

beyond our control shape our lives and our memories? And what can we really learn from the traumas of the past?

Demon Copperhead

By Barbara Kingsolver (Harper) \$32.50

Charles Dickens wrote *David Copperfield* from his experience as a survivor of institutional poverty and its damages to children. In transposing a Victorian novel to the contemporary American South, Kingsolver enlists Dickens' anger and compassion, and above all, his faith in the transformative powers of a good story. *Demon Copperhead* speaks for a new generation of lost boys, and all those born into beautiful, cursed places they can't imagine leaving behind.

Desert Star

By Michael Connelly (Little Brown) \$29

Detective Renée Ballard and Harry Bosch team up to hunt the brutal killer who is Bosch's "white whale"—a man responsible for the murder of an entire family. The first priority is to clear the decades-old unsolved rape and murder of a 16-year-old girl, a councilman's sister. When Ballard proves a serial predator has been at work in the city for years, the political pressure has never been higher. This may be Connelly's most gripping book yet.

And There Was Light: Abraham Lincoln and the American Struggle

By Jon Meacham (Random House) \$40

Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Jon Meacham chronicles

the life of Abraham Lincoln, charting how and why he confronted secession, threats to democracy, and the tragedy of slavery to expand the possibilities of America. This book tells of Lincoln's self-education, his loves, his bouts of depression, his political failures, his deepening faith, and his persistent conviction that slavery must end.

Dinosaurs

By Lydia Millet (W.W. Norton) \$26.95

Named one of the Most Anticipated Books of 2022 by Boston Globe, Literary Hub, and The Millions, this is the story of a man, Gil, who walks from New York to Arizona to recover from a failed love. His life begins to mesh with new neighbors. Millet explores the territory where the self ends and community begins—what one person can do in a world

beset by emergencies, and where does hope live?

Gilded Mountain

By Kate Manning (Scribner) \$28

Set in early 1900s Colorado, the unforgettable tale of a young woman, Sylvie Pelletier, who bravely faces the consequences of speaking out against injustice. Drawn from true stories of Colorado history, this is a tale of a bygone American West seized by robber barons and settled by immigrants; a story infused with longing for self-expression and equality, freedom, and adventure.

Until next month, happy reading.

The staff at Covered Treasures can be reached at books@ocn.me.

November Library Events

Schedule changes for November

By Harriet Halbig

Although the weekly math tutoring program has been suspended this semester, the library still maintains a list of local tutors in a variety of subjects for the use of patrons. Please ask for a copy at the information desk.

The Palmer Lake Library will be closed November 7 to 12 for renovations. The book drop will not be monitored

during this period and holds will not be delivered. We look forward to welcoming you back to an improved library with additional equipment and new carpeting.

Please note that all Pikes Peak Library facilities will be closed on Thanksgiving, November 24, and will reopen the following day.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me

Palmer Lake Historical Society, Oct. 20

The history of the Alexander Film and Aircraft Company

By Natalie Barszcz

The Palmer Lake Historical Society met on Oct. 20 to hear a presentation from Steve Antonuccio, author of *No Such Thing as a Typical Librarian*, a nonfiction book based on the history of the Alexander Film and Aircraft Company and his experiences working at the Carnegie Library in Old Colorado City, Colorado Springs.

Antonuccio told the story of how two brothers from Keokuk, Iowa, Don Miller Alexander, a bright introvert, and Julian Don Alexander, with great managerial skills and a kind heart, became the largest producers of advertising playlets for movie theaters. The idea began when as boys they discovered a magic lantern projector in their grandfather's attic. The brothers seized the opportunity to launch their first business from their grandfather's hardware store and began charging \$5 per slide for local businesses to advertise products via projection.

After Don graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering in Spokane, Wash., the brothers established The Alexander Electric Company in 1919 in Spokane, making advertising playlets for the ever-growing number of movie theaters that had edged out opera houses nationwide. Although very successful reaching theater owners with 100 salesmen, there was no overnight package system or long-distance telephones, and distributing the playlets and securing advertisements was cumbersome, so the factory moved centrally to Englewood, Colo.

Julian Alexander had become the 91st licensed pilot in the U.S. and decided to teach his salesmen to fly the advertising playlets to the thousands of movie theaters springing up around the nation. Don designed and built the "Eaglerock" bi-plane, and the company manufactured 893 until its ceased production in 1931. It was a "win-win" for the brothers, the advertisers, and theater owners. The concept of advertising in movie theaters began to take off, long before talk radio and television began, and before long the brothers were millionaires.

Tragically, a spark in the paint department of the bi-plane factory caused an explosion that killed 11 people, when a shop floor door designed to swing inward prevented employees from escaping the fire. The brothers were found guilty of criminal manslaughter and in violation of the Colorado Facilities Act, fined \$1,000 (about \$16,000 today) each, and they received a suspended 90-day probation.

A few days after losing the wrongful death lawsuit in 1927, the brothers moved south in 75 moving trucks to 260 acres of free land on North Nevada Avenue, and The Alexander Film and Aircraft Company was established in Colorado Springs. In 1929, the company also developed the Bullet, a closed cockpit plane capable of speeds up to 130 mph. Although well received with 50 initial orders, the stock market crash and the start of the Great Depression halted production, and only 12 of the advanced aircraft were ever produced.

As the largest producer of commercials in the world in its heyday, the company had 600 employees and 150 field representatives, shipping 150,000 feet of film daily both domestically and internationally. In the 1950s the company created the concept of television commercials using screen actors and establishing a large animation department, with many advertisements and films promoting the beauty of the Pikes Peak region.

Julian Alexander, who died in 1953, thought he had failed by not moving the company into modern aircraft production in support of World War II. The company finally closed its doors in 1974 after being sold numerous times due to financial difficulties. The Carnegie Library in Colorado Springs houses a special collection of the movies shot in the Pikes Peak region. Antonuccio's book is available to purchase at www.amazon.com.



Above: Pictured from left are Peter Blaney and Steve Antonuccio holding a copy of Antonuccio's book *No Such Thing as a Typical Librarian* at the Palmer Lake Historical Society monthly program on Oct. 20. Photo by Su Osgersby Ketchmark.

The Palmer Lake Historical Society usually meets on the third Thursday of every month. The next event at Palmer Lake Town Hall is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 17. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for a presentation at 7 p.m. by Jim Sawatzki on Gen. William Palmer. For additional details, visit www.palmerdividehistory.org.

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

Right: Dawn Collins, Palmer Lake town administrator, speaks to guests in the historic Palmer Lake Town Hall before the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) monthly program on Oct. 20. The Town of Palmer Lake received the Civic Restoration award of excellence from the



Historic Preservation Alliance of Colorado Springs for preserving the historic Town Hall in 2022. PLHS members and the town contributed to and completed some of the restoration, along with TN Parker Construction LLC. Peter Blaney (see photo at the left) of The Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum and PLHS audio visual expert initiated the application for the award. Collins attended the Historic Preservation Alliance Gala and Awards Ceremony held at the Colorado Springs Auditorium on Oct. 12 with PLHS Vice President Doris Baker and Tom Baker (former president of the PLHS). Caption by Natalie Barszcz. Photo by Su Osgersby Ketchmark

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Nature, mood, and electro culture

By Janet Sellers

Digging down to lift your spirits

Can playing in the dirt be a mood booster for kids as well as adults? Actually, soil can make us very happy. Gardening is also called horticultural therapy. The smell of microbacterium vaccae, a microorganism found in soil compost and leaf mold, light up neurotransmitters that release serotonin, a mood-lifting hormone.

Digging deeper, we find that gardening has a plethora of health benefits: health outcomes including reductions in depression, anxiety, and body mass index, as well as increases in life satisfaction, quality of life, and sense of community. The Atlantic magazine has reported, "M. vaccae, a living creature that resides in your backyard compost pile, acts like a mind-altering drug once it enters the human body, functioning like antidepressant pills to boost your mood."

Soil bacteria was found to work similarly to antidepressants, from a study published in the journal Neuroscience. It has been shown to boost the levels of serotonin and norepinephrine circulating in the systems of both humans and mice. Those are scientific studies. But we can do our own research and dig around in the garden soil. The safest is natural, organic compost soil uncontaminated with chemicals or man-made pharma—nature makes her own with the conditions we help create.

Different areas have different soils, of course. Chefs call it "terroir" and it gives our wine, sourdough bread, cheeses, and veggies the local flavors we love. It even affects chocolate!

Indoor plants have a similar effect on our health and the added benefits of actually absorbing toxins from indoor air. Working with plants—indoors or outdoors—helps lower blood pressure and heart rate simply by playing with the soil and being around them.

Electro culture: batteries and larger yields

Earth batteries and electro culture sound new, but they actually date back a while. Alexander Bain found this when

looking for cheap and available power for telegraph lines. Earth batteries, popular with off-grid public demand, produce a charge of 1-5 volts, and cost \$10 to \$500 depending on materials for how much energy you want to derive from them. A small earth battery can be made from an ice cube tray and a few other materials.

Ancient electro culture used in 1770 France generated larger plants and garden yields via Earth's atmospheric energy, aka Chi, life force, and Aether. As recently as the 1940s, Austrian naturist Victor Schauburger reported copper/brass/bronze tools would not impact the magnetism of the soil like those made of iron. Iron tools decreased the magnetism of the soil, made the farmers work harder, and caused drought-like conditions, but copper/brass/bronze tools did not alter the magnetism of the soil, leading to high quality soil, and required less work when used.

Janet Sellers is a writer, speaker, artist, and avid lazy gardener, looking to Mother Nature for optimal answers on soil, plants, and health. Contact her: JanetSellers@ocn.me.



Above: Students (from left, Lily Carter, Aalia Renteria, Grace Weitzel, Connick Goodwin, Kaylei Fields, Henry Hedstrand, and Hayden Fields) from Palmer Ridge High School and Lewis-Palmer High School recently helped with Monument Community Garden. Seeing their smiles, all seemed happy with just a few hours of digging around. Photo by Janet Sellers