

to remain an avant garde state, we can be the first to remove the legalization of retail marijuana statewide. Or, we can continue to keep our head in the sand. Call Gov. Polis at (303) 866-2471 or write him at 136 State Capitol Bldg., Denver, CO 80203. Let your voice be heard.

Chris Amenson

Rebuilding trust

We are fast approaching the one-year anniversary of the resignation of a District 38 conservative school board member. She stepped down claiming the board majority had been using executive sessions to hold improper discussions behind closed doors that included bullying and intimidation, in clear violation of Sunshine Laws. Her resignation letter stated that the meetings didn't stay specific to executive session purposes. Instead, certain board members went beyond specific topics allowed to be discussed, which invalidated the privilege of privacy for the meetings. Moreover, at a subsequent board meeting, those board members themselves violated executive session confidentiality by publicly discussing what was discussed in those closed-door meetings.

The most recent Thought Exchange asked the community: "What are some important ways Lewis-Palmer School District 38 can build trust and ensure confidence?" Since this board claims to stand up against bullying, they need to release these executive session tapes to the public. The four current board members who were present during the Jan. 18 and Jan. 30 executive sessions in question all claimed that they have no problem with releasing the tapes but decided not to release them due to "legalities." No legalities are involved. The power lies solely with the board to release the aforementioned tapes [CRS 24-6-402 (D)].

Releasing the tapes would be a good faith gesture on behalf of the board as a first step towards rebuilding the community's trust.

This community needs to return this board seat to a conservative. To do this, we need someone to step up from the surrounding Jackson Creek area and run for this seat in District 2. Please join the Facebook page Lewis-Palmer D38 LP Parents to learn if you live in the right area to qualify as a candidate and inquire what you need to do to run for this seat.

Derek Araje

Our Community News continues biased reporting on school board and upcoming school bond election

I wrote to you just before the last election to complain that your newspaper appears to be biased towards the D-38 Board of Education, school board. The editor published my letter, but also used it to state that you were not biased, in his editorial.

I still think you are biased, using the latest edition, issue No. 217, March 2, 2019, as an example. The amount of first page and upfront pages devoted to the school board and the upcoming election is amazing, and points to a larger agenda.

On page 1 you quote Mark Pfoff and a board resolution that basically states that in the last election, No-

vember 2018, the residents of Monument were too stupid to understand the ... "ballot language and unclear financing." I contend the measure was defeated because the voters fully understood what the board was trying to push on them, and the unclear language had been written on purpose. I did not see any push back to these questionable statements by *Our Community News*.

Also, I am sure that your "independent letter writer" Terry Miller will come out at any time—after all his "research" to support the upcoming bond measures. See Letters to Editor, p. 22. I have seen this tactic used in other elections.

There are other concerns with this issue and the school board, but I am at the 300-word limit, so they will have to wait.

In summary, I don't know the exact reason(s), but it appears your paper is in the pocket of the D38 Board of Education, and they are using you to set up an "out of cycle" election this year to push their questionable agenda.

Paul J. Lambert

Editor's Note

OCN's policy as published on page 31 of each issue: "Unlike papers that try to figure out what the 'story' is and then get quotes on each side to presumably lead the reader to conclude what the 'truth' is, OCN's role is to report in detail on public meetings of local governmental entities. We report what was talked about and what was decided. By reading OCN, you can find out what you might have learned if you had attended those public meetings. In this context, 'truth' is that the articles accurately represent what transpired at the meetings." The order articles appear in the paper is decided by the OCN editorial board based on newsworthiness. Last month, D38 articles appeared on the front page. This month, it is fire districts.

D38 censorship

In December, I submitted a Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) request to D38 asking for the removed comments from their December Thought Exchange, an online survey for community feedback. Instead of questioning the reasoning behind this, a local reporter (for this very publication) felt the need to CORA the name of the individual who made such a request of the district. Instead of holding district administration accountable for removing comments, a long-serving board member posted false comments about me making personal "attacks" on his Facebook page. And, instead of apologizing to the community for censoring and removing mostly negative comments about the school district, the district leadership put out an email saying how deeply saddened they were that the original CORA happened and that they would have to release those removed comments for all to see.

My CORA intentions were done simply to provide transparency and ensure all comments were made available for the community to view and decide for themselves. What is unfortunate is that citizens, like myself, feel the only way to receive accurate and timely information from D38 is through a CORA request. As a parent, former teacher, and taxpaying citizen, I will continue to

ask the district's leadership to provide full transparency and honesty to their community for whom they work. What deeply saddens me is that parents and community members coming forth with concerns and suggestions are labeled as district haters and teacher haters. Their voice is then publicly shamed and humiliated by the district leadership. We all want what is best for our children but may differ on the path. However, when utilizing taxpayers' money, we have a right to demand transparency in order to make educated decisions on how the money is spent.

Amy McKenzie

D38 needs another school

Because I wanted to know for myself, I went to Lewis-Palmer Middle School one day. Before school started, I watched the traffic. I saw students waiting in front of the building by 6:45 a.m. (the office opens at 7). By 6:53, there was an uninterrupted flow of traffic, including buses, until the last students were dropped off at 7:22. School starts at 7:23 a.m.

I observed the last students in the cafeteria have between one and five minutes to eat lunch. Adding more time to the lunches is not a good fix. Lunch times now start at 10:40 and end at 12:50. By adding just five minutes per lunch, kids might eat as early as 10:20 (and won't get home until five to six hours later) or begin lunch as late as 1:20 (nearly six hours after school starts). If you have (or had) a middle-school-aged child, you know that won't work! They have voracious appetites! And, as kids get hungry, brain-based research will tell you they don't learn as well.

I don't expect you to take my word for anything. Go observe LPMs in the morning. Check out the research regarding how kids learn (especially middle school kids) and see what practices work best to help them learn. There is a lot of information available, and it all says the same thing. Schools today do things with intent. The reasons are based on what the best practices are for kids. Some people are committed to doing things cheaply and don't care about what is best for kids. Should I mention how ridiculous it is to have an elementary school with nearly 900 kids? D38 needs to reopen Bear Creek/Creekside as a middle school and build another elementary. It is what is right for kids and for teachers.

Terry Miller

A word of thanks

Our family just wanted to share a word of appreciation about Monument Academy. When we first moved to Monument, we searched for a school that offered a great education and aligned with our family values. Our son's first school, in a neighboring district, wasn't the best fit for him, so we put him on the wait-list for MA. This was the best decision for him. Due to the teachers, fellow parents, and respectful environment, our son has thrived there. Soon, a new job will be taking our family out of state. We will always be grateful to the wonderful staff at MA and we hope our son's experience at his next school will be just as positive.

James and Patty Vandyke

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Mary Oliver and National Poetry Month

By the staff at Covered Treasures

"I decided very early that I wanted to write. But I didn't think of it as a career. I didn't even think of it as a profession. It was the most exciting thing, the most powerful thing, the most wonderful thing to do with my life."—

Mary Oliver

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Oliver died Jan. 17 at age 83. Penguin Press will publish an authorized biography, but as yet there is no title or release date.

April is National Poetry Month, inaugurated by the Academy of American Poets in 1996. Children and adults are naturally drawn to humor, rhyme, and rhythm found in poetry. Poetry can motivate kids to read and be a tool to build fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. Here are some collections for adults, teens, and children:

Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver

By Mary Oliver (Penguin Press) \$30

Throughout her celebrated career, Oliver touched countless readers with her brilliantly crafted verse, expounding on her love for the physical world and the powerful bonds between all living things. This is a stunning and definitive collection of her writing from the last 50 years. These 200-plus poems, arranged by Oliver herself, feature her work from her very first book of poetry published in 1963 at age 28 through her most recent collection published in 2015.



A Thousand Mornings: Poems

By Mary Oliver (Penguin Press) \$17

In this collection of poems, Oliver shares the wonder of dawn, the grace of animals, and the transformative power of attention. Whether studying the leaves of a tree or

mourning her adored dog, Percy, she was ever patient in her observations and open to the teachings contained in the smallest of moments. A chronicler of physical landscape, she opens our eyes to the nature within, to its wild and its quiet. With clarity, humor, and kindness these poems explore the mysteries of our daily experience.

Love Poems (for Married People)

By John Kenney (G.P. Putnam's Sons) \$15

Based on his popular New Yorker piece, Thurber Prize-winner John Kenney presents a hilarious collection of love poems for married people. This collection captures the reality of life once the spark of a relationship has settled. With brand new pieces that cover all areas of married life.

The Zen of Mountains and Climbing: Wit, Wisdom, and Inspiration

Edited by Katharine Wroth (Skipstone) \$12.95

The Zen series explores the peace, tranquility, and sense of adventure that many people discover while scrambling up mountains. This book includes inspirational poems and quotes from a variety of well-known and lesser-known people and includes flipbook art of climbing.

Paint Me Like I Am: Teen Poems from WritersCorps

By WritersCorps (Harper Teen) \$8.99

This collection of poems is by teens who have taken part in writing programs run by a national nonprofit organization called WritersCorps. It includes writing prompts where readers may write their own thoughts and poems, a foreword by acclaimed poet Nikki Giovanni, an essay from Kevin Powell, and writing tips from WritersCorps

instructors.

The Proper Way to Meet a Hedgehog and Other How-To Poems

Selected by Paul B. Janeczko (Candlewick Press) \$17.99

This beautifully illustrated collection of poetry for children features several authors. Poets from Kwame Alexander to Pat Mora to Allan Wolf share the way to play hard, to love nature, and to be grateful.

A Light in the Attic: Special Edition with 12 Extra Poems

By Shel Silverstein (Harper Collins) \$19.99

This classic delights with remarkable characters and hilariously profound poems in a collection readers will return to again and again. Here in the attic you will find Backward Bill, Sour Face Ann, the Meehoo with an Ex-actlywatt, and the Polar Bear in the Frigidaire. You will find out what happens when Somebody steals your knees, you get caught by the Quick-Digesting Gink, and a Mountain snores.

April 18 is Poem in Your Pocket Day. People celebrate by selecting a poem, carrying it with them, and sharing it with others throughout the day at schools, bookstores, libraries, parks, workplaces, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. You can find more than 30 ways to celebrate National Poetry Month at the Academy of American Poets website: www.poets.org/national-poetry-month/home.

Until next month, happy reading.

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