

of snow falling. Unfortunately, the main energy and moisture with this cold surge was split in two. One piece brought heavy snow to north Texas and Oklahoma and the other to Wyoming and the Upper Midwest.

Strong northwesterly flow continued to dominate our weather pattern during Christmas week. This meant several fast-moving storms bringing some snow and wind to the mountains, but for the most part only glancing blows to the Palmer Divide. Temperatures on the 23rd started off a little cooler than normal, with highs in the low to mid-30s and a few snow flurries during the overnight hours. Christmas Eve started off breezy and mild, but a cool push of air moved in during the early afternoon hours and produced a dusting of snow.

Temperatures were seasonably cool again on Christmas, with highs reaching into the mid-30s. Sunshine was the rule that day and continued through the early part of the weekend. Mild temperatures also returned, with west/southwesterly flow leading to highs in the low 50s, well above average for that time of the year.

Our last taste of winter for the year affected the region by the early afternoon of the 29th, when a cold front moved through and clouds soon followed. Snow began to fall that evening and continued through the early morning hours. This storm brought 2 to 4 inches of fresh snow to the region. Sunshine and fresh snow on the ground left behind a wintry scene through the end of the year.

A look ahead

January can bring the coldest temperatures

of the year, but there is often a proverbial "January thaw" when mild temperature make a brief appearance. Precipitation is on the low side, with amounts generally less than an inch. The month experiences numerous sunny and windy days, with quick shots of snow in between. The last few Januarys have generally been warmer than normal, with near normal precipitation and snowfall. January 2007-09 received more snow than normal, and the last couple have been drier than average.

December 2013 Weather Statistics

Average High **37.1°** (-1.0°) 100-year return frequency value max **50.5°** min **32.6°**
 Average Low **9.9°** (-3.3°) 100-year return frequency value max **22.4°** min **5.4°**

Monthly Precipitation **0.43"** (-0.38", 47% below normal) 100-year return frequency value max **2.82"** min **0.00"**
 Monthly Snowfall **7.3"** (-11.9", 62% below normal)
 Highest Temperature **57° on the 18th**
 Lowest Temperature **-17° on the 6th**
 Season to Date Snow **17.4"** (-24.8", 59% below normal) (the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
 Season to Date Precip. **13.35"** (+2.27", 20% above normal) (the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
 Heating Degree Days **1286** (+57)
 Cooling Degree Days **0** (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 to the editor are on page 27.

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.*

A town with no traffic lights

Dear Palmer Lake:

You are a town with no traffic lights. You are nestled in the Front Range, small, peaceful, and quiet. You are a close-knit home to hundreds who still enjoy the company of a community chili dinner. Where children still walk to school in safety. Where a trip to the post office or a walk around the lake is always an occasion to say hello to neighbors. People come to you for your tranquility. People come to you to escape the fast and the loud. Some come to visit. Others cannot resist you and stay a lifetime. All come because you have no traffic lights.

Your 2,500 residents are resting now, unaware of the approaching storm. A silent vote. An anonymous vote. A town-wide vote in April. Just months away. A vote that could bring you your first traffic light, and more. Your fate will be decided in a single day; in the blink of an eye. A lone issue: marijuana. And with that issue, difficulties, consequences. The only place in the county with legal marijuana. 650,000 possible customers. Even when only a fraction comes, you will be wiped away forever. Your name will remain, but you will no longer be Palmer Lake—you will have traffic—you will have traffic lights. I hope for the alternative. I hope that I will have to drive to Denver to get my marijuana. In Denver, the fast and the loud and the congestion will put a smile on my face—knowing that I'm heading home to Palmer Lake—a town with no traffic lights.

Peter Anderson

Monument Academy stands alone against Common Core

The Monument Academy Board of Directors passed a resolution to reject the Common Core State Standards Initiative, surprisingly making it the only school in District 38 to do so.

What the state fails to realize is that this measure will actually lower standards, particularly in schools like Monument Academy. It uses current Colorado State Standards of 1993 that are already much more rigorous, more thorough, and tailored to the unique needs of each student.

Common Core replaces tailored education for a one-size-fits-all approach. Even the Colorado Charter Schools Act says "The best education decisions are made by those who know the students

best," and that's not the state or federal government.

The resolution rightly states that "Colorado is a local control state, where local school boards, particularly and specifically those governing charter schools, are constitutionally granted broad discretion in setting curriculum and standards for their students."

Originally, 45 states and the District of Columbia approved the Common Core standards being implemented this school year, even before they were complete. Since then, at least 18 states have either rejected the standards or asked for more time to review or implement the requirements.

The Monument Academy resolution also addresses testing. Beginning next year, all Colorado state assessments will be replaced by a mandatory standardized national test, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment. The resolution states the PARCC "will not adequately evaluate our students' performance, and we desire a more specifically tailored accountability measure."

Ultimately, the resolution calls on the state Board of Education to reconsider their actions and to allow charter schools the option to readopt the State Standards of 1993.

As District 38's only public school of choice, Monument Academy's open enrollment began on Jan. 2 and runs through Feb. 28. Fortunately, parents in our district still have an option if they do not agree with the Common Core curriculum.

Jim Cunningham

*Media relations and outreach chair
 Monument Academy*

Superintendent sees strength and resiliency

Good news: The search for a new superintendent for Lewis-Palmer School District 38 is underway. The school board has contracted with the Colorado Association of School Boards to conduct the search, and community focus groups have already been meeting and discussing the attributes needed for leadership in our school district and community. The school board has established a timeline for the process and anticipates naming a superintendent in March.

The position will be nationally advertised as we endeavor to attract the very best candidates.

I would like to thank John Borman for his work and wish him well as he pursues new goals and this next chapter in his life. That being said, I am looking forward to the challenges in the coming semester as we close out the school year. We will not hit the pause button waiting for a new superintendent. New initiatives have been started by the school district, principals, and teachers, and we will continue to move ahead on those programs. I am encouraged by the strength and resiliency of our teaching and administrative staff as they continue to provide students with opportunities to learn and to achieve at the highest level, even as they once again go through a leadership change in the district.

It is my desire to provide and instill an emphasis on the vision and core values of District 38. Occasionally, we lose sight of the importance of our public schools and the opportunities necessary to give children the very best education possible. Schools are the foundation of our community and, quite frankly, are the foundation of our country's future. If we lose that focus, then we do our children an enormous disservice. Working with community members and school staff, I hope to once again encourage the cooperation and collaboration necessary to pursue the excellence in education for which this community and District 38 are known.

Ted Bauman

*Interim superintendent
 Lewis-Palmer District 38*

The \$907,170.80 question.

Our D-38 school board said in many public meetings it has always been their intention to redeem over \$4 million of Certifications of Participation debt in 2014.

After a long time, under citizen pressure, and a lot of collective community effort, the district finally released a difficult-to-read scanned hardcopy of this financial contract. No 2014 redemption option appears in the contract. Why?

When asked at December's meeting if this 2014 redemption was going to occur, our school board refused to answer and attacked, saying there is no problem and we must "Set an Example" for our kids of community cooperation. In answer to a question the school board did make concerning how they can recover community trust, it is transparency and truth that gain trust, not stone walls. There are \$907,173.80 in additional interest charges to the year 2021 because of this missing 2014 redemption option.

The questions the school board has refused to answer were, 1) Did the school board direct district financial managers this 2014 early redemption be explicitly specified in the contract? 2) Was the school board direction ignored or discarded by D-38 financial managers? 3) Or did something else happen causing our kids' and teachers' education apple to have a \$907,170.80 bite taken out of their funding?

Perhaps if our many community members, including Mr. Russ Broshous writing in last month, demand a \$907,170.80 answer from this school board, a true example can be set for our kids and teachers, rather than

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 and start Packing!

Tri-Lakes resident since 1990!

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