

rolled through the region starting late on the 18th and continuing through the 19th. This brought a quick shot of snow, and the high winds led to blizzard conditions from the mid-morning hours of the 19th through the mid-afternoon. Several roads were closed in the area because travel was very dangerous. Most of us picked up 3 to 6 inches of new snow.

However, this storm moved out of the region very quickly, and clear skies that night allowed temperatures to fall well below zero before midnight and through the next morning. The pattern quieted down over the remainder of the week as we headed toward the Christmas holiday. High temperatures rebounded from well below normal levels on the 19th to above normal on the 21st and 22nd. High temperatures reached as high as the low 50s on the 22nd. Cooler and unsettled conditions began to work back in by the Christmas holiday.

The next storm arrived just in time for the Christmas holiday, with light snow beginning to fall by late afternoon and early evening on Christmas Eve. Snow continued to fall through Christmas morning, but accumulations were minor, with most of us picking up 1 to 3 inches of new snowfall. Temperatures were chilly as well. After reaching the low 40s on the 24th, temperatures fell to the mid-teens by midnight and single digits on Christmas morning.

As this storm departed, clear skies returned for the 26th, making for some beautiful Colorado blue above the freshly fallen snow. This was short lived, however, as another quick moving storm was racing toward the region. Again, this storm didn't have a lot of moisture to work with and was only able to produce an inch or so of new snow. Temperatures were chilly again, and with the clear skies and new snow, most areas tumbled to below zero readings on the mornings of the 28th and 29th.

Sunshine mixed with high and mid-level clouds were the story for the next few days, as temperatures struggled to reach normal levels. Highs stayed below freezing on the 27th, 28th, and 29th, before jumping back into the mid- and upper 30s on the 30th. Cold air again moved in on New Year's Eve, with light snow and flurries flying as well. Temperatures struggled to reach the upper teens and low 20s, making for a cold New Year's Eve celebration.

#### A look ahead

January can see the coldest temperatures of the year, but there is often a proverbial "January thaw" where mild temperatures make a brief appearance. Precipitation is 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. The last few Januarys have generally been warmer than normal, with near normal precipitation and snowfall. January 2007 through

2009 received more snow than normal, but the last couple Januarys have been drier than average.

#### December 2012 Weather Statistics

Average High	39.7° (+1.6°)
100-year return frequency value	max 50.5° min 32.6°
Average Low	12.0° (-0.3°)
100-year return frequency value	max 22.4° min 5.4°
Monthly Precipitation	0.77"
	(-0.35", 29% below normal)
100-year return frequency value	max 2.82" min 0.00"
Monthly Snowfall	14.7"
	(-4.4", 23% below normal)
Highest Temperature	63° on the 5th
Lowest Temperature	-11° on the 9th
Season to Date Snow	22.0"
	(-22.2", 50% below normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	8.04"
	(-3.38", 30% below normal)
	(the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
Heating Degree Days	1213 (-16)
Cooling Degree Days	0 (0)

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## Top weather events of 2012

By Bill Kappel

### A record dry and warm year

March, June, August, and November 2012 received record to near record low amounts of precipitation. March was one of our driest in at least the last 100 years. Also, temperatures averaged almost 7° F warmer than normal. In June, temperatures averaged a whopping 7° warmer than normal and precipitation was sparse for most of us. This was the warmest June on record for the Front Range, with records extending back to 1872. November topped things off with only .01 inch of precipitation for the entire month. These conditions put 2012 in the top five warmest and top 10 driest years on record for the Front Range

in the last 100 years.

### Cold and snow to start February

A major snowstorm rolled through from Feb. 2 to 4. One to two feet of snow accumulated during the event. Temperatures tumbled as well, as highs failed to reach above freezing from the 4th through the 7th, a long stretch for this neck of the woods.

### Severe weather in early June

Low level moisture moved into the region overnight on June 5 and stuck around for the 6th and 7th. This, combined with a couple of disturbances moving through the region, helped to spark strong to severe thunderstorms over the region. The first round developed during the afternoon

of the 6th. These slow moving storms first developed over the south side of Black Forest, then continued to develop over Colorado Springs. These storms produced large, damaging hail and flooding rainfall for several hours. Areas hardest hit were generally south of Shoup Road through the south side of Colorado Springs. If you live north of this area, you were able to watch the storms and beautiful mammatus cloud formations, but didn't receive any rain or hail.

At the same time this storm complex was wreaking havoc on the region, severe storms were also occurring just to our north. Large hail and several weak tornadoes occurred at about the same time in Douglas and Elbert counties, coming

within about 10 miles of the El Paso County line. Another round of severe thunderstorms developed during the afternoon and early evening of the 7th. This complex developed east of Denver and moved south, affecting eastern El Paso County. This storm brought at least two tornadoes to Calhan and Ramah as well as numerous reports of large, damaging hail. This stayed just to the east of the region, sparing us a repeat of the day before.

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Bill's weather summary charts are posted at [www.ocn.me/v13n1.htm#weather](http://www.ocn.me/v13n1.htm#weather).

### Between The Covers at the Covered Treasures Bookstore

## Blockbuster books of 2012

By the staff at Covered Treasures

January is a time for looking forward and back. We decided to take a second look at some of our 2012 best sellers.

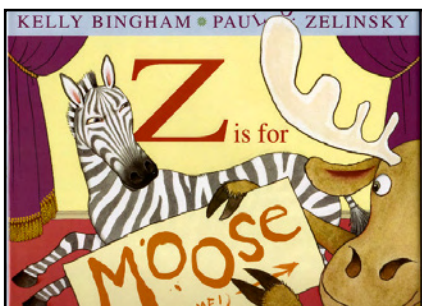
It was a banner year for local authors who had signings at our store. Steve Stingley was our best-selling author with his memoir *Under the Night Sky*. Other locally-written books which sold multiple copies included *Journey On: Beauty and Grit Along the Way* by Anna Blake Godbout; *I Love You, I Love You, I Do* by Kris Abel-Helwig; and *Wait Here, Wait There* by Barbara K. Tyner. Congratulations, authors!

Other titles popular with Tri-Lakes area readers included the following:

#### Z is for Moose

By Kelly Bingham with pictures by Paul O. Zelinsky (HarperCollins) \$16.99

Zebra is absolutely certain he'll be able to direct everyone to appear on the correct page, at the appropriate time, without any mishaps, hurt feelings, or unnecessary drama. Oh dear. Zebra forgot about Moose, who is horrified when Mouse appears on the "M" page. Hilarious situations and delightful illustrations make this a joy for young children and adults alike.



Set in New York City in 1938, Towles tells the story of a watershed year in the life of an uncompromising 25-year-old named Katey Kontent. Following a chance encounter with a handsome banker, Katey embarks on a journey from a Wall Street secretarial pool through the upper echelons of New York society in search of a brighter future, with only her bracing wit and her own brand of cool nerve to rely upon.

#### True Sisters

By Sandra Dallas (St. Martin's Press) \$24.99

In a novel based on true events, Dallas delivers the story of four British women seeking the promise of salvation and prosperity in a new land who come together on a harrowing journey. In 1856, Mormon converts, encouraged by Brigham Young himself and outfitted with two-wheeled handcarts, set out on foot from Iowa City to Salt Lake City, the Promised Land. The women endure unimaginable hardships and learn the true meaning of survival and friendship.

#### The Hunger Games

By Suzanne Collins (Scholastic Inc.) \$10.99

In the ruins of a place once known as North America rises the nation of Panem, a shining capitol surrounded by 12 outlying districts. The capitol is harsh and cruel and keeps the districts in line by forcing them all to send one boy and one girl ages 12 to 18 to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death on live TV. Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen regards it as a death sentence when she steps forward to take her sister's place in the Games. In the end, Katniss has to weigh survival against humanity and life against love.

#### The Weird Sisters

By Eleanor Brown (Berkley Books) \$15

Three sisters have returned to their childhood home, where books are a passion and TV is something other people watch. Their father, a professor of Shakespeare who speaks almost exclusively in verse, named them after the Bard's heroines. The sisters each have a hard time communicating with their parents and their lovers, but especially with one another. Now, faced with their parents' frailty and their own personal disappointments, not even a book can solve what ails them.

#### In the Garden of Beasts

By Erik Larson (Random House Inc.) \$16

William E. Dodd becomes America's first ambassador to Hitler's Germany in 1933, a year that proved to be a turning point in history. Dodd watches with alarm as Jews are attacked, the press is censored, and drafts of frightening new laws begin to circulate. As the shadows deepen, the Dodds experience days full of excitement, intrigue, romance, and ultimately horror, when a spasm of violence and murder reveals Hitler's true character and ruthless ambition.

Add a little extra happiness to your new year with the magic of a book that others have enjoyed.

Until next month, happy reading.

The staff at Covered Treasures Bookstore can be contacted at [books@ocn.me](mailto:books@ocn.me).

#### Rules of Civility

By Armor Towles (Henry Holt & Co.) \$16.99