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Local Events

Readers should assume that event information published in this issue is subject to change and information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website.

See pages 18-19 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- OCN mailing days, Thu., Feb. 29 & Apr. 4, approx. 7-8:30 am.
- Knights of Columbus at St. Peter Catholic Church Fish Fry Fridays during Lent, Fridays, Mar. 1-22.
- Monument Library Chess Club, Sat. Mar. 2, 2-4 pm.
- Stuff the Truck Food Bank Collection, Sun., Mar. 10, 9:30-11:30 am, Benet Hill Monastery.
- The Love Shop: Restyle Your Furs, Wed.-Thu., Mar. 13-14. See ad on page 8.
- Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) monthly meeting, Fri., Mar. 15, 11:30 a.m.
- Kiwanis Stars of Tomorrow Talent Show, Sun., Mar. 17, 2-5 pm. See ad on page 5.
- 100+ women who care membership/social networking, Wed. Mar. 20, 5 p.m.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Mar. 21, 7 pm. History of the Monument Cemetery.
- Holy Week Services, Bennett Hill Monastery Sun.-Sun., Mar. 24-31. See ad on page 3.
- Holy Week Services, Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church. Sun.-Sun., Mar. 24-31. See ad on page 7.
- Friends of Fox Run Park, Zoom meeting, Thu., Mar. 28, 7 pm
- Little Log Church 100th Anniversary Celebration, Sat., May 11, 1-4 pm.
- Taste of Tri-Lakes Cares, Wed., May 15, 5:30-8:30 pm.
- Annual Silver Key Senior Summit – Expo of Senior Services, Thu., May 16, 9-2 pm. See ad on page 2.
- YMCA summer day camp ages 5-12 begins May 28. See ad on page 6.



Above and below: D38 17th Annual Chess Tournament, Feb. 24. See page 16. *Photos by Michael Weinfeld.*



In this issue

D38 News 1-6
Monument News 1, 6-7
Palmer Lake News 7-9
County News 9-10
Fire District News 10
Water & San District News 10-13
WIA News 13-14
Weather 14
Letters and Columns 14-16
Snapshots 16-17
Notices and Calendar 18-19
OCN Information 17, 19-20

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Planned Fox Run Nature Center raises concerns



Above: More than 100 citizens of the surrounding areas of Fox Run Regional Park met with El Paso County Park and Recreation executives and planners, along with representatives from TDG Architecture to discuss the proposed Fox Run Park Nature Center. Those living in proximity to the park have voiced concerns regarding the impact on traffic through the neighborhoods, parking, and disruption of the quiet seclusion of their homes. There are also concerns about the loss of trees due to the size of the Nature Center but also the loss of the habitat for the wildlife that live in Fox Run Regional Park, including red and black foxes that have returned to the park in the last few years. There will be another public meeting **March 14**, 6-8 p.m. at the Pikes Peak Brewing Co. in Monument. See more information at www.tdg-frnc.com. *Photo by Marlene Brown. See also the letter to the editor on page 14.*

Monument Town Council, Feb. 5 and 20

Monument discusses Loop water system, non-sanctuary status, traffic studies

By Chris Jeub

Two town hall meetings were held on Feb. 5 and 20, during which updates and discussions were provided on a range of topics. The meetings covered progress reports on various projects and initiatives, including water management, infrastructure development, sales tax solutions, and immigration policies. Tensions arose during discussions on traffic concerning development impacts of Highway 105 and Jackson Creek Parkway. No decisions were made during these meetings concerning the congestion of traffic in this area.

Progress report on the Loop water system

John Kuosman, representing the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA, or the Loop) provided an update on the ambitious Loop water system during the Feb. 5 meeting. The system, a rotational water distribution initiative spanning the Colorado Springs area with Monument situated at its northernmost point, aims to transform water management practices in the region.

Kuosman expressed optimism about the project's progress, noting that while significant headway had been made, the journey to completion was ongoing. A pivotal moment came in October 2023 when an operational model was successfully executed, with the results shared among all member agencies. Central to Kuosman's presentation was the system's value proposition, emphasizing the long-term benefits of infrastructure investments. Forecasts suggested that the system could deliver water at a rate as low as \$8.35 per 1,000 gallons, positioning it as a cost-effective solution for member agencies. Monument, represented in the system's governance structure, holds a proportionate share of decision-making authority, ensuring local involvement in critical matters.

Councilmembers posed pertinent questions regarding cost comparisons, potential additions to existing fees, and the timeline for construction. Concerns were raised about the transparency of cost projections and the feasibility of delivering renewable water to all stakeholders. Kuosman addressed

these queries, acknowledging the need for further analysis while affirming the system's capability to provide renewable water upon completion.

In response to inquiries about construction timelines, Kuosman outlined a timeline aiming for the \$110 million system to be operational by 2027, demonstrating a tangible pathway toward realizing the project's goals.

Baseline Engineering steps in during moratorium

Amid Monument's moratorium on new project submissions, Baseline Engineering has assumed a pivotal role in project management. Two contracted planners, Julie Esterl and Lauren Richardson, have been brought on board to bolster the town's capabilities. Town Manager Mike Foreman highlighted the substantial workload, revealing that Baseline Engineering is currently managing 20 projects. Foreman also expressed optimism about the imminent hiring of a town planner, with strong candidates "already in the pipeline."

Hybrid sales tax solution approved

Resolution No. 06-2024 was presented and unanimously approved by the Town Council on Feb. 5. Finance Director Mona Hirjoi proposed the resolution, which outlines a hybrid solution for the self-collection of sales tax in Monument, set to commence on Oct. 1, 2024. Stemming from the council's acknowledgment of the need for improved control over revenue processes following Monument's transition to a home-rule municipality in January 2023, the decision to pursue this hybrid solution aims to enhance autonomy and efficiency. Hirjoi played a role in preparing and proposing the solution, facilitating discussions with key stakeholders such as the Colorado Department of Revenue and consulting firm CoSak to inform the decision-making process.

Monument Lake and Limbach Park improvements

The Monument Town Council passed Resolution No. 07-2024 unanimously, approving a contract with CXT for the

Monument Academy School Board, Feb. 8 and 22

Board passes parental rights policy 6-1; member resigns

By Jackie Burhans

Monument Academy (MA) held its regular meeting on Feb. 8 where it passed a parental rights policy after much discussion. It held a special meeting on Feb. 22 to reorganize after a board member's resignation.

In addition, MA reviewed its Q2 academic dashboard, approved moving forward with its homeschool program, heard administrative and committee reports, and discussed its assessment opt-out policies.

Board passes parental rights policy

Board President Ryan Graham reviewed the history of MA's parental rights policy, which describes how to handle transgender students. Based on past discussions, the current version strikes out the example of trying out for sports and the statement that parents may view their child's Fourth Amendment right to privacy as being violated by the actions of the transgender student and are encouraged to seek legal counsel. Graham read the entirety of the policy JRT Parental Rights Policy which can be found at <http://bit.ly/ma-policyJRT>.

Earlier, several public comments were made by members of the audience supporting the board, its resolution, and encouraging it to pass this policy. Commenters included former El Paso County State Rep. Tim Geitner, who is the board president for Liberty Tree Academy which is having similar conversations.

The board's legal counsel, Brad Miller, of Miller Farmer Carson Law, spoke, and while declining to give detailed legal advice in a public meeting responded to some of the concerns that were raised at the previous board meeting. He noted that there was discussion on whether student rights trumped parental rights and whether the case cited, *Troxel v. Granville*, was

MONUMENT (Cont. on 6)

MA (Cont. on 2)

MA (Cont. from 1)

on point. He said we live in a society where courts have sided with the rights of children in multiple instances and claimed that the Colorado Legislature was trying to eliminate the role of parents. He said that even if the board was the Rosa Parks of this current age, what

they are proposing wasn't direct civil disobedience nor a blatant violation of the law which is yet to be clarified.

Miller went on to say that, speaking of religion, the board might get accosted with the idea that Romans 13 and other New Testament verses say that the government is an extension of God's authority, and [MA] should be subject to it. But if the board looked to Acts and Ephesians it would be reminded that while it is subject to human institutions it should also obey God rather than men. The Colorado Legislature, he said, has placed schools like MA in the role of being accessories to a very consequential moral redefinition of individual identity. His view, he added, is that every society that has attempted to redefine personhood has failed.

He went on to address the concern for risk avoidance, saying he had consistently informed MA that the proposed policy would elevate MA's risk of being sued. It could be that the cost would be significant, he said, or potentially the adoption of this policy could augment MA's enrollment and encourage various forms of support and money. He also suggested that non-action could force families to consider whether the risk of public education could outweigh its convenience.

Miller said that concerns about needing policies on sports and bathroom monitoring could be addressed by administrative regulation and that MA did not need to remove its statement that affirmed a parent's right to sue over perceived violation of their child's privacy, although it had already done so. Finally, he noted that the legislature was considering proposals that would directly conflict with this policy and the board might need to reconsider it next year.

Board Treasurer Joe Buczkowski pointed out that the policy did not prohibit "biological males" from competing on girls' sports teams or from using girls' bathrooms. Two issues, he said, serve as his opposition to this policy. Firstly: How many different battles of parental rights are the school willing to take on, and what is the cost of those battles. Secondly, he felt that the policy could be considered to be prejudiced against the voluntary contact student because it requires a principal to call home even if that is against the express wishes of the student.

Buczkowski noted that the rights of a student who wants to transition might conflict with their parents' rights, and he wasn't sure MA wanted to get into that battle. He went on to say that enforcement of the policy required staff and teachers to know a student's biological sex, which was impossible to know. The policy requires staff members to monitor bathrooms, and he did not want to put them in the position of

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making those policies without the board.

Returning to the question of financial implications, Buczkowski said the board should reduce financial risk as much as possible and that MA had a track record of making very bad financial decisions. He specified that when building the East Campus, the financial projections were beyond the building's capacity based on the number of classrooms. The gymnasium, he specified, is useless for middle school and high school competitions and would cost millions to fix it. He said there was no budget for a parental rights legal battle and that MA was in the hole by \$150,000 to \$160,000 needed in fundraising just to balance its current budget. He suggested MA consider having the board members that vote in favor agree to indemnify the school on all financial costs or to do a fundraising campaign to set aside a reserve for these

legal costs.

Miller suggested that board members who vote no should indemnify the school should there be a lawsuit if they do not take action. Board Vice President Lindsay Clinton expressed her support for the policy, saying that when she drops her kids off, she does not give up her parental rights. She noted that they are in the process of hiring an executive director who must support, uphold, and enforce board policies. Board member Craig Carle also expressed his support for the policy, saying he understood the risks for the school but wanted to show

courage in the face of adversity. Board member Matt Ross said that the board must not let fear of man but rather the fear of God drive its decision. He said he believed the God of the Bible was watching their decision. Board member Emily Belisle said that this policy is not radical and did not attack anyone's lifestyle but was instead a way to maintain order in schools and required that parents be kept informed on matters that greatly affect their child.

Graham read his statement supporting the policy, saying the opposition had impugned the board by saying it

had not done its research on the conflict between parental and child rights. He said it was not the principal's role to sub-

vert the authority of a parent in their child's life and that there were a multitude of schools where one could abdicate

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their parental authority and the school would be glad to exploit that. He said that tonight's town hall is not to wage war against any schools but to go after those who have set their sights on our children. Although some say MA is creating a hostile environment, he said, MA's goal was to protect all students, citing a disputed statistic on transgender youth suicide rates. Graham said that MA protects the truth and was being ridiculed, mocked, labeled, and threatened. He thanked the Lord for the courage, conviction, and resolve of many of the board members he served with, saying "we can win and, God willing, we will win, even if we get tossed in the fire."

The board passed the policy on a vote of 6-1 with Buczkowski voting no.

Board resignation

At a special meeting on Jan. 22, Graham reported that Buczkowski had resigned from the board on Feb. 12 thus leading to a vacancy. Buczkowski's term was set to end on June 30. Per the board's bylaws, Graham said, the board could appoint a replacement or run as a six-member board until the June 30 election, and he moved to do so. The board unanimously approved the motion.

Graham noted that Buczkowski had been the board treasurer and that position needed to be filled. Carle agreed to serve as treasurer.

Buczkowski had been on both the Finance and Governance Committees. Carle was already on the Finance Committee and Graham offered to join as the second board member. Board member Karen Hoida was already a member of the Governance Committee and Belisle offered to step in as the second board member. Belisle asked for a second member to join her on the Curriculum Committee and Clinton agreed to do so.

Graham noted that, per their respective bylaws, the Monument Building Corp. and Monument Foundation, two 501(c)3 organizations which hold the West and East Campus debts, required a MA board member representative. Since Buczkowski, as treasurer, had been on those two boards, Graham formally moved that Carle replace him as the MA board representative. The board unanimously approved this motion.

Finally, the board unanimously authorized a change in the approved bank signers to remove Buczkowski and replace him with Carle.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- Carle spotlighted student Addison Michalak, an MA middle schooler who competed as the United States of America Track and Field (USATF) national junior championship placing fifth in the 3K cross-country 11-12 girls' division. She was named USATF girl athlete of the year.
- Acting Chief Financial Officer Glenn Gustafson noted that the Employee Retention Tax Credit program had been suspended by the Internal Revenue Service in December due to rampant fraud, then reopened with a much earlier deadline of Jan. 31. MA has submitted for \$1.3 million in payroll costs and might receive it in summer of 2024 but has been advised to sit on it in case of an audit. He also noted that MA was due \$180,000 from the charter startup grant it received and must now find eligible expenses for which it could be reimbursed. Finally, he reported that the interim School Finance Committee had proposed changes to the School Funding Act that could result in School District 38 as a whole losing \$3 million.
- Analytical Diagnostics consultant Jennifer Strawbridge presented the MA mid-year academic data shown in the meeting highlights at: <https://bit.ly/ma-20240208-highlights>.
- The board unanimously approved moving forward with the Monument Academy Home-school Partnership program after getting full



Above: At the Feb. 9 meeting, Monument Academy board member Craig Carle spotlighted student Addison Michalak, an MA middle schooler who competed as the United States of America Track and Field (USATF) national junior championship, placing fifth in the 3K cross-country 11-12 girls' division. She was named USATF girl athlete of the year. Pictured are Carle, left, and Michalak. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

support from Gustafson to invest in it knowing it may need to be subsidized for two years from West Campus cash reserves.

- School Culture and Assessment Coordinator Anna Arndt brought the board's attention to a new policy for state testing which gives students a score even if they only partially complete a test. Toward that end she asked the board to consider changes to its policy 1525 State Assessment Refusal Policy and allow administration to alert parents to upcoming changes to that policy. The board agreed to allow a letter to be sent and the policy to be reviewed at its next meeting.
- Director of Academics Tine Leone described the process used to replace the Saxon Math curriculum, which is going away, with Reveal Math. She thanked everyone involved and said that after the public review period the board will be voting on March 14. She hopes to order teacher editions of the curriculum before people leave for the summer.
- The board unanimously approved the executive director hiring timeline in March and April, which includes a screening committee meeting, a regular board meeting, a special board meeting and executive session, informal interviews and site visit, another special board meeting and executive session and an April 4 community town hall, culminating with a public vote on hiring the new executive director on April 11.

The MA School Board meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, March 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

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Lewis-Palmer D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee, Feb. 13

Committee receives leadership hiring and superintendent search update

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (PCAC) met on Feb. 13 at Prairie Winds Elementary School to discuss such topics as hiring for leadership positions, a search for a new superintendent, and priority 5 of the district's strategic plan referring to fiscal stewardship.

Prairie Winds presentation

Interim Principal Aileen Finnegan spoke about Prairie Winds Elementary School (PWES) and its programs and history. PWES opened in 2001 and has received the John Irwin School of Excellence Award recognizing test scores that exceeded expectations each year from 2011 to 2022 and the Governor's Distinguished Improvement Award in 2022.

Finnegan spoke of active parent participation in the school and enumerated the various extracurricular activities and such traditional events as Veterans Day Assembly and a science fair and fundraisers such

as a fun run and spirit night.

To view the PowerPoint of this presentation, please see the district website, lewispalmer.org, family resources, District Accountability Advisory Committee, and Meeting Resources.

Leadership update

Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstone reported on several leadership roles that were vacated this year and the progress in hiring. The district hired Kim Briding as principal of Palmer Lake Elementary School, Danielle Holmes as Special Education director, and Rachel Sellers as principal of PWES. These positions were expected to be confirmed by the Board of Education at its Feb. 26 meeting. Interviews are also planned for the positions of director of Planning, Facilities and Grounds, and Lewis-Palmer Middle School principal.

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Status of superintendent search
Board liaison Tiffiney Upchurch shared a presentation by McPherson and Jacobson, the firm selected to oversee the search for a new superintendent. Current Superintendent KC Somers will leave the district at the end of March. To view the presentation, please see the district website as explained above.

A survey has been distributed to staff, parents, and community members about priorities in selecting a new superintendent. As of the meeting date, 600 responses had been received. The goal is to receive at least 2,000.

Upchurch said that the board will continue to follow the current strategic plan until such time as a new superintendent is selected.

Upchurch also reported that she traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with representatives as part of the Coalition Colorado to lobby for full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Current funding is at 13% of the cost of educating students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The coalition was able to increase that amount to 40%.

Upchurch said the district is currently short by about \$1.5 million-\$2 million per year in funding this aspect of education.

Fiscal stewardship discussion
Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway offered a presentation (see the website as explained above) regarding fiscal stewardship by the district.

Ridgway recently testified in Denver on SB24-017 Cash Flow Moderation. Ridgway is the author of

the bill, which would allow school districts to receive their funding in a more equal amount each month. Currently, the majority of funding is received during the months when property taxes are received, and districts have to set aside money to fund payroll during the months at the end and very beginning of the calendar year. If passed, the bill will free up the \$8 million the district has been withholding.

Ridgway shared slides which explained the sources of district revenue and the timeline for creating the annual district budget, beginning in November with receipt of the governor's proposed budget and ending with passage of a complete budget for submission to the state by June 30.

When asked about the anticipated per pupil revenue for the upcoming school year, Ridgway said it is estimated to increase by 6.9%.

When asked whether the increased building activity in the district will result in a larger school population, Ridgway responded that demographics are changing. He said that birthrates are decreasing and home schooling is gaining popularity.

Whetstone said Building Advisory Committees, PCAC, and other entities are being consulted to determine their priorities for spending in the upcoming year. The group was divided into four subgroups to discuss their priorities.

In reporting back to the group, some priorities were as follows:

- Restore career and technical education (CTE) electives at middle school.
- Improve safety in parking lots and drop-off locations.
- Increase availability of CPR and other first aid training.
- Consider more staff to decrease class sizes at Bear Creek Elementary and Lewis-Palmer Elementary.
- Add cameras on buses.

- Provide air conditioning at Palmer Lake Elementary.
- Hire more counselors at the elementary level.

Committee updates
The Financial Transparency Committee will go into more depth on Ridgway's presentation.

The Staff Collaboration Committee will discuss four health plans to choose from for the upcoming year. Benefits account for 31% of the district payroll.

The Calendar Task Force will start its work on Feb. 29. The original committee will be joined by more staff, parents, and students who were randomly selected and invited to join. The 2024-25 calendar is approved and posted on the district website.

The Wellness Committee celebrated February as Heart Month by promoting a program for heart wellness. The school with the largest participation will win a staff lunch.

The Special Education Advisory Committee said that nominations for the annual Aliorum Dei Award opened on Feb. 14. The award acknowledges those who make a difference in the lives of students with disabilities.

The Gifted Education Leadership Team was to meet on Feb. 14 to discuss how the district is meeting the requirements for gifted/talented identification.

The Parent and Community Advisory Committee meets six times per year. Locations vary. The next meeting will be at 6 p.m. on April 9 at Palmer Ridge High School, 19255 Monument Hill Road in Monument. For further information, please contact tmckee@lewispalmer.org. Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Note

The D38 Board of Education met too late in the month to be included in this issue. Coverage of their Feb. 26 meeting will be included in the April 6 issue of OCN.

MONUMENT (Cont. from 1)

construction of a restroom facility at Monument Lake. This resolution marks a significant improvement over the current portable bathrooms, addressing a need for better amenities at the lake. Notably, the project is made financially feasible through the awarding of a grant that covers most of the \$183,000 budget.

The Town Council also unanimously approved Resolution No. 08-2024, greenlighting a contract with Star Playgrounds for the installation of new equipment at Limbach Park. With \$200,000 allocated to the Parks Department for improvements, staff identified Limbach Park as the optimal location to allocate these funds. Foreman added the importance of meeting Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, highlighting Limbach Park as a priority area for improvement.

Ballot measures discussed

Two ballot measures were discussed as possibly being added to November's ballot. Ballot Measure 1 proposes a lodging tax, with Mayor Mitch LaKind advocating for a 2-2.5% tax rate on short-term rentals, specifically targeting residential stays under 29 days as well as overnight stays at truck stops. The proposed tax revenue would be allocated exclusively to parks and trails, with LaKind emphasizing its potential as a consistent funding mechanism. While councilmembers like Steve King expressed a preference for keeping all funds within parks, others, including Sana Abbott and Jim Romanello, raised questions about diversifying funding or forming a parks commission for fund distribution.

Concurrently, Ballot Measure 2 focuses on charter changes, with Romanello proposing to lower the age limit for commissioners to 18, sparking debate among councilmembers about the potential impacts of altering the charter. While some, like Councilmember Marco Fiorito, expressed openness to additional ballot measures, others, like Councilmember Laura Kronick, voiced concerns about the piecemeal alteration of the charter, emphasizing the importance of respecting previous votes. These discussions underscored the complexities surrounding both ballot measures, highlighting the need for thorough consid-

eration and public education before they go to a vote.

Monument resolves as non-sanctuary town

The Town Council passed Resolution No. 11-2024, spearheaded by Mayor LaKind, declaring Monument as a "non-sanctuary" town. The resolution ignited a debate on the town's preparedness for handling migrant arrivals. Town Attorney Bob Cole emphasized the resolution's intent, positioning Monument in contrast to sanctuary cities, while Councilmember Kenneth Kimple sought clarification on the town's plan in the event of migrant arrivals. King expressed reservations about the town's capacity for accommodating migrants, citing limited resources for public housing. LaKind underscored the town's alignment with neighboring jurisdictions like Colorado Springs and El Paso County in their approach to migrant response. Ultimately, the resolution passed unanimously with a 7-0 vote, solidifying Monument's stance on the issue amid ongoing debates at the state and national levels.

Town greenlights new wellhouses

The council passed Resolution No. 12-2024, approving \$2.19 million for a construction project to build three new wellhouses in support of Wells 11, 12, and 13 for the Public Works Department. The resolution, presented by Director of Public Works Thomas Tharnish, sparked a lively discussion among council members regarding the project's cost and potential budgetary concerns. Tharnish addressed previous pricing issues that had since been resolved, but King remarked on the current inflationary environment. He noted that costs for projects have risen significantly, making it prudent to move forward without delay to avoid further expense escalation through rebidding. LaKind expressed apprehension about potential budget overruns, citing previous instances with the water tank project. Romanello emphasized the importance of cost containment measures to prevent excessive spending. Despite concerns, the motion ultimately passed unanimously.

Maverik development debated

Tensions escalated among councilmembers, notably between Romanello and Kimple, shedding light on underlying disagreements over the town's hesitation to allow Maverik Monument Junction Lot 1 Monument Junction West Filing No. 1 to continue.

During the Feb. 5 meeting, Kimple voiced objections to Ordinance No. 24-2023, which pertained to the approval of a Planned Unit Development for Maverik Monument Junction. Kimple requested its removal from the agenda, highlighting discrepancies in the ordinance's language that implied council approval where none had been given. However, despite Kimple's objections, the council proceeded with discussions, with the town staff emphasizing that the application was merely on hold, not withdrawn.

During the Feb. 20 meeting, a pivotal point of contention arose during the discussion on the Traffic Impact Study, a study called for by Kimple himself. A representative from Jacobs Engineering presented the study, largely answering questions Kimple raised via email. Kimple continued to raise concerns regarding the accuracy of traffic data presented in the study, alleging skewed numbers due to data collection outside of school times and the omission of COVID-19 impacts. Despite explanations from Jacobs Engineering, Kimple persisted in questioning the validity of the report, expressing apprehensions about the potential hazards posed by increased development on the community.

Romanello engaged in a pointed exchange with Kimple, challenging the validity of Kimple's claims and highlighting the inevitability of traffic growth given Colorado Springs' northward expansion. Romanello emphasized the importance of smart development rather than outright opposition, echoing sentiments shared by other councilmembers regarding the need for cautious, informed decision-making.

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However, Kimple persisted in bringing in external information, prompting Mayor LaKind to question its validity, particularly highlighting Kimple's assertion that Highway 105 wouldn't be completed until 2040. "They're actively building four lanes right outside my bedroom window right now; I hear it all day long," LaKind

said. Romanello followed by saying "I'm not OK with this at all," referring to Kimple's call for a tax-funded study to help promote a "NIMBY attitude" (Not In My Backyard). Town Attorney Bob Cole emphasized that no conclusion should be made because the applicant (Maverik) was not present. If Maverik should re-

turn with its application, Kimple said he would likely have more questions. ***** The Monument Council usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The next meetings are scheduled for Monday, March 4 and March 18. Call 719-884-

8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monument-townco.minutesondemand.com> and click on Town Council. Chris Jeub can be reached at chrisjeub@ocn.me.

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Feb. 8 and 22

Ben Lomand property eligible for annexation; stance on migrants debated

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans
At its meeting on Feb. 22, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) held a public hearing to decide if the property owned by the United Congregational Church was eligible for annexation by the town. Mayor Glant Havenar asked the board to approve a resolution declaring Palmer Lake to be a "non-sanctuary" town; she also asked it to authorize her to sign a letter drafted by leaders in surrounding towns to the El Paso Board of County Commissioners. The PLBOT board considered updates to the town's land use code. The lease agreement between EcoSpa LLC and the town was amended. The board held a workshop on its master fee schedule and voted to approve a new version of it. The location of the proposed pickleball courts was changed so that they would not be built over a water line. Finally, the board approved two special use permits. Both meetings ended with executive sessions. **Property meets eligibility requirements** Havenar opened the public hearing on the eligibility of the Ben Lomand property for annexation into the town by saying the attendees were neighbors

and by requesting they speak kindly. She and Town Attorney Scotty Krob said the sole topic of the hearing was whether the property was eligible for annexation and that all other issues would be handled later in the development process. Dan Madison, a civil engineer representing the church, said the town had written an annexation impact report for El Paso County as required by the annexation process. The primary criterion for eligibility was one-sixth of the boundary of the property being contiguous with the town. Madison said the property met that requirement with 20% of the boundary being contiguous. Havenar asked Madison to address the issue of water service for the proposed development. Madison said the developer does not want water service from the town; the lots would have private wells and the development would be self-sufficient regarding water. The developer did want the town to provide fire and police service, however. Madison pointed out that the developer initially wanted to remain in unincorporated El Paso County, but the town asked to be a partner in the development process. Resident Roger Moseley raised several objections to the planned de-

velopment, arguing that the impact report was "a terrible report," mistaken on the issue of density, lacking information about costs, that the specifics of the development were not covered, and that there was a legal requirement for maps to be updated. Krob replied the impact report was prepared for the county, which had judged it adequate for its purposes. The maps needed to be updated before annexation, Krob said, but not before the determination about eligibility was made. Resident Martha Brodzik said the impact report did not include a financial plan. She said she believed the town would be required to maintain a portion of County Line Road and

that annexation would cost the town \$77,000 a year in excess of the property taxes received. She said she was not in favor of or opposed to annexation, but she did not want to bear the burden of annexation. Resident Johann Moum asked who the developer of the property is and if access to the proposed development would be through existing streets. He also asked about the intended lot sizes. Havenar pointed out these questions did not relate to eligibility. Reid Wiecks, chairman of the Parks and Trails commission, said he was in favor of annexation but believed that one of the parcels would cut off a proposed trail. He objected to the Parks



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and Trails Commission not being involved in the annexation process. Havenar said the issue of trails was not relevant to the question of eligibility and the commission would be involved in the design phase of the process.

Two residents who did not sign the speaker log raised issues about water and fire prevention. Havenar said wells were managed by the state of Colorado. Trustee Shana Ball said the board was always conscious of the risk of fire.

Resident Bill Fisher said he believed the annexation agreement modified the existing land use code and he wanted residents to have a chance to comment on these changes.

Following the comments by the board and the public, Madison made his concluding remarks. He said the eligibility requirement was that the land be capable of development and that was the case. The impact report was done by the town, not the developer. A traffic study would be done during the development phase that would address roads. He explained the church is the owner as well as the developer and they intend to sell lots to builders.

Madison said he did not believe any connection to Capella Drive would be proposed, and that the primary access would be via County Line Road. Lots would be 2.5 acres and the trail issue would be addressed during the design phase. He said all tap fees would be paid and he believed development would reduce the likelihood of fire. He ended by saying the requirements for eligibility had been met.

Krob said if the board voted in favor of eligibility following the hearing, the next step would be a hearing on annexation, at which an ordinance would be voted on. The ordinance would do three things: annex the property, zone the property, and approve the annexation agreement.

Havenar closed the hearing, and the board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 13-2024, which finds the Ben Lomand property eligible to be annexed. The board also voted to hold an executive session on Wednesday, Feb. 28 at 5 p.m. to review the annexation agreement, and to hold a special session on Monday, March 4 at 5 p.m.

to consider the annexation ordinance.

Brodzik objected to the schedule of the additional meetings, arguing there was no need to rush. She repeated her point about costs not being adequately considered. She said when the town was hit with costs for the annexation, she would send her portion of the bill to the board for them to pay.

Trustee Dennis Stern asked residents to send their concerns to the board via email and to be concise.

“Non-sanctuary” status debated

Havenar asked the board to approve Resolution 20-2024, which declares Palmer Lake to be a “non-sanctuary” town. The resolution also calls upon the president of the United States to secure the border and to enforce immigration laws. The resolution recognizes the importance of legal immigration.

Havenar said the county commissioners had issued a statement regarding “non-sanctuary” status and the mayors of some towns had made similar statements. She said her goal was to prevent the town from expending resources responding to the arrival of migrants. Ball said the town does not have space or resources to help migrants.

Trustee Nick Ehrhardt agreed the town does not have resources but said “it’s a far cry from that to proactively saying we are shutting the door before the door even exists ... it’s regrettable that our neighbors have done so ... this is an opportunity for us to stand apart.” He encouraged faith communities to help address the needs of migrants, said Palmer Lake was a sanctuary in many ways, and said he was a citizen of the planet.

Resident Becky Albright said she was disturbed by the resolution and did not see its purpose.

Havenar asked Krob if the town has a responsibility to migrants who might camp by the lake. Krob said “sanctuary city” is not a legal designation but was a political statement and concerns cooperation with immigration officials. “If you say you are a non-sanctuary city it doesn’t change your legal liabilities ... it’s not really a legal question.”

Moseley asked: “Why are we not arresting bus drivers, shooting tires and

burning buses?”

Brodzik said the town’s code prohibits camping and the code should be enforced.

Chief of Police Jason Vanderpool said camping is not a criminal offense. His officers could only ticket migrants camping illegally and require them to go before a judge. Since they were transitory, a trial and a fine might be ineffective, he said.

The board voted to approve the resolution. Ehrhardt and Trustee Samantha Padgett voted no. Ball, Trustee Jessica Farr, and Havenar voted in favor. Trustee Kevin Dreher did not attend the meeting and was excused.

In a related matter, Havenar asked the board to authorize her to sign a letter, drafted by the mayors of Fountain, Green Mountain Falls, Calhan, Manitou Springs, Monument, Ramah and Colorado Springs, to the county commissioners, asking the commissioners to “engage in meaningful consultation with us, the mayors, before making public statements that have a negative impact on our communities.” The letter says the towns do not have the resources to support large numbers of immigrants. It asks for a collaborative approach from the commissioners.

Havenar said she supported the statement because it clarified the mayors would work together on the issue.

Ehrhardt voted against authorizing Havenar to sign the letter on behalf of the town. Ball, Farr, Havenar, Padgett and Stern voted in favor.

Land use code updated regarding annexation process

The board considered three updates to the town’s land use code, all of which would address deficiencies in the existing code regarding the annexation process. Krob said the first of the three updates was not ready for consideration, but the other two were ready. The second update would add language defining who can update the land use code, requiring a survey map when the zoning district map is changed, that zoning changes be initiated by the owner of the property or their representative and that the Community Master Plan be amended before approving zoning changes not in alignment with the plan. The third update defines a checklist of requirements for land use applications.

Collins and Krob emphasized that these changes would be temporary measures to fill gaps until the Planning Commission could complete its work on the land use code.

Brodzik objected to proposed changes, arguing they were a “cut and paste job,” and that the paragraph numbering was inconsistent. Krob responded that the language would be

cleaned up by Municode, the company updating the town’s code, during codification. Brodzik asked for a line-by-line review of the town code, which she said the board had agreed to previously. She said the changes aren’t “ready for prime time.”

Havenar emphasized the temporary nature of the changes. Krob said the board can revisit the code at any time.

Moseley and resident Claudia Belcher said the process was too rushed.

Havenar said the board supported the town staff in the performance of their duties and that there were applications that needed to be addressed.

The board voted unanimously to table the first proposed update and to approve the second and third.

EcoSpa lease amended

Havenar told the board that the Willans had asked for their lease agreement to be amended so that the town would receive 8% of all rents received for rental of the annex building. The annex building was previously referred to as the gymnasium and community center.

Lindsay Willan said she and Richard Willan had spent \$20,000 on an engineer’s report, soil tests, and a website and she believed the annex would be operational by early summer. She said they would pay the town a percentage of the profits rather than a fee per user of the annex.

Wiecks said he was concerned the Willans’ plans would prevent the construction of a trail around the perimeter of the Elephant Rock property. Lindsay Willans said the trail would be allowed.

The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 18-2024, which amends the lease agreement as proposed.

Master fee schedule adopted

Following a workshop on its master fee schedule held on Feb. 22, the board voted in favor of Resolution 15-2024, which amends the town’s master fee schedule. Trustee Farr voted no; the other trustees and Havenar voted yes.

Before the vote, Wiecks asked that fees for use of the baseball field be added. Collins said the fees should be discussed with the Little League before being added. Havenar said the fee schedule could be amended at any time.

The fee schedule can be found on the town’s website here: <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/documents>. The amended schedule had not been published when OCN went to print.

Pickleball courts moved

In previous months, the board had discussed with Awake the Lake liability

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concerns caused by the fact that the pickleball courts were to be built over a water line. No clear agreement had been reached concerning who would pay if the water line needed maintenance.

The board voted in favor of Resolution 9-2024, which moves the location of the courts south, adjacent to the pedestrian bridge abutment on the west side of the lake, where they would not be on top of the water line.

Special use permits

At its Feb. 8 meeting, a special event permit was approved for an Easter egg

hunt, to be held on Saturday, March 30, on the Village Green at 10 a.m. The event was organized by the Palmer Lake Arts Council and will include a visit from the Easter Bunny, crafts, and face painting.

At its Feb. 22 meeting, a special event permit was approved for an Easter service to be held on Sunday, March 31, at the Town Hall at 10 a.m. The service, hosted by Joy on the Rock, will be followed by brunch.

Executive sessions

The Feb. 8 meeting ended with an executive session for the board to receive

legal advice concerning potential sale of town property, the lease agreement with Eco Spa LLC, and a Police Department complaint.

The Feb. 22 meeting ended with an executive session to receive legal advice concerning the potential sale of town property and negotiation of a possible lease of a portion of the Elephant Rock property.

No actions were taken following either executive session.

The next regular board meetings are scheduled for March 14 and 28. In ad-

dition, there will be an executive session on Wednesday, Feb. 28 at 5 p.m. and a special meeting on March 4 at 5 p.m. All meeting will be held at the Town Hall. See the town's website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953.

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Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Jan. 30 and Feb. 22

Palmer Lake annexation impact report received

By Helen Walklett

During February, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) considered an annexation impact report for land west of the Town of Palmer Lake. The commissioners also heard concerns about safety on Vollmer Road near the School in the Woods site at the end of January.

Palmer Lake annexation

The proposed Ben Lomand Mountain Village annexation into the Town of Palmer Lake was back on the agenda at the Feb. 22 BOCC land use meeting ahead of it being discussed that evening at the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting. See the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting article on page 7.

Kylie Bagley, planner III, Planning and Community Development Department, said the annexation impact report contained more information on the annexation's potential impacts than was available when the BOCC first discussed it at its Jan. 23 meeting.

The annexation request is being made by landowner United Congregational Church and concerns 181.5 acres of RR-5-zoned land south of County Line Road, west of Indi Drive, north of the Lakeview Heights subdivision, and east of Oakdale Drive.

The applicant intends to develop the site, along with an additional 163 acres already within Palmer Lake, and rezone the land to the RE Estate Zone, which allows single-family dwellings on a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres. The total development on the combined property is not expected to exceed 80 lots. The steep topography of parts of the property being considered for annexation as well as the necessary land dedications and rights-of-way for roads and utilities mean that a large portion of the property is anticipated to remain

undeveloped. It is estimated that 104 of the 181.5 acres is buildable and, given the minimum lot size of 2.5 acres, this would result in about 41 lots on that portion.

All existing structures, including the existing church and youth center, would remain. The applicant intends to use the buildable remainder of the combined property for churches and other religious facilities. Public trail easements and recreational access may also be considered as part of any future development.

The report states that the town's police and fire services and the school district are believed to be more than adequate to provide services to the proposed development. The applicant will need to submit a drainage report and a traffic impact study as the project progresses.

Commissioner Carrie Geitner asked if there were any remaining concerns that might be potential problems for county and should be relayed to the Town of Palmer Lake. Bagley answered that there were none at this time.

Commissioner Holly Williams asked if Palmer Lake would be taking over responsibility for County Line Road. Meggan Herington, executive director, Planning and Community Development, said it would be standard for the town to take on the portion adjacent to the development and that discussions about other segments would need to be ongoing as the development progressed. She also clarified that the county and the Colorado Department of Transportation would receive detailed documentation for review and comment as any development moved forward.

The BOCC cannot approve or deny an annexation impact report; the report serves to notify it of the annexation

request and sets out potential impacts in general terms, allowing the BOCC to give direction to staff. Therefore, the commissioners accepted the report, but no vote was taken.

Vollmer Road safety concerns

During the public comments part of the Jan. 30 BOCC meeting, two residents raised concerns about safety and speeding on Vollmer Road, adjacent to

the School in the Woods site. Dick Hegeman, a resident of Hardin Road opposite the school site, said traffic had increased exponentially over the years. He spoke of speeding and cars parked on both sides of Vollmer and along Hardin during busy times such as school choice night when prospective parents and pupils visit. He said, "Something's got to be done because somebody is



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going to get hurt. Why can't we be proactive instead of reactive."

Vollmer Road resident Maggie Mae Stone stated, "I've been trying on the same subject for nearly 2 1/2 years to find out when somebody is going to give a damn about the kids at the

School in the Woods and put up speed limit signs."

Although it is a designated school zone, limited to 25 mph, this cannot be enforced because there are no signs. Stone told the commissioners that she and her husband had offered to pay

for two signs, but no one had acted interested in any way. She said she had been told by three Sheriff's Deputies on three separate occasions that nothing would change until someone died.

Chair Cami Bremer asked Josh Palmer, county engineer, to follow up

directly with the two citizens to explain the measures taken and those planned, which include the installation of dual turn lanes over the summer when the school is closed.

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

El Paso County Planning Commission, Feb. 1

Positive feedback from county commissioners

By Helen Walklett

At the Feb. 1 El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, Chair Tom Bailey reported that he and Commissioner Jay Carlson had met with County Commissioners Stan VanderWerf and Cammie Bremer to work toward a meeting between the full Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and the Planning Commission.

Bailey said, "They're very happy

with what we're giving them, so thank you all for that. Your participation in these discussions, in these deliberations, the questions that you ask, the points that we get onto the record gives the [county] commissioners a very solid foundation to make their final decision."

Carlson said the commissioners had commented, "We want you guys to function independently. We're not

looking for you to think 'What would the Board of County Commissioners do or think.' He added, "The other thing that both commissioners mentioned in our conversations with them is that they do read all our minutes and that they really pay attention to the dissenting votes, if there are any, and see if there's something they might have missed in their look at things. So, it's important to get our thoughts on the

record."

It is hoped that the meeting between the BOCC and the Planning Commission will take place in the next several weeks. Members of the public can comment on any application on the agenda at a Planning Commission hearing and can also raise a matter not on the agenda at the start of a meeting.

Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me

Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Feb. 21

New tender truck issues discussed; properties included

By Janet Sellers

NOTE: This reporter was unable to make a recording or attend in person and attended via an online Zoom meeting. This article was based on the agenda available online at www.BFFire.org and her notes from the meeting. This reporter was unable to enter the Zoom meeting until 20 minutes had passed, and some details from the meeting were unavailable to her at this writing.

At the Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Feb. 21, the board discussed the financial management plan, the budget execution, costs and delivery issues for the

new fire tender truck, and authority regarding policies and procedures.

There was a discussion between the board and Chief P.J. Langmaid regarding policies and proposals as well as implementation of the policies as procedures. The board approved the stated contract expenditure for the tender truck at delivery and reserved conversation to a later time regarding any further fees from issues regarding a timely delivery.

Inclusion of properties to the district were requested and adopted at this meeting. There were no comments on workshops, and a resident asking about plans for more equipment was told that it's in the long-term plan.

Chief Langmaid requested a public executive session with the board, and it was held at 8:50 p.m. The discussion centered on clarification for the chief and board duties of the district as an elite force and other terminology for policies and for terms on which the board requested clarification. Members of the board suggested that they address these issues later and not in this board meeting as the board members were not in agreement regarding the nature of the issues. They decided to announce a special meeting to clarify for all board members and when all board members are present. These comments ended the executive session.

Upon return to the regular meeting there were no more issues, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 20 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit www.bffir.org or contact Director of Public Relations Brooke Reid at Admin@bffir.org or call 719-495-4300.

Janet Sellers may be reached at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

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Monument Fire District, Feb. 28

Board meeting held after OCN went to press

By Natalie Barszcz

The Monument Fire District (MFD) board met on Feb. 28, which was after this issue of Our Community News had gone to press. Coverage of that meeting will be included in our April 6 issue.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month. A special meeting/public hearing for the inclusion/exclusion of property related to the merger with Donald Wescott Fire

Protection District will be held via Zoom and in person on March 6 at 3:30 p.m. at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 27 at 6:30 p.m. For Zoom meeting joining instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

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

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Jan 8

Safe Routes to School trail approved

By James Howald

In February, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board discussed and approved an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Lewis-Palmer School District 38 (LPSD). The board allocated additional funds to the Highway 105 construction project. It also heard operational reports. The meeting ended with an executive session.

Walking trail for students approved

District Manager Jessie Shaffer asked the board to approve an IGA between WWSD and LPSD allowing the school district to use a portion of WWSD's land for a Safe Routes to School walking trail to be used by students. The IGA had been a long time in the making, Shaffer said, and would permit the school district to use WWSD's lower lake access road, which runs along the southwestern edge of Lake Woodmoor, as a trail students could use to walk to school. Shaffer said a second IGA would be needed to address the construction of a bridge across the spillway at the southern edge of Lake Woodmoor.

The IGA notes that the school district has obtained a Safe Routes to School grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to fund construction of the trail. It makes LPSD responsible for the maintenance of the trail and specifies that LPSD will install two double-leaf vehicle gates at the north and south ends of the access road and will also install a fence along the western edge of the lake. LPSD will be responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the gates, the fence, and signs at the trailhead. The IGA also indemnifies WWSD

against any liability for use of the trail and insures WWSD against claims up to \$2 million.

Director Tom Roddam said he was opposed to the IGA, arguing that the indemnification in the IGA would not prevent WWSD from being sued. "It's not worth a hill of beans," Roddam said.

Board President Brian Bush said WWSD has "passively acknowledged this plan for a lot of years." (Our Community News first reported on the plan in 2017.)

Roddam suggested tabling the IGA until the plan for the bridge across the spillway was complete.

Shaffer said that prior WWSD boards had agreed to the plan, and it would be hard to renege on those commitments now. He said they could do so now but "it would be tough."

Director Dan Beley expressed some reservations about the IGA. Director Bill Clewe and Treasurer Roy Martinez said they did not have a problem with the terms of the IGA.

The board voted to approve the IGA. Beley, Bush, Clewe and Martinez voted in favor; Roddam voted against.

Additional funds for Highway 105 allocated

Richard Hood, of JVA Inc., the company managing WWSD's portion of El Paso County's project to widen Highway 105 between Jackson Creek Parkway and Lake Woodmoor Dr., gave the board an update on that project and asked the board to approve some additional funds.

Hood explained that Wildcat Construction has completed about 60% of

WWSD (Cont. on 12)

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WWSD (Cont. from 10)

the work for which WWSD is responsible. Improvements on Knollwood Boulevard and the Maguire property west of Knollwood are complete, Hood said. Service lines have been moved as required. The remaining portion of the work is on the south side of Highway 105 on Morning Canyon Road and adjacent to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Hood said there are \$143,000 in pending cost changes on the project. During the bid process, two mistakes were made: A pipe specification was changed from 8-inch to 6-inch and not properly accounted for and the costs of asphalt removal and replacement were underestimated. The pipe change will cost \$76,500, the additional asphalt costs will be \$33,026, and another \$34,000 is required by unexpected conditions such as needing to change the depth of some pipes, undocumented utility conflicts, and pipe diameters that differed from historical records. Hood pointed out that even with these additional costs, the total for the work was still \$200,000 less than the next higher bid.

Shaffer said the board had already approved

change orders up to 5% of the value of the contract, which would be \$50,000. He said the pending cost changes exceeded that amount, requiring the board to take action.

The board voted unanimously to approve another \$150,000 for the project.

Details of operational reports

- In his treasurer’s report, Martinez said water sales were higher than expected in January, up by 4.9% over the target. Sewer fees were as expected. WWSD purchased two new trucks, so equipment and vehicle costs were 90% of the budgeted amount.
- Shaffer said that Sackett vs. the Environmental Protection Agency, a 2023 case before the Supreme Court, had changed the regulations concerning wetlands under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The decision may complicate WWSD’s costs for permits, consultants, construction, and mitigation.
- Operations Superintendent Dan LaFontaine reported a 16% water loss in January due to five main breaks. He said the district’s water meter replacement project was just under 50% com-

plete. The effort to refill Lake Woodmoor was a bit behind schedule, with the lake refilling about 1.5 feet per day.

- In his review of upcoming development, Bush said he believed the proposed Waterside development, which would include 44 units on the west side of Lake Woodmoor adjacent to the Barn, after a delay, was now proceeding.

Executive session

The board held an executive session to receive legal advice concerning potential agreements with JV Ranches LLC, Monument Ridge West LLC, Enerfin Renewables LLC, El Paso County, and the members of the El Paso Regional Loop Water Authority.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 11 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see www.woodmoorwater.com or call 719-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

JamesHowaldcanbereachedatjameshowald@ocn.me.

Donala Water and Sanitation District, Feb. 15

Board considers request to extend service area

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

At its February meeting, the Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) board discussed a request to extend its service area to include a portion of the Falcon Commerce Center. It extended an existing water lease. The board also heard operational reports.

Request for sewer service raises questions

General Manager Jeff Hodge told the board that he had received a request from the Forest Lakes Metropolitan District (FLMD) to provide sewer service to a proposed development in the southern end of the Falcon Commerce Center. The center is west of I-25 and south of Baptist Rd., and its northern portion is home to the Pilot Travel Center, QuikTrip, and the United Parcel Service Customer Center. FLMD requested DWSD to allow future development in the southern end of the center to connect to a 24-inch sewer line owned by DWSD, Hodge said. FLMD currently receives sewer service from Triview Metropolitan District (TMD).

In response to a question from board President Wayne Vanderschuere, Hodge speculated that FLMD was requesting service from DWSD rather than from TMD because it would be cheaper than using TMD’s infrastructure. Hodge said he would prefer that FLMD install a lift station that would allow the flow to be metered. Vanderschuere pointed out that, if the connection were allowed, DWSD would need to account for an additional return flow.

Hodge said any future development in the Falcon Commerce Center would not be allowed to impinge on DWSD’s easement for the sewer line.

Vanderschuere pointed out that granting access

to the sewer line would raise accounting issues.

Hodge said it was not decided how the property in question would be developed; it could be commercial or residential. Vanderschuere said the property was just east of the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF) and that any residential development should not be able to complain about the odor from the facility. He also pointed out that, if access was approved, the price would need to be beneficial to DWSD’s core customers. He added that the Northern Monument Creek Interceptor project, the future of which is not clear, could also complicate this issue.

The board did not act on the request. Hodge said he would meet with representative of FLMD later in February.

Water lease renewed

Hodge asked the board to renew an agreement between the district and Martin Marietta that allows the company to lease up to 135 acre-feet per year of treated effluent from the Upper Monument Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. According to the lease agreement, Martin Marietta needs the water to replace evaporative depletions and to support gravel mining operations at the Rich Pit in Pueblo County. Martin Marietta will pay DWSD \$300 per acre-foot of water.

The board voted unanimously to renew the lease for a two-year term.

effluent discharged by treatment plants in the northern part of the county from Fountain Creek, treat it, and return it to customers in the four participating water districts.

Hodge said the Loop is discussing governance issues with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU). The loop is considering using CSU’s Edward Bailey Water Treatment Plant rather than building its own treatment plant. Hodge said he was concerned that upper management at CSU does not have a clear strategy for water reuse projects. He said that if CSU management did not buy into the Loop’s plan, the Loop would return to its original plan to build its own treatment facility. Hodge said the Loop would meet with CSU in March to try to resolve outstanding issues.

Water Operator Ronny Wright told the board that scheduled rehabilitation of the district’s water tanks was scheduled to begin on May 1. He said Well 16A should be operational in the next few months and available for use by summer.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 21 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs.

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Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Operational reports

In his manager’s report, Hodge gave the board an update on progress made by the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, known as the Loop, which is working to build the infrastructure needed to capture

El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, Feb. 15

Board debates relationship with CSU

By James Howald

At its February meeting, the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA, or the Loop) board continued its discussion of how to work with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU), particularly how the Loop might lower construction costs by making use of CSU’s Edward Bailey Water Treatment Plant (EBWTP) rather than building its own treatment facility. John Kuosman, a water practice leader with Merrick and Co., who also serves as the Loop Water Authority’s project planning and workflow manager, updated the board on his discussions regarding the EBWTP and the Loop’s relationship to CSU. The board also held an executive session.

Consultant proposes lowering EBWTP capacity

Kuosman told the board that he had held a kickoff meeting with Carollo Engineers Inc., the company that designed the EBWTP, to discuss strategies for adapting the plant to treat the water that the Loop intends to return to its participating water districts. He said the discussion touched on whether the Loop’s water could be handled as a separate flow within the plant, on the plant’s capacity, and on whether redundancy of processing within the plant was possible.

Kuosman said that, based on his discussion with

Carollo Engineers, handling the Loop’s water as a separate flow within the EBWTP was not possible.

Kuosman recommended “derating,” or lowering the stated capacity of the EBWTP. He explained that the plant had two treatment trains, each with five filter modules. Each treatment train is currently rated at 25 million gallons per day, for a total capacity of 50 million gallons a day. Kuosman argued for changes to the filter media, which would allow the plant to treat the Loop’s water but would also lower the total processing capacity. The proposed changes to the filter media would also allow the plant to remove PFAS chemicals. The alternative was for the Loop to build its own treatment plant, he said.

Director Amy Lathen, who represents the Cherokee Metropolitan District on the Loop’s board, asked if the plant’s capacity were reduced could it be increased later? She pointed out that the plant was not currently operating at full capacity. Kuosman said CSU’s plan for the plant was not completely transparent.

Loop board President Jessie Shaffer, who is also the general manager of the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, pointed out that the EBWTP is running at bare bones capacity: “just trying to keep the bugs alive.”

Governance approach discussed with CSU

Kuosman told the board he had discussed governance approaches with CSU. He said a regional convening authority was being considered. Existing governmental structures may not do what is needed over time, he said. Director Jeff Hodge, who is also the general manager of the Donala Water and Sanitation District, pointed out that the Loop was more nimble than CSU. Lathen said that CSU is not properly acknowledging the other regional players. She said she wanted to continue the governance discussion with CSU.

Executive session

The meeting ended with an executive session to receive legal advice from the Loop’s attorney regarding negotiating strategies.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 21 at 9 a.m. Regular meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. Workshop meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Cherokee Metropolitan District offices at 6250 Palmer Park Blvd., Colorado Springs. Please see loopwater.org or call 719-488-3603 to verify meeting times and locations.

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Monument Sanitation District, Feb. 21

Federal dollars help fund sewer line replacement

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

At its February meeting, the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board approved a notice of award for replacing a sewer line, funded primarily by the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). The board also heard an operational report from District Manager Mark Parker.

ARPA provides \$900,000 of \$1.4 million needed for sewer line replacement

Parker asked the board to approve a notice of award to Pate Construction Co. for \$1.4 million to replace a sewer line running east from the Willow Springs neighborhood to the Tri-Lakes Waste Water Treatment Facility (TLWWTF). Parker said Pate Construction’s bid was the lowest responsible bid of four bids presented to the district.

Parker said the existing line is made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and was poorly installed. The line has low points, called “bellies,” where grit accumu-

lates and blocks the line, requiring annual cleanings. When the line is replaced, it will be upgraded from 8-inch pipe to 12-inch pipe and will be moved 30 feet to the north within the easement belonging to Willow Springs. ARPA was funding \$900,000 of the \$1.4 million required to replace the line and the additional funds are earmarked in the district budget, Parker said. The district had offered to partner with View Homes, which plans to build houses adjacent to the line, but that effort was stymied by the Town of Monument’s moratorium on new construction, Parker said.

The board voted unanimously to approve the notice of award, which authorizes Parker to sign the agreement with Pate Construction.

Manager’s report

In his manager’s report, Parker told the board that residents in the Wakonda Hills neighborhood were continuing to see their septic systems fail, requiring them to connect to the district’s wastewater collection

system. As many as 24 residences need to make this transition, Parker said. Connecting to the district’s infrastructure requires the homeowner to build a service line to the district’s pipeline, which can cost as much as \$25,000. Some of the residents paid the required sewer tap fee ahead of time when the tap fee was between \$1,200 and \$2,000, less than it is presently. Those who waited to pay their tap fee must pay the current \$8,000 fee.

Parker told the board that the process controller electronics at the Wakonda Hills lift station had been replaced. The process controller had lost its configuration and had gone back to its default settings, Parker said, causing the lift station to stop working. A power surge may have been the cause of the failure, he said. Parker also mentioned that the supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) hardware in the headquarters building was being upgraded to match the equipment in use at the TLWWTF. Due to its age, re-

placement parts were not available.

Parker said the ducts had been cleaned at the district headquarters building for the first time in six years and he was working on getting the carpet replaced for an expected cost of \$5,500.

Monument Sanitation District meetings are held at 9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month in the district conference room at 130 Second St., Monument. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 20. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see [https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-](https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0)

map-0. Information: 719-481-4886.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Triview Metropolitan District, Feb. 22

Renewable water supply increases; CSU ties into NDS

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on Feb. 22, the board heard about an increase in the municipal renewable water supply and the tie-in of Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) to the Northern Delivery System (NDS). The board also discussed informing the residents about the district's path to becoming an 80% renewable water supply municipality and how sales tax and growth had helped achieve the district's goal. The board held an executive session and approved the potential purchase of land.

Treasurer/Secretary James Barnhart and Director Amanda Carlton were excused.

Renewable municipal water supply increases

Water counsel Chris Cummins announced a successful water change case that decreed about 1,050 of the district's water shares in the Fountain Mutual Irrigation Co. (FMIC). The decree changed the shares from agricultural water to municipal use water shares that equate to about 740 acre-feet in municipal water. The district leases 244 acre-feet of those shares to Fountain Valley Power for about \$15,000 per month. The remaining acre-feet will increase the municipal water supply to the district by about a half a year's worth of water from now on. In July that reusable renewable water will be available through the NDS, he said.

District Manager James McGrady said about 80% of the district's annual water supply beginning Jan. 5, 2025, will come from a renewable source, and the remaining 20% will be sourced from the district's Denver Basin groundwater wells. The renewable water supply will further increase as more water rights come into play, he said.

Northern Delivery System update

Assistant Manager Steve Sheffield said Kiewit had requested substantial completion and the two-year warranty period begins for the NDS pipeline on Jan. 31. The tie-in to CSU occurred on Feb. 5, but the district is anxious to get water moving through the pipeline to ensure the system is working 100% and can hold pressure. Kiewit recognizes that the pump station will not be complete until June and the pipeline will not be fully operational until mid-summer, he said.

Cummins said some pressure testing has occurred and the fire hydrants installed along the pipeline route held the correct pressure when tested with the static water in the pipeline.

McGrady said the pipeline should hold, but there is nothing like running the water through the pipeline to know for sure. The NDS pump station (located east of Highway 83 at Old Northgate Road) is moving along in its construction and is framed with roofing to begin on Feb. 26. The interior will be dry-walled by the end of the month and then the installation of the pumps will begin, he said.

Public relations—the path to renewable water

President Mark Melville requested future newsletters

reflect a timeline story beginning in 2015 on the district's path to its renewable water source.

Vice President Anthony Sexton requested the newsletter communicate all the reasons for the decisions the board makes. Many of the projects and the district's achievements are made through sales tax and growth, and an explanation would be useful for the residents, he said.

Director Jason Gross said the district has a wonderful story of vision, good timing, smart decision-making and long-term thinking and it would be a tragedy to not capture and share with the residents as the district reaches the end of the tunnel on its path to renewable water sourcing for the community. The story sets a good example for other municipalities, he said.

Cummins said in the last seven years the board only had about three votes that were not unanimous, and it has been important to have a board that can listen, understand, and make sound decisions and allow the district staff and consultants to do the things they need to do based on those decisions.

McGrady said there has been no micromanagement from the board; it gave vision and direction, setting the tone for staff to follow then standing back with confidence as staff and counsel pursued the projects needed to sustain renewable water for the future.

Operations report

McGrady said the following:

- A meeting to discuss an emergency interconnect with the Town of Monument (TOM) was delayed due to scheduling conflicts and is now scheduled for March 4.
- The Bale and Arkansas Valley Irrigation Co. (AVIC) ditch change cases are both moving forward. The district is trying to avoid a trial on April 1 with the AVIC change case by getting the objectors out as quickly as possible.
- The re-vegetation plan for the AVIC in Buena Vista is in order, and that had been a problem for some objectors.
- The district is planning to build recharge ponds to accommodate the AVIC water in the future, after the change cases are decreed and the property is annexed into the town of Buena Vista.
- Northern Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI) will kick off with a project meeting at the end of February.
- CSU held a meeting to discuss an indirect potable reuse plan. The district does not necessarily need the project to manage the district's wastewater return flows unless it becomes more cost effective.

Sheffield said the following:

- D38, the TOM and the district have reached an agreement on the striping and layout on Creekside Drive. Two westbound lanes at Bear Creek Elementary School will be incorporated soon to assist with the drop-off/pick-up flow.
- TMD is exploring the possibility of widening Leather Chaps Drive and is working with Black

Hills Energy to avoid the gas line that runs about 36 to 42 inches deep beside the road.

- Multiple meetings took place with the TOM planning staff and NES Inc. to discuss the water tank installation at Plant B on St. Lawrence Way in Promontory Pointe.
- An extensive meeting took place with Classic Homes to discuss a potential connection of sanitary sewer into the TMD collection system for Flying Horse North, Hodgen Road.
- District administrators are working with Ireland Stapleton Law to review and possibly revise the personnel manual.

Financial report

Sexton said he was curious about the check to Pikes Peak Regional Water Authority for \$5,687.83.

McGrady said the annual Transit Loss Fee is variable and is required to pay for the re-calibration of the gauges on Fountain Creek down to the Arkansas River. Every water district that uses Fountain Creek for water transit pays the re-calibration fee annually.

Cummins said that the flows were excessive last year following the huge amount of rain received in May 2023.

The board accepted, 3-0, checks over \$5,000 and the financial report for January as presented.

Executive session

The board moved into an executive session at 7:18 p.m. pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 24-6-402(4) (a), (b), (e) to discuss acquisitions and receive legal advice for negotiations regarding water acquisitions, the Highway Users Tax Fund share return, strategic planning, and change cases.

Sheffield confirmed the board returned to the regular session at 9:20 p.m. In a 3-0 vote, the board authorized McGrady to sign a letter of intent to potentially purchase a 2-acre parcel of land near the northwest corner of I-25 and Baptist Road for the future home office and storage yard.

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of every month at the district office located at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for March 21 at 5:30 p.m. For meeting agendas, minutes, and updates, visit <https://triview-metro.com>.

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

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Jan. 29, 31

Annual meeting and reorganization

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on Jan. 29 for its annual meeting to elect new board members, review 2023 accomplishments, state 2024 goals, and recognize good neighbors. The board met on Jan. 31 to certify the election, reorganize its positions, and approve operational procedures. The regular February meeting was held on the 28th, after the deadline for Our Community News, and will be reported in next month's issue.

Annual meeting

Board President Brian Bush called the meeting to order and covered the presentation available on the WIA website at <http://bit.ly/wia-2024-annual>. Bush confirmed that a quorum was achieved via residents returning their ballots and noted that the board had saved over \$2,100 by not providing postage-paid envelopes and saved \$1,000 by having staff count the ballots in lieu of the League of Women Voters. Bush reviewed the rules of conduct for the meeting, which he summarizes as "Be Nice!"

Bush reviewed the mission of WIA to perform covenant enforcement and architectural control; maintain and improve common areas; and provide public safety. He also noted that WIA monitors issues in surrounding areas that may affect its residents. Bush emphasized that, contrary to media reports on other homeowners' associations (HOAs), WIA does not foreclose on properties, enforce ridiculous covenants, or fail to work with residents on reasonable solutions, nor does it have rigid and unchanging rules and regulations. However, he said, the board cannot change the covenants without a 66% vote of lot owners. He noted that the board had recently changed the rules for gates and fences as well as increasing the number of cars allowed to park on the property outside of a garage. If a resident has a problem, Bush invited them to contact WIA via email.

Noting that board positions are unpaid, he introduced the 2023 board members and WIA staff, many of whom have been on staff for quite some time. The

WIA dues for 2024 have increased by \$8 to \$291 annually after considering the impact of inflation on salaries and the cost of improvements. The top three income sources were dues, new construction fees, and Barn rentals. Top expenses other than payroll were common area improvements and forestry maintenance. Bush commended the WIA and Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) staff for holding expenses under budget.

WPS services include immediate officer response, vacation checks, crime prevention, traffic control, 24/7 patrol, and interagency support and communication. In 2023, WPS had 13,500 on-duty hours; drove 72,837 miles; completed 12,772 vacation checks, responded to 882 calls for service, and more. WPS received \$19,080 in donations for vacation checks. In 2023, WPS added two new vehicles to replace aging jeeps. Bush noted that the board invested in body cameras for all officers. He also noted that in 2023 the El Paso Board of County Commissioners had decided to only plow Priority 3 roads when snow depths reach 6 inches, which creates hazardous driving conditions; he noted that by law WIA cannot plow county roads.

Bush reviewed 2023 highlights:

- WIA purchased a new computer server to replace its 8-year-old server.
- WIA continues to support the Safe Routes to School trail, which has been a long-term project. He noted that the trail will benefit association members as well and hopes to report on more progress this time next year.
- Thanks to the \$275,000 matching grant for wildfire mitigation, \$550,000 of mitigation has been done in the community.
- Four chipping days over two weekends that were free to residents; a \$10 donation was requested of non-residents.
- WIA improved two miles of trail on the South Woodmoor Preserve that it accepted as a donation from WOSC LLC.

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For 2024 goals, Bush highlighted:

- Obtain more funding for a fire mitigation grant.
- Developing trails in common areas.
- Continuing to digitize WIA files.
- Continuing WPS patrols.

Top architectural projects were roof replacement repairs, with 595 total projects (down from 634), of which 98.8% were approved by the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) or office staff.

The Good Neighbor award went to John and Sussanna Finter, who helped an ill neighbor by watering, removing snow, and helping in the house. The couple received a \$50 Home Depot gift card.

The meeting ended with a round of questions and answers about vegetation blocking visibility at intersections, the cattails at Wild Duck Pond, WIA's role in traffic safety for School District 38, and the decision not to plow streets until there are 6 inches of snow. If an intersection is in the WIA area, WIA's contractor can help remove overgrown vegetation, said Bush. ACC administrator Bob Pearsall said he had plans for the contractor to work on the Wild Duck Pond cattails. Bush said that the board had concluded that it was unsafe for officers to do traffic control in front of the middle and high schools. He also noted that snow removal is solely done by the county and recommended residents contact their county commissioner Holly Williams (HollyWilliams@elpasoco.com).

Board reorganization

At the Jan. 31 meeting, Bush reviewed the certified election results, which re-elected three members. The board re-instated directors to the following roles:

- Brian Bush, president
- Peter Bille, vice president, re-elected
- Connie Brown, treasurer
- Steve Cutler, Common Areas, re-elected

- Rick DePaiva, secretary and Community Outreach
- Brad Gleason, Public Safety
- Ed Miller, Architectural Control, re-elected
- Per Suhr, Covenant Control
- Cindy Thrush, Forestry

Board highlights

- The board appointed Bush, Bille, Brown, and DePaiva as authorized signers on its financial accounts.
- The board voted unanimously to meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7 pm. The November and December meetings will be moved earlier due to the holidays. All meetings are held at The Barn.
- The board set its covenant hearing dates for the second Thursday of each month at 6:15 pm.
- The board set its ACC meetings for the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. except for December when there is only one meeting. The board appointed the 2024 ACC committee members.
- The board authorized the ACC administrator to approve certain miscellaneous projects, handle compliance fee refunds up to \$500, and handle routine change orders for all projects without prior ACC approval.
- The board authorized the director of Forestry to review and approve tree removal requests and Firewise lot evaluations. The board appointed Forestry Committee members for 2024.

WIA and area developments

WIA is a member of the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Organizations (NEPCO), which tracks new developments. WIA is working with The

Heights property owners association (POA) to monitor the proposed development called Monument Ridge East. The Heights, a 62-member association, is behind the proposed Monument Ridge East development. WIA also works with the David Weekley Homes on the development of the Cloverleaf area, which has 131 homes. WIA will administer the covenants of this sub-HOA. Bush noted that they wanted to have wrought-iron fences which were not approved.

Bush noted that the North Bay development proposals have ranged from 41 to 13 units but is currently inactive. The Waterside development, which is just north of The Barn, is active and has changed from 52 to 44 units. WIA is working with the La Plata Communities/Vantage Homes and will be reviewing the governing documents. Bush reiterated that there is not one-square-inch of Tri-Lakes that is not planned for development at some point.

For more information on NEPCO, see <http://www.nepco.org>; for more information on development projects in Woodmoor, see <https://woodmoor.org/woodmoor-developments/>.

The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in the Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next meeting will be on March 28.

The WIA calendar can be found at www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/ once approved and posted.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

February Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

February was warm and wet, with overall moisture values coming in greater than the 100-year recurrence interval. In other words, there was less than a 1% chance in any given February that we would receive as much moisture as we did last month. These higher levels of moisture available also meant temperatures were warm as the origin of most of the storms that came through was the Pacific Ocean and not the Arctic. Lows never dipped below zero for us during the month.

Another benefit of the numerous storms moving through from the west/northwest was the amount of snow that accumulated in the mountains. This brought snowpack levels up to average by the end of the month. This pattern is typical of an El Niño winter overall for most of Colorado, so the mild and wet conditions were expected.

The Palmer Divide region was affected by a new storm about once per week. The first one moved through on the 2nd and 3rd. This storm was of subtropical Pacific origins and was therefore very mild for early February. In fact, the storms started out with a little rain/snow mix during the afternoon of the 2nd before everything turned into a heavy, wet snow. This was more like April than February. Heavy snow quickly accumulated along the higher elevations of the Palmer Divide, with amounts quickly falling off in lower elevations. New snow amounts ranged from 3-12 inches with high variability over short distances.

Mild air moved in behind this system, with highs reaching into the 50s by the 6th ahead of another active system which began to affect the region on the 9th. This storm moved in from the northwest and therefore was cooler than the previous storm. This meant all snow and blowing snow. Snow fell heaviest on the 10th, with 8-12 inches accumulating. This left behind a good snowpack across the area, and clearing skies on the 11th allowed temperatures to drop to the single digits.

A week of quiet weather moved in from the 11th to the 15th, with temperatures warming to the upper 40s and low 50s by the end of the period. A weak cold front brought light snow and cool temperatures on the 16th and 17th, with 1-3 inches of new snow around the region.

Temperatures then warmed again over the next few days, reaching the mid- to upper 50s from the 19th through the 21st. A very quick cool down accompanied by a spring-like pattern produced a few snow showers and even a few rumbles of thunder on the 22nd. Sunny and mild conditions quickly returned with highs back into the mid- to upper 50s from the 24th though 26th, helped with gusty westerly winds at times.

One final cold front moved through on the 27th, with a quick shot of snow that afternoon and evening into early on the 28th. This brought temperatures back to below normal levels to end the month.

A look ahead

March is known for a wide range of weather conditions in the region. We can see 70° temperatures one afternoon and blizzard conditions the next. Many of us remember the blizzard of March 2003 when we received 30-50 inches of snowfall that shut down the region. However, snow that does fall begins to melt quickly this time of the year, providing beneficial moisture for our plants as we head into spring.

February 2024 Weather Statistics

Average High	43.9° (+4.2°)
100-year return frequency value	max 51.9° min 32.8°
Average Low	19.2° (+6.4°)
100-year return frequency value	max 21.9° min 3.7°
Highest Temperature	59° on the 26th
Lowest Temperature	7° on the 11th
Monthly Precipitation	2.25"
	(+1.31" 240% above normal)
100-year return frequency value	max 2.10" min 0.02"
Monthly Snowfall	31.9"
	(+14.1", 80% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	90.0"
	(+19.5", 27% above normal)
Season to Date Precip.	3.16"
	(+1.51", 200% above normal)
Heating Degree Days	971 (+67)
Cooling Degree Days	0

Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 19.

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in LetterstoOurCommunityaretheresponsibilityoftheletter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.

Caught by surprise

The local community around Fox Run Park was largely caught by surprise recently at the plans of El Paso County to build a nature center in the more remote, wooded section of Fox Run Park, clearing trees to construct a building, a tower that rises above tree line, and 60 parking spots. Notification of the project was never directed at neighborhoods directly adja-

cent to the park—it came only through local citizen efforts. About 75 citizens showed up at a meeting held 20 minutes away on a snowy, icy night to discuss concerns about the project. Despite the expressed intention of the meeting, at least one attendee left questioning the true purpose.

There are legitimate traffic safety issues by those living on the residential streets around the park, not to mention other worthy considerations. In one person's attempt to explain issues documented in a 161-page speeding report on Becky Drive and urge the exploration of relocation of the center to a direct entrance off of Roller Coaster Road, the response was that said person needed "to have an open mind" to the current plan. While many attended the meeting with a per-

haps naive expectation on its expressed goal to gain input, it felt to many that the intent was to defend "the plan" and to appease the concerned.

Unfortunately, the Fox Run Nature Center will likely become another example of the strong arm of public servants to further projects with little disruption, despite negative impact on local citizens. However, the attempts to force alternative considerations that appropriately protect the Fox Run area are noble and in line with our societal foundations. The next opportunity for discussion is an open house to be held on March 14, 2024, from 6-8 p.m. at Pikes Peak Brewery, 1756 Lake Woodmoor Drive in Monument. Kelly Bane

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore
March mystery madness

By the staff at Covered Treasures

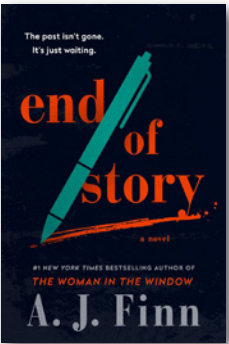
"Mysteries abound where most we seek the answers."—Ray Bradbury

March is a month of crazy weather, basketball and spring break. It's also a great time to hunker down with some good mysteries.

End of Story

By A.J. Finn

"I'll be dead in three months. Come tell my story," writes reclusive mystery novelist Sebastian Trapp to his longtime friend, an expert in detective fiction. "You and I might solve a mystery or two." Soon Nicky Hunter finds herself caught in an irresistible case, obsessed with discovering the truth. Scattered with eccentric characters and references to other mysteries, this is a fresh, witty new novel from the author of the popular The Woman in the Window.



The Mystery Guest: A Maid Novel (Molly the Maid)

By Nita Prose (Ballantine Books) \$29

Molly Gray has risen through the ranks of the glorious five-star Regency Grand Hotel to become the esteemed head maid. But just as her life reaches a pinnacle state of perfection, her world is turned upside down when a world-renowned mystery author drops dead on the floor of the hotel's tearoom. As the high-profile death threatens the hotel's pristine reputation, Molly knows she alone holds the key to unlocking the killer's identity.

The Last Caretaker

By Jessica Strawser (Lake Union Publishing) \$17

Katie accepts a resident caretaking job at a nature preserve. But from day one, something feels off. When a frantic, terrified woman arrives late at night, expecting a safe place to hide, it is clear this job is a lot more than Katie bargained for. As Katie digs deeper for clues in what the last caretaker left behind, she must discover courage she never knew she had—and decide how much she'll risk to do the right thing.

The Last Devil to Die: A Thursday Murder Club Mystery

By Richard Osman (Pamela Doorman Books) \$29

Shocking news reaches the gang that an old friend has been killed, and a dangerous package he was protecting has gone missing. The gang's search leads them into the antiques business, where the tricks of the trade are as old as the objects themselves. As they encounter drug dealers, art forgers, and online fraudsters, they have no idea whom to trust.

In the Woods (Dublin Murder Squad)

By Tana French (Penguin Books) \$18

In a small Dublin suburb in the summer of 1984 three children do not return home, and the police find only one of the children gripping a tree trunk in terror, unable to recall a single detail of the previous hours. Twenty years later, the found boy (Ryan) is a detective and keeps his past a secret. When a 12-year-old girl is found murdered in the same woods, he and his partner find themselves investigating a case chillingly similar to his own. This is the first in French's excellent Dublin Murder Squad series.

Miracle Creek

By Angie Kim (Picador USA) \$19

In a small town in Virginia, a group of people know

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 extended 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 online 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.

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



Above: Snow-covered Upper Palmer Lake Reservoir.

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.

Lovage, the mountain celery

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

perennial lovage from seed indoors, then plant outdoors after the last frost. It matures to a whopping 60 inches in

90 days; cutting it back mid-season will bring forth new, tasty leaves. Easily grown from seed, it grows well in pots

but is most vigorous in the ground. Janet Sellers is an avid “lazy gardener” letting Mother Nature lead the way for

natural growing wisdom. Reach her at janetsellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Fine art offers valuable returns



By Janet Sellers

Imagination is available at all times; using it to be creative and make something is a highly developed and valued skill. Art has an effect on viewers and collectors, and they seek to revisit the realms the artist brings as a kind of portal for them. We all experience this kind of portal idea when we read books or watch television and video games or use visual and sound media to engage with ideas and our imagination. The artist creates a pathway from our day-to-day life to the realm of imagination, bringing it to us physically from their adventures in imagination via art creation.

Art is decoration, a statement, ritual equipment, ornament, entertainment, and more. Art is the imagination made visible and tangible. We can make it ourselves, we can buy art as investment, and we can even buy fractional shares of art as investment and earn a return when the art sells.

In the last year, among the top 10 smart and safe investments with a whopping 10 percent return listed by the investment firm Lion’s Wealth Management, art is No. 4. Art is an investment to enjoy seeing every day while it creates a return. It also appreciates in value independently of other investment indexes like security indexes and inflation.

This begs the question of which level of art is investment worthy and how is that determined and discerned? Frequently, investors use the secondary art market for investment levels,

and the cognoscenti (literati) invest in the primary art market. What are those?

The primary art market is the first purchase of a work and usually lower in price than when the artwork is resold, which is known as the secondary market. Artworks can be resold often, but it is likely that the collector buys the artwork because they like to see it or know they can share it via leasing or other ways for shows at museums and events.

These primary and secondary art markets are closely intertwined, and the best way for people to understand the investment value, as with any investment, is educating themselves about the art, artists and the stability of the artists’ works and the art prices. The secondary art market tends to be more stable but as in any market, the seller, be it at auction, private sale, or a gallery sale, looks to make the highest return possible. Just as in any business, an artist’s artwork sales need to go up to show confidence, stability, and profitability for investment status. Even so, art for art’s sake and art for personal pleasure are still investments to enjoy and brighten our days.

News flash! This year, our Art Hop season will change from Thursdays to Fridays and include music, food, and more. Stay tuned!

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer and speaker who makes and shares her artworks locally and nationally via galleries, writing, and talks on art and making things. Contact her at janetsellers@ocn.me.

Snapshots of Our Community

Lions assist eyeglass project



Above: Members of the Tri-Lakes Lions Club and Knights of Sight gathered Jan. 14 to process over 60 pounds of recyclable eyeglasses donated by area residents. The glasses were sent to the Colorado Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center in Denver for further processing. Lions International vision centers will provide the glasses for free to underprivileged people around the world. Walmart Vision, America’s Best, Monument Vision, and Premier Vision helped with the project. *Photo by Gordon Reichal.*

TLWC CPR Training, Feb. 21



Above: Members of the Tri-Lakes Women’s Club (TLWC) and their spouses got CPR training at the Woodmoor Barn on Feb. 21. The training was conducted by the Monument Fire Department and UC Health cardiac care nurses. According to the American Heart Association, 74% of cardiac arrests that occur outside of a hospital happen at home, and nearly half of those victims survive when someone performs CPR. In the photo, TLWC member Margie Klaus watches as Roger Meurer, spouse of TLWC member Laura Meurer (not pictured), practices CPR technique. Checking the monitor that gives feedback on proper CPR technique are TLWC member and organizer of the event Carol Costakis and her husband Greg. *Photo by Sue Leggiero.*

Ice Cream for Breakfast, Feb. 24



Waters is Young Marine of the Year



Above: A Palmer Ridge High School junior was named Division 4 Young Marine of the Year for the second consecutive year on Dec. 28. Jackson Waters, 17, will now compete with five other division winners for the title of National Young Marine of the Year, the highest honor bestowed by the Young Marines nationally. The competition will be held March 23 in Woodbridge, Va., near the Young Marines National Headquarters. Since joining the Young Marines in 2016, Jackson has logged 850 hours of community service. *Photo courtesy of the Young Marines.*

D38 Chess Tournament, Feb. 24



Above: There were chess boards as far as the eye could see in the gym at Bear Creek Elementary on Feb. 24 as the school hosted the 17th annual D38 chess tournament. About 130 students took part. Robert Collier was the best among high school students, and Colton Kandrak topped the middle school division. Among elementary school students, Abraham Burruel won the first-grade category, Anze Caulkins was tops among second-graders. Henry Johnson won the third-grade division. Max Lindeman came in first among fourth-graders. The fifth-grade category was won by Walter Hefter. Kyle Fieber was tops among sixth-graders and Sam Knauf won the kindergarten category. In the photo, Palmer Lake Elementary School student Tucker VanderJagt makes a move toward victory in his third-round competition. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

Left: About 40 people lined up early to be among the first to eat ice cream for breakfast at Lolley’s Ice Cream in Monument on Feb. 24. Monument residents Ryan Maguire and his family were first in line at 8:40 a.m., 20 minutes before the shop opened. Maguire says they were first in line last year, too. The national event was originally scheduled for Feb. 3, but had to be postponed in Monument because of a snowstorm. Maguire says if it hadn’t been postponed, they would’ve stood in line in the snow. Customers had their choice of having their ice cream on top of waffles or mini-doughnuts. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

Stars of Tomorrow auditions, Feb. 24

Below: There was singing, gymnastics, piano and guitar playing, even clogging at the auditions for the second annual Stars of Tomorrow talent show. The auditions were held Feb. 21, 24, and 25 at “Big Red,” the D38 administration building in Monument. The Kiwanis Club of Monument Hill puts on the show that’ll take place March 17 at Palmer Ridge High School. Winners will be announced that night. The elementary school winner will earn \$500, and the top middle school student will take home \$750. Two scholarships worth \$1,000 and \$2,000 will be given to the high school winners. *Photos by Michael Weinfeld.*



Korina Mirenda performed gymnastics.



Evie LaBouliere and Caroline Marsh performed gymnastics.



Adalae LaBouliere and Truvie Marsh performed gymnastics.



Alyson Horne sang.



Rowan Vaughn sang.



June Vella sang and played guitar.



Ashlyn Boomer sang.



Henry Calvert sang.



Brianne Miller sang.



William Woo played the piano.



Benton Miles played trumpet and sang.



Blaise Klinedinst sang.



Roman Rodriguez performed a Michael Jackson dance routine.

Why advertise in OCN?

- OCN is mailed FREE to every resident and business in the Tri-Lakes area. We mail more than 22,700 copies every month and put another 700 copies in stacks throughout the area. OCN has the one of the largest mailed circulations among local newspapers in Colorado. We put copies of OCN into the hands of those people most likely to buy your products or services: local residents and businesses.
- OCN is a primary source for Tri-Lakes area news. Since its founding in 2001, OCN has been presenting unbiased, detailed coverage of Tri-Lakes area governmental entities and their deliberations and actions. Credibility is key. Advertising in a credible medium typically rubs off on the advertisers in that media.
- OCN gives preference to Tri-Lakes area businesses. As part of OCN’s long-standing commitment to encouraging the economic health of the Tri-Lakes area, we offer a significantly discounted ad rate to Tri-Lakes area businesses as a way to help local businesses like yours succeed.
- OCN’s low ad rates and monthly publication schedule help stretch your ad budget. OCN has one of the lowest ad costs per printed copy of any local publication. Since OCN is a monthly publication, your ad is out there for a month—more than four times longer than other local papers. Many of our advertisers tell us they’re still getting calls in the third and fourth week of the month.
- OCN doesn’t use contracts. You aren’t tied down. Adjust your advertising month-to-month to meet your changing needs. Our advertisers run ads in OCN because they see benefit in it, not because they’re bound by a contract they signed months before. To reward frequent advertisers, OCN has a Frequent Advertiser Bonus (FAB) rewards program. You earn up to 10% of your ad cost as a reward you can use to reduce the cost of future OCN advertising. The more you advertise with OCN, the more you save. Thanks to our FAB rewards program, OCN advertisers have saved more than \$111,000!
- You are supporting a good thing. Your advertising dollars support a unique all-volunteer, Tri-Lakes-focused effort to present factual, comprehensive news to all Tri-Lakes area residents and businesses.

And the best reason of all: It works!

Crystal Wright, Crystal’s In-Home Training - “I have had the best success with advertising in the Our Community News for my business. 95% of my new clients are coming from this local paper, and I couldn’t be more pleased. If you are thinking of advertising in the Monument area, I recommend you advertise with this paper.”

Mike Smith, Woodsmith Custom Creations - “OCN is the only paper that works for me. I’ve tried other newspapers, one that comes out daily and another that comes out weekly. Compared to the results I get from advertising in the OCN the other papers are flops. I get a fairly priced ad in my targeted area with calls referencing my ad every month. It can’t be beat!”

Randi and Dale Sehestedt, Woodmoor Handyman and Snow Plowing - “OCN is the only paper we advertise in and it consistently brings us plenty of good local customers. Great paper and great people to work with.”

Mary Sue Hafey, Fringe Benefits Custom Interiors - “Since I starting advertising with OCN years ago, it has helped brand my company while consistently increasing my exposure and sales!”

Elba D’Asaro, Spa Medica - “OCN ads work!”

Mike Reaster, Guitar Lessons - “Ads in OCN work great for me. I tried other local papers and got no response. Thanks to my ads in OCN, I can work from home and make a decent living. All my work comes from my ads in OCN.”

For more information on advertising, go to www.ocn.me/advertise.htm or contact John Heiser at (719) 488-3455 or ads@ocn.me.

Our Community Notices

By Janet Sellers

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the information number for that event. Please notify us if your event listing needs to be updated.

Tax preparation help

VITA provides free tax preparation to individuals and families who have a household income of less than \$60,000. For more information contact Elizabeth Quevedo, Senior V.P. of Community Impact, Pikes Peak United Way, elizabeth@ppunitedway.org, 719-955-0762 (ofc), 423-333-4431 (cell).

WMMI needs volunteers

The Museum of Mining and Industry is currently recruiting for Visitor Services Associates and Guides. Please consider sharing your time and expertise. Volunteers must be 18 and older and pass a background check. For information about volunteer opportunities, please call 719-488-0880 or email at volunteer@wmmi.org.

Children’s Literacy Center

The center provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level! Tutoring is at the Tri-Lakes Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 pm, and the Summer Session will run through Aug. 14. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or email Christine Jeffson at Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org.

Community volunteers

Many students need volunteer hours for scouting, civics classes, clubs, or would just like to volunteer for the good of it. Friends of Fox Run Park will have some openings for student volunteers (and grownups, too) most of the year for various tasks. Besides tasks, the group offers information and skills demonstrations for each 2-3 hour session, and celebrates volunteers at the park with annual community events. The Tri Lakes Cares on-site garden in Monument also needs volunteers in Fall, Spring and Summer. Gardening tasks include preparing garden beds, weeding, sowing

seeds, and developing the compost. Bring gardening gloves, some tools will be provided on the workdays. Contact Janet Sellers at JanetSellers@ocn.me or Marlene Brown at MarleneBrown@ocn.me for more information.

Palmer Lake Parking Restrictions

When there is an accumulation of two inches or more of snow, the parking restrictions shall be in effect. No person shall stop, stand, or park any vehicle on any portion of a snow route, or leave, abandon, or permit to remain stalled any vehicle, which is stalled on any portion of a snow route and take immediate action for placing the vehicle to be parked lawfully. Parked vehicles must be removed from all streets within the town, including those which are not designated snow routes. Parking information details: <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/pw/page/parking-restrictions-during-snow>.

Tri-Lakes Cares needs your support

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization serving northern El Paso County through emergency relief and self-sufficiency programs. The community-based, volunteer-supported center is a critical resource for our neighbors in need. The best way to help support Tri-Lakes Cares is to donate. Visit <https://tri-lakescares.org/donate> to learn how to donate money, medical items, personal supplies, or food. Please check the web for current needs in our food pantry at <https://tri-lakescares.org/donate/current-needs>. Donation drop-off hours are Mon.-Thu., 9 am-4 pm. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Tri-Lakes Cares at 719-481-4864 or info@tri-lakescares.org.

Silver Key at Tri-Lakes Senior Center

Silver Key at Tri-Lakes Senior Center, formerly known as the Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance Senior Center, has been providing exciting programs and activities to area seniors who have a zest for fun and learning. As the older adult population is growing, our services are in high demand. 719-884-2300 66 Jefferson St, Monument. See ad on page 2.

Need PC help?

Make It Work Clinic for PCs, FREE. Donations appreciated.

We are gauging interest in helping community members with their PCs, please email us if interested. enable@monumentalimpact.org. 55 Adams St in Downtown Monument. Monumental Impact info: <https://monumentalimpact.org>. See ad on page 4.

Can you volunteer today?

- **Links to local organizations** with an immediate need for volunteers are listed on the county’s website, www.elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations, for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).
- **The Colorado State University Extension office** in El Paso County has several opportunities for individuals interested in volunteering. <https://elpaso.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-opportunities/>
- **El Paso County volunteer-based and nonprofit organizations** rely on the hard work of individuals like you. Find out how you can play a part by becoming a volunteer in El Paso County. Get involved in El Paso County volunteering non-profits and organizations! <https://www.americantowns.com/el-paso-county-co/volunteer-organizations/>.
- **The El Paso County Sheriff’s Office** Volunteer Program is composed of a collective citizens group with a true and common desire to partner with the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office by volunteering their services while learning more about the internal workings of the law enforcement community. <https://www.epc-sheriffsoffice.com/volunteer-program-0>.
- **The El Paso County Volunteer Program** is a wonderful opportunity for citizens to learn about the various functions of county government as well as give back to the community. The County’s numerous boards and commissions need your experience, talents and time. <https://bocc.elpasoco.com/volunteer>.

Our Community Calendar

By Janet Sellers

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the info number for that event. Please contact calendar@ocn.me with changes and additions.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1, 2 & 3 board typically meets quarterly on the first Mon. Meetings are held via teleconference. For virtual joining instructions and updates see www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com.
- El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting, usually every Tue., 9 am. View agendas and meetings at www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso. Meetings are held at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-643. BOCC land use meetings are held the second and fourth Thursdays of the month (as needed) at 1pm Centennial Hall.
- Monument Town Council meeting, Mon., Mar. 4 & 18, 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees-for-remote-attendance-links.
- Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments, Tue., Mar. 5, 5 pm, 28 Valley Crescent St., Palmer Lake. Normally meets first Tue., as needed.
- Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board meetings: Wed., Mar. 6, 4:30 pm. in person at Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument, and via Zoom. Meetings for 2024: Apr. 24; June 26 (includes Volunteer Pension Board); Jul. 24; Sep. 25; Nov. 20. For Zoom meeting instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit <http://www.monumentfire.org> or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.
- El Paso County Planning Commission meeting, Thu., Mar. 7 & 21, 9 am. Regional Development Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live-streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Normally meets first & third Thu. (as required). Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com/2023-meetings/>.
- Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Mon., Mar. 11, 1 pm, 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
- Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting, Tue., Mar. 12, 10 am, 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: See <https://tlwastewater.com/index.html> Bill Burks, 719-481-4053.
- Monument Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Mar. 13, 6 pm Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Usually meets the second Wed. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. Info: 719-884-8028. www.townofmonument.org.
- Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Thu., Mar. 14 & 28, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- Monument Academy School Board, Thu., Mar. 14, 6:30 pm, East Campus gym, 4303 Pinehurst Circle. Usually meets the second Thu. Info: 719-431-8001, www.monumentacademy.net/school-board.
- Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting, Mon., Mar. 18, 6-10 pm. 146 N Jefferson St, Monument. The Board of Education meeting will be live-streamed on the district’s YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/LPSDCcommunity, agenda, and supporting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Contact Vicki Wood. Phone: 719.481.9546 Email: vwood@lewispalmer.org Website: <https://www.lewispalmer.org>.
- Monument Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Mar. 20, 9 am, 130 Second St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-4886, www.colorado.gov/msd.
- Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Mar. 20, 9 am, call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets sec-

ond Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsld.org.

- Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting, Wed., Mar. 20, 6 pm. Usually meets third Wed. Public can join the Skype meeting: <https://join.skype.com/PACuJKTn7Nrh>. Check the website for a link: <https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts>. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-0711, <https://academywsd.colorado.gov>.
- Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission meeting, Wed., Mar. 20, 6 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Mar. 20, 7 pm, Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at 719-495-4300. Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday.
- El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority meeting, Thu. Mar. 21, 9 am Monument Town Hall Boardroom, 645 Beacon Lite Rd. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-3603. www.loopwater.org.
- Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting, Thu., Mar. 21, 1:30 pm, 15850 Holbein Dr. In 2023, meets third Thu., Check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting. Info: 719-488-3603, www.donalawater.org.
- Triview Metropolitan District board meeting, Thu., Mar. 21, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
- Monument Fire District board meeting, in person or via Zoom, Wed., Mar. 27, 6:30 pm., Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumentfire.org>, or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911.
- Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting, Wed., Mar. 27, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. The WIA Board usually meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
- Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (now PCAC, formerly DAAC), Tue., Apr. 9, 6-10 pm, Lewis-Palmer High School, 1300 Higby Road, Meets six times a year. Usually meets monthly, second Tue. Contact info: tmckee@lewispalmer.org.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY EVENTS

- AARP Black Forest #1100, second Wed., noon. In-person Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd. All ages welcome. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
- AARP Local Senior Social, fourth Wed. In-person Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
- A.A. Big Book Study, every Thu., 7 pm, Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#.
- Alcoholics Anonymous, every Tue. & Thu., 7:30 p.m. Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80908. AA is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Join us with your questions. Info: bflc@bflchurch.org.
- Al-Anon for family and friends of alcoholics, every Tue. & Thu., 7:30 p.m. Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Road, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80908. Al-Anon members are people, just like you, who are worried about someone with a drinking problem. Join us with your questions. Info: bflc@bflchurch.org.
- Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9-10 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309.
- Al-Anon meeting: Letting Go, every Thu., 9-10:15 am at Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. For additional information go to www.al-anon-co.org.
- Al-anon Meeting: Monument, every Thu., 7-8 pm, Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750

- Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: MonumentSerenity@gmail.com.
- Amateur ham radio WØTLM (Tri-Lakes Monument ham radio Association), third Mon. (except December). All amateur ham radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Building, 166 2nd Street, Monument. For details, contact Bob Witte, bob@k0nr.com or www.WØTLM.com.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Let us pray with you, walk in the forest, come and visit prayer sites, every Sun. worship is 10:15 am, 3190 Benet Lane, 80921. See ad on page 3.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Half Day Prayer Group, first Sat., 9 am-12 pm. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- Benet Hill Monastery, Centering Prayer Group, every Tue., 10-11 am. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- Black Forest Community Church, Centering Prayer Group, first Sat., 8:30-10 am The Old Log Church. Centering prayer opens and closes the meetings with discussion and fellowship in between; open to all. Contact Rev. Roger Butts, at 719-433-3135, for information.
- Children’s Literacy Center, every Mon. & Wed., 5:30-6:30 pm. Provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level. Tutoring is at Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St. Monument. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor, or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or contact Rachel Morin, Tri-Lakes Senior Center Coordinator, CLC 610-246-1047 (cell).
- Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club, third Wed. Free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at www.cspguild.org.
- Essentrics Fitness Program at Senior Center, every Tue., 9 am & Thu., 10 am, Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St, Monument, CO 80132. Registration & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241, www.trilakes-seniors.org.
- Fellowship of Christ Church, every Sun., 9 am. Monument Academy East Campus, 4303 Pinehurst Circle 80908.
- Friends of Fox Run Park, Zoom meeting, fourth Thu., 7 pm, email friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com, they will email you the link the day of the meeting. Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for forest safety, trails, trees, education, special events, and more. Info: friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com.
- Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) Trail Repair monthly Work Days, second Tue. Apr.-Oct. 5 pm. Meet at Mt Herman Trailhead at the corner of Mt Herman Rd and Nursery Rd, bring gloves. FOMP needs volunteers to help repair the trails in the National Forest Open Space surrounding the Monument Fire Center. The Forest Service recently completed the second phase of Fire Mitigation work and many of the social trails have been damaged. The Forest Service relies on FOMP to maintain these trails. Tools will be provided.
- Fuel Church GriefShare, every Thu., 5:30-7:30 pm, 643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Email info@fuel.org. 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake.
- Fuel Church Sunday Service, every Sun. Service times, 11:00 am Live service streaming at www.fuelchurch.org at 11:40 am on www.fuelchurch.org. Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Nursery and kids’ service. Non-denominational, spirit-filled. Need prayer? Email us at info@fuel.org. See ad on page 5.
- Gleneagle Sertoma, first and third Wed., 11:45 am to 1 pm at Beasts and Brews, 7 Spectrum Loop, Colorado Springs. The longest continuously serving civic service organization in northern El Paso County features a program speaker addressing local topics of interest. Info: Duane Gritzmaker, dwgritz@gmail.com or 719-649-9220.

- Gleneagle Women’s Club, membership luncheon, third Fri., Sep.-June, various venues, 12 activity groups, i.e., hiking, bridge, etc. Guests welcome. For information contact Susan Owen, 719-886-7110.
- GriefShare Support Group, last Tue., 10:30 am-noon. NEW LOCATION: Tri-Lakes Senior Center, 66 Jefferson St. in the Grace Best Elementary School building. The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance has partnered with Colorado Palliative and Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. RSVP, info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
- La Leche League breastfeeding support group, second Thu., 12:30 pm. Partners and helpers welcome (and babies and kids, too) so we can meet our breastfeeding goals together. Homestead Direct Primary Care Clinic, 15455 Gleneagle Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80921. For more information, contact RachelKLangley@gmail.com.
- Lions Club Bingo, every Sat. (except the first Sat.), 8:30 am-1 pm and first Mon., 5:30-10 pm Tri-Lakes Lions Club’s portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes community. Updated info and location: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or www.trilakeslionsclub.org.
- Monument Dementia Caregiver Support Group, second Sat., 9:45-11:15 am. Meets in-person, First National Bank Monument (581 Highway 105, Monument, CO 80132). Meets monthly, 2nd Sat. Contact: Registration is required, call 800-272-3900 or email khare@alz.org to register.
- Monument Hill Kiwanis Club meeting, every Sat., 8 am. www.MHKiwanis.org, MonumentHillKiwanis@gmail.com for details, guests are welcome. Service leadership clubs, Key clubs, Builders Club, and K-kids at D38 schools. Memberships are open to the public. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org.
- Monument Life Recovery Group, every Mon., 6:30-7:30 pm, The Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd. This faith-based support group is for those seeking freedom from all hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Daycare for children under age 11. Info: 303-946-2659, www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/.
- Neighborhood Net Ham Radio, every Sat., 10 am Amateur ham radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.
- Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting, Sat., Mar. 9, 10 am-12 pm., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. HOA legal topics. Members of local HOAs are welcome. Usually meets bi-monthly (Jan., Mar., May, July, Sep., Nov.) on the second Sat. of the month. www.nepco.org.
- Palmer Divide Quiltmakers, first Thu., 6:30-8:30 pm at Monument Chamber of Commerce building, 166 2nd St, Monument, CO.
- Palmer Lake Art Group, second Sat. A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meetings. Guests welcome. 300 Hwy 105, NE corner of I-25 and 105. 9:30 am. Info: 719-460-4179, www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society, Thu., Mar. 21, 7 pm; (doors open at 6:30 pm), Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St. John Howe and Michael Weinfeld will present The History of the Monument Cemetery. Usually meets third Thu. Contact:Kokesdm@yahoo.com, https://palmerdividehistory.org.
- Pikes Peak Genealogical Society meeting, Wed., Mar. 14, 7 pm, guest speaker Judy G. Russell is a genealogist with a law degree. Meets monthly, second Wed. Members can log in and get the monthly meeting Zoom link. Guests are welcome to attend, please request an invitation from the PPGS president at www.PPGS.org.
- Ridgeview Baptist Church, every Sun., 10:30 am, temporarily meeting at 9130 Explorer Dr., Colorado Springs, 80920. Info: 719-357-6515 or www.ridgeviewcolorado.org. See ad on page 6.
- Senior Bingo, third Wed. Silver Alliance Senior Center, Space is limited to 16. participants. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email sue@monumentalfitness.
- Senior Book Club, second Fri., 11 am-noon, Silver Alliance Senior Center, all are welcome. Coffee & snacks. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
- Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church, every Sun., Contemporary 9 am; Traditional 10:30 am. A live stream is available at www.tlumc.org/live. Watch live or replay: www.facebook.com/tlumc, www.youtube.com/tlumc.org. Info: 719-488-1365, www.tlumc.org. 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument.
- Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Wednesday night fellowship classes, every Wed., 6-7:30 pm, 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 719-488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org.
- Tri-Lakes Cruisers, first Wed., 7 pm. A nonprofit car club. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, with numerous activities and events each month. Club membership applications are now being accepted and are available on the website: https://tlcruisers.weebly.com.
- Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce Networking breakfast, first and third Thu., in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30-9 am free registration at www.TriLakeschamber.com.
- Tri-Lakes Church of Christ Cabin Conversations: fellowship with meals. every Wed., 6 pm 20450 Beacon Lite Rd. See ad on page 6.
- Tri-Lakes Dynamic Rotary Club meeting, monthly first and third Thu. 6 pm-8 pm. First Thursday via zoom and third Thursday in person at the Chamber of Commerce, 166 2nd St., Monument. Details: www.tlrotary.com. Trilakesdynamicrotary@gmail.com . Guests welcome. We are a service club serving Tri-Lakes. Memberships open to the public. Info: www.tlrotary.com
- Tri-Lakes Parkinson’s Disease Support Group, third Sat., 10 am-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St., Monument. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485. If you need any help, please call Syble or Barry.
- Tri-Lakes Women’s Club (TLWC) monthly meeting, Fri., Mar. 15, 11:30 a.m.Program: Travis Chastain -- Body Mind Balance. Chastain is an Am-SAT certified teacher of the Alexander Technique which help7 alleviate a number of issues, including chronic back and neck pain, Parkinson’s disease, stiff joints, and stress-related injuries. Eisenhower Golf Club, USAFA. Usually meets monthly on the third Fri. To become a member, or learn about the club, visit our website at www.tlwc.net Contact Info: Tri-Lakes Women’s Club

- membership@tlwc.net.
- Women’s A. A. Step Study, every Mon., 6:30 pm, meeting remotely, check for details. Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in the west lot. Info: 866-641-9190. Al-Anon Zoom Meeting, Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9:00 - 10:00 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309
 - Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, 166 2nd St., Monument. New members welcome. Info: Post Commander and POC Bruce Beyerly, Bruce.Beyerly@gmail.com.
 - VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829, third Wed., 7 pm, The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact carlsonmkc@aol.com for instructions on how to connect. If you are a relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News: volunteer mailing days, Thu. Feb. 29 & Apr. 4, approx. 7-8:30 am. We are all volunteers at OCN and need YOUR help, even for an hour or two, getting the papers ready to mail. Contact AllenAlchian@ocn.me or (719) 488-3455.
- The Knights of Columbus at St. Peter Catholic Church will host Fish Fry Fridays during Lent, Fridays, Mar. 1-22. Adults \$14,Adults \$14,Kids (5-12) \$9, Kids 4 and under free; includes grilled salmon (limited), cod (all-you-can-eat), clam chowder, side dishes, drinks, desserts and pizza for children.Dinner will be served in the school gym located at 124 First Street, Monument.
- Monument Library Chess Club, Sat. Mar. 2, 2-4 pm. We welcome anyone who wants to learn to play chess or wants to play a game with an experienced player. Just show up or contact Steve Waldmann, (719) 822-0023. Monument Library meeting room, 1706 Lake Woodmoor Dr., Monument.
- Stuff the Truck Collection for Westside Cares Food Bank, Sun., Mar. 10, 9:30-11:30 am, Benet Hill Monastery, 3190 Benet Hill Lane, 80921. Info: https://benethillmonastery.org/ways-to-give-back/catholic-sisters-week/
- Kiwanis Stars of Tomorrow Talent Show, Sun., Mar. 17, 2-5 pm, a ticketed event at Palmer Ridge High School. See ad on page 5.
- 100 + women who care membership/ social networking. Wed. Mar. 20, 5 p.m.,Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Join the fun, bring a friend and help us grow.100 + women who care are committed to contributing \$100 twice a year to local Tri-Lakes charities.
- Spring Break STEaM camp grades 3-5, Tue.-Thu., Mar. 26-28, Western Museum of Mining and Industry, wmmi.org. See ad on page 10.
- Holy Week Services, Sisters of Bennett Hill Monastery a contemporary Benedictine monastic presence. Sun.-Sun., Mar. 24-31, 3190 Benet Ln., Colorado Springs. See ad on page 3.
- Holy Week Services, Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church. Sun.-Sun., Mar. 24-31. See ad on page 7.
- Nighttime EGG-stravaganza at Fox Run Regional Park, Fri., Mar. 29, starting at 7:45 p.m., Fox Run Regional Park. Glow in the dark egg hunt. Work with your team of 2-6 to find eggs that will contain the answers you need to win a prize. ages 8+. \$6 per person // \$5 per member. Details: kyleetaylor2@elpasoco.com.
- Affordable Flooring Connection: Sales and installation. See ad on page 2.
- Cornerstone Cleaners, special offers through Mar. 31. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
- Eagle Wine & Spirits, special offers through Mar. 31. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
- The Love Shop: Restyle your furs, Wed.-Thu., Mar. 13-14; 251 Front St. See ad on page 8.
- McCord’s Garden center special offers. Garden center opening Fri., Mar. 15. See ad on page 5.
- Monument Cleaners, special offers through Mar. 31. 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
- Monumental Med Spa special offers for March. 88 Hwy 105 Palmer Lake. See ad on page 7.
- Mountain View Pella windows, special offers. See ad on page 20.
- Noel Relief Centers, new patient specials, new treatment options. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
- PeakView Windows, special offers for March. See ad on page 20.

Content

Articles in Our Community News focus on the deliberations of Tri-Lakes area governmental bodies such as the Monument Board of Trustees, Palmer Lake Town Council, and many of the local water, sanitation, fire, and school district boards.

Unlike papers that try to figure out what the “story” is and then get quotes on each side to presumably lead the reader to conclude what the “truth” is, OCN’s role is to report in detail on public meetings of local governmental entities. We report what was talked about and what was decided supplemented with board packet information. By reading OCN, you can find out what you might have learned if you had attended those public meetings. In this context, “truth” is that the articles accurately represent what transpired at the meetings.

The content of ads, inserts, and letters to the editor in OCN is solely the responsibility of the advertisers and authors who place those ads, inserts, and letters. The appearance of an ad, insert, or letter in OCN does not imply endorsement of the ad, insert, or letter’s content or purpose. While OCN does not knowingly run false ads, inserts, or letters, we do not research the accuracy of that content. Readers are encouraged to do their own research prior to committing to use the products or services offered or accept the conclusions of letters to the editor. Readers with concerns about the content of an ad, insert, or letter should take up those concerns with the advertiser or author.

Contact John Heiser, Publisher, at johnheiser@ocn.me or (719) 488-3455 with any questions.

- Silver Key senior services, companionship services and more including friendly home visits. Volunteers needed. 719-884-2300. See ad on page 2.
- St. Peter Catholic School preschool now enrolling for August 2024; 124 First St., Monument. See ad on page 2.
- The Living Room Plants, special offers through Mar. 31. See ad on page 5.
- Tri-Lakes Collision and Auto Service Center, special offers through Mar. 31. See ad on page 5.
- YMCA Special offers: Spring youth sports registration open now. Sport season starts Apr. 1. See ad on page 6.
- Covered Treasures bookstore No Boys Allowed Event. Thu., Apr. 18, snow date Apr. 25, a ticketed event, see details at bookstore: 105 Second St., Monument.
- Little Log Church 100th Anniversary Celebration, Sat., May 11, 1-4 pm, 133 High St. Palmer Lake. Info: www.littlelogchurch.com.
- Taste of Tri-Lakes Cares, Wed., May 15, 5:30-8:30 pm. \$40/ person. Spruce Mountain Events, 14771 Spruce Mountain Road, Larkspur, CO 80118. https://secure.qgiv.com/for/totlc2024/event/tasteoftrilakescares2024/
- Annual Silver Key Senior Summit – Expo of Senior Services: Thu., May 16, 9-2 pm. Great Wolf Lodge. For Seniors, friends or family members, or those serving the senior population. Free admission, food and drinks, it features over 80+ vendors, aging related information sessions. For more information, visit silverkey.org/senior-summit or email, development@silverkey.org. See ad on page 2.
- YMCA summer day camp for ages 5-12 begins May 28, ppymca.org/daycamp see ad on page 6.

Our community calendar carries listings on a space-available basis for Tri-Lakes events that are sponsored by local governmental entities and not-for-profit organizations. We include events that are open to the general public and are not religious or self-promotional in nature. If space is available, complimentary calendar listings are included, when requested, for events advertised in the current issue. To have your event listed at no charge in Our Community Calendar, please send the information to calendar@ocn.me or Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, Colorado 80132.

Letters to Our Community

Our Community News welcomes letters to the editor on topics of general interest to readers in the Tri-Lakes area. We do not knowingly print letters that are substantially the same as letters that have been submitted to other publications. To ensure that OCN contains a variety of viewpoints, each letter writer is limited to a maximum of one (1) letter per issue and six (6) letters within a twelve (12) month period. To submit a letter, please:

- Email your letter, preferably as an attached Microsoft Word document, to editor@ocn.me or mail a copy to Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, CO 80132-1742.
- Identify your submission as a letter to the editor and confirm that it has not been submitted to any other publication.
- Include a suggested headline or title that summarizes the topic you are addressing.
- Limit your letter to no more than 300 words including your suggested headline and closing.
- Include your full name, home address, phone numbers, and email address, if you have one. Only your name will be published.
- Submit your letter so we receive it no later than midnight, Friday, two weeks prior to the publication date.

If you have not received an acknowledgement two days after your email submission or one week after you mailed your letter, please contact John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455 or editor@ocn.me. At OCN’s sole discretion, we may ask you for clarification of your statements. Include references, such as website links, in your letter for any facts and figures you cite. OCN does not guarantee every letter will appear in print or on-line and does not guarantee a publication date. The number of letters printed on a particular topic or in a particular issue may be limited. Letters containing personal attacks or endorsements for or complaints about individually-named commercial products or services will not be published.

Look for our next issue
Saturday, April 6

Ad space reservations due: **Fri., Mar. 15**
Finished ad artwork due: **Fri., Mar. 22**
Letters to the editor due: **Fri., Mar. 22**
Calendar items due: **Fri., Mar. 29**

Visit our website to read, download, and search all the back issues at
WWW.OCN.ME



Our Community News

Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area

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Editorial content: editor@ocn.me
Event information: calendar@ocn.me

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USAFA wildfire, Feb. 25



Above: Large plumes of smoke were visible from the Tri-Lakes area on the afternoon of Feb. 25. The smoke was generated by a brush fire on steep terrain north west of West Monument Creek Road on the south side of the Air Force Academy. The fire began around 1 p.m. Wind was gusting from the west at 30-40 miles per hour throughout the day. By evening, the fire had grown to about 150 acres. Due to the fire, the base was closed to the public, pre-evacuation notices were issued for Douglass and Pine Valley housing, Douglass Valley Elementary School was closed, and Air Academy High School students switched to remote learning. A Red Flag Warning had been in effect when the fire began with higher-than-normal temperatures and wind gusts in the forecast. As of Tuesday morning, Feb. 27, at 4:30 a.m., the fire was 168 acres and 50% contained. *Caption by Natalie Barszcz. Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*



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