

rative nonfiction of the highest order.

Survival Lessons

By Alice Hoffman (Algonquin Books) \$13.95

In a wise, gentle and wry road map, Hoffman gives directions on how to reclaim your life, with ways to envision everything—from relationships with friends and family to the way you see yourself—and how to find beauty in the world even during your toughest times. Hoffman reminds us that our lives are made up of equal parts of sorrow and joy, and that it is impossible to have one without the other. This insightful little book will fit into some Christmas stockings.

Pocket Pals Trail Guides

By John Vasilakis, \$6.95 each

When Vasilakis, an avid hiker, first moved to Colorado Springs, he was excited about all the national forest trails to explore. He soon found, however, that the trails weren't

well-marked, and he felt the scale was too large on most available maps. With a background in geographic information systems and computer mapping, Vasilakis began making his own hiking maps with the help of a GPS device. The results of his efforts are a series of pocket-size, waterproof, tear-resistant maps of 14 Pikes Peak region trails, plus maps for five fourteeners. Hikers will be thrilled to find these handy little maps in their stockings.

Stitches

By Anne Lamott (Riverhead Books) \$17.95

When life lurches out of balance, we collect the ripped shreds of our emotional and spiritual fabric and sew them back together, one stitch at a time. Lamott explores how we find meaning and peace in these loud and frantic times—where we start again after personal and public devastation, how we recapture wholeness after loss, and how we locate our true identities in this frazzled age. Us-

ing her witty humor and faith in God, Lamott helps us understand how to cope with loss, as well as with love and laughter.

How to Tie a Scarf: 33 Styles

By Potter Style (Random House) \$12.95

From designer silk squares to chunky homemade knits, this guide is filled with inspired ways to style your scarves. It includes step-by-step instructions for square, oblong, and embellished scarves and styles for summer, fall, winter, and spring. Add a scarf to this attractive little book, and you have a perfect gift.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a holiday season filled with love, laughter, family and friends. Until next year, happy reading.

The staff at Covered Treasures can be contacted at books@ocn.me.

Bird Watch on the Palmer Divide by Elizabeth Hacker is taking a hiatus this month.

Art Matters

Artists: resilient, resourceful and ... rich



By Janet Sellers

Optimism is alive and well in the art world, and last month was an indicator of robust art buying enthusiasm. Prestigious Post War and Contemporary art had the best auction total in recorded history just in November. The result was \$691 million in sales at the famed Christie's auction house in New York.

The Contemporary art sector has held its place in the world art market since the Contemporary movements of Post War Art and Pop Art appeared, and Contemporary artist Jeff Koons is now the highest paid living artist, since his *Balloon Dog (Orange)* fetched \$52 million at the auction.

I have found making balloon animals to be a fun, novel medium for sculpture that anyone can enjoy. Artfully, these forms are pleasing, pure abstracts of real things and animals that must be created with enough imagination to represent their essence. Koons' balloon animals are made using purchased toys as maquette, then fabricated into gargantuan size in stainless steel. While some critics laud his insights to common culture, others rail against the works as "kitschy" and self-merchandising.

Koons established himself as an artist in the 1980s in New York while working at the Museum of Modern Art. He also became licensed broker in the commodities market for a number of years at the prestigious Smith Barney and others. As an artist, I find that his commodities career move was rather brilliant, seeing as how art is the last high end (yet completely unregulated) commodity that exists—and he likely made many contacts at that job in the high-end financial arena that could facilitate the sales of his works of art at that level.

The artist has said, "I think art takes you outside

yourself, takes you past yourself And if the anxiety is removed everything is so close, everything is available, and it's just this little bit of confidence, or trust, that people have to delve into."

His paintings are done in a "color by number" process so that the result appears to be made by a single hand, but in reality he has over 100 artisans at work in his factory. In sculpture, he designs multiples of high-end products that sell for millions of dollars each. In any case, Koons can smile all the way to the bank. Becoming the artist with the highest price tag for his sculpture is an art form, or at least a magical feat, in itself. While not our usual concept of art as a personal statement, that is pretty rich.

December events for art around town

Bella Art and Frame Gallery and Wisdom Tea House continue co-hosting of a Contemporary art photo exhibit with the works of 45 photographers on view. The works range from ethereal imagery complete with fog and mysterious atmospheres to very graphic, impressionistic images. All of the works are on the subject of *A Tree*, which is the title of the show. The show runs through December. Bella Art and Frame, 183 Washington St., and Wisdom Tea House, 65 Second St., are across Second Street from each other in Monument.

Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TCLA) opened its Contemporary art show *Who Done It* on Dec. 6. Artists created exhibition pieces on 12-by-12-inch canvases. The sale also was open to the mediums of glass, wood, and others. Artists did not sign the front of their works to keep an air of intrigue for the show. Signatures and contact information are on back of each piece, but viewers will not know who created the work until after it is purchased. Each piece sells for \$250. Show runs through December.

TCLA is at 304 Highway 105 in Palmer Lake.

Our local art venues and galleries will participate in the annual shopping events for the annual Small Town Christmas Saturdays on Dec. 7 and 14. Mr. and Mrs. Claus and perhaps some elves and more will greet you and your loved ones. We may even see the Cinderella Carriage again, so keep an eye out.

These events are truly the efforts of the artful imagination of a small town at holiday time, so be sure to join the local merchants and celebrate the season in a fun way as well as buy gifts. And it is so enjoyable to go walking in our town, taking in its festive air as we greet others and make lifelong memories of this special season. Let's bundle up because it's winter, and make some fun and warm memories for life.

Janet Lee Sellers is an American artist, teacher and writer. She makes public art sculptures in concrete, and paintings in oils and watercolors. Sellers lives in Woodmoor, and looks for sightings of wildlife while being protected by her tame pets on the back deck. So far they sound the alarm to ... mostly other pets. She can be reached at janetsellers@ocn.me.

Snapshots of Our Community

VFW recognizes Baroni and Shindel



Above (Left): Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829 of Monument awarded Colton Baroni the post's award for achieving first place in the local Patriot's Pen Contest for his essay on patriotism. With Baroni are Post 7829 officers, from left, Joe Martin and Jerry Lollar, and their wives on the right, Patty Lollar and Diane Martin. **(Right):** The post's Teacher of the Year award was given to Prairie Winds Elementary School fifth-grade teacher Gwen Shindel, shown being congratulated by her school Principal Aileen Finnegan and Lewis-Palmer Middle School Principal Seann O'Connor. The post annually recognizes the area's top classroom teacher who teaches citizenship education topics at least half of the school day and promotes America's history, traditions, and institutions effectively. Shindel distinguished herself in this role in 2013. *Photos by Bernard Minetti.*



Saturday Signings in December

Dec. 7, Small Town Christmas

10 a.m.-noon—**Barb Ziek** will sign her newest book in the *Zadie* series, *Zadie and Plain Vanilla, the Rainbow Alpaca, Saves Christmas*. Weather permitting, some of her alpacas will be available for viewing in the store's back parking lot. 11 a.m.-1 p.m.—**Kris Abel-Helwig** will read from and sign her several books, including the *I Love You...* series and the new *Wifful Wafful Duffle Duffle Sniffle Snaffle, Snorful, Dorful Waffle*.

1-3 p.m.—**Alan Roettinger** will sign and discuss his latest cookbook, *Extraordinary Vegan*. ...and...between 1 and 2:30 pm...**Buck Pyle** will be dropping by to deliver his brand new CD, *The Cowboy Christmas Dream Tour*. He promises to bring his guitar and sing a few selections for us!

Dec 14, Holiday Open House

10 a.m.-noon—**Allison Flannery** will be signing her new children's book (with CD), *In the Hall of the Mountain King*. 1-3 p.m.—**Julie Raber**, co-owner and founder of *Pocket Pals Trail Maps* will be here to talk about her mapping process. **Susan Davies**, director of the Trails and Open Space Coalition, will be joining Julie to discuss trail damage from this past summer's events. **Todd Caudle**, one of our favorite Colorado outdoor photographers, will be here to sign his numerous beautiful books and calendars.

(719) 481-2665 (BOOK)

Dec. hours: Mon.-Sat. 9-5, Sun. 11-3



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