

Active Shooter class, Jan. 10



Above: Monument Police Chief Jake Shirk taught an Active Shooter class for local residents on Jan. 10. The class included a lecture, slides, videos, and questions and answers. The class focused on best practices for an active shooter event, what to do if one finds oneself in such an event, how to recognize the signs of potential violence, and what to expect after an active shooting takes place. Chief Shirk explained the importance of situational awareness for one's family is vital to survival. People should prepare and practice for their own safety, because police officers cannot get to a situation in time to prevent it, they are called after an event is going on. Shirk said we all should look at where we are through the lens of survival and make a plan before anything happens and rehearse it. It is a good idea to know where each family or group member will be, figure out a path of escape, and be prepared to escape, hide, or fight. More classes can be requested via the Police Department, and immediate further information is online at www.ready.gov/active-shooter. *Photo by Janet Sellers*

Patrick at Gallery 132, Jan. 13

Right: Acoustic guitarist Dave Patrick played a wide variety of music, ranging from The Girl from Ipanema to Moonlight Sonata at Gallery 132 in Monument on Jan. 13. Crowds gathered to listen, and some even pulled up chairs to sit and enjoy his relaxing style and selection. This was Patrick's first visit to the Tri-Lakes area, and he plans to return. *Photo courtesy of Jennifer Cunningham.*



The Blood Vessel, Jan. 16



Above: The Penrose-St. Francis Blood Bank brought its "Blood Vessel" to Monument in January. The mobile unit stopped at Monument Community Presbyterian Church on Jan. 16. Blood Bank staff had conducted a donation drive at St. Peter Catholic Church earlier in the week and planned to visit DePuy Synthes a few days after Community Presbyterian's blood drive. Donor phlebotomist Catherine Hanlon (pictured in the inset drawing blood from Susan Permut) stated, "Each pint can save up to three lives." Photos of recipient children adorn the walls inside the blood mobile. Their stories confirm that life's unpleasant surprises can involve hospitals and surgeries. The four-step process usually takes 20 to 45 minutes, but it depends on each donor's circumstances. The Blood Vessel provides a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere, and snacks provide post-donation energy. Penrose-St. Francis strives to schedule the Blood Vessel to be "on location" weekly. If your organization is interested in hosting a blood drive, call 719-776-5714. If you are interested in donating blood, visit the website www.penrosetstfrancis.org or call 719-776-5822.

Winter Woodland Wonders



Above: One chilly morning in January, children and adults explored Fox Run Park in search of wildlife. Mary Jo Lewis, Bear Creek Nature Center supervisor, led a two-hour hike Jan. 13, expertly pointing out plants and animals that live in the park. While we walked, we discussed winter survival techniques employed in nature. Two young adventurers in the group sought out and found big and small evergreens, including bearberry and ponderosa pines. If you smell the pine bark, you might get a whiff of vanilla or butterscotch! Fox squirrels followed us from high in the trees, chittering as we viewed the mess of pine cones below their nest. We sought out, but didn't find Abert's squirrels with their tufted ears, and porcupines, which also nest in trees. For information on hikes offered by El Paso County, go to www.elpasocountynaturecenters.com, then search through Programs and Classes. *Photo by Allison Robenstein*

Benet Hill concert, Jan. 14



Above: On Jan. 14, the Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery hosted House Parish Baroque, a quartet specializing in the music of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. The afternoon sun glimmered through the windows of Our Lady of Peace Chapel while the four played Elizabethan-era folk tunes. Artistic Director Elisa Wicks acted as emcee, explaining song origins and creating the baroque violin's ethereal, almost mysterious sound as bow was pulled across strings. Jennifer Carpenter's recorder and Pam Chaddon's cello kept bass undercurrents, while Eric Wicks' harpsichord created a crisp, sharp sound as if playing a crystal guitar. Soprano Amanda Balestrieri sang with the group, creating pleasingly coherent harmonies. In *Flow, My Tears* by John Dowland, Balestrieri's voice was the counterpart to the instruments' sound flowing along the ups and downs of a serene path. At times, listeners swayed to the music, and children snuggled with their parents. *Photo by Allison Robenstein*