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Local Events

See pages 26-31 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- WMMI Family Day: *Geology*, Sat., Jan. 4, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- County's Annual TreeCycle, Sat.-Sun., Jan. 4-5, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- Fiber Art Exhibition Opening Reception at TLCA, Wed., Jan. 8, 6-8 p.m.
- NEPCO General Membership Meeting, Sat., Jan. 11, 10 a.m.-noon
- Speakeasy Casino Night Benefit for Bryson's Chase, Sat., Jan. 11, 6-10 p.m.
- Benet Hill Concert: *Parish House Baroque*, Sun., Jan. 12, 2:30-4 p.m.
- Tri-Lakes Chamber Education: *Basics of Bookkeeping*, Wed., Jan. 15, 9 a.m.
- PLHS Annual Potluck and Membership Meeting, Thu., Jan. 16, 7 p.m.
- Lewis-Palmer High School Tour, Fri., Jan. 17, 8 a.m.
- Benet Hill Film Series, "Breakfast at Ina's" & "Pickle," Fri., Jan. 17, 6:30 p.m.
- Bryan Duncan Concert at TLCA, Fri., Jan. 17, 7 p.m.
- Palmer Ridge High School Open House, Tue., Jan. 21, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Friends of Fox Run Park, Thu., Jan. 23, 5-6 p.m.
- Palmer Ridge High School Tour, Fri., Jan. 24, 1 p.m.
- Black Rose Acoustic Society: *Guardrail*, Fri., Jan. 24, 7 p.m.
- Wendy Woo w/Robin Hoch Concert at TLCA, Fri., Jan. 24, 7 p.m.
- St. Peter School Open House, Sun., Jan. 26, 12:30-2:30 p.m.
- Lewis-Palmer High School 8th Grade Open House, Wed., Jan. 29
- Palmer Lake Art Group Winter Art Show & Sale Opening Reception, Fri., Jan. 31, 6-8 p.m.

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Circulation

Print Run: 21,630

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Stacks: 880

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Tri-Lakes rings the bell for the Salvation Army



Above: On Nov. 29, Monument Hill Kiwanis Club launched scheduling of volunteer bell ringers for the Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign in the Tri-Lakes area. A total of 702 volunteer hours were provided by members of Monument Hill Kiwanis Club, Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High School Key Clubs, Middle School Builders Club, Tri-Lakes Women's Club, Cub Scout Pack 85, Boy Scout Troop 17, Woodmen Valley Chapel, and King Soopers employees. Last year, \$50,000 was raised by the Tri-Lakes area for the Salvation Army. About 33% of total yearly donations to the Salvation Army come through the Red Kettle campaign. This money is used year-round to provide food, disaster relief, outreach to the elderly, ill and disabled, shelter and necessities for homeless, and opportunities for underprivileged children. This year's Red Kettle campaign was completed Christmas Eve, with bell ringers located at Walmart and King Soopers. Pictured from left are Tian Yu Meltzer and Griffin Greenwood of the Lewis-Palmer High School Key Club. *Photo by Sharon Williams.*

Palmer Lake Town Council, Dec. 12 and 18

Simmering dissatisfaction brings rush of resignations

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

At its meetings in December, a number of long-standing concerns—about the future of the town's Fire Department, about the roles of Town Administrator Valerie Remington and Town Attorney Maureen Juran, and about the competence and effectiveness of the Town Council—came to a head and led to the resignations of Trustee Gary Faust, Remington, and Juran.

Despite the turmoil in the town's leadership, the council was able to pass two resolutions, the first authorizing the town to accept a donation of stock to benefit the Police Department, and the second adopting a budget for 2020. Also, the council heard suggestions from local developer Kurt Erhardt about changing direction on a controversial process required of developers who are planning projects within the town boundaries.

Faust resigns, walks out

At the Dec. 12 meeting, Faust responded to feedback that had been received from some residents expressing dissatisfaction with Faust, Cressman, and Juran, arguing that he had always acted in what he believed to be the best interests of all the town's citizens while abiding by legal requirements and ad-

PALMER LAKE (Cont. on 2)

Monument Academy School Board, Dec. 9

Board hears from bond advisor, learns about secondary school program, accepts member's resignation

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held a regular board meeting on Dec. 9 to hear from a municipal advisor regarding its bonds, hear an update on the curriculum for the secondary school, and accept a board member's resignation.

Bond advisor

COO Christianna Herrera introduced Matt O'Meara from Choice Advisors, who is working with board President Mark McWilliams on reviewing forecasts. O'Meara described himself as a municipal financial advisor and said

he was a retired investment banker who started his company to ensure that charter schools get a fair deal and have the ability to manage to the covenants and financial arrangements that they've agreed upon. He said he had

MA (Cont. on 4)

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PALMER LAKE (Cont. from 1)

vice from the town's legal staff. He said he had run out of desire to give back to the town and pointed out that trustees were donating their time.

Faust said there was no failure to run as a statutory town, as critics had argued, and that he felt the town was best served by a strong town manager working together with the Town Council.

At the same meeting, a discussion between Faust and Trustee Glant Havenar concerning a proposed survey to gather community input on the future of the town's Fire Department became heated when Havenar criticized Faust for refusing to listen to opinions other than his own about what should be on the survey. Havenar said Faust did not seek input from the committee formed to plan for the future of the town's Fire Department and claimed Faust wanted to send the survey to property owners only. Havenar threatened to resign if the survey was not distributed to all voters.

In response, Faust claimed he was assigned the task of writing the survey. Faust stood up, said he was resigning,

and walked out of the meeting.

Havenar later circulated a written apology in which she said she regretted losing her temper over her disagreement with Faust but insisted that she was correct in demanding the survey go to all the town's voters.

At a special meeting on Dec. 18, Mayor John Cressman said that the council would need to appoint a trustee to replace Faust within 60 days. Cressman asked anyone interested in the position to submit a letter of intent and a resume to Administrative Assistant Toni Vega at toni@palmer-lake.org.

Cressman announces departure of Remington and Juran

At the Dec. 18 meeting, Cressman announced that Remington had resigned her position as town administrator. Cressman did not provide an explanation of why Remington resigned.

Remington's resignation prompted a discussion about how to remove her access to the town's IT systems and data.

At previous meetings and in letters to the Town Council, some residents had questioned Remington's salary, arguing it was higher than what com-

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parable town administrators were paid and that the town could not afford her salary. These claims prompted research into what other administrators are paid.

At the same meeting, Cressman announced that Widner & Juran LLP, the legal firm where Town Attorney Juran was a principal, had terminated its work for the town. Cressman did not provide details about the decision but did mention the board had received a letter from concerned residents who disagreed with Juran's conclusions about the role of the town administrator.

The resignations of Remington and Juran came at a time when the town was also discussing how to hire a town clerk.

Radosevich appointed to town manager role

At the Dec. 18 meeting, Trustee Mark Schuler said Bob Radosevich had offered to help the town part-time with budgeting and other administrative work.

Radosevich has previously served as the town's deputy town clerk.

The council accepted Radosevich's offer to serve as interim town administrator but did not decide on compensation.

Two resolutions passed

At the Dec. 12 meeting, the council passed Resolution 15 of 2019, which authorizes the town to accept \$30,000 in common stock of United Tech-

nologies Corp., to be used by the town's Police Department, as directed by the police chief.

The stock was donated by an anonymous benefactor.

At the same meeting, following the conclusion of the public hearing on the budget held open from the November meeting, the council passed Resolution 16 of 2019, which adopts the 2020 budget, appropriates the monies specified, and certifies the mill levies for 2020. The total assessed valuation of property in Palmer Lake for 2019 is \$38.358 million, according to the El Paso County assessor. The General Fund mill levy will be 11.238 mills, raising \$431,070 in revenue; the Fire Department mills are 10.00, raising \$383,582 in

revenue. The total mill levy will be 21.238, unchanged from

the previous year.

During the discussion pre-

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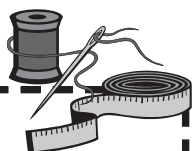
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ceding the vote on the budget resolution, Cressman told those present that the town will not run out of money in October 2020, as some rumors had stated.

In the same discussion, Remington addressed criticisms that the budget process was not transpar-

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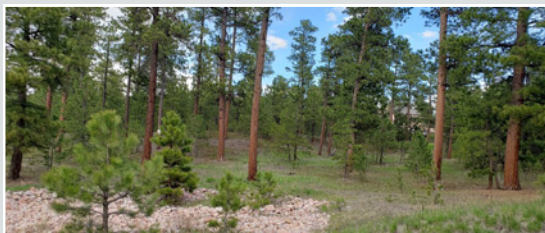
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Above: The Dec. 18 Palmer Lake Town Council special meeting was well-attended and very interactive, with trustees, staff, and community members brainstorming on how to fill a trustee vacancy and handle the necessary personnel transition because of the resignation of the town administrator and legal counsel as well as the open position for town clerk. There was a spirit of cooperation, with the audience making suggestions or volunteering to help handle the duties required on an interim basis. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

ent. Remington pointed out that a three-hour budget work session, held Oct. 22, was open to the public, that a public hearing on the budget had been announced and held on Nov. 14, and that the budget had been posted on the town's web page on Dec. 9.

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Developer suggests moratorium on project review process

In response to capacity shortfall issues with the town's sewer system, a moratorium on additional sewer taps was put in place earlier in 2019. A review process for new developments was also instituted that required a \$5,000 deposit be placed by developers to fund an engineering review of their projects.

At the Dec. 18 meeting, local developer Kurt Ehrhardt proposed a moratorium on the review process, including the fee, in January when some new sewer taps will become available.

Trustees Schuler, Havenar, and Paul Banta said the process should be re-examined. Cressman said the engineering review still made sense for larger projects, but he wanted to meet with Ehrhardt to discuss the issue further.

The council is scheduled to hold two meetings in January, on Jan. 10 and Jan. 24, at 6 p.m. at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, with the second meeting organized as a working session. Information: 481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

MA (Cont. from 1)

worked with several schools in the area.

O'Meara said he would start by looking at current financing and constraints, then do stress testing on forecasts to make sure MA is meeting its covenants and can refinance the balloon note on the secondary school as soon as possible. He would talk to the auditor to see if there is any flexibility on sources of revenues. Currently their bonds pledge revenues from each building for its associated debt, each with its own audit. He said there are potentially some accounting mechanisms that may allow school A to support school B. He would explore what is legally available. If there isn't anything, he would talk to MA's investor to see if it can make adjustments. He noted that the 2019 bonds for the secondary school can be refinanced in 2023.

O'Meara said he thinks MA is in pretty good shape, though hamstrung by the state's requirement

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that any moral obligation debt be investment grade. MA's rating has been downgraded because it took on a bunch of leverage. A moral obligation enhancement is a quasi-guarantee that the state provides for charter schools with an investment rating. MA's 2014 bonds qualified but the 2019 bonds did not. He feels the term "junk bond" is jargon that indicates MA doesn't have a credit rating of BBB- in the open market. This is true for the vast majority of the 7,000 charter schools in the nation. He feels MA is doing well on the metrics it can manage in terms of cash on hand and debt service coverage but is struggling because it has taken on additional leverage and doesn't yet have new students in those seats.

He explained that the call date is when they can refinance; they could do so earlier but that would entail prepayment penalties and tax disadvantages. The long-term goal is that MA refinances its balloon debt and eliminates financial risk on the balance sheet. He said that was few years away. The intermediate goal is to look at the bond covenants and what investors are looking at for financial metrics and determine what is needed to get there in terms of how many students are needed in the new school to break even or get an investment grade credit rating. He said he has experience talking to rating agencies and negotiating with multiple agencies to get the desired result.

McWilliams said he expected to receive a proposal from Choice Advisors to consider and noted that it is typical to hire consultants for any corporation. Herrera noted that MA had just had its S&P credit rating published and it's just under investment grade threshold. She said her previous school was very creative in the way it refinanced its initial bonds by making sure they met their covenant schedule.

Secondary school academic program

Herrera discussed progress on developing the academic program for the new secondary school, which includes the seventh- and eighth-grade middle school campus. She has been working with the faculty and the curriculum committee. She discussed school start and drop-off times to make the schedule friendly with both the MA elementary school and the other high schools in the district. She gave several options, and the board authorized her to make the final decision.

She said the group is looking at having seven periods with an optional eighth period Monday through Thursday, preserving half-days on Friday. The eighth period would be an optional half hour for clubs, enrichment, and study hall, or parents could pick up kids early for sports and other activities. She said that the Friday half days could be used by juniors and seniors to work on leadership or capstone project work. Every other week, two of the days would be on a block schedule to have time for arts, science labs or for house meetings.

The board members had questions to clarify the block schedule, passing period, comparing end of daytime with D38 schools for kids who participate in district sports. Herrera indicated that the every-other-week block schedule was a happy medium for those who like it and those who think it's too much time. During the block schedule there is still a "passing" period built in that would be used for breaks. She noted that kids would have to cut into about 10 minutes of the last period to participate in district sports but said that was better than the current situation. She said she would love to have a bus available and would be bringing this up again.

More information about secondary school course progression, comparison of MA high school credits to state and district credits, and potential club offerings can be found at <https://www.monumentacademy.net/new-high-school/courses-and-clubs/>

Board member resignation

Board member Dwayne Cooke offered his resignation at the conclusion of the meeting, saying that he

had chosen an alternative direction and his children would no longer attend MA, which makes him ineligible to be on the board. McWilliams thanked Cooke for his 1 1/2 years of service, noting the board would need to appoint someone to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term until the end of June 2021. Board member Melanie Strop suggested requesting nominations for the vacancy by the last day of the semester to be reviewed over the break.

Highlights

The following items were highlighted at the board meeting:

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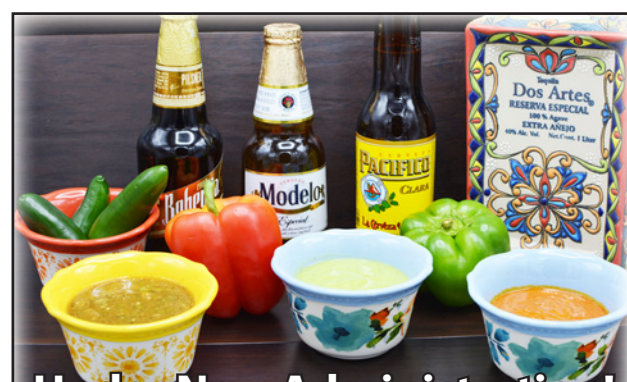


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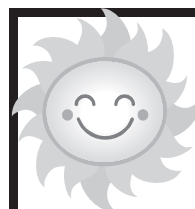
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Monument Board of Trustees, Dec. 2

April election ballot question approved; three trustee positions up for election

By Allison Robenstein
At the Dec. 2 meeting, the Monument Board of Trustees (BOT) approved a resolution to include a question to voters on the April 7 ballot concerning broadband services. The trustees also approved an update to the special events permitting ordinance, reviewed the methods used to create meeting minutes, and scheduled interviews for a new town attorney for Dec. 17.

Trustee Laurie Clark was absent.
April ballot includes question and three trustee positions

In June, the board directed Town Manager Mike Foreman to prepare an election question regarding Colorado state Senate Bill 05-152, which was passed in 2005 and declares local governments may not provide subscribers cable television, telecommunications service, or advanced service, including high-speed internet. Neither may local governments purchase, lease, construct, maintain, or operate a facility to provide these services either directly or indirectly.

Background: "High-speed broadband" service is typically run over fixed fiber connections. When it is available in the U.S., fixed wireless access or 5G will use wireless connectivity at the final connection within a home or business, which will require close in, line-of-sight transmitters set hundreds of feet apart over a street.

If the town wanted to consider partnering with a private broadband business, residents must first vote to opt out of SB 152. There are 114 Colorado cities and counties that have opted out of SB 152, including El Paso County.

Three Board of Trustees positions will be up for election in April. Trustee Jeffery Bornstein's second four-year term will be completed in April. Trustee Greg Coopman will be finished with his first four-year term and could run again to hold the seat for a second term. Trustee Jim Romanello was elected to his seat in November 2018, which he holds until the next election in April.

Foreman said candidate nomination petitions will be available starting Jan. 7, 2020 and are due to the town by Jan. 27, 2020. Eligible candidates must be at least 18 years old and be a resident of Monument for 12 months prior to the election.

Special events permit changed after Indie Fest request

Town Clerk Laura Hogan asked the

board to approve an update to the special events permits after an unexpected request came to the board this past summer. During the July 15 board meeting, Michael Bailey of Tri-Lakes Radio made a request for a music festival, Indie Fest, to be held in the town and would cover two days and include over 4,500 spectators. The trustees had been surprised by an event of this magnitude, causing them to rethink the special events permitting and approval process.

Monument municipal code chapter 5.52 states special permits are required for events that necessitate road closures or that significantly affect traffic flow. An event of 100 participants or more in an outdoor venue also requires a special permit.

Tonight, the board decided to require events of 1,000 people or more to come in front of the board for approval.

Hogan said the fees wouldn't change, but Trustee Ron Stephens asked if they are appropriate and suggested there are other ways to make up for fees, such as asking for event planners to take on insurance requirements.

Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott worried about existing verbiage in the code that states events with up to 500 people and no alcohol served do not require police officers. "People could drink somewhere else and then show up here," she said. Foreman said he would address this request with the new police chief when that person is hired.

The ordinance was approved unanimously.

Minutes versus recordings?

Coopman asked that the Nov. 18 meeting minutes, specifically the portion of the meeting concerning Home Place Ranch, be similar to a transcript that reflects the board's actual discussions and dialogue. He said the minutes of the meetings are "our record of what occurs on this board. And these minutes are what is relied upon." Coopman said it is crucial the minutes aren't summarized because they are the "record of our town."

Coopman has been asking for more detailed minutes for years, rather than the paraphrasing that sometimes occurs.

Hogan read from the Colorado state municipal clerk's reference guide that declares meeting minutes should be as accurate as possible but are not

required to be a verbatim transcript. She continued reading from the manual, saying the minutes should identify the governing body's actions, not their full deliberations.

Town Attorney Joseph Rivera said a full transcript of public meetings would be created using the audio recording rather than relying on the minutes. Although Coopman was worried the audio recordings might not be kept in perpetuity, Foreman reminded him the meeting videos are on YouTube for future retrieval.

Attorney resumes received; interviews set

Human Resources Director Robert

Bishop has been receiving town attorney resumes, which he gave to the board. All agreed interviews would happen in a workshop on Dec. 17.

Checks over \$5,000

The following checks were approved:

- Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency, property claim—\$5,127.
- TPX Communications, IT managed services—\$8,468.
- City of Colorado Springs, dispatch radio users fee—\$6,817.

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

Monument Planning Commission, Dec. 11

Tri-Lakes Monument fire station annexation approved

By Kate Pangelinan
The one item on the agenda at the Dec. 11 Monument Planning Commission meeting was a proposal to approve annexation and an Annexation Agreement for Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Station 1. This would make the fire station an official part of the Town of Monument.

The first stage of this project—updating the "Annexation Plan/Growth Area" map in the town's Comprehen-

sive Plan to allow for the possibility of annexing this property—was approved at the November MPC meeting and then again at the Nov. 18 Board of Trustees meeting. The parcel of land in question is the Station 1 site at 18650 W. Highway 105, a fire station surrounded on the north and east by Monument town limits and on the west by the Town of Palmer Lake.

Fire Chief Chris Truty was present at this meeting to explain the fire dis-



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trict’s motivations in pursuing annexation. There are hopes to do some work on the property, for example, and it was deemed preferable to go through the town as opposed to the county.

If any additional building projects are proposed for Fire Station 1 in the future, a Planned Development Site Plan would need to be provided and an impact fee will be collected at that time.

During public comments, two people expressed concern about their currently unincorporated properties becoming surrounded by municipalities.

The question was raised about whether this would force an unincorporated property into annexation. Planning staff established that to be considered an “enclave,” a property would have to be surrounded on all sides by the same municipality, not by two separate ones, and that even should a property become an enclave, the owners still may not head down the road to annexation if they don’t request it and the town does not pursue it.

A motion to approve the fire station’s annexation passed unanimously,

7-0.

There will be several changes in the Planning Commission lineup starting out during January 2020, as well as a possible time change for meetings. It was proposed that MPC meetings be held at 5:30 or 6 instead of the current 6:30, and returning commissioners seemed amenable to the change. The next meeting, however, will be held on Jan. 8 at 6:30, keeping with the previously established time.

Planning Commission Chair Michelle Glover was thanked for her time

on the commission, as this was her last meeting, and she said it was an honor to serve with her fellow commissioners.

MPC meetings are generally held on the second Wednesday of the month at 645 Beacon Lite Rd. Information: 884-8017 or <http://www.townofmonument.org/meetings/>.

Kate Pangelinan can be reached at katepangelinan@ocn.me.

Monument Board of Trustees, Dec. 16

Treasurer payout, 2020 budget approved

By Allison Robenstein

The Monument Board of Trustees approved the 2020 budget as presented by Finance Director Rosa Ooms during the Dec. 16 meeting. New members were added to the Planning Commission, and a controversial campaign finance ordinance was passed. A separation agreement with the treasurer was completed. Town Manager Mike Foreman had his annual review during a brief executive session.

Trustee Laurie Clark was noted absent.

2020 budget approved

Ooms presented a 2020 budget for approval that has gone through many iterations throughout the four budget workshops held by the town—Sept. 9, Oct. 7, Nov. 18, and Dec. 9. Throughout all the meetings, Town Manager Mike Foreman has said town staff used a 6% increase in revenues for forecasting, although revenues have been reaching

up to 14% in monthly increases.

The biggest change to the budget this year is the addition of the Capital Projects Fund, which receives revenues from the Use Tax, Highway User Tax, and the Road/Bridge Tax. A transfer of \$682,000 from the General Fund was used as the initial deposit for the fund. Previously, revenue collected from these taxes were held within the general fund, but the previous finance director, Bill Wengert, said statutorily those revenues are supposed to be kept in a separate fund. This new fund forecasts out to 2025 for capital projects of an ongoing nature, such as pipe repairs. A total of \$670,000 in projects was budgeted for 2020 including paving, curb and gutter work, and street maintenance.

The Water Enterprise Fund is composed of revenue from town water use and tap fees and includes \$1.748 million in budgeted projects that include radium removal, pipe replacement,

and critical valve replacement. Ooms said several vehicle requests were removed from the budget in order to focus on infrastructure updates as the board has stressed its support of infrastructure improvements. Trustee Jeffrey Bornstein asked why these projects were not being wholly completed in 2020, but rather being extended over five years. Public Works Director Tom Tharnish explained these projects are linear and dependent upon a staged approach. Ooms pointed out pipe replacement and critical valve replacement are expected to be continuous and have been planned for out to 2025. “The board supports you 200%,” said Bornstein.

The general fund includes only one new employee request, that of town attorney. Currently, Joseph Rivera acts as town attorney in an external function. The new request is for a full-time town employee. Bornstein asked if this employee will act as the court attorney, too. Since the board’s April 15 meeting, the Ausmus law firm has acted as the town’s part-time municipal court prosecuting attorney. The firm charges the town \$600 per monthly court session. No decision was made either way.

Trustee Greg Coopman was upset there were not more new employees in the budget. Specifically, he said there should be more police officers added. During earlier budget workshops, additional new employees were budgeted, including three new police officers, but these were removed at some point.

The 2A Water Fund was established for the acquisition of water rights as well as water storage and delivery. In 2020, the town budgeted \$4.7 million in 2A funds for capital projects. The much-needed second water storage tank and pipeline were approved for \$3.5 million although no location was approved for placement.

The Community Development Fund was changed to include community grants that were previously included in the general fund. A total of \$134,000 was transferred from the general fund to community development. These grants are requested by local businesses to make physical improvements to their buildings or to fund advertising. Bornstein asked if the grant program should be put on hold for 2020 since the budget is tight. “I don’t know what the return on investment is” for this project, he said. Mayor Don Wilson said, “I’m not interested in discussing these grants.” Foreman said the five-year program has benefited the downtown economy, so Bornstein asked to see some measurable criteria in the future.

Although Clark was not present during tonight’s public budget hearing, she has asked about Chamber of Commerce funding during budget workshops. Clark held a meeting on a weekend at the Chamber building and stated there was no heat and believed the building needs a new HVAC system.



Above: Carly Coates was honored as the Town of Monument Employee of the Month for November. She was previously with the Glendale Police Department as the sheriff’s secretary. Here, she has been records technician, court clerk and property evidence technician since 2018. Coates was recently promoted to records manager, supervising all three positions. The acting police chief said she is hard working and much appreciated at the office. The town manager said she stepped up at one point, doing all three of the positions she supervises now. From left are Acting Police Chief Lee Birk, Coates, and Town Manager Mike Foreman. Photo by Allison Robenstein.

Tharnish said the system was replaced last year as part of the town’s lease obligations. President and CEO of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Terri Hayes said, “We’ve had zero problems with that. It is on a timer, and perhaps it had been turned off for the weekend.”

Clark continued the discussion, saying the heat issue is a “serious health hazard that we should address.” Both Foreman and Hayes said the issue had already been resolved.

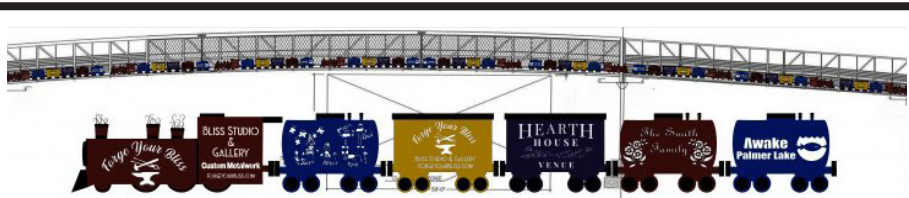
Foreman said the town’s relationship with the chamber is important because it operates the visitors center and that shows a lot of value and expenses for the town. Because of the visitors center, the town doesn’t need to pay an additional employee to provide the information to the public. “Terri is proactive, and we have a very good relationship with her,” he said.

In the end, the 2020 budget was approved 5-1 with Coopman voting against, saying, “I believe it sacrifices public safety.”

Members added to Planning Commission


Four members of the Planning Commission either resigned or are not eligible for another term, so Planning Director Larry Manning asked for new members to be appointed. Chairwoman Michelle Glover and Commissioners Jeremy Lushnat and Ken Kimple do not want to be reappointed. John Dick is term limited.

The remaining members—Chris Wilhelmi, Daniel Ours, and Melanie Strop—each have one year remaining




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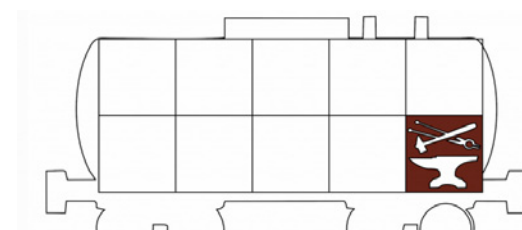
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in their appointments. Current alternates Steve King and William Lewis wish to be appointed to the full board and will serve two-year terms until Dec. 31, 2021.

Mitchell LaKind, who currently serves on the Board of Adjustment, and newcomer Eric Light will also serve two-year terms as regular Planning Commission members. Finally, new member Joshua Thomas will serve a one-year term ending Dec. 31, 2020.

All requests from Manning were approved.

Campaign finance law changes put town clerk in hot seat

In 2019, the state Senate changed the Fair Campaign Practices Act to require municipal campaign complaints to be filed with the clerk of that municipality. Senate Bill 19-232 changes the act so that town clerks, who report to the town manager and the Board of Trustees, must accept potential financial complaints about their superiors.

Foreman and Town Clerk Laura Hogan felt this could put the clerk's

job in jeopardy because she would be responsible for passing along a complaint to a board member so they may resolve the issue within 30 days of receiving the complaint. If the situation is not resolved, or the board member hasn't responded, Hogan must set up a hearing with an independent investigator. Wilson said, "This is another unfunded mandate from the state," asking where the money would come from to pay the third-party investigator.

Foreman said it's inappropriate for Hogan to be handling such issues. Town Attorney Joseph Rivera said Hogan is merely acting in a clerical position, and the hearing would protect her from the suggestion of bias. Bornstein ask if campaign finance issues occur often. Hogan said citizens have come to her asking about finance issues, and she has previously sent them to the secretary of state.

Treasurer separation

At the Nov. 18 meeting, and after a lengthy executive session that followed the regular meeting, the board

voted 5-1 to instruct Foreman to draw up a separation agreement for Town Treasurer Pamela Smith. Clark voted against the motion, and Mayor Pro Tem Kelly Elliott had left the building following the close of the regular meeting and before the executive session.

In tonight's approved consent agenda, the separation agreement included two checks for Smith. The separation settlement check for three months of salary, health, and dental benefits totaled \$31,396. The sick and vacation leave payout check of \$26,275 was approved without discussion.

Smith was put on administrative leave at the March 4 board meeting when Foreman acknowledged an ongoing El Paso Sheriff's Office investigation. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n4.htm#mbot>. Then, during the March 18 board meeting, Rivera advised the board both the FBI and IRS were working on the same investigation. See

www.ocn.me/v19n4.htm#mbot0318.

Town manager review

The board held a brief executive session to review the town manager's work over the past year. Upon its return to the public session, the board unanimously approved a 2% cost-of-living raise. In fact, all town employees were approved for the same raise, down from the original 5% that was proposed in October.

Town manager's report

- Foreman reported the following:
- Human Resources Director Robert Bishop is hiring for four positions—town accountant, senior planner, chief of police, and town attorney. There has been no mention of hiring a new treasurer.
 - The Planning Department's top priority for the new year is the Jackson Creek Road widening project for the town's portion of the road from Higby Road to Highway 105. Its goal is to fully fund the

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Lewis-Palmer High School, January 29, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.



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project by July 2020.

The Monument Board of Trustees usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Jan. 6. Call 719-884-8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and

complete board packets for BOT or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monumenttown-co.minutesondemand.com> and click on Board of Trustees.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

Forest Lakes Metropolitan District and Pinon Pines Metro Districts 1, 2, and 3, Dec. 9

2020 budgets and rate increases approved

By Natalie Barszcz
The 2020 budgets were among the many resolutions approved on Dec. 9 by the boards of Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD) and Pinon Pines Metropolitan Districts 1, 2, and 3 (PPMD 1, 2, 3). The board also approved the proposed water, wastewater, and landscaping and maintenance rate increases for 2020.
PPMD 1 budget for 2020
After opening the public hearing on the 2020 budget, District Manager Ann Nichols presented the final assessed values for the PPMD 1 budget, stating the following figures for the 2020 budget:

- Operation and management expenses for PPMD 1 will be levied a tax of 11.133 mills.
- The General Operating Fund stands at \$130,315 at the beginning of 2020.
- Capital and debt service will be levied a tax of 44.531 mills upon each dollar of the total valuation for assessment of all taxable property within PPMD 1.
- The Debt Service Fund stands at \$465,087 at the beginning of 2020.
- \$115,800 will be pledged for the administration and management expenses of FLMD.

- \$5,500 is pledged for the audit, which will be conducted by Hoelting & Co. Inc. Nichols concluded by saying, “We expect to have a little in excess of \$60,000 to pay the debt service.”
“All figures are final and other than that everything else is subject to change,” said Nichols.
The board unanimously approved and adopted all resolutions presented, 4-0.
FLMD, PPMD 2, and PPMD 3 2020 budget and rate increases
Nichols said she was surprised there had been no rumblings on the proposed rate increases and even though the new rates would help reduce the deficit there would still be a slight deficit in 2020 and a further rate increase may be needed for the 2021 budget. Nichols also said,
“Landscaping costs need to be reduced.” Assistant Secretary and Treasurer Douglas Stimple, CEO of Classic Homes, said in agreement, “Water usage could now be limited on landscaping, since it is well established.” To view the rate increases, see www.ocn.me/v19n12.htm#flmd and visit www.forest-lakesmetrodistrict.com. Nichols also stated that administration expenses for FLMD had a

\$132,000 deficit, which has been reduced to \$23,000 after pulling money from property tax revenues. Nichols estimates that the Public Improvement Fee from the Pilot Station in PPMD 3 will generate \$240,000 in revenue. The board unanimously approved and accepted the rate increases and all resolutions for the 2020 budget as presented, 4-0.
Board election and attorney update
District Counsel Russell W. Dykstra gave the following updates for 2020:

- The state now mandates new requirements for the posting of special district public meetings, requiring only a 24-hour notice in advance on the district website. In case of circumstances that prevent the use of the website, notices for public meetings will be onsite on Tract C, Forest Lakes Filing 1, 3625 Mesa Top Drive, and at the mail kiosk in Tract E, Forest Lakes Filing 1, on Forest Lakes Drive.
- The 2020 election resolution requires the board to call the election and nominate an election official for the May 5, 2020 board member elections. Nominations are due by the end of February. The election will be a mail-in ballot and cost about \$8,000.

Self-nomination forms to be a candidate for district board member in PPMD 1, FLMD and PPMD 2 and 3, may be obtained from:
Becky Johnson, Paralegal
Spencer Fane
1700 Lincoln St., Suite 3800
Denver, Colorado 80203
303-839-3912
303-839-3838 (fax)
bjohnson@spencerfane.com

All self-nomination forms should be returned to Becky Johnson at the address listed above.
Meeting time review
Property Manager Tom Blunk, attending via phone, asked if the time could revert back to 10 a.m. for future board meetings. PPMD 1 Director Mike Hitchcock said most HOA meetings are conducted at 6 p.m. Stimple said we should wait until the new location in Flying Horse is established in March to determine if the residents will attend more frequently before changing the meeting time.
Dog waste receptacles
PPMD 1 Director Mike Slavic requested moving a dog waste station on the south end of the park to a location closer to the mail kiosk area, since the distance from the park to the mailbox had no dog waste station. Secretary James Boulton, vice president/project manager of Classic Homes, responded, “Rather than move the existing station, we could add a further two dog waste stations to fill in the gaps.” The FLMD board unanimously agreed to have All American Ground Maintenance install the additional dog waste stations.
The meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

PPMD 1 meetings, followed by joint meetings of FLMD and PPMD 2 and 3, are typically scheduled once a quarter at 4 p.m. The location of the next meeting is subject to change. Official meeting notices are posted on the district website at www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com. For general questions, contact Ann Nichols at (719) 327-5810 or at anicholsduffy@aol.com.
Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz.ocn.me.

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Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Dec. 9

New rates, budget for 2020 approved

By James Howald

In addition to revising water and sewer rates for 2020, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board also finished its work on the budget for the upcoming year at the meeting on Dec. 9. The board renewed three operating agreements and set a date to award the contract for the construction of the pipeline that will move water from Well 21, the district's newest well, to the processing plant. Finally, Assistant District Manager Randy Gillette told the board he was beginning to plan for the replacement of aging water mains.

Modest changes to water and sewer rates approved

To complete its work on water and sewer rates for 2020, the board held a mandatory public hearing at its December meeting. The hearing was attended by Andrew Rheem and Hannah Palmer-Dwore of Raffetlis Financial Consultants (RFC), the company assisting the district with its analysis of rates. Rheem and Palmer-Dwore previously attended the November board meeting to make preliminary recommendations about rates.

Rheem told the board that frequent rate analyses were valuable to ensure that costs are correctly allocated to the different classes of service users, and to help the district meet its service delivery goals while maintaining steady rates. Water and sewer rates are calculated separately, Rheem said.

Rheem told the board that good financial planning should provide enough revenue to fund operation and maintenance costs, address debt service payments, and provide for capital improvement projects such as additional wells and upgrades to treatment plants.

Rheem recommended a 2% increase to sewer rates for 2020, primarily to adjust for inflation.

Overall, Rheem recommended small changes to water rates in 2020 for most customer classes.

For residential users, Rheem recommended an increase of 1.9%, with no change to the district's Renewable Water Infrastructure fee (RWIF). The RWIF represents the costs of the district's acquisition of Woodmoor Ranch and its water rights. Rheem pointed out that residential water customers are subsidizing other customer classes, such as bulk and non-potable water customers, and that RFC's recommendations, if

accepted by the board, would reduce those subsidies.

The board decided to increase rates for irrigation customers by 2.9%. Bulk customers will see a 5% increase in 2020, since that service had the largest gap between cost of service delivery and cost to customers.

The board ended the public hearing on rates and voted unanimously to approve Resolution No. 19-06, which sets water and sewer rates for 2020.

Public hearing on budget wraps up

A preliminary budget for 2020 was presented at the meeting in October. This budget received minor updates at the November meeting, and a public hearing on the budget was opened at the November meeting. District Manager Jessie Shaffer told the board that the only change to the proposed budget since November was the incorporation of the new service rates and the projected revenue that would result from those rates.

There were no comments on the proposed budget from the public at the meeting, but the Dixon and Brundrett families sent the board an email protesting the increase in rates and asking the board meetings to be held at times that would make it easier for them to attend.

The budget hearing was closed.

The board voted unanimously to approve Resolution No. 19-07, which adopts the budget and appropriates funds accordingly.

Operating agreements updated

The board voted to renew three operating agreements:

- The management contract between WWSD and the Chilcott Ditch Company, in which the terms were unchanged.
- A contract with JVA General Consulting Services (JVAGCS) for surveying, cost estimates, and small designs, which sets a maximum annual fee of \$75,000.
- A contract with JVAGCS for work on the Central Water Treatment Plant, the Lake Pump Station, and the South Filter Plant.

Date set to award pipeline contract

The board voted to meet on Dec. 12 at 1 p.m. to consider awarding the contract to build a pipeline between Well 21 and the water processing plant.

Water mains show their age

Gillette told the board that the district maintains about 80 miles of water mains, and breaks are becoming more frequent as the system ages. Gillette estimat-

ed about 40 percent of the mains would soon need to be replaced.

The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 13 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. See www.woodmoorwater.com or call 488-2525 to verify meeting times.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

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Triview Metropolitan District, Dec. 11

Rates up, mills down

By Jennifer Kaylor

At the Triview Metropolitan District's Dec. 11 board meeting, directors conducted a water and wastewater rates public hearing and received updates to the 2020 budget that included a decision to temporarily collect fewer mills from property taxes. The board also celebrated its Jackson Creek Parkway (JCP) widening project collaboration with the Town of Monument by presenting a certificate of appreciation to town Public Works Inspector Tom Martinez.

Vice President Marco Fiorito was excused.

Triview is a Title 32 special district within Monument that provides road, landscaping, and open space maintenance, and water and wastewater services to Jackson Creek, Promontory Pointe, Sanctuary Pointe, and several commercial areas.

The Dec. 11 board packet may be accessed via www.triviewmetro.com/boardDocuments. The December board packet includes the Nov. 15 special meeting minutes in which Triview approved a water and sewer infrastructure agreement between Home Place Ranch LLC and Triview Metropolitan District.

Resolutions set 2020 rates, budget, mills

No residents offered input during the water and wastewater rates public hearing, so without much ad-



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ditional discussion the board moved to approve several resolutions that set the financial framework for the coming year.

The water and wastewater rates resolution established the residential water base rate at \$26 per month and a higher volume rate of \$5.25 per 1,000 gallons for the first 6,000 gallons and parsed a separate charge of \$4 per month for billing and metering. The residential base wastewater rate bumped to \$46.28 per month and the per-1,000 flow average rose to \$4.56. *For the full table of 2020 residential and commercial water and wastewater rates see <https://triviewmetro.com/rates>.*

District Manager Jim McGrady explained the district's need to ensure that revenue covers future expenses. In a comparison between Triview's 2020 rates and 2019 rates of neighboring water and sanitation districts, he demonstrated that Triview's rates would, on average, be lower or equivalent. President Mark Melville added that the district can no longer subsidize water and wastewater operations with commercial tap fees that are intended to fund infrastruc-

ture. For a 2019 rate comparison chart see <https://bit.ly/2SkQ8Ub>.

Directors adopted the 2020 budget resolution after McGrady identified shifts from the proposed budget presented in November. Despite higher-than-anticipated expenses for the A-yard building and a metering station at Baptist Road and Gleneagle Drive—it will be used to measure Triview's anticipated flows of renewable Fountain Mutual Irrigation Co. water to be delivered via Donala's delivery infrastructure—savings on the 2020 road rehabilitation plans broadened to include Leather Chaps—from Lyons Tail to slightly north of Larimer Creek Drive—and the southern portion of Promontory Pointe. *For more information about the potential intergovernmental agreement between Donala and Triview, see <https://www.ocn.me/v19n11.htm#dwdsd>.*

The budget resolution included a temporary reduction in the 35 mills collected from property taxes to 32 mills. The temporary reduction was made possible by the increase in the number of homes in the district. Because the district's debt service payments would



Above (L to R): Triview Metropolitan District Board President Mark Melville and District Manager Jim McGrady present a certificate of appreciation to Town of Monument's Civil Engineering Inspector Tom Martinez. McGrady and the Triview board recognized Martinez's tireless efforts in ensuring the success of the Jackson Creek Parkway widening project. *Photo by Jennifer Kaylor.*

essentially stay the same, the larger tax base translated to a lower tax contribution per household. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n7.htm#tvmd>. McGrady estimated a rough calculation of \$20 in savings per \$100,000 in home valuation for the 2020 tax year. He confirmed the 32 mills would provide the district with enough revenue to meet its debt retirement expenses for the new year and set aside a little extra for future debt service. The reduction will be reassessed annually.

Two final resolutions stipulated the district's administrative function and repurposed a commercial reuse water fee into a renewable water fee.

Collaboration and innovation recognized

McGrady led a ceremony and presented a certificate of appreciation recognizing Martinez's hard work, innovative ideas, and steadfast presence from the beginning of the JCP widening project. McGrady extolled Martinez's efforts to streamline traffic flow, conserve resources, save money, and finish with an outstanding product. Director James Otis commended Martinez for being instrumental in easing

tensions between the Town of Monument and the district. Martinez expressed his gratitude for the recognition.

Buildout demand discussed

Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) and some northern El Paso County water and wastewater districts, including Triview, are exploring regionalization possibilities. The primary focus has been on wastewater regionalization, but the possibility of some type of regional renewable water collaboration has also been getting attention. In reference to a Nov. 20 presentation in which CSU's regionalization study group relied on assumed water demand data from its potential regionalization partners, Melville suggested that Triview determine a buildout water demand to provide CSU with more substantiated information. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n11.htm#tvmd>.

Using a JDS Hydro projected future total water demand dated March 2019, directors discussed additional parameters that might impact water needs such as the varying types, sizes, and "densities" (water demand in proportion to the size of a building) of economic development

as well as challenges specific to renewable water that include drought, surface water evaporation, and transit loss. If Triview's renewable water resource becomes part of a regional plan, McGrady introduced the goal to create a fully conjunctive system in which Triview would have water storage, senior and junior water rights, and wells to bolster its surface water supply.

The board and McGrady calculated a conservative estimate of 2,400 acre-feet per year of water consumption to provide to CSU.

Resident presents landscaping commentary

Promontory Pointe resident Ken Kimple praised Triview's road crews for their hard work and willingness to go "above and beyond" in helping the community. He also presented concerns from some of the neighborhood's residents regarding landscaping replacement needs. Melville confirmed that supplies and tree replacement were a budget line item for 2020 but cautioned that some areas have been defying the district's replacements efforts; despite replanting, the trees just do not survive. Kimple emphasized that residents want to prevent water waste and assist with the area's beautification. Parks and Open Space Superintendent Jay Bateman affirmed the concerns and indicated that he would collaborate with Kimple.

At 7:10 p.m., the board entered executive session §24-6-402(4)(b)(e)(f) legal advice, negotiations, personnel. McGrady confirmed later that no additional actions were taken as a result of the executive session.

The next Triview board meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Jan. 15, 2020. Check the district's event calendar at www.triviewmetro.com/home or call 488-6868 for meeting schedule updates. Board meetings are held at the district office, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 300, Monument. See also "Triview Metropolitan District" on Facebook, or [Twitter.com/@TriviewMetro](https://twitter.com/TriviewMetro). Jennifer Kaylor can be reached at jenniferkaylor@ocn.me

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Donala Water and Sanitation District, Dec. 12

Rates, mill levies, and water storage feasibility study approved

By Jennifer Kaylor

The Donala Water and Sanitation District Board of Directors conducted its public hearing on the 2020 budget, including water and wastewater rate increases, at its Dec. 12 meeting. Directors approved multiple resolutions to confirm the district's 2020 financial structure. District Manager Kip Petersen presented an intergovernmental agreement regarding water storage and provided an update on Donala's Willow Creek Ranch renewable water resource.

Rates keep pace with cost of service

Petersen summarized the 2020 budget, explaining that he had provided a detailed review at the district's Oct. 17 meeting. The rate changes, based on the cost of service analysis provided by Meyer and Sams (formerly known as GMS Inc.), included: a 2.4% increase across all water rate tiers, a \$1 increase to the customer service charge, and a 5% increase—from \$35 per month to \$36.75 per month—to the monthly wastewater rate. Petersen deemed the rate increases necessary to accommodate rising operating costs and anticipated capital expenditures such as upgrades on the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWTF) or a cost-share in the North Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI)—potential collaboration in a regional wastewater pipeline. The increases will ensure coverage of operating expenses, help the district prepare for the million-dollar expenses, and limit the need to borrow funds, he said.

Donala resident Steve Hrin, in response to a local high school student's residential survey for a cost-of-water project, asked Petersen and the directors if water expenses would ever decrease. The response was a unanimous "no." Petersen cited Donala's reliance on Denver Basin non-renewable water and ongoing maintenance of aging infrastructure. Director Ed Houle added that the district is not immune to the impact of inflation; Donala's electric rates increased by 18% and 9% in the last two years. Essentially, water must be stored, transported, treated, and delivered to customers and those processes cost money.

After the close of the public hearing, the board approved several resolutions. Two resolutions formally approved the 2020 budget and rates, another officially appropriated \$27.45 million for total revenues in the budget, and a fourth appointed Donala Office Manager Tanja Smith as the designated election official for the May 5, 2020 election in which three director positions will be open. Two additional

resolutions established the mill levies for Areas A and B. Area A, the larger portion of the district, receives both water and wastewater services and will be levied 21.296 mills for an estimated revenue of \$1.96 million. Area B, a small area in Chaparral Hills, receives only Donala's wastewater services and will be levied 10.648 mills for an estimated \$3,367 in revenue.

Petersen extended words of appreciation for his staff's extra efforts in helping him develop this "most challenging budget."

Water storage to be explored

Petersen presented a draft intergovernmental agreement between Donala, Triview Metropolitan District (Triview), and the City of Fountain (Fountain) to explore the potential use of former off-channel gravel pits at Fountain Creek—located west of I-25 and just south of Fountain—for water storage. The agreement splits the investigation expenses evenly into one-third portions for each entity. Donala and Triview would bear the initial financial burden in 2019 and 2020 with Fountain—having already funded some preliminary engineering work—funding all expenses in 2021 until it reaches equal financial footing.

The partnership with Triview is helpful since it reduces costs for each district and provides ample opportunity for each entity to evaluate its water storage needs, commented Petersen. This potential water storage would serve Donala's Laughlin Ditch water rights and Triview's Fountain Mutual Irrigation Co. water shares. Engineers will determine the capacity of the potential storage site. In response to a question about transporting the Laughlin Ditch water from Fountain to Donala, Petersen explained that it could possibly be delivered via Colorado Springs Utilities' (CSU) system in a CSU-Fountain-Donala "exchange" and could potentially be treated at CSU's Edward Bailey Water Treatment Plant. Petersen emphasized that the IGA strictly serves as an agreement to explore potential storage.

The board directed Petersen to sign the agreement and pursue the exploration phase. **Postponed capital project reinstated**

A capital 2019 project called a residual management facility was postponed so that Donala could explore collaboration on CSU's possible regional wastewater treatment project that might have made the residual management facility unnecessary. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n7.htm#dwsd>. This facility adds another system for Donala to reduce its arsenic discharge from the UMCRWTF while also helping to

balance water drawn from its groundwater and renewable water resources.

Disadvantageous timing of the CSU project led Donala to restart plans to construct the residual management facility. Petersen revealed that construction costs had risen dramatically. The original estimate of \$1 million climbed to slightly more than \$1.7 million. By reviewing Glacier Construction Co.'s estimate and eliminating or downgrading items, the district was able to reduce costs by \$125,000. The shortfall of more than \$600,000 would be met by reducing water main replacement in the district, Petersen added.

Ranch in hibernation; staff plans for spring

Donala's Willow Creek Ranch is in hibernation, reported Petersen. He and Superintendent of Water Operations Mark Parker visited the ranch, Donala's resource for renewable water, about a month ago. Their inspection tour revealed checklist items to address. Beaver dams were diverting waterflow from the flume thereby reducing the potential water flow credit the district will measure beginning in May. Petersen reported that the district would attempt to trap and relocate the beavers and employ heavy equipment to more fully remove the dams.

Additionally, the district's "No Trespassing" and "No Hunting" signs had been removed along the western boundary, Petersen said, and signs of human encroachment were evident. The district will post new signs using a stronger attachment method in the spring.

Overall, Petersen expressed confidence that the district is ready to meet its water demands. Seasonally lower temperatures caused the district's water consumption to dip from about 17.6 million gallons in October to about 11.6 million gallons in November. The ranch's renewable water supplied 75% of November's consumption, but the district plans to increase well use to offset the cost of Willow Creek Ranch water delivered through CSU's system.

At 2:50 p.m. the board moved into executive session to discuss CRS 24-6-402(4)(f) Personnel Matters, General Manager replacement; CRS 24-6-402(4)(e) Determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations; developing strategy for negotiations; and instructing negotiators. Petersen confirmed that no actions would be taken as a result of the executive session.

The next board meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. Jan. 16 at the district office at 15850 Holbein

Drive, Colorado Springs. The directors meet in the district office conference room. Board meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month. More information is available by calling (719)488-

3603 or accessing www.donalawater.org.

Jennifer Kaylor can be reached at jenniferkaylor@ocn.me.



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Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Dec. 3

2020 budget approved unanimously

By Allison Robenstein

During the Dec. 3 meeting of the Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board, the 2020 budget was approved unanimously, as were the district and sub-district annual mill levies for property taxes. Many firefighters were recognized for their service to the community. Attorney Michelle Ferguson noted she will be the full-time attorney for the meetings since former district attorney Matt Court has taken a job with the City of Thornton. Board Secretary Mark Gunderman led the meeting.

Treasurer Joyce Hartung arrived late, and Chairman William “Bo” McAllister was excused.

2020 budget brings staff changes

Chief Vinny Burns presented a staff plan change for 2020 and associated budgeting that were approved. Burns will continue as chief and add three full-time battalion chiefs (BC), eliminating the assistant chief position and all captain positions. Assistant Chief

Scott Ridings will be the senior battalion chief, and two internal staff members will be appointed for the other positions.

The battalion chiefs will take on some of the current chief’s work, including planning and training tasks. The BC’s will be in charge of day-to-day operations, including arriving at calls before other vehicles. That way, the BC can address command needs for each call to allot manpower.

Burns also requested \$250,000 for a new diesel generator from the Building and Equipment line item. During the March 2019 bomb cyclone, the chiefs were surprised to find that the Station 1 generator only functions in the southern portion of the building that houses the main office, kitchen and sleeping quarters. The northern addition, built in 2005, acts as the emergency command post and houses stranded travelers if they aren’t able to get home, so it needs access to a generator. *See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n4.htm#dwfpd>.*

Because the current generator isn’t sufficient to cover the entire station’s electrical needs, the chiefs suggested moving the newer Station 2 generator to Station 1. It runs on natural gas, as does the current generator, and is capable of operating 95% of the secondary station located along Highway 83. Ridings said they are asking to replace it with a diesel generator in 2020.

The chief suggested including \$25,000 for 2020 in the ambulance line item, because it appears the district may be closer to contracting with American Medical Response (AMR) for its ambulance services. He has had to assign three firefighters from Wescott to AMR and hopes to regain those employees to supplement staffing on rigs in the following year.

During budget discussions, the chief asked for \$300,000 from 2019 re-

served funding to purchase a new tender this year. The truck, also called a tanker, will hold 3,500 gallons of water that can be hauled to rural parts of the district that lack fire hydrants. Director Duane Garrett asked how many developments are lacking hydrants, to which Burns said half the geographic area of the district and roughly 1,000 homes.

Director Larry Schwarz said he isn’t opposed to the purchase as long as three people are assigned per rig before this additional truck is put into the rotation. Citing National Fire Protection Association standard 1710, Schwarz said engines, rescue and aerial vehicles each require three people per rig, for a total of 14 firefighters on scene for a typical 2,000-square-foot residential structure fire.

Schwarz also asked the chiefs to consider adding requirements for a tender to their mutual aid agreements with local agencies that have the apparatus. That way, they would have access to other tenders and associated water-carrying capacity to fight fires. Burns said Wescott could “knock down a fire” using the existing 1,500-gallon tender, but waiting for automatic aid to arrive on scene takes too long. He said his teams “should have the tools they need” to do their jobs, indicating the purchase would far better serve Wescott.

Ferguson asked about obtaining bids for the project, to which Burns said his intention is to have multiple companies bid for the vehicle. The board unanimously approved his request. The overall district mill levy of 7.0 was approved for 2020. And the northern subdistrict mill levy of 14.90 will also be collected in 2020.

Chief’s report

Wescott held an awards ceremony last week at which many officers were recognized for their lifesaving efforts. These include:

- Capt. Sean Pearson received the Jeff Edwards Award for Excellence for his leadership and ongoing

mentoring of others. This is only the second time this award has been bestowed; the other time was to Assistant Chief Scott Ridings. The award is named after Chief Jeff “Never Give Up” Edwards, who served as chief from 2006 to 2010.

- Lt. Bryan Ackerman was named Volunteer Fire Fighter of the Year, and Lt. Eric Bogenrief was named Career Fire Fighter of the Year.
- Burns said there were two calls for service in which the victims were in full cardiac arrest in 2019 but made a full recovery. Nineteen Wescott personnel were recognized for their lifesaving efforts during these calls: Luke Radakovich, Bryan Ackerman, Shannon Balvanz, Eric Bogenrief, Justin Chavez, Brian Kirkpatrick, Tanner Saucerman, Wayne Krzemien, Robert Patten, John Hoeh, Anthony Mayes, Stef Metcalf, Justin Myers, Lucas Owens, Sean Pearson, Scott Ridings, Melissa Seidenberg, Cory Trottier, and Jon Urban.
- During the March 2019 bomb cyclone, Wescott saved a motorist trapped under a vehicle, identifying creative methods to get the person to the hospital during the worst of the storm. The following firefighters were recognized for the efforts: Burns, Shawn Ballard, Spencer Kohler, Balvanz, Chavez, Brian Kirkpatrick, Jim McBride, Roger Lance, George Laugesen, Anthony Mayes, Stef Metcalf, and Urban.

The next Donald Wescott fire district meeting is scheduled for Jan. 21 at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meetings are usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. For information, call Executive Administrator Stacey Popovich at 488-8680 or see www.wescottfire.org.

Allison Robenstein can be reached at allisonrobenstein@ocn.me.

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Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Dec. 4

2020 budget approved; engineer promoted

By Natalie Barszcz

On Dec. 4, the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board approved the final proposed 2020 budget, including a pay raise for all staff, and witnessed the promotion of Engineer Mike Smith.

Treasurer Jason Buckingham and Secretary Mike Smaldino were excused, and Director Tom Tharnish failed to arrive before the meeting adjourned.

Engineer promoted

Chief Chris Truty congratulated Lt. Smith on his promotion from Engineer. Board President John Hildebrandt administered the oath during the ceremony.

Truty informed the board that the final assessment of anticipated property taxes had been received from the El Paso County Assessor's Office, and an additional \$3,000 in property taxes had been included in the final 2020 budget presented for signature. Truty said the following:

- The 2020 wage schedule

increase is 3.75% as presented and approved at the October board meeting. See www.ocn.me/v19n11.htm#tlmfpd.

- The mill levy is set at 18.4 mills for the 2020 budget year.
- The fee schedule is unchanged for 2020, except for the return check fee increase to \$35.
- The fee schedule has not changed since 2015 and may need to be reviewed for 2021.
- Impact fees are being



Above: Lt. Mike Smith receives his new rank pin from wife, Britney Smith, during the swearing-in ceremony at the TLMFPD board meeting on Dec. 4. Photo by Natalie Barszcz.



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- A temporary location change for board meetings will be required from February through May during the remodel project at Station 1.
- Regular board meetings will be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month except for the Nov. 18 and Dec. 2 meetings.

Hildebrandt said, "The budget is the guiding factor for the district, and the budget num-

bers drive the organization throughout the year." He asked the board to approve resolution 06, 07, and 08 to adopt all aspects of the 2020 budget, the mill levy, and the wage schedule. The board unanimously approved and adopted all resolutions presented in the final 2020 budget, 4-0.

May 2020 board election

Truty said four board positions with three-year terms and one two-year term position will be open for the May 7 election. Self-nominations begin on Jan. 1, and the form will be available for download at www.tlmfire.org. Hildebrandt and Truty agreed to discuss the election format and nominate a designated election official at the January board meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Meetings are usually held the fourth Wednesday of each month. The next meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Jan. 22 at TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. For information, contact Office Administrator/HR Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011. For upcoming agendas, see www.tlmfire.org/board.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz.ocn.me

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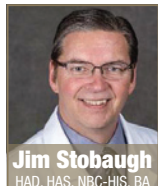
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Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Dec. 11

2020 budget approved; interim chief extended

By Natalie Barszcz

On Dec. 11, the Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) board held an executive session before the regular board meeting to discuss a personnel matter. After the closed session, the regular board meeting was held at its regular time, and the board approved the 2020 budget and extended the interim chief.

Director Nate Dowden was in attendance during the executive session and was excused for the regular board meeting.

Executive session

The BFFRPD board moved into an executive session at 6 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter with interim Chief PJ Langmaid. After its conclusion, no decisions were made or announced at the regular board meeting.

Interim chief extension

Board President Rick Nearhoof requested the board extend the term of interim Chief Langmaid until the May 2020 board meeting. The board unanimously approved the extension until after the May 2020 board elections.

2020 budget approval

Langmaid said he had made a last-minute change to the 2020 budget to prepare for hiring staff on short notice. Should qualified candidates walk in and the need to hire "raw talent" immediately present itself, funding would be available.

Treasurer Jack Hinton said Langmaid and his staff had done a great job on the budget and "It is as good as it gets." Hinton made a motion to approve the resolutions and adopt the 2020 budget. The board unanimously adopted and approved the 2020 budget. See www.bffire.org/budget for a comprehensive explanation.

Signing approval adopted

Hinton read the revised resolution 2019-05 to give approval for all active board members of the BFFRPD to be signers on any necessary documents related to the district's banking accounts including, but not limited to, signing checks or the deposit of funds as necessary for the district's operation in an emergency. The authority to sign any banking documents for BFFRPD will be under the direction and knowledge of the Board of Directors and the knowledge and request of the fire chief. The director will submit a receipt of the transaction to the chief to be transferred to the finance director for input into the accounting system. The board adopted and approved the resolution 4-0.

Fire marshal division

BFFRPD will now assume a far more active role in fire

El Paso Board of County Commissioners,
Dec. 5, 10, 12, 17, and 19

Amendments to Forest Lakes Phase II approved

By Helen Walklett

During December, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved an application for amendments to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) for Forest Lakes Phase II. The commissioners also made decisions relating to the I-25 Gap project, the 2020 budget, Monument's Comprehensive Plan, and a variance of use at Gleneagle Square.

Forest Lakes Phase II

At the Dec. 10 meeting, the commissioners unanimously approved an application for amendments to the PUD for Forest Lakes Phase II, which was approved as a combined PUD and preliminary plan by the BOCC in April 2019. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n5.htm#epbocc>. The development is northwest of the intersection of I-25 and Baptist Road and southwest of Monument. The amendments do not increase the number of lots previously approved. These remain at 180.

Before the hearing started, Commissioner Cami Bremer stated for the record that it had been noted that her father-in-law had previous involvement with the project. She said she had no discussions or communications with him about it and that she had no

marshal roles and responsibilities, and Deputy Chief James Rebitski will be working almost exclusively on ensuring BFFRPD is well-positioned to educate and enforce codes. A resolution to adopt a code will be presented to the board in January with the expectation of presenting the new code to the El Paso Board of County Commissioners for adoption in early 2020. See www.ocm.me/v19n12.htm#bffrpd.

Operational report

Langmaid gave the following updates:

- Recent hire Firefighter/Paramedic Bre Demming has resigned to pursue a career in nursing; her last day will be in January.
- Firefighter/paramedics positions are difficult to fill and we are hopeful that high-quality personnel will consider joining BFFRPD full-time.
- We are looking at reinstating the "fly-car" response to meet the needs of the district without burning out BFFRPD paramedics.
- A meeting to discuss mutual aid agreements for ambulance requests with AMR, the Colorado Springs Fire Department, and county chiefs is being scheduled.
- Shifts A and B are staffed with six personnel, and shift C will be manned with five personnel while staff are in paramedic school until 2020.
- The department held an "All Hands" meeting to discuss the direction of the department and the reasons for the changes that are being implemented.
- We are attempting to keep the upstairs balcony at Station 1 free from snow to eliminate leaks until the repairs can be completed in 2020.
- Training continues with "a daily tempo that is through the roof."
- The new district website is now up and running.
- The 2019 property inclusions have now been approved by the county. See www.ocn.me/n19v12.htm#bffrpd.

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Meetings are usually held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at BFFRPD Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Jan. 15. See www.bffire.org.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

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concerns about her ability to make a clear and unbiased decision.

Kari Parsons, Planner III, Planning and Community Development, presented the proposed amendments to the commissioners, which include the addition of a sixth tract for stormwater detention, relocation of the detention ponds and proposed trails out of the wetland areas in response to neighbors' concerns, and the adjustment of lot lines. Planned culverts over the drainage way would be replaced by a bridge structure that would span the wetland area, and there would be adjustments to the retaining walls and the addition of a guardrail for safety on Mesa Drive.

Parsons explained that the applicant was also requesting permission to

perform pre-development site grading and was asking for a finding for water sufficiency for quality, quantity, and dependability. She said that if there was a finding for water sufficiency, then the applicant intended to request administrative approval of subsequent final plats. She said 28 neighboring property owners had been notified ahead of the public hearings.

The El Paso County Planning Commission heard the application at its Nov. 5 meeting and unanimously recommended it for approval. *See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n12.htm#epcpc>.* Some of the discussion at that meeting had addressed matters outside of the narrow scope of the amendments being considered. At the BOCC hearing,

Cole Emmons, senior assistant county attorney, first set out the criteria for approving the application and then said, "I want to give you some limiting instructions, both to you as well as to the audience. I've just read a long list of criteria as they relate to the PUD. Typically when we are in a zoning hearing, and in this case a PUD hearing, the board has a lot of discretion in considering the evidence and making its decision. At the zoning stage, that's usually an opportunity for the public to weigh in on the plan. I want to make it clear that today's hearing and the applications in front of you are limited in scope. This is for an amended PUD and we are only looking at the issues that Kari [Parsons] mentioned related to the renumbering of lots, the location of the tanks, those types of things. We are not here to rehash the density issues."

Andrea Barlow of NES Inc., representing Classic Homes, reiterated what Emmons had said, stating that the approved plan was not being revisited. She said, "The changes are very minimal and are actually improvements that will help the compatibility of this project with the site conditions."

She went on to say that such minor changes would normally have been dealt with at final plat stage but were being done as a preliminary plan amendment because the project had been under so much public scrutiny. Concerning the pre-development site grading, and specifically whether a permit was required, which was questioned at the Planning Commission hearing, she reiterated that the Army Corps of Engineers had stated that the grading work did not require a permit as long as access was via the existing road.

She told the commissioners that Mr. Irey, a neighboring property owner, had recently questioned the thoroughness of the public engagement process. She stated that there had been three public meetings, which was unusual as normally only one is held and even that is not required by county code. She also said that many neighbors had spoken at the original Planning Commission meeting, adding, "So there has been a thorough public process on this application, both originally and moving forward through this amendment."

The commissioners had no questions for staff or the applicant. No member of the public spoke in favor. Two spoke against. Judy von Ahlefeldt, a citizen who had also spoken at the

Planning Commission hearing, said, "I agree that all the 'I's' have been dotted and the 'T's' crossed for the regulation and code compliance and all that but I want to speak to some things that I don't think have been addressed." She voiced concerns about the Forest Service being notified about trail access while on furlough, wildfire risk, and the lack of any archaeological inspection of the site. During her testimony, Commissioner Mark Waller reminded her more than once to get to her comments on the modifications.

Von Ahlefeldt said, "Well I guess I'll just make the same statement that I made at the Planning Commission that I thought public hearings were for the public to bring all concerns." She ended by saying, "I already said I agreed with all of the compliance with the regulations. The problem is we don't have enough regulations. There are things that are simply not covered. That's why we are doing a county master plan and what I see happening here is two things: Nero is fiddling while Rome burns and the other is the fable of the emperor's clothing."

Carol Johnson, a neighbor who also commented at the Planning Commission hearing, then raised wildfire concerns. When asked to get to the modifications, she said, "That's fine. So how do we as citizens help you go on from here and not make the mistakes you're making? How do we do this?" When the discussion returned to the dais, Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez Jr. said providing public input into the master plan process would be the appropriate way forward.

Doug Stimple, CEO of Classic Homes, spoke to express his frustration at the opposition to the application and particularly a last-minute communication from Mr. Irey, a neighboring property owner. He said, "I have to tell you I think Mr. Irey has defamed Ms. Parsons. I think it's outrageous and he's tap dancing with a defamation suit from us. So, if Mr. Irey wants to get attorneys involved, we'll see, but our plan was approved in April. These are insignificant modifications that do a better job of protecting the natural environment which contains almost 500 acres of open space and mouse habitat and we request your approval."

Commissioner Waller said, "We need to engage in the land use planning process in a responsible manner, and I think that that's what we try to do as a board every single time we have one of these sorts of development plans come before us. And I tell you it's particularly disheartening to me and quite frankly irritating to me and I can tell you it will never be persuasive to me to have folks like Mr. Irey threatening personal suit against me and my colleagues if we don't do what he wants us to do." He continued, "It's not about doing what Mr. Irey wants to have done. And it's not about being afraid to do one thing or another. For me, it's about doing what's right. It's about trying to make our community grow in a responsible manner."

Commissioner Holly Williams said, "I believe that this development has been done very well and I think it will match. It's very nice. It leaves the big knoll in the center of the development there as open space and I am going to be in favor of this."

The commissioners voted unanimously to approve the amendments with a finding for water sufficiency. All the documents and correspondence relating to the application can be viewed on the county's EDARP system. *See <https://epcdevplanreview.com/Public/ProjectDetails/153945>.*

Victoria Rae (McEvers) Gascho



Victoria Rae (McEvers) Gascho

Victoria Rae (McEvers) Gascho, 73, of Monument, Colorado passed away at home surrounded by family on November 25, 2019. She valiantly battled cancer for over four years. Born and raised in Grayling, Michigan, Vicki became a follower of Jesus early in life, committing herself to a life of Christian service.

At Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, she met Dick Gascho. They married in Fairview, MI in 1967 and were soon blessed with three sons.

In 1972 and for the next 13 years, they served Trinity Baptist Church in Alma, Michigan. Moving to Graz, Austria in 1985, they joined the work of Greater Europe Mission and eventually located to Luxembourg. For the last 21 years, She has called Monument, Colorado home.

A life-long learner, Vicki earned a PhD in Education from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. She invested her gifting in Greater Europe Mission as well as holding the role of Senior Consultant for Curriculum Development with Development Associates International. At DAI, Vicki's work took her to India, Egypt and elsewhere in Asia and Africa. She was also an adjunct faculty member at Trinity International University, Deerfield, Illinois.

Vicki was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, friend and mentor. She will be missed by many. Vicki is survived by her husband Dick, sons Rick (Christy), Andy (Vicki), Adam (Bethel) and grandchildren Rich, Megan, Josiah, Rebecca, Jacob, Mariah, Jeremiah, Ty, Micah, and Kael. She was preceded in death by her parents, Roy and Gladys McEvers, and siblings Ted (Jennie), Jerry (Shirley) and Louanne (Bob).

A memorial service is planned for January 31, 2020, to be held at 6:30 pm at Woodmen Valley Chapel, 290 E. Woodmen Road, Colorado Springs, 80919. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Greater Europe Mission (P.O. Box 1669, Monument, CO 80132-1669), Development Associates International (13710 Struthers Rd, Suite 120, Colorado Springs, CO 80921), or Compassion International (Colorado Springs, CO 80997).

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COUNTY (Cont. from 18)

Variance of use at Gleneagle Square

At their Dec. 10 meeting, the commissioners approved a request for a variance of use to allow a vehicle rental business to operate from the former Loaf ‘N Jug gas station premises at Gleneagle Square. The property is slightly northeast of the Struthers Road and Gleneagle Drive intersection. The request was made by Bucher Design Studio on behalf of the tenant, Nate Vaccari. The variance allows the applicant to have a maximum of five employees serving about 30 customers per day with a total of 10 rental vehicles stored on the property at any time. It also permits a private car wash bay on the property.

I-25 Gap project

The commissioners approved two resolutions relating to the I-25 Gap project at their Dec. 5 meeting. They approved a resolution to appropriate expenditures in the amount of \$600 million from the General Fund’s fund balance to the 2019 General Fund Budget for the project. They also approved a contract with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The contract’s purpose is to establish their respective rights and obligations in respect to the administration of the INFRA grant, the design and management of the project, and the contribution of county funds to the project.

Monument’s Comprehensive Plan amendment

At the Dec. 17 meeting, the commissioners approved a resolution made by the Town of Monument’s Planning Commission in November and approved by the town’s Board of Trustees earlier in December. The

resolution updates the Annexation Plan/Growth Area map in the town’s 2017 Comprehensive Plan to include land that is available for annexation. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n12.htm#mpc>.

County master plan update

At the Dec. 12 BOCC meeting, the commissioners received an update on the county master plan project from John Houseal of consultants Houseal Lavigne Associates and, specifically, the newly released “Existing Conditions Report.” This is an extensive document that gives a snapshot in time of where the county is now. It can be found online at <https://elpaso.hlplanning.com/pages/documents>.

The consultants led a Master Plan visioning public workshop on Dec. 11. See photo of the El Paso County Master Plan Visionary Workshop, Dec.11 on the right. The survey from that workshop can be filled out online through Jan. 7 at <https://elpaso-hlplanning.hub.arcgis.com/pages/questionnaires>.

Other decisions

- Dec. 10—The commissioners approved the almost \$385 million budget for 2020 after Sherri Cassidy, the county’s chief financial officer, walked them through the final version. The budget documents can be seen on the county website at <https://admin.elpasoco.com/financial-services/budget-finance/county-budget/>.
- Dec. 10—Approved the award of a contract and purchase order to Tree Beavers LLC for the Pineries Open Space Forest Thinning Project at a total cost not-to-exceed \$127,600. The Pineries Open Space is in Black Forest, northeast of the intersection of Vollmer and Shoup Roads.

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.



Above: At an El Paso County Master Plan Visionary Workshop on Dec. 11, attendees provided their input through their smartphones and were able to see their opinions on screen in the auditorium calculated immediately. Other concerned citizens on Facebook (www.facebook.com/elpasocountycyco) who were not able to attend could be involved in the workshop through live polling. Subjects in the polls included infrastructure, water use, transportation, and other services needed for the high growth of the area. The consulting team that has been working with county planners is looking for insight from the public. To give your opinion, take the survey at planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com and click on “your el paso master plan.” Photo by Marlene Brown.

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Dec. 18

Board updates reserve fund policy, approves renovation

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on Dec. 18 to wrap up the year with updates to the reserve policy, approval for renovation work, and plans for the annual meeting. Board member Tom Smith was absent.

Update reserve policy

The board voted unanimously to update the reserve fund policy, which has not been updated since 2006. Since then much has changed in the way that WIA operates. The new policy will be posted on the website at www.woodmoor.org.

Renovation plans

With the Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) addition complete, the board unanimously approved renovating the old WPS offices as well as the conference room. The cost is not to exceed \$30,000 and will come

out of the reserve fund.

Annual meeting

Homeowners’ Association administrator Denise Cagliari announced that the annual meeting will be held on Monday, Jan. 27 at the Barn. Sign in will start at 6:30 p.m. and light appetizers will be served. The annual meeting includes highlights for the past year, goals for the coming year and the election of new board members. Ballots should arrive in the mail soon.

The January board meeting will be moved to the fifth Wednesday on Jan. 29 at 7 p.m.

Board highlights

- The board is working with Woodmoor Water and Sanitation to review the augmentation costs on the ponds, which were higher than expected.
- Tall grass violations are closed due to snow and

will be reviewed in the spring.

- WIA will investigate providing Wi-Fi access in the Barn.
- There are 47 unpaid annual dues for 2019, among the lowest seen in years, and payments are being pursued. Annual dues for 2020 will be sent soon.

The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next meeting has been moved to Jan. 29 due to the annual meeting.

The WIA calendar can be found at www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/ once approved and posted.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

December Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

December was drier and warmer than normal across the region, which provided a nice break after the previous two months of cool and snowy weather. For the year overall, we were wetter than normal, including well-above-normal snowfall, and temperatures were slightly warmer than normal. Some of the most memorable weather events of the year included a very snowy January, a historic March blizzard, a record late May snowfall, then a wild swing between a record warm September to a near record cold October. All these memorable events and variable weather are part of the wonderful aspects we get to enjoy here along the Front Range of the Rockies.

The year ended with a fairly uneventful month,

with temperatures above average and snowfall below average. The first week saw temperatures average 5-15 degrees above normal with generally dry conditions. The exception was the 5th, when a cold front brought some light snow during the morning and early afternoon. This barely amounted to enough to measure but at least provided a reminder that we are in winter. Temperatures peaked in the mid- to upper 50s on the 2nd and the 7th, with overnight lows in the teens and 20s.

More normal temperatures returned for the middle of the month, but we remained generally dry with just a few days of low clouds and flurries. Finally, a taste of more winterlike conditions moved in late on the 14th, with snow developing during the afternoon of the 15th. Highs stayed below freezing that afternoon as well, only reaching the mid- to upper 20s, with 2-4 inches of new snow accumulating. Clear skies and fresh snow cover that evening and the next morning allowed temperatures to plummet below zero in many locations. But the next warmup was not far away.

Dry air quickly returned behind this system as a strong ridge of high pressure built in from the west/southwest. Sunshine and dry conditions dominated from the 17th through the 26th, with temperatures warming each day, reaching the upper 50s to low 60s from the 21st through the 23rd. Gusty winds and mild air held temperatures above freezing even during the overnight hours on the 23rd. These temperatures were about 20 degrees warmer than normal, reaching near daily record-high territory in what is usually one of

our coldest times of the year.

The month ended with a return to winter conditions as the wind direction changed from west to south, then north starting the day after Christmas. This resulted in areas of low clouds and fog that evening and continuing into the next day. This produced a nice layer of rime ice on most exposed surfaces, giving everything a holiday feel. The final storm of the month then moved in on the late 27th through 28th, with light snow starting that evening and increasing quickly on the afternoon of the 28th.

This combined with a reinforcing shot of cold air to produce near-blizzard conditions at times during the afternoon and evening of the 28th. The storm produced 3-6 inches of wind-driven snow for most before leaving the region late on the 28th. Sunshine returned to end the month, but temperatures remained cool with the fresh snow and light winds as highs stayed below freezing on the 29th and 30th, before reaching the mid- to upper 30s on New Year’s Eve.

A look ahead

January can see the coldest temperatures of the year, but there is often a proverbial “January thaw” where mild temperatures make brief appearances. 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.

December 2019 Weather Statistics

Average High	42.1° (+3.8°)
100-year return frequency value max	50.5° min 32.6°
Average Low	17.6° (+4.3°)

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100-year return frequency value max 22.4° min 5.4°	Highest Temperature	61° on the 22nd	(+0.46", 12% above normal)
Monthly Precipitation 0.56"	Lowest Temperature	-1° on the 16th, 17th	(the snow season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)
(-0.45", 45% below normal)	Season to Date Snow	63.7"	
100-year return frequency value max 2.82" min 0.00"		(+24.2", 38% above normal)	
Monthly Snowfall 9.1"	(the snow season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)	Season to Date Precip. 3.89"	
(-8.6", 49% below normal)			

Heating Degree Days **1090** (-137)
Cooling Degree Days **0** (0)
Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident.
He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.

Corrections to the Dec. 7 issue of OCN

By Jennifer Kaylor, OCN Managing Editor
The article, "Citizens for a Better Palmer Lake, Nov. 20: Members vote on next steps," should have identified the woman in the photo as Christie Ramshur, not Christie Rancher. OCN reported that Ramshur "stressed the need for the trustees to return to serving the citizens." Ramshur corrected the statement to reflect her belief that "every trustee agreed to serve as a trustee in an effort to serve the citizens" and never indicated that they need to return to serving.
The article, "Palmer Lake Town Council, Nov. 14: Council hears update on bridge," should have identified the person speaking on behalf of Awake the Lake as Darin Dawson, not Derek Austin.

The snapshot, "Bomb threat at Wal-Mart, Dec. 5," should have reported the date as Dec. 4. Also, the estimated loss in sales of \$75,000 by a department manager has not been confirmed.
OCN regrets the errors and thanks readers for bringing them to our attention.
Jennifer Kaylor can be contacted at editor@ocn.me.

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 31.
Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community are the responsibility of the letter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.
Note: The letters this month are arranged in alphabetical order by the submitter's last name.

Monument Academy: poised for the future
As a longtime resident of District 38, it's fitting that I am now part of the excellent education happening here. I have brought a unique skill set to add to others in the education community here in D38, and I look forward to doing my part to help educate our community's children. In 2020, Monument Academy will add hundreds of seats across elementary, middle school, and high school grades 9 and 10.
As the newly named chief operating officer of Monument Academy, I am proud to partner with our students, educators, families, and community to ensure we achieve Monument Academy's mission. Our mission produces students who learn from the past, value the present, and are equipped for the future.
I have accepted the position as chief operating officer at a time of program growth and have accepted the charge of working to strengthen the current program and to establish an upper school that will fulfill the powerful work started with MA's students from preschool through eighth grades. It fulfills my heart's passion to open a high school program focused on a full scope of fine arts from the artistic performance to the industrial, engineering and science, as well as offering various pathways leading to higher education or directly into a chosen profession. This is a great and providential time to be part of the MA community, and I fully embrace this opportunity to lead and to serve in an honorable fashion, holding integrity and transparency as a top priority. Monument Academy has achieved success on many levels, and I wish to build upon this strong legacy.
Visit our website at www.monumentacademy.net to learn more about our new campus, high school offerings and more!
Christianna Herrera
Chief Operating Officer
Monument Academy

D38 decision makers—can you hear us now?
After two years of voters expressing their displeasure with wasteful bond initiatives, D38 still doesn't get it. A D38 ad and board member comment in the December OCN claim a "recent historical pattern of anti-education tax sentiment in our community" and "a strong voice in the community which does not support public education." The leadership has not been listening. There is only an "anti-wasteful spending of tax dollars" sentiment in the community. No sane person is against education.
I would venture to guess that taxpayers of D38 are one of the more highly educated groups in the area. We do not need to be "educated" to better support the schools; we need to be told the truth and then we will gladly work with suggested fiscally responsible options to support the future of our community. But the board has to listen. As one board member stated, they (the board) failed when the bond failed (twice).
The new superintendent is off to the right start by requesting long-term facilities planning. We do not have a capacity problem; we have an allocation problem between schools. Student population is down this year by 131 per OCN (<https://www.ocn.me/v19n12.htm#d38-1104>). Choice enrollment was rightfully closed to those outside the district. And for the first time, I read about increasing developer impact fees (BINGO) to pay for new schools. What a novel concept! Assess costs against those who profit the most.
As long as the board continues to put more time, money, and effort into spinning and marketing their solutions, as opposed to listening to the community, no new school bond will ever pass. Hard decisions regarding the allocation of limited funding start in our homes and should continue in our community. That's a lesson all kids should learn.
Patrick Kiernan ■

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore
Great way to start the new year

By the staff at Covered Treasures
"Books can be dangerous. The best ones should be labeled 'This could change your life.'" —Helen Exley

The new year brings a time of reflection and new beginnings. Get inspiration from some great biographies and memoirs:

A Republic If You Can Keep It
By Neil Gorsuch (Crown Forum) \$30
As Benjamin Franklin left the Constitutional Convention, he was reportedly asked what kind of government the founders would propose. He replied, "A republic, if you can keep it." In this book, Justice Neil Gorsuch reflects on his journey to the Supreme Court, the role of judges under our Constitution, and the vital responsibility of each American to keep our republic strong. Gorsuch reveals some of the events that have shaped his life and outlook, from his upbringing in Colorado to his Supreme Court confirmation process.



Love Does: Discover a Secretly Incredible Life in an Ordinary World
By Bob Goff (Nelson Books) \$17.99
As a college student, he spent 16 days in the Pacific Ocean with five guys and a crate of canned meat. As a father, he took his kids on a world tour to eat ice cream with heads of state. He made friends in Uganda, and they liked him so much he became the Ugandan consul. He pursued his wife for three years before she agreed to date him. His grades weren't good enough to get into law school, so he sat on a bench outside the dean's office until they finally let him enroll. Bob Goff has become something of a legend, and his friends consider him the world's best-kept secret. Light and fun, unique and profound, the lessons drawn from Goff's life and attitude just might inspire you to be secretly incredible, too.



Tesla: Inventor of the Modern
By Richard Munson (W.W. Norton & Co.) \$16.95
Nikola Tesla invented radio, robots, and remote control. His electric induction motors run our appliances and factories. In the early 1900s, he designed plans for cell phones, the internet, death-ray weapons, and interstellar communication. His ideas have lived on to shape the modern economy, yet he has been largely overlooked by history. Drawing on letters, technological notebooks, and other primary sources, Richard Munson presents a comprehensive portrait of this farsighted and underappreciated mastermind.



Edison
By Edmund Morris (Random House) \$38
Thomas Edison is mostly remembered for the gift of universal electric light, but we have him to thank for so much more. In all, this near-deaf genius patented 1,093 inventions, not including others such as the X-ray fluoroscope that he left unlicensed for the benefit of medicine. This biography portrays the unknown Edison. Morris spent seven years of research among the 5 million pages of original documents preserved in Edison's laboratory, and had privileged access to family papers still held in trust.



Year of the Monkey
By Patti Smith (Alfred A. Knopf) \$24.95
As Smith heads toward a new decade in her own life, she offers her wisdom, wit, gimlet eye, and above all, a rugged hope for a better world. Riveting, elegant, often humorous, illustrated by Smith's signature Polaroids, Year of the Monkey is a moving and original work.



Home Work: A Memoir of My Hollywood Years
By Julie Andrews, Emma Walton Hamilton (Hachette Books), \$30



In this follow-up to her critically acclaimed memoir, Home, Julie Andrews shares reflections on her astonishing career and rise to fame, along with dealing with the demands of unimaginable success, being a new mother, the end of her first marriage, embracing two stepchildren, adopting two more children, and falling in love with Blake Edwards. Co-written with her daughter, it is funny, heartrending, and inspiring.



How to Treat People: A Nurse's Notes
By Molly Case (W.W. Norton & Co.) \$25.95
As a nurse, Molly Case cares for her patients, sharing not only their pain but also life-affirming moments of hope. Weaving together medical history, art, memoir, and science, How to Treat People explores the rhythms of life and death in a tender reminder that





Happy 2020! My wishes for a fantastic New Year with happiness, health, and prosperity!
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we can all find meaning in being, even for a moment,
part of the lives of others.

“Great books help you understand, and
they help you feel understood.”—John Green

Until next month, happy reading!
The staff at Covered Treasures can be reached at
books@ocn.me.

December Library Events

Learn to play the ukulele, improve your diet, and hear about the work of a forensic pathologist

By Harriet Halbig

January brings opportunities to learn new skills such as playing the ukulele and increasing plant-based foods in your diet. Be sure to check the section below about programs at the Palmer Lake Library for additional opportunities.

Children’s programs

Regularly occurring children’s programs at the Monument Library include *Book Break* on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:30 to 11, *Story Time* on Tuesdays from 10:30 to 11:15, *Toddler Time* on Thursdays at 9:30 and 10:30, and *Paws to Read* on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4 to 5.

On Saturday, Jan. 11 from 2:30 to 3:30 there will be a *STEM for Kids class on propulsion*. Children will explore the science of motion, conduct experiments with balloons, build a marshmallow catapult, and create their own mini “hovercraft.” Ages 6 to 12 are welcome.

Homeschool @ Monument on Monday, Jan 13 from 1:30 to 2:30 will feature the story of *Epic Engineering Disasters: the Titanic*. When the passenger liner Titanic left port on its maiden voyage on April 10, 1912, it was the largest and most luxurious ship in the world and described as “unsinkable.” In this program, homeschoolers will learn about the history of this ship, examine engineering mistakes made by the ship’s engineers, and test principles such as buoyancy and overflow. Program is for ages 5 to 12.

Kidsmake Pom Pom Mobiles on Thursday, Jan. 16 from 4 to 5 will show kids how to paint, string, and wrap while creating a mobile to be displayed in the home. Ages 5 to 12 are invited, and no registration is needed.

Lego Build will meet on Saturday, Jan. 18 from 10 to 11:30. Use our large collection of Legos to build to your heart’s content.

Homeschool @ Monument on Monday, Jan. 27 from 1:30 to 2:30 invites kids to explore *Ancient Egypt*. Discover a world where time is read by water, stories are written in pictures, and the most extravagant buildings are tombs. Spark your child’s interest in history by way of simple activities. Work together or independently at multiple activity stations to understand life in ancient Egypt. Recommended for ages 7 to 12.

Teen and Tween programs

See above for description of *Lego Build*.

Every Wednesday from 3 to 5 in the study room, an *All Ages Knitting* group meets. Practice materials are provided but attendees are encouraged to bring their own projects.

Tweens and teens (ages 12 to 18) can enjoy an *Introduction to Dungeons and Dragons* from 3:30 to 5:30 on Monday, Jan. 6. Come and learn the basics. Our expert Dungeon Masters will cast 4+ storytelling and introduce you to this wonderful game. No experience is needed, and character sheets will be provided. Registration is preferred.

On Mondays, Jan. 13 and 27, come to the library from 3:30 to 7 to take advantage of *AfterMath*, free math tutoring for all levels taught by experienced adult tutors. No appointment needed. Not held on Jan. 6 or 20 due to school and library closings.

The Teen Creative Writing Group will meet in the study room from 6 to 7:30 on Tuesday, Jan. 7. Meet fellow writers, do writing exercises, and share snacks.

Learn about the uses of *forensic pathology in the real world* with *El Paso County Coroner Dr. Leon Kelly*, who will give a fascinating look into how to identify someone, determine a cause of death, and solve crimes. This program, from 4 to 5:30 Tuesday, Jan. 14, is presented by one of only 500 forensic pathologists in the country.

The Paper Tigers Origami Club will meet from 4:15 to 5:30 on Friday, Jan. 17. This group is open to adults and teens of all skill levels, introducing new projects each month. Registration is preferred but not required.

Teens Make Tuesday on Tuesday, Jan. 21 from 4 to 5:30 features a *Self-Care Spa Day*. Treat yourself! In this program you’ll learn to make your own foot scrub, dry shampoo, lip balm, and chocolate mask. You will leave with a container of each and instructions so you can make them at home for yourself or a special gift. All supplies are provided and registration is required.

The Monument Library Anime Club will meet from 5 to 6:30 on Thursday, Jan. 30. Share anime with others who love it, enjoy snacks, and help shape the club for the future. Nothing rated above TV-14. Recommended for ages 13 and up.

Adult programs

See above for descriptions of *All Ages Knitting*, *Paper Tigers Origami*, and *Forensic Pathology in the Real World*.

The Senior Chats group meets each Wednesday from 10 to noon. Enjoy a cup of coffee and casual conversation.

A *free beginner’s yoga class* is offered every Thursday from noon to 1.

The Life Circles writing group will meet from 9:30 to 11:30 on Monday, Jan. 6. The Jan. 20 meeting is cancelled due to library closure for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The group concentrates on writing about

life experiences.

The Second Thursday Craft on Jan. 9 from 2 to 4 is *Stress Relief Spa*. Back by popular demand, we will make some of our most relieving spa items, including hand scrub, bath bombs, and a soothing lavender spray.

The Monumental Bookworms will meet from 7 to 8:30 on Tuesday, Jan. 14 to discuss *The Wailing Wind* by Tony Hillerman. This group, sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Friends of the Library, is open to all.

History Buffs will meet from 1:30 to 3:30 on Wednesday, Jan. 22. Discuss history with other buffs. This year’s discussion topic is *The Making of America (1783-present)*. No registration required.

Join vegan chef JL Fields to learn *Three Ways to Add More Plants to Your Diet* on Wednesday, Jan. 22 from 6 to 7. Registration is required and the class is geared to ages 18 and up.

The Monument Library spinning group will meet from 1:30 to 3:35 on Thursday, Jan 23. Explore the craft of hand spinning.

Palmer Lake Library programs

The Palmer Lake Book Group meets at 9 a.m. on the first Friday of each month. *Family Story Time* is at 10:30 each Wednesday, and *Toddler Time* is at 10:30 each Friday.

The Homeschool @ Palmer Lake program from 1 to 2 on Friday, Jan. 10 is *Mess Around with Sound*. What makes sound and how does it travel? We will experiment with the Chladni plate, tuning forks, and other items and talk about the sound production of a stringed instrument. For ages 7 to 12.

Children are invited to the *Third Saturday @ Palmer Lake Library* on Saturday, Jan. 18 from 10:30 to 11:30 to join Mrs. Blake to use a sgraffito technique to make a Palmer Lake Star tile. This class is for ages 7 and older and registration is required.

Have the winter blues? Adults are invited to come to the Palmer Lake Library on Wednesdays, Jan. 15, 22, and 29 from 4 to 5 to *learn to play the ukulele* with local music teacher Nichole Murphy. The ukulele is a surprisingly easy instrument to learn. If you have experience and have a uke, bring it along! A number of ukuleles will be available if you are just looking to try it out. Registration is required so we know how many to bring.

Please note that all Pikes Peak Library facilities will be closed on Monday, Jan. 20 in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Our forests and trees can talk, cry, and sing to us



Left: Listening to a tree’s ultrasonics is more accessible to most people with an ear horn or stethoscope (some parks and botanic gardens keep earphones and MIDI devices right at the tree), and for many trees, springtime is optimal listening because the tree will be pulling up water. Pine trees can recover from dry spell damage in hours or days, but most trees need all season, if they recover at all. We have many local ponderosa pine culturally modified trees (CMT) as shown here, and many of those are attributed to the Ute Nation. Some of our CMT are hundreds of years old and were likely spared the logging ax from timber industry due to their unique shape. *Photo by Janet Sellers*.

By Janet Sellers

It’s known that inside trees, their drying out creates an ultrasonic scream for water. Trees also make noise when they are scared, in pain, or cold. Most humans cannot hear it, but scientists in France at Grenoble University, led by physicist Alexandre Ponomarenko, have separated and analyzed the sounds. Trees have straw-like tubes called xylem for soaking up water; it takes great pressure to draw up the water, more when there is less water to take up. Then, air bubbles form and block the tube, and the stressed tree has to work

harder to pull water up from root to crown via more pressure; this creates a sound.

These ideas may sound like science fiction of Western science culture, but they hint at a parallel universe with plants. In the book *Knowing Home*, authors Dr. Gloria Snively and Dr. Wanosts’a7 Lorna Williams (her actual name from the Lil’wat Nation, British Columbia) acknowledge that in indigenous traditions, plants and animals are our oldest teachers. Braiding indigenous science with Western science takes into account the multidimensional world of nature and the multidimensional cultural world of each of us.

Indian Science is based on observation in many ways and includes sight, sound, resonance, personal experience, and more, and can refer to the communication as the trees talking. In Eurocentric language and science culture, this is set off from personal experience and called cavitation, and microphones can pick up the sounds the cavitations make. Arizona geologists are building acoustic detectors to decode the sounds. They look to help trees before they are so stressed that they may die, especially important decodings for “I’m thirsty” or “I’m cold” or “You’re hurting me.”

An exhibit at Britain’s Royal Botanic Gardens

of Kew allows visitors to put on headphones and listen to eucalyptus and other species. Trees in many areas are already on the edge of what their cavitation can sustain. Pine trees are especially good at repairing the embolisms and are able to do repairs on a daily or hourly basis. The cells are dying, and that is what causes the rings inside the trees but also causes trees to exude sap; indeed, the sounds create a micro-habitat drawing insects, which in turn attract birds.

Trees are like slow animals
Since 1983, biologists Jack Schultz and Ian Baldwin have been working on

plant communication and cite, “Trees are like slow animals; the only thing they can’t do is run away when attacked.” Canadian biologist Suzanne Simard has recorded tree communication via fungi, and that is now affectionately known as the “Wood Wide Web.”

Sound artist Alex Metcalf has devised a listening cone based on an old-fashioned ear trumpet, but with a tree’s tiny sounds magnified. Hardwoods are easiest to hear, and we can hear the trees’ sap gurgling, crackling, bubbling in springtime. Trees communicate with each other in the forest via coiled, tube-like fungi structures in soil called

hyphae (kind of like fiber-optic cables) and a spoonful of soil can hold seven miles of them!

In Italy, scientists in the Damanhur community developed—and now sell—a device that amplifies and modulates the “music of the plants” to levels audible for the human ear. The device also shows that plants are able to learn and remember. Sonic artists and music composers connect the device to trees and plants and play music together with the trees’ singing, using Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI), a technical standard that describes a communications protocol, that allows

a digital connection to interact with each other.

Important reminder for winter
Our local trees and shrubs need water in winter. Lack of moisture can mean injury or death to root systems. Water only when air temperatures are above 40 degrees F., apply water at mid-day so it will have time to soak in before possible freezing at night, and water during extended dry periods without snow cover—one to three times per month.

Janet Sellers is a writer, artist, teacher, and public speaker on the topics of art, nature, and visual culture. She can be reached at janetsellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Live longer with art in your life



By Janet Sellers
Can enjoying art at a gallery, a museum, or at home help you live longer? A World Health Organization report on over 3,000 studies on the topic shows that art has a power for our longevity in ways scientists never expected. It’s been long known that art making is an important plus for kids and adults to develop and maintain physical and mental agility, and that putting pencil to page keeps parts of our brain and neurology from going dormant—especially getting our imagination on the page and in generating and capturing original thoughts on the page.

The good news for people of all ages is that the beneficial impact of the arts is furthered by taking part in the arts. The recently published English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, held over 14 years, concluded that “receptive arts engagement could have a protective association with longevity in older

adults.” Their data show substantial reductions in mortality for participants who engaged in cultural activities at the initial assessment point when adjusted for all identified demographic, socioeconomic, health related, behavioral, and social factors. Cultural activities included going to museums, art galleries, concerts, or the theater.

A study funded by the National Endowment for the Arts reported that a knowledge base and appreciation for the arts stemming from a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) education approach actually translated into a more accurate pathway to college. The study tracked participants from their sophomore year of high school to their mid-20s. The key findings from the study confirmed that arts students were:

- more likely to apply to more colleges than non-arts students.
- 21 percent more likely to attend

- a postsecondary institution than non-arts students.
- just as likely to pursue STEM majors as non-arts students.
- just as likely to receive scholarships as their non-arts peers.

The study was a powerful indicator that the arts empowered students to love learning, which turned out to be the most relevant factor in addressing higher education and developing the student’s unique talents. Some of today’s most renowned innovators have an arts education and hold degrees in arts education disciplines:

- YouTube Chief Executive Susan Wojcicki majored in history and literature.
- Logitech Chief Executive Bracken Darrell majored in English.
- Slack founder Stewart Butterfield majored in English.
- Airbnb founder Brian Chesky majored in the fine arts.

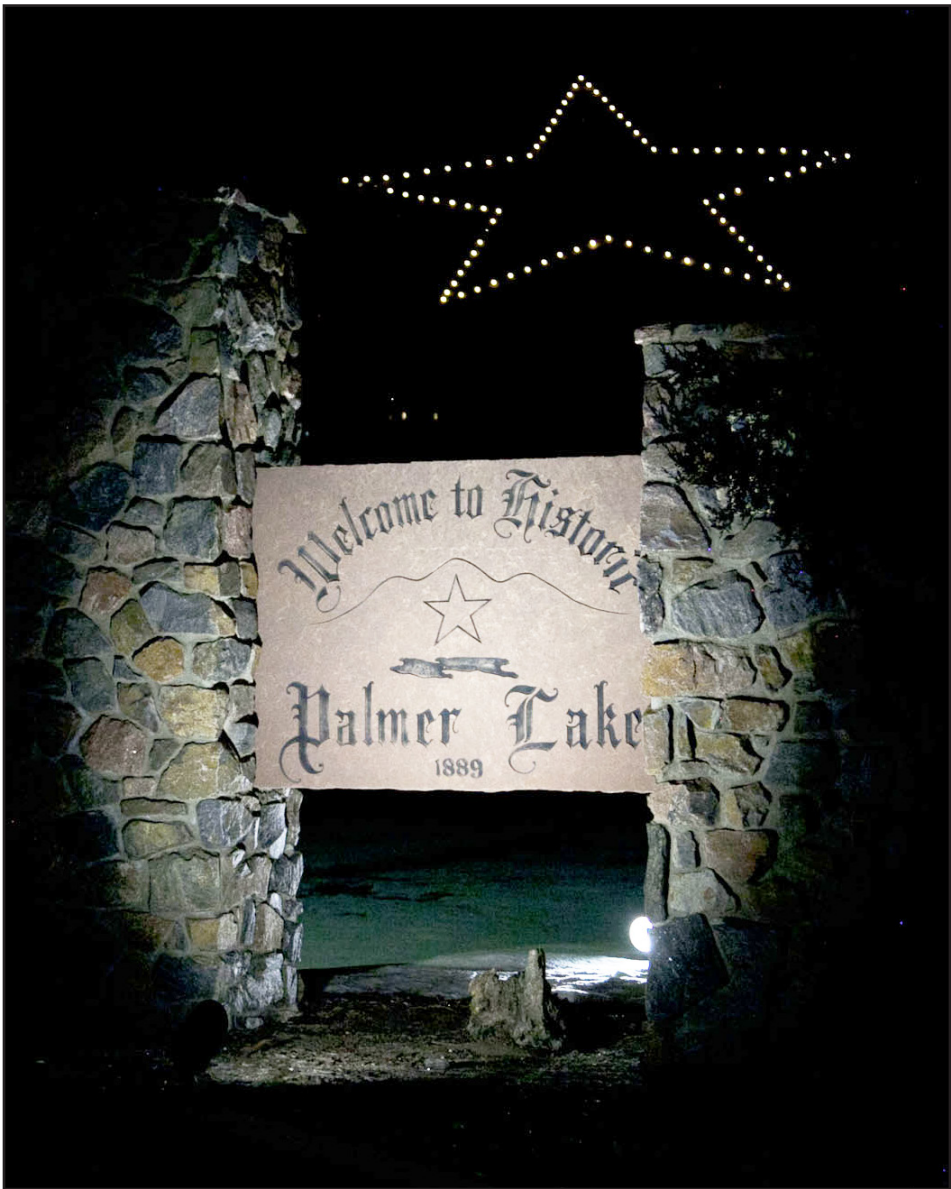
- Jack Ma, the chief of Alibaba in China, holds a bachelor’s degree in English.

We have plenty of information about the positive effects and neurophysiological changes induced by activities such as the arts, which enable “deep play” or “flow.” What are the mechanisms linking cultural engagement with longer life? Would quality of life be the key? These are hard to pin down without further study, but there is a consensus that these, and beneficial social engagement, are pivotal to health and longevity.

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, and speaker on the topics of art, nature, and life enrichment. She teaches art and visual communication classes at her Woodmoor and Fox Run Park area studios. Contact her at janetsellers@ocn.me.

Snapshots of Our Community

Palmer Lake Star



Above: The Palmer Lake Star greeted visitors driving into Palmer Lake on Colorado State Highway 105 during the holiday season. *Photo by David Futey.*

Open Space Contract, Dec. 3



Above: Nearly 100 acres of open space in South Woodmoor are now under contract in a unique purchase agreement between the sellers, WOSC LLC—formerly known as the Walters Open Space Committee that represents 111 residents whose homes border the land—and a local land development company. The contract was signed Dec. 3 and is expected to close in 120 days or early April 2020.

Pictured at right are Tish Norman, left, and Ray Sullivan of WOSC LLC. Go to <https://www.gofundme.com/save-south-woodmoor-co-open-space> if you wish to help WOSC defray administrative expenses. *Caption information provided by Ray Sullivan and Tish Norman. Photos courtesy of WOSC LLC.*



Hazel Miller at TLCA, Dec. 6

Right: On Dec. 6, Hazel Miller and her band performed their blend of R&B, blues, jazz, and soul music at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA). Miller started singing in the third grade as she joined the eighth-graders at a grade school performance. She has over 30 years performing with the band formed over 20 years ago. Their selection of songs included Fleetwood Mac's Dreams, My Favorite Things from The Sound of Music, the Christmas standard Silent Night, Donny Hathaway's This Christmas and Santa Baby, a song she remembered watching being performed by Eartha Kitt on The Ed Sullivan Show. Information on upcoming events at the TLCA is at trilakesarts.org. Photo by David Futey.



Kiwanis Craft Fair, Dec. 7

Right: The Monument Hill Kiwanis Club held its 13th annual craft fair on Dec. 7 at Grace Best School. The mood was festive as shoppers browsed many individual tables full of crafts, jewelry, and foods. Santa strolled through the aisles and holiday music played in the background. Customers were able to shop here and then head over to the stores at Monument's Small Town Christmas. Photo by Allison Robenstein.



Song Spinners, Dec. 8



Above: The Song Spinners, who have been performing for about 50 years, performed a Christmas program at Jackson Creek Senior Living for residents and guests Dec. 8. The performance included movements with Santa, the Grinch, Frosty, "Leroy the Redneck Reindeer" and others with costume changes on-the-fly. The volunteer choir is composed of former professional musicians and other skilled entertainers. Greg Chandler and Trish Davison performed and introduced scenes. The Song Spinners are the official Colorado Springs show choir, and the group is led by Doyle Combs, music conductor, and Rhonda Combs, choreographer and production manager. Photo by Steve Pate.

Palmer Lake Fire & Safety, Dec. 6



Above: On Dec. 6, Palmer Lake Fire and Public Safety Committee members discussed safety concerns with local residents, including the mayor, at Palmer Lake Town Hall. Issues included the wait—sometimes as long as an hour—for an ambulance to come to Palmer Lake. They come from Tri-Lakes or Gleneagle or even from Fillmore Street in Colorado Springs, depending on which company has an ambulance available. The building that houses the Fire Department was built in the mid-1930s, and although it has been remodeled, it has reached its maximum capacity. If the town buys a private ambulance there is nowhere to park it. The Palmer Lake Police Station lacks the facilities to securely store or lock up private information and currently houses prisoners in Monument. A survey will be mailed to registered voters in Palmer Lake regarding budget issues for the police and fire departments, stations, equipment needed, and for hiring and retaining officers and personnel. **Pictured from left** are committee members Rich Kuehster, Shana Ball, Capt. Weston Oesterreich and Meredith "Kit" Bromfield. Photo by Marlene Brown.

Monument Tree Lighting, Dec. 7



Above: Girl Scouts from Troop 1625 sold hot beverages, treats, and homemade crafts to support their troop at Limbach Park in Monument during the Annual Holiday Tree Lighting event on Dec. 7. Children waited with anticipation to visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus in the bandstand, and candy canes were given to the children by the town staff. Donations were gratefully accepted by Tri-Lakes Monument firefighters for Santa on Patrol. Photo by Natalie Barszcz.

School in the Woods, Dec. 10



Left: Young Naturalists Thrive in the Woods: On Dec. 20, photo-journalist Byron Reed of Denver's Channel 9 News featured Academy District 20's School in the Woods in the studio's monthly Cool Schools program. Each year, 78 fourth-graders attend this school in Black Forest, which welcomed its 20th year by moving into a permanent building in April 2019. School in the Woods Administrator Jon Wuerth celebrates the school he helped create in 1999 as "a place where one's voice matters, where students have power, where naturalists learn they can make a difference, and where teachers challenge students to create a learning environment open to relationship building." One young naturalist celebrates "recess like none other" on the school's 10-acre preserve. "Teachers trust us outside," not only with playtime, "but also with jobs." Another student raves about the field trips which can "last all day or even become an overnight." She appreciates "learning which comes from the land." Caption by Bill X. Barron. Photo by Jon Wuerth.

Church at Woodmoor, Dec. 11



Above: On Dec. 11, the Church of Woodmoor hosted a dinner to present a \$1,500 donation to Tri-Lakes Cares (TLC) Executive Director Hailey Chapin. Chapin spoke to those gathered about the ways in which TLC helps people in the community. Afterward, church members prepared goody bags for its annual celebration of Tri-Lakes Cares Appreciation Day, which was held Dec. 16. Pictured above from left are Pastor Ellen Fenter, Chapin, Parish Council Chair Noelle Berry, and Outreach Committee Chair Bob Fenton. Photo courtesy of Church of Woodmoor. Below, “Cookies with Santa,” organized by Jerry and Meg Solomon, was held Dec. 14 to offer a sensory friendly environment for children who need a space free from crowds, additional noises, and stressors. Meg Solomon stated, “We were honored to be a part of some kids’ first pictures with Santa because they felt safe and comfortable. We are hoping to make this an annual event.” Twelve children from the Tri-Lakes area participated. **Pictured at right,** Vivien Feighery spends quiet time with Santa. Photo by Bob Smith.



VFW honors veterans, Dec. 14



Above: On Dec. 14, the local VFW post joined the National Wreaths Across America Day event. Every branch of military service had a representative place a wreath on a stand followed by everyone joining in the pledge of allegiance. Then, family members and attendees were invited to take wreaths to place at the 115 veteran gravesites at Monument Cemetery. Photo by John Howe.

Friends of Fox Run Park, Dec. 14



Above: On Dec. 14, the Friends of Fox Run Park held a “tree slice” ornament-making party at the warming hut near the frozen lakes in the park. The public was invited, and dog walkers and others dropped in while visiting the park, including these enthusiastic hikers and friends. Caption by Janet Sellers. Photo courtesy of T. McKinsey Morgan, Friends of Fox Run Park.

Presents for Patriots, Dec. 14



Above: Local Girl Scout Ambassador Olivia Tighe of Troop 3661 recruited sponsorships and volunteers to support kids of military families who will miss deployed loved ones during the holidays. A Dec. 14 celebration was packed with pizza and other kid-friendly foods, a craft table, a raffle, and gifts presented by Santa. Tighe expressed that she had experienced many holidays without her dad and developed this project to work toward her Girl Scout Gold Award as well as reach out to local military kids. She created a calendar of events to give families yearlong activity ideas and, especially for new families, help them assimilate more seamlessly into the community. Pictured are Santa with the Cortner family, Alek, Kelley, and mom Dawn, who will celebrate Christmas without dad Jay, who is deployed in Germany. Photo by Jennifer Kaylor.

Santa on Patrol, Dec. 14 & 21



Above (left): Santa went on patrol Dec. 21 to deliver presents to children in Gleagle and surrounding areas. Accompanied here by Wescott fire station staff, Santa and his helpers took toys to children amid blaring sirens and much happy excitement. Photo by Janet Sellers.



Above (right): From left, Elsa from *Frozen* and Emergency Incident Support volunteer Sonia Aitken greet Kevine Corado with a high five at the Santa on Patrol event on Dec. 14 in Monument. The annual tradition of distributing toys to local disadvantaged children continued with the efforts of Monument and Palmer Lake Police Department staff, the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office, Toys for Tots, Shield 616, the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Department, and the thousands of donated gifts from local residents. Emergency Incident Support provided hot chocolate and candy canes at every stop. Photo by Natalie Barszcz.

Above (right): From left, Elsa from *Frozen* and Emergency Incident Support volunteer Sonia Aitken greet Kevine Corado with a high five at the Santa on Patrol

Palmer Lake Yule Log, Dec. 15



Above: Revelers from around the Tri-Lakes area and as far away as the Western Slope gathered for the annual yule log hunt in Palmer Lake on Dec. 15. The merry crowd set off from the warm fireplace of the Town Hall led by a bagpiper and was sent off into the woods with a trumpeter's horn. Following a more than 80-year tradition, the first person to find the red-ribboned yule log, ride it back to town, and help slice off a piece for the following year gets the first cup of wassail by the fireside. The 2019 yule log finder was Jesse Gray of the Watkins family. The event honored some of the founders who passed on in 2019, including Tim Watkins, beloved protector of the forest, whose son Isaac led the start for the caped yule log hunters. **Inset:** Tim Watkins' cape. *Photos by Janet Sellers.*



Outpouring, Dec. 17



Above: Tri-Lakes YMCA presented "Outpouring" at Pikes Peak Brewing Co. on Dec. 17. James Whitfield, membership experience director, and personal trainer Ann Elise Peterson (pictured above) discussed how the local YMCA can help with New Year's resolutions. Tips included how to achieve the benefits of proper exercise and even how to deal with neurological disorders such as Parkinson's, activities that can slow the aging process, and support for recovering from injury. If you want help getting started on a fitness program, personal trainers are available. Peterson presented dietary recommendations and suggested that, living at high altitude, we should drink seven or eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day. The "Y" provides services for members to enhance physical fitness through planned programs. If you are a Medicare recipient, you may be eligible for "Silver Sneakers" at a low cost or free. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

Ice Fishing on Monument Lake, Dec. 31



Above and right: Dedicated fishermen await the last catch of the year at Monument Lake on Dec. 31. Colorful fishing tents dotted the frozen surface of Monument's own 'Lake of the Rockies' on the last day of the decade. Except for the occasional sound of an ice-drill, peace and tranquility were the order of the day; and with a little luck and patience, a few trout were actually caught. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*



Our Community Notices

By Judy Barnes, Events Editor
Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the information number for that event.

Leave your legacy on the bridge
The Palmer Lake pedestrian bridge will soon be open to foot traffic. You can help "bridge" the funding gap by buying CNC-cut steel engines, cars, and cabooses that will add support and decoration. See the selection at www.awakepalmerlake.org (click on Palmer Lake Bridge Fundraising Project).

Sponsor your own locomotive, box car, or caboose and become part of Palmer Lake history. See ad on page 8.

Monument Academy Tours

Choice enrollment is now open. Learn about this growing school; schedule a tour at 481-1950 ext. 1710, www.monumentacademy.net. See ad on page 10.

Free child's admission at WMMI
Receive a free child admission with one regular adult admission, one per family or group, through **Feb. 29**. WMMI is located at 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 exit 156), and is open Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information, call 719-488-0880, or visit www.wmmi.org. See

ad on page 5.

TLWC 2020 Grant Process, Jan. 15-Mar. 15

Tri-Lakes Women's Club's (TLWC) grant application for 2020 will be available online **Jan. 15** through **Mar. 15** on the TLWC website, www.tlwc.net. Eligible organizations include nonprofit and public service organizations and public schools that serve the Tri-Lakes area. Special program and project requests are welcomed. The application package includes the instructions as well as other important qualifying information. For more information, visit www.tlwc.net.

LEAP—Help for heating bills

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) is a federally-funded program that provides cash assistance to help families and individuals pay a portion of winter home heating costs. The eligibility period for LEAP runs **Nov. 1-Apr. 30**. Application packets will automatically be mailed to residents who received LEAP assistance last year at the address where they were living at that time. To find out if you qualify for LEAP, call 1-866 HEAT-HELP (866-432-8435) or visit www.colorado.gov/cdhs/leap.

Essentrics Comes To Senior Center

The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Senior Center now offers Essentrics, a classical stretch fitness program that has aired on PBS for many years. It is designed to prevent injury and improve posture and flexibility, and can be done by all fitness levels. Classes will be held on Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m. and Thursdays at 8 a.m. at the Lewis-Palmer High School modular building across from the YMCA, on Jackson Creek Pkwy. Contact Sue Walker for more information and to register, 719-330-0241.

MVEA Christmas Light Roundup, ends Jan. 30

Mountain View Electric Association (MVEA) wants to help you make the energy efficiency switch this holiday season! Drop off your incandescent C7 and C9 light strands at an MVEA office and receive a \$5 per strand bill credit. The Monument MVEA office is at 15706 Jackson Creek Parkway, Ste. 100. For more information, phone 800-388-9881.

MVEA scholarships, apply by Jan. 15

Each year, MVEA awards \$1,000 scholarships to 14 graduating high school seniors. Applications are due by Jan. 15, 2020. Apply online at www.mvea.coop/scholarships.

Free income tax help, Jan. 15 to Apr. 15

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program provides free income tax preparation assistance to individuals and families with a household income of \$56,000 a year or less. To find out if you qualify or to schedule an appointment, call 2-1-1 or text VITANOW to 85511 Mon. through Fri., 8 a.m.-5 p.m., starting Jan. 15.

Call for artists, enter by Jan. 17

Palmer Lake Art Group's winter show exhibition dates are Jan. 29-Feb. 22 at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts. See eligibility criteria and terms of submission at www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.

FOMP seeks board members

Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) manages a 1,000-acre hiking/biking/equestrian trail area. The group is recruiting new board members. For more information, visit www.fomp.org.

Become a CASA volunteer

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) offers a volunteer opportunity like no other. As appointed represen-

tatives of the court, CASA volunteers are empowered to make a lifelong difference in the lives of abused and neglected children. To learn more, contact Uriko Stout, 447-9898 ext. 1060, urikos@casappr.org; or visit www.casappr.org.

Officiate high school basketball

Make the right call and become a high school basketball official. Email the Colorado Springs Basketball Officials Association, csboa.areadirector@gmail.com, for information on training and certification.

St. Peter Catholic School now enrolling

The school offers academics, athletics, and faith formation for preschool-eighth grade. Call or visit: 124 First St., Monument; 481-1855; www.petertherock.org. See ad on page 2.

Master Plan Survey now online

El Paso County continues to seek citizen input in an online survey as it creates the new county master plan. To complete the survey, go online to planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com. For more information, phone 719-520-6300.

Sisters' Thrift & Boutique

The Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery have a shop full of gently used treasures at 8674 N. Union Blvd., Colorado Springs. Store hours are Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The phone number is 719-282-0316.

Volunteer drivers needed

Mountain Community Senior Services is a nonprofit, grant-funded organization that provides free transportation to Tri-Lakes seniors 60 and older. The program needs volunteer drivers. For more information, visit the website, coloradoseniorhelp.com, email info@coloradoseniorhelp.com, or call the hotline, 488-0076.

Thrift Store needs volunteers

Volunteers are needed for various tasks. The store is located at 755 Highway 105, Suite N, in the West End Center and is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. To volunteer, call 488-3495.

Free services for seniors

Mountain Community Senior Services offers free transportation and handyman services to Tri-Lakes seniors. If you need a ride to a medical appointment, grocery shopping, or the local senior lunches, a volunteer driver will be happy to help you. Call 488-0076 to

leave a message for the dispatcher. If you need grab bars in the bathroom, a ramp to your door, or repair of stairs or railings, please call Cindy Rush, 488-0076, and leave a message or visit www.coloradoseniorhelp.com.

MVEA tree-trimming services

Tree trimming helps prevent storm-related power outages. For more information, call 800-388-9881 or 719-495-2283, or visit www.mvea.coop/tree-trimming.

Tri-Lakes Talks

There is now a website, www.TLtalks.com, for local articles, podcasts, and much more. TLtalks.com is dedicated to providing a platform where you can write about what is important to you and where the Tri-Lakes community can exchange ideas, thoughts, and information. Visit www.TLtalks.com to see the mission statement, submission guidelines, and terms and conditions.

I-25 MyWay commuting options website

Visit www.i25myway.org and enter starting and ending ZIP codes for personalized I-25 commuting solutions and savings estimates. The website will help you arrange the details and free test commutes, including carpools, van pools, and the Bustang South Line. The site will run through the end of construction in 2022.

County launches Citizen Connect

Citizen Connect is a new tool that allows citizens to report problems and put in service requests with the click of a mouse or touch of a button. Citizens can download this app, EPC Citizen Connect, for iPhone or Android phone. For more information, visit www.elpasoco.com/county-launches-citizen-connect.

Sign up for "Reverse 9-1-1"

The Emergency Notification System (powered by Everbridge), commonly referred to as Reverse 9-1-1, is a tool that can make rapid notifications to specific geographic areas to alert you to emergency situations including manmade disasters, evacuations, hazardous materials incidents, missing persons, and more. Reverse 9-1-1 is not the same as Amber Alerts, which are generated by a different system. You must register to receive emergency notifications on any phone other than your landline. You can list up to five locations and up to eight points of contact. Sign up at www.elpasoteller911.org.

County assessor launches enhanced website

The newly redesigned site with the Property Record Card and Citizen Comper (value comparisons) makes parcel and property searches more informative, easier to use, and accessible on mobile devices as well as desktops. Find the enhanced website at <https://property.spatalest.com/co/elpaso/>.

Residence vacation check

The El Paso County Sheriff's Office will conduct vacation checks of homes of county residents who are on vacation. This is a great way to add security to your home when you're away for multiple days. Either a deputy or trained volunteer will visit your home while you're away and check it periodically. To add your home to their schedule, visit www.epcsheriffsoffice.com. Info: 520-7151.

Monument text alerts

Text "Monument" to 41411 to receive updates and news of meetings, weather alerts, openings and closings, as well as other important town information to your phone or personal mobile device.

FREE Senior Beat newsletter

Each monthly *Senior Beat* newsletter is full of information for local seniors, including the daily menu of the senior lunches offered Monday through Friday at the Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Highway 105, Palmer Lake. It also contains the schedule of the classes and events for the month at the Senior Citizens Center and senior-friendly library programs. To subscribe, send an email with your name and mailing address to SeniorBeat@TriLakesSeniors.org. *Senior Beat* can also be viewed online at www.TriLakesSeniors.org.

El Paso County services for vets

Three county agencies providing services to veterans now have satellite offices at the Mount Carmel Center of Excellence, 530 Communications Circle, Colorado Springs. The Veterans Service office at Mount Carmel is open Mon. through Fri., 8 a.m.-5 p.m.. Call 719-309-4729 for an appointment. The Pikes Peak Workforce Center Mount Carmel office is open and is staffed with Workforce Center employees who help veterans with their employment needs. Call 719-772-7000 for an appointment. The county Department of Human Services also has a Mount Carmel office open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, visit www.veteranscenter.org. ■

Our Community Calendar

By Judy Barnes,

Community Calendar Editor

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the info number for that event.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Mon., Jan. 6, 1 p.m., 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Meets 2nd Mon. each month. Info: 488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
- **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Mon., Jan. 6, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month at 6:30 p.m. Info: 884-8017, www.townof-monument.org.
- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 7, 9 a.m. Centennial Hall, 200 South Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo.

Spring. Meets every Tue. and Thu. Info: 520-6430, www.agenda-suite.org/iip/elpaso.

- **El Paso County Planning Commission Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 7, 9 a.m., 2880 International Circle (off Union Blvd & Printers Pkwy). Meets 1st & 3rd Tue. (if required) each month. Find agendas: <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/el-paso-county-planning-commission/2019-meetings/>. Info: 520-6300.
- **Palmer Lake Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 8, 9 a.m., 120 Middle Glenway. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Info: 481-2732. www.plsld.org.
- **El Paso County Park Advisory Board Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 8, 1:30 p.m., Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade. Info: 520-7529.
- **Monument Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 8, 6:30 p.m. Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets 2nd Wed. each month. Live-streamed at <http://bit.ly/2uZxjfa>.

Info: 884-8017, www.townof-monument.org.

- **Monument Academy School Board Meeting**, Thu., Jan. 9, 6 p.m., Lab 312, 1150 Village Ridge Point, Monument. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 481-1950, www.monumentacademy.net/school-board.
- **Palmer Lake Town Council Meeting**, Thu., Jan. 9, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 14, 10 a.m., 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets 2nd Tue. each month. Info: Bill Burks, 481-4053.
- **D-38 Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC) Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 14, Campus Tour 6:30-7 p.m., meeting 7-8:30 p.m., Bear Creek Elementary School Library, 1330 Creekside Dr., Monument. Meets 2nd Tue. each month, location varies. Info: Cheri McLean,

719-785-4210, cmclean@lewis-palmer.org, www.lewispalmer.org.

- **Monument Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 15, 9 a.m., 130 2nd St. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 481-4886.
- **Triview Metropolitan District Board Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 15, 5:30 p.m., 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 300, Monument. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
- **Academy Water and Sanitation District Board Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 15, 6 p.m., Wescott Fire Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 481-0711.
- **Palmer Lake Planning Commission Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 15, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District Board Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 15, 7 p.m., Station 1,

Why advertise in OCN?

- **OCN is mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area.** We mail more than 20,700 copies every month and put another 700 copies in stacks throughout the area. OCN has the largest mailed circulation and the third-largest circulation among local newspapers in El Paso County after *The Gazette* and *The Colorado Springs Independent*. We put copies of OCN into the hands of those people most likely to buy your products or services: local residents and businesses.
- **OCN is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news.** Since its founding in 2001, OCN has been presenting unbiased, detailed coverage of Tri-Lakes area governmental entities and their deliberations and actions. Credibility is key. Advertising in a credible medium typically rubs off on the advertisers in that media.
- **OCN gives preference to Tri-Lakes area businesses.** As part of OCN's long-standing commitment to encouraging the economic health of the Tri-Lakes area, we offer a significantly discounted ad rate to Tri-Lakes area businesses as a way to help local businesses like yours succeed.
- **OCN's low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget.** OCN has one of the lowest ad costs per printed copy of any local publication. Since OCN is a monthly publication, your ad is out there for a month—more than four times longer than other local papers. Many of our advertisers tell us they're still getting calls in the third and fourth week of the month.
- **OCN doesn't use contracts.** You aren't tied down. Adjust your advertising month-to-month to meet your changing needs. Our advertisers advertise with us because they see benefit in it, not because they're bound by a contract they signed months before. To reward frequent advertisers, OCN has a Frequent Advertiser Bonus (FAB) rewards program. You earn up to 10% of your ad cost as a reward you can use to reduce the cost of future OCN advertising. The more you advertise with OCN, the more you save. Thanks to our FAB rewards program, OCN advertisers have saved more than \$78,300!
- **You are supporting a good thing.** Your advertising dollars support a unique all-volunteer, Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and businesses.

And the best reason of all: It works!

- Jennifer Cunningham, Gallery 132** - *"OCN is the only print publication where I've seen consistent results in engagement for my business."*
- Randi and Dale Sehestedt, Woodmoor Handyman and Snow Plowing** - *"OCN is the only paper we advertise in and it consistently brings us plenty of good local customers. Great paper and great people to work with."*
- Melissa Riesling, LPC** - *"Advertising with the OCN has been terrific! I have so many people tell me 'I saw your ad!' The OCN is a very affordable way to promote your business in the community."*
- Kerri Bohler, The Villa Restaurant** - *"Thanks for all you have done for us. Our ad with OCN was the best thing we ever did for advertising. It outshines all the rest."*
- Mary Sue Hafey, Fringe Benefits Custom Interiors** - *"Since I starting advertising with OCN years ago, it has helped brand my company while consistently increasing my exposure and sales!"*
- Elba D'Asaro, Spa Medica** - *"OCN ads work!"*
- Sarah Groh, Sarah Groh Music Studio** - *"Your paper has been the best press I have ever had. Thanks to the OCN ads my plate is full and I don't think I could take on any more clients right now."*
- Cathy Thompson, Johan Hair Studio** - *"OCN is my paper of choice for advertising. The ads John has helped me design have provided a constant stream of new clients. My ads have paid for themselves many times over! Thanks John!"*
- Mike Reaster, Guitar Lessons** - *"Ads in OCN work great for me. I tried other local papers and got no response. Thanks to my ads in OCN, I can work from home and make a decent living. All my work comes from my ads in OCN."*

For more information on advertising, go to www.ocn.me/advertise.htm or contact John Heiser at (719) 488-3455 or ads@ocn.me.

- 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: 495-4300.
- **Donala Water & Sanitation District Board Workshop**, Thu., Jan. 16, 1:30 p.m., 15850 Holbein Dr. Workshop is open to the public. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 488-3603, www.donalawater.org.
 - **El Paso County Planning Commission Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 21, 9 a.m., 2880 International Circle (off Union Blvd & Printers Pkwy). Meets 1st & 3rd Tue. (if required) each month. Find agendas: <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/el-paso-county-planning-commission/2019-meetings/>. Info: 520-6300.
 - **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Board Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 21, 6 p.m., Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Normally meets 3rd Mon. each month. Info: 719-867-8690, knameika@lewis-palmer.org, www.lewispalmer.org.
 - **Monument Board of Trustees Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 21, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets 1st and 3rd Mon. each month. Info: 884-8017, www.townofmonument.org.
 - **Wescott Fire Protection District Board Meeting**, Tue., Jan. 21, 7 p.m., Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Dr. Meets 3rd Tue. each month. Info: 488-8680.
 - **D-38 Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)**, Wed., Jan. 22, 6:30 p.m., Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Info: 433-5672, MNay@lewispalmer.org.
 - **Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District Board Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 22, 6:30 p.m., TLMFPD Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105. Meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: Jennifer Martin, 484-0911, www.tlm-fire.org.
 - **Palmer Lake Town Council Meeting**, Thu., Jan. 23, 6 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
 - **Woodmoor Improvement Association Annual Meeting**, Mon., Jan. 27, sign in at 6:30 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Light appetizers will be served. Info: 488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
 - **Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting**, Wed., Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Normally meets 4th Wed. each month. Info: 488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.

LOCAL LIBRARY EVENTS

- For information on library events, see the library events column on page 22 and visit www.ppld.org. Please note that all Pikes Peak Library facilities will be closed on Monday, Jan. 20 in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- **The Palmer Lake Library hours** are Tue.-Fri., 10 a.m.-6 p.m., and Sat., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. 66 Lower Glenway. Info: 481-2587, www.ppld.org.
 - **The Monument Branch Library hours** are Mon.-Thu., 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri. & Sat, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun., 1-5 p.m. 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Info: 488-2370, www.ppld.org.
- ## WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club Breakfast Meeting**, every Sat.,

- 7:30 a.m., D-38 Admin. Building, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Guests are welcome at weekly meetings featuring speakers on a variety of topics and a free continental breakfast. Memberships open to the public. Join the 150+ men & women of the Tri-Lakes area who work together to make a difference for youth and our community. Info: RF Smith, (719) 210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Aliyah Congregation**, every Sat., 10 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Visitors are welcome. Info: 330-2382, www.aliyahcongregation.com. See ad on page 31.
 - **Neighborhood Net**, every Sat., 10 a.m. Amateur radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
 - **Bingo by the American Legion**, every Sat., game sales start at 6 p.m., games start at 7 p.m., the Depot Restaurant, in Palmer Lake. Proceeds go to scholarships and other community support activities. Info: 481-8668, www.americanlegiontrilakespost911.com/bingo.htm.
 - **Artful Outdoors: Weekly art and nature hikes**, most Sat.-Sun., 1-3 p.m. and by appointment. Join Janet Sellers at local nature, cultural, and gallery spots. Info: 719-357-7454, www.StartMyArt.com.
 - **Fuel Church Sunday Service**, every Sun., 9:30 a.m. New hours, 9:15 a.m. & 11:15 a.m., kids service ages 4-11 @ 9:15 a.m. only, 14960 Woodcarver Rd. (just west of I-25 off Baptist Rd). Non-denominational, spirit led. Info: info@fuel.org, www.fuelchurch.org. See ad on page 10.
 - **Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church** Worship Hours, every Sun., traditional services 8 & 11 a.m., contemporary service 9:30 a.m., Sunday school, all ages, 9:30 a.m., 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. Info: 488-1365, www.tlumc.org. See ad on page 3.
 - **Black Forest Community Church** Sunday Worship, every Sun., 10 a.m., 6845 Shoup Rd. All are welcome to the family friendly services. Info: www.blackforestcommunitychurch.org.
 - **Cathedral Rock Church** Sunday Service, every Sun., 10 a.m., Tri-Lakes YMCA, 17250 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. Info: www.cathedralrockchurch.org. See ad on page 11.
 - **Tai-Chi Class**, every Mon., 10 a.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Cost: \$5. Drop-ins welcome. Info: 481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
 - **Seniors Monday Movie Matinee**, every Mon., 1-4 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center located on Lewis-Palmer High School campus. Free movies and snacks. See the schedule of films in Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Senior Beat.
 - **Artfully Speaking Toastmasters**, every Mon., 5:45 p.m., 4452 North Chestnut St., room 252, Colo. Springs. Info: Glenn, 719-260-6551; www.artfullyspeaking.toastmastersclubs.org.
 - **Women's A.A. Step Study**, every Mon., 6:30 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in west lot. Info: 360-4306.
 - **Monument Life Recovery Group**, every Mon., 6:30-8 p.m., The Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd.

- This faith-based support group is for those seeking freedom from all hurts, habits, and hang ups. Find support seeking freedom from addictions and family members with practical tools for change. Daycare provided for children under age 11. Info: 481-3600.
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Bingo**, every **Mon.**, 7:30 p.m., Carefree Bingo, 3440 N. Carefree Circle, Colo. Springs. All proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes Community. Info: mark.zeiger@gmail.com.
 - **Blue Wave Taekwondo Club**, every **Mon. & Fri.**, 4:30 p.m., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. New members welcome. Cost: \$15 ea. to cover rental, first class FREE! Info: Alex Ratcliff, TaekwondoBlueWave@gmail.com, 817-962-8044.
 - **Senior Citizen Luncheons**, every **Mon.-Fri.**, 12-12:30 p.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. See the menu for the month in the Senior Beat newsletter. A \$2.25 donation is requested. Stay for bingo the 2nd Thu. each month. Reservations are requested, phone 884-2304.
 - **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI)**, open **Mon.-Sat.**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 Exit 156 A). Free child admission with a paid adult during April. Daily guided tours at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Cost: \$10 adults, \$9 military/AAA, \$8 seniors & students, \$6 children 3-12, free to children under 3 & museum members. Info: 488-0880, info@wmmi.org, www.wmmi.org.
 - **Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Thrift Store**, open **Mon.-Sat.**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 755 Hwy 105, Suite N, in the West End Center. Seniors 62+ get a 20% discount on Wednesdays. Military & Teacher Appreciation Day, 20% off regular priced items on Saturdays. All proceeds support Tri-Lakes Senior Programs. To donate furniture, call 488-3495 for a pickup. Info: www.TriLakesSeniors.org.
 - **Tri-Lakes YMCA Senior Coffee**, every **Tue.**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., 17250 Jackson Creek Pkwy, Monument. Members and non-members are welcome. Socialize, have coffee and snacks in the front lobby. Free. Info: 630-2604, hbrandon@ppymca.org, www.ppymca.org.
 - **Al-anon Meeting: Monument Serenity**, every **Tue.**, 7:30-8:30 p.m., Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: Kay, 481-9258.
 - **Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center**, every **Tue.** at 12:30 p.m. & **Thu.** at 8 a.m., Lewis-Palmer High School modular building across from the YMCA, on Jackson Creek Pkwy. All fitness levels can prevent injury and improve posture and flexibility. Registration & Info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
 - **Peak Reader Children's Literacy Program**, every **Tue. & Thu.**, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Free one-to-one tutoring for children reading below grade level. To enroll your child or volunteer as a tutor, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or call 471-8672.
 - **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ** Wednesday Night Fellowship Meal (Free) & Classes, every **Wed.**, 6-7:30 p.m., 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (Corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org.
 - **Al-anon Meeting: Letting Go**, every **Thu.**, 9-10:10 a.m., Tri-Lakes Chapel, room 209, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: Kay, 481-9258.
 - **A.A. Big Book Study**, every **Thu.**, 7 p.m., Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Info: 481-0431.
 - **Overeaters Anonymous Big Book Study**, every **Thu.**, 7-8 p.m., Natural Grocers, 1216 W. Baptist Rd., Monument. Info: Beth, 773-682-1223; or Nancy, 640-3343.
 - **Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS)**, every **Fri.**, 8 a.m., Monument Chamber of Commerce, 166 2nd St., Monument. Info: Terry, 684-4912, or visit www.TOPs.org.
 - **Yin Yoga Classes**, **Mon.**, **Jan. 6**, 6:30-7:45 p.m., Yoga Pathways Studio, 755 Hwy 105, West End Center, Suite A (3/4 mile west of Safeway). A slow yoga practice; all levels welcome. First class always free. Info: Deb Harano, 719-338-8467; DimensionsYoga@gmail.com.
 - **Black Forest AARP Potluck Lunch & Meeting**, **Wed.**, **Jan. 8**, noon, 12455 Black Forest Rd. Program: Installation of 200 chapter officers and an update on the 2020 tax law changes. All ages welcome. Meets 2nd Wed. each month.

- RSVP & Info: Stan, 596-6787, www.aarpchapter-1100blackforest.weebly.com.
- **Foot Care Clinic**, **Wed.**, **Jan. 8**, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines your feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$30 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed. and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 577-4448.
 - **Senior Bingo**, **Thu.**, **Jan. 9**, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake, after the senior lunch. Come for lunch at noon, then stay and play. Free! Prizes! Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: Maggie Nealon, 488-3037.
 - **Bridge**, **Thu.**, **Jan. 9**, 1-4 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, 1300 Higby Road, Monument. Meets 2nd Thu. each month, Sept.-June. Info: www.trilakeseniors.org/programs/events.html.
 - **Ben Lomond Gun Club**, Tri-Lakes Chapter, **Thu.**, **Jan. 9**, 7 p.m., Tri-Lakes Fire Station 1, 18650 Hwy 105 west of Monument near the bowling alley. Meets 2nd Thu. each month. Info: 481-3364.
 - **Silver Center Book Club**, **Fri.**, **Jan. 10**, 11 a.m.-noon, Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on Lewis-Palmer High School campus. The January book is "The Nightingale" by Kristen Hannah. All are welcome. Meets 2nd Fri. each month. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & Info: Sue, 330-0241.
 - **La Leche League Meeting**, **Fri.**, **Jan. 10**, noon-1 p.m., Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Mothers, babies, and mothers-to-be are all invited. Meets 2nd Fri. each month. Info: Kelley, 440-2477, kdghorashi@gmail.com.
 - **NEPCO Meeting**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 11**, 10 a.m.-noon, New Monument Town Hall & Police Building, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. All are welcome to this meeting of local homeowners associations. Info: 481-2723 or visit www.nepco.org.
 - **El Paso County Hazardous Materials & Recycling Collection Facility**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 11**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 3255 Akers Dr., Colorado Springs. Open the 2nd Sat. each month as well as Mon.-Thu., 7 a.m.-5 p.m., accepts porcelain fixtures, common recyclable items, household hazardous waste, various electronics, and TVs up to 19-inch diagonal. Bring a nonperishable food item for Care and Share. Info: 520-7878, http://adm.elpasoco.com/Environmental_Services/Solid_Waste_Management.
 - **Palmer Lake Art Group**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 11**, 9 a.m., Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. Meets 2nd Sat. each month. Info: 487-1329, www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.
 - **Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 11**, 9:45-11:30 a.m., The First National Bank of Monument, 581 Hwy 105. Meets 2nd Sat. each month. Info: Gail, 481-3711.
 - **Faithful Friends**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 11**, 3-4:30 p.m., Wesley Owens Coffee & Cafe, 1744 Lake Woodmoor Dr., Monument. This month's topic: "What bridges are you glad you've burned? Which need to be burned in 2020?" Meets 2nd Sat. each month. RSVP & Info: Ellen, 303-526-5000.
 - **Chess Nuts**, **Tue.**, **Jan. 14**, 5-9 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center. Any age, any skill. Learners welcome. Drop in and leave when you want. Bring your own board and pieces if you have them. Meets 2nd & 4th Tue. each month. Info: www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess.
 - **Tri-Lakes Chamber Monthly Education Series: Basics of Bookkeeping**, **Wed.**, **Jan. 15**, 9 a.m.-noon, 166 Second St., Monument. Free. Register online, www.trilakeschamber.com/events-calendar.htm. Info: 481-3282.
 - **Gleneagle Sertoma Luncheon Meeting**, **Wed.**, **Jan. 15**, 11:30 a.m., Liberty Heights, 12105 Ambassador Dr., Colo. Springs. Interesting speakers and programs; all are welcome. Meets 1st & 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Garrett Barton, 433-5396; Duane Gritmaker, 481-2424; www.gleneaglesertoma.org.
 - **Senior Bingo**, **Wed.**, **Jan. 15**, 1-2 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, Lewis-Palmer High School campus. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Sue Walker, 464-6873.
 - **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829**, **Wed.**, **Jan. 15**, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. New members welcome. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info:

- Post Commander Joe Carlson, 405-326-2588, jcarlson@vfw7829.org, www.vfw7829.org.
- **VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829**, **Wed.**, **Jan. 15**, 7 p.m., The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. New members welcome. If you are a male or female relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Meets 3rd Wed. each month. Info: Kathy Carlson, 488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.
 - **Senior Tea**, **Thu.**, **Jan. 16**, 12-1:30 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center at Lewis-Palmer High School (across from the YMCA). Come early to socialize. Volunteers needed. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Reservations required: contact Sue, 464-6873, sue@monumentalfitness.com.
 - **Palmer Lake Historical Society Annual Potluck and Membership Meeting**, **Thu.**, **Jan. 16**, 7 p.m., Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. The PLHS furnishes the ham, rolls, coffee and tea. Please bring a salad, side dish, or dessert to share and enjoy local entertainment. All are welcome. Meets 3rd Thu. each month. Info: 559-0837, www.palmerdividehistory.org.
 - **Gleneagle Women's Club**, **Fri.**, **Jan. 17**. Come for lunch, book discussions, bridge, and more. Location for lunch varies. Meets every third Fri., Sept.-June. Info: Syble Krafft, 488-2669.
 - **Foot Care Clinic**, **Fri.**, **Jan. 17**, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$35 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 577-4448.
 - **The Breakfast Club**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 18**, 8:30 a.m., The Ridge at Castle Pines North (Ridge Grill and Bar), 1414 Castle Pines Pkwy. Single people 50+ meet new friends and have fun. Meets 3rd Sat. each month. Info: 303-815-8428, www.TBC-50plus.org.
 - **Monument Hill Farmers Market Winter Indoor Market**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 18**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Grace Best, 66 Jefferson St., Monument. Shop all your old favorites. Meets every 3rd Sat. through April. Info: 592-9420. See ad on page 5.
 - **Pikes Peak Music Teachers Association Meeting**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 18**, 9:30 a.m., Graner Music, 4460 Barnes Rd., Colo. Springs. Chee-Hwa Tan, NCTM presents "What's New in Piano Pedagogy." Music teachers and students meet for coffee, fruit, pastries, a meeting, and presentation. Non-members welcome. Normally meets 2nd Tue. each month. Info: 307-760-6426, deemody636@gmail.com, www.ppmta.org.
 - **Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 18**, 10 a.m.-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St, Monument. Come for socializing, discussions on Parkinson's-related issues including available support, and occasional speakers. Meets 3rd Sat. each month. Info: Syble Krafft, 488-2669.
 - **Covered Treasures Bookstore Booksignings**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 18**, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., 105 Second St., Monument. Sandra Dallas signs her two new books, *Westerling Women* and *Someplace to Call Home*. Refreshments will be served. Info: 481-2665, www.coveredtreasures.com.
 - **Monument Essential Tremor Support Group**, **Sat.**, **Jan. 18**, 1-3 p.m. Movement disorder sup-

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- port group. Monument Branch Library, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr. Now meets quarterly. Info: Margaret, lumargaret@aol.com; Jim, jimdjs22@gmail.com.
- **Amateur Radio W0TLM** (Tri-Lakes Monument Radio Association), Mon., **Jan. 20**. All amateur radio operators or those interested in becoming amateur radio operators are welcome. Meets 3rd Mon. Check the website for details. Info: Joyce Witte, 661-9824, Joycewitte@gmail.com; www.W0TLM.com.
 - **Outpouring: TLUMC Supporting our Community**, Tue., **Jan. 21**, 7 p.m., Pikes Peak Brewing Company, 1756 Lake Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Everyone is welcome. Meets 3rd Tue. each month. Info: LWeber1971@aol.com; for current speaker info go to <http://tlumc.org/outreach/outpouring>.
 - **Senior Social**, Wed., **Jan. 22**, 1-4 p.m., 12455 Black Forest Rd. Meets 4th Wed. each month except Nov. & Dec. Info: aarpchapter1100blackforest.weebly.com.
 - **Friends of Fox Run Park**, Thu., **Jan. 23**, 5-6 p.m., Southwinds Fine Art Gallery upstairs, 16575 Rollercoaster Rd. (corner of Baptist and Rollercoaster Roads). Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for safety, trails, trees, education, more. Guest speaker each month. Meets 4th Thu. each month. Info: 719-492-0355, janetsellers@ocn.me.
 - **Chess Nuts**, Tue., Jan. 28, 5-9 p.m., Silver Alliance Senior Center, across the street from the YMCA. Any age, any skill. Learners welcome. Drop in and leave when you want. Bring your own board and pieces if you have them. Meets 2nd & 4th Tue. each month. Info: www.TriLakesSeniors.org/chess.
 - **Foot Care Clinic**, Fri., **Jan. 31**, Silver Alliance Senior Center located across the street from the Tri-Lakes YMCA, on the Lewis-Palmer High School campus. A registered nurse examines feet and provides foot care advice, toenail trimming. Cost: \$35 for a 30-min. visit. Meets 2nd Wed., 3rd and last Fri. each month, by appointment only. Info & appointments: call the Visiting Nurse Association, 577-4448.
 - **Lupus Support Group**. If you suffer with an autoimmune disease and want to connect with others, you are welcome to join this group. Info: dmbandle@hotmail.com.
 - **Myasthenia Gravis Association** of Colorado Support Group. Location varies. Info: Carolyn, 488-3620, www.4-mga.org, 303-360-7080, 4mga@4-mga.org.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) Family Day: Geology**, Sat., **Jan. 4**, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., 225 North Gate Blvd. (I-25 Exit 156 A). Learn about Colorado's minerals and mining, try your luck at "Keep What You Find" gold panning. Cost: \$10 adults, \$9 military/AAA, \$8 seniors & students, \$6 children 3-12, free to children under 3 & museum members. Info: 488-0880, info@wmmi.org, www.wmmi.org. See ad on page 5.
- **County's Annual TreeCycle**, Sat.-Sun., **Jan. 4-5**, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Baptist Road trailhead, Baptist Road & Old Denver Hwy. Recycle your Christmas tree. Trees are ground into mulch that is given away free. Remove all decorations from your tree before dropping it off. Bring your own tools and containers for mulch. Cost: \$5, benefits community youth sports programs. Info: 520-7878, www.TreeCycleCOS.org.
- **Sew Inspiring: A Juried Fiber Art Exhibition Opening Reception**, Wed., **Jan. 8**, 6-8 p.m., Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA), 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. This exhibition highlights the art, skill, and heritage of traditional and contemporary quilts and fiber arts. Runs Jan. 7-24. Info: 719-481-0475, www.trilakesarts.org.
- **CASA Volunteer Informational Hour**, Fri., **Jan. 10**, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 418 South Weber St., Color. Springs. Find out how you can be the voice for a child who is involved in the court system due to abuse, neglect, or domestic violence. Light lunch included. RSVP & Info: 719-447-9898, urikos@casappr.org, www.casappr.org.
- **Black Rose Acoustic Society: Blue Canyon Boys**, Fri., **Jan. 10**, 7 p.m., doors open at 6:15. Black Forest Community Center, 12530 Black Forest Rd. at Shoup Road. Cost: \$10 general, \$5 BRAS members, \$5 non-member students with

- ID. Info: Joe Maio, 528-6119, jrmtn@comcast.net, www.blackroseacoustic.org.
- **Speakeasy Casino Night Benefit for Bryson's Chase**, Sat., **Jan. 11**, 6-10 p.m., Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Dress for the Roaring 20s. Dinner, starting chips, dancing, prizes, silent auction, cash bar, and more. Cost: \$100. Proceeds benefit Children's Hospital Colorado Pediatric Mental Health Institute. Info: Lindsey Kangas, 904-742-1273; Tickets: www.brysonschase.org/events.
 - **Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery Chamber Concert: Parish House Baroque**, Sun., **Jan. 12**, 2:30-4 p.m., 3190 Benet Lane, Colo. Springs. Cost: \$25. Buy tickets online: www.benethillmonastery.org. Info: 633-0655, ext. 132.
 - **Lewis-Palmer High School Tour**, Fri., **Jan. 17**, 8 a.m., 1300 Higby Rd., Monument. Repeats Feb 7. RSVP & Info: Ms. Verrie, 719-488-6186; www.lewispalmer.org/Page/9. See ad on page 9.
 - **Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery with Rocky Mountain Women's Film Institute Film Series, Breakfast at Ina's and Pickle**, Fri., **Jan. 17**, 6:30 p.m., 3190 Benet Lane, Colo. Springs. Free, online registration is requested: www.benethillmonastery.org. Info: 633-0655, ext. 132.
 - **Bryan Duncan Concert at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts**, Fri., **Jan. 17**, 7 p.m., doors open 6:15 p.m., 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Tickets & Info: 481-0475, www.trilakesarts.org.
 - **Monument Hill Farmers Market Winter Indoor Market**, Sat., **Jan. 18**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Grace Best, 66 Jefferson St., Monument. Shop all your old favorites. Meets every 3rd Sat. through April. Info: 592-9420. See ad on page 5.
 - **Palmer Ridge High School Open House**, Tue., **Jan. 21**, 6-7:30 p.m., 19255 Monument Hill Rd, Monument. Talk to representatives from the academic departments, view available athletic and club activities. Info: www.lewispalmer.org/enroll. See ad on page 9.
 - **Palmer Ridge High School Tour**, Fri., **Jan. 24**, 1 p.m., 19255 Monument Hill Rd, Monument. Repeats **Feb. 6**. RSVP & Info: Mrs. Nam, 719-867-8600, www.lewispalmer.org/enroll. See ad on page 9.
 - **Black Rose Acoustic Society: Guardrail**, Fri., **Jan. 24**, 7 p.m., doors open at 6:15. Black Forest Community Center, 12530 Black Forest Rd. at Shoup Road. Cost: \$10 general, \$5 BRAS members, \$5 non-member students with ID. Info: Joe Maio, 528-6119, jrmtn@comcast.net, www.blackroseacoustic.org.
 - **Wendy Woo w/Robin Hoch Concert at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts**, Fri., **Jan. 24**, 7 p.m., doors open 6:15 p.m., 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Tickets & Info: 481-0475, www.trilakesarts.org.
 - **Covered Treasures Bookstore Booksigning**, Sat., **Jan. 25**, 1-3 p.m., 105 Second St., Monument. Kelli and Peter Bronski sign *No Gluten, No Problem Pizza, a cookbook*. They will bake pizzas for your enjoyment. Info: 481-2665, www.coveredtreasures.com.
 - **St. Peter School Open House**, Sun., **Jan. 26**, 12:30-2:30 p.m., 124 First St., Monument. Find out about education for Preschool through 8th grade. Info: 481-1855; www.petertherock.org. See ad on page 2.
 - **Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery Human Trafficking Series: A Survivor's Story—from Captivity to Catalyst**, Mon., **Jan. 27**, 6:30-8:15 p.m., PPLD 21C, Venue Room, 1175 Chapel Hills Dr., Colo. Springs. This 4-session series addresses the cultural and systemic brokenness that feeds and fuels human trafficking locally, nationally, and globally. Free. RSVP & Info: 633-0655, ext. 132; sroseann@benethillmonastery.org; www.benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 10.
 - **Lewis-Palmer High School 8th Grade Open House**, Wed., **Jan. 29**, 1300 Higby Rd., Monument. Talk to representatives from the academic departments, view available athletic and club activities. Sign up at www.lewispalmer.org/Page/9. See ad on page 9.
 - **Palmer Lake Art Group Winter Art Show & Sale Opening Reception**, Fri., **Jan. 31**, 6-8 p.m., Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts, 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Come celebrate the opening of the show and meet the local artists. The show runs Jan. 29-Feb. 22, Tue.-Sat., noon-4 p.m. Proceeds benefit art scholarships for School District 38 high school seniors. Info: www.palmerlakeartgroup.com or email plaginfo@palmerlakeartgroup.com. See ad on page 31.
 - **Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery Human Traf-**

- ficking Series: Connecting the Dots: Cultural and Systemic Ills that Fuel Human Trafficking**, Mon., **Feb. 3**, 6:30-8:15 p.m., PPLD 21C, Venue Room, 1175 Chapel Hills Dr., Colo. Springs. This 4-session series addresses the cultural and systemic brokenness that feeds and fuels human trafficking locally, nationally, and globally. Free. RSVP & Info: 633-0655, ext. 132; sroseann@benethillmonastery.org; www.benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 10.
- **State of the Tri-Lakes Region Lunch**, Fri., **Feb. 7**, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Great Wolf Lodge, 9494 Federal Dr., Color. Springs. Review the past year, look forward to the new year: views of what is going on in our area and predictions for the future. Info: 719 481-3282. Register on line: www.trilakeschamber.com/state-of-the-tri-lakes-region.html.
 - **Dion Pride: A Tribute to Charley Pride Concert at Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts**, Fri., **Feb. 7**, 7 p.m., doors open 6:15 p.m., 304 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Tickets & Info: 481-0475, www.trilake-sarts.org.
 - **Community Emergency Response Training (CERT)**, Tue.-Sat., **Feb. 18-22**, 6-10 p.m. Tue.-Thu., 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Sat.; Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. Learn how to be resilient and "what to do when 911 can't get there" in a disaster or emergency in this free course given by the El Paso County Office of Emergency Management. See www.EPCCERT.org. Register at <http://ppcertfeb20.eventzilla.net>. Info: Robin, 575-8858.

Our Community News is a member of the **Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce**. Visit the chamber at www.trilakeschamber.com



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Letters to Our Community

Our *Community News* welcomes letters to the editor on topics of general interest to readers in the Tri-Lakes area. We do not knowingly print letters that are substantially the same as letters that have been submitted to other publications. To ensure that *OCN* contains a variety of viewpoints, each letter writer is limited to a maximum of one (1) letter per issue and six (6) letters within a twelve (12) month period. To submit a letter, please:

- Email your letter, preferably as an attached Microsoft Word document, to editor@ocn.me or mail a copy to **Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, CO 80132-1742**.
- Identify your submission as a letter to the editor and confirm that it has not been submitted to any other publication.
- Include a suggested headline or title that summarizes the topic you are addressing.
- Limit your letter to no more than 300 words including your suggested headline and closing.
- Include your full name, home address, phone numbers, and email address, if you have one. Only your name will be published.
- Submit your letter so we receive it no later than midnight, Friday, two weeks prior to the publication date.

If you have not received an acknowledgement two days after your email submission or one week after you mailed your letter, please contact Jennifer Kaylor, Managing Editor, at (719) 488-3455 or editor@ocn.me. At *OCN's* sole discretion, we may ask you for clarification of your statements. Include references, such as website links, in your letter for any facts and figures you cite. *OCN* does not guarantee every letter will appear in print or on-line and does not guarantee a publication date. Depending on the space available, the number of letters printed in an issue may be limited to the first 12 received. Letters containing personal attacks or endorsements for or complaints about individually-named commercial products or services will not be published.

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Please join us today! Meet a group of interesting and committed people. Learn new skills—use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit our community and celebrate unfiltered information. Please call John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455, or email johnheiser@ocn.me to see how you can contribute. Contact us today!

Paid Advertisement

Our community calendar carries listings on a space-available basis for Tri-Lakes events that are sponsored by local governmental entities and not-for-profit organizations. We include events that are open to the general public and are not religious or self-promotional in nature. If space is available, complimentary calendar listings are included, when requested, for events advertised in the current issue. To have your event listed at no charge in Our Community Calendar, please call (719) 339-7831 or send the information to calendar@ocn.me or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.

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Content

Articles in *Our Community News* focus on the deliberations of Tri-Lakes area governmental bodies such as the Monument Board of Trustees, Palmer Lake Town Council, and many of the local water, sanitation, fire, and school district boards.

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.

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Contact John Heiser, Publisher, at johnheiser@ocn.me or (719) 488-3455 with any questions.

**Look for our next issue
Saturday, February 1**

Ad space reservations due: Fri., Jan. 10
Finished ad artwork due: Fri., Jan. 17
Letters to the editor due: Fri., Jan. 17
Calendar items due: Fri., Jan. 24

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The Rabbi's Corner
Hanukkah 2019 Retrospect

*Teachings compiled by Lovena Kiser
as requested by Rabbi Oswald Garagorry*

The last candle has been lit and the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) is complete. The center Shamash (Servant) candle has shared its light during each of the eight nights for friends, family gatherings, fun, food, gifts and remembrance; leaving the warm glow of treasured memories for years and generations to come.

The 8-day Feast of Dedication's (aka the Festival of Lights) story has been told over and over again to revere the Jewish lives lost and celebrate the ultimate success to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in freedom. Here is the story, that is etched in the souls of His Chosen People.

The Books of Maccabees relate that 2,200+ years ago, Alexander, the son of Phillip the Macedonian, began winning the rest of his name as he and his legions conquered the whole Middle East, parts of Africa, and Europe. In the early 300's B.C.E. at the age of 21, he forever became known as Alexander the Great. During his short 12-year reign he placed 17-20 governor/generals over his empire to keep it unified. Upon his death at the age of 32, these men grabbed their piece of his empire as their own. After years of fighting, intrigue, murders, and assassinations, his empire was divided into two warring kingdoms: the Seleucids aka the Greek/Syrians in the north and the Ptolemaic aka the Greek/Egyptians in the south. Israel was caught in the middle of these two kingdoms for over 100 years. In the 160's B.C.E. the Greek/Syrians prevailed under the leadership of the most oppressive and cruelest of the Seleucid kings...Antiochus Epiphanes (Glorious). His plan to keep control of his kingdom was simple: enforce an intensive Hellenization program. This meant that that all ethnic and regional cultures were to be replaced with one unifying culture...the Greek culture. For Israel, this meant that the core of Jewish life; the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the Great Temple in Jerusalem had to be abolished. Among other things he prohibited was the practice of circumcision, Sabbath observance, Torah study, and Temple Services.

His conquests invariably included the ransacking of local religious temples, taking the gold, silver and fine cloths to enlarge his personal treasury. The Holy Temple in Jerusalem was not spared this plunder, leaving the Temple completely barren. Not content with looting the Temple, he killed thousands in Jerusalem and took 10,000 men, women, and children captive as slaves. He burned down the finest buildings, tore down the city walls, and built a Citadel on high ground overlooking the Temple. He fortified it with high walls and towers and stationed a garrison of Macedonian troops who, with the support of Jews sympathetic to Antiochus, inflicted great suffering on the remaining citizens of Jerusalem. He converted the Temple into a temple for the worship of Zeus, forcing the Jews to build idol altars and compelling them to offer a pig on the altars daily as he profaned the Holy Temple by offering pigs on its' altar.

God-fearing Jews who refused to obey his decrees were whipped with rods, their bodies torn to pieces, and reports of Mothers caught allowing the circumcision of their sons were forced to watch their babies strangled. The Mothers were then strangled, nailed to a cross and their dead 8-day old baby boys were hung around their necks like necklaces as an example to others. Those who performed the circumcision were killed. Anyone who was caught with any sacred book was immediately put to death and the book destroyed.

In order to force all Jews to forsake the worship of YHVH, generals in command of forces of men were sent out of Jerusalem in all directions. When they reached the town of Modin (about 20 miles west of Jerusalem) to build an altar for the sacrifice of pigs they encountered a respected priest by the name of Mattathias and his five sons. The commanding General Appelles, chose Mattathias to sacrifice the first pig, so that others would follow the decreed sacrifices. When Mattathias refused,

one of the Jews in the crowd ran forward to sacrifice the pig. This infuriated Mattathias and he killed him on the altar. His five sons drew their swords killing Appelles and several of his soldiers. Mattathias then cried throughout the city in a loud voice, saying, "whosoever is zealous for the law and maintains the covenant, let him follow me." So, he and his sons fled into the mountains, leaving everything they had. His son, Judah Maccabees became the leader of the rebels known as the Maccabees. It is estimated that Judah's forces eventually numbered around 6,000 men. Over the next 3 years of fierce fighting, Antiochus sent in more than 105,000 men to combat Judah's dramatically outnumbered fighters.

Then in the third year, after a decisive victory over Antiochus' General Lysias in 164 B.C.E., Judah said, "Now that our enemies are crushed, let us go up to purify the sanctuary and rededicate it. And the whole army gathered together, and they went up to Mt. Zion. And they found the sanctuary desolated and the altar polluted. So he (Judah) chose priests of blameless conversation, such as had pleasure in the law, who cleansed the sanctuary...and when as they consulted what to do with the altar of burnt offerings, which was profaned; they thought it best to pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them, because the heathen had defiled it; wherefore, they pulled it down and laid up the stones in the mountain of the Temple in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to show what should be done with them." They built a new altar and it was during the eight-day rededication of the holy altar that the legend of the oil for the menorah began. It is said, that when Antiochus took the Temple all the holy oil for the menorah was desecrated, but as they were restoring the Temple, one small undefiled jug of oil was found with its seal still intact. It contained only enough oil to burn the menorah for one day. Rather than wait eight days for new oil to be consecrated, they decided to light the menorah using the one small jug of oil. Yet, a miracle occurred when the menorah stayed lit for eight days, until new consecrated oil could be added.

At that time, Hanukkah was decreed a National Holiday for Jews the world over. It should not come as a surprise that Yeshua kept this Feast along with the Eight Feasts commanded in *Leviticus 23*. The first direct reference to Hanukkah is found in *John, Chapter 10:22-23*: "Then came Hanukkah in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Yeshua was walking around inside the Temple area, in Solomon's Colonnade." This important passage is the setting for Yeshua's public proclamation he was the Messiah. The second reference is found in *Luke, Chapter 19:37-40*, as Yeshua is being welcomed into Jerusalem, by the entire band of talmidim (disciples), singing and praising God, "Blessed is the King who is coming in the name of Adonai!" "Shalom in heaven!" "Glory in the highest places!" It was at this time, that some of the Pharisees in the crowd told him to reprimand his disciples, but he answered them, "I tell you that if they keep quiet, the stones will shout!" The question begs to be asked... "what stones will shout in a land filled with stones?"

Everyone in Israel who had been in the Temple knew the Hanukkah story of "the desecrated Altar Stones," that were piled in a corner of the Temple Court and understood the reference Yeshua was making.

May the Hanukkah story encourage everyone who believes in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; trust that the fight is never ours alone...it is God's and the victory is His.

Shalom to you.


*Dr. Garagorry is the Rabbi
of Aliyah Congregation that
meets on Saturdays at 10 a.m.
at the Mountain Community
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Jan 29 - Feb 22
2020

Winter Art Show



Fri, Jan 31 Opening Reception • 6:00 - 8:00

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