

practical yet transformative seven-day plan of science-based techniques that can help you harness stress through more positive challenge and purpose. Dr. Epel shows us how we can “stress better” by training our minds and bodies to shift toward a flexible, beneficial stress response that can actually enhance health. You will develop a more robust mindset, build the resources you need to turn stress into strength, and fill your days with more joy, connection, and ease.

Outlive: The Science and Art of Longevity  
By Peter Attia (Harmony) \$32

In this operating manual for longevity, Dr. Peter Attia draws on the latest science to deliver innovative nutritional interventions, techniques for optimizing exercise and sleep, and tools for addressing emotional and mental health. Dr. Attia's aim is less to tell you what to do and more to help you learn how to think about long-term health, to create the best plan for you as an individual.

Aging and longevity are far more malleable than we think; our fate is not set in stone. With the right roadmap, you can plot a different path for your life, one that lets you outlive your genes to make each decade better than the one before.

Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life  
By Dacher Keltner (Penguin Press) \$28

In Awe, Dacher Keltner presents a radical investigation and deeply personal inquiry into this elusive emotion. Revealing new research into how awe transforms our brains and bodies, alongside an examination of awe across history, culture, and within his own life during a period of grief, Keltner shows us how cultivating awe in our everyday life leads us to appreciate what is most humane in our human nature. And during a moment in which our world feels more divided than ever before, and more imperiled by crises of different kinds, we are greatly in need of awe.

Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones

By James Clear (Avery Publishing Group) \$27  
James Clear draws on the most proven ideas from biology, psychology, and neuroscience to create an easy-to-understand guide for making good habits inevitable and bad habits impossible. Along the way, readers will be inspired and entertained with true stories from Olympic gold medalists, award-winning artists, business leaders, life-saving physicians, and star comedians who have used the science of small habits to master their craft and vault to the top of their field.

Happy New Year! Until next month, happy reading.

The staff at Covered Treasures can be reached at [books@ocn.me](mailto:books@ocn.me).

### January Library Events

## 2024 Adult Reading Program announced; Toddler Time resumes

By Harriet Halbig

The 2024 Pikes Peak Library District Adult Reading Program will begin on Feb. 1 and last until March 31. More information will be in the next issue of OCN.

Monument Library will begin offering Toddler Time again in January. Sessions will be at 9:30 and 10 on Wednesday mornings, followed by Stay and Play.

Story Time on Tuesdays in Monument will not resume, but Family Story Time will continue

at Palmer Lake on Fridays from 10:30 to 11:15.

There are a few changes on a district-wide basis. Use of The Hall adjacent to Penrose Library will be discontinued beginning May 1, 2024. A few reservations are still available before that date. Staffing posed a problem. The Special Collections department is now called Regional History and Genealogy. The department offers an extensive collection of maps, periodicals, government publications and pamphlets, and family history resources back to Colonial times.

Materials must be used on site. Hours for the department are 10 to 5 Tuesday through Saturday. Database resources will also change in 2024 as the district reviewed usage and expense. For details, please see the district website, [ppld.org](http://ppld.org).

Happy New Year from the library, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

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### Palmer Lake Historical Society, Dec. 17

## 90th Annual Yule Log Hunt

By Marlene Brown

As part of Christmas activities, the Town of Palmer Lake, with the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) helping with the ceremonies, held the 90th Annual Yule Log Hunt on Dec. 17 at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. The event is known to be the longest-running yule log ceremony in the United States.

The yule log celebration was brought to Palmer Lake by Lucretia Vaile and Miss Evalena in 1933. Fifty people wearing red and green capes went on the hunt for the hidden log. The first yule log was found by C.R. Hays. He then rode the log back to town pulled by the other hunters. They were greeted by 200 cheering residents and visitors. The log was cut in half, half of the log was burned, and the other half was saved for the next year.

This year's yule log was found by Josephine Maslak of Erie, Colo. The log was then cut in half with a hand saw. Half of the log was burned in the fireplace at the Town Hall. According to tradition, Christmas songs are sung by everyone in

the Town Hall, then the first drink of the wassail, a traditional warm drink of apple cider and spices, is served to the finder of the log, and all the guests are then welcome to partake in a cup of wassail.

The Town of Palmer Lake supports the Yule Log Hunt and has proclaimed the second Sunday before Christmas to be known as Yule Log Sunday. Many thanks to Palmer Lake Yule Log Association for continuing the traditions of Yule Log Hunt. See its Facebook page—Palmer Lake Yule Log—for more information.

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The next event for the PLHS will be at 6 to 8:30 p.m. Jan. 18 (doors open at 5:30 p.m.). The Annual Potluck Supper and Membership Meeting will be held at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. A brief business meeting will include a recap of 2023 and the election of 2024 officers. The meeting is open to the public. For more information, go to [palmerdividehistory.org](http://palmerdividehistory.org).

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**Above:** Pictured at the 90th Annual Yule Log Ceremony are Mistress of Ceremonies Patricia Atkins, Master of Ceremonies Niall Byrne, and euphonium and Call to Hunt player Nolan Byrne. Photo by Mike Cimino.

### High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

## The wonderful gifts of the pine tree

By Janet Sellers

We live in a high desert pine forest climate. Our soil and environment have been optimized for millions of years for the native plants that include our pine trees. Besides lumber, the pine forests offer much to us that we may not know, but the Native Americans who lived here for thousands of years have a deep understanding of the forest benefits to our health and land stewardship.

From root to crown, our local ponderosa pine tree holds much benefit for nature in its up to 800 years of forest ecology life—and for us. Our area has been an important conservation place, too. In an article this year about the origins of the nearby Monument Nursery (on Mount Herman Road), Eric Swab of the TrailsandOpenSpaces.org (TOSC) shared some historic facts about our beloved local forests, a huge factor for why we all live here in the Tri-Lakes region.

“By the mid-19th century, the U.S. government owned much of the forested land in the West. Over the years these forests had been devastated by wildfires, and by logging for the railroads, mining and the building industries. The government was beginning to realize that something needed to be done to protect this resource, this ‘green gold,’ that was so important

to the growth of the country.” The forests had to be replenished, and the Monument Nursery became the place where millions of seedlings got their start to protect the forests and the land of the mountain West.

Pine forests have natural oils released by the trees for many reasons, particularly to protect the health of the trees. A pine tree releases its scent messages to other trees about pathogens and pests. The pine scent comes from chemical compounds called terpenes. If the bark of the tree is damaged, the tree can release protective resin that deters pests and fungal growth. The pine scent also deters insects such as mosquitos.

One of the surprising facts for newcomers to our area about our pines is regarding pine needles. They make excellent mulch for landscaping (as evidenced by the forests themselves) and provide some health benefits to people and animals by breathing the pine scented air. Some species of pine, such as the white pine, are used in beneficial teas, but needles of the ponderosa are not used for this.

Pine needles decompose very slowly so they don't need replacing as often as other mulches. However, eventually needles will break down and enrich garden soil. By the time the needles

fall from the tree, they have lost a lot of their acid composition, and as the soil microbes digest them, they become close to neutral. They moderate soil temperature in summer and prevent winter soils from freezing and heaving roots from the ground.

In fire-prone areas, care must be taken in using any natural mulch. Pine needles hold in ground moisture, knit themselves together to stay put even on sloped areas, and allow snow and rain to sift through them to nurture the soil. The natural soil in our area is specific to support the native plants of pine forests, yet pine needle mulch topping does not bother food or flower garden plants, since these must be planted into appropriately amended soil. Then pine mulch does its job to keep in soil moisture while keeping out weeds.

There are many books and U.S. Forest Service pamphlets as well as online details if one has an interest in learning more about the benefits of pine trees and pine needle mulch.

Janet Sellers is an avid “lazy gardener” letting Mother Nature lead the way for natural growing wisdom. Reach her at [JanetSellers@OCN.me](mailto:JanetSellers@OCN.me).

### Art Matters

## Why people should live with art

By Janet Sellers

An artist may or may not show their work publicly. Fortunately, most artists will show and sell their creations. It is an act of sharing, and of course a strategy for attracting attention to one's

creative prowess.

### Living with art gets you beyond everyday activity.

“It's a matter of pure enjoyment, but also, living with art gives people a sensitivity, absolutely,

and more feeling, more understanding,” Peter Selz, founding director of the Berkeley Art Museum, said in a recent interview for the library about the University of California at Berkeley art lending program. “Living with art gets you be-

