

and harming kids and pets, ruining our watershed and more. Safe ways to handle what we think of as pests include deterring wasps with fake nests or traps from our homes, but remember, they have important jobs to do in nature!

#### Eco services of wasps

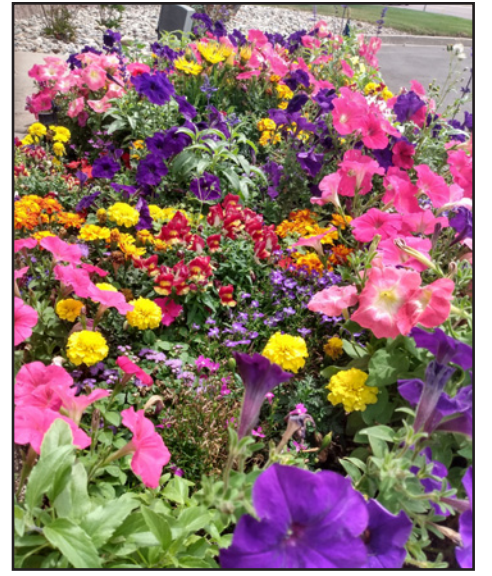
The U.S. Forest Service reports how wasps are helpful, stating that the true wasps have stingers that they use to capture insects or spiders for food for their larvae. We can keep them at a safe distance—200 feet all around the house—with nest decoys or brown paper bags. Hornets and paper wasps provide vital pest control services. Paper wasps feed their growing young

caterpillars and leaf beetle larvae, while hornets catch all manner of live insects for their developing larvae. Yellow jackets scavenge dead insects to feed their offspring, meaning they prevent the bodies from piling up—like a cleaning service.

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**Right:** Alyssum, marigold, spearmint or nasturtium, lavender, catmint, garlic or chives deter bugs, rabbits and deer. Castor oil penetrates the ground, giving ground vegetation an odor and taste

that disagree with voles, driving them to find food elsewhere. Mix 1 cup of castor oil with 2 tablespoons of liquid soap per gallon of water and spray it monthly over the lawn and soil and into their tunnels, and again after each big rain or snow. Or position castor oil-soaked cotton balls or other absorbent material (some add tabasco sauce and mint) around tunnels and the garden. For a dry lawn scatter, mix 6 ounces castor oil, three tablespoons each cayenne and garlic powders, and one gallon clay cat litter. For a spray, use a gallon of water, 6 ounces castor oil, three tablespoons each cayenne and garlic powders. *Photo courtesy of Tara Lloyd and Janet Sellers.*



#### Art Matters

## Zoom videos, art, and lighting



*By Janet Sellers*

Collectors these days may end up collecting a wide variety of artworks or they may enjoy consistency in their collecting. Beyond decoration and furnishings, art has a significant influence on us because it is around us and influences our environment indoors. Like music, art has an impact on us both emotionally and physiologically. As visual beings, we are constantly aware of what's around us. Luckily, we can change, balance, and improve our environment at will with art.

Art lovers and collectors often consider art as like a companion of sorts. We are influenced by the things around us, particularly visual expressive sources, especially art. People have a need for their home, office or wherever they are using the art to silently help evoke

a feeling or mood. We are keenly aware that what we see affects how we feel about our experiences. Lighting, color, and our surroundings impact us in subtle yet powerful ways.

#### Zoom meetings vs. portrait art lighting for impact

Being aware of the effect of composition and lighting is vital for success with videography, just as it is with art. If the lighting, color, and dynamics aren't properly understood and portrayed, viewers could simply lose interest and not connect to the visuals, both in artwork and in other visual communications such as movies and now with Zoom meetings.

In our small-screen video meetings, we are sitting in one place, and that visual experience takes on a specific set of engagements and responses.

We are basically captive at the screen, looking forward at the onscreen speaker or screen sharing views, and often feel rather exposed to the audience. Knowing how to look our best on screen helps our confidence, comfort level, and focus.

Understanding lighting and backgrounds for online video meeting experiences for both presenters and audiences is vital, just as it is for artworks. In classical paintings, the background is dark and the face well-lit, focusing our attention on the subject as brightly as possible. However, successful video meetings use light backgrounds, focusing small-screen attention to the speaker as subject. Human visual attention needs constant help for focusing attention if we want to get the desired results for a presentation, product

launch or other purpose. The speaker actually creates a talking portrait for the audience, just on an intimate, small screen.

Optimal for painting, photography and movies is the three-fourths view lighting, the eponymous Rembrandt lighting, adding pleasing dimension and depth just by the lighting, creating natural and compelling imagery. With live video meetings, however, our looks are optimized using one steady lamp, directly by the face, for even, steady lighting, as with a ring light—it also gives us the appearance of sparkly eyes.

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## Snapshots of Our Community

### Arlene's Beans helps fund armor



**Above:** On March 8, Arlene's Beans restaurant donated a \$1,000 check to help purchase rifle-rated body armor for Monument police officers. Body armor for police officers is an ongoing need because the armor expires. The funds will help Monument police officers get the body armor they need. From left are Marcy Deeds, Mayor Don Wilson, Arlene Padilla, Bobby Padilla, Chief Sean Hemingway, Commander John Hudson, and Sgt. Tim Johnson. For more information and to donate to this cause, contact Marcy Deeds, [www.Shield616.org](http://www.Shield616.org). *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

### Local authors sign books, Mar. 20



**Above:** Local authors held book signings at Covered Treasures Bookstore on March 20. Linda K. Bridges, left, signed her children's book *Hildie's Hat Party*. The story follows woodland creatures who must solve a friend's problem before they can all attend the party. Bridges writes and illustrates her books. Her next project will be *Olivia Can't Fly*, a story about an owlet who learns flying is easier than she thought. Mike Torreano is the author of numerous historical fiction and western books including his latest, *A Score to Settle*. In this book, Del Lawson rides the Goodnight-Loving cattle trail seeking revenge but finding romance, too. *Photo by Allison Robenstein.*

## Homestead Ranch Regional Park



**Left:** Homestead Ranch Regional Park features diverse topography ranging from rolling, open meadows to tree-covered bluffs running the length of the park. A natural spring-fed pond and creek in the central valley of the park attract deer, coyotes, foxes, waterfowl, and occasional pronghorns. Rattlesnake Butte, a prominent landmark in eastern El Paso County from which visitors can see the Front Range and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the distance, is located within the park. Location: 16444 Gollihar Road, Peyton. <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/parks-and-recreation/homestead-ranch-regional-park/> *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*