

January Library Events

Despite understaffing, Friday and Saturday hours extended

By Harriet Halbig

Entering the new year, the Monument Library will continue to be closed on Thursdays until further notice. This is due to understaffing. Hours on Friday and Saturday have been extended from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Patrons are welcome to take advantage of our resources and services, including access to computers, printing, faxing, and some programs.

To view a listing of programs, please see the website, ppld.org, select programs and the branch which you wish to view. Programs now include some toddler times and discussion groups for adults.

Staff and volunteers at the library are masked. It is recommended that unvaccinated patrons and young children who are not yet vaccinated also wear masks.

Please note that all Pikes Peak Library facilities

will be closed on Monday, Jan. 17 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Happy New Year to all and we hope to see you soon.

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Palmer Lake Historical Society, Dec. 12

88th Palmer Lake Yule Log Hunt

By Sharon Williams

As noted on a Palmer Lake website, "Palmer Lakes annual Yule Log Hunt is a Christmas card in motion." This fun holiday event took place on Dec. 12 with ceremonies launched by officials of the Yule Log Committee on the Village Green at Palmer Lake Town Hall. Master of Ceremonies Niall Byrne, Mistress of Ceremonies Patricia Atkins, and Committee President Kurt Voelker facilitated the big event.

The hunt and burning part of the yule log immediately following the hunt are beloved Christmas traditions today, with origins traced to ancient celebrations of the winter solstice.

The Lake Placid Club, Lake Placid, N.Y., is known as the birthplace of this tradition in the United States. They brought community and families together starting in 1911 until it was ended at the time of the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid in 1980.

In 1933, Palmer Lake initiated this local holiday ritual with a splinter from the Lake Placid yule log, and now it's the longest continual yule log event in the United States.

At the Village Green, middle-school trumpeter Nolan Byrne heralded the start of the hunt. The hunters, along with the attending festive crowd, moved to the forestry starting point. The 8-foot notched log was soon found by 20-year-old Andrew Leidenberger. In doing so, he is the fourth member of the Leidenberg-

er family to become an honored recipient of the red and green cape. As the finder, Leidenberger rode on the log as it was pulled with long ropes by participants along the half-mile distance back to Town Hall. There was much excitement and laughter as children got to take turns riding on the log with Leidenberger. During the final stretch, local bagpiper Isaiah Watkins led the way into the Village Green.

Normally following the hunt, part of the log is burned in the fireplace of the Palmer Lake Town Hall. Here, the hunters and townspeople gathered to ceremoniously toast the finder of the log and drink hot wassail, carol, and watch the yule log burn. This year, due to the restorative construction in process at Town Hall, an adapted version of this celebration was provided outside on the Village Green.

The Palmer Lake Historical Society monthly programs are presented at 7 p.m. every third Thursday of the month at the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Community Room, 166 Second St., Monument. The society will hold its annual business meeting on Jan. 20 at 7 p.m., including the election of officers for board members ending their terms of office. For information, call 719-559-0837 or click on www.palmerdividehistory.org.

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Above: Andrew Leidenberger, who found the yule log, rides on it back to Palmer Lake Town Hall. Children took turns riding behind him as they were pulled along the half-mile route for celebratory ceremonies on the Village Green. Photo and caption by Sharon Williams.

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Winter seed planting with milk jug as cloche

By Janet Sellers

January is traditionally a time of rest for the outdoor garden, but it's also a fine time to prep some seeds, especially if the fall season got away from you for in-ground planting.

Winter sowing with milk jugs

We can do some interesting things indoors in January to prepare for spring planting. Besides making garden plans and ordering seeds, we can actually start planting as well indoors or outdoors.

Winter planting works best for cold weather seeds, anything that needs stratification or the cold chill that prepares seeds for germination when things get warmer. This can work for any kind of seed, but of course it's optimized for the seeds that will be cold hardy because they germinate first. I once had a couple of lettuce plants that I let go to seed. But the plant got buried under snow and then I couldn't harvest the seeds. The following spring the seeds sprouted and

thrived even under intermittent spring snows that are actually protective against frost. When the weather warmed up, the lettuce grew well, and I had hundreds of lettuce plants albeit scattered throughout the garden bed.

The secret to winter sowing is protection and having a jug as a miniature greenhouse. Our coldest months tend to be January and February, with plenty of snow in March, so the really cold hardy plants like columbine and others are fine planted in January, while mid- and late-spring planting is needed for the more tender annuals and vegetables that do not need the stratification process.

This modern cloche is free

Clear and semi-transparent milk, soda, or water jugs and other plastic containers with holes drilled in the bottom for drainage work well for this mini-greenhouse/cloche. I scoured the Empress of Dirt website for instructions. The method requires cleaning the

container thoroughly and providing drainage holes in the bottom and venting holes in the top, which a milk jug has by removing the cap.

The containers are cut in half (leaving 4 to 6 inches of depth for the potting mix and water in the bottom part), and little slits are cut at the bottom of the top portion and the top of the bottom portion to allow the top to fit snugly over the bottom but lift easily for watering and checking the plants. An imperative is to label the jugs and seal with duct tape. The jugs can be placed in a sunny area outside. Avoid windy areas that could knock them over. It can be on the ground or a picnic table. Snow is welcome; monitor the jugs so they don't dry out.

Janet Sellers is an avid lazy—aka nature-focused—gardener, using Mother Nature's methods for the local high desert forest climate. Share your wisdom and send your local gardening tips to JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Artists have a vision they share with others

By Janet Sellers

"You're all artists. So I always say you're not looking at me with two eyes, you're looking at me with three eyes. I'm sure you're seeing something that I'm not seeing. That's why I'm collecting, because I'm really hungry for all the vision that you can give me besides the one that I can see with my own eyes."—Sveva D'Antonio, collector.

I was privileged to be with Italian art collector Sveva D'Antonio recently at a Zoom meeting. She told us about her passion for collecting art, and that she and her husband recently had inherited his father's art collection, which started them collecting art as well. Her biggest interest is to get to know artists and share

the art connection. She feels that artists have a "third eye" of visionary experience instead of the two eyes, or the usual take on life that most people have.

D'Antonio expounded on the idea that an artist shares their vision of creation and imagination through the materials the artist uses to share that vision or imagination, that the artist can reach levels of thought and bring that to the physicality of time and space by making the art, and especially by sharing it. She also was firm about working through galleries or a gallerist to purchase the art to support the chain of art economics. While she adores visiting personally with an artist whose work she's attracted to, she and her husband, as collectors, will not break that special

chain of connection of collector, gallery, and artists.

The D'Antonios share their collections with museums and other public venues. Many of the works in their collection do not fit into their homes in Italy, requiring specific venues to share the art publicly. Contemporary art collectors look to exchange ideas with contemporary artists as well as cherish the artworks personally and share publicly so that the artists' creations and ideas can expand the thinking of people. They are not in the billion-dollar art world, yet they manage their finances to develop the body of their collection as visionaries, which they find important for present-day understanding and for future generations to see what artists and thinkers of our time made

