

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 31.

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community are the responsibility of the letter writer and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer. Letter writers should include sources for any facts and figures they cite.

Anonymous letter criticized

Once again, an excellent edition of OCN for July! Getting such a thorough factual update on the Town of Monument Board of Trustees was very helpful. Thank you and your reporter/writers.

We do have a concern with OCN allowing a letter to the editor to be submitted as anonymous. Following is an excerpt from a 2007 article, "Printing Anonymous Letters to the Editor Puts Public Trust in Newspapers at Risk":

"However, research shows that running an anonymous letter to the editor is an easy way to get you or the newspaper sued because they are more likely to be filled with misinformation or libel. Because an anonymous letter cannot be identified with a person or group, it has limited value.

"If a citizen has something truthful and valid to say, they should write a letter without trying to harm others and let the readers evaluate what they have to say in the light of who they are."

We believe that if someone feels strongly enough about a topic or issue, then (s)he should stand behind it with his/her name on the letter. Publishing anonymous letters and sharply worded commentaries can inflame conversations on major community issues. Additionally, letters without attribution could come from outside our local area. From our own knowledge, the anonymous July letter about D38 student population reflected bias and misinformation. It would have been helpful to know the author, allowing us to put what was written into context.

We ask for OCN to review and reconsider the existing policy of allowing anonymous letters for the following reasons: 1) It simply does not align with your overall focus and mission of providing our community with your mission of providing factual reporting;

and (2) it has the potential to jeopardize the public's trust.

Dave and Barb Betzler

Editor's note: The OCN editorial board discussed the issues raised by this letter. OCN distinguishes between anonymous letters, which we do not publish, and "name withheld" letters where OCN has the name and contact information for the letter writer but is respecting a request by the letter writer to not publish their name. While we try to minimize the number of "name withheld" letters in the paper, we feel offering this option helps encourage whistleblowers and others who might fear retaliation to provide important information to the community.

The ball is in your court

For public record, I and several others have inquired about D38's policies on physical education substitutions and National Signing Day for years. Since board members are busy, I have decided to offer some suggestions so D38 can have policies on the aforementioned issues.

High school PE substitutions

Our district recognizes that physical education is not mandated by the state of Colorado and is a local control issue. Therefore, students participating in interscholastic sports, community sports, and other approved activities (such as dance or martial arts) may substitute their sport or activity in place of the 1.5 PE credits required for graduation.

The student must have a minimum of 15 hours per month in their sport or activity of substitution. Data must be recorded onto a district-provided activity chart, including a verification from their coach or instructor, in order to count for each .5 credit for that semester.

National Signing Day

District 38 takes pride in our students' accomplishments. We vow to include all D38 student athletes, regardless of where they participate in a sport, to take part in National Signing Day ceremonies if they are being recruited by a college for their sport.

I am asking again for the District 38 Board of Education to please add these items to your agenda. Implementing them costs the district nothing and they

are in the best interest of our kids. Here's your chance to do something "for the kids." I am more than happy to help create an appropriate chart for athletes to use for their PE logs.

Amy McKenzie

Keep D38 strong!

My family moved back to Colorado in 2015, thankful the military stationed us in this wonderful place for a third time. We carefully selected Monument as our home, knowing we plan to be here long term. We love the community feel, and the biggest factor in choosing Monument was D38 schools for our two children. It's been a fantastic fit for my kids, who have thrived academically, socially, and emotionally in this high-performing district. I can see why D38 has its fantastic reputation and why so many families want to live in Monument.

The only downside is that our class sizes and student populations are growing. Over winter break in 2016, Bear Creek Elementary alone enrolled 45 new students! And I have heard firsthand about the crowding at LP Middle School.

D38 has a plan to alleviate crowding now and address the continuing growth. We can have a second middle school ready for students in the fall of 2019. D38 is putting forward a bond for converting Bear Creek back to a building for sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders (it was originally built as a middle school) and building a new 650-seat elementary (which is far cheaper to build than a new middle school) right next to the current campus to house the K-fifth-graders currently in Bear Creek Elementary. This plan is a smart, fiscally conservative approach to address the capacity issues we're facing—we get the middle school we desperately need now and keep a neighborhood elementary school in Jackson Creek, right where it's needed most.

I know this community recognizes the value in having one of the top-performing school districts in the state, and I urge everyone to vote yes for a minimal investment (about \$13 per month for the proposed bond/mill levy override) for our kids and our community.

Amy Shertzer

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

25th birthday party washed away!

A letter to our customers

Dear friends of Covered Treasures,

Paula Primavera arrived to quite a surprise when she opened the store on July 6. "It was like walking into a thunderstorm," she said. Water was cascading down as a result of a burst pipe, and pieces of the ceiling were falling on the floor. The west side of the Chapala Building is temporarily closed for renovations. The Bookstore staff hopes to reopen on a limited basis in about a month, utilizing the rooms that were not damaged. Covered Treasures was 25 years old on July 17, but the party that was planned will be delayed until our grand reopening.

Tommie Plank and Leona Lacroix did a lot of research and decided the area needed a bookstore back in 1993. They then spent more than six months taking courses on operating a small business, finding a distributor, filing articles of incorporation, ordering bookcases and initial inventory, joining the American Booksellers' Association, and, of course finding the perfect location. After considering a spot in a shopping center, space opened up in the historic Chapala Building in downtown Monument, and the history and character of the building were exactly what they were looking for.

Choosing a name proved to be a challenge. "Covered Treasures" finally evolved from a long list of names including "The Book Treasury," "Books & Company," and "Purple Mountain Bookstore." Leona retired in 1998 for family reasons, but Tommie and Paula have carried on the community feel of the store, and Pamela Sparks has been a valued addition to the bookstore family for the past two years.

In large part due to our continued commitment to specialized customer service and relationships,



Above (L to R): Tommie Plank, Paula Primavera, Pam Sparks, and Leona Lacroix. Photo by John Howe.

Covered Treasures has become more than just a bookstore to the Tri-Lakes community. People have called and stopped by to ask directions, how to spell a word, what hours other businesses were open, get details about a community event, or ask us to find books based on very little information. It became a meeting place for customers for various reasons, including book clubs and a writing group.

We have played Tooth Fairy and Secret Santa to young and old and have felt privileged to listen to stories, funny or sad, when a customer needed a sympathetic ear, a shoulder to lean on, or someone to share a laugh. We have delighted in meeting your out-of-town visitors; many of them stop in to visit each year when they are back in town. Our employees always enjoy talking about books and helping customers

choose gift books for relatives and friends based on their ages and interests. And we have loved having young people we once welcomed to the cozy children's book room come back to visit with their own little ones, telling them how they used to like to come to the store when they were kids.

As a member of the Historic Monument Merchants' Association, the store publicizes and supports many community events, sells tickets to the Empty Bowl Dinner, and participates with Tri-Lakes Cares in its Books 4 Kids program. In addition to carrying new and used books, an extensive greeting card section offers handmade gems from local artists and photographers. Many local hiking books and maps and area histories are unique to the store. Author signings range from first-time, self-published local writers to nationally known best-selling authors, such as Sandra Dallas, Peter Heller, and Kent Haruf.

We miss being in the store and seeing all our amazing, loyal customers, and we hope you miss us. Until we reopen, we will be in the Chamber Building for Art Hop evenings. We are still taking special orders. All you have to do is email us at covrdtreas@aol.com; Monument Pharmacy has graciously agreed to be the pick-up location. Paula will be posting status updates on our Facebook page and in emails.

It has been our great privilege to be your bookstore, and we will be back! Until then, happy reading. And thank you for 25 Great Years in Monument!

*Tommie, Paula, Pam, and Leona
The staff at Covered Treasures*

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