

Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters to the editor are on page 35.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community should not be interpreted as the view of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.

Thanks from Tri-Lakes Women's Club

On behalf of the 235 members of the Tri-Lakes Women's Club, we thank you, the Tri-Lakes and Colorado Springs communities, for your support of our fall fundraising event, Wine and Roses and More held Oct. 27 at the

Pinery.

A successful event such as this takes the support of many, many people who believe in the mission of the sponsoring organization. This was certainly the situation for our Wine and Roses event. Special appreciation goes to the many businesses and individuals who contributed auction items or cash, the restaurants and food vendors, the celebrity servers, the Wine Cellar for securing the wine purveyors, and especially those of you who attended and our members who saw that every detail was perfectly executed.

In 2012 the Tri-Lakes Women's Club awarded \$44,000 in grants to qualified Tri-Lakes area nonprofits, public service organizations, public schools, and Waldo Canyon Fire Relief. Your support of our club events assists us in supporting community organizations who can do just a little more because of these grants. Thank you, again.

Donna Wagner and Mary Mills, co-presidents
Tri-Lakes Women's Club

Between The Covers at the Covered Treasures Bookstore

Great gifts for grownups

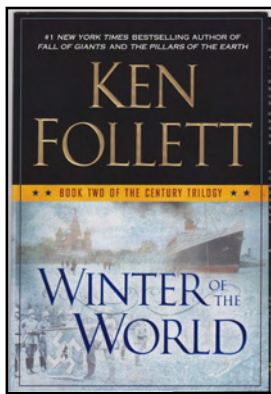
By the staff at Covered Treasures

Looking for the perfect gift for a friend or a family member? Why not consider a book? There are a number of exciting new offerings to choose from on a variety of topics.

Winter of the World: Book Two of the Century Trilogy

By Ken Follett (Dutton) \$36

Follett's second novel in this historical epic picks up right where the first book left off. Its five interrelated families—American, German, Russian, English, and Welsh—enter a time of enormous social, political, and economic turmoil, beginning with the rise of the Third Reich, through the Spanish Civil War and the great dramas of World War II, to the explosions of the American and Soviet atomic bombs and the beginning of the long Cold War. For anyone who enjoyed *Fall of Giants*, this brilliantly researched, fast-moving sequel is sure to be a treat.



Flight Behavior

By Barbara Kingsolver (Harper Collins) \$28.99

In the lyrical language of her native Appalachia, Kingsolver bares the rich, tarnished humanity of her novel's inhabitants and unearths the modern complexities of rural existence. Characters and reader alike are carried beyond familiar territory, into the unsettled ground of science, faith, and everyday truces between reason and conviction. Taking on one of the most contentious subjects of our time—climate change—*Flight Behavior* dissects

the motives that drive denial and belief in a precarious world.

The Round House

By Louise Erdrich (Harper Collins) \$26.99

In the spring of 1988, a woman living on a reservation in North Dakota is attacked, and the life of her family is changed forever. Illuminating the harsh realities of contemporary life in a community where Ojibwe and white live uneasily together, this brilliant and entertaining novel is a masterpiece of literary fiction. Erdrich embraces tragedy, the comic, the spirit world, and a tale of injustice that is, unfortunately, an authentic reflection of what happens in our own world today.

God: A Story of Revelation

Deepak Chopra (Harper One) \$25.99

In a unique blend of storytelling and teaching, Chopra explores the evolution of God by capturing the lives of 10 historical prophets, saints, mystics, and martyrs who are touched by a divine power. Our belief—and therefore the way we think of God—transforms with each passing century. In this new novel, Chopra brings to life the defining moments of our most influential sages, ultimately revealing universal lessons about the true nature of God.

Malice of Fortune

By Michael Ennis (Doubleday) \$26.95

In this vivid Renaissance thriller, Niccolo Machiavelli and Leonardo Da Vinci come together to unmask an enigmatic serial killer as we learn the secret history behind one of the most controversial works in the Western Canon, *The Prince*. Ennis brilliantly weaves together his expert knowledge of Renaissance history and art with extraordinary details about the people who lived in this dark time to create an atmospheric and endlessly entertaining

novel.

The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill-Defender of the Realm, 1940-1965

By William Manchester and Paul Reid (Little Brown & Co.) \$40

Twenty years in the making, this impressive work chronicles how Churchill organized his nation's military response and defense, compelled FDR into supporting America's beleaguered cousins, and personified the "never surrender" ethos that helped the Allies win the war. Manchester and Reid present a revelatory and unparalleled portrait of this brilliant, flawed, and dynamic leader.

The Dog Stars

By Peter Heller (Knopf) \$24.95

Hig, a pilot, survived the flu that killed everyone he knew and lives in the hangar of a small abandoned airport with his dog, his only neighbor a gun-toting misanthrope. When a random transmission somehow beams through his radio, the voice ignites a hope deep inside him that a better life—something like his old life—exists beyond the airport. But what he encounters and what he must face—in the people he meets, and in himself—is both better and worse than anything he could have hoped for. *The Dog Stars* is both savagely funny and achingly sad, a breathtaking story about what it means to be human. Heller lives in Denver, and the Colorado setting of *The Dog Stars* makes it all the more interesting for us Coloradans.

Long after the wrappings and tinsel are cleared away, an engrossing book can provide comfy company on those cold, snowy January days.

Until next year, happy reading.

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

Bird Watch on the Palmer Divide

Brown creeper: *Certhia americana*



By Elizabeth Hacker

December is always a crazy month for us. I enjoy all the parties, activities, and spending time in many of our local retail shops, but finding time to relax and enjoy the season can be challenging. That is why I schedule time for daily walks and go on at least one long hike. I bring my binoculars so I can watch the variety of wildlife I see along the way. Seeing a fox, a deer, or even a pair of silly magpies conversing is sure to revive my holiday spirit.

One bird that has become a favorite of mine is the brown creeper. It gets its name from the way it moves around a tree. The name "creeper" is rather a creepy and

possibly inappropriate name for this remarkable but indistinguishable bird.

Description

The brown creeper is small woodland songbirds with an affinity for big trees. The feathers on its back are a mottled dark brown and thus easily blend into the bark of a tree, making detection difficult unless it is moving. Its breast and belly are white fading to tan.

Its rump is a reddish brown and its tail is long and stiff. It uses its tail to brace itself against the tree, similar to the way a woodpecker uses its tail. Unlike the often noisy and showy woodpecker, these inconspicuous, quiet little birds are easily overlooked.

Habitat

The brown creeper is found in mature forests. It prefers to nest in hardwood forests, so it would be uncommon to see one here in the spring or summer. During winter months it forages in coniferous forests, so a good time to look for them is December through March.

Brown creepers spend most of their time spiraling up the trunk or around a major limb of a mature tree. They move around and up a tree, often passing downward-moving nuthatches along the way. Once they reach the



Left: Painting by Elizabeth Hacker of a brown creeper. A color version is posted at www.ocn.me/v12n12bird.htm.

top, they fly to the bottom of the next tree to begin again. Generally only one bird will spiral up a tree at a time. Reportedly the brown creeper travels in flocks alongside nuthatches and chickadees, but the times I've spotted this bird it's always been by itself.

Diet

This little bird might be easily overlooked, but it plays a major role in keeping forests healthy as it consumes

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