

ing and early afternoon. Unfortunately, no organized systems moved through, so snow showers were scattered and didn't produce any significant accumulations. Temperatures were below normal for most of the last two weeks of the month.

#### A look ahead

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

#### March 2023 Weather Statistics

Average High **43.8°** (-8.4°)  
100-year return frequency value max **57.9°** min **38.0°**  
Average Low **18.3°** (-3.3°)  
100-year return frequency value max **27.0°** min **12.0°**

Highest Temperature **66° on the 15th**  
Lowest Temperature **5° on the 18th**  
Monthly Precipitation **0.33"**  
(-1.26", 80% below normal)  
100-year return frequency value max **4.29"** min **0.22"**  
Monthly Snowfall **6.4"**  
(-13.9", 70% below normal)  
Season to Date Snow **69.5"**  
(-21.4", 25% below normal)  
*(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)*  
Season to Date Precip. **2.05"**  
(-1.19", 35% below normal)  
*(the precip season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)*  
Heating Degree Days **1052** (+139)  
Cooling Degree Days **0**

*Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident.  
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**Above:** On March 20, the first day of spring, fast-moving clouds deliver short, light bursts of snow over Monument. Monument Rock is on the right a bit below the middle of the photo. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

## 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 are in order by the author's last name.*

#### Necessary mitigation

If you were upset and thinking that the wildfire mitigation efforts underway at Monument Preserve are ugly, imagine the catastrophic conflagration that could occur if such mitigation wasn't done. Imagine the heartache if one of your beloved places was burned to a crisp, reduced to nothing but blackened stalks of trees and scorched earth. Trails would be closed because of the danger of dead trees falling on hikers and bikers. It may not be pretty right now, but if you've spent any time outdoors, you know that nature rejuvenates itself. The vegetation will come back and we'll have a healthier forest land. More important, we'll have a more defensible forest, if and when flames come licking for more.

Those of us who do not have a degree in forest management or may be unfamiliar with the term Wildland Urban Interface, would do well to trust the

professionals. By the way, take a look at your own property and see where mitigation might benefit your property and make you safer. There are knowledgeable people, particularly if you live in Woodmoor, who will come out and help you decide what you can do to achieve that. You'll find that you can perform mitigation and still have a very nice-looking property.  
**Bill Beagle**

#### D38 demographics changes are important

It is not about school district money, it is about having a plan for teachers and student population changes.

Our school district neighbors in Denver closed schools apparently because they did not see or plan for the growing student loss over the previous years.

School districts and boards like D38 are expected to identify changing demographics and plan in advance, not spring school district decisions on the community without specific detailed plans.

D38 demographics have changed over the last three years, and it is important D38 strategic plans are updated not only on a scheduled basis, but when rapid changes occur over a short period of time to account for inflation, population shifts, staffing, and budget changes.

Our Denver neighbors are learning district plans should be dynamic and be quickly reviewed with the community as conditions change and certainly before school closure decisions are quickly made.

President Reagan is famous for saying "Trust but verify." Significant D38 demographic household changes, growth estimates, budget assumptions, curriculum evolution, and classroom teacher requirements are coming or already here. Community verification is difficult in an information-sparse environment.

D38 plans seem to be lagging in reflecting the new reality of rapid inflation, competitive staff recruiting, addressing deferred maintenance, and sadly a successful comprehensive vision for the future of our district.

A change in D38 is overdue and November elections are coming soon. Choose wisely and express your opinion just as the Town of Monument community governance decision and successful vote proved are essential for a better future.

**Gordon Reichal**

#### Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

## The power of human connection

*By the staff at Covered Treasures*

*"Social connection is such a basic feature of human experience that when we are deprived of it, we suffer."—Leonard Mlodinow*

If we have learned anything these last few years, it's the powerful need for human connection. These non-fiction and fiction books are noteworthy reads centering on this.

#### We Are the Light

*By Matthew Quick (Avid Reader Press) \$27.99*

A widower takes in a grieving teenager and inspires a magical revival in Majestic, Penn., a small, quaint town torn apart by tragedy. Everyone sees Lucas as a hero, except Lucas. Insisting that his deceased wife visits him as an angel, Lucas spends his time writing letters to his former therapist. Then Lucas and Eli form an unlikely alliance, embarking on a journey to heal their neighbors and themselves. This unforgettable, optimistic tale reminds us that life is full of guardian angels.



#### Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World

*By Vivek H. Murthy, MD (Harper) \$29.99*

Dr. Vivek Murthy's message is about the importance of human connection, the hidden impact of loneliness, and the social power of community. He makes a case that loneliness affects not only our health but also how our children experience school, how we perform in the workplace, and the sense of division and polarization in our society. At the center is our innate desire to connect. We are, simply, better together.

#### The Good Life: Lessons from the World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness

*By Robert Waldinger, MD and Marc Schultz, PhD (Simon & Schuster) \$28.99*

What makes a life fulfilling and meaningful? The stronger our relationships in all their forms—friendships, romantic partnerships, families, coworkers, book club members, Bible study groups—the more likely we are to live happy, satisfying, and healthier lives. The Harvard Study of Adult Development reveals that the strength of our connections with others can predict the health of our bodies and brains as we go through life. It's never too late to strengthen current relationships and to build new ones.

#### B.F.F.: A Memoir of Friendship Lost and Found

*By Christie Tate (Avid Reader Press) \$28*

A heartwarming memoir about Christie Tate's lifelong struggle to sustain female friendship and the friend who helps her find the human connection she seeks. With Meredith, 20 years older, by her side, Christie embarks on a brutally honest exploration of her friendships past and present. B.F.F. explores what happens when we finally break the habits that impair our ability to connect with others, and the ways that one life can change another.

#### The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma

*By Bessel Van Der Kolk, MD (Penguin) \$19*

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, one of the world's foremost experts on trauma, has spent over three decades working with survivors. He uses scientific advances to show how trauma literally reshapes both body and brain, compromising sufferers' capacities for pleasure, engagement, self-control, and trust. He explores innovative treatments, exposes the tremendous power of our relationships to hurt and to heal, and offers new hope for reclaiming lives.

#### The Half Known Life: In Search of Paradise

*By Pico Iyer (Riverhead Books) \$26*

Paradise: that elusive place where the anxieties, struggles, and burdens of life fall away. Pico Iyer brings together a lifetime of explorations to upend our ideas of utopia and how we might find peace amid difficulty and suffering. He brings together the outer world and the inner to offer us a surprising, original, often beautiful exploration of how we might come upon paradise amid our very real lives.

#### A Thread of Grace

*By Mary Doria Russell (Ballantine) \$17*

It is 1943, and 14-year-old Claudette Blum and her father are among thousands of Jewish refugees scrambling over the Alps toward Italy. The Blums discover that Italy is anything but peaceful, as it quickly becomes an open battleground for the Nazis, the Allies, Resistance fighters, Jews in hiding, and ordinary Italian civilians trying to survive. It tells the little-known story of the vast underground effort by Italian citizens who saved the lives of 43,000 Jews during the final phase of World War II. Profoundly moving, it engages the value and depths of human connection.

Until next month, happy reading.

*The staff at Covered Treasures can be reached at books@ocn.me.*