

ation is different, noting that Monument Sanitation District would provide wastewater service. Both the Town of Monument and WWSDD declined water service, so Buc-ee's is now looking to annex Palmer Lake. Bush suggested that concerned residents get involved with local groups opposing the annexation.

A resident raised an issue about a neighbor shooting squirrels with a BB gun on the resident's property. They were told that the WPS chief and the covenant control administrator would investigate it again as a possible nuisance violation and bring their findings to the board.

At the Jan. 29 meeting, a resident expressed concern about the community's lack of effort in fire mitigation. He suggested that the board and the

people of Woodmoor get behind a major league program such as Firewise to prepare for a major fire. Bush said as long as he had been on the board, fire has been seen as the biggest threat to the community, which was the reason for restrictive rules and regulations and large fines.

He reminded the resident of WIA's spending and accomplishments on chipping and mitigation. The board provides resources, encouragement, and support but cannot force people to use them. With the costs of mitigation increasing, the board has to find a balance, said newly elected Forestry Director Jason Hann, who volunteered to discuss offline what could be done to engage residents in the effort. The board made available a document on Wildfire safety

online at <https://woodmoor.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Wildfire-Safety-Home-Hardening-Guide.pdf>.

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

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

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 19.

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community are the responsibility of the letter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer. When there is more than one letter, the letters are arranged in alphabetical order based on the last name of the author.

Grace Best demolition

D38 is using stagecraft to justify destroying a politically inconvenient school building. After years of complaining about Grace's maintenance and repair costs, they are now using a fire marshal inspection that the building supposedly failed to leave the impression that "the fire department condemned the building." Their descriptions of the building's actual status are suspiciously vague and inconsistent.

The problem with this narrative is that D38 got a surprise windfall last year that could have paid to fix the problems. D38 convinced the state to let them spend \$8 million of their reserves. Instead of fixing Grace, they're spending it all to purchase and renovate a 37-year-old building for a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) center—transforming an open warehouse into a space for learning that mirrors a Google or Facebook work-

place." They'll have to pay another \$3 million to complete the buildout. The administration provided cost estimates for the project and for building new but estimates for transforming Grace into the CTE center weren't presented. It wasn't even discussed.

Worse yet, if you have a building the fire marshal wants to shut down until certain repairs are made you don't jump to spend \$1.3 million to demolish it. You try to sell it as-is. To save yourself \$1.3 million. But D38's board didn't even discuss selling the building, let alone check if anyone might be willing to take it off their hands. By the district's own calculations, the land the building sits on is only worth \$700,000. Why spend \$1.3 million to clear land that's worth \$700,000?

All their narrative-building has left them scrambling to find a home for the homeschool and special needs transitions programs housed at Grace Best. It's clear that making sure taxpayers cannot use this space for a school in the future is more important to them.

Derek Araje

D38 chaos

The D38 Board of Education took the unusual action to "accept" Dr. Datter's resignation after about six months on the job and post out a confusing sever-

ance package which includes a large cash payment that varies from \$224,000 to about \$84,000 depending on if more staffing changes occur or more resignations come in.

This chaos needs to be solved with well-justified plans to be resolved before June 30 to start a new superintendent search or hire from within D38 from several candidates (old and potentially new), which could be expected.

Sound chaotic to you? During this time of unexpected staff turbulence and transition, we are fortunate to have D38 quickly declare Amber Whetstone as interim superintendent pending June 30.

At the February D38 Working Session, the 5-0 unanimous hiring decision was declared a failed decision, and now several paths forward are being discussed with the next milestone decision scheduled for June 30 (4.5 months from now).

Right now D38 does not have an assistant superintendent but we do have an interim superintendent. Do we also need declared an "interim" assistant superintendent?

How will that new senior staff member salary costs impact "savings" from Dr. Datter's resignation salary avoidance?

Gordon Reichal

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

March mystery madness

By the staff at Covered Treasures

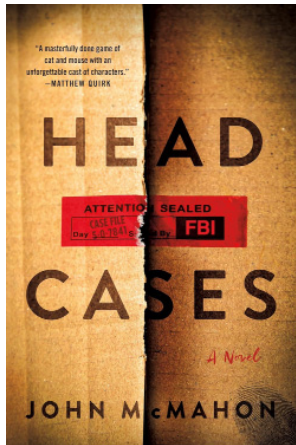
"If I had a bookstore, I would make all the mystery novels hard to find."—Demetri Martin

Check out the following titles for an engaging mystery.

Head Cases

By John McMahon (Minotaur Books) \$28

FBI Agent Gardner Camden is an analytical genius with an affinity for puzzles. Gardner and his squad of brilliant, quirky agents make up the Patterns and Recognition (PAR) unit, brought in for cases that no one else can solve. When DNA links a murder victim to a serial killer long presumed dead, the team springs into action.



Presumed Guilty (Presumed Innocent No. 3)

By Scott Turow (Grand Central Publishing) \$30

Rusty is a retired judge living in the rural Midwest with his wife, Bea. But the peace that's taken Rusty so long to find evaporates when Bea's son, Aaron, disappears. Aaron eventually turns up and his girlfriend is discovered dead. Aaron is arrested and set for trial on charges of first-degree murder. For Rusty, the question is not whether to defend Aaron, or whether the boy is in fact innocent—it's whether the system to which he has devoted his life can ever provide true justice for those who are presumed guilty.

All the Colors of the Dark

By Chris Whitaker (Crown Publishing Group) \$30

1975 is a time of change in America. The Vietnam War is ending. Muhammad Ali is fighting Joe Frazier. And in the small town of Monta Clare, Mo., girls are disappearing. When the daughter of a wealthy family is targeted, a most unlikely hero emerges. With a missing person mystery, a serial killer thriller, a love story, and a unique twist on each, Chris Whitaker has written a novel about what lurks in the shadows of obsession and the blinding light of hope.

The Oligarch's Daughter

By Joseph Finder (Harper) \$30

Paul Brightman is a man on the run, living under an assumed name in a small New England town with a million-dollar bounty on his head. When his security is breached, Brightman is forced to flee into the New Hampshire wilderness to evade Russian operatives who can seemingly predict his every move. Six years ago, Paul was a rising star on Wall Street who fell in love with a Russian oligarch, and the object of considerable interest from several U.S. intelligence agencies. Now, to save his own life, Paul must unravel a decades-old conspiracy that extends to the highest reaches of the government.

We Solve Murders

By Richard Osman (Pamela Dorman Books) \$30

Steve Wheeler is enjoying retired life. He still does the odd bit of investigative work, but his days of adventure are over. Adventure is daughter-in-law Amy's job now. Amy Wheeler thinks adrenaline is good for the soul. Working in private security, every day is dangerous. She's currently on a remote island protecting mega-bestselling author Rosie D'Antonio, until a dead body and a bag of money mean trouble

in paradise. As a thrilling race around the world begins, can Amy and Steve outrun and outsmart a killer?

Death in a Darkening Mist: A Lane Winslow Mystery (Lane Winslow Mystery No. 2)

By Iona Wishaw (Touchwood Editions) \$20

On a snowy day in December 1946, Lane Winslow, a former British intelligence agent, is introduced to the local hot springs. While there, she is astonished to overhear nearby patrons speaking Russian. The investigation points to the Soviet Union, where Stalin's purges are eliminating enemies. Her complicated relationship with the local police inspector is intensified by the perils of the case. It all comes to a frantic and shocking end with a perilous nighttime journey along treacherous snow-covered roads.

Night Watch

By Jayne Anne Phillips (Vintage) \$18

In 1874, in the wake of the Civil War, 12-year-old ConaLee finds herself on a journey with her mother, Eliza, who hasn't spoken in more than a year. They arrive at the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum in West Virginia. In the asylum, they get swept up in the life of the facility—the mysterious man they call the Night Watch; the orphan child called Weed; the fearsome woman who runs the kitchen; the remarkable doctor at the head of the institution. Epic, enthralling, and meticulously crafted, Pulitzer Prize-winning Night Watch is a stunning chronicle of surviving war and its aftermath.

Until next month, happy reading.

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

March Library Events

Adult Reading Program continues; special programs; jigsaw puzzle swap

By Harriet Halbig

The 2025 Winter Adult Reading Program continues through March 31. Participants who read 30 minutes per day or participate in specified district programs for 30 days will receive the annual program mug and a coupon for a dessert from Crumbl. Upon registering, participants receive a program tote bag while supplies last. To see a list of programs which qualify for credit, please go to ppld.org/winter-reading.

Special programs in March

Homeschool students ages 5 to 12 are invited to *Explore the Natural World* on Wednesday, March 12 from 2 to 3 p.m. Experience this on-the-road version of Pikes Peak Library District's Educational Resource Center at the Monument Library. The program includes resources to explore the natural world of plants and animals and the human body.

On Saturday, March 8 from 11 to noon, adult patrons are invited to a program called *Strange Colorado*, exploring urban legends and stories of the odd, spooky, or the macabre. Join author and paranormal investigator Erin Taylor to discover tales from her book *Strange Colorado*. Some of the lore

includes the Pikes Peak Highway's Phantom Hitchhiker, Tommyknockers in the mountains, and aliens in the San Luis Valley. Offered as part of the Winter Adult Reading Program.

The *Tweens Dungeons and Dragons* club will meet from 4 to 5:30 on Saturday, March 8. Play Dungeons and Dragons with our own Dragon Master Dustin. New members are welcome and no experience is required. Open to ages 9 to 12. Registration is required. Go to ppld.org and look under programs by location.

Teens are invited to learn leadership skills, earn volunteer hours, and give input on what happens at the library by attending meetings of the *Teen Advisory Board* and working on projects. Regular attendance is recommended and you must fill out a volunteer application to participate. The meeting will be on Thursday, March 13 from 5 to 6 p.m.

Come to the Monument Library's *Jigsaw Puzzle Swap* on Saturday, March 5 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Give a puzzle, get a new-to-you puzzle in exchange. Only gently used puzzles accepted.

The *Friends of the PPLD Book Group* will meet from 10:30 to 12:30 on Friday, March 21. All are

welcome. The March selection is *Sooley* by John Grisham.

This year's special program for spring break is *Cool Science Super-sized Science* on Tuesday, March 25 from 10:30 to 11:15. Join *Cool Science* as it runs simple but cool science experiments, tricks, and demonstrations that you can do at home with everyday materials. Watch them super-size it for super-sized excitement.

Teens age 12 to 18 are invited to *Escape Room: Travel to the 80s* on Thursday, March 27 from 3 to 4 p.m. Welcome to 1986. Here you will find cutting-edge technology from the 1980s that you will need to use along with your knowledge of all that was rad in the 80 to get yourself back to the present day. You only have 45 minutes before you are stuck in the past forever. Registration is required by calling 719-488-2370 or go to ppld.org and check programs by location.

See ppld.org for regularly occurring library events and programs by location.

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