

Our Community News

Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area



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Issue #228 — Volume 20 Number 2 — Saturday, February 1, 2020

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Local Events

See pages 27-31 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- Winter Fun at Fox Run, Sat., Feb. 1, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Benet Hill Human Trafficking: "Connecting the Dots," Mon., Feb. 3, 6:30-8:15 p.m.,
- D-38 Community Collaboration: "What's next for D38?" Tue., Feb. 4, 6:30-8 p.m. repeats Feb. 11, 13, and 20.
- Wildfire Preparedness Meeting, Tue., Feb. 4, 10 a.m.,
- Tri-Lakes Chamber Monthly Education Series: Search Engine Optimization, Tue., Feb. 4, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.,
- Dion Pride: A Tribute to Charley Pride TLCA, Fri., Feb. 7, 7 p.m.
- Palmer Lake Winterfest, Sat., Feb. 8, noon-3 p.m.
- High Altitude Gardening, Tue., Feb. 11, 5-6:30 p.m. repeats Feb. 18
- Black Rose Acoustic Society: Train Station, Fri., Feb. 14, 7 p.m.
- Hazel Miller & the Collective at TLCA, Fri., Feb. 15, 7 p.m.
- CERT, Tue.-Sat., Feb. 18-22
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Feb. 20, 7 p.m., Radio pioneers.
- Landscape Design Principles, Tue., Feb. 21, 10-11:30 a.m.
- Free D-38 Chess Tournament, Sat., Feb. 22, 8:15 a.m.
- WMMI: Science Writing, Sat., Feb. 22, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
- Benet Hill - Colin McAllister, Classical Guitar, Sun., Feb. 23, 2:30-4 p.m.
- Water-wise Gardening, Tue., Feb. 25, 10-11:30 a.m. repeats Mar. 5 and 13
- LPHS Band Free Concert, Tue., Feb. 25, 7-8:30 p.m.
- Black Rose Acoustic Society: The Colorado College Bluegrass Ensemble, Fri., Feb. 28, 7 p.m.
- Wildfire Preparedness Meeting, Tue., Mar. 3, 10 a.m.,
- Songwriters in the Round at TLCA, Sat., Feb. 29, 7 p.m.

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Circulation

Print Run: 21,630
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Stacks: 865

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Pedestrian bridge installed in Palmer Lake



Above: On January 7, SEMA Construction Inc. installed the two sections of the bridge manufactured by Big R Bridge Manufacturing. The funding for the bridge came from Awake Palmer Lake and its related events, a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant, and matching funds from the Town of Palmer Lake. See additional photos on pages 24-25. To make a part of the bridge a permanent memorial for your business, your family, or your loved ones' memory, see the ad on page 2. *Photo by David Futey.*

Black Forest Fire Rescue/Protection District, Jan. 15

Operations captain hired; county fire code enforcement falls short

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) board meeting on Jan. 15, the recently hired district operations captain was introduced to the board. Board members also heard a discussion on the implementation of new fire codes and updates on the district operations.

Director Nate Dowden was excused.

Operations captain hired

Interim Fire Chief PJ Langmaid introduced Capt. Bill Kraus, the new operations captain for the district, tasked in the new position to develop a master plan and strategic plan. Langmaid said, "Once measurable goals for operations have been developed, we will present the proposed standards to measure the effectiveness of the department for adoption by the board."

County ignoring fire codes, chief says

Langmaid said the Land Development Code is not being enforced by the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) as it approves new developments. He was concerned about another request from Flying Horse North that he felt was "piecemealing" the planning.

Langmaid also said the following regarding fire code enforcement and impact fees:

- We need to maintain good relationships with property developers and homebuilders.
- Impact fees to fire districts were never ratified by the BOCC and so are not being collected for new construction even though Classic Homes had agreed to pay BFFRPD \$450 per home in Flying Horse North.
- Reasonable conversations with homebuilders regarding safety will be necessary for the safety of the public and firefighters.
- Local television media may be doing a story on this bigger issue.

Treasurer Jack Hinton said, "One board member from BFFRPD needs to be present at each BOCC meeting, it is extremely important that fire codes are enforced, it is more important than spending money and I have no intention of losing a firefighter through stupidity." Hinton added, "The fire codes have not been enforced at Flying Horse North and they should not have been given a permit to begin building."

Langmaid said Deputy Chief Jim Rebetski, in conjunction with Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, is developing a draft resolution for the county to adopt the 2015 International Fire Code, and the district will seek a resolution to enforce the codes.

BFFRPD (Cont. on 3)

An important message for our readers

Our Community News needs your help!

OCN's unbiased reporting, favorable advertising opportunities, platform for expressing opinions, and spotlight on community events in the Tri-Lakes area appear in over 20,000 area mailboxes every month due to volunteer time and energy. If you can spare a little—or a lot—of time, here are some vital jobs that can help you build skills and enjoy the camaraderie of new friends:

Volunteer coordinator

Location: Work from home or meet new volunteers at a variety of places in the community. This role requires great listening skills and a heart for people. OCN would love to have one or two people who are available to help new volunteers feel welcome and assimilate into their perfect OCN "job." Volunteers in this role would connect new volunteers with the appropriate person for training and gather feedback for ways that OCN may improve. If you enjoy establishing and maintaining relationships with people, whether over the phone or email, or meeting for coffee, this is the role for you. This role is new with an estimation of 10 hours per week.

Ads coordinator

Location: Work from home. This role involves significant phone and email

OCN (Cont. on 2)

OCN (Cont. from 1)

communications with advertisers. This volunteer must be comfortable using (or learning) Excel, working at a com-

puter, and explaining the details and benefits of advertising in OCN. Expect to commit at least 75 hours per month with a concentration of work at the end of the month.

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Reporters

Location: Attend community events and meetings and work from home. Volunteer reporters are people who like to write and want to keep the community informed about what was discussed and what was decided. Reporters typically begin by covering "Snapshots of Our Community" events and expand into articles. Initial time commitment is five to 10 hours per month, depending on the number of assignments chosen.

Truck driver

Location: Truck rental location, Monument Sanitation District (MSD), and post offices just one day per month. These volunteers need to be comfortable driving a 16-foot U-Haul-type moving truck and loading/unloading, weighing, and delivering more than 160 full post office tubs to the Monument, Briargate, and sometimes Palmer Lake post offices. A typical time commitment is four to seven hours on the Friday before the first Saturday of the month.

Mailing day volunteers

Location: Work at MSD conference room or walk or drive business delivery routes just one day per month. Volunteers are needed for tasks such as inserting flyers, counting papers, stuffing postal tubs, and delivering small stacks of papers to local businesses. Volunteers are reimbursed for mileage. A typical time commitment is generally two to five hours on the Friday before

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Above: New and current volunteer members of Our Community News Inc. enjoy food and conversation before their annual meeting Jan. 12. Publisher John Heiser, who connected long-distance via telephone, reviewed the historical data and led discussions about circulation and advertising. The monthly governance newspaper relies solely on ad revenue and volunteers. From left are Janet Sellers, Harriet Halbig, Allen Alchian, Lynda Pate, Steve Pate, Michael Weinfeld, Mike McGrath, Kim Statham, Jennifer Kaylor, and Sharon Williams. More than 40 volunteers are currently involved in producing and distributing OCN each month. *Photo by John Howe.*

the first Saturday of the month.

Stacks coordinator

Location: Work from home and MSD. This role involves organizing papers for stacks route deliveries and scheduling and managing volunteers who deliver the four routes. Time commitment includes about two hours per month in phone calls/email for scheduling and about two hours on mailing day.

Ads sales

Location: Work from home and meet advertisers at their

respective businesses. This volunteer will enjoy engaging potential advertisers about the many benefits of reaching potential customers through OCN's distribution from the mountains to Black Forest Road, and from County Line Road to Northgate Boulevard. The time commitment varies widely from 15 to 40 hours per month.

Graphic layout

Location: Work from home. This is a long-term commitment that involves learning

the layout and design process using an InDesign application and working with the managing editor to determine content. Volunteers can expect to work 20 to 30 hours during the final three to four days prior to print day.

OCN will provide the equipment and training needed. Come, use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit our community. Join us today! Contact Managing Editor Jennifer Kaylor at editor@ocn.me.

BFFRPD (Cont. from 1)

Open burn fire permits mandatory

Langmaid said an illegal fire started on Vessey Road was significant enough to "traumatize" some neighbors and require the involvement of the El Paso County Sheriff's Office. BFFRPD was the first agency to request that the Sheriff's Office enforce the county's burn ordinance.

Burn permits for any

kind of fire, including small recreational ones, are required by law and can be obtained from BFFRPD. Unauthorized burns carry a fine of \$500 to \$1,000.

Structure fire discussed

Local resident Linda Smith asked for clarification regarding the response to the Bridle Bit Road house fire on the morning of Dec. 25 in which one person died and three were injured.

Langmaid's comments included:

- The initial address they were dispatched to was on Shoup Road when it should have been Bridle Bit Road...The Sheriff's Office is running a dispatch center on a very tight budget.
- The home was already 75% engulfed on arrival, and "the outcome of the fire was not altered by that slight delay."

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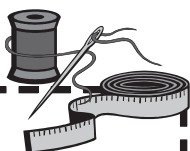
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- It was an unusual fire and is still under investigation.

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Board President Rick Nearhoof thanked Munsun Excavating for sending a backhoe to the scene immediately, despite the short notice on Christmas Day.

Financial update

Hinton said that since the district operates on a zero-based budget, it is critical for the board and staff to create a plan for future large expenditures. The current budget does not allow for large unplanned expenditures such as the unexpected Plymovent bill and the purchase of the two new ambulance chassis in the latter half of 2019. Hiring Kraus will help with the development of the apparatus replacement plan, Langmaid said.

Director Jim Abendshan thanked both Langmaid and Hinton for all their hard work and co-ordination on the district's financial report. The financial report was approved 4-0.

Chief's report

Langmaid said the district is understaffed and that four full-time positions remain vacant, three of which should ideally be filled by firefighter/paramedics. The district is currently conducting interviews with applicants from both out of state and across the region. Langmaid also updated the board with the following information:

- A paramedic will be included on each shift.
- The "flycar" will ideally be reinstated by the end of January, after the vehicle has been fitted with lights, sirens and other equipment.
- Meetings continue with county partners regard-

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ing mutual aid agreements with American Medical Response.

- Due to the district's paramedic vacancies, Training Capt. Chris Piepenburg has stepped in to cover some Advanced Life Support shortfalls more often than originally planned.
- The current fleet is not designed nor standardized for the district terrain and is currently under review. One ambulance had its step ripped off when it had to drive overland to a burning home since there was no room in the driveway for more than just one engine.
- BFFRPD has no fire marshal. The county has nine new developments under review, and this shortage is a problem.

Official meeting announcements

The board unanimously adopted Resolution 2020-01 to post meetings and meeting dates on the BFFRPD website, following the new state regulation requiring only 24 hours prior posting on the district website. Board Secretary Donna Arkowski said it is good PR to also continue posting meeting announcements at both station locations in conjunction with the website.

Board member election resolution

Nearhoof proposed the following as a resolution:

- Three board positions, those of Hinton, Dowden, and Abendshan, are up for election in the May 5 board election.
 - The self-nomination window is open from Jan. 1-Feb. 28.
 - Self-nomination forms are now available from Administrative Assistant Melissa Bottorff, BFFRPD Station 1 at 11445 Teachout Rd., Colorado Springs, CO 80908. Telephone (719) 495-4300.
- The board unanimously approved the resolution. The board meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at BFFRPD Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Feb. 19. See www.bffire.org.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

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Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Jan. 21

Wescott remembers board chairman; election moves forward

By Allison Robenstein

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board and members of the audience took a moment before the regular board meeting started to remember Chairman William "Bo" McAllister, who passed away Jan. 4. The board approved several temporary job switches for board members and finalized election needs.

Treasurer Joyce Hartung arrived late.

Chairman McAllister

Tonight's meeting was the first since the passing of Chairman McAllister, so Secretary Mark Gunderman led the audience in a moment of silence to honor him. McAllister's service was held at Wescott's Station 2 on Jan. 10. His wife, who calls herself "Mrs. Bo," was in attendance at tonight's meeting and thanked everyone who made his service possible, telling the firefighters, "You are still family to us."

Resident Mary Gunderman said, "To have known Bo a little was a delight. To have known him well was a treasure. And now a loss beyond measure."

Election plans

Three board director positions are up for election during the May 5 polling place vote. Both Larry Schwarz' and Duane Garrett's positions are up for reelection, as is McAllister's empty seat. Self-nomination forms can be found at <http://wescottfire.org/board-of-directors-2/elections/> and must be returned by Friday, Feb. 28. McAllister ran the board meetings. Gunderman has been stepping in when needed, and tonight asked to be nominated to the chairman position. All board members agreed to the appointment, while also naming Schwarz as the secretary, the title recently held by Gunderman. These positions may change after the election is complete.

Chief's report

Assistant Chief Scott Ridings said the call volume for 2019 had increased 21% over the previous year, for a total of 961 calls for service. Their average response time, which is the time they leave the station to the time they arrive on scene, was six minutes, 17 seconds. They hope to get this down to an even six minutes. Ridings said the new station alerting system they hope to install this year will help with that average. Their average time from receiving the call to leaving the station is one minute, six seconds.

Chief Vinny Burns reported the following:

- Captains Sean Pearson and Shannon Balvanz will be promoted to battalion chiefs.
- Lieutenants Roger Lance and Wayne Krzemien will be promoted to captain positions.
- Matt Gibbs will be promoted to driver and Luke Jones will be testing for a driver position shortly.
- Burns read several letters from residents who had been helped by the Fire Department during recent calls for service.
- Firefighter Jon Urban presented a request to use reserved capital improvements funds to swap out fluorescent lighting with LED lighting. Ur-

ban said the cost would be \$5,400 to switch out the bay lighting at Station 1 and the bay and living quarters lighting from Station 2. He noted the turnout gear worn by the firefighters is susceptible to degradation caused by ultraviolet lighting. Lance worked with Urban on the project and had received one quote. "Since we deal with public funds," Gunderman asked the firefighters to get two more quotes. The board agreed to hear their presentation and make a decision on funding the project once all bids were received.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

The next Donald Wescott fire district meeting is scheduled for Feb. 18 at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich at 488-8680 or see www.wescottfire.org.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

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Christina Cotton

Clark also noted a late fee of \$211 to TPX Communications and asked if the town is paying its bills on time. Foreman said this is a new company and there are questions about when the services were actually completed. He and Finance Director Rosa Ooms were working on it and would not pay the late charge.

No vote was taken to approve the payment to Murray, Dahl, Beery and Renaud, and to TPX Communications. It is unclear if these payments would now need to be approved at the next meeting, causing them to be late.

Fire station annexation
TLMFPD Fire Chief Chris Truty began

annexation discussions with the town in August when he petitioned to file for the process. On Dec. 11, the Monument Planning Commission approved the final annexation request that includes the one-acre site located along Highway 105. *See <https://www.ocn.me/v20n1.htm#mpc>.*

Truty had said the reason for moving forward with annexation into the town was the less-complicated town permitting for future building expansion projects. *See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n11.htm#mbot1007>.*

Tonight, the board gave the final approval when it voted for annexation unanimously.

Notice of meetings will change
With the update to a recent Colorado statute regarding public meetings, the town is allowed to post meeting notifications only on the town's website. Hogan told the board "currently we post it at the post office, on our website and in the lobby" of the Monument Town Hall. The notice of meetings will now be posted only on www.townofmonument.org.

Anyone can sign up for notification of updates to the town's Documents on Demand where meeting agendas are posted. To sign up for these notifications, use <https://monumenttownco.document-on-demand.com/Signup>.

Checks over \$5,000:
The following checks were identified to be paid, but because they were pulled from the consent agenda, they were never voted for approval by the board. These include:

- TPX Communications, Managed Services, \$8,442
- Murray, Dahl, Beery and Renaud, legal services, \$30,003

This check was approved for payment:

- Triview Metropolitan District, Motor Vehicle Tax for October and November 2019, \$28,563

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.
Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

Monument Planning Commission, Jan. 8

New members sworn in; Sanctuary Pointe Phase 3 Site Plan approved

By Kate Pangelinan
The Jan. 8 Monument Planning Commission meeting was one of transition, according to a draft of the minutes provided by the Monument Planning Department. Following the departure of Chairman Michelle Glover and Vice Chairman John Dick, Commissioners Daniel Ours and Melanie Strop were the only members eligible to be elected to lead the commission. This means they have served on the commission for one year or longer. Ours nominated Strop for the position of chairman, and her appointment was approved by the rest of the commission. Strop is now the commission's chairman, and Ours is co-chairman.

New commissioners Mitchell LaKind, Eric Light, and Joshua Thomas took the oath of office, and Commissioner Steve King was sworn in as a regular member of the Planning Commission after serving as an alternate since July 2019.

More information about this meeting can be found online at <https://monumenttownco.documents-on-demand.com/>. Although there are usually recordings of the Planning Commission meetings on YouTube, a technical error resulted in this month's being recorded without sound.

Sanctuary Pointe Phase 3— Preliminary/Final Planned Development Site Plan
According to the packet prepared by Planning Department staff, Phase 3 of the Sanctuary Pointe project consists of 72 single-family residential lots on about 117 acres. It is west of Sanctuary Pointe Phase 2, which is still in development. When this project was first approved, it was agreed that there could

be up to 600 total units across Sanctuary Pointe. Phases 1, 2, and 3 together account for those 600 residential units. This proposal for Phase 3 is in keeping with the Sketch Plan approved in 2006.

Andrea Barlow of NES represented this project.

According to a draft of this meeting's minutes, some of the questions asked included:

- Strop inquired about parks on the property, after which Barlow described a larger main park space. The possibility of a play area for children was mentioned.
- Strop asked about the materials used for trails in the area. (There is one concrete sidewalk, but most trails are expected to be natural dirt.)
- Ours mentioned a concern about driving along these roads behind construction vehicles that are too large for tight curves. As a response, Classic Homes Vice President/Project Manager Loren Moreland described the county design standards used for the curve in question, and Jeff Hodsten, traffic engineer, noted that while large equipment can currently make its way around the curve, he will look into the matter if needed.
- Strop asked about the emergency access on Kingswood Drive, and Commissioner Chris Wilhelmi asked about building supply requirements for fire mitigation.

After the public comments portion of the meeting, King expressed concern about future development and the loss of trees, noting that the town is in the middle of code updates right now. He

also wanted to register concern that Sketch Plans never expire.

Two residents asked questions about the project. Jim Stewart asked about a trail near Higby Road as well as a possible access point he had heard

mentioned. Barlow explained that the original Sketch Plan did refer to another access, but the area is actually too steep to accommodate it.

Pam Demkowicz stated that she loves the project plan but wondered



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about drainage. Barlow noted that the project’s drainage would include the retention ponds and assured citizens that it should work smoothly.

In the end, the Sanctuary Point Phase 3 Preliminary/Final PD Site Plan proposal was approved unanimously. It then went on to be approved by the Board of Trustees. *See related Board of Trustees article below.*

Reports and communications

- Planning staff requested a volunteer for the Board of Adjustment.
- The commission agreed to move future meetings to 6 p.m. instead of the former 6:30 p.m.
- There will be a February workshop with state Department of Local Affairs PC training.

The meeting was followed by a pre-

sentation by Martin Landers with Plan Tools LLC.

This article was written referencing a draft of the Jan. 8 meeting’s minutes that will be considered for approval by the Planning Commission at its February meeting.

Planning Commission meetings are

generally held on the second Wednesday of the month at 645 Beacon Lite Rd. For more information: call 884-8017 or go to www.townofmonument.org/meetings/.

Kate Pangelinan can be reached at katepangelinan@ocn.me.

Monument Board of Trustees, Jan. 21

Development code updates underway

By Allison Robenstein

Before the regular meeting on Jan 21, the Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) held a workshop to review the 2020 land development code updates. During the regular meeting, the board approved the final phase of Sanctuary Pointe and was introduced to new town staff.

Land development code update project underway

The Monument Planning Department received a grant through the state Department of Local Affairs to update town municipal codes. Specifically, the project will review Title 16 and 17 of the codes, which cover subdivision and zoning codes respectively. To see a list of the town’s municipal codes, go to [https://library.municode.com/co/monument/codes/code of ordinances](https://library.municode.com/co/monument/codes/code%20of%20ordinances). According to the board packet, Monument’s development code update will consolidate all land use regulations (zoning, subdivisions, signs, and other related code provisions) into one document for ease of reference. The 2017 Monument Comprehensive Plan iden-

tified code updates as most necessary. Plan Tools LLC of Loveland is assisting town staff with the project. At this workshop, Martin Landers of Plan Tools and Gerald Dahl of Murray, Dahl, Beery and Renaud gave an update to the board.

Dahl said the team’s diagnosis of the codes identified inconsistencies. Landers said the town has “more [codes] than any other community we’ve worked with before.” Dahl gave an example of the new code format that will be in table form with graphics where needed, as opposed to the confusing narrative organization the town currently uses.

More information about the 18-month project can be found at www.townofmonument.org/478/Land-Development-Code-Project.

New town staff

Finance Director Rosa Ooms introduced Town Accountant Jessica Hullinger, who has bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting as well as five years of experience.

Acting Police Chief Lee Birk intro-



Above: Monument Human Resources Director Robert Bishop presented Shannon Walker as the Employee of the Month for December 2019. He said Walker is proactive, honest, and volunteers for extra assignments. She has worked seven years for the town, starting as an administration assistant and now HR benefits specialist. Town Manager Mike Foreman said he and the staff are also appreciative of Walker. From left are Bishop, Foreman and Walker. *Photo by Erica Romero.*

duced Police Service Specialist Evan Cox, who was brought on in October 2019 as a code enforcement officer. Birk said there isn’t enough work for full-time code enforcement, so he has identified additional duties for this position.

Trustee Jeffrey Bornstein asked if there is a forecast for dividing up the time Cox will spend performing code enforcement versus all other assignments, to which Birk responded he will evaluate that as his time here progresses.

Planning Commission alternate approved

Sean White was sworn in as a new member of the Planning Commission as an alternate. Chad Blome, who offered to be on either the Planning Commission or the Board of Adjustments, was selected for the latter. White was born and raised in Monument, while Blome is originally from Nebraska and moved to Monument with his family.

Four members of the Planning Commission either resigned or are not eligible for another term. Chairwoman Michelle Glover and Commissioners Jeremy Lushnat and Ken Kimple do not wish to be reappointed. John Dick is term limited. See <https://ocn.me/v19n12.htm#mpc>.

Sanctuary Pointe Final PD Site Plan for Phase 3

Town Planner Debbie Flynn presented the ordinance for Sanctuary Pointe Final PD Site Plan for Phase 3 approval. The final site request for this development consists of 117 acres and will include 72 single-family lots. According to Flynn, the request was approved by the Planning Commission on Jan. 8 by a 7-0 vote.

The two access points for the phase are Sanctuary Rim Drive east to Baptist Road and Sanctuary Rim Drive west to Gleneagle Road, which was extended



Above: On Jan. 22, the town announced the selection of Christian “Sean” Hemingway as the new chief of police. Jake Shirk, the former chief, retired in July last year. Since then, several in-house officers, as well as an external hire, Lee Birk, have managed the department. Hemingway is a 30-year veteran officer serving as chief of police in the town of Bay Harbor Islands, Fla., for the last six years. *Photo courtesy of Town of Monument.*

through Promontory Pointe into the Sanctuary development.

Kimple, a previous Planning Commission member, said during the public hearing phase that the access through Gleneagle Road should not be considered as an egress since it is not complete. He said there are no curbs, sidewalks, or signage along the roadway, although it is being used by subcontractors and residents. Kimple was almost hit walking his dog along the

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road when a distracted driver didn't see him.

He suggested the connection to Higby Road is a big issue for improving safety in the neighborhood if there is ever a fire and it should be built out as soon as possible as an egress from the community.

Andrea Barlow of NES Inc., representing Classic Homes, responded by saying the developer has done everything required of them, meeting all conditions from Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District. Loren Moreland, vice president of Classic Homes, said they met the requirements of the town's development guidelines. He indicated Classic Homes doesn't need to further improve Gleneagle Drive for it to be considered a safe way in and out.

Trustee Greg Coopman considered Kimple's concern about safety to be valid, noting, "I'm tired of developers saying we don't have to" with regard to doing more than the town's development requirements for the safety of residents. It comes down to procedural

issues that can be resolved in code updates, he said. Coopman asked how the developer would respond to Kimple's "valid concern," to which Moreland said he too had almost been hit driving on the roadway, but he said they have followed the standards as required by the town.

Both Coopman and Bornstein were concerned the minimum requirements currently set by the town are not meeting the needs of the residents with regard to safety and agreed they could be changed with the current review process.

Trustee Ron Stephens agreed with Kimple about his concerns and urged town staff to continue their work with the county and Triview Metropolitan District to annex Higby Road into town. Town Manager Mike Foreman said he met with Triview and the county last week to continue their discussions, but there is a lot of legal work to be done before the annexation goes through. During the Nov. 18 BOT meeting, Triview District Manager Jim McGrady an-

nounced the county might be willing to transfer ownership of Higby Road to the town, which means the road can be developed to meet safety requirements. See <https://ocn.me/v19n12.htm#mbot>.

Barlow added that all the homes are built to Firewise standards, and the landscaping must meet the standards as well. Moreland said the homeowners receive design guidelines with a full list of Firewise-approved plants, and the developer teaches classes during the annual neighborhood barbecue.

The ordinance was approved unanimously.

Town manager's report

Foreman reported the Police Department has received LoJack technology free of charge for two vehicles, which will assist with stolen vehicle recovery. The department also received a daily field activity report form from the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, also free of charge, to capture data on calls for

service and enforcements.

The meeting went into executive session at 8:15 p.m. for the negotiation and discussion of the salary and compensation package for a new chief of police. No decisions were made in open session.

The Monument Board of Trustees usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Feb. 3. Call 719-884-8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets for BOT or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttown-co.minutesondemand.com> and click on Board of Trustees.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

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February 13, 2:00-3:30 p.m., Ray Kilmer Elementary School

February 18, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Monument Academy

February 20, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Palmer Ridge High School

More info at lewispalmer.org or info@lewispalmer.org

One Team ^{D38} Our Team

Palmer Lake Town Council, Jan. 9 and 23

New council member appointed to replace Faust

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans
The Palmer Lake Town Council (PLTC) started 2020 with new faces on the council and on the town's administrative team. The personnel changes also led to some different responsibilities for other council members.

The first resolution of the New Year came next on the agenda at the Jan. 9 meeting, followed by a resolution pronouncing the project to add a second water tank complete. At the same meeting, the PLTC voted to have the town address a drainage issue on Up-

per Glenway Road.
At the Jan. 23 meeting, the council heard a presentation from the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD) about changes to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) floodplain map and discussed the search for a new town clerk. The council also discussed how to hire a town clerk and a fire chief.

Susan Miner appointed to replace Faust

At the work session on Jan. 23, Susan

Miner was appointed to replace Gary Faust, who resigned from the Town Council at the Dec. 12 meeting.

According to Miner's resume, included in the board packet for the meeting, her work history includes years of facility, real estate, and project management work for Hewlett-Packard. She ran an interior design business in Palmer Lake from 1991 to 2006. Miner also served previously on the PLTC.

Miner said she believed the town's zoning was the area where she would most like to see changes, because that is where residents can affect what will happen in their town. Miner argued that residents should be included in discussions about zoning issues.

Mayor John Cressman told the council there was one other applicant for the seat on the council, but that application was withdrawn.

The council voted unanimously to appoint Miner to the vacant seat, where she will serve until the next election in November 2020. Immediately after her appointment, Miner was sworn in and took her seat on the council.

The council also approved trustee Glant Havenar to replace Faust as a representative on the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments.

New administrators and interim town attorney join the team

At the Jan. 9 meeting, Cressman introduced temporary Town Clerk Judy Egbert, who will serve while the town seeks to hire a permanent replacement. Cressman introduced Interim


Town Attorney Matthew. Z. Krob, of Krob Law Office LLC, who replaces the town's previous law firm Widner and Juran, LLC.

Cressman also formally introduced the town's Interim Town Manager, Bob Radosevich, whose appointment was initially discussed in December. Radosevich is well-known to residents for his many years of service on the town's administrative team.

Resolutions address posting locations and water tank project

At the Jan. 9 meeting, the council passed two resolutions. The first designates the Palmer Lake Town office and the Palmer Lake Post Office as the official locations where notices of public meetings will be posted. Meeting notices will also be posted on the town's web page (<https://townofpalmerlake.com>).

The second resolution declares the completion of the town's project to add a second water tank to the town's infrastructure, removing a single point of failure for the town's water supply. Completion had been delayed by the need to address a leak attributed to incompletely cured concrete in the tank's construction. Radosevich told the council that declaring the project complete would mean final payment of \$199,156 would be due at the end of January. Town Council member Paul Banta asked if the cost would be passed onto residents in their water bills; Radosevich said the previous 7 percent increase in fees was passed to cover the costs of the tank construction.



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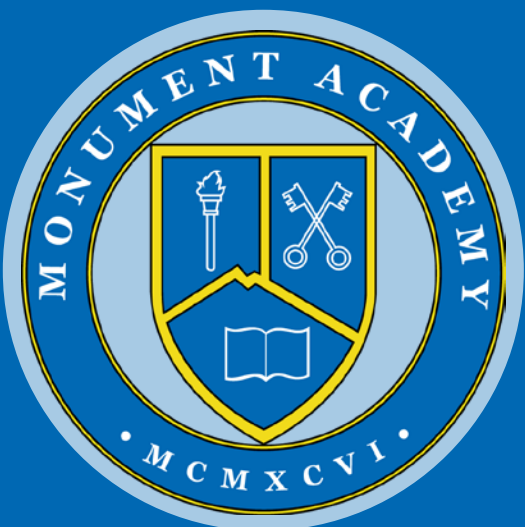
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Drainage issue on Upper Glenway addressed

Town Council member Mark Schuler brought a drainage issue affecting a portion of Upper Glenway Road, which has been discussed by the council previously, to the attention of the council.

The issue involves a culvert that the town built adjacent to Upper Glenway Road that contributed to flood damage last year during a 500-year rainstorm. The entire history of the culvert is not clear, but there was agreement that the town had a hand in the construction of it. A homeowner whose property was damaged by runoff coming through the culvert had previously asked the town to address the situation and compensate him for the damage to his property. The homeowner offered to fill in the culvert if the town was unwilling to remediate the drainage problems.

Because Schuler’s property was affected, he recused himself from the vote on this issue.

After discussion, the council voted to have the town’s maintenance staff develop and implement a plan to address the drainage problem created by the culvert.

Palmer Lake floodplain reduced in size

Greg Dingrando and Keith Curtis of PPRBD told the council that the floodplain along Butler Canyon had been re-evaluated by FEMA and reduced in size, lowering the estimate of flood risk in the town and potentially reducing insurance costs for residents and

business owners. According to Dingrando and Curtis, 52 homes and businesses are no longer considered to be in the floodplain and may be in a position to save on flood insurance.

Forty vacant parcels were also removed from the floodplain, potentially lowering their cost to develop.

Dingrando and Curtis estimated that the changes could save the citizens of Palmer Lake more than \$100,000 a year in insurance costs. They supplied a map of the changes to the Town Council and said residents could contact PPRBD at 719-327-2898 to ask if their properties were affected.

Searches for town clerk and fire chief get under way

At the Jan. 23 meeting, Radosevich told the council a job description for a new town clerk had been drafted and asked for their thoughts on how to publicize it.

After a lengthy discussion about how to include citizen input in the search for a new clerk, the council voted to authorize \$1,000 to be spent advertising the position on the Colorado Municipal Clerks webpage and elsewhere.

Schuler told the council that the Fire Committee had met recently and that a job description for the fire chief position had been drafted. Schuler asked Krob if he had reviewed that job description, and Krob suggested that the Employers Council be brought into the discussion, since their advice would cost the town less than a formal legal review by an attorney. Krob

said the Employers Council had already been contacted to help with the search for a fire chief.

The next two scheduled meetings will be on Feb. 13 and Feb. 27 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, with the second meeting organized as a working session. Information: 481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.



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Monument Academy School Board, Jan. 9

Board discusses academic calendar, fills empty seat

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held a regular board meeting on Jan. 9 to discuss the academic calendar, approve a lottery enrollment policy, fill an empty board seat, review assessments, and consider the high school dress policy.

Academic calendar

Chief Operating Officer Christianna Herrera launched the discussion over the 2020-21 Academic Calendar. Board President Mark McWilliams asked if the calendar planned for more wetness due to rumors of a 30-year wetter period. Marty Venticique, assessment coordinator and former meteorologist for Pikes Peak Television, pointed out that similar concerns arose after the Hayman fire but never came to pass.

Herrera noted that major changes incorporate the new high school and maintain half-day Fridays, providing for snow days while maintaining contact time. Board member Melanie Strop asked about proactively noting which half-day Fridays might be converted to full days if needed to make up snow days. Board member Chris Dole asked that extra Fridays designated for makeup exclude holiday weekends, given the importance of family life.

Board member Megghan St. Aubyn raised the issue of the early August start, asking if it should be pushed a week to accommodate the schedule for the new secondary school. Herrera said they were looking at a version of the calendar that started later in August if needed. Herrera recommended tabling the bill until next month’s meeting, and Strop agreed, saying that they expected to have more information on the secondary school project schedule. All board members recommended waiting until the calendar is set and publish just one calendar.

Lottery enrollment policy approved

Herrera noted that, as a recipient of the Colorado Charter School Program grant from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), MA is required to have a lottery enrollment policy. This requirement makes sure there is full transparency in enrollment policy. Interested parties submit Letters of Intent (LOI), which are date and time stamped. Open slots are filled from the LOI list first. The lottery is invoked only if there is a wait list and the schools are within 10% threshold of being full. She said a lottery allows military families

who move in to put their child on the list and have a chance to get in. Wait lists are not preserved from year to year; families must indicate interest each year.

The policy was unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

Board seat filled

The board announced the selection of Susan Byrd to fill the vacant board position created when Dwayne

Financial Focus

Changes in Retirement Plans as of Jan. 6, 2020

It might not have made the headlines, but a recently passed piece of legislation could affect the IRAs and 401(k)s of millions of Americans beginning in 2020. So, if you have either of these accounts, or if you run a business, you’ll want to learn more.

The new laws, collectively called the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act, include these noteworthy changes:

- *Higher age for RMDs* – Under current law, you must start taking withdrawals – known as required minimum distributions, or RMDs – from your traditional IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan once you turn 70½. The new law pushes the date to start RMDs to 72, which means you can hold on to your retirement savings a bit longer.
- *No age limit for traditional IRA contributions* – Previously, you could only contribute to your traditional IRA until you were 70½, but under the SECURE Act, you can now fund your traditional IRA for as long as you have taxable earned income.
- *Limitation of “Stretch IRA” provisions* – Under the old rules, beneficiaries were able to stretch taxable RMDs from a retirement account over his or her lifetime. Under the SECURE Act while spouse beneficiaries can still take advantage of this “stretch” distribution, most non-spouse beneficiaries will have to take all the RMDs by the end of the tenth year after the account owner passes away. Consequently, non-spouse beneficiaries who inherit an IRA or other retirement plan could have tax implications due to the need to take larger distributions in a shorter timeframe.
- *No early withdrawal penalty for IRAs and 401(k)s when new child arrives.* Typically, you must pay a 10% penalty when you withdraw funds from your IRA or 401(k) before you reach 59½. But now, with the new rules, you can withdraw

up to \$5,000 from your retirement plan without paying the early withdrawal penalty, as long as you take the money within one year of a child being born or an adoption becoming final.

Some provisions of the SECURE Act primarily affect business owners:

- *Multi-employer retirement plans* – Unrelated companies can now work together to offer employees a 401(k) plan with less administrative work, lower costs and fewer fiduciary responsibilities than individual employers now encounter when offering their own retirement plans.
- *Tax credit for automatic enrollment* – The new law provides a tax credit of \$500 for some smaller employers who set up automatic enrollment in their retirement plans. And a tax credit for establishing a retirement plan has been increased from \$500 to \$5,000.
- *Use of annuities in 401(k) plans* – It will now be easier for employers to consider including annuities as an investment option within 401(k) plans. Previously, many businesses avoided offering annuities in these plans due to liability concerns related to the annuity provider, but the new rules should help reduce these concerns.

The SECURE Act is the most significant change to our retirement savings system in over a decade. We encourage you to contact your financial advisor, tax professional and estate planning attorney to assess the potential impact on your investment strategies and determine any possible tax and estate planning implications of the SECURE Act.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor:
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Cooke resigned from the board due to moving his child to another school. Byrd has extensive experience in teaching for other districts and will be sworn in at the next board meeting. She noted that she was looking forward to bringing her expertise to the table as they work on curriculum decisions.

High school uniform policy versus dress code

The board facilitated a lengthy discussion of whether the high school should have a uniform or only a dress code. There was discussion of deciding based on a survey or whether they should just look at research to see which is best. Some parents were open to more latitude for older students, and some were adamantly in favor of a uniform all the way through high school.

Concerns were raised that some might not choose MA if required to wear a uniform, while others suggested some might not choose MA if there was not a uniform policy

through high school. Options were presented from full uniform to adding some choices for middle schoolers to having only a dress policy for high school students. No changes are anticipated for the elementary school dress code.

MA decided to send out a survey to current fifth- through eighth-grade parents, teachers, and staff with four options to select, pointing to the current dress policy. They tabled this decision until results are in.

Highlights

The following items were highlighted at the board meeting:

- The board announced that they would receive the Inez Lewis award from D38, recognizing tremendous growth in math as measured by Colorado Measure of Academic Success (CMAS). MA was recognized at the D38 Board of Education meeting on Jan. 21.
- Herrera mentioned that MA is working with D38 to see if the CDE can use

Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) scores to count for the John Irwin Schools of Excellence Award in lieu of CMAS, given MA's low participation rate.

- Herrera confirmed that, after considering many options, MA has con-

firmed its decision for sixth grade to be part of middle school and move to the new facility.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, Feb. 13 in Lab 312 at 1150 Village Ridge Point. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second

Thursday of each month. Information on the MA School Board, including schedule, minutes, committee and finances can be found at <http://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board>.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Lewis-Palmer D38 District Accountability Advisory Committee, Jan. 14

Committee receives reports on legislative activity, safety and security, and Bear Creek Elementary School

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 District Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC) discussed Bear Creek Elementary School (BCES), a preview of legislative proposals for 2020, and a report from Chief of Safety and Security Dennis Coates at its Jan.14 meeting.

BCES Principal Peggy Parsley conducted a tour of the facility before the meeting.

The school was originally constructed as Creekside Middle School in 2001. In 2010, following the closing of Grace Best Elementary, the middle school became Bear Creek Elementary and one middle school remained, Lewis-Palmer Middle School.

The current student population of BCES is 892, including 14 who have arrived since October. In addition to a four-classroom modular housing seven sections of preschool, BCES has a program for students with significant support needs, such as those accompanied by a nurse or requiring a wheelchair. Ray Kilmer Elementary is the only other district school with this program.

The school also features a Smartlab for students in

grades 3 to 6, where they work on collaborative projects and teachers act as facilitators.

The entire staff has also been trained to deal with trauma and continues to study two books each year on the subject. Examples of such trauma include death of a parent, a recent move, or a recent immigration from a dangerous situation. The school makes an effort to give a feeling of family to the population and holds classroom meetings each morning to ensure that students relate to one another and any social or emotional issues are noticed and addressed.

Among the challenges at the school are security, due to the amount of glass and open space. Frequent drills are held and students learn to remain calm. Parsley praised the PTO and parents for their suggestions and input on solutions to security issues.

Other challenges include the workload of the staff and traffic in the area. All rooms in the building are in use except for a weight room, which must be accessed through the gym.

Addressing the subject of last year's failed bond issue to build an additional elementary school, Parsley said there is a concern that the entire student body would not be accommodated in a building of the proposed size.

Legislative and board update

Board liaison Tiffney Upchurch reported on board activities and proposed legislation. She said the board had begun work on a strategic plan for the district and wishes to show appreciation for the dedication of those who promoted last year's bond issue. Superintendent K.C. Somers is giving a series of 10 collaborative community events at various locations and using various formats to maximize community participation (see ad on page 9 of this issue). At least one board member will be present at each. Somers will moderate each session.

Regarding legislation, such topics as safety, school choice, and preparing students for life after high school are being addressed. An interim committee on school finance is in its third year. Gov. Jared Polis also wishes to fund preschool, perhaps with taxes from vaping. Another option

would be a statewide mill levy.

Upchurch showed a video from the Colorado Department of Education on the subject of school funding.

Safety and Security update

Chief of Safety and Security Dennis Coates gave a presentation on the activities of his department.

Coates served as a School Resource Officer for nine years before embarking on his present job. He was originally a teacher before entering the El Paso County Sheriff's Office. As a result, he is familiar with the school environment. He has four staff members, all of whom have 20 years or more of law enforcement experience. He said that this experience has made it possible to recognize mental health issues and address them early.

Addressing the challenges of the department, Coates said that vaping and drugs remain a problem, adding that some garments allow a student to have a vaping device in a pocket where it can be accessed without a teacher noticing. His primary concern is that we don't know what is in the devices being used. He said that law enforcement dogs are no longer being trained to sniff marijuana because it is no longer the primary problem.

A second challenge is the prevalence of social media. Twitter is gaining popularity among students, and there now a way to create a fake Instagram account called Finstagram to send damaging messages. The department investigates all reports of bullying—there were 172 reports to Safe2Tell last year. The Safe2Tell program allows individuals to anonymously report any concerns about safety and security. Reports may be made by phone, email, or texting and will immediately be answered by representatives of the Sheriff's Office. Those involving D38 are answered by Coates himself.

There was a recent outbreak of fights that were videotaped and broadcast on social media. Those involved in the fights and the filmer were disciplined.

A new concern is the rate of growth in the district, especially near the schools. There is a concern about traffic.

There are now door alarms at the high schools so that stu-

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dents may use only two doors during the lunch break. In this way, others cannot come in when the students leave. The doors are not locked, simply alarmed, so exiting in an emergency is not affected.

In progress is the creation of new student ID cards, which will be scanned when a student enters or leaves a school.

District data review
Assessment Coordinator Mi-

chael Brom explained the final 2019 District Performance Framework, which shows the district's performance in the areas of academic achievement, academic growth, and postsecondary and workforce readiness.

The district was accredited with distinction.

To view the District Performance Framework in detail, please go to Lewis-Palmer.org, Family Resources, District

Accountability Advisory Committee, meeting minutes, District Data Review and find a link to the District Performance Framework. This is the final report based on results of data from the 2018-19 school year.

DAAC meets six times a year on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. Locations vary. The next meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday,

Feb. 14 at Ray Kilmer Elementary School, 4285 Walker Rd., Colorado Springs. A tour of the

school will be offered at 6:30. *Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.*

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Jan. 21

Board celebrates district achievements, thanks benefactors, views budget calendar

By Harriet Halbig
The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education recognized state- and district-level award winners, athletic champions and benefactors at its Jan. 21 meeting.

The district was Accredited with Distinction by the Colorado Department of Education, and several schools were awarded as follows:

- The John Irwin Award for excellence in math, science, and English Language Arts went to Lewis-Palmer Elementary and Prairie Winds Elementary. Prairie Winds Elementary was also awarded the Governor's Distinguished Improvement Award for exceptional student growth.
 - The Inez Lewis Award, a D38 award recognizing academic growth of over 10 points in the last year, was awarded to Lewis-Palmer Middle School, Prairie Winds Elementary School, and Monument Academy.
 - Recognition for athletic achievement was given to the Lewis-Palmer High School (LPHS) Girls Volleyball Team for winning their fourth state championship and the eighth-grade boys' basketball team from Lewis-Palmer Middle School for their undefeated season and league championship.
- The board also recognized American Furniture Warehouse for its contributions to



Above:Jolene Swanson, left, and Malikai Baits work with board Secretary Tiffney Upchurch to control a Sphero as part of the Demonstration of Learning presented by Ray Kilmer Elementary School. *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*

the district.
The third-grade class from Ray Kilmer Elementary worked with members of the board to demonstrate the use of Spheros, a robotic device that involves the use of a tablet to steer and change color. The challenge was to outline a square on the floor.

Fifth-graders from Kilmer Elementary presented a patriotic music performance of God Bless America and the history of the song.

Representatives from LPHS and Prairie Winds Elementary also presented gifts to board members in recognition of National School Board Member Month.

The Palmer Ridge High School Chamber Singers performed for the board.

Dismissal of Coach Collins protested
During the public comments portion of the meeting, Pete



Above:The Lewis-Palmer Middle School eighth-grade basketball team was recognized for their second undefeated season and league championship. To the right of the team are board President Matthew Clawson and Lewis-Palmer Middle School Principal Seann O'Connor. *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*



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(incumbent Rick L. Gordon)

District 7: Monument, Woodmoor, and a portion of the surrounding areas
(incumbent Donna J. Andersen-Van Ness)

The "Procedure for Director Elections and Member Voting" is available on MVEA's website at www.mvea.coop/annual-meeting.

To view a territory map with districts, visit www.mvea.coop/territory-map.

Are you interested in being an MVEA Board of Directors candidate? A candidate must be an MVEA member and reside in the district where there is a vacancy. Visit MVEA's Annual Meeting web page at www.mvea.coop/annual-meeting for additional candidate requirements. Click on "By-laws" and go to Article III, Section 2. A member interested in nomination should contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528 and leave a message. You will be contacted to verify your membership, district, and to begin the nomination process. A member may seek election by nomination by the nominating committee or nomination by petition.

- To be nominated by the nominating committee, please contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528. If seeking election by nomination through the nominating committee, a candidate questionnaire must be received by MVEA to be submitted to the committee by 5:30 p.m., Thursday, March 26, 2020.
- To be nominated by petition, you must have the petition signed by 15 MVEA members. Petitions and procedures will be made available by contacting the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528. The petition, along with a completed candidate questionnaire, must be returned to an MVEA office by 5:30 p.m., Monday, April 20, 2020.

A candidate questionnaire must be completed for either nomination by the committee or nomination by petition. If you have questions, please contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line.

Nominating Committee ••• District 2: Steve P. Wilson District 7: Linda K. Fenster

MVEA Board Nomination Information Line
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Above: Representatives of Monument Academy celebrate their receipt of the Inez Lewis Award. They are, from left, Director of Finance Marc Brocklehurst, Middle School Dean Julie Seymour, D38 Board President Matthew Clawson, Elementary School Dean Charlie Richardson, Chief Executive Officer Christianna Herrera, and D38 Superintendent K.C. Somers. Lewis-Palmer Middle School and Prairie Winds Elementary School also received the Inez Lewis Award. *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*

Bach, Austin Bach, Misty Bach, Hans Larsen, Melinda Clawson, and John Colby protested the recent dismissal of track and cross-country coach Rob Collins. All said that the students loved him, and he was instrumental in earning several athletic college scholarships. He excelled as a motivator and had been recognized at the state level for his work. Several parents said that more than one of their children had benefitted from the coach's encouragement. They requested that the board investigate the cause of the dismissal and reinstate the coach.

Jeff Lewis spoke about the subject of vaping and the fact that some districts in California have filed suit against Juul for endangering students.

Also, he said the Colorado Department of Education reported an 18% increase in suspensions last year due to marijuana use. He urged the board to take action.

During board comments, several members thanked those who came to speak during public comments.

Director Chris Taylor and Secretary Tiffiney Upchurch also thanked community members who have attended recent community collaboration events. These events will take place across the district and at different times of day to encourage attendance by a wide variety of citizens. For further information, please see the ad on page 9 of this issue.

Board President Matthew Claw-

son also thanked those who spoke and thanked Superintendent K.C. Somers for his efforts to increase community engagement by moderating the collaboration events.

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz told of some success stories with special-needs students at Lewis-Palmer Middle School and how the efforts of the staff have enabled several students to enter the mainstream.

Somers thanked Monument Academy for its presence and the reception it hosted before the meeting. He outlined the format for the community events, beginning with a 20-minute introduction on the state of the district, individual comments from the community, and small group discussions. All results will be recorded and tabulated. He encouraged everyone to attend at least one of the events.

State Sen. Paul Lundeen spoke briefly about the upcoming legislative session, saying school board members are the heroes of elected officials.

Lundeen said that at least 50 proposed bills involve public education. He acknowledged that there are now too many unfunded mandates—actions required by the state without financial support. He also said that the flow of funding must change, as now some of the wealthiest districts are being supported financially by some of the most challenged.

Lundeen favors a bill that would reward highly effective teachers with bonuses. This bill has been referred to the Finance Committee.

Director Thomas asked for advice on how the district should proceed af-

ter repeated defeats of mill levy overrides and bonds.

Lundeen suggested that the district change its strategy to ensure that the public believes in the importance of education. He also said the improving relationship between the district and Monument Academy is a positive factor.

District calendars

Executive Director of Finance David Crews explained the calendar for the development of the budget for the coming year, including the development of a system to increase compensation, support new curriculum, decrease deferred maintenance of facilities, and develop parameters for school-based budgeting.

Taylor asked how the district was so inaccurate in its enrollment forecast for this year.

Somers said that the district has hired a new demographer and will receive the first information in April.

The board approved the district calendars for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years.

The board went into executive session to discuss a personnel matter at 9 p.m. No further actions were taken following the executive session.

The Lewis-Palmer D 38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be held on Feb. 10 due to the conflict with Presidents Day on the 17th.

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

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Jan. 13

Board approves rules for election, business

By James Howald

The Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board voted on a pair of resolutions at their first meeting of

2020. The first defined the rules for the upcoming district election and the second addressed other rules about how the board will conduct its business. The

board's representative to the Joint Use Committee was re-elected and an alternate was confirmed. The board also heard operational reports from staff.

Rules set for upcoming board election and other tasks

Resolution 20-01 appointed Mandi Kirk of the law firm Norton and Smith P.C.

as the designated election official who will manage the upcoming board election. Her duties will include appointing election judges and possibly cancelling the election if there are no candidates for the board.

WWSD (Cont. on 16)

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WWSD (Cont. from 14)

The resolution also declares the WWSD headquarters at 1845 Woodmoor Drive to be the polling place for the election.

The resolution carries forward a number of procedures that have governed the operation of the board in previous years, such as the requirement to publish notifications of legal notices in a local newspaper.

The board voted unanimously to approve the resolution.

The district’s attorney, Erin Smith told the board that anyone wishing to serve on the board could submit a self-nomination form at the district headquarters. All self-nomination forms are due by Feb. 28 at 4 p.m., she said, adding the recommendation that the forms be handed in early so applicants have time to correct any errors in their form before the deadline.

The second resolution, also approved unani-

mously, set rules for exactly how the board must handle certain tasks—for example, the resolution that declared the Tri-Lakes Tribune as the local newspaper where WWSD would publish legal notices.

Hanson re-elected to Joint Use Committee

The board re-elected board member Lee Hanson to represent the district on the Joint Use Committee, the organization that manages the sewer infrastructure shared by WWSD, Monument, and Palmer Lake residents. WWSD President Jim Taylor was elected as an alternate to Hanson until May.

Operational report highlights

- The Chilcott Ditch is currently shut down for its winter hiatus.
- District Assistant Manager Randy Gillette told the board there were 45 main breaks in 2019, and that the number of breaks was increasing year by year, reflecting the age of the system.
- Gillette also told the board his team was work-

ing on a project to ensure pipelines connecting residences to main lines were properly maintained.

- District Manager Jessie Shaffer told the board that Well 21, the district’s newest well, which is located in the Misty Acres subdivision, is on schedule to be available during peak-use season in the summer.

The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 10 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. See www.woodmoorwater.com or call 488-2525 to verify meeting times.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility
Joint Use Committee, Jan. 14

Total phosphorus
treatment underway

By Lisa Hatfield

The Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (TLW-WTF) Joint Use Committee (JUC) met on Jan. 14 to discuss facility operations.

TLWWTF is owned in equal one-third shares by Monument Sanitation District (MSD), Palmer Lake Sanitation District (PLSD), and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD).

The three-member JUC acts as the board of the facility and consists of one director from each of the three owner districts’ boards: MSD board Chairman Ed DeLaney, JUC president; PLSD board member Reid Wiecks, new JUC vice president; and WWSD board Director Lee Hanson, JUC secretary/treasurer. Other board and staff members of the three owner districts also attended, including MSD District Manager Mike Wicklund, PLSD District Manager Becky Orcutt, and WWSD Assistant District Manager Randy Gillette.

Dale Smith remembered

DeLaney asked for a moment of silence in honor of Dale Smith, “a dear member of our tribe.” Smith served as the marshal/police chief for the Town of Palmer Lake from 1975 to 2006 and was very involved in many local governing boards including serving on the JUC from 2009 to 2014. He died Jan. 6.

Discharge Monitoring Report

Facility Manager Bill Burks said that in November, the first month of state-required and reported total phosphorus (TP) treatment, the facility’s new chemical TP removal tertiary clarifier system was working efficiently. See www.ocn.me/v17n12.htm#tlwtf.

Burks is also attempting to save electrical costs associated with UV bulb disinfection that destroys E. coli.

Stakeholder meeting updates

Burks reported that the Arkansas River/Fountain Creek Coalition for Urban/Rural River Evaluation (AF CURE) and TLWWTF continue to monitor points in the watershed for the presence of specific macroinvertebrates that are supposed to indicate the health of a stream. They also discussed non-point sources of stream pollution.

MSD Environmental Compliance Coordinator Jim Kendrick reported that at the Colorado Wastewater Utility Council December meeting, topics of concern for PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) included: the lack of federal regulatory standards, lack of approved laboratory analytical methods, and lack of options to destroy these toxins. They also discussed temperature limits for intermittent and ephemeral dry stream beds.

The next meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. Feb. 11 at the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility, 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of the month and are open to the public from all three owner-districts. For information, call Bill Burks at 719-481-4053.

Lisa Hatfield can be reached at lisahatfield@ocn.me.

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Donala Water and Sanitation District, Jan.16

District considers NMCI NEPA Participation Agreement

By Jennifer Kaylor

At the Jan. 16 meeting, the Donala Water and Wastewater District Board of Directors discussed potential participation in the North Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Participation Agreement as proposed by Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) for the purpose of setting parameters of cooperation.

Board President Ken Judd led a discussion to reconsider an intergovernmental agreement between Donala and Triview Metropolitan District to transport Triview's leased water through Donala's infrastructure to Triview's water delivery system. General Manger Kip Petersen summarized 2019 revenue and expenses and other district activities.

Water attorney Rick Fendel was also present.

Access to property and information, but no cost

According to the NEPA Participation Agreement draft, effective upon signing of all parties, participants would include CSU, Donala, Triview, Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Monument Sanitation District, Palmer Lake Sanitation District, and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District No.1. The six districts listed after CSU are collectively known as the northern entities. This NEPA permitting phase would gather information to determine the feasibility and environmental impacts of constructing the NMCI—an approximately 10-mile extension of gravity-driven wastewater pipeline intended to form a connection between CSU's existing wastewater collection system near Pine Creek and I-25 and the northern entities. The NMCI NEPA project is anticipated to last 36 months.

Petersen explained that CSU would conduct the NEPA process and bear the cost. Participants would provide property access and rights of entry; upon request help expedite survey production, wetlands identification, endangered species and associated habitat location identification, and National Historical Preservation Act clearances; and information sharing and overall cooperation. He confirmed that the agreement does not bind Donala to any future activities. Petersen recommended board approval of the participation agreement.

It was noted that under CSU's definition of wastewater service, CSU's responsibilities pertaining to return flows was limited to an accounting role. After a brief discussion, the board approved the participation agreement contingent upon the inclusion of language indicating CSU's support or facilitation of return flows in the definition of wastewater service.

Intergovernmental agreement reconsidered

Judd clarified that the discussion regarding the intergovernmental agreement with Triview was to determine if Donala would reconsider the agreement as amended and, if so, additional details would be determined during the following executive session. Petersen recounted the history of negotiations between Donala and Triview pertaining to the transport of Triview's leased water from the Board of Water Works of Pueblo (Pueblo Water) through Donala's infrastructure. It was determined at Donala's December meeting that enough uncertainty existed for Donala to discontinue these water "wheeling" discussions with Triview, but Donala would keep a previously established emergency agreement with Triview intact.

In response, Petersen stated that he had received a memo from Triview District Manager Jim McGrady that proposed an amended agreement that would be effective for one year and drop the amount of water transported per year from 500 acre-feet to 200 acre-feet.

Petersen reported that the new approach—which was under review by CSU—would add to the amount of water that Donala could move for Triview without encroaching upon Donala's current agreement and limits with CSU. Donala would pay the same rate to move Triview's leased water from Pueblo Water as it does to move its own Willow Creek Ranch water and Donala in turn would bill Triview accordingly. Donala would also charge Triview for additional expenses such as electricity to power extra well pumping time as well as administrative time and expertise.

Petersen presented the decision to the directors whether to reconsider the amended agreement and reopen discussions with Triview. The board voted to reopen the intergovernmental agreement negotiations.

This item was added to the executive session that followed the open meeting.

2019 financial estimates on target

Final revenue and expenses fell within close range of budgeted figures for 2019. Petersen explained that the water fund's revenue was technically down by 15.8%, but the budget included a \$1.75 million loan that the district did not collect. Wastewater revenue exceeded expectations by 3.3%. Expenses in the water and wastewater funds, including capital projects, ended at 4.4% and 6.8% under budget, respectively.

Keeping a watchful eye on anti-speculation

After Petersen reported on Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority activity, water attorney Rick Fendel commented that potentially forthcoming basin of origin protection and anti-speculation legislation may warrant concern. He spoke of potential benefits as well as obstacles. Depending on how terms such as basin and out-of-basin movement are defined, legislative changes may bring negative impacts for the district. Referring to the anti-speculation legislation, Fendel expressed concern that unintended consequences might result.

Fendel confirmed that he and legislative liaison Dick Brown would monitor ongoing activity.

Outreach and other status reports

- Petersen, Judd, and Director Wayne Vander-schuere met with Colorado Springs City Council President Richard Skorman to provide him with Donala's perspective on its relationship with Colorado Springs, regionalization of services such as the NMCI project, and Donala's history as a special district. Petersen reported that the meeting was positive, and similar meetings are planned with other entities.
- The U.S. Drought Monitor shows that El Paso County was listed as abnormally dry as of Jan. 7.
- The district drew 60% of its water from its Willow Creek Ranch renewable water supply and 40% from its well system in December and produced 425,344 more gallons than in November.
- Snowpack near Willow Creek Ranch appears to be average for this time of year.
- Petersen confirmed payment of \$200,000 to Pueblo County as part of its 1041 permit. This payment completes a \$250,000 fee to mitigate Fountain Creek impacts and fund new projects in the Fountain Creek watershed; the first pay-

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ment of \$50,000 was paid in 2019. Donala must also pay \$10,000 annually, with a 3% increase per annum, to the Fountain Creek District.

- Depending on construction bids received in early spring, the 2020 goal for the water main replacement is to complete Huntington Beach, Candlewood, and Mission Hills.

At 2:29 the board moved into executive session under the provisions of CRS 24-6-402(4)(f) to discuss personnel matters; CRS 24-6-402(4)(d) specialized details of security arrangements or investigations; CRS 24-6-402(4)(e) determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations; developing strategy for negotiations

and instructing negotiators. Petersen confirmed that no actions were taken following the executive session.

The next board meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. Feb. 20 at the district office located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80921. The directors meet in the district office conference room. Board meetings are normally held on

the third Thursday of the month, except for the 2020 May and November meetings. More information is available by calling (719)488-3603 or accessing www.donalawater.org.

Jennifer Kaylor can be reached at jenniferkaylor@ocn.me

Triview Metropolitan District, Jan. 22

Misinformation dispelled and actions approved

By Jennifer Kaylor

At the Triview Metropolitan District’s Jan. 22 board meeting, directors received questions from Triview resident Ann Howe. District Manager Jim McGrady presented several items for review and possible approval, including a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Participation Agreement with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU).

Director James Barnhart was excused. Water attorney Chris Cummins and general counsel Gary Shupp were present.

Triview is a Title 32 special district within Monument that provides road,

landscaping, and open space maintenance and water and wastewater services to Jackson Creek, Promontory Pointe, Sanctuary Pointe, and several commercial areas.

The Jan. 22 board packet may be accessed via www.triviewmetro.com/boardDocuments.

Answers bring clarity

Howe posed three questions, the first of which pertained to a statement she thought she heard at a Town of Monument Board of Trustees meeting. She asked if Triview had been overpaid in its share of tax revenue by the town. McGrady and the directors expressed

surprise. No one had heard of any overpayments. McGrady committed to getting more information.

On Jan. 23, McGrady included OCN when he provided Howe with his emailed response.

According to Town Manager Mike Foreman’s recollection, the town’s finance director stated that the town had over-budgeted the amount of property taxes owed to Triview, not overpaid. McGrady explained further that over-budgeting can occur because districts must often use a preliminary property tax valuation from the county to create their budgets in August. Final valuations, which tend to be lower than preliminary figures due to residents contesting their valuations, are not available until late November or early December. Triview’s accountant confirmed that the amount paid to Triview was correct and based on the county’s final valuation.

Howe also inquired about the Economic Development Council’s progress and expressed concern that “a half-million” was not bearing fruit. McGrady corrected the amount spent on the consultant’s services as being about \$34,000. See the pdf pp. 44 through 73 of the Buxton contract in the May 21 Triview board packet.

much in its infancy.

Howe’s final question was about a purportedly unsafe road between the Home Place Ranch development and Sanctuary Pointe. McGrady confirmed that the road is temporary and intended for emergency access and, eventually, the road will be replaced and outfitted with curb and gutter. See related Jan. 21 Board of Trustees article on page 8.

Contractual plans move forward

McGrady presented five action items, the first being the NEPA Participation Agreement for the North Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI). The draft document spells out the parameters of participation in the NEPA process, which essentially stipulates full cooperation in determining the feasibility of constructing the NMCI to create a regionalized wastewater service. None of the six sanitation districts that comprise the northern entities—Donala Water and Sanitation District, Triview, Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Monument Sanitation District, Palmer Lake Sanitation District, and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District No. 1—would bear any expense during this approximated 36-month phase. See the related Donala article on page 17.

McGrady stated that he and Cummins agreed that the document was straightforward. The board approved the agreement as presented with the understanding that any substantial changes would be presented to it for approval.

McGrady responded that the council’s participation in a trade show in Fort Worth was very productive. Several enterprises knew of Monument and the Front Range. Director James Otis added that the council’s focus is to attract businesses that don’t currently exist in town and will fit Monument’s culture; to encourage, support, and attract mom-and-pop enterprises; and to establish economic stability that relies less on residential fees to provide services. President Mark Melville stated that the council’s work with Buxton, a consultant company, is still very

The board approved three additional contracts. The JDS-Hydro Consultants Inc. proposal for drilling two wells in the southwest corner of a park adjacent to Sanctuary Rim Drive and near the district’s A building was approved. The bid of more than \$1.3 million will install the wells, but Triview will bear additional expenses to connect the wells to its B plant, purchase pumps and motors, construct a dual-purpose building to house the well controller and provide restroom facilities, and complete finishing work on the parking lot, landscaping, and a possible playground. The estimated total expense for this project is \$2.5 million.

McGrady highly recommended the four-year contract (subject to annual appropriations) with Haynie and Co. for auditing services. President Mark Melville and Secretary/Treasurer James Barnhart were authorized to sign the audit engagement letter.

Directors approved the contract engaging the Law Offices of Gary L. Shupp P.C. for general counsel services. McGrady announced that Shupp would likely transition into retirement, and 2020 would be his final year to serve in this role for Triview.

The board also approved resolution 2020-01 to name the law firm White Bear Ankele Tanaka & Waldron as the designated election official for the May 5 election. Two incumbent directors have reached the end of their terms and plan to run for re-election.

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TRIVIEW (Cont. on 20)

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TRIVIEW (Cont. from 18)

Self-nomination forms are available at the Triview office at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 300, Monument.

McGrady expressed disappointment at Donala's proposed higher-than-anticipated fees for transporting or "wheeling" water on Triview's behalf. The board decided to continue work on the metering station that will allow the wheeled water to be measured as preparation for potential emergencies. The future of a long-term wheeling agreement between the two districts seemed unclear and in need of more time and information.

Additional activities create a busy schedule

Additional progress reports included:

- A change case for 500 of Triview's Fountain Mutual Irrigation Co. shares, which shifts the shares to municipal uses including augmenta-

tion and broadens the district's opportunities for short-term and potentially long-term use.

- Work continued to refine landscape plans for the Jackson Creek Parkway (JCP) median to ensure plant appropriateness regarding climate, salt tolerance, elevation, and drought tolerance.
- Parks and Open space priorities focused on watering new plant material and older trees. Director Marco Fiorito proposed that the district create a 10- to 15-year playground equipment upgrade schedule for the parks, especially those in the Jackson Creek area.
- Parks staff will be working with a Girl Scout troop to install 10 to 12 yards of mulch and possibly May plantings at Creekside Park as a service project.
- A malfunctioning traffic light controller at the juncture of Leather Chaps Drive and JCP was scheduled to be repaired on Jan. 29 and 30, tem-

porarily transforming the intersection into a 4-way stop for a portion of each day.

- Water pumped in December reached almost 12 million gallons.

At 7:10 p.m., the board entered executive session §24-6-402(4)(b)(e)(f) legal advice, negotiations, personnel. McGrady confirmed later that no additional actions were taken as a result of the executive session.

The next Triview board meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Feb. 19. Check the district's event calendar at www.triviewmetro.com/home or call 488-6868 for meeting schedule updates. Board meetings are held at the district office, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 300, Monument. See also "Triview Metropolitan District" on Facebook, or [Twitter.com/@TriviewMetro](https://twitter.com/TriviewMetro).

Jennifer Kaylor can be reached at jenniferkaylor@ocn.me.

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Jan. 2, 7, 14, and 16

Public improvements completed at two developments

By Helen Walklett

During January, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) made decisions relating to two Tri-Lakes-area developments and approved a range of license applications

Letters of credit released for two developments

At the Jan. 7 BOCC meeting, the commissioners unanimously approved the final release of the letter of credit for public improvements at the Jackson Ranch Filing No. 2 subdivision for \$20,602 following the completion and satisfactory inspection of all the improvements. The development is east of Roller Coaster Road and north of Higby Road.

A partial release of a letter of credit for \$159,258 for Academy Gateway Filing No. 1 was approved at

the Jan. 14 meeting. This followed the completion and satisfactory inspection of 80% of the grading and erosion control work and public improvements at the site at the corner of Struthers Road and North Gate Boulevard.

License applications

The commissioners made a number of license decisions at their Jan. 2 meeting. They set the survey area for an application by Khanh Vu Corp., d/b/a TK Nails Spa & Bar, for a beer and wine liquor license for its premises at 1765 Lake Woodmoor Drive and scheduled the license hearing for Jan. 28. They approved a request by The Country Club at Woodmoor to waive the 45-day application requirement for the submission of its hotel and restaurant with optional premises license renewal after the applicant failed to file in

time.

They also approved the issuance of an ambulance service license to the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District. The license is valid for one year from Jan. 1, 2020.

At the Jan. 16 meeting, the commissioners approved the transfer of ownership of the existing hotel and restaurant license from Descar's Roadside Bar & Grill to Black Forest Bistro at 6750 Shoup Road. The transfer of ownership application was filed on Dec. 31, and the county issued a temporary permit to enable the continued operation of the liquor license at the premises until the full transfer could be approved.

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

El Paso County Planning Commission, Jan. 7

Final plat for Walden Preserve 2 filing recommended for approval

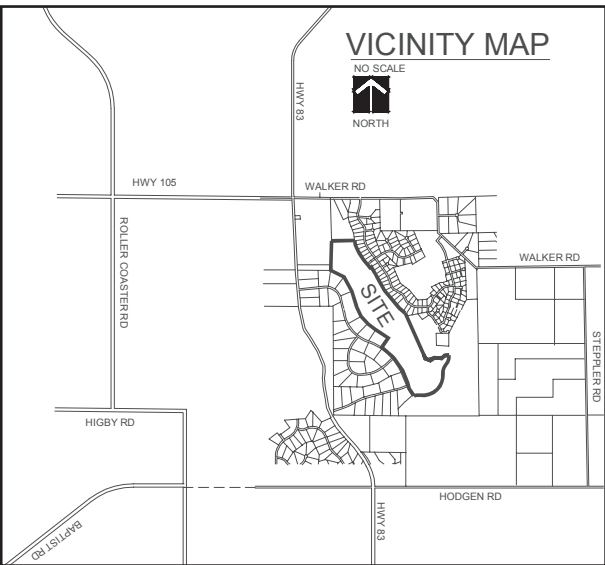
By Helen Walklett

At its Jan. 7 meeting, the El Paso County Planning Commission recommended for approval a final plat request for Filing No. 4 at the Walden Preserve 2 subdivision. The commissioners also approved a minor subdivision request for a property in Black Forest.

Walden Preserve 2 final plat request

The proposed final plat for Filing No. 4 at the Walden Preserve 2 development makes up 45.27 acres of the overall 134.05-acre parent parcel and is zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD). It is east of Highway 83, south of Walker Road, and north of Hodgen Road, along the north side of the Pond View Place and Walden Way/Timber Meadow Drive intersection. The proposed final plat includes 23 single-family residential lots with a minimum lot size of one acre, two tracts for utilities, drainage, open space, and recreation totaling 18 acres, and three acres of right-of-way. The property is within the Black Forest Preservation Plan area.

The El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the Walden Preserve PUD development plan for the phased development of 66 single-family residential lots in December 2004. In March 2014, the BOCC approved a rezoning request that reduced the minimum lot size from 2.5 acres to 1 acre. The plans were amended administratively in December 2019 to allow for slight variations in the lot configuration, but the amendments did not alter the overall density or add additional lots.



Above: Walden Preserve 2 site map. Source: El Paso County Planning and Community Development's EDARP system.

Fifty-six adjacent property owners were notified. The county received one letter in favor and two in opposition. Concerns raised included whether the existing infrastructure could handle the additional lots. Nina Ruiz, project manager/planner II, Planning and Community Development, said that staff had not identified an issue. Gilbert LaForce, PE Engineer II, Planning and Community Development, told the commissioners that, although part of the drainage had not been constructed per the plans, work was now ongoing to remedy this.

Discussion at the hearing centered on the construction of a regional trail through the development that Ruiz told the commissioners had been partially built but never fully constructed to county standards. She said that the property owner had entered into a Park Lands Agreement in 2014 that allowed them to dedicate land for a trail in lieu of paying parkland fees. Ruiz said that more recently the developer had been in talks with the county's Parks Department about potentially leaving the trail as it is and paying fees from this point onward and that a condition had been included in her report to reflect this.

However, more recently, the applicant had be-

gun to think finishing the trail might be a better option. Ruiz said the county was therefore requesting that the condition be modified to allow the county to work with the applicant on a resolution that could be brought to the BOCC for approval without having to come back before the Planning Commission.

Brian Bobeck, the county's park operations manager, confirmed that discussions with the property owner had gone back and forth on completing the trail versus paying regional park fees. He said, "Ultimately we would like to have the trail completed per the Park Lands Agreement, but as we've gotten to this point, if the trail isn't completed, we would be open, at the recording of the final plat, that the regional parks fees, the remaining fees, be paid at that point. So, it will be an either or. Again, [we prefer that the] trail be completed prior to the recording of the final plat."

David Jones of Land Resource Associates, on behalf of the applicant, told the commissioners that his client understood the importance of the trail. He said, "This trail is constructed. It is being used today. What it does not have on it is a surface coating of crushed limestone. The crushed limestone has been incredibly difficult for us to find in El Paso County. That's just a fact that we're faced with, so we've been spending some time right now working with the Parks Department trying to find an alternative that meets their needs but is affordable for our community to use as well. It's not like we're saying we're not going to build the trail. The trail is there today."

Commissioner Tim Trowbridge said he would prefer the trail to be finished rather than having the applicant pay the fees. Fees in lieu of land dedication go to a regional fund rather than to the specific development, so they would not necessarily be applied to this particular trail.

The unanimous recommendation for approval included a finding for water sufficiency with regard to quantity, quality, and dependability. The application was scheduled to be heard at the BOCC meeting on Jan. 28.

Walker Reserve minor subdivision

Also at the Jan. 7 meeting, the commissioners unanimously recommended for approval an application by Alessi and Associates, on behalf of G3 Investments, for Walker Reserve, a minor subdivision to create three single-family residential lots on a 40.77 acre property

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zoned RR-5 (residential rural) in Black Forest. The property is about one mile east of Highway 83 just to the north of Walker Road. The subdivision would create two lots of just over five acres and a third of 28.52 acres and would include 1.81 acres of right-of-way.

The application was treated as a consent item, meaning there was no discussion. It was scheduled to be heard at the BOCC meeting on Jan. 28.

County master plan update

Mark Gebhardt, deputy director, Planning and Community Development, gave an update on the master plan process at the end of the Jan. 7 meeting, telling the commissioners that the two-year project was ap-

proximately on schedule and currently at 25% of budget but with more detailed reports and information to come.

Earlier in the meeting, Judy van Ahlefeldt, a Black Forest resident, had addressed the commissioners with concerns she had about the process. She said, "I would like to see more direct Planning Commission involvement in the master plan in terms of oversight and with the website and public outreach, participation and visioning, and overall direction. Most of what I've seen has been reports to you by PCD [Planning and Community Development]. I know four of you are on MPSC [Master Plan Steering Committee] and

that's good but with regard to that, I think it would be good to have an agenda item on each agenda the rest of the year for the Planning Commission to hear what the people who have attended the MPSC that are on the Planning Commission have to say and I think that would improve the communication and make things a little better."

Information about the master plan project can be found on county's website: <https://elpaso-hlplanning.hub.arcgis.com/>

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations Inc., Jan. 11

NEPCO has plans for 2020 presentations

By Marlene Brown

The Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations Inc. (NEPCO) held its bi-monthly meeting Jan. 11 at the Monument Town Hall. Attendees included governing members of northern El Paso County homeowners associations and concerned citizens. NEPCO President Greg Lynd discussed plans for 2020 presentations regarding issues pertaining to subdivision homeowners such as transportation, road construction and maintenance, water, fire protection, property taxes, and high growth in the area.

Paul Pirog, vice chairman of the Transportation and Land Use Committee, said NEPCO continues to offer input to local governments, such as the Town of Monument, and outlying new subdivisions. As a volunteer organization, NEPCO is able review applications, preliminary plans, final plats, and permits to build and give recommendations to the county Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. Some of the high-density subdivisions being reviewed are Sanctuary Point Filing 3, Rollin Ridge, the business park at Highway 83 and Hodgen Road, Grandwood on Higby Road (151 homes on 2½- to 5-acre lots), Willow Springs Ranch (396 lots annexed to Monument on 219 acres), The Village rezone (84



Above: Paul Pirog, vice chairman of the NEPCO Transportation and Land Use Committee, described some of the numerous proposed new housing developments in the area. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

acres of townhomes, multi-family homes, commercial and single-family homes), and Monument Ridge Filing 2 at Baptist and Struthers Roads. There were 23 new subdivision reviews in 2018 and 43 reviews for new subdivisions in 2019.

Wildfire Preparedness Committee

Matthew Nelson, Woodmoor Improvement Association Covenants/Forestry administrator, and Beth Lonnquist, Red Rock Ranch Homeowners Associa-

tion (HOA) president, reported on wildfire preparedness. Red Rock Ranch HOA received recognition as a Firewise USA Site of Excellence through training and planning to help homeowners form mitigation plans. Creating a Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan begins with local resources. Andre Mouton of Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Emergency Preparedness Group offers emergency training along with teaching the protocols for mitigation, slash removal, and chipping coordination for each of the lots in a subdivision. Neighbors help neighbors, so the workload for each house and lot is not all on the individual owner.

The Wildfire Preparedness Committee meets on the first Tuesday of month at 10 a.m. at the Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr., and is open to the public to discuss resources available to individuals and other homeowners associations to be involved in mitigating wildfires.

NEPCO meets 10 a.m. to noon every other month on the second Saturday at the Monument Town Hall. The next general meeting will be on March 14.

Marlene Brown can be reached at marlenebrown@ocn.me.

January Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

After a snowy start to the season, conditions really quieted down starting in December and continuing in January. In fact, January 2020 was one of the driest on record, which is saying something when you consider January is already one of our driest months of the year. Up until the last few days of the month, almost no measurable precipitation fell across the Front Range.

At the official observing site in Denver, only a trace of snow had been recorded through Jan. 26th, and if it weren't for a couple quick-moving storms, one on the 27th and one on the 29th, that would have tied 1934 as the least snowy January on record. Not surprisingly, temperatures were also well above normal for the month, especially the low temperatures. We didn't drop below zero during the month, which is highly unusual for January.

Not surprisingly, the month started off mild, with highs reaching 50°F on the 1st, about 15 degrees warmer than normal. Temperatures "cooled" back down to normal levels on the 2nd and 3rd before warming back up to the mid-50s on the 4th. The roller coaster ride in temperatures between average and above average continued during the first week of the month.

One of the few storms that brought moisture be-

gan to affect the area late on the 9th, with some flurries developing that evening. More flurries and snow showers developed on the 10th and on the morning of the 11th. Those resulted in only about a half-inch of snowfall and barely a measurable amount of liquid equivalent.

Dry weather again took hold through the middle to end of the month, with temperatures again holding right around average to a little above. The dry period was interrupted by a quick snow shower just before noon on the 17th and other than that, no snow fell from the 12th through the 26th.

Finally, slightly more active weather conditions moved into the region over the last couple days of the month. The first system produced some light snow and blowing snow from late afternoon through mid-evening on the 27th. This produced 1-2 inches of new snow, normally not a noteworthy storm, but given how dry this January has been, it was a "big" storm. A couple quick moving systems moved through with light snow during the morning and early afternoon of the 29th and again during the late afternoon and evening of the 30th.

A look ahead

February is often a dry and cold month for the region as we move toward the snowy and unsettled conditions of March and April. Precipitation averages less

than an inch, with average high temperatures in the 30s. It can get very cold in February, with Arctic air making brief pushes into the region. However, days begin to get a little longer, which leads to some nice, sunny days and the snow that does fall begins to melt faster.

January 2020 Weather Statistics

Average High	41.7° (+1.6°)
100-year return frequency value max	48.4° min 30.8°
Average Low	17.7° (+5.1°)
100-year return frequency value max	26.6° min 6.6°
Highest Temperature	55° on the 4th
Lowest Temperature	7° on the 10th, 11th
Monthly Precipitation	0.22"
	(-0.49" 65% below normal)
100-year return frequency value max	1.56" min 0.01"
Monthly Snowfall	3.5"
	(-9.8", 70% below normal)
Season to Date Snow	67.2"
	(+14.4", 20% above normal)
Season to Date Precip.	4.11"
	(+0.03", 1% above normal)
Heating Degree Days	1093 (-4)
Cooling Degree Days	0

Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.

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.

Note: The letters this month are arranged in alphabetical order by the submitter's last name.

Good news regarding property tax rates

Last year, most homeowners saw property values increase. The El Paso County Assessor's Notice of Valuation (NOV) last May caused some to claim, "My taxes went up!" That's possible, but by early February residents will receive property tax bills with the rest of the story.

When you get that bill, compare your rates to last year's (<https://treasurer.elpasoco.com/mill-leaves/>). The January OCN reported about local taxing entity rates to be paid in 2020. Most rates will decrease or remain the same.

Lewis-Palmer School District 38 decreased to 41.43 from 44.068 mills, keeping the Tri-Lakes education tax rate well below comparable districts. Triview Metropolitan District reduced to 32 from 35, described as a temporary reduction.

OCN reported no changes for Palmer Lake (21.238), Donald Wescott Fire Protection District overall (7.0) and the northern subdistrict (14.9), Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (18.4), and Donala Water and Sanitation District A (21.296) and B (10.648). OCN reported only one rate increase: Forest

Lakes (Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1) to 55.664 (from 55.278).

From other news sources, the county rate will decrease to 7.552 (from 8.068), the Pikes Peak Library

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District rate will be 3.731 (from 4.0), and the Town of Monument will be 6.152 (from 6.289).

The Residential Assessment Rate also decreased to 7.15% (from 7.2%), so to apply these rates use the Assessor’s Market Value x .0715 Residential Assessment Rate x Mill Rate x .001 (the rates are per \$1,000). Or think of it this way: one mill costs \$7.15 per \$100,000 of your home’s value.

One more piece of good news regarding taxes: Colorado state income tax decreased to 4.5 (from 4.63).

Paul Howe

OCN: Who makes it possible?

As many readers know, *Our Community News* is a publication devoted to providing Tri-Lakes-area residents with information they need to become involved in the public process of addressing the significant challenges facing the Tri-Lakes area. Articles focus on the deliberations of Tri-Lakes-area governmental bodies such as the Monument Board of Trustees, Palmer Lake Town Council, and many of the local water, sanitation, fire, and school district boards.

What is less well known is who does the work of making the publication available, one that is provided free of charge. The entire staff of OCN consists of vol-

unteers, thoughtful and caring “Tri-Lakers” who put in numerous hours to attend governmental meetings, write about what was said and decided at those meetings, take photos—and attend to all the myriad administrative details. These volunteers do not receive a salary; they do it because they care about our community and keeping it safe, thriving, and pleasant.

Many thanks to all of OCN’s volunteers.

PS. If you are wondering where the money comes from to pay for the paper, the answer is advertising. Also, there are, I believe, a few other very minor sources of income.

Ross Meyer, Former OCN volunteer ■

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

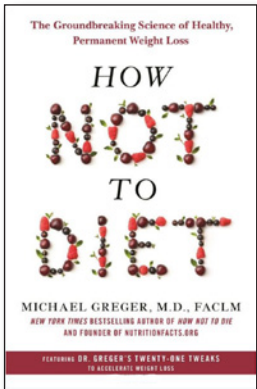
Heart and body health

By the staff at Covered Treasures
“It’s impossible,” said pride. “It’s risky,” said experience. “It’s pointless,” said reason.
“Give it a try,” whispered the heart.—Unknown

February is Heart Month as well as the month of Valentine’s Day. Why not read some books that help you toward optimal health and longevity with your loved ones. Making small lifestyle changes can have huge health benefits and can change the entire trajectory of your life.

How Not to Diet: The Groundbreaking Science of Healthy, Permanent Weight Loss
By Michael Greger, M.D., FACLM (Flatiron Books) \$32.50

Dr. Michael Greger, internationally renowned nutrition expert and physician, homes in on the optimal criteria to enable weight loss while considering how specific foods actually affect our health and longevity. He lays out the key ingredients of the ideal weight-loss diet but goes beyond food to identify 21 weight-loss accelerators that maximize our natural fat-burning capabilities.



The Blue Zones Kitchen: 100 Recipes to Live to 100
By Dan Buettner (National Geographic) \$30

Building on decades of research, longevity expert Dan Buettner has gathered 100 recipes inspired by the Blue Zones, home to the healthiest and happiest communities in the world. Each dish uses ingredients and cooking methods proven to increase longevity, wellness, and mental health. The recipes also include

lifestyle tips.

Smart Plants: Power Foods & Natural Nootropics for Optimized Thinking, Focus & Memory
By Julie Morris (Sterling Publishing) \$29.95

This book reveals the dietary secrets to better brain performance. Combining scientific research with the wisdom of ancient remedies, it showcases an array of cognition-enhancing plants—from everyday foods to natural nootropics. Her recipes make it easy to incorporate these powerful foods into your daily diet.

Half the Sugar, All the Love: 100 Easy, Low-Sugar Recipes for Every Meal of the Day
By Jennifer Tyler Lee and Anisha Patel, M.D., MSPH (Workman Publishing) \$22.95

Our children consume three times the recommended daily allowance of added sugar, which puts them at an unprecedented risk for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, excess weight, and more. This book features 100 doctor-approved recipes that cut the sugar by half or more without sacrificing the flavors our families love. It’s an eye-opening education, a program of healthy eating, and a cookbook chock-full of easy, delicious recipes all in one.

Cannabis and CBD for Health and Wellness: An Essential Guide for Using Nature’s Medicine to Relieve Stress, Anxiety, Chronic Pain, Inflammation, and More
By Aliza Sherman and Dr. Junella Chin (Ten Speed Press) \$16.99

A safe, comprehensive guide to using cannabis to ease chronic and acute health issues such as pain, insomnia, inflammation, depression, anxiety, grief, stress, and more, from the founder of a global cannabis wellness network and an osteopathic physician. With information on cannabis forms, methods of in-

gestion, dosing and microdosing, safety and storage, caregiving and effectiveness for self-care, physical fitness, aging, and more, this is the only book you need to start using cannabis for better health.

No Gluten, No Problem Pizza: 75+ Recipes for Every Craving—From Thin Crust to Deep Dish, New York to Naples
By Kelli and Peter Bronski (Experiment) \$24.95

With more than a decade of gluten-free recipe experience, the Bronskis bring 75 recipes with all of the authentic flavor and texture of traditional pizza but none of the gluten. Every step of the process is explained. You will find 15 kinds of dough covering all the major pizza styles, grain-free and nutrient-rich pizzas, and pizzas for every meal.

Stretching: 30th Anniversary Edition
By Bob Anderson (Shelter Publications) \$19.95

Bob Anderson is the world’s most popular stretching authority and a local author. For over 35 years, Anderson has taught millions of people, including the Denver Broncos and Olympic athletes, his simple approach to stretching. His book features stretching routines specific to a variety of people, including sports enthusiasts, travelers, children, gardeners, and people in wheelchairs. There is also an abbreviated version of each routine for people in a hurry, new information on the stretching vs. warming up debate, and new and improved drawings. A new section focuses on office fitness exercises, helpful for both home and office computer users.

“Believe in your heart that you’re meant to live a life full of passion, purpose, magic and miracles.”—Roy T. Bennett

Until next month, happy reading!
The Covered Treasures staff can be reached at books@ocn.me.

February Library Events

Adult Winter Reading Program begins; Valentine crafts available

By Harriet Halbig

February’s library programs include fascinating home-school programs, Valentine crafts, and the kickoff of the *Winter Adult Reading Program*. See below for more information.

Children’s programs

Regularly occurring children’s programs at the Monument Library include *Book Break* on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:30 to 11, *Story Time* on Tuesdays from 10:30 to 11:15, *Toddler Time* on Thursdays at 9:30 and 10:30, and *Paws to Read* on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4 to 5. When registration is required, please call 488-2370.

The *Homeschool @ Monument* program from 1:30 to 2:30 on Monday, Feb. 10 is *Mess Around with Sound*. This program, for ages 7 to 12, will feature experiments with a Chladni plate, tuning forks, and other items as well as discussing the sound production of stringed instruments. Registration required.

Lego Build will meet on Saturday, Feb. 15, from 10 to 11. Use our large collection of Legos to build to your heart’s content. All ages welcome and no registration required.

Come to a *Snow Party* from 4 to 5 on Thursday, Feb. 20. Your child will help build an indoor snowman and make paper bag snowflakes to take home! For ages 5 to 12.

The *Homeschool @ Monument* program on Monday, Feb. 24 from 1:30 to 2:30 is *3D Koi Fish Masterpiece*. Homeschoolers will see the many variations of

the Japanese koi fish and their habitat, then create a 3-D koi and paint it in realistic bright colors. Artists will design a splashing waterfall background to place the koi in and may add a “signature” in Japanese characters as a finishing touch to their masterpiece. For ages 7 to 12.

Teen and Tween programs

See above for a description of *Lego Build*. Every Wednesday from 3 to 5 in the study room, an *All Ages Knitting Group* meets. Practice materials are available, but attendees are encouraged to bring their own projects.

The *Teen Creative Writing Group* will meet in the study room from 6 to 7:30 on Tuesday, Feb. 4. This group, for ages 12 to 18, allows you to meet fellow writers, share ideas, do writing exercises, and share snacks. No registration needed.

Friday, Feb. 7 from 1 to 3, teens ages 16 and up are invited to make *Valentine Card Creations*. Sparkles, paint and paper will be combined to make mixed-media Valentine cards using upcycled materials such as brown paper bags, corrugated cardboard and fun vintage paper. We will crunch, splatter, and crinkle our way to some funky, one-of-a-kind cards. Roxanne Lingle will teach this class. Registration required.

On Friday, Feb. 7 from 4 to 5, join us for *Tween Twist: Mosaics*. Tweens ages 9 to 12 will make their own Minecraft masterpiece, magical modern memento, and more. You will draw your own mosaic design or copy an example and bring it to life with

square stickers or perler beads.

Teens are invited to come for *Study Break Bingo* on Tuesday, Feb. 11 from 3:30 to 4:30. Drop by after school for a quick session of Bingo. There will be snacks and prizes! No registration necessary.

Teens struggling with math can take advantage of free tutoring at all levels by experienced adult tutors. Drop in on Mondays between 3:30 and 7. No appointment necessary. Follows the D38 and library schedules.

Teens Make Tuesday from 4 to 5:30 on Tuesday, Feb. 18 will teach you to sew your own heart (broken or whole) plushy. No sewing experience required. All supplies provided for ages 12 to 18. Registration is required.

The *Paper Tigers Origami Club* will meet from 4:15 to 5:30 on Friday, Feb. 21. Learn new designs each month. All teens and adults are welcome. Registration is preferred but not required.

The *Monument Library Anime Club* will meet from 5 to 6:30 on Thursday, Feb. 27. Share anime with other enthusiasts. Eat snacks and watch anime, none rated above TV-14. Recommended for ages 13 and up.

Adult programs

The *2020 Winter Adult Reading Program* will be from Feb. 1 to March 31 with the theme of *Imagine Your Story*. Prizes include an enamel pin, a Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory Bar, and the annual mug. Patrons are challenged to read eight books in eight weeks or four books and attend four qualifying pro-

grams. Come to the library to register or register online and print your reading log at home. This program is for ages 18 and up.

See above for descriptions of *All Ages Knitting*, *Valentine's Day Card Creations*, and *Paper Tigers Origami*.

Regularly occurring adult programs include *Senior Chats* on Wednesdays from 10 to noon and *yoga* on Thursdays from noon to 1. Both are open to all and require no registration.

On Thursday, Feb. 6 from 2 to 4 learn how to up-cycle a book and turn it into a piece of art. This class will present the *basic principles of the art of book folding*. The participants will complete a heart design. Registration is preferred. This is the first of a two-part

series, with the second session on Feb. 13. Registration is required for each.

Life Circles will meet from 9:30 to 11:30 on Monday, Feb. 3. This group writes about memories of life events. Join a supportive circle, which will help you to be motivated and productive. No registration required.

The *Monumental Bookworms* will meet from 7 to 8 on Tuesday, Feb. 11 to discuss *The Hate You Give* by Angie Thomas. All are welcome to this book club sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Friends of the Library.

History Buffs will meet from 1:30 to 3:30 on Wednesday, Feb. 26. This group selects a different era to discuss each year. This year's topic is the *Making of America (1783-present)*. No registration

required.

The *Monument Library Spinning Group* will meet from 1:30 to 3:45 on Thursday, Feb. 27. Join a group of hand spinners. No registration required.

Palmer Lake Library Events

The *Palmer Lake Book Group* meets at 9 a.m. on the first Friday of each month. For the current selection, please call 481-2587.

Family Story Time at Palmer Lake is on Wednesdays at 10:30. Toddler Time is on Fridays at 10:30.

Homeschool @ Palmer Lake from 1 to 2 on Monday, Feb. 14 will be *The Northern Lights Science and Art Experience*. This program, for ages 6 to 12, explains the northern lights, what causes this scientific phenomenon, and where

and when to see them. Participants will then create a northern lights art project using chalk pastels. Please call 481-2587 to register.

Kidsmake Art: Story Art: Hooray for Fish, on Saturday, Feb. 15 from 10:30 to 11:30 will begin with a reading of *Hooray for Fish* by Lucy Cousins. Using crayons and tempera paint to outline and decorate fish of all types, attendees will practice drawing shapes, mixing colors, and creating art inspired by the book. This program is recommended for ages 5 to 12. Registration is required at 481-2587.

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

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Protecting our forest clime when landscaping

By Janet Sellers

The secret to our local garden success, I believe, is the soil. I say this a lot: Our native soil is perfect for conifers and forest ecology. We came here to enjoy the forests, after all. But many try to have their dream landscape by tearing out the forests they came here to live near.

Can we have both? Of course! To amend the soil for non-native things is done easily in one day if you know a secret that helps our local alpaca farmers and makes our gardens amazingly ready for whatever we want to put there—almost. Secret? It's alpaca manure—also known as alpaca beans—and I write about it a lot because I want people to understand how amazing this amendment is. We can mix it as fresh "green manure" or even aged "brown manure" with dry leaves from fall and voila! A perfect and fluffy amendment that can go right on the ground.

Do you have grass or other things where you want your garden bed? No problem. Almost any time of year, lay out cardboard flat or use newspapers on snow-free land, pile on your alpaca bean and leaf amendment 3-6 inches thick and top it off with pine needles from last fall to keep out unwanted sprouts. This makes very fertile soil that will grow most anything in our zone, and some that are only in close zones.

We've had success with this at Monument Community Garden and at my house. All the work is done in an hour or so, and it's immediately ready to plant seeds. You can bet critters will be on patrol, but the pine straw seems to keep most out until sprouts appear, and then it's spring and we can net the beds if



Above: Spring flowering trees are popular everywhere, likely because they explode into beautiful blossoms to refresh our souls. We can plant these even as thin saplings, and they thrive with pruning. I like to see the pink blooms framing snow-covered Pikes Peak, embraced in our clear, bluer-than-blue spring skies from my picture windows. I like to paint the scene and bring my students there to draw and paint, shaded under the branches filled with blooms. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

needed.

Truth be told, I have so many deer running through my yard that I've planted lots of Russian sage and other plants like native wildflowers or iris, cos-

mos and poppies, none of which are native but are very colorful and deer proof. The birds love my beautiful pink dwarf crabapple tree, especially after the crab apples are edible later in the year. It's a four-season tree with blossoms, green summer leaves, golden fall colors and tiny red apples in winter. It can be pruned down small or allowed to grow large.

My beloved Nanking apricot has stayed with me for about 15 years but doesn't get to bloom in February most years, even though it gets lots of buds. We get freezes in February and March when the apricot likes to bloom. It makes it through these awful temperature spikes with leaves for the summer and it's still a very pleasant tree. It was created to live through frigid Chinese winters and be fine down to minus 30 degrees, but its blossoms freeze off, it just can't take the start-stop of our unpredictable winters as the crabapple seems to be able to do. I'm sure that the apricot as well as the crabapple were grafted (onto some kind of plum tree?) in the first place, which is common for most nursery trees.

Dangerous liaisons

February sunny days are tempting to get nursery plants, but don't put them outdoors! Our icy weather spikes last until May, and many a lovely plant has met its demise unless kept protected indoors, even saplings.

Janet Sellers is an avid ethnoecologist and lazy gardener whose only additions to our land are soil amendments found in nature, then letting nature do most of the work to grow things. Send your garden tips to JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Mr. Jung Ying Tsao: Far East Fine Arts



By Janet Sellers

Happy (lunar) New Year—it's the Year of the Mouse! The Year of the Mouse (or rat) traditionally symbolizes intelligence and strong vitality both in cuteness and shrewdness. The mouse can accomplish whatever it sets its mind on. This idea reminded me of a story from my life about kindness and wisdom.

In my college years, I loved to visit my friend Mr. Jung Ying Tsao, at his art gallery in San Francisco. He was always very kind to me and taught me tremendous life lessons while we talked about Chinese art. In fact, he gave me a summer job in 1978 at his gallery translating things about art from Chinese to English.

My job as a weekend interpreter for the city ended suddenly when they closed that division, and I desperately needed something that would cheer me up. I knew seeing Mr. Tsao and the art would do it. To me, there was no museum in the entire city of San Francisco that had such amazing, uplifting art, but Mr. Tsao's Far East Fine Arts gallery did. Art for me is like visiting dear friends who are always ready to be with you and make you happy.

Practicing my Mandarin on him (poor guy) I asked Mr. Tsao if it would be OK for me to visit the art, because I needed to, as I had just lost my job and I felt really dumbfounded. Mr. Tsao seemed deeply moved, suddenly saying in English, "But you have a job! I give you a job right now." He took me into the back gallery filled with the precious artworks. "You enjoy the paintings; I will get something ready." After

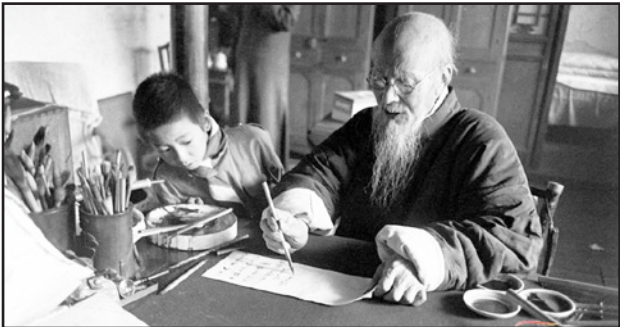
that, he guided me in translating and transliterating the names and dates and colophons, or inscriptions, of his gallery art all summer. I was in heaven in a room full of art to love and writing about it for someone who very likely was the closest to a Confucian gentleman I would ever meet in my life. At the time, I had no idea of the profound effect his good character would have on me lifelong.

Also that year, Mr. Tsao had the opportunity to go back to China and visit his family, whom he had not seen in over 30 years. "... China is opened up, I can go. I will see my family." The Open Door Policy of Deng Xiao Ping now allowed foreign investment. Mr. Tsao was elated. I was happy for him but sad for me. Soon after he left for China, I had to return home, too, to Southern California, having graduated San Francisco State University.

Afterward, I liked to write to Mr. Tsao for New Year's, and he always wrote me back a nice note on a card with a Qi Baishi painting. Mr. Tsao absolutely loved to share his passion for Chinese culture and art; it was his mission in life, I think. He was much loved by all who met him, and I have many more stories to tell you about him.

Janet Sellers is an award-winning artist, writer, teacher, and public speaker. Her biggest painting is 500 feet long in LA, and she has been writing poetry and prose internationally for publications for... decades.

Contact her at JanetSellers@OCN.me.



Above: Chinese artist Qi Baishi, born a peasant, started out as a carpenter apprentice at age 14, learning painting from the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting. He became an influential Chinese painter, noted for his innovative, playful approach. His whimsical style was unprecedented in Chinese painting; he is credited for modernizing the gongbi style of Chinese painting in the 20th century. Painting, poetry, and calligraphy writing are considered the Three Perfections in one painting. Here, Qi shares his brush time with a small child. Cicada painting by Qi Baishi; both images are in the public domain at Creative Commons. *Caption by Janet Sellers.*



Snapshots of Our Community

WMMI Family Geology Day, Jan. 4



Above: On Jan. 4, the Western Museum of Mining and Industry held its Family Day Geology, teaching attendees about Colorado’s rich mining history. Here, young “prospectors” are taught how to pan for gold by a member of the Gold Prospectors of Colorado. During Family Day, the children could keep any gold they found. *Photo by Sreedevi Vangala.*

Students help TreeCycle, Jan. 4



Above: El Paso County employees and high school students helped make this year’s TreeCycle a success. The event benefits sports teams countywide. Trucks and cars lined up at the Baptist Road Trailhead at Baptist Road and Old Denver Highway on Jan. 4-5 to drop off their used Christmas trees and donate \$5 each for recycling. The fundraiser at the Monument location benefited the Lewis-Palmer Lacrosse Team and is one their biggest fundraisers of the year. The high school students happily grabbed the trees from the vehicles and threw them on a pile to be recycled. Pictured on Jan. 4 are Ethan Hulting, left, and Reese Thornton, Lewis-Palmer Lacrosse players. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

Pedestrian bridge installed in Palmer Lake, Jan. 7

Below, on the facing page, and on page 1: On a chilly Jan. 7 morning, Jeff Hulsmann of the Awake Palmer Lake (APL) Committee pronounced it “a momentous day, three years in the making.” The reason for Hulsmann’s pronouncement and the assemblage of other APL members along with community members was the installation of an iron bridge over the railroad tracks in Palmer Lake. The two sections of the bridge, linking the lake and the town, were manufactured by Big

R Bridge Manufacturing and installed by SEMA Construction Inc. With the bridge sections in place, a concrete deck will be poured on the bridge and additional dirt added for the walkways up to it. The funding for the bridge came from the APL and its related events, a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant, and matching funds from the Town of Palmer Lake. Additional information on the APL and this project is at <http://awakepalmerlake.org/>. *Photos by David Futey.*



Above: The first section of the bridge is swung into place. **Right:** With the first section of the bridge in place, the crane swings to attach to the second section. **Far right:** The crane cabling is attached to the second section of the bridge.



Left: The second section of the bridge is swung into place. **Right:** SEMA Construction workers make the connection between the first and second section of the bridge.



Above: From left, John Froshaug (SEMA Construction), Chris Cummins (Awake Palmer Lake), Bill Fisher (Awake Palmer Lake), Jeff Hulsmann (Awake Palmer Lake) and Eric Petrie (SEMA Construction) posed next to the bridge after the second section was installed.

AARP elects officers, Jan. 8



Above: The Jan. 8 Black Forest AARP Chapter 1100 meeting featured speaker Cheryl Moyer from H&R Block. Moyer discussed 2020 tax law changes and issues relating to wills and inheritances. This meeting also installed the newly elected chapter officers and reaffirmed many appointed committee chairs. Outgoing President Ray Rozak conducted the oath of office for the incoming officers: President Candace Lehmann, Vice President Raji Verma, Secretary Patricia Dix; and Treasurer Anita Wolfe. Seated from left are Raji Verma, Candace Lehmann, Beverly Schaab, and Electa Beckner. Standing from left are Jim Belk, Helen Von Gunden, Anita Wolfe, Patricia Dix, Lavonne Hidy, Charles Karlstrum, Lori Belk, Waldo Pendleton, and Stanley Beckner. *Photo courtesy of Black Forest AARP 1100.*

Red Kettle collections top \$48K



Above: On Jan. 11, the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club, organizers of the Tri-Lakes-area Red Kettle Campaign, presented the Salvation Army with a check for \$48,618. This amount was the result of over 700 volunteer hours provided at Red Kettle locations in northern El Paso County by members of Monument Hill Kiwanis Club, Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High School Key Clubs, Middle School Builders Club, Tri-Lakes Women's Club, Cub Scout Pack 85, Boy Scout Troop 17, Woodmen Valley Chapel, and King Soopers employees. Pictured from left: Tom Nelson, Kiwanis; Capt. Doug Hanson, Salvation Army; Ron Mangiarelli, Kiwanis Bell Ringing manager; Benny Nasser, Kiwanis; Marki Morrison Gille and Pam Perry, co-presidents of Tri-Lakes Women's Club; and Pete Peterson, president, Monument Hill Kiwanis. *Photo by Warren Gerig.*

Blue Canyon at Black Rose, Jan. 10



Above: In their fourth appearance at Black Rose Acoustic Society on Jan. 10, the Blue Canyon Boys quickly produced thundering, foot-stomping applause for this crowd-pleasing favorite. They once again brought a colorful, high-spirited set of original instrumental, vocal, and rich acapella compositions to the Black Forest Community Center. Members are, from left, Drew Garrett, bass; Gary Dark, mandolin; Jason Hicks, guitar; and Chris Roszell, banjo. *Caption by Sharon Williams. Photo by Todd Ryan Performance Photography.*

Fundraiser for mental health, Jan. 11



Above: Bryson's Chase President Lindsey Kangas, right, and Vice President Katie Guile express their thanks and offer instructions to a crowd of Roaring-20s-clad gamblers at the Speakeasy Casino Night held at the Woodmoor Country Club on Jan. 11. The \$13,627 in funds raised were earmarked for the Children's Hospital Colorado Pediatric Mental Health Institute. Kangas founded Bryson's Chase in response to mental health challenges faced by her own family and in recognition of the financial support mental health treatment requires. See <https://brysonschase.org/> for more information. *Photo by Jennifer Kaylor.*

Medical examiner draws a crowd



Above: El Paso County Medical Examiner Dr. Leon Kelly presented "Forensic Pathology: The Investigation of Injury and Death" to an overflow crowd at the Monument Library on Jan. 14. Kelly explained his educational path for young listeners who might be considering pathology, which primarily focuses on the diagnosis of disease, as a career choice. Anatomic pathologists work with body tissue and clinical pathologists use laboratory science to determine diagnoses. Forensic pathology is a subspecialty that requires an additional year of education and includes training in blood spatter, ballistics, and other matters pertaining to crime. The medical examiner's role, continued Kelly, is to help police officers, lawyers, judges, and other members of the legal system determine the cause and manner of death. This means establishing the decedent's identity, time of death, and how an injury or injuries occurred; proving or disproving guilt in relevant cases; confirming or denying a witness's testimony and causative factors; providing expert testimony; and granting or denying tissue for harvest (organ donation). Kelly emphasized the difference between a coroner and a medical examiner in Colorado. A coroner must meet two criteria: be at least 18 years of age and not be a felon. Kelly's 13-year educational path to becoming a medical examiner stands in stark contrast. Above, Kelly prepares listeners for potentially disturbing information and photos included in his presentation. *Photo by Jennifer Kaylor.*

Guardrail at Black Rose, Jan. 24.



Above: In a rousing homecoming, Adam Gardino and his fellow Guardrail musicians performed Jan. 24 at the Black Rose Acoustic Society. Gardino was mentored by Charlie Hall, a founder of the Society, at an early age. In recent years, he has become an internationally and locally award-winning songwriter and guitar-picking phenomenon. Members are, from left, Gardino, guitar; Kelly Champlin, fiddle; and Luke Tripp, bass, fiddle, and mandolin. *Photo by Todd Ryan Performance Photography.*

Local EIS supports east county



Above: On Jan. 20, Emergency Incident Support (EIS) volunteers supplied first responders with coffee, burritos, and ice cream during the responders' successful efforts to control and prevent the spread of a fire in eastern El Paso County. EIS volunteers, who are experienced emergency services individuals, rapidly mobilize to help first responders combat dehydration, hunger, and exposure to the elements as they fight fires and handle other emergencies. The impromptu coffee and burrito provisions were made by Village Inn and Ellicott Ranch Market in Calhan, respectively. To learn more about EIS or support it with a donation, see www.epceis.com. *Photo by Gordon Reichal.*

PLHS annual meeting, Jan. 16



On Jan. 16, the Palmer Lake Historical Society held its Annual Potluck and Membership Meeting with the election of officers for the upcoming year. With a large membership in attendance, an overview of 2019 events and 2020 goals were presented by incoming President Su Osgerby Ketchmark and Secretary Patricia Atkins. Highlighting the 2019 events was the placement of Palmer Lake Town Hall on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties. **Above:** Board members are, front row from left, Pat McCarthy, member at large; Maggie Williamson, treasurer; Atkins; and Ketchmark. Top row from left are Barbara Morehead, member at large; Wayne Russert, vice president; and Sharon Williams, member at large. Not pictured: Rogers Davis, director of the Lucretia Vaile Museum, and Susan Kuehster, member at large. *Photo by Sharon Williams.*

Parkinson's support group, Jan. 18



Above: Outgoing Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Support Group President John Farley ceremonially passed the key to incoming Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Support Group President Barry Hanenburg at the Jan. 18 support group program. The group, which will mark its third year in the fall, was initiated by Sybil Krafft and John Hobson to provide local support and educational opportunities to those affected by Parkinson's disease (PD). Krafft's husband, Roger, suffered from the debilitating disease until his death a few years ago. For more information about PD and research or Parkinson's Foundation Chapter events see www.michaeljfox.org and www.parkinson.org/rockymountain/events, respectively. Above, Hanenburg addresses the Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Support Group on Jan. 18 after officially accepting the group's presidential role. He is joined by his wife, Anita, the group's founder, Krafft, and former president Farley. *Photo by Jennifer Kaylor.*

Wendy Woo at TLCA, Jan. 24



Left: On Jan. 24, Wendy Woo returned to the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) for what has become a widely anticipated annual concert. Woo has established an enthusiastic following of area fans since first performing at the TLCA in 2009. She has performed here solo, with her band and, as in this case, with longtime accompanist Robin Hoch, adding violin and complementary vocals. Woo stated, "Robin adds a different dimension to the stage performance" with Hoch chiming in, "We love playing together." Woo said, "I love how the (Tri-Lakes) community has embraced what I bring" and always "love returning here." This evening's song list included the title track and other songs off her 2019 release, *The Immigrant*, fan favorites *Hey Bartender* and *Saving Grace*, along with covers *Thunder* by Imagine Dragons and *Hey There Delilah* by Plain White T's. *Photo by David Futey.*

Human Trafficking, Jan. 27



Left: On Jan. 27, Session 1 of a four-part free, informative Human Trafficking Prevention Series was launched at Pikes Peak Library 21C. This riveting presentation by Jenni Jessen: “A Survivor’s Story—From Captivity to Catalyst” was introduced by Sister Rose Ann Barmann OSB from the sponsoring community of The Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery. Jessen, an American survivor of human trafficking, along with her husband KJ, provided current compelling statistics of this human crisis locally, nationally, and globally. The next series: Monday evenings Feb. 3, 10, and 17. For more information or questions, contact Sister Rose Ann OSB: sroseann@benethillmonastery.org or call 719-633-0655. *Photo by Sharon Williams.*

Birds of Colorado, Jan. 27



Above: On Jan. 27, Peter Kummerfeldt presented “Birds of Colorado” at the Limbach Theater, Jackson Creek Senior Living, to a group of about 40 residents and guests. Wild birds seen along the Front Range were described and various types of feeders were shown. The lark bunting is Colorado’s state bird but is seldom seen along the Front Range. Kummerfeldt described many types of feeders and how to present food and water to attract birds and minimize access by squirrels and other animals. Millet is not a favorite of wild birds. The mix should contain sunflower seeds, Niger seed, and other grains. Kummerfeldt stated that millions of birds are killed annually by domestic cats that are allowed outside and by feral cats. A few other predators such as Cooper’s hawks and other falcons, raccoons, and foxes also diminish wild bird populations along with habitat destruction. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

D38 Community Collaboration: “What’s next for D38?”, Jan. 27



Above: On Jan. 27, K C Somers, superintendent, presented an overview of Lewis-Palmer School District 38’s performance statistics, teacher salaries, student/teacher ratios, etc., and how it compares with other districts. Teacher salaries are considerably lower in D38 than Academy School District 20, for example. Student/teacher ratios are higher. After Somers’s overview, the attendees, made up of parents, a few teachers, and other interested participants, took a networked survey that divided participants into focus groups to discuss ways forward. The groups saw elements of “what’s next” as linked: classroom overcrowding, large class sizes, and

the inability of teachers to give proper attention to students’ learning, emotional and social well-being, and safety. Participants’ recommendations will be tabulated and evaluated along with similar community collaborations throughout the district. Results should be available by the end of February. An earlier D38 Community Collaboration event was held Jan. 15 at Bear Creek Elementary School. See the ad on page 9 for the times and locations of additional Community Collaboration events scheduled for Feb. 4, 11, 13, and 20. *Caption by Steve Pate. Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

Our Community Notices

By Judy Barnes, Events Editor

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the information number for that event.

Leave your legacy on the Palmer Lake pedestrian bridge

The Palmer Lake pedestrian bridge will soon be open to foot traffic. You can help “bridge” the funding gap by buying CNC-cut steel engines, cars, and cabooses that will add support and decoration. See the selection at www.awakepalmerlake.org (click on Palmer Lake Bridge Fundraising Project). Sponsor your own locomotive, box car, or caboose and become part of Palmer Lake history. See ad on page 2.

Monument Academy tours

Choice enrollment is now open. Learn about this growing school; schedule a tour at 481-1950 ext. 1710, www.monumentacademy.net. See ad on page 10.

Free child’s admission at WMMI

Receive a free child admission with one regular adult admission, one per family or group, through Feb. 29. WMMI is located at 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 exit 156), and is open Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information, call 719-488-0880, or visit www.wmmi.org.

TLWC 2020 grant process, apply by March 16

Tri-Lakes Women’s Club’s (TLWC) grant application for 2020 will be available online through **March 16** on the TLWC website, www.tlwc.net (click on Community Support, then Grant Awards). Eligible organizations include nonprofit and public service organizations and public schools that serve the Tri-Lakes area. This year, eligible

organizations can apply for small as well as large grants. Special program and project requests are welcomed.

In 2019, TLWC awarded over \$45,000 in grants. Recipients included the Monument Police Department, the Palmer Lake Fire Department, Mountain Community Senior Services, Rocky Mountain Music Alliance, Tri-Lakes Cares, WMMI, and numerous District 38 schools. Since 1977, TLWC has granted over \$980,000 to nonprofit, public service and public education programs through fundraising efforts. The application package includes the instructions as well as other important qualifying information. For more information, visit www.tlwc.net.

Monument Hill Kiwanis grants, apply Feb. 1-May 15

The Monument Hill Foundation, the charitable arm of the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club, has an annual granting program. Grants are awarded to charities as defined by the IRS, to various qualifying youth activities, and to schools for various educational activities and scholarships. Applications will be accepted through May 15. The grant application is available at www.monumenthillkiwanis.org/forms/mhf_grants. See ad on page 3.

LEAP—Help for heating bills

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) is a federally funded program that provides cash assistance to help families and individuals pay a portion of winter home heating costs. The eligibility period for LEAP runs **Nov. 1-April 30**. Application packets will automatically be mailed to residents who received LEAP assistance last year at the address where they were living at that time. To find out if you qualify for LEAP, call 1-866 HEAT-HELP (866-432-8435) or visit www.colorado.gov/cdhs/leap.

Essentrics comes to the Senior Center

The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Senior Center now offers Essentrics, a classical stretch fitness program that has aired on PBS for many years. It is designed to prevent injury and improve posture and flexibility, and can be done by all fitness levels. Classes will be held on **Tuesdays** at 12:30 p.m. and **Thursdays** at 8 a.m. at the Lewis-Palmer High School modular building across from the YMCA, on Jackson Creek Pkwy. Contact Sue Walker for more information and to register, 719-330-0241.

Tri-Lakes Y Youth Spring Sports, register now

Practices begin the week of **March 30** for indoor/outdoor soccer, flag football, and volleyball. Financial assistance is available. Register at www.ppymca.org or at the Y, 17250 Jackson Creek Parkway, Monument. See ad on page 6.

Free income tax help, ends April 15

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program provides free income tax preparation assistance to individuals and families with a household income of \$56,000 a year or less. To find out if you qualify or to schedule an appointment, call 2-1-1 or text VITANOW to 85511 **Mon. through Fri.**, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) seeks board members

FOMP manages a 1,000-acre hiking/biking/equestrian trail area. The group is recruiting new board members. For more information, visit www.fomp.org.

Change a child’s story, become a CASA volunteer

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) offers a volunteer opportunity like no other.

As appointed representatives of the court, CASA volunteers are empowered to make a lifelong difference in the lives of abused and neglected children. To learn more, contact Uriko Stout, 447-9898 ext. 1060, urikos@casappr.org; or visit www.casappr.org.

Officiate high school basketball

Make the right call and become a high school basketball official. Email the Colorado Springs Basketball Officials Association, csboa.areadirector@gmail.com, for information on training and certification.

St. Peter Catholic School now enrolling

The school offers academics, athletics, and faith formation for preschool-eighth grade. Call or visit: 124 First St., Monument; 481-1855; www.petertherock.org. See ad on page 2.

County seeks citizen input: master plan survey now online

El Paso County continues to seek citizen input in an online survey as it creates the new county master plan. To complete the survey, go online to planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com. For more information, phone 719-520-6300.

Sisters’ Thrift & Boutique

The Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery have a shop full of gently used treasures at 8674 N. Union Blvd., Colorado Springs. Store hours are **Mon.-Fri.**, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The phone number is 719-282-0316.

Volunteer drivers needed for seniors’ transportation service

Mountain Community Senior Services is a nonprofit, grant-funded organization that provides free transportation to Tri-Lakes seniors 60 and older. The program needs volunteer drivers. For more information,

visit the website, coloradoseniorhelp.com, email info@coloradoseniorhelp.com, or call the hotline, 488-0076.

Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Thrift Store needs volunteers

Volunteers are needed for various tasks. The store is located at 755 Highway 105, Suite N, in the West End Center and is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. To volunteer, call 488-3495.

Free transportation and handyman services for seniors

Mountain Community Senior Services offers free transportation and handyman services to Tri-Lakes seniors. If you need a ride to a medical appointment, grocery shopping, or the local senior lunches, a volunteer driver will be happy to help you. Call 488-0076 to leave a message for the dispatcher. If you need grab bars in the bathroom, a ramp to your door, or repair of stairs or railings, please call Cindy Rush, 488-0076, and leave a message or visit www.coloradoseniorhelp.com.

MVEA tree-trimming services

Tree trimming helps prevent storm-related power outages. For more information, call 800-388-9881 or 719-495-2283, or visit www.mvea.coop/tree-trimming.

Tri-Lakes Talks

There is now a website, www.TLtalks.com, for local articles, podcasts, and much more. TLtalks.com is dedicated to providing a platform where you can write about what is important to you and where the Tri-Lakes community can exchange ideas, thoughts, and information. Visit www.TLtalks.com to see the mission statement, submission guidelines, and terms and conditions.

I-25 MyWay commuting options website

Visit www.i25myway.org and enter starting and ending ZIP codes for personalized I-25 commuting solutions and sav-

ings estimates. The website will help you arrange the details and free test commutes, including carpools, van pools, and the Bustang South Line. The site will run through the end of construction in 2022.

County launches Citizen Connect

Citizen Connect is a new tool that allows citizens to report problems and put in service requests with the click of a mouse or touch of a button. Citizens can download this app, EPC Citizen Connect, for iPhone or Android phone. For more information, visit www.elpasoco.com/county-launches-citizen-connect.

Sign up for “Reverse 9-1-1” emergency notifications to your cell phones

The Emergency Notification System (powered by Everbridge), commonly referred to as Reverse 9-1-1, is a tool that can make rapid notifications to specific geographic areas to alert you to emergency situations including man-made disasters, evacuations, hazardous materials incidents, missing persons, and more. Reverse 9-1-1 is not the same as Amber Alerts, which are generated by a different system. You must register to receive emergency notifications on any phone other than your landline. You can list up to five locations and up to eight points of contact. Sign up at www.elpasoteller911.org.

County assessor launches enhanced website

The newly redesigned site with the Property Record Card and Citizen Comper (value comparisons) makes parcel and property searches more informative, easier to use, and accessible on mobile devices as well as desktops. Find the enhanced website at https://property.spatiallest.com/co/elpaso/.

Residence vacation check

The El Paso County Sheriff’s Office will conduct vacation checks of homes of county residents who are on vacation. This is a great way to add security to your home when you’re

away for multiple days. Either a deputy or trained volunteer will visit your home while you’re away and check it periodically. To add your home to their schedule, visit www.epc-sheriffsoffice.com. Info: 520-7151.

Monument text alerts

Text “Monument” to 41411 to receive updates and news of meetings, weather alerts, openings and closings, as well as other important town information to your phone or personal mobile device.

Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free

Each monthly *Senior Beat* newsletter is full of information for local seniors, including the daily menu of the senior lunches offered Monday through Friday at the Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Highway 105, Palmer Lake. It also contains the schedule of the classes and events for the month at the Senior Citizens Center and senior-friendly library programs. To subscribe, send an email with your name and mailing address to SeniorBeat@TriLakes-Seniors.org. *Senior Beat* can also be viewed online at www.TriLakesSeniors.org.

El Paso County services to veterans

Three county agencies providing services to veterans now have satellite offices at the Mount Carmel Center of Excellence, 530 Communications Circle, Colorado Springs. The Veterans Service office at Mount Carmel is open Mon. through Fri., 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 719-309-4729 for an appointment. The Pikes Peak Workforce Center Mount Carmel office is open and is staffed with Workforce Center employees who help veterans with their employment needs. Call 719-772-7000 for an appointment. The county Department of Human Services also has a Mount Carmel office open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, visit www.veteranscenter.org.

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Our Community Calendar

By Judy Barnes,
Community Calendar Editor

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the info number for that event.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Mon., **Feb. 3**, 1 p.m., 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Meets 2nd Mon. each month. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Mon., **Feb. 3**, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month at 6:30 p.m. Info: 719-884-8017, www.townofmonument.org.
- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners Meeting**, Tue., **Feb. 4**, 9 a.m. Centennial Hall, 200 South Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Meets every Tue. and Thu. Info: 719-520-6430, www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission Meeting**, Tue., **Feb. 4**, 9 a.m., 2880 International Circle (off Union Blvd & Printers Pkwy). Meets 1st & 3rd Tue. (if required) each month. Find agendas: https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/el-paso-county-planning-commission/2019-meetings/. Info: 719-520-6300.
- **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Board Meeting**, Mon., **Feb. 10**, 6 p.m., Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Normally meets 3rd Mon. each month. Info: 719-867-8690, knameika@lewispalmer.org, www.lewispalmer.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee Meeting**, Tue., **Feb. 11**, 10 a.m., 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets 2nd Tue. each month. Info: Bill Burks, 481-4053.
- **D-38 Community Collaboration: What’s next for D38?** Tue., **Feb. 4**, 6:30-8 p.m., Lewis-Palmer Middle School; Repeats: Feb. 11, 9:30-11 a.m., Grace Best Education Center; Feb. 13, 9:30 a.m., Prairie Winds Elementary School; Feb. 13, 2 p.m., Ray Kilmer Elementary School; Feb. 20, 8 a.m., Monument Academy Charter School; Feb. 20, 6:30 p.m., Palmer Ridge High School. Info: 719-488-4700, info@lewispalmer.org, www.lewispalmer.org. See ad on page 9.
- **D-38 Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC) Meeting**, Tue., **Feb. 11**, Campus Tour 6:30-7 p.m., meeting 7-8:30 p.m., Ray Kilmer Elementary School, 4285 Walker Rd. Meets 2nd Tue. each month, location varies. Info: Cheri McLean, 719-785-4210, cmclean@lewispalmer.org, www.lewispalmer.org.
- **Palmer Lake Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Wed., **Feb. 12**, 9 a.m., 120 Middle Glenway. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-2732, www.plsd.org.
- **El Paso County Park Advisory Board Meeting**, Wed., **Feb. 12**, 1:30 p.m., Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade. Info: 719-520-7529.
- **D-38 Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)**, Wed., **Feb. 12**, 6:30 p.m., Lewis-Palmer High School, 1300 Higby Rd., Monument. Info:719- 433-5672, MNay@lewispalmer.org.

- **Monument Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., **Feb. 12**, 6:30 p.m. Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Live-streamed at http://bit.ly/2uZxjfa. Info: 719-884-8017, www.townofmonument.org.
- **Monument Academy School Board Meeting**, Thu., **Feb. 13**, 6 p.m., Lab 312, 1150 Village Ridge Point, Monument. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-1950, www.monumentacademy.net/school-board.
- **Palmer Lake Town Council Meeting**, Thu., **Feb. 13**, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission Meeting**, Tue., **Feb. 18**, 9 a.m., 2880 International Circle (off Union Blvd & Printers Pkwy). Meets 1st & 3rd Tue. (if required) each month. Find agendas: https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/el-paso-county-planning-commission/2019-meetings/. Info: 719-520-6300.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Tue., **Feb. 18**, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month. Info: 719-884-8017, www.townofmonument.org.
- **Wescott Fire Protection District Board Meeting**, Tue., **Feb. 18**, 7 p.m., Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets 3rd Tue. each month. Info: 719-488-8680.
- **Monument Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Wed., **Feb. 19**, 9 a.m., 130 2nd St. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-4886.
- **Triview Metropolitan District Board Meeting**, Wed., **Feb. 19**, 5:30 p.m., 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 300, Monument. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
- **Academy Water and Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Wed., **Feb. 19**, 6 p.m., Wescott Fire Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-0711.
- **Palmer Lake Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., **Feb. 19**, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District Board Meeting**, Wed., **Feb. 19**, 7 p.m., Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 719-495-4300.
- **Donala Water & Sanitation District Board Workshop**, Thu., **Feb. 20**, 1:30 p.m., 15850 Holbein Dr. Workshop is open to the public. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-488-3603, www.donalawater.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Board Meeting**, Wed., **Feb. 26**, 6:30 p.m., TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105. Meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: Jennifer Martin, 719-484-0911, www.tlmfire.org.
- **Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting**, Wed., **Feb. 26**, 7 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
- **D-38 Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)**, Wed., **Mar. 4**, 6:30 p.m., Administration Building Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St.Monument. Info:

719-433-5672, MNay@lewispalmer.org.

LOCAL LIBRARY EVENTS

For information on library events, see the library events column on page 22 and visit www.ppld.org.

- **The Palmer Lake Library hours** are Tue.-Fri., 10 a.m.-6 p.m., and Sat., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. 66 Lower Glenway. Info: 481-2587, www.ppld.org.
- **The Monument Branch Library hours** are Mon.-Thu., 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri. & Sat, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun., 1-5 p.m. 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Info: 488-2370, www.ppld.org.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club Breakfast Meeting**, every **Sat.**, 7:30 a.m., D-38 Admin. Building, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Guests are welcome at weekly meetings featuring speakers on a variety of topics and a free continental breakfast. Memberships open to the public. Join the 150+ men & women of the Tri-Lakes area who work together to make a difference for youth and our community. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Aliyah Congregation**, every **Sat.**, 10 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Visitors are welcome. Info: 719-330-2382, www.aliyahcongregation.com. See ad on page 31.
- **Neighborhood Net**, every **Sat.**, 10 a.m. Amateur radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
- **Lions Clubs Bingo**, every **Sat.**, 10 a.m., and Wed., 7 p.m.; Carefree Bingo, 3440 N. Carefree Circle, Colo. Springs. Tri-Lakes Lions Club’s portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes Community. Info: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or www.trilakeslionsclub.org
- **The Wine Seller Free Wine Tastings**, every **Sat.**, 1-4 p.m., 2805 Roberts Dr., Monument. Info: 719-488-3019, www.thewineseller.net.
- **Bingo by the American Legion**, every **Sat.**, game sales start at 6 p.m., games start at 7 p.m., the Depot Restaurant, in Palmer Lake. Proceeds go to scholarships and other community support activities. Info: 719-481-8668, www.americanlegiontrilakespost911.com/bingo.htm.
- **Artful Outdoors: Weekly art and nature hikes**, most **Sat.-Sun.**, 1-3 p.m. and by appointment. Join Janet Sellers at local nature, cultural, and gallery spots. Info: 719-357-7454, www.StartMyArt.com.
- **Fuel Church** Sunday Service, every **Sun.**, 9:30 a.m. New hours, 9:15 a.m. & 11:15 a.m., kids service ages 4-11 @ 9:15 a.m. only, 14960 Woodcarver Rd. (just west of I-25 off Baptist Road). Non-denominational, spirit led. Info: info@fuel.org, www.fuelchurch.org. See ad on page 7.
- **Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church** Worship Hours, every **Sun.**, traditional services 8 & 11 a.m., contemporary service 9:30 a.m., Sunday school, all ages, 9:30 a.m., 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. Info: 719-488-1365, www.tlumc.org. See ad on page 3.

- **Black Forest Community Church** Sunday Worship, every **Sun.**, 10 a.m., 6845 Shoup Rd. All are welcome to the family friendly services. Info: www.blackforestcommunitychurch.org.
- **Cathedral Rock Church** Sunday Service, every **Sun.**, 10 a.m., Tri-Lakes YMCA, 17250 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. Info: www.cathedralrockchurch.org. See ad on page 11.
- **Tai-Chi Class**, every **Mon.**, 10 a.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Cost: \$5. Drop-ins welcome. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Seniors Monday Movie Matinee**, every **Mon.**, 1-4 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center located on Lewis-Palmer High School campus. Free movies and snacks. See the schedule of films in Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Senior Beat.
- **Artfully Speaking Toastmasters**, every **Mon.**, 5:45 p.m., 4452 North Chestnut St., room 252, Colo. Springs. Info: Glenn, 719-260-6551; www.artfully-speaking.toastmastersclubs.org.
- **Women's A.A. Step Study**, every **Mon.**, 6:30 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in west lot. Info: 719-360-4306.
- **Monument Life Recovery Group**, every **Mon.**, 6:30-8 p.m., The Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd. This faith-based support group is for those seeking freedom from all hurts, habits, and hang ups. Find support seeking freedom from addictions and family members with practical tools for change. Daycare provided for children under age 11. Info: 719-481-3600.
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Bingo**, every **Mon.**, 7:30 p.m., Carefree Bingo, 3440 N. Carefree Circle, Colo. Springs. All proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes Community. Info: mark.zeiger@gmail.com.
- **Blue Wave Taekwondo Club**, every **Mon. & Fri.**, 4:30 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. New members welcome. Cost: \$15 ea. to cover rental, first class FREE! Info: Alex Ratcliff, TaekwondoBlue-Wave@gmail.com, 817-962-8044.
- **Senior Citizen Luncheons**, every **Mon.-Fri.**, 12-12:30 p.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. See the menu for the month in the Senior Beat newsletter. A \$2.25 donation is requested. Stay for bingo the 2nd Thu. each month. Reservations are requested, phone 719-884-2304.
- **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI)**, open **Mon.-Sat.**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 Exit 156 A). Free child admission with a paid adult during April. Daily guided tours at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Cost: \$11 adults, \$10 military/AAA, \$9 seniors & students, \$6 children 3-12, free to children under 3 & museum members. Info: 719-488-0880, info@wmmi.org, www.wmmi.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Thrift Store**, open **Mon.-Sat.**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 755 Hwy 105, Suite N, in the West End Center. Seniors 62+ get a 20% discount on Wednesdays. Military & Teacher Appreciation Day, 20% off regular priced items on Saturdays. All proceeds support Tri-Lakes Senior Programs. Volunteers needed, phone 716-464-6873. To donate furniture, call 719-488-3495 for a pickup. Info: www.TriLakes-Seniors.org.
- **Tri-Lakes YMCA Senior Coffee**, every **Tue.**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., 17250 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. Members and non-members are welcome. Socialize, have coffee and snacks in the front lobby. Free. Info: 719-630-2604, hbrandon@ppymca.org, www.ppymca.org.
- **Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families Meeting: ACA Promises**, every **Tue.**, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Natural Grocers meeting room, 1216 W. Baptist Rd., Monument. As a child, did you develop a False Self in order to survive? The solution is learning to re-parent ourselves with gentleness, humor, love, and respect. Info: Call/text Stacey, 206-384-8285, www.adultchildren.org (click on Newcomer).
- **Al-anon Meeting: Monument Serenity**, every **Tue.**, 7:30-8:30 p.m., Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: Kay, 719-481-9258.
- **Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center**, every **Tue.** at 12:30 p.m. & **Thu.** at 8 a.m., Lewis-Palmer High School modular building across from the YMCA, on Jackson Creek Pkwy. All fitness levels can prevent injury and improve posture and flexibility. Registration & Info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
- **Peak Reader Children's Literacy Program**, every **Tue. & Thu.**, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Free one-to-one tutoring for children reading below grade level. To enroll your child or volunteer as a tutor, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or call 719-471-8672.
- **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ** Wednesday Night Fellowship Meal (Free) & Classes, every **Wed.**, 6-7:30 p.m., 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (Corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org.
- **Al-anon Meeting: Letting Go**, every **Thu.**, 9-10:10 a.m., Tri-Lakes Chapel, room 209, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: Kay, 719-481-9258.
- **A.A. Big Book Study**, every **Thu.**, 7 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Info: 719-481-0431.
- **Overeaters Anonymous Big Book Study**, every **Thu.**, 7-8 p.m., Natural Grocers, 1216 W. Baptist Rd., Monu-

- ment. Info: Beth, 773-682-1223; or Nancy, 719-640-3343.
- **Live Music at the Speedtrap**, every **Thu.** open mic 7-9:30 p.m., musicians every Fri. & Sat., 8-11 p.m., 84 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Info: 719-488-2007, www.speedtrapbistro.com.
 - **Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS)**, every **Fri.**, 8 a.m., Monument Chamber of Commerce, 166 2nd St., Monument. Info: Terry, 719-684-4912, or visit www.TOPS.org.
 - **Wildfire Preparedness Meeting**, **Tue., Feb. 4**, 10 a.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Learn about resources and training for homeowners and owners associations for wildfire mitigation and Firewise communities. Meets 1st Tue. each month. Info: Matthew Nelson 719-488-2693 ext 4, matthew@woodmoor.org.
 - **Tri-Lakes Chamber Monthly Education Series: Search Engine Optimization**, **Tue., Feb. 4**, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 166 Second St., Monument. Free. Register online, www.trilakeschamber.com/events-calendar.htm. Info: 719-481-3282.
 - **Gleneagle Sertoma Luncheon Meeting**, **Wed., Feb. 5**, 11:30 a.m., Liberty Heights, 12105 Ambassador Dr., Colo. Springs. Interesting speakers and programs; all are welcome. Meets 1st & 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Garrett Barton, 719-433-5396; Duane Gritzmaker, 719-481-2424; www.gleneaglesertoma.org.
 - **Tri-Lakes Lions Club Meeting**, **Thu., Feb. 6**, 6:30 p.m., Country Club of Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Membership open to the public. Join Lions or the Leo Youth Club to help support the Tri-Lakes Community. Meets first Thu. each month. Info: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741; www.trilakeslionsclub.org
 - **Palmer Divide Quiltmakers**, **Thu., Feb. 6**, 6:45 p.m., Monument Hill Church, 18725 Monument Hill Rd., Unit 18, Monument. Meets 1st Thu. each month. Info: PDQ504@gmail.com.
 - **El Paso County Hazardous Materials & Recycling Collection Facility**, **Sat., Feb. 8**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 3255 Akers Dr., Colorado Springs. Open the 2nd Sat. each month as well as Mon.-Thu., 7 a.m.-5 p.m., accepts porcelain fixtures, common recyclable items, household hazardous waste, various electronics, and TVs up to 19-inch diagonal. Bring a nonperishable food item for Care and Share. Info: 719-520-7878, http://adm.elpasoco.com/Environmental_Services/Solid_Waste_Management.
 - **Palmer Lake Art Group**, **Sat., Feb. 8**, 9 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. Meets 2nd Sat. each month. Info: 719-487-1329, www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.
 - **Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group**, **Sat., Feb. 8**, 9:45-11:30 a.m., The First National Bank of Monument, 581 Hwy 105. Meets 2nd Sat. each month. Info: Gail, 719-481-3711.
 - **Faithful Friends**, **Sat., Feb. 8**, 3-4:30 p.m., Wesley Owens Coffee & Cafe, 1744 Lake Woodmoor Dr., Monument. This month's topic: "You Can't Make This Stuff Up! (tall tales that aren't)." Meets 2nd Sat. each month. RSVP & Info: Ellen, 303-526-5000.
 - **Pikes Peak Music Teachers Association Meeting**, **Tue., Feb. 11**, 9:30 a.m., Graner Music, 4460 Barnes Rd., Colo. Springs. Jamie Shaak presents Memorization Tips & 20 Variations on Practicing Hanon. Music teachers and students meet for coffee, fruit, pastries, a meeting, and presentation. Non-members welcome. Meets 2nd Tue. each month. Info: 307-760-6426, deemoody636@gmail.com, www.ppmta.org.
 - **Black Forest AARP Potluck Lunch & Meeting**, **Wed., Feb. 12**, noon, 12455 Black Forest Rd. Program: Fire safety in the home. All ages welcome. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. RSVP & Info: Stan, 719-596-6787, www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weebly.com.
 - **Foot Care Clinic**, **Wed., Feb. 12**, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines your feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$30 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed. and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
 - **Senior Bingo**, **Thu., Feb. 13**, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake, after the senior lunch. Come for lunch at noon, then stay and play. Free! Prizes! Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: Maggie Nealon, 719-488-3037.
 - **Bridge**, **Thu., Feb. 13**, 1-4 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, 1300 Higby Road, Monument. Meets 2nd Thu. each month, Sept.-June. Info: www.trilakesseniors.org/programs/events.html.
 - **Ben Lomond Gun Club**, Tri-Lakes Chapter, **Thu., Feb. 13**, 7 p.m., Tri-Lakes Fire Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105 west of Monument near the bowling alley. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 719-481-3364.
 - **Silver Center Book Club**, **Fri., Feb. 14**, 11 a.m.-noon, Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on Lewis-Palmer High School campus. All are welcome. Meets 2nd Fri. each month. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & Info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
 - **La Leche League Meeting**, **Fri., Feb. 14**, noon-1 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Mothers, babies, and mothers-to-be are all invited. Meets 2nd Fri. each month. Info: Kelley, 719-440-

- 2477, kdghorashi@gmail.com.
- **The Breakfast Club**, **Sat., Feb. 15**, 8:30 a.m., The Ridge at Castle Pines North (Ridge Grill and Bar), 1414 Castle Pines Pkwy. Single people 50+ meet new friends and have fun. Meets 3rd Sat. each month. Info: 303-815-8428, www.TBC50plus.org.
 - **Monument Hill Farmers Market Winter Indoor Market**, **Sat., Feb. 15**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Grace Best, 66 Jefferson St., Monument. Shop all your old favorites. Meets every 3rd Sat. through April. Info: 719-592-9420. See ad on page 5.
 - **Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group**, **Sat., Feb. 15**, 10 a.m.-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St, Monument. Come for socializing, discussions on Parkinson's-related issues including available support, and occasional speakers. Meets 3rd Sat. each month. Info: Syble Krafft, 488-2669.
 - **Amateur Radio W0TLM (Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association)**, **Mon., Feb. 17**. All amateur radio operators or those interested in becoming amateur radio operators are welcome. Meets 3rd Mon. Check the website for details. Info: Joyce Witte, 719-661-9824, Joycewitte@gmail.com; www.W0TLM.com.
 - **Outpouring: TLUMC Supporting our Community**, **Tue., Feb. 18**, 7 p.m., Pikes Peak Brewing Company, 1756 Lake Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Everyone is welcome. Meets 3rd Tue. each month. Info: LWeber1971@aol.com; for current speaker info go to <http://tlumc.org/outreach/outpouring>.
 - **Gleneagle Sertoma Luncheon Meeting**, **Wed., Feb. 19**, 11:30 a.m., Liberty Heights, 12105 Ambassador Dr., Colo. Springs. Interesting speakers and programs; all are welcome. Meets 1st & 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Garrett Barton, 719-433-5396; Duane Gritzmaker, 719-481-2424; www.gleneaglesertoma.org.
 - **Senior Bingo**, **Wed., Feb. 19**, 1-2 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, Lewis-Palmer High School campus. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Sue Walker, 464-6873.
 - **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829**, **Wed., Feb. 19**, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. New members welcome. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Post Commander Joe Carlson, 405-326-2588, jcarlson@vfw7829.org, www.vfw7829.org.
 - **VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829**, **Wed., Feb. 19**, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. New members welcome. If you are a male or female relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.
 - **Senior Tea**, **Thu., Feb. 20**, 12-1:30 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center at Lewis-Palmer High School (across from the YMCA). Come early to socialize. Volunteers needed. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Reservations required: contact Sue, 464-6873, sue@monumentalfitness.com.
 - **Palmer Lake Historical Society Meeting**, **Thu., Feb. 20**, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Wayne Russert presents "Radio and Its Unknown Pioneers." All are welcome. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 719-559-0837, www.palmerdividehistory.org.
 - **Gleneagle Women's Club**, **Fri., Feb. 21**. Come for lunch, book discussions, bridge, and more. Location for lunch varies. Meets every third Fri., Sept.-June. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669.
 - **Foot Care Clinic**, **Fri., Feb. 21**, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$35 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
 - **Chess Nuts**, **Tue., Feb. 25**, 5-9 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. Any age, any skill. Learners welcome. Drop in and leave

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- when you want. Bring your own board and pieces if you have them. Meets 2nd & 4th Tue. each month. Info: www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess.
- **Senior Social**, Wed., **Feb. 26**, 1-4 p.m., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Meets 4th Wed. each month except Nov. & Dec. Info: aarpchapter1100blackforest.weebly.com.
 - **Friends of Fox Run Park**, Thu., **Feb. 27**, 5:30 p.m., Southwinds Fine Art Gallery upstairs, 16575 Rollercoaster Rd. (corner of Baptist and Rollercoaster Roads). Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for safety, trails, trees, education, more. Guest speaker each month. Meets 4th Thu. each month. Info: 719-492-0355, janetsellers@ocn.me.
 - **Foot Care Clinic**, Fri., **Feb. 28**, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$35 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 719-577-4448.
 - **Wildfire Preparedness Meeting**, Tue., **Mar. 3**, 10 a.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Learn about resources and training for homeowners and owners associations for wildfire mitigation and Firewise communities. Meets 1st Tue. each month. Info: Matthew Nelson 719-488-2693 ext 4, matthew@woodmoor.org.
 - **Gleneagle Sertoma Luncheon Meeting**, Wed., **Mar. 4**, 11:30 a.m., Liberty Heights, 12105 Ambassador Dr., Colo. Springs. Interesting speakers and programs; all are welcome. Meets 1st & 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Garrett Barton, 433-5396; Duane Gritzmaker, 481-2424; www.gleneaglesertoma.org.
 - **Tri-Lakes Lions Club Meeting**, Thu., **Mar. 5**, 6:30 p.m., Country Club of Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Membership open to the public. Join Lions, or the Leo Youth Club, to help support the Tri-Lakes Community. Meets first Thu. each month. Info: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741; www.trilakeslionsclub.org
 - **Palmer Divide Quiltmakers**, Thu., **Mar. 5**, 6:45 p.m., Monument Hill Church, 18725 Monument Hill Rd., Unit 18, Monument. Meets 1st Thu. each month. Info: PDQ504@gmail.com.
 - **Lupus Support Group**. If you suffer with an autoimmune disease and want to connect with others, you are welcome to join this group. Info: dmbandle@hotmail.com.
 - **Myasthenia Gravis Association** of Colorado Support Group. Location varies. Info: Carolyn, 488-3620, www.4-mga.org, 303-360-7080, 4mga@4-mga.org.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Winter Fun at Fox Run**, Sat., **Feb. 1**, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (Dog parade/contest, 11 a.m.), Fox Run Regional Park Warming Hut, 2110 Stella Dr. Join guided nature walks, listen to professional storytelling, roast hot dogs and marshmallows, watch (or enter!) a Dog Snow Queen & King contest, and more. Cost: \$5 per person, includes snacks and all activities. Info: 719-520-6387, 719-520-6972.
- **Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery Human Trafficking Series: Connecting the Dots: Cultural and Systemic Ills that Fuel Human Trafficking**, Mon., **Feb. 3**, 6:30-8:15 p.m., PPLD 21C, Venue Room, 1175 Chapel Hills Dr., Colo. Springs. This 4-session series addresses the cultural and systemic brokenness that feeds and fuels human trafficking locally, nationally, and globally. Free. RSVP & Info: 719-633-0655, ext. 132; roseann@benethillmonastery.org; www.benethillmonastery.org.
- **D-38 Community Collaboration: What’s next for D38?** Tue., **Feb. 4**, 6:30-8 p.m., Lewis-Palmer Middle School, 1776 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Join the discussion with Superintendent K.C. Somers and the Lewis-Palmer Board of Education. Repeats: Feb. 11, 9:30-11 a.m., Grace Best Education Center; Feb. 13, 9:30 a.m., Prairie Winds Elementary School and 2 p.m., Ray Kilmer Elementary School; Feb. 20, 8 a.m., Monument Academy Charter School and 6:30 p.m., Palmer Ridge High School. Info: 719-488-4700, info@lewispalmer.org, www.lewispalmer.org. See ad on page 9.
- **Palmer Ridge High School Tour**, Thu., **Feb. 6**, 1:30 p.m., 19255 Monument Hill Rd, Monument. Repeats Feb. 6. RSVP & Info: Mrs. Nam, 719-867-8600, www.lewispalmer.org/enroll.
- **Brian Usher at Jackson Creek Senior Living**, Thu., **Feb. 6**, 3:30 p.m., 16601 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. Sing-along favorites. RSVP & Info: 259-0448, www.JacksonCreekSeniorLiving.com.
- **CASA Volunteer Informational Hour**, Thu., **Feb. 6**, 4:30 p.m., 418 S. Weber St., Colo. Springs. CASA volunteers advocate for abused and neglected children in the community and in the courtroom. Learn more about volunteering for CASA; snacks served. RSVP to Uriko Stout, ustout@casappr.org, www.casappr.org.
- **State of the Tri-Lakes Region Lunch**, Fri., **Feb. 7**, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Great Wolf Lodge, 9494 Federal Dr., Colo. Springs. Review the past year, look forward to the new year: views of what is going on in our area and predictions for the future. Info: 719-481-3282. Register on line: www.trilakeschamber.com/state-of-the-tri-lakes-region.html.

- **Dion Pride: A Tribute to Charley Pride Concert at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts**, Fri., **Feb. 7**, 7 p.m., doors open 6:15 p.m., 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Tickets & Info: 719-481-0475, www.trilakesarts.org.
- **Palmer Lake Winterfest**, Sat., **Feb. 8**, noon-3 p.m., Palmer Lake. Ice skating (skates available) and games, live ice sculpture station, hot dogs and treats, music, and more. Info: Darcy, 630-796-5885.
- **High Altitude Gardening**, Tue., **Feb. 11**, 5-6:30 p.m., Chamber of Commerce Community Room, 166 Second St., Monument. Learn best practices and plant selection to handle wildlife and wild weather here in Monument. Repeats Feb. 18, 10 a.m. RSVP & Info: 719-884-8013, www.townofmonument.org, then click on Community, then Town of Monument Newsletter.
- **Valentine’s Day Party at Jackson Creek Senior Living**, Fri., **Feb. 14**, 1-4 p.m., 16601 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. DJ and treats. RSVP & Info: 259-0448, www.JacksonCreekSeniorLiving.com.
- **Black Rose Acoustic Society: Train Station**, Fri., **Feb. 14**, 7 p.m., doors open at 6:15. Black Forest Community Center, 12530 Black Forest Rd. at Shoup Road. Cost: \$10 general, \$5 BRAS members, \$5 non-member students with ID. Info: Joe Maio, 719-528-6119, jrmtn@comcast.net, www.blackroseacoustic.org.
- **Monument Hill Farmers Market Winter Indoor Market**, Sat., **Feb. 15**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Grace Best, 66 Jefferson St., Monument. Shop all your old favorites. Meets every 3rd Sat. through April. Info: 719-592-9420. See ad on page 5.
- **From Bayonet to Scalpel at Jackson Creek Senior Living**, Sat., **Feb. 15**, 1 p.m., 16601 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. Veteran’s group presentation. RSVP & Info: 259-0448, www.JacksonCreekSeniorLiving.com.
- **8th Annual Castle Rock Bull Riding Challenge**, Sat., **Feb. 15**, 7-9 p.m., Douglas County Fairgrounds indoor arena, 500 Fairgrounds Dr., Castle Rock. Two shows: a 2 p.m. matinee and 7 p.m. show. Visitors will learn about bucking bulls, how they are cared for, training, and much more! Vendors, food concessions, a mechanical bull and pony rides, and free parking. Cost: \$20 Adult, \$15 Youth (ages 6-12) and military with ID, youngsters under the age of 5 are free. Riders and stock contractors interested in entering should contact Ty Rinaldo at TZ Bucking Bulls, thetzranch@gmail.com. Info: 719-641-3233.
- **St. Peter Catholic Church: Unplanned**, Sat., **Feb. 15**, 6:15 p.m., 155 Jefferson St., Monument. The powerful true story of abortion clinic director Abby Johnson’s dramatic transformation from Planned Parenthood spokesperson to passionate, pro-life speaker. See the movie trailer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBLWpKbC3ww>. Repeats third Saturday each month. Info: stephanierkemp@gmail.com.
- **Hazel Miller & the Collective at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts**, Fri., **Feb. 15**, 7 p.m., doors open 6:15 p.m., 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Special Valentine’s Day Show. Tickets & Info: 719-481-0475, www.trilakearts.org.
- **The Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery Human Trafficking Series: Introducing Bakhita Mountain Home**, Mon., **Feb. 17**, 6:30-8:15 p.m., PPLD 21C, Venue Room, 1175 Chapel Hills Dr., Colo. Springs. Free. Learn about this residential community for adult women recovered from human trafficking. RSVP & Info: 633-0655, ext. 132, roseann@benethillmonastery.org, www.benethillmonastery.org.
- **High Altitude Gardening**, Tue., **Feb. 18**, 10 a.m., Chamber of Commerce Community Room, 166 Second St., Monument. Learn best practices and plant selection to handle wildlife and wild weather here in Monument. RSVP & Info: 719-884-8013, www.townofmonument.org, then click on Community, then Town of Monument Newsletter.
- **Musical Memories with Dave Michalick at Jackson Creek Senior Living**, Tue., **Feb. 18**, 2:30 p.m., 16601 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. RSVP & Info: 259-0448, www.JacksonCreekSeniorLiving.com.
- **Community Emergency Response Training (CERT)**, Tue.-Sat., **Feb. 18-22**, 6-10 p.m. Tue.-Thu., 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Sat.; Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. Learn how to be resilient and “what to do when 911 can’t get there” in a disaster or emergency in this free course given by the El Paso County Office of Emergency Management. See www.EPCCERT.org. Register at <http://pp-certfeb20.eventzilla.net>. Info: Robin, 719-575-8858.
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Free Peer-to-Peer**, ten **Thu.**, beginning **Feb. 19**, 6-8:30 p.m., southeast Colo. Springs. This 10-session educational program helps adults with mental health conditions better understand themselves and their recovery. Repeats Feb. 27 in north Colo Springs. Register online at namicoloradosprings.org. Info: 719-473-8477 or email info@namicos.org.
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Family-to-Family**, twelve **Thu.**, beginning **Feb. 20**, 6-8:30 p.m., southeast Colo. Springs. This free class is an evidence-based, 12-week course for family and friends of individuals with serious mental illnesses. Register online at namicoloradosprings.org. Info: 719-473-8477 or email info@namicos.org.
- **Landscape Design Principles**, Tue., **Feb. 21**, 10-11:30 a.m., Chamber of Commerce Community Room,

- 166 Second St., Monument. Especially valuable for new home builds. RSVP & Info: 719-884-8013, www.townofmonument.org, then click on Community, then Town of Monument Newsletter.
- **Free D-38 Chess Tournament**, Sat., **Feb. 22**, 8:15 a.m. onsite registration, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. tournament; Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, 1315 Lake Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Open and free to all K-12 students who attend D-38 schools or live within the D-38 boundaries. Chess sets provided. Participants may bring their own snacks. Concessions available. Pre-registration is encouraged to ensure sufficient medals or trophies; pre-register each student at <https://forms.gle/Tipirx-6wyE89xtjPA> or register the morning of the tournament. Info: Steve Waldmann, huskerco@gmail.com; Annette Bass, abass@lewispalmer.org.
 - **WMMI Winter Writers’ Course: Science Writing: Pathways to Discovery**, Sat., **Feb. 22**, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Western Museum of Mining, 225 North Gate Blvd. Writing about science, nature, mining, history, and other nonfiction subjects offers exciting opportunities to be published. Magazines, newspapers, bloggers, clubs, and schools are looking for articles to share with their audience, and this class can teach you how to publish. Students in middle and high school are encouraged to attend. Graduate credit available. RSVP & Info: 719-488-0880, or online, <https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/wmmi/items/190323/calendar/?flow=41147>.
 - **Spotlight on Local Authors at Covered Treasures Bookstore**, Sat., **Feb. 22**, 1-3 p.m., 105 Second St., Monument. Mava Joyce Aubrey will sign *Beyond the Aftershocks*. Mark Pope will sign *Calli on the Loose*. Gene McKenzie will sign *Debunking the Diet Myth*. Larry Patzer will sign *The Palm Tree*. Refreshments will be served. Info: 481-2665, www.coveredtreasures.com.
 - **Fuel Church 6th Anniversary Celebration**, Sun., **Feb. 23**, 9:15 & 11:15 a.m., 14960 Woodcarver Rd. Info: www.fuelchurch.org. See ad on page 7.
 - **Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery Chamber Concert: Colin McAllister, Classical Guitar**, Sun., **Feb. 23**, 2:30-4 p.m., 3190 Benet Lane, Colo. Springs. Cost: \$25. Buy tickets online: www.benethillmonastery.org. Info: 719-633-0655, ext. 132.
 - **Water-wise Gardening: Smart, classy design and plant selection to save water**, Tue., **Feb. 25**, 10-11:30 a.m., Chamber of Commerce Community Room, 166 Second St., Monument. Repeats Mar. 5, 5 p.m., and Mar. 13, 10 a.m. RSVP & Info: 719-884-8013, www.townofmonument.org, then click on Community, then Town of Monument Newsletter.
 - **Pikes Peak Brewing Co. Mardi Gras Celebration**, Tue., **Feb. 25**, 4 p.m., 1756 Lake Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Chef Bob’s Lobstah Trap, 4 p.m.; live music, 6 p.m. Info: www.pikespeakbrewing.com. See ad on page 12.
 - **Lewis-Palmer High School Band Free Concert**, Tue., **Feb. 25**, 7-8:30 p.m., Lewis-Palmer High School Auditorium, 1300 Higby Rd., Monument. Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band, and Jazz Band. Info: 719-757-1485, tchapman@lewispalmer.org.
 - **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Family-to-Family**, twelve **Thu.**, beginning **Feb. 27**, 6-8:30 p.m., north Colo. Springs. This free class is an evidence-based, 12-week course for family and friends of individuals with serious mental illnesses. Register online at namicoloradosprings.org. Info: 719-473-8477 or email info@namicos.org.
 - **Black Rose Acoustic Society: The Colorado College Bluegrass Ensemble**, Fri., **Feb. 28**, 7 p.m., doors open at 6:15. Black Forest Community Center, 12530 Black Forest Rd. at Shoup Road. Cost: \$10 general, \$5 BRAS members, \$5 non-member students with ID. Info: Joe Maio, 719-528-6119, jrmtn@comcast.net, www.blackroseacoustic.org.
 - **Pineries Open Space Hike**, Sat., **Feb. 29**, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. El Paso County Parks and the Trails and Open Space Coalition will guide a preview hike through this new county property, its largest open space holding, northeast of the intersection of Vollmer and Shoup Roads, in the Black Forest area,. Cost: \$4 for non-members. RSVP & Info: 719-520-6977.
 - **Songwriters in the Round at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts**, Sat., **Feb. 29**, 7 p.m., doors open 6:15 p.m., 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Tickets & Info: 481-0475, www.trilakesarts.org.
 - **Water-wise Gardening: Smart, classy design and plant selection to save water**, Tue., **Mar. 5**, 5-6:30 p.m., Chamber of Commerce Community Room, 166 Second St., Monument. Repeats Mar. 13, 10 a.m. RSVP & Info: 719-884-8013, www.townofmonument.org, then click on Community, then Town of Monument Newsletter.

Support Our Community. Volunteer with OCN!

Please join us today! Meet a group of interesting and committed people. Learn new skills—use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit our community and celebrate unfiltered information. Please call John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455, or email johnheiser@ocn.me to see how you can contribute. Contact us today!

Paid Advertisement

- **Tapping into Theology: *The Shroud and the First Holy Week***, Tue., **Mar. 10**, 7-9 p.m., St. Peter Parish Ministry Center, 155 Jefferson St., Monument. Dr. John and Rebecca Jackson (directors of the Turin Shroud Center in Colorado Springs) will address the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin, called the greatest Christian relic of the Passion of Christ and venerated for centuries by people around the world. RSVP by March 6. RSVP & Info: stephanierkemp@gmail.com.

Our community calendar carries listings on a space-available basis for Tri-Lakes events that are sponsored by local governmental entities and not-for-profit organizations. We include events that are open to the general public and are not religious or self-promotional in nature. If space is available, complimentary calendar listings are included, when requested, for events advertised in the current issue. To have your event listed at no charge in Our Community Calendar, please call (719) 339-7831 or send the information to calendar@ocn.me or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.

Support Our Community Advertise in OCN!

Our Community News (OCN), with a circulation of over 21,600, is a unique all-volunteer monthly newspaper mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area. OCN is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news that gives advertising preference to Tri-Lakes and Black Forest businesses. OCN's contract-free low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget while supporting an important Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and business owners.

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ads@ocn.me, or visit www.ocn.me.**

Letters to Our Community

Our Community News welcomes letters to the editor on topics of general interest to readers in the Tri-Lakes area. We do not knowingly print letters that are substantially the same as letters that have been submitted to other publications. To ensure that OCN contains a variety of viewpoints, each letter writer is limited to a maximum of one (1) letter per issue and six (6) letters within a twelve (12) month period. To submit a letter, please:

- Email your letter, preferably as an attached Microsoft Word document, to editor@ocn.me or mail a copy to **Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, CO 80132-1742**.
- Identify your submission as a letter to the editor and confirm that it has not been submitted to any other publication.
- Include a suggested headline or title that summarizes the topic you are addressing.
- Limit your letter to no more than 300 words including your suggested headline and closing.
- Include your full name, home address, phone numbers, and email address, if you have one. Only your name will be published.
- Submit your letter so we receive it no later than midnight, Friday, two weeks prior to the publication date.

If you have not received an acknowledgement two days after your email submission or one week after you mailed your letter, please contact Jennifer Kaylor, Managing Editor, at (719) 488-3455 or editor@ocn.me. At OCN's sole discretion, we may ask you for clarification of your statements. Include references, such as website links, in your letter for any facts and figures you cite. OCN does not guarantee every letter will appear in print or on-line and does not guarantee a publication date. Depending on the space available, the number of letters printed in an issue may be limited to the first 12 received. Letters containing personal attacks or endorsements for or complaints about individually-named commercial products or services will not be published.

Look for our next issue Saturday, March 7

Ad space reservations due: Fri., Feb. 14
Finished ad artwork due: Fri., Feb. 21
Letters to the editor due: Fri., Feb. 21
Calendar items due: Fri., Feb. 28

Visit our website to read, download, and search all the back issues at
WWW.OCN.ME

The Rabbi's Corner Thank You

By Rabbi Oswald Garagorry

I am taking this opportunity to thank you, my dear readers. I am very appreciative for the time you have taken to read what the Lord has given me to write in *Our Community News* for the past 10 years. I want to tell you a little bit about the Aliyah Congregation, about our people and about myself. Aliyah's first meeting was on May 14, 2005. I didn't speak at our first meeting, but I have been teaching Torah ever since the second Shabbat (with a few exceptions, when we have had guest speakers). From that first gathering to the present, our goal and our emphasis has been to love YHWH our God, to love people and to honor His word. It is a goal we have upheld with great devotion.

We embrace all 66 books of the Bible, yet we have our emphasis in the first five books (The Torah) because, as stated in *Exodus 24:12*, God himself wrote the first four books of the Bible, with the expectation for us to teach it. For this reason, we have taught the Torah cycle every year for the past 14+ years of our existence in every service. The fifth book, Deuteronomy, was inspired by our God for Moses to write. If you read the first two chapters, it will become very clear to you that Moses is its author. Deuteronomy has a special place in our hearts because of Moses authorship. He is the only author of the entire Bible who spent 40 days alone with God himself (twice). The impact of these encounters in his writing can be seen very clearly.

A uniqueness of Aliyah Congregation is that all is done by brothers and sisters who love our Lord and do all that is needed for the Congregation from their hearts. As the scriptures tells us, in *Colossians 3:23*, "Whatever work you do; put yourself into it, as those who are serving not merely other people, but the Lord." No one is paid for whatever they do, because our brothers and sisters love our Lord and they do everything to please Him.

Another uniqueness of Aliyah Congregation centers on the serious issue of money. Paul warned us in his first letter to Timothy: "For the love of money is the root of all the evils." (1st Timothy 6:10). Since we began in 2005, we have "passed the plate" to take an offering on two different occasions. The first time was a sad moment in the life of a 12 year old boy. His parents were getting divorce. He was broken-hearted and very sad. He came to the service on Shabbat and expressed his sadness to some of us. Attempting to comfort and encourage him, we passed the plate for him for the first time in our history. An offering of \$70 came in, which we gave to him. The other occasion where we passed the plate was to help a young couple who were having a difficult time in paying their rent. So we passed the plate for the second time in 14 years of existence. Without counting the money, we gave it to them in their moment of need.

So my dear reader, why am I telling you all this? For one reason only: many times we get hurt and discouraged when we start to wonder in our minds if we will ever find a group that is not focused on money, internal politics, or social status. By God's mercy since day one of our existence our aim has been to love God, love people and honor His word. Money, internal politics and social status have never had a place in the Congregation.

In light of all I have said to you, I want to communicate one more thing. Two years ago I turned 68 years old. That birthday was a day for me to think about life. After spending time with myself and my God, I made some decisions. One of them was that was when I turned 70 years old, my wife and I will return to Brazil, our Country of origin. I communicated that decision to my wife and one more person from the Congregation. Then this past January, I informed the Congregation, of my decision. So my dear reader on Shabbat, January 25, I turned 70 years old and I gave my last Torah teaching as Rabbi of Aliyah Congregation.

The word of God says: "And these things you heard from me, which were supported by many witnesses, these things commit to faithful people, such as will be competent to teach others also." 2nd Timothy 2:2. In light of this mandate, in 2010, we started the Yeshiva Torah Institute which is like a Christian seminary. The Yeshiva has been authorized by the Colorado Department of Higher Education, to function and to grant Masters and Doctors in Hebrew Letters. We have students from different parts of the country that have come, studied, graduated and been ordained as Rabbis and Rabbas. Some of them have started their own congregations; others have taken over the Rabbinate of existing congregations which is the case with Aliyah Congregation. Our Sister, Alleluyah Williams has been part of Aliyah for several years and has received her Doctor in Hebrew Letters and Ordination as a Tanakhee Rabba. Please remember her in prayer as she shepherds Aliyah Congregation for many years to come; loving God, loving people and honoring His word. So, my dear readers thank you so much for having reading my articles for the past 10 years. My wife and I pray that our Lord will use us for His honor in the days to come.

In Messiah's Love, Big hug to you,
Shalom.

*Dr. Garagorry is the Rabbi
of Aliyah Congregation that
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Unlike papers that try to figure out what the "story" is and then get quotes on each side to presumably lead the reader to conclude what the "truth" is, OCN's role is to report in detail on public meetings of local governmental entities. We report what was talked about and what was decided. By reading OCN, you can find out what you might have learned if you had attended those public meetings. In this context, "truth" is that the articles accurately represent what transpired at the meetings.

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