

Picnic-N-Planes, May 25



**Above:** On May 25, the Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) added to the Air Force Academy (AFA) graduation festivities with its Picnic-N-Planes event. For a \$5 per car admission, over 500 attendees received a hilltop view on the museum's property of the Thunderbirds' post-graduation performance. The Thunderbirds displayed their precision and aeronautical acrobats against the backdrop of the AFA and snow-dusted mountains. Attendees brought tents, blankets, chairs, and their own picnic goodies or had the option to purchase from a food truck. After the performance, attendees roamed the museum's property and viewed the many outdoor exhibits related to mining and the Industrial Revolution. *Photo by David Futey.* **Right:** The U.S. flag is flying at half-staff to honor the 21 lives lost at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, on May 24, in the deadliest school shooting in Texas history. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*



Palmer Lake grand-reopening



**Above:** On Saturday, May 1, the Town of Palmer Lake held a grand-reopening event that included a ribbon-cutting for the newly reopened Lucretia Vaile Museum, Pikes Peak Library, and the historic Town Hall. The town also unveiled two newly restored history signs provided by Wayne Russert. Attendees enjoyed cake, beverages, and live music by the Rock of Ages (Joy on the Rock) band on the greens in front of the hall. Mayor Bill Bass spoke at the ribbon-cutting for the Town Hall and was assisted by Trustees Glant Havenar and Karen Stuth in unveiling the restored signs. **Right:** The museum ribbon-cutting was performed by longtime volunteer and former director Sharon Jarnigan, who was dressed in a vintage outfit. The current director of the museum, Roger Davis, spoke at the event. As shown in the photo on page 22, the library was opened by Jean Carrier, the current manager, and Teona Shainidze-Krebs, interim chief librarian and CEO of Pikes Peak Library District as well as library staff and volunteers. *Photos by Jackie Burhans.*



Ruth Ann Steele celebrated, May 25



**Above from left:** A group of 26 gathered to honor and celebrate the legacy of Ruth Ann Crook Steele, with the unveiling of a hand-forged iron memorial bench at the Black Forest Community Center, on the morning of May 25. The group sang a selection of Ruth's favorite songs from the 154 pieces she had arranged during her lifetime, and they sang along with the Forest Choir accompanied by Judith Von Ahlefeldt on the African Ashiko drum. Ruth was founder of the Slash and Mulch Program, beloved teacher, conservationist, noxious weed warrior, bluebird lady, musician, composer, founder, kingpin, and director of the Forest Choir and Black Forest "Keeper of the Keys." Ruth died June 3, 2021, leaving the 35-acre Black Forest property owned by Ruth and her husband Jim for 55 years as a conservation easement. The Ruth Ann Steele Memorial Bench design reflects Ruth's passions and was hand-crafted by Jodie Bliss at Bliss Studio and Gallery, Monument. The memorial bench was installed in front of a small tree in a southwest-facing position in the Log School Park, on the corner of Shoup and Black Forest Roads. Kay and Lynn Stricklan began a GoFundMe page in 2021 to generate funding to fabricate the bench, and thanks to multiple generous donations the goal was met. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*



Memorial Day, May 30



**Above:** A shivering crowd of about 200 gathered at Monument Cemetery to remember and honor the fallen on Memorial Day. The flags were flying straight out from a strong wind. A sudden mist blew in while fallen service members' names were read aloud. State Rep. Terri Carver was the honored speaker. *Photo by Creighton Smith. Caption by Creighton Smith and Michael Weinfeld.*

An important message for our readers

Our Community News needs your help!

*Our Community News* is an all-volunteer organization. For the past 20 years, our volunteers have provided unbiased reporting on important local issues, including real estate development, fire departments, school districts, and water availability. We have provided a very favorable platform for advertising local businesses. We have published letters to the editor to allow you to express your opinions on events affecting the Tri-Lakes area.

Now we find that we have more tasks than we have volunteers. Some vital jobs where we could use your help:

- Reporters. Reporting on local meetings, what they talked about and what they decided.
- Mailing assistants. Counting and lifting tubs of papers to take the monthly mailing to the post offices and stacks of papers to local businesses, loading and unloading mailing tubs from a truck at two

locations, preparing postoffice paperwork, tub labels, subscription labels, etc.

- Drivers. Driving a rental truck to various post offices once a month.
- Ad sales assistants. We need volunteers who love *OCN* to contact local businesses and encourage them to advertise in *OCN*.

The time and skills involved vary greatly from job to job. *OCN* will provide whatever equipment and training you need.

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 Publisher John Heiser at (719) 488-3455, or email [johnheiser@ocn.me](mailto:johnheiser@ocn.me) to see how you can contribute. Contact John today! He is waiting to hear from you. Together we can ensure that *OCN* continues to provide a vital service to our wonderful Tri-Lakes community.