



Above: Lisa Hatfield receives a replica of a Michael Garman statue for her Vincent Elorie outstanding citizen award from Vice President Peter Bille. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

completed on the main level of The Barn. This bathroom will be more convenient for all guests attending events at The Barn and is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair. The project cost \$14,300, which was less than the original budget of \$15,000.

Board highlights

- Vice President Peter Bille noted that the county assessor is working on re-appraising property and will host a number of meet-and-greet events. WIA is working with the appraiser to try to host a meeting in the Tri-Lakes area, perhaps in coordination with other organizations, at a venue large enough to hold interested residents.
- Community Outreach Director Bert Jean is looking for input from residents on what WIA can do to foster a sense of community.
- Public Safety Director Brad Gleason noted that warmer weather leads to kids biking and playing near the roadways and urged residents to watch for them.
- WIA is working with D38 to schedule chipping

days for residents to drop off slash at no cost, using the parking lots of the middle school and Lewis-Palmer High School.

- Forestry Director Ed Miller noted that one instance of mountain pine beetle infestation had been found. A 75-foot ponderosa pine in a WIA open space was lost during the bomb cyclone event.
- WIA is working to get plans approved for an extension to The Barn that will house Woodmoor Public Safety.

The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. at The Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next regular meeting will be on April 24. The WIA calendar can be found at <https://www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/>. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at <https://www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/> once approved and posted.

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March Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

March is usually one of our most active weather months as winter transitions to spring. This intense change between seasons often results in strong storms and large swings in temperatures. This year was no different and in fact produced the strongest storm on record in terms of central pressure over the region. This “bomb cyclone” was unique in many ways (more on that later). For the month overall, temperatures were below normal and precipitation was above normal, continuing the trend we’ve seen most of the winter. Of course, getting lots of moisture in March is very important as we head into spring as well, so that is good news.

The month started off with a record, the first signs of which were associated with a cold front that moved through around 2:30 p.m. on the 1st. This was accompanied by a brief graupel shower and snow showers that afternoon. Fog and low clouds filled in behind the front and stayed in place on the 2nd. This held high temperatures below freezing the entire day, with highs reaching only the upper 20s that afternoon. In fact, reinforcing cold air continued to filter in over the next few days, keeping temperatures below freezing from 3 p.m. on the 1st through the early morning hours of the 6th. This was very unusual for March, as temperatures not exceeding the freezing mark for more than four consecutive days have rarely been observed.

During this period, an Arctic air mass moved in during the afternoon of the 2nd and brought with it record cold air. Temperatures dropped to the low single digits by the evening of the 2nd with light snow. Light snow continued the next day as well, with temperatures barely recovering as highs only made it to the mid-single digits. Overnight lows dropped well below zero on both the 3rd and 4th, setting some records in the region. During this cold period, generally 3-6 inches of new snow accumulated.

However, as is the case in March, once the cold air retreated and the sun returned, temperatures warmed quickly. Highs reached the mid-50s from the 6th through the 8th as the snow melted quickly. Slightly cooler air worked in from the 9th through the 11th, with a few snow showers at times. This happened as the atmosphere was loading up for what would turn out to be a historic storm event.

The first signs of this were noted during the 12th as mild southerly winds allowed temperatures to warm into the upper 50s and more importantly drew in very moist air. This was noted by rain showers occurring that evening and a few thunderstorms over Elbert County. Rain continued overnight as the warm, moist air continued to stream into the region ahead of an area of low pressure that was developing over southeast Colorado. As this low continued to develop, northerly winds began to form on the backside, drawing colder air down the Front Range. This changed the rain to snow around 5 a.m. But the fun was just starting.

As the low continued to strengthen, cold air contin-



Above; The ad hoc Synchronized Snowblower and Shovel Team cleared multiple 4-foot drifts and dug out four stranded cars on Harness Road the day after the bomb cyclone, making the road somewhat passable more than one day before El Paso County crews were freed up from clearing Priority One and Two roads to plow this Priority Three road. See <https://publicworks.elpasoco.com/road-bridge/snow-plowing/> to find out El Paso County road snow plowing classifications. Or, if you live within the Town of Monument, Town of Palmer Lake, or a “metropolitan district” with road plowing responsibilities, check with them directly. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

ued to rush in at the same time significant moisture and upward atmospheric motion were in place. This allowed heavy snow to form and strong winds to develop. With the cold air and high pressure to the north and strengthening low pressure to the southeast, the pressure gradient became extremely tight and hurricane-force winds developed. This produced blizzard conditions starting around 10 a.m. on the 13th. The storm continued to strengthen and move slowly over from southeast Colorado to the east/northeast into western Kansas. This allowed the blizzard conditions to continue through late evening.

Snow piled up and caused major problems throughout the region, producing drifts several feet high and making travel impossible. Several factors of this storm were unique, including several observation stations over eastern and southeastern Colorado setting all-time record low pressure readings and a new all-time high wind gust of 96 mph recorded at the Colorado Springs airport. Most areas picked up around a foot of wind-driven snow, although this was very difficult to measure accurately. The Pueblo National Weather Service has put together an excellent writeup of the meteorology behind this storm at https://www.weather.gov/pub/Bombogenesis_20190313. Keep in mind that it is very unlikely any of us will see a storm this strong again in our lifetime around the Palmer Divide.

The good news is the weather pattern quieted down over the next week, with cool and dry conditions. Highs were in the low 20s on the 14th, then 30s and 40s from

the 15th through 21st.

Unfortunately, we weren’t done with our wintry weather for the month as another unsettled pattern moved back in. This started with another strong low-pressure system developing over southern Colorado on the 22nd. This produced another round of snow and wind from the early evening of the 22nd through the early morning of the 23rd. But just as quickly as this storm developed, warm air moved in as it departed. High temperatures jumped into the 50s and 60s from the 24th through the 28th. In fact, temperatures reached record levels on the 27th, nearly touching 70 degrees.

But as is the case in March, cold air quickly returned with a final round of unsettled weather returning to end the month. This started with some low clouds, fog, and drizzle starting late on the 27th and the morning of the 28th. The atmosphere continued to destabilize as an area of low pressure moved into the area from the west. “Thundersnow” even formed with this event just after 6 p.m. on the 29th, signifying just how unstable the atmosphere was. Snow fell that evening and into the next morning and combined with some gusty winds to cause blowing snow at times. Cool conditions and some light snow provided a fitting end to the month as well. During the period, 3-5 inches of new snow accumulated, bringing our monthly total to nearly 30 inches in some locations.

A look ahead

April is known for a wide range of weather conditions in the region and is on average our snowiest month of the year. We can see 70-degree temperatures one afternoon and blizzard conditions the next. Several recent years have seen over 50 inches of snow accumulate during the month. Of course, it also melts very quickly, often adding beneficial moisture to the soil and helping the vegetation, which is just getting started.

March 2019 Weather Statistics

Average High	43.7° (-6.5°)
100-year return frequency value	max 57.9° min 38.0°
Average Low	19.4° (-1.8°)
100-year return frequency value	max 27.0° min 12.0°
Highest Temperature	69° on the 27th
Lowest Temperature	-6° on the 4th
Monthly Precipitation	2.62"
	(+1.03", 58% above normal)
100-year return frequency value	max 4.29" min 0.22"
Monthly Snowfall	27.1"
	(+6.8", 30% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	124.1"
	(+33.2", 28% above normal)
	<i>(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)</i>
Season to Date Precip.	9.31"
	(+2.97", 25% above normal)
	<i>(the precip season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)</i>
Heating Degree Days	1036 (+123)
Cooling Degree Days	0

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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 writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.*

When will we learn?

In a study published on March 25 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, the use of retail marijuana was once again questioned. The article highlighted the rise in Denver-area hospital emergency room visits and three deaths tied to marijuana use since legalization.

Sure, Colorado sees a fair amount of tax revenue from the sale of retail marijuana, but the medical, law enforcement, and social costs continue to rise as well as there has been a 600 percent increase in emergency room visits tied to marijuana use since legalization, 90 percent Colorado residents.

How many kids will experience lifelong effects from the permanent reduction in their mental acuity from using retail marijuana? You can say they aren’t supposed to have access in their parents’ homes, but what do you really think happens?

You can read about these effects on www.calm-palmerlake.org. There are reasons marijuana is still a Schedule 1 drug, along with heroin and LSD, even after a recent review by the Obama administration in August 2016. There is no valid medical research which indicates any medical benefit, and it is permanently hurting our residents. Is the increased tax revenue, which is only a very small portion of the state budget, worth it?

If our new state administration wants to really help Coloradans, there is still time to take a further look at state law concerning retail marijuana. If Colorado wants