

was a typo. Instead of voting on a one-year contract as published on the printed agenda, the board was to vote on a three-year contract with a salary increase. This agenda item was also posted online for the public to view. I double checked to make sure it still said 2017—it did.

If you google “D38 superintendent severance,” you will quickly find that our small community has suffered greatly in the recent past from superintendent turnovers and substantial severance payouts. It continues to be an area of concern for me. The proper action would have been to table the issue, correct the official record, allow for public comment, and vote at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Perhaps the superintendent deserves the extension and the raise, but delaying the vote would certainly help with transparency and move towards improving trust. The bottom line: The more transparent our D-38 board is, the more trust our community will have. As a reminder, the board works for us.

**Amy McKenzie**

### Mill levy override questioned

Last year, Yogi Berra, the beloved New York Yankee who lived a full life for 90 years, died of natural causes. His Yogi-isms promise to live on for many, many more years. Remember “It’s like déjà vu all over again”? The taxpayers living in Lewis-Palmer School District 38 (D-38) can relate to this one!

Less than two months after our last school board election, the new D-38 Board is already talking about another mill levy override (MLO)—a tax hike for Tri-lakes’ residential and commercial property owners. D-38 must believe they can win this time, since 2016 is a presidential election year and people are riled up to vote.

D-38 says Colorado’s school funding formula is unfair and we are the lowest funded school district on the totem pole. Yet—we still graduate the best and the brightest in all of Colorado. They say they’ve balanced the budget, have plenty of money in the bank, and got rid of their debt. So tell me—why do they need more money? They

say we’re heading for a fiscal cliff in 2017. Hmm... Then why does central admin keep growing—three new high paid bureaucrats in the last year? Breaking News: The Board just renewed the superintendent’s contract for three years. A 22 percent pay hike for a first-time superintendent, all on the taxpayer dime. Didn’t they learn their lesson after a trail of D-38 superintendents left with hefty severance packages? Does all this spending buy us more transparency—more trust? I haven’t seen it!

As Yogi would say, “You can learn a lot by watching!” The times we live in call for prudent leadership. One final Yogi comment, “We made too many wrong mistakes” is especially worth remembering as the D38 BOE asks once again for more money.

**Sharon Schafer**

### The Grinch and D-38 Common Core

Before the recent 2015 election, every elected D-38 school board member looked you right in the eye and told you they opposed Common Core. Each pointed to their resolutions and campaign statements to Stop Common Core, and promised if you vote for them in November, they will work to remove expensive Common Core intrusions on our schools, kids and families.

Reading the January OCN coverage on the last School Board meeting, I see a complete turn back to D-38 support for Common Core. It now is too expensive to remove Common Core, it is too complex a task, will take too long, the State of Colorado will change it anyway, D-38 parents and teachers really love Common Core, and D-38 wants everyone to relax, Common Core isn’t really that bad. Apparently, it only took the Grinch from the November election promises to just before Christmas to steal the D-38 School Board honesty and integrity out from under you. Merry Christmas everyone.

**Gordon Reichal**

### Our Community News—what and who

This letter is being written to provide readers of OCN an insight into the paper’s background, staff, and mission.

The letter closes with a personal assessment.

The following words are borrowed from ocn.me, the paper’s website:

**Background**—This all-volunteer newspaper written by and for Tri-Lakes area residents was launched in June 2001 by a group of Tri-Lakes area residents after concerns arose regarding the coverage of Tri-Lakes area news. Residents only heard about major decisions after the meetings had been held. The paper’s originators concluded that there was an urgent need to provide residents the information they needed to become involved in the public process of addressing the significant challenges facing the Tri-Lakes area.

**Who**—OCN is produced entirely by volunteers who contribute their time and talents to help keep residents of the Tri-Lakes region informed. Many of the volunteers have been with the paper for many years, at least one of whom has been on staff since the paper’s inception.

**Mission**—Provide to Tri-Lakes area residents (1) accurate, objective community-based and area-wide news to help them reach sound conclusions and contribute to a successful future for the area, (2) a forum for the free exchange of ideas and opportunities that may impact residents’ daily lives; and (3) a forum for supporting local businesses by providing a guide to Tri-Lakes area shopping through inexpensive advertising.

For further information, such as advertising, letters to the editor, and gaining access to archived editions, see <http://ocn.me>.

**A personal perspective.** I recently became an OCN volunteer. While my interactions with the staff have been limited, it’s obvious to me that they consist of caring and talented people, folks who donate their time and energy to producing the paper. Young to old, the staff represents a cross section of our community. While they bring years of experience and loads of enthusiasm, they leave their personal views at the front door.

**Ross Meyer ■**

## Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

# The love affair of children and books

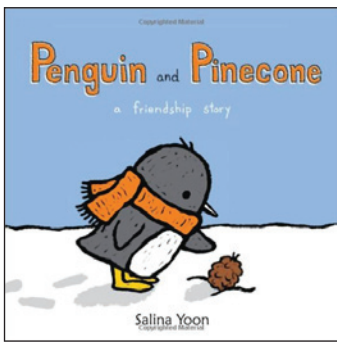
By the staff at Covered Treasures

One of the greatest gifts you can give to the children in your life is to teach them to love books. Research shows that to succeed in school and in life, children need to read on grade level by the third grade, so start early with read-aloud books. Children who associate books and reading with the soothing voice and warm lap of a caring adult are likely to continue enjoying books as they learn to read.

### Penguin and Pinecone: a friendship story

By Salina Yoon (Walker and Co.), \$15.89

When curious little Penguin finds a lost pinecone in the snow, their friendship grows into something extraordinary. But when Grandpa tells Penguin it’s too cold for Pinecone to live with them, Penguin has a tough decision to make.



turned into Wolf chasing Rabbit through the trees, it was time for Rabbit to think quickly. He discovered that using your imagination is a wonderful thing, and you never know where it might lead you.

### The Nonsense Show

By Eric Carle (Philomel Books), \$18.99

Nonsense lies at the heart of many beloved nursery rhymes. Children readily accept odd statements like “the cow jumped over the moon.” In this book, nonsense and surrealism combine to spark creativity and imagination. What’s true? What’s impossible? What’s absolutely absurd?

### Nancy Clancy: Secret of the Silver Key

By Jane O’Connor; Illustrated by Robin Preiss Glasser (Harper) \$4.99

In this fourth book of the Nancy Clancy series, Nancy and her best friend are off to solve another mystery—but this time it involves going back in time! When the girls set off to unlock the secret of the silver key found in an old desk, they learn there are some things that remain timeless forever.

### Flat Stanley: His Original Adventure!

By Jeff Brown (Harper) \$4.99

Stanley was an ordinary boy until the night his bulletin board fell off the wall and flattened him. All of a sudden, Stanley can slide under doors, mail himself across the country in an envelope, and fly like a kite! But flatness has its serious side, too, and Stanley ends up being the only one who can try to stop thieves from stealing paintings from the museum. Will he succeed?

### DK Adventures: Antarctic Expedition

By Katy Lennon (Penguin Random House) \$5.99

Discover what it takes to be a scientist on an expedition to Antarctica to drill ice cores for research. Experience the harsh conditions of this polar landscape, learn how to survive, and find out about the intrepid explorers from the past who set out to reach the South Pole.

### Counting Lions

By Katie Cotton; illustrated by Stephen Walton (Candlewick Press) \$22

Exquisite charcoal drawings introduce 10 threatened species—lions, gorillas, giraffes, tigers, elephants, wolves, penguins, turtles, macaws, and zebras in astonishing detail. Poetic text notes each creature’s particular qualities and behavior, while providing a quiet counting exercise. Further notes about the animals and suggestions for additional reading put the finishing touches on a volume that will be cherished by the entire family for years to come.

### Magic Tree House #49: Stallion by Starlight

By Mary Pope Osborne (Random House) \$4.99

Jack and Annie must find four secrets of greatness for Merlin the magician. To start, they travel back in time to meet Alexander the Great. But young Alexander is bossy, vain, and not great at all! How can they learn from him? It’s going to take a wild black stallion, magic from Merlin, and a lot of bravery to succeed. Are Jack and Annie clever and bold enough to complete their mission?

“Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.”  
—Emilie Buchwald

Until next month, happy reading.

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

## February Library Events

# Library to host local author, initiate new monthly craft program

By Harriet Halbig

The Monument Library is initiating some new programs in February, including a monthly adult craft program on the second Thursday and a First Saturday Teen Movie. See

below for details.

### Family programs

The Family Fun program for February will be I Heart... Family Fun at 2:30 on Saturday, Feb. 13. All ages are in-

vited to create a variety of heart crafts, cards, pictures of what or who you love, and make a set of your very own “From the Heart” coupons. No registration required.

The Legos Club will meet on Saturday, Feb. 20 from