

another 3-4 inches of snow accumulated that morning and afternoon. Temperatures remained below freezing through the mid-afternoon of the 18th as the fresh snow cover helped to limit any warm-up. Morning lows were also chilly, with the fresh snow cover and clear skies, and we briefly dipped below zero on the morning of the 17th. A quick intrusion of mild air followed this storm, with highs jumping back into the 50s on the 19th and 20th, but that would be the last time we would see above normal temperatures through the remainder of the month.

A strong storm began to move through late on the 20th and was in full force on the 21st. This brought heavy snow and colder temperatures. More than a foot of snow accumulated from late on the 20th through early on the 22nd, with the heaviest snow falling on the 21st. Temperatures were held down as reinforcing shots of cold air continued to filter in. Highs only reached the mid-teens on the 22nd and 23rd, and overnight lows started with zero each morning. A brief break occurred as this storm moved out and before the next system moved in, but temperatures stayed below normal through the period.

High temperatures reached into the mid-30s on the 24th and 25th, but tumbled quickly back to the mid-teens on the 26th and 27th behind the next cold front. Another 6-8 inches of snow accumulated with this final push of cold air as well, helping to bring our snowpack levels to the highest of the season so far. The last day of the month started cold, with lows right around zero, but lots of sunshine that afternoon made for a pleasant day weather-wise. Although with all the fresh snow on the ground, temperatures still only managed to make it into the mid- and upper 20s.

A look ahead

March is known for a wide range of weather conditions in the region. We can see 70° temperatures one afternoon and blizzard conditions the next. Many of us remember the blizzard of March 2003 when we received 30-50 inches of snowfall that shut down the region. However, snow that does fall begins to melt quickly this time of the year, providing beneficial moisture for our plants and limited inconvenience for us.

February 2015 Weather Statistics

Average High	40.5° (+1.7°)
100-year return frequency value max	51.9° min 32.8°
Average Low	16.0° (+3.3°)
100-year return frequency value max	21.9° min 3.7°
Highest Temperature	66° on the 7 th
Lowest Temperature	-5° on the 24 th
Monthly Precipitation	1.48"
	(+0.60" 40% above normal)
100-year return frequency value max	2.10" min 0.02"
Monthly Snowfall	29.0"
	(+16.0", 55% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	73.9"
	(+4.9", 7% above normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	14.19"
	(+1.32", 10% above normal)
	(the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
Heating Degree Days	1001 (-104)
Cooling Degree Days	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 31.
Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter written is an OCN volunteer

D-38 school board vacancy position

I am Sarah Sampayo – wife, mother of three, attorney, and Monument homeowner. I would like to announce my interest in running for the Director District 2 vacancy on D38’s school board for this year’s upcoming Nov 3rd ballot. I received my BA-MA in religious studies through the foreign studies program of Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium. I taught at the University of Texas before pursuing a law degree at Texas Tech, where my focus was mediation and constitutional rights. In 1999, while my husband was on a teaching assignment at the Air Force Academy, we bought one of the first homes built in Jackson Creek. Our two sons were born here in Colorado. We moved away on various military assignments, added a daughter, and returned to retire to our Jackson Creek home in 2008. For six years, I homeschooled my three children - one gifted, one special needs, and one dyslexic - before entering them first into private, then D-38 public schools. I regularly participate in education decision making at both the state and local level. I have been active for over two years in D38’s District & Building Accountability Boards, PTO, and school principal and D38 Board coffees. I am known for being a good listener, I have a passion for independent research, and I am committed to helping solve problems. Most recently, I have helped draft education legislation for our El Paso County State representatives and testified at several Colorado House and Senate education committee hearings. Our community needs leaders who are committed and engaged – both in the classroom, as well as with policy. As concerned parents and community members, we all have a vested interest in the future of education. My goal is simple. Let’s put students, teachers, and parents as our priority. Let’s restore local control in education.

Sarah Sampayo

Refuse the Tests!

We are parents of a student in D-38 and have chosen to refuse state and federally mandated tests for her this year, including the PARCC that is scheduled to be given this month. There are many reasons to refuse the testing, particularly this first year when legislators are closely watching parents’ response and student participation. As we witnessed last fall in Boulder and Jefferson Counties, there is a bipartisan ground swell of concern about these tests. Our own State Board of Education is not supportive of these tests, voting to allow local school districts to request waivers and to hold school districts “harmless” if they do not reach 95% partici-

pation this year. PARCC is tied to federal funding and Common Core Standards, all of which represent an effort to wrest control from local school districts and parents alike when it comes to educating our children. Of greater concern is the fact that our children’s right to privacy is not protected; in fact, their private information can be shared with other government entities by contract, as well as anyone else with a supposed “educational interest”. There is nothing to compare these test results to, just like last year’s CMAS test could not be compared to the prior year’s TCAP, which was different from the earlier CSAP, and on and on. Who is benefiting from these tests? Certainly not our children. The expense (in the millions) to administer these tests, the time taken from instruction and the stress on students and teachers alike are more reasons to refuse to participate in this madness. PARCC may well be a one year test due to the backlash; is it worth putting your children through it? Do your homework, and refuse the test.

Dr. Dennis and Diana Helffenstein

Attention Fellow Grandparents!

Do you know what Common Core is? Do you really know? I consider myself pretty savvy when it comes to the news, but I didn’t become aware of Common Core until 2013 – 3 years after it became the “law of the land” in Colorado. Forty-four States, including Colorado, passed legislation to adopt Common Core in 2010. As we begin to peel back this onion, we are uncovering what it’s really all about.

As I read parents’ letters to the OCN, the Gazette, and the Denver Post, I’m struck by how much they worry about the testing, data mining, and the “progressive” curriculum changes their children face. My original reaction was thank goodness my son graduated in 1993 from an excellent school system like D38. His learning disability presented many challenges, but nothing like what’s happening to parents today. Then my thoughts go to my 4-

year old granddaughter. What’s around the corner for her? And then I worry.

She is the reason I am doing my homework. I’ve scrolled and sifted through countless on-line articles and I have even attended public meetings put on by local concerned parents. Here’s my bottom line. Don’t believe those who say Common Core is just about a uniform set of standards. Common Core is the federal takeover of the American public schools. Sound familiar?

Even though our children are grown and gone, the future of our grandchildren’s education is in peril. Let’s all get educated on Common Core. We all know how to Google, right? Make your own judgments. If you decide you are against Common Core, figure out how to become involved. One way is to contact our D38 school board. Find out how you can help them “fight the good fight.”

Sharon “Sam” Schafer □

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 15 Years Experience (719) 650-8877
Susan Humphreys
 Piano Teacher

 susan.lohr54@gmail.com