



TIM KRAUSE, Idalia School Superintendent, presented the Colorado Association of School Boards McGuffey Award to Nancy Helling, Idalia School Board member.

Idalia teacher receives award

Nancy Helling with the Idalia School District RJ-3 has been selected as 2012 McGuffey Award recipient from Region 1. First published in 1836, the "McGuffey Readers" rode the wave of western expansion. After the Civil War, they were standard schoolbooks in 37 states. The "McGuffey Readers" were a series of seven books with stories and poems that not only taught kids reading and grammar, but also helped them develop good qualities. They were some of the most widely used and influential textbooks of their time in transferring not only knowledge, but also certain virtues required to fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship in a free society. Named after these historically significant books, the CASB McGuffey Award is designed to honor that unique board member who brings to his/her board work both the head and the heart of committed and passionate service.

Nominated by their peers, the McGuffey Award applicants are selected from four regions throughout the state of Colorado. Idalia School District RJ-3 announced Mrs. Helling as the recipient of the award in Region 1. Mrs. Helling has been a board member for Idalia School District RJ-3 for five years. During her tenure she has dedicated untold additional hours to the pursuit of her duties as a school board member. Her unselfish efforts have been instrumental in major improvements for the district. In December of 2010, Idalia RJ-3 decided to pursue a "BEST" grant to renovate/rebuild the pre-kindergarten through grade 12 school. Nancy devoted countless hours to first the development of the district's master plan and then to the subsequent bond election once the grant was received. The bond

election was successful with 83 percent of the district's citizens voting to approve the bond. Following the election Nancy was once again an advocate for her constituents as interviews were conducted and a building team was hired. Mrs. Helling continues to put forth considerable effort to ensure the success of the Idalia building project while simultaneously devoting time to her regular board activities, researching possible grant opportunities and to helping the district maintain its educational programs at the highest levels. She is tireless in her pursuit of excellence, organized and efficient in her role as a board member, said Idalia School superintendent, Tim Krause, and is devoted to her school and its students. Mrs. Helling is a genuine asset to her community and to the students and school she serves.

Idalia News

Merry Christmas to the Idalia community! Everyone is reminded to get Idalia news information for the next two weeks to Chuck Wright by Dec. 21 and Dec. 28 for future editions.

St. John news
 Sunday, Dec. 23, 10:30 a.m. - Worship theme: "Putting Christ In Christmas," Philippians 2:1-11. Holy Communion will be celebrated.
 Monday, Dec. 24, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. - Christmas Eve programs will include Christmas

carols, candle lighting, and a retelling of, "The Night Before Christmas." Traditional Christmas candy bags will be given out at both programs. Everyone is invited to attend.

Sunday, Dec. 30, 10:30 a.m. - "5th Sunday" worship service. This informal family worship service will be held in the Fellowship Hall and include worship activities that focus New Year's resolutions.

Idalia School news
 Thursday, Jan. 3 - School resumes.
 Congratulations to Idalia School

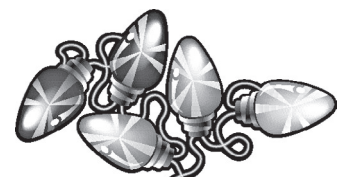
By **Chuck Wright**

Board member, Nancy Helling, on receiving a 2012 McGuffey Award from the Colorado Association of School Boards. The CASB McGuffey Award is designed to honor that unique board member who brings to his/her board work both the head and the heart of committed and passionate service. Nominated by their peers, the McGuffey Award applicants are selected from 4 regions throughout the state of Colorado.

Many homes decorated for Christmas lighting contest

St. Francis and rural St. Francis shone brightly this Christmas season. Many homes were decorated with lights and other Christmas décor. Some had only a few strings of lights, or candy canes, or wreaths, while others had many lights, trees, large balloon figures of Santas and snowmen. Rodney Neitzel, owner of Uptown Market, decided to take over the Christmas Lighting Contest since there was no longer

a Chamber of Commerce to sponsor it. He offered two \$50 gift certificates for the houses deemed the brightest by a team of three judges. However, the judges (who asked to remain unnamed) couldn't make up their minds. So, the St. Francis Equity put up two more \$50 gift certificates. The winners this year are Don and Jennifer Krien, north of St. Francis on Road 15; Joe and Jan



Fortin, South Benton Street; Ian and Michele DeWaal, Ash Street; and William and Nicole Wilburn, East First Street. The photos of the winners will be pictured in next week's St. Francis Herald.

Veterans suffer from disorder

Of the 1.7 million veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, 300,000 or 20 percent suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or major depression. They called it "shell shock" in World War I. In World War II, it was called "combat neurosis." Now they call it post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD for short. What exactly are they talking about, anyway? The "big book" of psychiatric disorders (called the DSM-IV-TR), that mental health professionals use to diagnose patients, breaks down post-traumatic stress disorders into six major criteria, said Keary Carman, who is planning to establish a 555 Collective headquarters in St. Francis. Let's lay these out in plain English:

- 1) You have to have witnessed something horrible and traumatic, such as someone dying, or have been involved in a situation in which your life was threatened.
- 2) You have a hard time shaking memories of the event. You have nightmares about it, flashbacks when you're awake.
- 3) You spend time and energy trying to avoid these memories. You withdraw from the world around you.
- 4) You're constantly on-edge, nervous, overwhelmed by a feeling that something bad is about to happen.
- 5) All of this goes on for more than one month (these things can go on for a lifetime).
- 6) These issues lead to problems at home, in the workplace, legal problems - basically, these symptoms can get so bad that they ruin your entire life.

the things they saw and heard, about the memories that will most likely haunt them forever. The symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder are a natural reaction to witnessing tragedies. The sounds, sights, and smells stick to our brain forever. We do whatever we can to avoid these thoughts, to no avail. So, we enter a cycle of depression and rage that affects everyone and everything around us. Life no longer makes any sense to us, and sometimes we even decide to end it. The suicide rate of veterans today is at an alarming high. Just about one veteran kills him or herself each day. In June 2012, the *New York Times* reported that more veterans had killed themselves in 2012 than had died in combat (154 vs. 124). By September 2012, the number of veteran suicides had risen to 211, and is assuredly much higher today. Life is stressful enough for anyone, let alone people struggling with memories of traumatic events. Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are suffering from the worst kind of PTSD, the type that results from repeated exposure to trauma. Due to the multiple tours of duty

they have had to serve during these recent conflicts, the sights and sounds of war have been ingrained within their psyche. To expect these men and women to return to civilian life without a hitch is expecting too much from our soldiers. One of the most problematic issues of post-traumatic stress disorder relates to that fact that the sufferer feels like no one else understands his pain. Life goes on as normal all around him, while his mind spins downward into the destructive cycle of trauma. Perhaps the first step that society can take in helping these men is simply letting them know that we see their pain - that we recognize they are suffering, and we want to help them. St. Francis just might be the perfect place to start such a trend. *Editor's note: Mr. Carman is the director of the 555 Collective, an organization that uses the arts in support of survivors of trauma. He has recently relocated to St. Francis (his family has been here for several generations), and is working towards the goal of establishing a headquarters for his organization in Cheyenne County.*

Obituary

Bradford Clay Branson
 July 10, 1963 - Dec. 13, 2012

Bradford Clay Branson died in the early morning hours on Thursday, Dec. 13. He was 49 years old and succumbed to lung cancer. He is survived by his mother and father, Betty and James Branson and one sister Jan Lane, and many dear friends. He moved to St. Francis about

a year ago and was employed at Majestic Service. He made a home here and often remarked that it reminded him of Oklahoma where he spent his summers. Brad was cremated and a memorial service is planned for sometime in January in St. Francis.

***** NOTICE *****


THE FIRST HALF OF TAXES ARE DUE DEC. 21ST WITHOUT PENALTY.

Please be sure to bring your bar code slip(s) to pay your taxes. Or pay online by e-check or credit card at kansas.gov/propertytax

Cheyenne County Treasurer, Delores Jenik

The Saint Francis Herald and Bird City Times

Will be CLOSED Mon., Dec. 24 and Tues. Dec. 25



Ad and Copy Deadline is Wed., Dec. 26 at 5 p.m.

The papers will be delivered on Dec. 28.

The staff at the St. Francis Herald and Bird City Times wishes everyone a Merry Christmas!



"At the end of the day, it's nice to come home and hang out with my family in front of the fireplace."

- Kelly told us

It's the season to get comfy. Keep the family cozy with clean-burning, efficient natural gas. Gourmets prefer a gas flame for cooking, and it's a safe, reliable way to heat water for kitchen and bath.

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