

mon during this time as well, with just a few high clouds at times. Fortunately, winds were light as the ridge of high pressure sat right over us.

The third week of January was dry and mild. No precipitation fell from the 21st through the 27th as a strong ridge of high pressure dominated our weather. This allowed mild air to establish itself firmly and prevent any cold air or storminess from reaching the region. Moisture levels dropped to some of the lowest levels possible, with relative humidity at times reaching as low as 1 percent on the 22nd and 23rd! Thank goodness winds were well-behaved, or fire danger would have been extreme. Temperatures reached near-record levels during this time as well, hitting the upper 50s from the 22nd through the 24th, peaking in the low 60s on the 23rd. Temperatures did cool slightly during the weekend with low to mid-40s, but that was still 5 to 10 degrees above normal. Most of the leftover snow from the cold period earlier in the month was melted/sublimated away as well.

Cold air finally made a return visit to the area just before the end of the month. Highs hit the upper 40s and low 50s early on the 28th before the cold front arrived

later that afternoon. Snow showers and graupel developed late that afternoon and cold air continued to filter in. Light snow fell during the morning of the 29th, accumulating a little more than an inch of power. Although not much, it was a nice break from the dry, mild weather that had been in place. Temperatures were chilly as well, with highs only reaching the low 20s on the afternoon of the 29th. A final round of snow moved through that evening and into the next morning. This was our largest snowfall of the month, with 3-4 inches of fluffy powder accumulating. Temperatures were chilly as well, dipping well below zero that morning. Quiet and sunny conditions returned for the last two days of the month as temperatures slowly warmed back towards normal levels.

#### A look ahead

February is often a dry and cold month for the region as we move toward the snowy and unsettled conditions of March and April. Precipitation averages less than an inch, with average high temperatures in the 30s. It can get very cold in February with arctic air making strong pushes into the region. But days begin to get a little longer, which leads to some nice, sunny days, and snow melts faster.

January 2013 Weather Statistics	
Average High	39.3° (-0.8°)
100-year return frequency value	max 48.4° min 30.8°
Average Low	11.5° (-0.7°)
100-year return frequency value	max 26.6° min 6.6°
Highest Temperature	62° on the 23rd
Lowest Temperature	-15° on the 15th
Monthly Precipitation	0.32"
	(-0.42" 54% below normal)
100-year return frequency value	max 1.56" min 0.01"
Monthly Snowfall	6.4"
	(-7.4", 50% below normal)
Season to Date Snow	28.4"
	(-26.8", 49% below normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	8.36"
	(-3.72", 31% below normal)
	(the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
Heating Degree Days	1248 (+53)
Cooling Degree Days	0

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### Between The Covers at the Covered Treasures Bookstore

## Happy healthy Heart Month

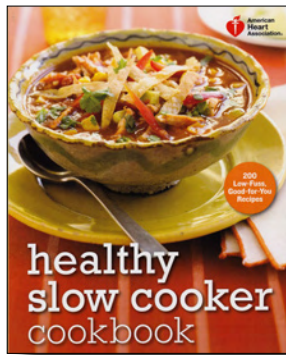
By the staff at Covered Treasures

As you tackle your "to do" list for 2013, how about taking time to care for your heart? Whether that means eating healthier, losing weight, relaxing and meditating, or sharing the joy of books with a child close to your heart, we have some suggestions for starters.

#### American Heart Association: Healthy Slow Cooker Cookbook

American Heart Association Team (Random House) \$16.99

The slow cooker, one of America's favorite kitchen appliances, has become increasingly versatile and sophisticated, and now it can support a heart-smart diet. From appetizers to desserts and many dishes in between, the 20 recipes in this book will surprise you with their variety and depth of flavor. The book includes 18 full-color photographs as well as information on the benefits of slow cooking.



#### Meatless

Martha Stewart Kitchens (Random House) \$25

Going meatless, even a few days a week, doesn't mean you have to sacrifice flavor. Vegetarian cooking has never been easier or more delicious, thanks to the abundance of farmer's markets, diverse fresh produce aisles, and excellent choices of pastas, grains, beans, and even frozen staples. As inspiring as it is practical, *Meatless* features over 200 recipes—each accompanied by a color photograph—for full-fledged vegetarians and meat eaters alike.

#### Zen of Snowy Trails

Katharine Wroth, editor (Skipstone) \$12.95

From a Chinese proverb to Robert Frost, this treasury of quotes captures the emotional, spiritual, and humorous experiences we have when exploring our snow-covered landscapes. Whether you prefer snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, or just tramping through powdery drifts, inspiration arrives from many authors and outdoor experts. Further insight on the peace, tranquility, and sense of adventure found when the snow begins to fall comes from surprising sources, such as gymnast Nadia Comaneci, "Calvin & Hobbes" creator Bill Watterson, and many more.

#### Small Changes, Big Results

Ellie Krieger (Random House) \$16

This is an easy-to-start, simple-to-maintain, scientifically sound, 12-week program of small steps—just three each week—such as starting a food journal, choosing healthy fats and proteins, and replacing refined grains with whole grains. With 65 recipes, this revised edition helps you free yourself from junk food cravings and replace additive-laden fake food with healthy, real food for better sleep, more stamina, and a slimmer waist—all while eating delicious food. And you won't be forbidden to eat a single thing.

#### The Very Fairy Princess Follows Her Heart

Julie Andrews and Emma Walton Hamilton (Little Brown and Co.) \$16.99

It's Valentine's Day, Gerry's favorite day of the year! That means it's time for her to get out her sparkliest markers, glue, and glitter and make unique handmade cards for everyone in her class. But when there's a mix-up on the

big day, and her cards are left behind, Gerry must find the perfect Very Fairy Princess way to celebrate what makes each of her friends sparkle.

#### The Kiss Box

Bonnie Verburg (Scholastic) \$16.99

In a simple story as warm as sunshine, Verburg's soothing text and Henry Cole's gentle watercolors convey the universal joy of sharing time with a loved one. They also portray the anxiety we sometimes feel when we have to be apart—whether it be for an errand to the grocery store, a business trip, or the first day of school. For young and old alike, *The Kiss Box* is a tender reminder that we are always together where it matters most: in our hearts.

#### The Dash Diet for Weight Loss

Thomas J. Moore, M.D. (Gallery Books) \$16

Named the Best Overall Diet by *U.S. News & World Report* two years in a row and recommended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) Diet is considered not only the most effective diet for reducing the risk of hypertension, heart disease, kidney disease, and colon cancer, it's also the best way to reach your healthiest weight and stay there. The book features extensive, easy-to-follow meal plans for meat eaters and vegetarians, plus practical tools and advice.

February is American Heart Month, so take a little time to be kind to your heart and to the hearts of those you love. Until next month, happy reading.

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

### Bird Watch on the Palmer Divide

## The Great Pikes Peak Birding Trail



By Elizabeth Hacker

During the winter months I suffer from cabin fever, and the only cure is to dress for the weather and head outdoors. Sometimes I walk the neighborhood but I prefer to branch out to explore a trail or open space. One of the side effects of cabin fever is "brain drain," so when I can't decide where to go, I Google.

#### The Great Pikes Peak Birding Trail

Recently I discovered the Great Pikes Peak Birding Trail (GPPBT) which is a segment of the Colorado Birding Trail and an ongoing project by the Aiken Audubon Society ([www.aikenaudubon.org](http://www.aikenaudubon.org)) to list good birding sites in this region.

The GPPBT website describes the type of habitat and birds typically found at the site. Currently about 20 sites are listed on the GPPBT website, but ultimately this trail stretches for hundreds of miles in El Paso and four other counties to prime birding sites though out the Pikes Peak

region. Some sites, such as the Air Force Academy, are only a short drive, but all of the GPPBT sites currently listed are within 60 miles of my front door, which seems relatively close. This is a link for the Colorado Birding Trail: [www.coloradobirdingtrail.com](http://www.coloradobirdingtrail.com).

The birding trail phenomenon began in 1996 with the first segment of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. Texas is a birding hot spot, and on any given day it is possible to see groups of birders stopped along the road looking through binoculars. Small coastal communities realized the economic potential and began listing birding sites to attract birders.

#### Birding economics

Word spread and birding trails are now in various states of development across the United States and Canada. In August 2009, USA Today reported that 1 in every 5 Americans watch birds. The greatest percentage of the estimated 48 million birders in the United States looks for

birds in their back yards. However, 45 percent of birders travel significant distances to look for birds.

More than 450 species of birds are found along the Front Range Flyway. While it doesn't have the number of birds that Texas has, many birders consider southern Colorado to be a good place to look for birds. If just 2 percent of the 22 million traveling birders visited the Pikes Peak region each year, that would mean about 400,000 birders staying five to 10 days. In addition to the revenue generated, this kind of visitor serves to reinforce the healthy lifestyle of this region.

#### Trails and Open Space Coalition

The Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) ([www.trailsandopenspace.org](http://www.trailsandopenspace.org)) is another good reference to find a place to hike and enjoy. The website lists many trails and open spaces. I also like taking part in some of their fun and crazy activities that are also listed on the website.

TOSC was established in 1987 with the purpose