

attend. Monument Academy also has a total of 29 waivers from state law. Both systems work—but only because the public schools in D38 provide an excellent education for those who are unable to attend the charter school.

D38 has a 95 percent graduation rate, with a drop-out rate of only 2.5 percent. Palmer Ridge High School and Lewis-Palmer High School placed 21st and 22nd in the state by U.S. News and World Report. Both high schools boast championship athletic teams. Palmer Lake Elementary was named a Title 1 Distinguished School by the Colorado Department of Education. Our schools excel due to the dedication of the teachers and the leadership of the administration.

Please keep our school district one of the best in the state. Research the accomplishments of our schools, and make time to vote. With the growth in our community, we all need to do our part.

Karen Heater

Understanding the D38 numbers

Ever wonder why school district officials complicate the topic of public school funding? I have. As a 26-year financial expert, small-business owner, and Monument Academy finance committee volunteer, I've learned the public welcomes simplicity.

District 38 has some information under the "knowables" tab on its website that references the Negative Factor and Colorado School funding and how Colorado compares with the nation. This is great knowledge to have, but both have no real effect on D38. They describe the "have not's" of school funding. My goal: Focus on what we do have, by trying to understand the dollars coming in and how this affects our budgets at home, and our children attending district schools.

In 1994, Colorado established a standard formula to fund all public schools (including charter schools). This formula applies to all 178 school districts. It's not rocket science, or Common Core math. For this school year, D38 will receive \$7,225.25 per enrolled student. The state refers to this as PPR (per pupil revenue) funding. Each school district's funding may be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance>.

Let's consider last year's enrollment of 6,324 students multiplied by \$7,225.25 per student (the state refers to students as FTEs, meaning full-time equivalent), which will generate about \$45,692,481. The "about" statement is because half-day kindergarten students are not full-time FTEs.

The district also receives supplemental funding from district property owners such as the \$4 million annually from the 1999 mill levy override, in perpetuity. Thank you, taxpayers!

I appreciate district officials educating me on the big picture, but understanding the finer details is a desired "knowable" for me. I make it a point to understand the numbers, which enables me to be an effective community servant.

Sonya D. Camarco

D38 public schools prepare students well for advanced education

My family specifically chose the D38 public school sys-

tem for its exceptional ability to prepare students for admission to the top universities in the nation. We can say with certainty that D38 has not disappointed us. After speaking with professors and admissions officers at Stanford, MIT, and Yale, we found D38 has an outstanding reputation of rigorous preparation for advanced studies. D38 schools also provide all of the opportunities necessary for students to stand out against the stiff competition for admission at these prestigious institutions. Most importantly, we have witnessed many D38 children being admitted to these top-tier schools.

That said, we are concerned about a movement in our community with a mission to change the way our public schools operate. There are suggestions of adding creationism to the curriculum, reducing salaries of administrators, and building charter schools that take away funding from our exceptional public schools. These ideals, while they may be the wish of certain parents, are clearly not in the best interest of our children when it comes to the reputation of D38 among the top universities. Citizens should be concerned about preparing children for the demands of universities and future job markets, not with personal beliefs of curriculum, or poorly-informed notions as to how a school district should be run soundly.

In the upcoming school board election, vote for someone who will ensure that D38 will continue to prepare students for the universities and job markets, not for someone who may care about kids but who is putting personal agendas ahead of the demands of universities and employers. The system that is in place is working, as clearly evidenced by the high number of D38 public-school students admitted to top universities. Let's think twice before messing up that system for future generations of D38 children.

Wendy Ladau

Speak up about nuclear danger

Those who keep abreast of national and international news might reasonably be excused for their exhaustion from all the cruel and depressing events that we hear or see on a daily basis. Still, whether corruption, abuse, savagery, or anything else in the same or similar categories are the cause, nothing could surpass the outbreak of a nuclear war. Obviously, I'm referring to North Korea and what our country—as well as other sane nations—should or should not do to address the nuclear weapon's capability of that rogue regime.

For those of us old enough to remember, 13 days in October 1962 were likely the most terrifying time of our lives; the world teetered on the brink of a nuclear holocaust. As then Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara said, "... I thought I might never live to see another Saturday night." Had it not been for the cool and measured response of President John Kennedy, in which he ignored the advice of most of his advisors and generals, we would have invaded Cuba—a nation that harbored Russian intermediate and short-range nuclear weapons whose Russian military commanders had been authorized to use. Additionally, some number of Russian submarines were in the vicinity, at least three of them armed

with a nuclear torpedo.

Why this letter? Currently, there exists a sufficient number of nuclear weapons worldwide to destroy all life on earth many times over. We average citizens must speak up and ensure that those we elected to Congress and (especially) the presidency understand that our nation's use of nuclear weapons can only be justified in retaliation for a nuclear strike on our homeland. Remaining silent is an option, but certainly an unwise one.

Ross Meyer

Protest dense new subdivisions in Woodmoor

I'd like to make an appeal to citizens of Woodmoor to get involved in protesting all the new dense subdivisions being proposed for our neighborhoods. See this website: <https://www.woodmoor.org/woodmoor-developments/>

If you make your voice heard, there's a chance that some of the density, noise, unsightliness, and safety issues of these projects could be reduced for the benefit of existing homeowners.

Many arguments should be raised with the El Paso County Planning Commission and County Commissioners before these projects get rubber-stamped. Below are two.

1. Why allow all these new densely-populated communities to be built within Woodmoor boundaries when this entire area is already facing water shortages and aquifer depletion in the near future? Where is the foresight in allowing new unsuspecting families to build homes in an area where their water rates may become exorbitant as new water sources become scarce and expensive to procure?
2. Safety and welfare will be compromised in many ways. The heavy construction machinery that will occupy The Beach at Woodmoor corner, possibly for years until project completion, poses hazards to drivers, walkers, schoolchildren, joggers, and cyclists accustomed to the safety and tranquility of the rural-like roads and open space in that area.

A single private developer should not be allowed to bring upheaval to an established community and leave a negative aesthetic imprint on it for years to come without making some concessions to the current residents.

For those who are concerned: Review the El Paso County Planning Commission's Land Development Code at <http://adm.elpasoco.com/Development%20Services/Pages/LandDevelopmentCode2016.aspx>

Review the applicant's Letter of Intent (e.g., The Beach at Woodmoor) at <https://epcdevplanreview.com/Public/ProjectDetails/100101>

Make your arguments as to how the proposed development does not meet the criteria set forth in the Code, (e.g., For PUDs - 4.2.6 (D), "will be in harmony and responsive with the character of the surrounding area...").

Think about what happens if there is an economic downturn and all these projects stall out, leaving their incomplete shells throughout the Woodmoor area, too late to restore it back to its original beauty.

Sandra Yates

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

The Great Outdoors

By the staff at Covered Treasures
August is a great time to get outside and enjoy this wonderful state. Here are a few books about the great outdoors to delve into.

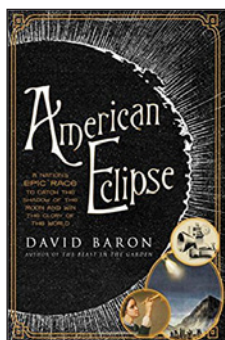
"Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better."—Albert Einstein

"Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own."—Charles Dickens

American Eclipse

By David Baron (Liveright Publishing Corp.) \$27.95

In 1878, the rare event of a total solar eclipse offered a priceless opportunity to solve some of the solar system's enduring riddles, and it prompted a clutch of enterprising scientists to brave the wild frontier in a grueling race to the Rocky Mountains. In vibrant historical detail, acclaimed science journalist David Baron re-creates this epic tale that reveals as much about the historical trajectory of a striving young nation as it does about the solar eclipse.



Sun Moon Earth: The History of Solar Eclipses from Omens of Doom to Einstein and Exoplanets

By Tyler Nordgren (Basic Books) \$26.99

Aug. 21, 2017 will mark the first total eclipse of the sun in

America in almost 40 years. Astronomer Tyler Nordgren illustrates how this phenomenon was transformed from a fearsome omen to a tourist attraction. Sun Moon Earth takes us around the world to show how different cultures interpreted these dramatic events. Greek philosophers discovered eclipses' cause and used them to measure their world and the cosmos beyond. Victorian-era scientists mounted eclipse expeditions. And modern-day physicists continue to use eclipses to confirm Einstein's theory of relativity.

The Push: A Climber's Journey of Endurance, Risk, and Going Beyond Limits

By Tommy Caldwell (Viking) \$27

On Jan. 14, 2015, Tommy Caldwell, and his partner, Kevin Jorgeson, summited what is widely regarded as the hardest climb in history—Yosemite's nearly vertical 3,000-foot Dawn Wall. Caldwell's odds-defying feat was the culmination of an entire lifetime of pushing himself to his limits as an athlete. This engrossing memoir is an arresting story of focus, drive, motivation, endurance, and transformation, a book that will appeal to anyone seeking to overcome fear and doubt, cultivate perseverance, turn failure into growth, and find connection with family and with the natural world.

Found: A Life in Mountain Rescue

By Bree Loewen (Mountaineers Books) \$17.95

Bree Loewen has become a wife, a mother, and a leader

of Seattle Mountain Rescue (SMR), a volunteer-based search-and-rescue operation. SMR is involved in incidents including high-profile accidents and rescues that never even make the local news. And since the climbing and outdoor community in Seattle is so close-knit, Loewen often finds herself involved in efforts to rescue friends and acquaintances. Loewen conveys the intensity of rescue and recovery situations as well as the beauty of wilderness landscapes.

How to Die in the Outdoors: 150 Wild Ways to Perish

By Buck Tilton (Falcon) \$16.95

Simply by living a normal life, you have an excellent chance of becoming yet another statistic on the list of leading causes of death. But Buck Tilton prefers to ponder the alternatives as he presents 150 more interesting and unique ways to perish, from snake bite, elephant foot, rhino horn, and more. With witty prose, Tilton describes not only the details of how you can die, but also ways to avoid death should a life-threatening situation arise before you're ready to leave this world.

Wolf Nation: The Life, Death, and Return of Wild American Wolves

By Brenda Peterson (Da Capo Press) \$27

Brenda Peterson tells the history of wild wolves in America. The earliest Americans revered them. Settlers zealously exterminated them. Now, scientists, writers, and ordinary citizens are fighting to bring them back to the