

Hazel Miller at TLCA, Dec. 1



Above: On Dec. 1, the Hazel Miller Band returned to the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts with an uplifting and inspiring Christmas-oriented show. Miller said, “We came to celebrate” and celebrate they did with a variety of Gospel and Christmas songs. They performed Gospel songs such as He’s an Awesome God, I Cried and I Cried Until I Found the Lord, and Are You Ready for a Miracle? The Christmas-oriented songs included Stevie Wonders That’s What Christmas Means to Me and from the Peanuts Christmas Special Christmas Time is Here and the instrumental Linus and Lucy. Regarding the band’s song selection, Miller said “my heart is dancing and my outside needs to match my inside.” With unparalleled vocals from Miller and her accompanists along with tight instrumentation from the band, audience members could not help but dance inside and out as well. *Photo by David Futey*

Monument Small Town Christmas



The shops in downtown Monument were decked out in holiday décor for the annual Small Town Christmas held Saturday, Dec. 2. A nativity scene on Beacon Light Road greeted passersby as they headed downtown. Lots of customers snapped photos of the holiday adornments before ducking into festive stores. Merchants said the crowds were large this year despite the mild, not-so-wintery feel to the weather. Many stores offered discounts and refreshments like hot cocoa for the kids and wine for the adults. Families were encouraged to shop with the little ones, who got some special attention with face paint-

ing and balloon animals. Santa posted himself and Mrs. Claus at a local restaurant for the day, while his reindeer frolicked in the town square. Even Santa’s alpacas were present, holding court at the toy store. And there were wood and ice carving demonstrations in the park ahead of the evening’s tree lighting. **Above Left:** This downsized train engine got a holiday makeover. *Photo by Allison Robenstein.* **Below:** Cupid the baby reindeer met many local children who enjoyed petting and talking to the 6-month-old reindeer calf. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*



North Pole Craft Fair draws 1,600



Above: Lewis-Palmer High School graduate Miguel Dakota entertained shoppers during the fair. Dakota, who now lives in Denver, appeared on *America’s Got Talent*. *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*

The 12th annual North Pole at Tri-Lakes Craft Fair, hosted by the Monument Hill Kiwanis, was held at the Grace Best Education Center on Dec. 2.

Project Manager Bob Nissen reported that there were 73 vendors from throughout the state selling items from clothing to food to handcrafted items of wood and other materials.

During the course of the fair, an estimated 1,600 shoppers passed through the halls, donating almost \$750, 580 pounds of food, and a bin of toys to benefit Tri-Lakes Cares.

Eight music and dance groups entertained the shoppers in addition to Miguel Dakota, who performed Christmas music and some original compositions.

The Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Cookie Walk was a success, selling over 8,000 cookies and raising \$2,600 for their charities, including Tri-Lakes Cares Neighborhood Nurse, Days for Girls, Palmer Divide Blanket Brigade, and the Crawford House Quilters.

Proceeds from the fair go to fund programs in the Lewis-Palmer D38 School District.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Monument Tree Lighting Ceremony

Right: Downtown Monument’s annual Tree Lighting Ceremony was held Saturday Dec. 2 in Limbaugh Park. The afternoon included holiday performances by local groups in the bandshell. A local food truck provided refreshments, and Monument Police and Tri-Lakes Fire were there to ring in the holidays, too. Kids climbed into the fire trucks, ran through the nearby playground, and waited in line to talk with Santa and Mrs. Claus. There was a festive feeling in the air as the holiday season approached. The cheerful mood was contagious as a group of singers prepared to entertain the audience just before the lighting. Some who haven’t attended previous ceremonies might think it would be a single tree lighting, but they’d be mistaken. Almost every tree in the park gets lit!



A food drive was held benefitting Tri-Lakes Cares, a community-based, volunteer supported resource center. For more information, call 719-481-4864 or see trilakescares.org. *Photo by Allison Robenstein*

Right: Tri-Lakes Leos charter member Kendal VanDenHoek helped hand out free stuffed animals at the Monument Tree Lighting Ceremony on Dec. 2. The Leos partnered with the Monument Branch Library to collect stuffed animals donated by the public and planned to share extras with Santa on Patrol. The Leos, a community-based service club for students ages 12-18, is supported by the El Paso County Tri-Lakes Lions Club and raises money for people having vision trouble, including those who need glasses or seeing-eye dogs. For more information, call or text Carol Reece, Tri-Lakes Leo Club advisor, (678) 836-3895, tlleoclub@gmail.com. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

