

Palmer Lake Historical Society, Oct. 21

## Long Expedition Bicentennial: Exploring the Front Range, 1820

By Sharon Williams

On Oct. 21, a full house experienced John Stansfield's presentation in celebration of the Long Expedition's Bicentennial. The Palmer Lake Historical Society meeting was held at Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Building in Monument.

Stansfield delivered a direct account as read from the report "An Expedition from Pittsburg to the Rocky Mountains," Maj. Stephen H. Long, Commander; Compiled by Edwin James; by order of the Hon. J.C. Calhoun, Secretary of War.

In early May 1820, Maj. Long was ordered to abandon an expedition along the Missouri River, return back east and ready himself to lead another expedition of the Rocky Mountain west to learn about the Platte and Arkansas Rivers and sources. John Quincy Adams, on behalf of President James Monroe, had recently signed a treaty with Spain expanding the U.S. western boundary to the Pacific Ocean.

On June 6, 1820 a party of 22 men with supplementary military support departed on what became a 1,600-mile journey. After one month of slow prairie travel, the first sighting of the Rocky Mountains was noted on June 30 by Dr. Edwin James. Dr. James was a surgeon, linguist, botanist, and geologist. Upon logging 568 miles from the eastern origin of the expedition, the party was at the mouth of the Platte River and traveled south along the base of the Front Range.

After passing sandstone fins along the mountains near today's Sentinel Rock in Perry Park by West Plum Creek, they arrived to camp in an area of insulated (island-like) table lands. The landscape was described as a north-south open region of a divide, now the Palmer Lake area. Here they camped at the headwaters of Monument Creek July 10 to July 12 to study and document their observations.

During this encampment, Dr. James identified several new plant species. Among them was the Colo-



Samuel Seymour, *View of the Insulated Table Lands at the Foot of the Rocky Mountains, 1820*

**Above:** This Long Expedition depiction features the butte country of the Palmer Divide using the antiquated descriptive word "insulated," which means island-like. *Photo from Long Expedition Collection: Samuel Seymour, View of the Insulated Table Lands at the Foot of the Rocky Mountains, 1820. Caption by Sharon Williams.*

rado blue columbine, *Aquilegia caerulea*, now our Colorado State Flower. It is believed the discovery was in the general area where Pine Crest Lodge now exists in Palmer Lake.

The expedition followee the South Platte, Arkansas, and Red Rivers, eventually ending at Fort Smith, Ark., in September 1820. Among the list of discoveries were 42 animal species, 75 insect species, and 140 plant species.

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Presenter John Stansfield is a storyteller and writer. For 40 years, Stansfield has recounted stories from the American West and the world, re-enacted the lives of pioneers, and authored award-winning biog-



**Above:** Our Colorado state flower, Colorado blue columbine, *Aquilegia caerulea*, was discovered and identified as a new species in the Palmer Lake area by Dr. Edwin James, botanist with the Long Expedition. *Photo by Sigi Walker. Caption by Sharon Williams.*

raphies. His book *Writers of the American West: Multicultural Learning Encounters* (Teacher Ideas Press, 2002) earned a Colorado Authors' League Award and was a finalist for the Colorado Book Award. His latest book, a folkloric short story collection titled *Rocky Mountain Stories to Read Aloud or Alone*, is pending publication.

The Palmer Lake Historical Society monthly programs are presented at 7 p.m. every third Thursday of the month at Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce-Community Rm, 166 Second St., Monument. The Nov. 18 program will be *Colorado's 10th Mountain Division* presented by Col. Tom Duhs. Info: 719-559-0837, [www.palmerdividhistory.org](http://www.palmerdividhistory.org).

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### Emergency Preparedness

## Northwest El Paso County Evacuation Drill, Oct. 2

By Lisa Hatfield

During an evacuation exercise on Oct. 2, residents received first-hand experience evacuating their homes in a hurry in case of a wildfire or other disaster. It also provided first responders from across the region a chance to practice interagency communication and deployment of their evacuation procedures.

**Note:** Every resident of El Paso and Teller Counties should register their cell phones with Peak Alerts at <https://peakalerts.org/> (same as [ElPasoTeller911.org](https://elpaso911.org)) so local authorities can tell them how to take action when emergencies strike their neighborhood. (This is different than the automatic statewide AMBER alert system.)

Residents of Palmer Lake, Lake of the Rockies, Red Rock Ranch, and Colorado Estates were invited to participate in the wildfire evacuation drill. It was hosted by El Paso County, Town of Monument, Town of Palmer Lake, Monument and Palmer Lake Police Departments, El Paso County Sheriff's Office, Palmer Lake Fire Department, Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, and the Pikes Peak Regional Office of



**Above:** Monument Police Department Sgt. Melikian notified Jeff and Kathy Baker it was time to evacuate from Red Rock Ranch and head to the safety fair during the Oct. 2 Northwest El Paso County Evacuation Drill. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

Emergency Management.

Registered participants received a pre-planned evacuation notice directing them to gather at a simulated evacuation center. The emergency prepared-

ness fair there included organizations that support evacuations in El Paso County and had information on emergency planning and shelters for people and animals, wildfire risk reduction, ideas for people with disabilities, and how to pack a "go-bag" and make electronic copies of all your vital documents.

Outside, the Touch-A-Truck display included HazMat, American Red Cross, Special Communications Unit, El Paso County Sheriff's Office, and Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District. The volunteers of EIS (Emergency Incident Support) provided breakfast and lunch for all the first responders and participants.

One participant said the exercise helped him start thinking about his emergency meet-up plans if he's separated from his wife, what to pack in an evacuation bag, and what creative alternatives he has to escape from his neighborhood if the usual roads are jammed with cars and danger is zooming toward them.

Lisa Hatfield can be contacted at [lisahatfield@ocn.me](mailto:lisahatfield@ocn.me)

### High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

## Windowsill zombies; bringing outdoor pots indoors

By Janet Sellers

**Zombie gardens and growing indoor greens**  
It takes about three to four weeks to grow greens in the windowsill, and although they will be baby greens or relatively short, they will be ready to eat! We've had great luck growing chard and onions, like green onions, and other vegetables in the windowsill from what we call zombie vegetables, which are given a second life in just a few inches of soil.

You can take bulb onion ends or scallions, even garlic cloves, place them in about an inch of water, or in a few inches of well-watered soil. They'll begin the very next day to grow again. In a few weeks, you will have some to add to a meal.

I've done this with lettuces, onions, or anything that comes with a root including celery. The onions and garlic leaf greens are delicious and subtle in flavor. Just snip off a few by the inch, not the whole thing,

and they will continue to grow and give you tasty food.

**Lazy gardening is Mother Nature's secret**  
We desperately need pollinators and microorganisms for our garden and our planet to be healthy and continue to grow well for next year. If we can keep the fall leaves together, even in a hidden place, that will protect Nature's little critters that help our gardens to grow (mulch chopping the leaves chops up good bugs), and come spring we can tidy up, saving lives and our gardens in the process.

**Debugging is not just for computers**  
We can bring our beloved potted flowers such as geraniums and other potted favorites indoors, but beware and debug them first! Debug the potted plants that have a drain hole by dipping them in a soapy solution of water with a few drops of mild soap for 20 minutes outdoors, rinse, scrub the outside of the pot and drain and dry before you bring them indoors. It's

simple. Soap can work as an insecticide in the garden, and for potted plants and soil. I have also used a tub of water indoors when the temperature felt too cold for working outside. This remedy works for house plants already indoors, too.

### Monument Compost Program

Until Nov. 30, local residents can bring their items to the south end of Limbach Park to be composted. Accepting: pumpkins, leaves, and fruit and veggie discards. No-no's include pine needles, animal waste, chemical waste. For a limited time, the Town of Monument is offering this drop-off location for all residents' pumpkins and bagged leaves.

Janet Sellers is an avid lazy gardener, learning Mother Nature's secrets with nature as the guide.  
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