

For 2024 goals, Bush highlighted:

- Obtain more funding for a fire mitigation grant.
- Developing trails in common areas.
- Continuing to digitize WIA files.
- Continuing WPS patrols.

Top architectural projects were roof replacement repairs, with 595 total projects (down from 634), of which 98.8% were approved by the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) or office staff.

The Good Neighbor award went to John and Susanna Finter, who helped an ill neighbor by watering, removing snow, and helping in the house. The couple received a \$50 Home Depot gift card.

The meeting ended with a round of questions and answers about vegetation blocking visibility at intersections, the cattails at Wild Duck Pond, WIA's role in traffic safety for School District 38, and the decision not to plow streets until there are 6 inches of snow. If an intersection is in the WIA area, WIA's contractor can help remove overgrown vegetation, said Bush. ACC administrator Bob Pearsall said he had plans for the contractor to work on the Wild Duck Pond cattails. Bush said that the board had concluded that it was unsafe for officers to do traffic control in front of the middle and high schools. He also noted that snow removal is solely done by the county and recommended residents contact their county commissioner Holly Williams (HollyWilliams@elpasoco.com).

Board reorganization

At the Jan. 31 meeting, Bush reviewed the certified election results, which re-elected three members. The board re-instated directors to the following roles:

- Brian Bush, president
- Peter Bille, vice president, re-elected
- Connie Brown, treasurer
- Steve Cutler, Common Areas, re-elected

- Rick DePaiva, secretary and Community Outreach
- Brad Gleason, Public Safety
- Ed Miller, Architectural Control, re-elected
- Per Suhr, Covenant Control
- Cindy Thrush, Forestry

Board highlights

- The board appointed Bush, Bille, Brown, and DePaiva as authorized signers on its financial accounts.
- The board voted unanimously to meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7 pm. The November and December meetings will be moved earlier due to the holidays. All meetings are held at The Barn.
- The board set its covenant hearing dates for the second Thursday of each month at 6:15 pm.
- The board set its ACC meetings for the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. except for December when there is only one meeting. The board appointed the 2024 ACC committee members.
- The board authorized the ACC administrator to approve certain miscellaneous projects, handle compliance fee refunds up to \$500, and handle routine change orders for all projects without prior ACC approval.
- The board authorized the director of Forestry to review and approve tree removal requests and Firewise lot evaluations. The board appointed Forestry Committee members for 2024.

WIA and area developments

WIA is a member of the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Organizations (NEPCO), which tracks new developments. WIA is working with The

Heights property owners association (POA) to monitor the proposed development called Monument Ridge East. The Heights, a 62-member association, is behind the proposed Monument Ridge East development. WIA also works with the David Weekley Homes on the development of the Cloverleaf area, which has 131 homes. WIA will administer the covenants of this sub-HOA. Bush noted that they wanted to have wrought-iron fences which were not approved.

Bush noted that the North Bay development proposals have ranged from 41 to 13 units but is currently inactive. The Waterside development, which is just north of The Barn, is active and has changed from 52 to 44 units. WIA is working with the La Plata Communities/Vantage Homes and will be reviewing the governing documents. Bush reiterated that there is not one-square-inch of Tri-Lakes that is not planned for development at some point.

For more information on NEPCO, see <http://www.nepco.org>; for more information on development projects in Woodmoor, see <https://woodmoor.org/woodmoor-developments/>.

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. The next meeting will be on March 28.

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.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

February Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

February was warm and wet, with overall moisture values coming in greater than the 100-year recurrence interval. In other words, there was less than a 1% chance in any given February that we would receive as much moisture as we did last month. These higher levels of moisture available also meant temperatures were warm as the origin of most of the storms that came through was the Pacific Ocean and not the Arctic. Lows never dipped below zero for us during the month.

Another benefit of the numerous storms moving through from the west/northwest was the amount of snow that accumulated in the mountains. This brought snowpack levels up to average by the end of the month. This pattern is typical of an El Niño winter overall for most of Colorado, so the mild and wet conditions were expected.

The Palmer Divide region was affected by a new storm about once per week. The first one moved through on the 2nd and 3rd. This storm was of subtropical Pacific origins and was therefore very mild for early February. In fact, the storms started out with a little rain/snow mix during the afternoon of the 2nd before everything turned into a heavy, wet snow. This was more like April than February. Heavy snow quickly accumulated along the higher elevations of the Palmer Divide, with amounts quickly falling off in lower elevations. New snow amounts ranged from 3-12 inches with high variability over short distances.

Mild air moved in behind this system, with highs reaching into the 50s by the 6th ahead of another active system which began to affect the region on the 9th. This storm moved in from the northwest and therefore was cooler than the previous storm. This meant all snow and blowing snow. Snow fell heaviest on the 10th, with 8-12 inches accumulating. This left behind a good snowpack across the area, and clearing skies on the 11th allowed temperatures to drop to the single digits.

A week of quiet weather moved in from the 11th to the 15th, with temperatures warming to the upper 40s and low 50s by the end of the period. A weak cold front brought light snow and cool temperatures on the 16th and 17th, with 1-3 inches of new snow around the region.

Temperatures then warmed again over the next few days, reaching the mid- to upper 50s from the 19th through the 21st. A very quick cool down accompanied by a spring-like pattern produced a few snow showers and even a few rumbles of thunder on the 22nd. Sunny and mild conditions quickly returned with highs back into the mid- to upper 50s from the 24th though 26th, helped with gusty westerly winds at times.

One final cold front moved through on the 27th, with a quick shot of snow that afternoon and evening into early on the 28th. This brought temperatures back to below normal levels to end the month.

A look ahead

March is known for a wide range of weather conditions in the region. We can see 70° temperatures one afternoon and blizzard conditions the next. Many of us remember the blizzard of March 2003 when we received 30-50 inches of snowfall that shut down the region. However, snow that does fall begins to melt quickly this time of the year, providing beneficial moisture for our plants as we head into spring.

February 2024 Weather Statistics

Average High	43.9° (+4.2°)
100-year return frequency value	max 51.9° min 32.8°
Average Low	19.2° (+6.4°)
100-year return frequency value	max 21.9° min 3.7°
Highest Temperature	59° on the 26th
Lowest Temperature	7° on the 11th
Monthly Precipitation	2.25"
	(+1.31" 240% above normal)
100-year return frequency value	max 2.10" min 0.02"
Monthly Snowfall	31.9"
	(+14.1", 80% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	90.0"
	(+19.5", 27% above normal)
Season to Date Precip.	3.16"
	(+1.51", 200% above normal)
Heating Degree Days	971 (+67)
Cooling Degree Days	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 19.

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.

Caught by surprise

The local community around Fox Run Park was largely caught by surprise recently at the plans of El Paso County to build a nature center in the more remote, wooded section of Fox Run Park, clearing trees to construct a building, a tower that rises above tree line, and 60 parking spots. Notification of the project was never directed at neighborhoods directly adja-

cent to the park—it came only through local citizen efforts. About 75 citizens showed up at a meeting held 20 minutes away on a snowy, icy night to discuss concerns about the project. Despite the expressed intention of the meeting, at least one attendee left questioning the true purpose.

There are legitimate traffic safety issues by those living on the residential streets around the park, not to mention other worthy considerations. In one person's attempt to explain issues documented in a 161-page speeding report on Becky Drive and urge the exploration of relocation of the center to a direct entrance off of Roller Coaster Road, the response was that said person needed "to have an open mind" to the current plan. While many attended the meeting with a per-

haps naive expectation on its expressed goal to gain input, it felt to many that the intent was to defend "the plan" and to appease the concerned.

Unfortunately, the Fox Run Nature Center will likely become another example of the strong arm of public servants to further projects with little disruption, despite negative impact on local citizens. However, the attempts to force alternative considerations that appropriately protect the Fox Run area are noble and in line with our societal foundations. The next opportunity for discussion is an open house to be held on March 14, 2024, from 6-8 p.m. at Pikes Peak Brewery, 1756 Lake Woodmoor Drive in Monument. Kelly Bane

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

March mystery madness

By the staff at Covered Treasures

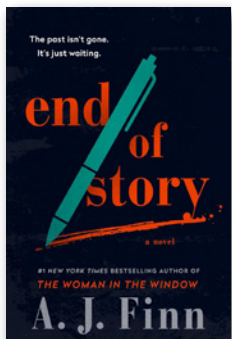
"Mysteries abound where most we seek the answers."—Ray Bradbury

March is a month of crazy weather, basketball and spring break. It's also a great time to hunker down with some good mysteries.

End of Story

By A.J. Finn

"I'll be dead in three months. Come tell my story," writes reclusive mystery novelist Sebastian Trapp to his longtime friend, an expert in detective fiction. "You and I might solve a mystery or two." Soon Nicky Hunter finds herself caught in an irresistible case, obsessed with discovering the truth. Scattered with eccentric characters and references to other mysteries, this is a fresh, witty new novel from the author of the popular *The Woman in the Window*.



The Mystery Guest: A Maid Novel (Molly the Maid)

By Nita Prose (Ballantine Books) \$29

Molly Gray has risen through the ranks of the glorious five-star Regency Grand Hotel to become the esteemed head maid. But just as her life reaches a pinnacle state of perfection, her world is turned upside down when a world-renowned mystery author drops dead on the floor of the hotel's tearoom. As the high-profile death threatens the hotel's pristine reputation, Molly knows she alone holds the key to unlocking the killer's identity.

The Last Caretaker

By Jessica Strawser (Lake Union Publishing) \$17

Katie accepts a resident caretaking job at a nature preserve. But from day one, something feels off. When a frantic, terrified woman arrives late at night, expecting a safe place to hide, it is clear this job is a lot more than Katie bargained for. As Katie digs deeper for clues in what the last caretaker left behind, she must discover courage she never knew she had—and decide how much she'll risk to do the right thing.

The Last Devil to Die: A Thursday Murder Club Mystery

By Richard Osman (Pamela Doorman Books) \$29

Shocking news reaches the gang that an old friend has been killed, and a dangerous package he was protecting has gone missing. The gang's search leads them into the antiques business, where the tricks of the trade are as old as the objects themselves. As they encounter drug dealers, art forgers, and online fraudsters, they have no idea whom to trust.

In the Woods (Dublin Murder Squad)

By Tana French (Penguin Books) \$18

In a small Dublin suburb in the summer of 1984 three children do not return home, and the police find only one of the children gripping a tree trunk in terror, unable to recall a single detail of the previous hours. Twenty years later, the found boy (Ryan) is a detective and keeps his past a secret. When a 12-year-old girl is found murdered in the same woods, he and his partner find themselves investigating a case chillingly similar to his own. This is the first in French's excellent Dublin Murder Squad series.

Miracle Creek

By Angie Kim (Picador USA) \$19

In a small town in Virginia, a group of people know