

Palmer Lake Historical Society, May 17

Historian depicts early life on Palmer Divide

By Bernard L. Minetti

Local historian and speaker Don Ellis provided a well-rounded and detailed account of the history of the Palmer Divide and the general area surrounding it at the May 17 meeting of the Palmer Lake Historical Society. He said that by 1830, trappers and traders had come to the Divide area. He also noted that his grandparents came to the Divide as youngsters in 1874.

Ellis said Monument was originally built as one of three forts. The two other forts were built at Franktown and at Spring Valley on West Cherry Creek. These forts were constructed to help defend the settlers from occasional conflicts with Indians in the 1860s. He said that those who came West were generally trying to take advantage of the Homestead Act. Since there were no lumberyards or architects, the settlers often had to cut timber in the hills and hew the lumber into the beams, joists, doors, and windowsills. He noted that each plank had to be hand-sawed and stone had to be quarried for each home by each homeowner.

These homes, Ellis said, had no warranty, no abstract fees, no red tape, and no “legal fuss.” The settlers just came, built the West, and left all of it to us. He described the owning and developing of the sawmills along the Divide. These mills were the source of lumber to satisfy the building needs of Denver and Colorado City. Later the mills became the source of the railroad ties for the railroads that helped build the West. Ties were hauled to Kit Carson and the men were paid \$1 per tie, delivered.

Ellis said the Forest Service estimated that through 1912, 600 million board feet of timber were harvested from the Divide area. Most of this timber was cut on government-owned land. There also was free-range government land, which was made available to the ranchers seeking a place to develop and grow. The first cattle drive



Above: Ranch c. 1900. Photo provided by the Palmer Lake Historical Society.

crossed the Divide in 1866. Railroads developed track and rolling stock to haul ranchers’ cattle. The first railroad, the narrow gauge Denver & Rio Grande, was up and running in 1871.

The Denver & Rio Grande built a station in Palmer Lake and at Greenland to the north. The Greenland stationhouse was built from a converted boxcar. In describing rail development in the Divide area, Ellis said that 10 years later, in 1881 and 1882, the Denver and New Orleans Railroad built a standard-gauge line from Denver to Pueblo along a different route to the east.

The Santa Fe Railroad built a line that served Palmer Lake and Greenland with a new depot at Greenland. Ellis noted that following the construction of the depot, more cattle were shipped out from Greenland than from any other point in Colorado.

This depot served the Santa Fe and the Denver and

Rio Grande railroads. Denverites began using the railroad to attend the annual Monument potato bake. The tickets cost \$1.

Ellis’ grandfather wrote that the climate in Colorado was quite different then. It was too cold to raise wheat, so oats and potatoes were the favored crops of the time.

Ellis described the difficulties that were encountered due to the environment and severe weather encountered at the time. He noted that his grandfather sold their Divide-area ranch and moved to Peyton. At the time, education was hard to come by but Peyton had a high school.



Above: Local historian Don Ellis is pictured before his presentation on *Early Life in the Palmer Divide*. Ellis’ grandparents settled in the area in 1874. Photo by Bernard Minetti.

The June 17 meeting will be the annual Father’s Day free pie and ice cream fest. All dads are invited to participate with families on the green at the Palmer Lake Town Hall from 2 to 4 p.m.

Bernard Minetti can be contacted at bernardminetti@ocn.me.

Special Events and Notices

By Judy Barnes, Editor Emeritus
with assistance by Candice Hitt

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the info number for that event.

Wednesday Senior Lunch at Big Red June Menu

June 6—Ham, scalloped potatoes & salad
June 13—Pulled BBQ pork sandwich, potato salad & pickle
June 20—Meat loaf, baked potato casserole & salad
June 27—Brats, coleslaw & potato chips

Rolls and butter are served with each meal except sandwiches. Dessert is also provided.

An activity of Tri-Lakes Health Advocacy Partnership. Meals are provided by Pinecrest Catering, Palmer Lake; Nikki McDonald, executive chef, 481-3307.

Hooked on Palmer Lake Kids’ Fishing Derby, June 2

This community event is sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, El Paso County Parks, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife. A limited number of free poles are available. If you received free gear in the past or have your own, please bring it. Recommended bait, if you can bring it, includes salmon eggs and worms. Lots



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of free stuff will be given away. Children 10 and under must be accompanied by an adult, no exceptions. No child will be denied admission for lack of ability to pay. Tickets are \$3 in advance and can be purchased at the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce (481-3282), or \$4 at the lake. For more information, call 481-3282.

Tri-Lakes Cruisers 10th Anniversary Car Show, June 10

The annual car show, a benefit for Tri-Lakes Cares, will be held **June 10** in Historic Downtown Monument, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free participant breakfast, show T-shirts, trophies, door prizes, great DJ music, Air Force Academy falcon display, food, vendors, police and fire department displays. For more information, visit www.tlcruisers.org.

Monument Hill Country Club Open House, June 6

Play a complimentary round of golf (cart required) or pick up a one-day athletic pass after the open house. Additional open houses on Sat., **Jun. 16** 10 a.m., Wed., **Jun. 20**, 7p.m., Wed., **Jun. 27**, 7p.m. RSVP: 884-7241. Info: www.monumenthillcc.com.

Griffith Golf Tournament, June 25

Bring your friends, family, or business associates to the Golf Club at Bear Dance in Larkspur, **June 25**. Shotgun start is at 8 a.m. Play a challenging course, enjoy great food, and have a chance to win prizes while you help the Griffith Center change the life of a child. For more information, contact Jamie Sachtjen, jamie.sachtjen@griffithcenters.org or 719-327-2031, or visit www.griffithcenters.org.

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Mail-in primary election ballots due June 26

The election process is not over in Colorado. The next step for voters is to participate in the June 26 Primary Election. Last year legislation was passed to change Colorado’s Primary Election from August to June. This will be the first June Primary Election under the new law. Unlike past primaries that were polling place elections, voters will have to cast their ballot by mailing it or by dropping it off at one of the designated drop-off locations. Ballots will be mailed June 4. To verify your voter record and check your affiliation, visit www.GoVoteColorado.com. Voters can change affiliation at www.GoVoteColorado.com or by completing a Voter Registration form and returning it to the El Paso County Election Department, PO Box 2007, Colorado Springs, CO 80901. Voter Registration forms are available on the Clerk and Recorder’s web page, <http://car.elpasoco.com/elections>, or at any of the Clerk and Recorder’s offices. For more information contact Alissa Vander Veen at 351-9626 or AlissaVanderVeen@elpasoco.com.

Kiwanis Club foundation accepting grant applications until June 30

The Monument Hill Foundation is the granting arm of the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club. Its mission is to serve as a resource for the club in providing financial support to the Tri-Lakes community and its youths. The foundation is accepting applications for grants until **June 30**, for the upcoming granting year from Oct. 1, until Sept. 30, 2013. Forms and requirements for submission are available at the foundation’s website, www.monumenthillfoundation.org. Questions about the grant program can be directed to Bill Kaelin, director of Granting and External Relations, (719) 488-9242, williamkaelin@gmail.com

Attention 17-year-olds who want to vote

Teens who are age 17 and will be 18 on or before Election Day are encouraged to register in advance of this year’s elections to be eligible to vote. They must be registered 29 days prior to the election even if they will not be 18 until Election Day. This applies to both the Primary Election on June 26 and the General Election on Nov. 6. Colorado law allows for pre-registration for individuals who are 17 years old a year prior to the election in which they want to