

Last-Minute Gifts. Come to the library on Wednesday, **Dec. 19**, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. and learn to make fleece hand warmers, bath bombs, and ornaments. Open to ages 12 to 18, registration required.

The *Paper Tiger Origami Club* will meet on Friday, **Dec. 21**, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Registration is encouraged but not required. Open to all ages and skill levels.

Adult programs

The *Socrates Café* discussion group meets on **Tuesdays** from 1 to 3 p.m., *Senior Chats* meets on **Wednesdays** from 10 a.m. to noon. See below for information on the two book clubs.

Please see above for descriptions of *Coloring for Everyone* and *All-Ages Knitting*.

Beginning Thursday, **Dec. 6** from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and each **Thursday** thereafter, there will be a beginning yoga class at the library. All are welcome and no registration is required.

On **Dec. 6** from 2 to 4 p.m. we will offer a class on embossing cards and envelopes. We will use stamps, embossing powder, and a heat gun to make our own metallic designs. Registration is required.

Join us on Dec. 13 for our *Second Thursday Craft, Fleece Ornaments*. We will be making ornaments in the shape of animals, leaves, flowers, and more. Registration is required and opens two weeks before craft day.

The *Monumental Bookworms* will meet on **Dec. 11** from 7 to 8:30 p.m. to discuss *Beartown* by Fredrik Backman.

The *Life Circles Writing Group* meets from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. on **Dec. 3 and 17**. This is a supportive group that provides discipline and inspiration to accomplish your writing goals.

The *Monumental Readers* book club will meet from a.m. 10 to noon on Friday, **Dec. 21**, to discuss *The Little Old Lady Who Broke All the Rules* by Catha-

rine Ingelman-Sunberg. All are welcome and no registration is required.

History Buffs will meet from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on **Dec. 26**. This year's discussion topic is *Origins of Modern Europe (500-1500)*.

Palmer Lake Library events

The *Palmer Lake Book Group* will meet at 9 a.m. on Friday, **Dec. 7**. New members are welcome. Please call 481-2587 for the current selection.

Story Times at the library are on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. *Toddler Time* is on **Fridays** at 10:30 a.m.

The *Third Saturday at Palmer Lake Library* is a paint party! All ages are welcome and the program begins at 10:30 a.m. on **Dec. 15**.

Please note that all Pikes Peak Library Facilities will be closed all day Dec. 24 and 25, and will close at 4 p.m. on Dec. 31 and remain closed on Jan. 1.

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Palmer Lake Historical Society, November 15

History series features Colorado's only WWI flying ace

By Sigi Walker

The Palmer Lake Historical Society's Third Thursday Monthly History Series program featured Dr. Charles D. Dusch Jr., Acting Command Historian of the U.S. Air Force Academy. His enthusiastically received presentation focused on the World War I career of Capt. Jerry Cox Vasconcells, a Denver resident and Colorado's only WWI flying ace. Highlighted were the flight training of that era, the evolving combat strategies, and the difficulties of coordinating missions with other nations. Dr. Dusch drew on materials in the academy's McDermott Library's Special Collections, which contain photographs, personal letters, news clippings, and other documents illustrating Vasconcells' WWI military aviation career. The three albums of materials primarily date from 1916 to 1919.

After completing training in July 1917 in Fort Riley, Kan., Vasconcells joined Canada's Royal Flying Corps, since the U.S. had not entered WWI at that time. He was later transferred to the American Forces, flying as part of the 27th Aero Squadron. Dusch told of the use of night scouting flights that accompanied troops in night attacks. Just before the end of the war, Vasconcells was made commander of the 185th Aero Squadron, the first night pursuit squadron in the American Expeditionary Forces.

Dr. Dusch said that many of the photographs



Above: The Nov. 15 presentation featured Charles D. Dusch, Ph.D., acting command historian. He teaches world, military, Civil War, and air power history at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Pictured from left, Dusch, Palmer Lake Historical Society President Tom Baker, and Jim Riggins, who spoke about the Palmer Lake Star. *Photo by Su Osgerby Ketchmark.*

used in his presentation had not been shown publicly before. They illustrated very well the story of WWI avi-

ation being told, from the tents that served as living quarters in Canada, to the aerial photos of potential targets of night attack against the entrenched German lines in France, to photos of their pet fox in France. Another feature, which was very helpful, was the use of maps to explain military plans being discussed.

Roger Davis, Director of the PLHS' Vaile Museum, announced that the museum would be open afterward so that attendees could view the special WWI Armistice Day Exhibit currently on display. It showcases a WWI "doughboy" uniform, artwork, postcards, posters, magazines, and circa 1918 photographs. The exhibit will be on display until the end of January 2019.

Mark your calendars for the Yule Log Celebration

While there is no monthly history series program in December, the community of Palmer Lake will be hosting the annual Yule Log Celebration at 1 p.m. Sunday, **Dec. 16**. This tradition began in 1934. The venue is the Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent Street. The event is free and open to all.

Contact Sigi Walker at mikensigi@comcast.net.

Bird Watch on the Palmer Divide

Black-capped Chickadee

By Elizabeth Hacker

With our recent cold weather, snow, and strong winds, do you ever wonder how little birds like the diminutive black-capped chickadee survive?

According to Dennis Paulson, writer for the on-line site birdnote.org, "For winter survival, chickadees have three things going for them: They're insulated, they're active, and they have a good memory."

"Thanks to a half-inch coat of insulating feathers, chickadees maintain their body temperature at 100 degrees Fahrenheit during daylight hours, even when the air is at zero degrees. At night, their temperature drops to 18 degrees, which reserves their store of fat. Also, chickadees gather food at a terrific rate. In autumn, they stash their winter sustenance all around their territory. Their good memories enable them to find this food when the days are short and cold. It's not surprising that the part of the brain associated with spatial memory is larger in chickadees than in many other birds."

Supplemental feeding

Did you know that more than 100 species of birds supplement their diet with birdseed, suet, fruit, and nectar? It isn't necessary to supplement a bird's diet but it does make a difference in their rate of survival, especially during the winter months. Many people enjoy watching birds come to their feeders. In winter I feed the birds in my yard with black oil sunflower seeds placed in covered feeders, thistle placed in a tube feeder, peanuts placed on a platform feeder, and suet in wire boxes.

I find woodpeckers, chickadees, wrens, magpies, jays, and squirrels eagerly flock to the suet I make using the following recipe:

- 1½ cups shortening (look for palm oil-free options)



Above: Black-capped Chickadees

- ¾ cups nut butter (any kind)
 - 3½ cups of wild bird seed (I also add cut pieces of dried fruit)
 - 1 cup rolled oats (quick variety is find)
 - ½ cup cornmeal (add more if the mixture is too runny)
 - Ice cube tray or cooking sheet lined with waxed paper, parchment or aluminum foil.
1. Mix dry ingredients and set aside.
 2. Combine shortening and nut butter in a microwave-safe bowl, warm in microwave and mix well before adding dry ingredients. Mixture should be soft but not runny.
 3. Spoon mixture into ice cube trays or onto cookie sheet. I store the suet nuggets in the freezer.
 4. Place them in suet boxes or net feeders and you'll have happy birds!

Commercially available suet can be purchased at bird, pet, and hardware stores but since I've been making

the above recipe, the birds only nibble at commercial suet blocks after all the homemade is gone. Often it goes rancid and must be discarded.

Bird guides

Do you ever see a bird and wonder what it is? Over the years, I've used a number of guidebooks but they are bulky and heavy to carry while hiking. I still use them but over the last few years I've switched to downloading bird apps on my phone. Apps help me to quickly identify most birds and eliminate the need to carry a heavy guidebook. However, I still keep a few guidebooks in my car that come in handy for birds that are hard to identify.

Download a free bird app

Recently I downloaded the Cornell's bird app "Merlin Bird ID." It's free, quick, and easy to use. I keep a list of the birds I see on any given day. Merlin allows me to list the birds I find and track the location, date, and time I recorded them. I can even use the app to report my list to e-bird, Cornell's site that tracks the reported species and number of birds in a particular area at a given time. Listing birds on e-bird also elevates its user's status to "citizen scientists."

Unplug and explore the great outdoors!

I've read that there is a movement to "unplug," and what better way to unplug than to go out to experience the world around us. In Colorado we are fortunate to have beautiful parks to explore, we are one of the top birding states, wildlife abounds, and although at times the weather can be challenging, if you wait a day or two, the sun will turn gray skies into a brilliant blue, the winds will calm, and temperatures will again invite us to go out and enjoy the great outdoors.

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