

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 19.

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community are the responsibility of the letter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.

Thank you

From those of us who walk around Monument for exercise, to shop, etc., thank you to the churches, businesses, and individuals who clear their sidewalks after snow events. It is a safety issue and keeps us from

having to walk in the streets. A special thanks to St. Peter Catholic Church for completely clearing the sidewalks around its buildings and property immediately after snow events. It is very much appreciated. Joyce Lash

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Celebrating the classics in 2024

By the staff at Covered Treasures

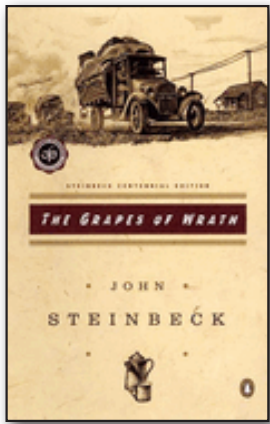
"A classic is a book that has never finished what it has to say."—Italo Calvino

Classics are available for readers of all ages and stand the test of time. They are well worth revisiting (or reading for the first time) as we all move forward into 2024.

The Grapes of Wrath

By John Steinbeck (Penguin Classics) \$18

First published in 1939, Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family forced to travel west to the promised land of California. A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man's fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman's stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America.



The Secret Garden

By Frances Hodgson Burnett (Harper Collins) \$10

This gorgeous paperback includes Tasha Tudor's iconic illustrations, an extended author biography, activities, and more, making it the perfect collector's edition or a wonderful gift for young readers. When orphaned Mary Lennox comes to live at her uncle's

great house on the Yorkshire Moors, she finds it full of secrets. The gardens surrounding the large property are Mary's only escape. Then, Mary discovers a secret garden, surrounded by walls and locked with a missing key. With the help of two unexpected companions, Mary discovers a way in—and becomes determined to bring the garden back to life.

Stuart Little

By E.B. White (Harper Collins) \$7

Stuart Little is no ordinary mouse. Born to a family of humans, he lives in New York City with his parents, his older brother George, and Snowbell the cat. Though he's shy and thoughtful, he's also a true lover of adventure. Stuart's greatest adventure comes when his best friend, a beautiful little bird named Margalo, disappears from her nest. Stuart is determined to track her down and ventures away from home for the very first time in his life. He finds adventure aplenty. But will he find his friend? Whether you curl up with your young reader to share this book or hand it off for independent reading, you are helping to create what are likely to be all-time favorite reading memories.

West with the Night (A Memoir)

By Beryl Markham (North Point Press) \$17

If the first responsibility of a memoirist is to lead a life worth writing about, Markham succeeded beyond all measure. Born Beryl Clutterbuck in the middle of England, she and her father moved to Kenya when she was a girl, and she grew up with a zebra for a pet; horses for friends; baboons, lions, and gazelles for neighbors. She made money by scouting elephants from a tiny plane. And she would spend most of the rest of her life in East Africa as an adventurer, a race-

horse trainer, and an aviatrix—she became the first person to fly nonstop from Europe to America, the first woman to fly solo east to west across the Atlantic.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

By Betty Smith (Harper Perennial Classics) \$19

From the moment she entered the world, Francie Nolan needed to be made of stern stuff, for growing up in the Williamsburg slums of Brooklyn, New York demanded fortitude, precocity, and strength of spirit. By turns overwhelming, heartbreaking, and uplifting, the Nolans' daily experiences are raw with honesty and tenderly threaded with family connectedness. Smith has created a work of literary art that brilliantly captures a unique time and place as well as deeply resonant moments of universal experience.

A Wrinkle in Time

By Madeleine L'Engle (Square Fish) \$9

Late one night, three otherworldly creatures appear and sweep Meg Murry, her brother Charles Wallace, and their friend Calvin O'Keefe away on a mission to save Mr. Murray, who has gone missing while doing top-secret work for the government. They travel via tesseract—a wrinkle that transports one across space and time—to where Mr. Murray is being held captive. There they discover a dark force that threatens not only Mr. Murray but the safety of the whole universe. A Wrinkle in Time is the first book in Madeleine L'Engle's Time Quintet.

Until next month, happy reading.

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

February Library Events

Adult Reading Program begins; tax assistance available

By Harriet Halbig

The Monument Library's Winter Adult Reading Program began on Feb. 1 and will continue through March 31. Enroll online at ppld.org or at your local library and log reading and other activities for 30 days to win prizes. Attendance at selected library programs also count as activities. Please see the website for details.

Free assistance in tax preparation is available for those who earned less than \$60,000 in 2023. Appointments for help are available beginning in February. Locations include Library 21c and East at the northern end of Colorado Springs.

Vitalant Blood Donation (formerly Blood Systems) will administer a blood drive on Feb. 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please contact Jean Carrier at the library

at 719-488-2370 to register.

The Tween Dungeons and Dragons club will meet from 4 to 5:30 on March 1. This club welcomes those ages 9 to 12.

Harriet Halbig can be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Palmer Lake Historical Society, Jan. 18

Annual Potluck and Membership Meeting

By Marlene Brown

On Jan. 18, the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) held its Annual Potluck and Membership Meeting at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. Started in 1956, the PLHS, a 501C3 nonprofit, is in its 67th year. The mission of the PLHS is to preserve, protect, promote, and provide access to historical data, artifacts, and other items of significance relating to the Palmer Divide area and make resources available to the public primarily through the Lucretia Vaile Museum and annual programming. See palmerdividehistory.org for events.

The PLHS operates the museum, located at 66 S. Valley Rd., Palmer Lake. The PLHS board and members, including museum director, staff, and docents are all volunteers. The museum houses historical exhibits dedicated to the towns of Palmer Lake and Monument, Black Forest, the U.S. Air Force Academy, and the Palmer Divide area. The staff works with the Town of Palmer Lake to facilitate events such as the annual Father's Day Ice Cream Social every June and the Yule Log Hunt in December. The museum is open on Wednesdays 1-4 p.m. and Saturdays 10-2 p.m., with private tours upon request.

After the potluck dinner, Diane Kokes, 2023 vice president and acting president, presented a recap of the past year. Each month was dedicated to a presentation of historical significance such as the Awake the Lake Committee presentation on the history of Palmer Lake and a presentation by past President Jim Sawatzki on the Life and Times of Gen. William Jackson Palmer, founder of Palmer Lake in 1871.

Kokes then introduced John Spidell of the Spidell Foundation as the emcee for the board election. The past board for 2023 had agreed to serve another term for 2024. Kokes; Doug Lang, treasurer; and Patricia Atkins, secretary, were nominated. Spidell asked for any other nominations and as there were none, all three were nominated to continue and, by a show of hands, voted in unanimously to return for another term.

Jeannine Engle, who had agreed but was unable to attend, was nominated for the position of president. Engle has served as a director and docent for PLHS and the museum. The membership voted unanimously for Engle to become the 2024 president.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of the month. The next meeting will be on Feb. 15, 7-8

p.m.; doors open at 6:30 pm. The presentation will be Union Printer's Home: Past, Present and Future. For more information about future presentations and membership, go to palmerdividehistory.org.

Marlene Brown can be reached by email at marlenebrown@ocn.me.



Above: Returning to serve for another year on the Palmer Lake Historical Society board are, in rear, Kathy Lombardi, left, and Barb Morehead. In front, from left, are Patricia Atkins, Wayne Russert, Heather Kruger, Doug Lang, and Diane Kokes. Incoming President Jeanine Engle is not pictured. Photo by Marlene Brown.

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Colorado trades in grass for cash

By Janet Sellers

Snow adds nitrogen to our soil.

Nitrogen is abundant in the air, but it must be fixed in some way to be available to our soil. Both rain and snow can accomplish this. Called the poor man's fertilizer, it really is Mother Nature at work. We don't need additives when we understand how nature works. Snow brings a fair amount of nitrogen and sulfur, both important nutrients for soil. In our area, snow provides much-needed moisture that is slowly released into our soil. Unlike summer rains that can cause runoff of water and soil, snow soaks into and supports the land.

Are lawns a sign of prestige or disregard?

The American obsession with lawns stems from the idea that a person has the wealth or means to maintain it to perfection. Scientific American reports that lawns are indicative of success as socio-economic indicators. Even though the landscape of the New World settlers had already been greatly altered by Na-

tive Americans for the survival purposes of optimal hunting and fishing, the colonists' grazing in place of farm animals actually decimated the native grasses to the point of livestock starvation.

In turn, the colonists had grass and clover seeds imported. Along with these, weed seeds including dandelions and plantain also showed up and spread across America. The green carpet lawn was a curiosity in England and France until the Palace of Versailles' landscape became an elite influence. Lawns soon caught on in Europe, and the New World wealthy raced to copy this landscape fashion. We can't eat lawn turf, but curiously, both dandelion and plantain are remarkable foodstuffs capable of supporting people lifelong.

Cash for grass

We live in a high desert climate where our pine forests have learned to thrive, grow and conserve water resources. Due to water and resource needs, Colorado is now headed from turf lawns to restorative gardens

with a state funded turf replacement program aimed at nonessential turf to reduce outdoor watering. The program seeks to convert grass to more water-efficient landscaping.

The Colorado Water Conservation Board has been providing funds to eligible entities (local governments, water districts, nonprofits and others) in grants to replace turf with low water landscaping as a key tool for water conservation. Colorado approved a \$2 million bill to support turf replacement in 2022 and looks to increase that amount to \$5 million this year.

Non-native grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass (native to Europe, Asia, and Africa) guzzle nearly half of all the water in Colorado cities. 2023 saw Colorado approve \$92 million in funding for water conservation that included a variety of irrigation and planning projects. Streams and wetlands that are affected by road building and construction also have legislative protections in the works at the state level.