

December 2017 Weather Statistics

Average High **46.5°** (+8.2°)
 100-year return frequency value max **50.5°** min **32.6°**
 Average Low **17.0°** (+4.7°)
 100-year return frequency value max **22.4°** min **5.4°**
 Monthly Precipitation **0.17"**
 (-0.84", 84% below normal)
 100-year return frequency value max **2.82"** min **0.00"**

Monthly Snowfall **2.8"**
 (-14.9", 84% below normal)
 Highest Temperature **62° on the 30th**
 Lowest Temperature **3° on the 24th**
 Season to Date Snow **10.6"**
 (-29.3", 73% below normal)
 (the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
 Season to Date Precip. **3.06"**

(-2.17", 41% below normal)
 (the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
 Heating Degree Days **1031** (-196)
 Cooling Degree Days **0** (0)
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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.

No tolls on I-25

For decades, Colorado roads have been neglected despite the 2005 approval of Colorado-wide Referendum C, "The Colorado Economic Recovery Act," providing \$18.8 billion for education, healthcare, and roads, and 2017 SB-17-267, "Sustainability of Rural Colorado," also funding education, rural healthcare, and roads to the tune of \$1.9 billion. Only \$49 million (Ref C) and \$450 million (SB-17-267 pending) was spent on roads.

El Paso County voters passed \$7.5 million in Referendum 1A, and Colorado Springs-area voters approved \$10 million in Referendum 5B. So why are we hearing about yet another Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) request for money in the form of tolls?

Priorities. It is that simple. Yet funding and building roads are a core government function.

Fixing the Gap, which connects the two largest cities in Colorado, was a 2014 campaign promise by Gov. John Hickenlooper. Out of the \$32 billion state budget, Hickenlooper has not requested one General Fund dollar be allocated to improve Colorado roads.

Significant traffic delays or incidents occur every day along this corridor. Improving the Gap should be a top economic, quality of life, and safety priority.

CDOT should not be able to hold the people of Southern Colorado hostage, demanding the long overdue expansion of the Gap consist of a toll lane. The point they seem to miss: The addition of a third general use lane, not a toll lane, will make all the difference to ensure trip reliability, reduce congestion, and improve safety.

Citizen engagement, such as the Facebook group "Fix I-25 Now!" has ensured transportation issues are

being addressed. Progress has been made with the acceleration of the two studies necessary for work to start. In October, the Colorado Highway Transportation Commission, which oversees CDOT priorities, approved \$250 million to be used toward the Gap, pending approval of a federal INFRA grant.

We must not let up!

Ann Howe

Is our military big enough?

First, I am a war veteran, having served honorably as a combat medic in Vietnam. My wife and I fly an American flag outside our home 24/7/365. I consider myself a patriot and am proud to have served my country.

However, I do have a question about how much money our government is spending in the military budget. President Trump just signed a bill to increase the military budget to \$825 billion. That's over 50 percent of our federal discretionary budget and our second-highest expenditure over all (Social Security is No. 1 at a little over \$1 trillion).

First, that is three times more than the No. 2 country, China, (last I heard, not a military adversary) and larger than the next eight largest world militaries combined. Russia is a low third at \$87 billion—just 10 percent of the U.S. And, in 2006, Congress added a military line item for OCO (a discretionary fund with no oversight). It started at \$300 million and is now \$19 billion.

In today's type of wars, where we use jets and drones to wipe out the enemy (along with uniquely trained personnel like Special Forces and Team 6), what type of weapons do we really need? Do we need battle tanks? We have 8,800. Russia has just 820. When the U.S. Air Force can deploy men/women, equipment, and support in hours, why do we even need a Navy (sorry Navy). In times of crises, it takes weeks to send the same personnel and equipment to the required area by sea. And what does an aircraft carrier cost? Currently \$4.6 billion. Just for one.

What if we were just twice as big as the next largest military? That would save \$270 billion—\$2.7 trillion over 10 years. That's a lot of tax dollars.

Kent Jarnig

Thank you for opening your hearts on Christmas Day

This is a letter of thanks to the whole family of La Rosa restaurant in Palmer Lake, especially Marina La Riva, the owner.

For many people, the Christmas holidays are a religious or spiritual time, and a time to be with family and loved ones, filled with high hopes and cheerful times or hoping for cheerful times. But for some, it can be a very difficult time for many reasons and they may be alone or unable to join their loved ones. Marina La Riva and her family—and employees and volunteers—opened their hearts and opened the restaurant on Christmas Day to help people in our Tri-Lakes community celebrate the holiday with kindness and a delicious, traditional Christmas Day meal for free.

Nope, it was not for people who just didn't want to cook for the day, it was specially created for those who did not have loved ones to be with and some who also needed a ride to be able to attend. This and more were lovingly provided. Volunteers served food, washed dishes, offered transportation and cheerful smiles for the afternoon. I was there and met people from our community who were truly thankful and happy to have such a lovely day and be with others in fellowship for the afternoon.

I think some of the other local restaurants also donated food, as did many locals themselves donate or volunteer for the event. So, I'd like to take this time to thank each and every one of you who helped make a happy memory for many of our community who truly appreciate your kindness for a special day that will be long remembered.

Janet Sellers

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Start off the new year right

By the staff at Covered Treasures

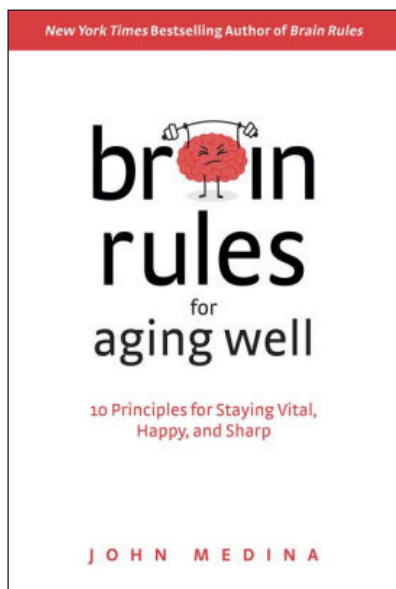
"I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're doing something."—Neil Gaiman

Here are some great books to start the year:

Brain Rules for Aging Well: 10 Principles for Staying Vital, Happy, and Sharp

By John Medina (Pear Press) \$27.99

Developmental molecular biologist Dr. John Medina gives you the facts and the prescription to age well. He has two previous best-sellers. In *Brain Rules*, Medina showed us how our brains really work, and why we ought to redesign our workplaces and schools to match. In *Brain Rules for Baby*, he gave parents the brain science they need to know to raise happy, smart, moral kids. Now, in *Brain Rules for Aging Well*,



Medina shares how you can make the most of the years you have left. It is organized into four sections, each laying out familiar problems with surprising solutions.

The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World

By Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams (Avery) \$26

Nobel Peace Prize Laureates His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have survived more than 50 years of exile and the soul-crushing violence of oppression. Despite their hardships—or, as they would say, because of them—they are two of the most joyful people on the planet. In 2015, they spent a week together. This book offers us a rare opportunity to experience their unprecedented week together, from the first embrace to the final goodbye. We get to listen as they explore the Nature of True Joy and confront each of the Obstacles of Joy—from fear, stress, and anger to grief, illness, and death. They then offer us the Eight Pillars of Joy, which provide the foundation for lasting happiness. Finally, they share their daily Joy Practices that anchor their own emotional and spiritual lives.

Everything You Need You Have: How to Be at Home in Your Self

By Gerald Kite (Harmony Books) \$17

Kite reveals 10 steps to finding a secret, peaceful, and permanent place inside yourself that you can access at all times. You'll see that you already have what you need to be happy and well.

Goddesses Never Age: The Secret Prescription for Radiance, Vitality, and Well-Being

By Christiane Northrup, M.D. (Hay House) \$16.99

Blending personal stories and practical exercises with the latest research on health and aging, Dr. Northrup lays out the principles, tools, and inspiration of ageless living. Explaining that the state of our health is dictated far more by our beliefs than by our biology, she brings it all together in a 14-day Ageless Goddess Program.

The Youth Equation: Take 10 Years Off Your Face

By Jeffrey Dover, M.D., Cara Birnbaum (Wiley) \$24.95
 Renowned dermatologist Jeffrey Dover shares his secrets, offering options to suit a range of skin types and budgets. He walks readers through how to create a customized do-at-home plan anyone at any age can follow simply by picking up a few products at the local drugstore.

The RBG Workout: How She Stays Strong and You Can Too!

By Bryant Johnson (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), \$14.99

One of America's most admired women is octogenarian Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She stays healthy in part due to workouts with her personal trainer, Bryant Johnson, whom she's called "the most important person" in her life. This simple but challenging workout will have you getting fit in no time. It also contains tips from the bench and sidelines with Bryant's folksy wisdom on getting fit and staying healthy.

The Miracle Morning: The Not-So-Obvious Secret Guaranteed to Transform Your Life (Before 8 AM)

By Hal Elrod (Hal Elrod) \$19.95

Elrod shows how to wake up each day with more energy, motivation, and focus to take your life to the next level. It's time to wake up to your full potential.