

- Miller reported that there have been 560 projects submitted so far in 2023, which is a decrease of 7.7% from 2022. The approval percentage is 98.8%.
- Forestry Director Cindy Thrush said there were three Forestry and Firewise visits in November and that WIA was preparing its final grant reimbursement package, having exhausted the \$275,000 in matching grants

for mitigation. She is working with the state to secure additional funding in the new year.

The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. There will be no regular board meeting in January. Instead, the annual meeting will be held on

Jan. 29, and the reorganization meeting will be held on Jan. 31; both will be at the Barn at 7 p.m. The WIA calendar can be found at www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/ once approved and posted.

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December Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

The El Niño pattern was in full effect in December, with temperatures and precipitation above normal around the Palmer Divide. During El Niño patterns, the storm track over the southern U.S. becomes stronger and more active. This often brings a series of storms through California and the southwestern U.S. and along the southern Plains and Gulf Coast. At the same time this allows warm air to move into the central Plains and Ohio Valley, which bottles up the cold air in Canada. Therefore, cold air outbreaks are less common. And this December we didn't see any Arctic fronts move through. This was the opposite of 2022, when some very cold air moved in the week before Christmas.

The month started out with some light snow each of the first three days, although temperatures were only slightly below average. During the period, 2-4 inches of snow fell, with highs reaching the 30s each afternoon. Mild conditions moved in soon after, with highs reaching near daily record levels in the mid- to upper 60s on the 6th. As is normal, this was ahead of a storm system that was approaching the region from the west. This storm brought a quick change in the weather starting the morning of the 8th, with areas of snow showers increasing to snow and blowing snow during the day and continuing into the early morning of the 9th. This storm brought another 4-8 inches of snow to the region over the two-day period. Temperatures were cooler as well, with highs reaching the mid-20s on the 9th and overnight lows in the single digits above and below zero.

Another change moved in for a few days, but this time temperatures didn't warm up as much, only reaching normal levels in the 30s and 40s before another quick-moving storm brought 1-4 inches of snow to the area and cooler temperatures on the 13th. Of course, the nice part about

each of these snowfalls during the first two weeks of the month helped get us in the Christmas spirit with plenty of fresh snow on the ground. However, a longer streak of mild and dry conditions then moved back in from the 15th through the 22nd. Temperatures peaked on the 19th, with highs reaching the upper 50s to low 60s.

However, this pattern began to break down just in time for Christmas with a large area of low pressure developing over eastern Colorado and slowing moving into Kansas and Nebraska. Initially this storm brought a couple inches of snow into Christmas. Then a brief break occurred on Christmas Day before the storm continued to intensify to our east. At the same time, the storm took an unusual pattern and retrograded back to the west. This produced a prolonged period of strong northerly flow and moisture in the region from Christmas night through the morning of the 27th. This snow came in waves with a good period of heavy snow and wind the morning of the 26th and a second period of heavier snow and wind during the afternoon and evening of the 26th.

There were a couple of unique aspects with this storm. First, its northerly flow meant that the topography of the Palmer Divide was very important in developing snowfall and keeping temperatures cold enough for snow. This meant areas to our north around Denver and to our south in Colorado Springs received very little snowfall and in some cases rain showers. The other aspect was the location of the low-pressure system to our east. This left us right on the far western edge of the storm, and therefore areas farther east received more snowfall and areas farther west much less. The dividing line was right around I-25, with areas to the east picking up 6-10 inches and areas to the west only a couple inches at most. During this period, temperatures were cool as well, with highs below freezing and lows

touching zero on Christmas morning.

After this storm departed, conditions were quiet and sunny heading into New Year's weekend. Temperatures responded, climbing from the 30s on the 28th to the 40s on the 29th and the 50s on the 30th.

A look ahead

January can see the coldest temperatures of the year, but there is often a proverbial "January thaw" where mild temperatures make brief appearances. Of course, that's been the case all winter so far, so hopefully this January will see a shift in the overall pattern to cold and snowy conditions. Unfortunately, precipitation is usually on the low side, with amounts generally less than an inch. The month experiences numerous sunny and windy days, with quick shots of snow in between.

December 2023 Weather Statistics

Average High	43.2° (-0.5°) 43.7
	100-year return frequency value max 50.5° min 32.6°
Average Low	19.4° (+6.1°) 13.3
	100-year return frequency value max 22.4° min 5.4°
Monthly Precipitation	1.51"
	(+0.50", 44% above normal)
	100-year return frequency value max 2.82" min 0.00"
Monthly Snowfall	27.2"
	(+9.5", 45% above normal)
Highest Temperature	66° on the 5th
Lowest Temperature	0° on the 25th
Season to Date Snow	41.7" (+2.2")
	(the snow season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)
Season to Date Precip.	26.38" (+4.09")
	(the precipitation season, Jan 1 to Dec 31)
Heating Degree Days	1046 (-239) 1285
Cooling Degree Days	0 (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 23.

Disclaimer: The information and opinion 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 arranged in alphabetical order based on the last name of the author.

Bell ringers help the needy

It has been my honor to be a bell ringer for the Salvation Army (SA) at Safeway in Monument to greet the wonderful, generous Tri-Lakes community. There were smiles and stories shared perhaps because of my patter as I welcomed folks with "Young lady (under 80) you look terrific today; I thought the sun was bright but your halo is blinding me." A time or two my "Merry Christmas young man" was corrected by "I'm 85" or "I'm 91." Had my 82 beat! The outpouring of cash donations was heartwarming as was noted by the downtown SA staff. The volunteers of the three sites in this area should be proud of the community response.

John Howe

D38 school board elections

It's a shame that Todd Brown ran unopposed to the D38 school board. I say that because of my personal interactions with Todd. I was on a tour of Lewis-Palmer Middle School a few years ago with Todd. He was disinterested in education and learning about kids and how they learn. As soon as the topic turned to curriculum, he left. He certainly has no knowledge or concerns regarding kids with special needs, gifted kids, or twice exceptional kids. Todd wants to be on the board because he is sure that the board is "hiding" money or spending it on exorbitant salaries. Some of his animosity comes from events that occurred 20 years ago when he didn't even live here. He listens to the malcontents.

Todd was the administrator of the LP Parents Facebook page, which is simply a propaganda machine for those who want to destroy public education. He allowed others on the LP Parents site to debase and slander people personally and professionally. He especially let Derek Araje attack people for their opinions. But if you said something back to Derek, then you were "admonished" by Todd on the LP Parents page.

When asked why Derek wasn't "admonished," Todd said he handled Derek privately. LOL!

If you are concerned about your child's education, I suggest you keep an eye on Todd Brown. I believe he will only bring animosity to the board and the district. District money will not be spent on what is best for kids, nor on teachers. As a fiscal conservative, and the principal of LPMS for seven years (two consecutive years as a John Irwin School of Excellence), and who returned money back to the district every year from my budget for 32 years, I am dismayed at Todd's approach to education.

Terry Miller

Appalled at MA's gender transition policy

Once again, I am appalled and disgusted by Monument Academy's new gender transition

policy! Not only is it discriminatory in nature, it blatantly states it's going against state and federal law. Another portion states the administration can notify the community, these students are minors, what gives you the right to disclose anything about them? You also talk about 4th Amendment rights; you have removed any rights of these students!

I am also curious if District 38 is sanctioning this illegal policy and will they pay for the lawsuits that will certainly ensue! (MA has already received a letter from the ACLU.) If MA is depending on parents to foot the bill, then I hope they have deep pockets!

Finally, I resent any of my tax dollars going to this dysfunctional institution!

Claudia Swenson

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

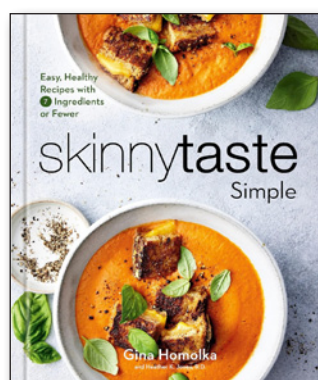
Books that are a great way to start the new year

By the staff at Covered Treasures
"And now we welcome the new year. Full of things that have never been."—Rainer Marie Rilke

Here are some books that will help you navigate 2024.

Skinnytaste Simple: Easy, Healthy Recipes with 7 Ingredients or Fewer: A Cookbook
By Gina Homolka (Clarkson Potter Publishers) \$35

Skinnytaste Simple has recipes with no more than seven ingredients, with maximum flavor and nutrition. From hearty breakfasts to crowd-pleasing dinners, there are recipes that many will love. Each recipe features a photo, icons that indicate recipes that may suit your dietary needs (such as gluten-free,



dairy-free, vegetarian), and nutritional info, with the most up to date Weight Watchers points available on the Skinnytaste site.

Walk: Slow Down, Wake Up, and Connect at 1-3 Miles per Hour
By Jonathon Stalls (North Atlantic Books) \$17.95
In 2010, Jonathon Stalls and his blue heeler husky mix began their 242-day walk across the United States, relying on each other and the kindness of strangers along the way. In this collection of essays, Stalls explores walking as waking up. Walk is an urgent and glorious call to slow down, look around, and engage with the world in front of us. It's an invitation to move, to connect, to participate deeply in the world—and to dissolve the barriers that separate us from each other and the living Earth.

The Stress Prescription: Seven Days to More Joy and Ease (Seven Days)
By Ellisa Epel (Penguin Life) \$15
In The Stress Prescription, Dr. Epel distills decades of research, infused with wisdom, into a