

# Snapshots of Our Community

## Political history of the Panama Canal

*By David Futey*  
On Nov. 8, the Western Museum of Mining & Industry (WMMI) hosted Noel Maurer, associate professor of International Affairs and International Business at George Washington University. In 2010, Maurer authored the book *The Big Ditch*, which describes the multifaceted political history of the Panama Canal. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the canal's completion, and controversy



**Above:** Author Noel Maurer and WMMI manager David Futey share a light moment prior to Maurer's presentation on the political history of the Panama Canal. *Photo by Bruce Temkin.*

still remains over historic and present day United States involvement. Maurer described France's initial development of the canal in 1881 and how it treated it as a mining project, which eventually led to construction failures. The U.S. took over the project in 1904 and completed it in 1914 at about double the original cost estimates. Workers from Barbados provided the majority of the physical labor required, with oversight by U.S. managers. Arguments were waged then and today on its economic and strategic value. Due to the Canal Zone, Panama saw little financial benefit until the 1950s. The first commercial shipping did not occur until July 1920, with California oil being the primary major cargo being shipped to eastern U.S. cities. The canal's value to shipping decreased overtime as U.S. trucking and railroads provided more cost effective ways to haul freight. The U.S military saw no benefit because naval eets would still be required in both oceans for response time. Maurer also described present-day impacts, including the proposed canal through Nicaragua, with support from China, and the potential geopolitical impact. Information on upcoming events at the WMMI is at [www.wmmi.org](http://www.wmmi.org). *David Futey can be reached at [davidfutey@ocn.me](mailto:davidfutey@ocn.me).*

## Homemakers celebrate Thanksgiving



**Left:** The Monument Homemakers celebrated Thanksgiving on Nov. 6 by hosting a feast for firefighters from the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District. The group also collected food items to donate to Tri-Lakes Cares for Thanksgiving baskets for local families and made gift boxes for the American Indian children and elderly men and women of One Nation. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

## Legacy Sertoma Makes Donation to Homes For Our Troops



**Left:** With the help of the Plumbers & Pipefitters Union Local 58 and the American Legion Post 9-11, Legacy Sertoma recently was able to send a \$1500 check to Homes For Our Troops. Pictured (L-R) Dave Cooper representing Local 58, Legacy Sertoma President Jim Fitzpatrick, and Col (Ret) Janet Ferrin of Post 9-11. *Photo by Legacy Sertoma Club.*

## Hello Dolly



Lights. Camera. Action. "It takes a village"—or in this case a theater company. Palmer Ridge High School Bear Necessity Theatre Company presented *Hello Dolly!* on Nov. 13, 14, and 15 at the Palmer Ridge High School auditorium . The crew—choreographers, musicians, producers, directors, chorus members, costume designers, sound designers, actors, singers, dancers, stage managers, light crew, stage crew, construction crew, stage run crew, tech crew, props crew, makeup crew—performed with a smile and delighted the audience. Palmer Ridge students not only designed and built the sets but also hustled to make set changes as necessary, accommodating the numerous actors, singers, and dancers on stage. The live orchestra added another element of professionalism. *Photos by Michael Justice.*

## Tri-Lakes Women's Club Grant to HAP

At its November board meeting, Tri-Lakes Health Advocacy Partnership (HAP) recognized Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) members Donna Wagner, chair of the Grants Committee, and Geri Bush and Gail Wittman, 2013 co-presidents, for the club's recent grant of \$3,000, which allowed HAP to re-carpet and refurbish its Senior Center. HAP Treasurer Colleen Garwood said, "TLWC is a superior organization, known for its support of area nonprofits. TLWC's grant enhances our ability to provide important services and support for Tri-Lakes seniors." At its Nov. 17 meeting, HAP also recognized Eagle Scout candidate Dalen Babalyan for his Scout project coordinating and completing the Senior Center re-carpeting. Dalen is a junior at Discovery Canyon High School and a member of Troop 6, which is led by Scout Leader Eric Wetherby. From left are Eagle Scout candidate Dalen Babalyan, Gail Wittman, HAP President Dave Betzler, Donna Wagner, and Geri Bush. *Photo below provided by HAP.*

