

each other because they're part of a special treatment center, a hyperbaric chamber that may cure a range of conditions from infertility to autism. But when the chamber explodes, and two people die, it's clear the explosion wasn't an accident. A showdown unfolds among characters keeping secrets and hiding betrayals.

Two Dead Wives

By Adele Parks (Mira Books) \$19

A woman with a shocking secret is missing, presumed dead. And her two husbands are suspects in her murder.

der. Until a body is found, this scandalous and sad case remains wide open. Meanwhile, Stacie Jones lives a quiet life in a small village, nursed by her father as she recovers from illness and shielded from any news of the outside world. Their reclusive life is about to be shattered.

Mastering the Art of French Murder (An American in Paris Mystery)

By Colleen Cambridge (Kensington Publishing Corporation) \$18

Tabitha Knight has recently arrived in Paris for an ex-

tended stay with her French grandfather. Her neighbor and friend is Julia Child. Everything goes wrong when a dead body is found in the cellar of Julia's building. The murder weapon is a knife from Julia's kitchen and there is a note in the pocket of the dead woman that is in Tabitha's handwriting.

Until next month, happy reading.

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

March Library Events

Adult Reading Program continues; tax preparation aid available

By Harriet Halbig

The Winter Adult Reading Program continues through March 31. Read for at least 30 minutes a day or participate in a list of library programs for a total of 30 days and receive a Winter Adult Reading Program mug and a certificate for a free piece of chocolate from Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory. The grand prize this year is a gift card from the Colorado Springs Downtown Partnership, including over 170 shops and restaurants.

To register, go to your local library or register on-

line at ppld.org. The program began on Feb. 1, so any reading since then will be counted.

Free tax preparation aid is available to those who earned less than \$60,000 in 2023. The closest location for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is at the East Library (5550 Union Blvd.) on Fridays from 2 to 5. For an appointment, call 211 or 719-955-0742. Also available is tax aid from the AARP Foundation, especially for those over 60 years old and unable to afford paying for the service. This service is available at Library 21c (1175 Chapel Hills Dr.). For an

appointment, call 719-235-6757.

On Saturday, March 16 from 11 to noon come to the Monument Library to hear wildlife biologist Joe LeFleur speak about Birds of the Pikes Peak Region. LeFleur will talk about raptors, hawks, and owls of the region. Following the presentation, copies of LeFleur's books (<https://betterbirdwatching.com>) will be available for purchase. This program was rescheduled from February when the library was closed due to snow.

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

Palmer Lake Historical Society, Feb. 15

Union Printers Home: past, present, and future

By Marlene Brown

The monthly meeting of The Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) held at the Palmer Lake Townhall on Feb. 15 was a PowerPoint presentation by Ellie Hinkle, director of History and Archives for the Union Printers Home (UPH). Located in Colorado Springs on Union Boulevard near Memorial Park, it has been dubbed "The Castle on the Hill." The building was dedicated in 1892. (See photo postcard circa. 1940s.)

The building was built as a place for rest, recovery, and retirement for the workers of the International Typographical Union (ITU). Many union printers suffered from "printers' lung" caused by the fumes of lead-based ink and confining working conditions. The original building has been added onto and other buildings were built on the grounds. What started as The Castle on 25 acres grew to over 20 buildings on 300 acres, including a dairy farm and vegetable gardens, and UPH was self-sustaining for many decades. UPH housed up to 400 residents, some were medical patients and other aged union printers from all over the U.S. and the world. Over the years with a declining population, it opened to non-union printer residents and was sold to a private nursing home group. The facility was closed in 2020. See unionprintershome.com/history.

In 2021, a group of local investors bought UPH, looking to preserve the legacy of The Castle. What they found were buildings full of historical artifacts



Above: 1940s postcard picturing the Union Printers Home. Courtesy UPH

that needed to be stored and preserved. Much of Hinkle's job, up to the present, has been to retrieve and clean up and catalog the contents of the buildings, while working with the new owners to come up with a plan.

What is their redevelopment plan? To create a diverse entertainment and educational community and to enhance the surrounding neighborhoods. Sports events, concerts, shops, food courts, office space, farmers markets, museums, and art galleries are planned (See Unionprintershome.com/vision). It could take 10 years or more to see their vision in the



Above: Roger Davis, Lucretia Vaile Museum director and curator, left, and Ellie Hinkle, speaker and director of History and Archives for the Union Printers Home. Photo by Marlene Brown.

final stages, but for the 130-year-old building it could bring new life.

PLHS holds monthly historically informative meetings, usually on the third Thursday at 7 p.m.; doors open at 6:30 p.m. Meetings are open and free to the public. Next month, Michael Weinfeld and John Howe will present "The History of Monument Cemetery Founded in 1886" on March 21. For more information about upcoming events and membership information, go to palmerdividehistory.org.

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

On the Trail (in memory of Tim Watkins)

Palmer Lake Reservoir hike

By Steve Pate

On a hike up Palmer Lake Reservoir Road to the upper Palmer Lake Reservoir on Feb. 20, the trail conditions were snow/slush with some ice and still over a foot of snow off-trail. I did not use micro spikes but always carry them on hikes this time of year, along with winter-preparedness gear such as a warm coat and hat, water, snacks, fire starter, gloves, mylar blanket, etc. I did not need any of these items, although downhill is more treacherous without spikes.

Despite the beautiful weather, I encountered only one other human on the two-hour jaunt. The Reservoir Road was well-used, as was the trailhead to the Ice Cave Creek trail just west of the lower reservoir and Balanced Rock just beyond the upper reservoir.

On the west side of the upper reservoir, the piles of logs generated by last year's wildfire mitigation are still intact. A few of these logs have been used to create a new bridge over Monument Creek near the Glen in Palmer Lake. Palmer Lake Fire Chief John Vincent said about a year ago that no plans had been agreed upon by the Board of Trustees to dispose of the logs, and he speculated they might be burned. Another possible solution would be to haul them out and let local people saw cordwood for use in fireplaces or stoves. No private vehicles are allowed on the Res-



Above: Snow-covered Upper Palmer Lake Reservoir.

ervoir Road—perhaps an exception for a one-time cleanup would be in order in this case.

I saw only one area where someone had been ice fishing. Keep in mind, if you ice fish, the ice should be at least 4 inches thick to support humans walking on the ice. When the ice is snow-covered, fishing can become a slushy challenge.

Steve Pate may be contacted at stevepate@ocn.me.



Above: Snow-covered boulder field north of the lower reservoir.



Above: Log piles west of the Upper Palmer Lake Reservoir.

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

This month in the garden: soil, bird songs, and hummingbirds

By Janet Sellers

Tie a red ribbon for hummingbirds

Hummingbird scouts return this month and are attracted to red, orange, pink, and yellow colors. Before we have our full-bloom colorful gardens outdoors (which can take until June or later some years) we can attract hummingbirds to our gardens with simple red ribbons tied near food sources. Feeder placement is critical to avoid our area's bears and critters, and I've personally taken to using colorful flowers with nectar (petunias, lantana, etc.) for safety instead of feeders around the garden. I brought my lantana in for the winter and will put those hanging pots out on a day-by-day basis very soon.

Physics: Birds singing helps our plants grow

Sonic bloom music and bird songs stimulate plants,

and they grow better. I've turned on a local classical radio station (complete with human announcers) to keep out critters, but I didn't know about the plant benefits until recently. In a research article about physics resonance by D. Kroeze MSc. of CANNA-uk.com, Kroeze wrote, "...The University of California, San Diego in the United States discovered a signal mechanism that controls a plant's stomata. The two cells that form the stoma consist of specialized cells (guard cells) that are tuned to the resonant frequency of calcium. When exposed to this frequency the stomata close. However, if the frequency is not exactly right the cells will open again within an hour. This happens even if the concentration of calcium is so high that the stomata would normally close. Experiments showed that exposure to high tones was more or less directly responsible for increased gas exchange, and not just after an hour."

Dirt, soil, and topsoil

Topsoil is the rich, dark soil layer that has nutrients, holds water, and is home to the microorganisms that help our plants grow. The organic matter in soil is specific to what grows there or what we want to grow there. We use different compositions mixed into our soil for vegetables than we would for grasses or other plants, but all soils need a rich microbiome to support the landscape. The easiest way to accomplish this inexpensively or free is with a compost made up of vegetables, grass, leaves, and flowers or other plant-specific composting methods. Using alpaca manure tea is another cost-effective enrichment for watering the landscape and a jump start for garden plants and seedlings as its composition doesn't burn the plants.

Love, the mountain celery

March is the month to start the rich, celery-flavored