Public Works Committee 3:30 p.m., Municipal Building.

Tuesday, March 20

Estes Park Planning Commission noon, study session; 1:30 p.m., regular meeting; Municipal Building.

Estes Valley Recreation and Park District 7 p.m., 18-hole golf course.

Drug bust: Problems grow as population does

Continued from page 1

"The second lab we discovered was possibly the largest in Larimer County history," Van Deutekom said. "It had the potential of making two to three pounds with a street value approaching \$200,000."

The first lab police uncovered was smaller, but still resulted in seven people being charged with six convictions.

"This department has been very successful in detection and taking labs down," Filsinger said.

Besides uncovering the meth lab on Feb. 23, police have made three drug arrests within the past two weeks, a result of an undercover operation conducted by the department's Selective Enforcement Unit. The unit periodically focuses in on a certain type of crime like drugs or burglaries to more effectively pool efforts.

"Since the formation of the

Selective Enforcement Unit two and a half years ago, we have made 28 arrests with 27 convictions for drugs," Van Deutekom said. "That does not include the six (arrest) warrants just issued."

Those six arrest warrants were obtained from judges as a result of probable cause gathered during the undercover operation, and gave police the authority to apprehend the suspects named in the arrest warrants on sight.

On Feb. 23, at 7 a.m., police arrested Ronald Lee Goddard, 38, of Estes Park, at 1224 Graves Ave. He was charged with distribution of methamphetamine, a Schedule II controlled substance, and transported to Larimer County Detention Center for arraignment.

A preliminary hearing in the case against Goddard has been set for 10 a.m., March 19, said a representative of the Larimer

County District Attorney's Office.

On Feb. 28, at 12:22 p.m., police arrested Danny M. Kneller, 24, of Estes Park, who was taken into custody by Littleton police officers at the Arapaho County probation office.

Van Deutekom said Estes Park police contacted Kneller's probation officer, who saw the arrest warrant for Kneller that had been entered into the National Crime Information computer and alerted Littleton police.

Kneller has been charged with distribution of cocaine, a Schedule II controlled substance, and has been transported to Larimer County Detention Center for arraignment.

Van Deutekom said Schedule II drugs are the hardest drugs after Schedule I. He said Schedule II drugs are the most common of the hard drugs found in

Estes Park, and said he is not aware of any arrests made by the department for Schedule I drugs.

"It's not uncommon in the Estes Valley to find a variety of drugs that are being used illegally," Van Deutekom said. "We've seized drugs in a variety of places."

He said distribution of cocaine and distribution of methamphetamine are both class III felonies, which carry a possible penalty range of four to 12 years in prison and a \$300,000 to \$750,000 fine.

In addition, an Estes Park juvenile was arrested and charged for distribution of marijuana within the past week. Van Deutekom said marijuana is a Schedule V drug, the least hard, but that distribution is an automatic felony.

Police also have two arrest warrants out for a suspect believed to be involved in both dis-

tribution of marijuana and distribution of a Schedule II substance.

Police are also in search of a suspect who is believed to be out of state. That suspect has an arrest warrant out for distribution of cocaine.

"The Selective Enforcement Unit did a lengthy undercover investigation," Van Deutekom said. "Those warrants were obtained and executed without incident."

Van Deutekom said he has noticed more hard drugs in Estes Park, particularly cocaine, in recent years. He said it is likely a result of population growth.

"I see more now, but I also see more people in town now," he said. "Our drug problem is proportional to other towns. As we grow, the drug problems are going to grow."

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