

Palmer Lake Historical Society, Feb. 16

Awake the Lake Committee describes mission

By Marlene Brown

On Feb. 16, the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) meeting led by Vice President Diane Kokes heard from the Awake the Lake Committee. Members of the committee explained the mission of Awake the Lake is to salvage, restore, and recreate the natural majesty of the namesake of the town. Palmer Lake is the only natural lake along the Front Range. The Town of Palmer Lake was founded in 1871 by Gen. William Jackson Palmer and incorporated in 1889.

Committee member Jeannine Engle, former owner of the Rock House, gave a photographic history of the tiny town of Palmer Lake from 1820 when the Columbine, the state flower, was discovered along with Elephant Rock. Though Elephant Rock is privately owned, it can be seen from Highway 105 and the Santa Fe Trail that runs from Palmer Lake to Monument. In 1871, a telegraph office was set up in Palmer Lake and Hackett's Ditch was dug from Summit Lake to Palmer Lake to fill the lake because the railroad drained most of the water to run steam engines across the state. The Rockland Hotel was built in 1889, and in 1890 the first Chautauqua was held. Many people came by railroad for the event. It was \$2.25 round trip from Denver.

Jason Phillips, a graduate of School District 38, began the efforts to "Save the Lake" in the

'90s. Though he was only 10 years old, he was able to raise over \$10,000 to donate to the town to help refill the lake.

Linda Vier of Divide GeoAnalytics LLC monitors the six wells and reports to the town. She has tracked precipitation and evaporation of the lake since June 2017 and watches for significant water dissipation due to drought and other natural causes.

Jeff Hulsmann, owner of O'Malley's Steak Pub, reported that the railroad was still using steam engines up until 1950s. The lake had been drained and refilled several times. Even though Palmer Lake is a natural spring-fed lake, the use of the water for train engines caused the lake to be emptied. Water was brought from the reservoirs above the town in an effort to refill the lake.

In 2014, Chris Cummins, volunteer water attorney, worked to fight the railroad and filed for the water rights for the town. In 2016, the change of water rights was finally obtained. Though the railroad had tried to increase the size of the lake's footprint, the Awake the Lake organization decreased the size of the lake back to its natural state.

Several fundraisers include the Fourth of July Festival and .5k race. With over 1,000 runners, the 2022 .5k race raised \$37,000 in day. One of the group's accomplishments is the pedestrian



Above: The Awake the Lake Committee, from left: Jason Phillips, Jeannine Engle, Jeff Hulsmann, and Linda Vier. Photo by Marlene Brown.

bridge that crosses the tracks from the parking areas on the west side of the lake. Being able to access the lake without crossing the railroad tracks has been a true community effort. For more information and to make donations, go to awakepalmerlake.org

The next meeting of PLHS will be at the Palmer Lake Town Hall on the third Thursday of the month, March 16, 7 p.m., doors open at 6:30 pm. For more information, go to palmerdividehistory.org.

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High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Colorado in March is full of nature's surprises

By Janet Sellers

Every spring, I write about the dandy dandelion and its health benefits to eat as well as the benefits to our local soils and our planet. After a long winter of letting our landscapes as nature intended for our ecology to "nest in place" the dandelion is one of the first greens and flowers we see in March. The plant is a real lifesaver. It supports our pollinators as one of the first available plants.

Edible root to flower, the dandelion has traditionally been sought after as a culinary and important landscape plant. Not for exotic beauty, although it has been an important culinary and medicinal plant since ancient times in Europe. Dandelions were brought to North America (known as Turtle Island to indigenous peoples) by the European immigrants in the 1600s. They wanted to make sure they had an available food

and medicine source when they reached the New World.

Our hummingbird scouts arrive in March March marks the arrival of the hummingbird scouts to Colorado. Their migration begins from their warm winter homes in Central and South America. Nesting grounds in Colorado range from our local area for the broadtail hummingbird to Canada and Alaska for the rufous hummingbird. We see four kinds of hummingbirds in Colorado along our Central Flyway here in our Front Range area: broadtail, rufous, calliope, and black-chinned. Each of these passes through our area onto their nesting areas in higher altitudes.

Daylight saving time will start March 12. That means we'll have to adjust our clocks and ourselves to the changes it brings. Originally devised to help ranchers, farmers, and crops, it is

currently a support for golfers in golf courses. Michael Downing, author of *Spring Forward: The Annual Madness of Daylight Saving Time* purports that it is a money maker for golf courses and shopping malls but a disruptor for school children and most people, as they must go to school and work in the dark. While the clock does not affect our growing plants related to sunlight, the issue is more complex than that for the food industry and human life. According to some studies, there are higher incidences of a variety of health and heart issues due to circadian rhythm disruption.

Janet Sellers is a writer, artist, and speaker and enjoys sharing about the forests, mountains, and landscapes of Colorado. She offers *Shin Rin Yoku* meditative walks throughout the year. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Artists know how to share the visible and the invisible

By Janet Sellers

"I don't know why people are so keen to put the details of their private life in public; they forget that invisibility is a superpower."—Banksy
Our imaginations are invisible but powerful. We take in what we see and hear—and use all our senses—to make sense of our world and who we are. In art, the creators can visibly show or merely imply ideas to the viewer. That's the fun of it. That's the excitement of looking at art in person: The viewer has a personal connection with the art in their flow of the moment.

In weekly art roundtable discussions, I hear from art curators and art collectors from all over the world. They are enthusiastic about enjoying art personally and sharing their collections in novel ways. Art collectors locally and globally are acknowledging their profound interest in collecting paintings these days more than ever, and enjoying the art for themselves. No longer are collectors amassing mere assets of popularity. They are taking in artworks that are meaningful to them with a more personal approach to their

taste.

The aforementioned Banksy is a unique artist, with no curators but many interested collectors. It is hard to collect the works because they exist outdoors on buildings and structures to reach viewers. And publicly, no one knows who Banksy is.

Banksy makes graffiti creations that are so temporary that the very wall the artwork is put on has to be removed to keep and sell the artwork. Banksy's work is recognizable and highly critical of the wrongs of our world. Indeed, both Banksy and the artwork are hard to get hold of. Banksy is considered to be worth—by speculation of London's Dawson auction house—over \$60 million.

We are inundated with visual stimuli on our screens and phones to the point it is overwhelming. Seeing and appreciating visual art in person is the most enjoyable way to experience it. We can view art at our own tempo and move on or walk back to see artworks. Art lovers as collectors and as artists have always known this and



Above: Bella Art and Frame Gallery owners Maggie Williamson, left, and Ethan Ahlstrom, right, show off their new gallery space. They kept the tradition of their guest artist wall and individualized exhibit spaces, with over 40 artists represented, and have pedestals for freestanding sculptures. The shop is now at No. 11 Front Street Square, 251 Front St., Monument. Photo by Janet Sellers.

have explored ideas to their outer limits. We are moving back from over-screened life to personal