

to melt faster.

January 2021 Weather Statistics

Average High	40.5° (+0.4°)
100-year return frequency value max	48.4° min 30.8°
Average Low	16.5° (+3.9°)
100-year return frequency value max	26.6° min 6.6°
Highest Temperature	58° on the 29th

Lowest Temperature	2° on the 27th
Monthly Precipitation	0.57" (-0.14" 20% below normal)
100-year return frequency value max	1.56" min 0.01"
Monthly Snowfall	12.0" (-3.3", 10% below normal)
Season to Date Snow	37.0"

Season to Date Precip.	1.66" (-13.8", 30% below normal)
Heating Degree Days	1132 (+35)
Cooling Degree Days	0 (-2.48", 60% below normal)

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. The letters this month are arranged in alphabetical order based on the letter-writer's last name.

Tri-Lakes community deserves thanks

"Every penny counts, merry Christmas and God bless," I said frequently in December. I was a bell ringer for the Salvation Army at Safeway in Monument. The contributions were only outweighed by the kindness of the people going in and out as well as the entire staff at Safeway. It was a joy to hear from the Salvation Army that our kettle was always full, and every penny stays in El Paso County to help the needy.

John Howe

Anonymous D38 ad criticized

As a former District 38 board president, local businessperson, and member of many local boards, I was dismayed that you would publish an anonymous ad from the District 38 Parents and Taxpayers. They obviously don't represent the community majority, and they represent opinions best found in obscure conspiracy sites.

I am all for the First Amendment, but I also think your advertising department used poor discretion in publishing an advertisement so obviously inflammatory and misrepresenting the community. My hope is that in the future names are required on such advertisements. I am writing this as a complaint to your advertising department. I realize that you are a volunteer organization, and as such I recognize you fulfill a valuable role in the community. The ad was not representative of how you have conducted business for the last 20-plus years.

David J. Jones DDS

Editor's note: At OCN's annual meeting in January, the OCN volunteers approved a change in our ad policy to now require that ads identify in some way what business, individual, or registered group placed the ad.

Misguided resolution by Monument trustees

I am not a resident of Monument, but I live nearby and use its many stores, shops, services, etc., so I would like to offer some thoughts about the town's recent Resolution No. 08-2021, "reasserting the rights of the town and its residents and condemning the unconstitutional limitations imposed upon their freedoms by the governor of Colorado."

While I find it to contain valid points, it also cherry-picks various governing documents to validate its conclusions (space limitations restrict examples). Yes, why are some entities considered essential while others are not? A valid question. But is the correct solution to allow all Monument churches, clubs, schools, gym, and bars, etc. to disregard reasonable and presumably well-thought-out limitations implemented by our state and county health authorities?

I support the local businesses and want them to prosper; they are vital to the local economy and wellbeing of the residents of the Tri-Lakes region. But we must acknowledge that we are in the midst of a deadly pandemic, wherein the

real experts tell us to wear masks while in public, avoid large crowds, travel long distances only when truly important, and get vaccinated as soon as possible. Regrettably, too many of us ignore these guidelines, thereby selfishly placing others in danger.

The aforementioned resolution is in many ways misguided, inappropriately political, and unjustly critical of our governor. We're all in this together, and we need to pull together. Ignoring our leader's directives and declaring that "That the Town of Monument will not abide by any Executive Orders limiting attendance of and free speech at public meetings within the town" is wrong. It should be rescinded.

Ross Meyer

Monument welcomes COVID

As a Tri-Lakes area resident who has supported the businesses in this town throughout the last three decades, I was shocked when I read that Resolution No. 80-2021 passed with a 7-0 ratio. Everyone with investments in this community should read this resolution very closely and decide whether the assertions put forth are in accordance with your values, knowledge base, and understanding of how our community should function and be represented during and after this pandemic.

As citizens of a responsible community, we all need to strive for the values all Americans hold dear: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These values are our common ground. We must use our God-given intellect, paired with substantial evidence-based science and our natural ability to adapt to challenging circumstances and simply do what is right.

Science has proven how viruses spread, reproduce, and mutate. Restrictions mandated by our government are based on this science and are focused not on political aspirations but, instead, on the promotion of public and individual health. They are designed to normalize community financial stability and to enable us to return to a reality where fulfillment of our needs for human interaction are safely achieved.

Viruses have a couple of billion years' head start on humanity in the survival game. They have only one goal: reproduction. Humans have developed intellect and cooperation as our basic survival mechanisms and this, with faith, will see us through. We all need to follow science-based protocols known to limit the spread of disease such as proper wearing of masks, social distancing, vaccination, and limitations on indoor activities that promote infection. When these proven measures are rejected, COVID-19 cases will surge. If we refuse to follow science, our people and businesses will continue to suffer the ravages of COVID-19.

Sharann Mills

Monument Board of Trustees "irresponsible" for considering pandemic sanctuary city

I would like to say how appalled I am by several members of the Monument Board of Trustees' comments about considering Monument as a pandemic sanctuary city. Trustee Jim Romanello said we should "open our businesses, go to

church, go to temple, stand and, if necessary, fight for what is right." Trustee Mitch LaKind saying for businesses to "ignore the red (severe risk) level." How irresponsible are these views? We have almost a half-million deaths in the U.S.A., most hospital ICU beds are at maximum capacity, refrigerator trucks are being used to house the deceased, millions of people are traveling on planes and catching/spreading COVID, ambulances bringing sick patients are having to wait hours to get their patients admitted or seen at the hospital, and many other horrible facts.

Yes, I know that businesses are suffering monetarily. In my own extended family, there are several businesses that are also suffering huge losses. But we need to be responsible citizens of the world and follow the rules, not just for ourselves, but for the good of mankind. I have not seen my children or grandchildren for 12 months, but sacrifices need to be made.

Please be good citizens of the world and wait until this horrible worldwide pandemic is under control and then return to enjoying our lives in a normal way.

Marina Nelson

Upset over town's COVID-19 response and anonymous ad

Having lived in Monument, as a friend says, "since the earth was cooling" and a native, I was concerned about the Board of Trustees' newest resolution regarding disregarding state and health departments' recommendations for the fight against COVID-19! Especially since correspondence sent to them was brushed off as "not pertinent!" Color me silly, but I thought the board was there to actually listen to their constituents!

Don't get me wrong, the plight of small businesses is past an emergency situation! My own business has not earned a cent since this pandemic began, and I do not qualify for any Cares Act funds because I had no income in January and February!

The town is also upfront about if a business goes through with following their resolution, they cannot help them! I feel this resolution may do more harm than good and actually drive potential customers away who wish to stay healthy from Monument!

On another subject, I was appalled to see an ad by "concerned citizens and Taxpayers!"

First, if you are truly concerned and feel good about what you are saying, then why the need for secrecy?

Second, I am a parent, grandparent, taxpayer, and great-grandparent. The teachers in our district are coping with a situation a saint would have difficulty with! I feel my grandkids are getting the best possible education under the circumstances! These teachers are being stretched to their limits and they keep on keeping on!

Would my grandkids like to be with their friends? Darn straight. But they are resilient and they realize what needs to happen for all of us to be safe and be able to have fun stuff down the road!

Shame on all of you "Concerned Parents" who can't even own your feelings publicly!

Claudia Swenson ■

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Gobsmacked (astounded) by nature

By the staff at Covered Treasures

"I go to books and to nature as the bee goes to a flower, for a nectar that I can make into my own honey."

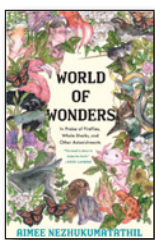
—John Burroughs

Here are some books that will help you get gobsmacked by nature.

World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments

By Aimee Nezhukumatathil (Milkweed Editions) \$25

Award-winning poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil brings readers a collection of essays about the natural world and the way its inhabitants can teach, support, and inspire us. For this is the way with wonder: It requires that we are curious enough to look past the distractions to fully appreciate the world's gifts. Warm, lyrical, and gorgeously illustrated, this is a book of sustenance and joy.



Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants

By Robin Wall Kimmerer (Milkweed Editions) \$18

Robin Wall Kimmerer is a botanist and a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She brings these two lenses of knowledge together to show us how nature offers gifts and lessons. Also available is a new 40th anniversary, updated hardcover special edition. It is beautifully bound with a new

cover, bookmark ribbon, deckled edge, and colored illustrations.

Native American Prayer Trees of Colorado

By John Wesley Anderson (Old Colorado City Historical Society) \$37.95

Local author John Wesley Anderson takes his readers on a journey of discovery through his study of the Native American tradition of modifying trees for navigational, medicinal, burial, educational, and spiritual purposes. He worked in close association with members and elders of the Southern Ute Reservation, the study of previous researchers, and people familiar with these culturally modified trees, to create this work which moves forth the documentation and preservation of these landmarks.

Easy Hikes to the Hidden Past

By Rocky Shockley and T. Duran Jones (Rocky Shockley) \$14.99

This unique book offers well-researched, often hidden, historic discoveries with easy trail walks, hikes, and bike rides. It covers Colorado Springs, Manitou Springs, Cripple Creek, Cañon City, and Palmer Lake, and features photos, trail maps, and fun history trivia.

The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness

By Sy Montgomery (Atria) \$16.99

In pursuit of the wild, solitary, predatory octopus, natural-

ist Sy Montgomery has befriended octopuses with strikingly different personalities from New England aquarium tanks to the reefs of French Polynesia and the Gulf of Mexico. This award-winning bestseller explores the emotional and physical world of the complex, intelligent octopus and the remarkable connections it makes with humans and what they can teach us.

Our Wild Calling: How Connecting with Animals Can Transform Our Lives—and Save Them

By Richard Low (Algonquin Books) \$16.95

Louv interviews researchers, theologians, wildlife experts, indigenous healers, psychologists, and others to show how people are connecting with animals in ancient and new ways, and how this serves as an antidote to the growing epidemic of human loneliness; how dogs can teach children ethical behavior; how animal-assisted therapy may yet transform the mental health field; and what role the human-animal relationship plays in our spiritual health. He reports on wildlife relocation and how the growing populations of wild species in urban areas are blurring the lines between domestic and wild animals.

Migrations

By Charlotte McConaghy (Flatiron Books) \$26.99

Franny Stone has always been the kind of woman who is able to love but unable to stay. Leaving behind everything but her research gear, she arrives in Greenland with a singular purpose: to follow the last arctic terns in the world on