

February Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

February was mainly a dry and mild month, interrupted by a couple snowfalls and brief intrusions of cold air. Temperatures for the month ended up about 5°F above normal, one of the warmer Februaries around the region in the last 100 years. The three storms that did bring snow to the area managed to accumulate enough moisture to bring the monthly totals above normal.

Winter made a strong appearance to start February as a major snowstorm hammered the region. Snow had begun just before January ended, but really got going on the 1st. Snow, heavy at times, combined with gusty winds to produce hazardous conditions around the region. This continued into the morning of the 2nd, before all the snow finally came to an end by that evening. One unique characteristic of this storm was the time it continued to affect the region and the duration of the heavy snowfall. From late on Jan. 30 through the evening of Feb. 2, most of us received 16-24 inches of snowfall. Of course, this was on top of a pretty good snowpack that has been around since mid-November.

The heavy snow caused lots of travel problems, with schools closed an unusual three days in a row. Temperatures were held down quite a bit during and immediately after the storm, as the deep snowpack acts to cool the air near the ground and reflects a lot of the energy from the sun. Highs were below freezing from the evening of Jan. 30 through the afternoon of the 6th, a long stretch for us. Low temperatures also plummeted with the fresh snow and clearing skies, reaching well below zero on the 3rd and 4th.

Colorado blue skies returned quickly on the 3rd as the storm departed, but a quick-moving storm followed on its heels. The next system didn't seem like much compared to the 1-2 feet from a few days before, but it did drop another 2 inches and provided a reinforcing shot of cold air. Behind this last storm, high pressure quickly moved in from the west. This brought with it a warmer and dry air mass.

Even with all the fresh snow, temperatures managed to climb into the 30s and 40s on the 6th and 7th.

After a snowy, cold start to the month, our "January thaw" came during the second week of February. Temperatures started the week of the 8th a little cooler than normal as we had a lot of fresh snow on the ground to melt. However, high pressure continued to build in from the west and the air mass continued to warm. Eventually, that warm air was able to overcome the energy needed to melt the snow and temperatures warmed considerably. Highs reached the low to mid-50s from the 10th through the 13th, but would have been much warmer had the snow not been around. In addition, no weather systems moved through, so it was dry for the entire week. We did see plenty of high and mid-level clouds at times and some gusty winds, but otherwise quiet conditions.

It was a warm, dry week around the region from the 15th through the 21st. High pressure was in control of our weather pattern during the entire period, with temperatures in the 40s and 50s. High temperatures were about 10 degrees warmer than normal on the 15th and 16th, in the upper 40s, then warmed even more over the next few days. Highs reached the upper 50s on the 18th and 20th, reaching record high levels for many locations. Our temperatures were held down a little because of the snow on the ground, but in areas along the Front Range and Eastern Plains where snow had already melted, highs reached into the 70s. A push of cooler air finally arrived on Sunday the 21st, with temperatures returning to normal levels, upper 30s and low 40s.

A final storm brought a quick shot of 2-4 inches of snow from the afternoon of the 22nd through the morning of the 23rd. But like much of the month, dry and mild conditions quickly returned behind this departing storm. Highs were held below freezing on the 23rd, then remained right around normal on the 24th and 25th, before jumping back to well above normal levels to end the month. Highs reached into the mid-50s and low 60s

from the 26th through the 29th. This mild, windy, and dry weather also helped to melt most of the snow that had hung around since November. But remember, winter isn't over for us, as we still have our snowiest time of the year ahead (mid-March through mid-April), so enjoy the nice weather while you can.

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 and limited inconvenience for us.

February 2016 Weather Statistics

Average High	44.9° (+4.9°)
100-year return frequency value max	51.9° min 32.8°
Average Low	17.9° (+4.9°)
100-year return frequency value max	21.9° min 3.7°
Highest Temperature	60° on the 27th
Lowest Temperature	-12° on the 3rd
Monthly Precipitation	1.13"
	(+0.21", 20% above normal)
100-year return frequency value max	2.10" min 0.02"
Monthly Snowfall	23.4"
	(+6.1", 26% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	87.5"
	(+17.9", 20% above normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	13.04"
	(+.05", 1% above normal)
	(the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
Heating Degree Days	974 (-123)
Cooling Degree Days	0

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Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters to the editor are on page 27.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer

Let's continue to fight Common Core

As a parent of children in D38, I'm vehemently opposed to Common Core, now rebranded: College and Career-Ready and Next Generation. Three short months ago, all D38's school board candidates voiced their strong opposition to Common Core. Soon after the election, the D38 superintendent advised the board to wait. At last month's board meeting, a D38 employee chastised parents for continuing to speak out. Be assured—this conversation will continue until this federal mandate—Common Core—is rejected.

Common Core has infiltrated our schools through testing, curriculum, and surveys that require children to reveal personal information regarding their beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and values. Accredited with distinction, D38 has now decided to align its graduation requirements with Common Core. Why?

As a local control state, Colorado is uniquely equipped to reject Common Core. State Rep. Paul Lundeen and D38 Director Sarah Sampayo continue to remind us that parents are primary in directing their children's education. Thanks to our well-researched, vocal and engaged parents, D38 successfully waived the invasive Healthy Kids Colorado Survey and data-mining TS Gold assessments.

As parents, we have a voice—we are empowered. One way to make your voice heard is to refuse your students'

participation in any and all assessments, testing (PARCC, CMAS), surveys (Naviance, ICAP), programs, and classes with which you are not comfortable. Download a refusal form to submit to your school principal. Refer to "Refusal to Test and Privacy Protection Form" on the homepage of stopcommoncorecolorado.webs.com. To avoid confusion, please work with your school officials so they understand your desires. The Colorado Department of Education confirms there are no penalties to the district or to students for refusing to test. Colorado has acknowledged the parents' fundamental right to refuse.

Special thanks to D38 Director Sampayo for allowing "all voices to be respected and heard."

Cheryl Darnell

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Small press month

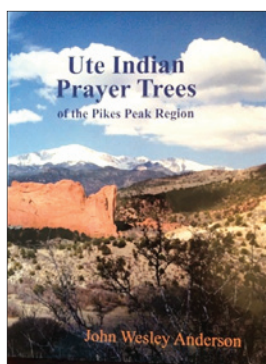
By the staff at Covered Treasures

Small presses are usually considered those publishing fewer than 10 titles per year, with annual sales below \$50,000. Many of them specialize in genre fiction or poetry, limited edition books or magazines, while others focus on nonfiction markets. Following are some of the gems that come from these publishers—intriguing volumes that may never have had a chance with the large companies.

Ute Indian Prayer Trees of the Pikes Peak Region

By John Wesley Anderson (Old Colorado City Historical Society) \$39.99

Ute Tribal Elders say that at the beginning of time the Creator placed the Ute in the Shining Mountains. They knew Pikes Peak by the name Tava, the Sun Mountain. This is a story about the Ute, the People of Sun Mountain and their sacred prayer trees, many of which can be found in the Tri-Lakes area.



Rocky Mountain Getting Started Garden Guide

By John Cretti (Cool Spring Press) \$24.99

Whether you are a beginning gardener, a newcomer to the area, or an old hand who is looking for some new ideas, this guide covers over 180 of the top plants recommended for the Rocky Mountains, including every type of plant from flowers and groundcovers to trees and shrubs. Cretti also gives design tips, advice on planting, growing and care, and includes large color photographs of each plant.

Cooking for the Birds

By Adele Porter (AdventureKeen Publications) \$9.95

Why not invite "everybirdy" to your yard with a banquet of nutritious, home-cooked foods? This colorfully illustrated little book features 26 simple recipes, perfect to tackle alone or with the whole family. These fun-to-make treats will attract 74 backyard birds, including orioles, hummingbirds and more.

Make: Making Simple Robots

By Kathy Ceceri (MakerMedia), \$24.99

Written in language that non-engineers can understand, this book helps beginners move beyond basic craft skills and materials to the latest products and tools being used by

artists and inventors. Find out how to animate folded paper origami, design a versatile robot wheel-leg for 3D printing, or program a rag doll to blink its cyborg eye. Each project includes step-by-step directions as well as clear diagrams and photographs. These are robots for anyone, made from anything.

The Common Thread of Overcoming Adversity & Living Your Dreams

By Jerry Gladstone (Morgan James) \$16.95

This book gives you instant access to insights, wisdom and proven strategies from Academy Award winners, Super Bowl and World Series champions, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame legends, Olympians, UFC world class fighters, and even billionaires. Not based on theory, these stories prove there is indeed a Common Thread of how celebrities, such as Sylvester Stallone, Muhammad Ali, Ringo Starr, and Bill O'Reilly, reached the pinnacle of success.

Nothing Here but Stones

By Nancy Oswald (Filter Press LLC) \$8.95

Based on the Russian Jewish colony that settled in Coto-paxi, Colo., in 1882, this story features Emma, a middle child, outsider, dreamer, and risk taker. Her adventures