

Season to Date Snow **91.3"**
 (-3.2", 15% below normal)
 (+1.4", 2% above normal)
 (the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)

Season to Date Precip. **15.59"**
 (+1.38", 10% above normal)
 (the precip season is from July 1 to June 30)
 Heating Degree Days **852** (-65)

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*

Be a friend of Black Forest park

Black Forest Regional Park needs a few good "friends." As you recall, the park was badly damaged in the Black Forest Fire. A new Forest Management Plan has set restoration priorities.

Now it's time to get to work!

Join us for a Black Forest Regional Park community meeting 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, April 9 at the Lodge at Cathedral Pines, 13977 Milam Rd. Learn how you can help restore your park and help form a Black Forest Park Friends Group.

Volunteer projects will include removing invasive weeds, constructing and maintaining erosion control structures, and meeting other critical needs. No experience necessary. Teens with service hour requirements are welcome! For more information, call the Trails and Open Space Coalition at 633-6884.

Thank you!

Susan Davies, executive director

Trails and Open Space Coalition

Woodmoor resident and avid trail user

Fire mitigation project terms clarified

This is in regards to the caption, "Matching grant can help area resident reduce wildfire risk" published in OCN on March 7, page 27.

Just to clarify a few terms of the Fire Break Project partnership between Coalition for Upper South Platte (CUSP) and Tri-Lakes property owners: Property owner volunteer "in-kind" time is required, together with owner's out-of-pocket payment of 50 percent cost share. (So if the fire fuel treatment of your land costs \$1,000, you'd pay \$500 and CUSP would cover \$500. No matter how many volunteer hours you log, you still pay your share of the actual cost of treatment.)

Other terms of agreement with CUSP also apply.

All the required CUSP documents, including the log for recording volunteer time, can be downloaded from www.TownOfPalmerLake.com or request them from me at JudithReginaHarrington@gmail.com / (719)229-9636.

Benefits of participation in the CUSP/Tri-Lakes Project: 1. You save half the cost of reducing wildfire risk to your property; 2. you contribute to the safety of your neighborhood, improve our wildland urban interface (WUI), and protect firefighters; 3. You comply with El Paso County and municipality International Fire Code ordinances; 4. You satisfy insurance company mitigation/"defensible space" requirements; 5. You could save money on your Colorado income taxes.

Arrange to have a pre-mitigation assessment from your local fire department now! Please call me. I'd be happy to answer questions, give you more details, and get you on the 2015 Palmer Lake/CUSP Project fire fuel mitigation schedule.

Judith Harrington

Editor's note: *The photo of the SWIFT team on page 27 of March 7 issue of OCN was taken by Dave Cooper, who was having mitigation work done on his property by SWIFT.*

D-38 school board out of step with commissioner and U.S. Senate candidate Darryl Glenn

County commissioner and U.S. Senate candidate Darryl Glenn recently released a statement to our community titled, "Let's talk about education." His position says "Common Core claims to raise the quality of education but is designed to data mine personal family information, indoctrinate children, and expand federal control."

I completely agree with Commissioner Glenn. The question is why doesn't our D-38 school board?

Many in our community received a letter from our school board on Nov. 12, 2014 accepting this intrusion into our families to the State of Colorado while they seem to sit idle on the sidelines, do not advocate for our teachers, our kid's privacy, or address our kid's education

future.

Please help motivate Lewis-Palmer D-38's school board to act as our community advocate for education as does U.S. Senate candidate Glenn. Thank you.

Gordon Reichal

Distrusting the D-38 Board of Education

Over the past several years, community surveys concerning the Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Board of Education have reported a lack of trust of this governing body. This distrust began with a payout of \$250,000 to a superintendent after only five months into his contract. The explanation given was that no rationale for this expensive decision would be made as part of a "gentleman's agreement."

None of the current board members were on the board at that time, so why the continuing distrust? It may have something to do with a continuing lack of transparency and an unwillingness to review and evaluate major decisions such as the reconfiguration that included moving all sixth-graders to elementary schools (and cutting the program options for them that was previously available in the middle schools) and channeling all district seventh- and eighth-graders into one middle school prior to dividing them into two high schools.

Another decision authorized the board to borrow millions of dollars the district did not need. To many community members, the board operates like an insider's club who does not have to respond to the questions and ideas presented by their constituents. This may be possibly due to the fact that all the current board members were initially appointed (hand selected) by the board. Once each faced election, it was done so as an incumbent, which statistically is a strong leg up on other contenders.

This fall, four of the five board member positions will be on the ballot. The district patrons deserve a school board with members who bring diverse fresh points of view to this governing body.

Stephen Boyd

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Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

Spring has sprung

By the staff at Covered Treasures

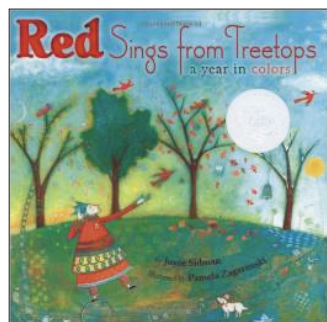
Sunny afternoons are longer after our switch to daylight saving time and we begin to anticipate outdoor activities—hiking, gardening, baseball. Yet we do live at 7,000 feet in Colorado, so spring snows often mean we are daydreaming rather than actually doing them. Here are a few books to help with those spring dreams.

Red Sings from Treetops: A Year in Colors

By Joyce Sidman (Houghton Mifflin, \$17.99)

Color comes alive in this whimsical, imaginative book: "green drips from spring leaves," "purple pours into summer evenings one shadow at a time," "red whispers along my finger with little beetle feet." With original and spot-on perceptions,

Joyce Sidman's poetry brings the colors of the seasons to life in a fresh light, combining the senses of sight, sound, smell, and taste. Illustrator Pam Zagarenski's beautiful interpretations go beyond the concrete, allowing us to not only see color, but to feel it in this Caldecott Honor book.



while the weather's "iffy," get yourself ready with this basic book on the sport. Laced with humorous fishing stories, it offers sound advice on tackle selection, reading water, casting technique, and small-stream scouting. The author of numerous books on fly-fishing, Gierach's work has appeared in *Field & Stream* and *Fly Rod & Reel*. He lives in Lyons, Colo.

Timber Press Guide to Vegetable Gardening in the Mountain States

By Mary Ann Newcomer (Workman Publishing, \$19.99)

Like all gardening at high altitude, growing vegetables requires regionally specific information: what to plant, when to plant it, and when to harvest, based on climate, weather, and first frost. This book tackles this need head-on. Monthly planting guides show exactly what you can do in the garden from January through December, with tutorials on seed saving, worm bins, and more.

Little Lamb, Bobby Bunny, Casey Chick and Katie Kitten

(Barron's Educational, \$7.99 each)

With soft fabric pages and stimulating features to see and feel, cloth books are the perfect first books for baby. Little Loves Rattle Books feature a sweet springtime tale of a baby animal exploring the world around it. A built-in rattle creates a gentle sound whenever the books are shaken and make them the perfect stroller or car seat take-along.

The Colorado Mountain Companion; a potpourri of useful miscellany from the highest parts of the highest state

By M. John Fayhee (West Winds Press, \$23.99)

While you're planning your summer destinations and activities, take a look at this "treasure trove of useful (and just plain fun) information about Colorado's mountain country." In this book you'll learn about strange festivals, geology, mountain lexicons, hiking and biking, Colorado as a movie set, Colorado songs, and a wealth of other miscellaneous information about Colorado, and what our state is all about—an essential text for those who'd like to dig a little deeper into what it means to be a Coloradan. (Coloradoan? Read this book for more on the debate!)

The Hall: A Celebration of Baseball's Greats

By Baseball Hall of Fame (Hachette \$35)

The official book celebrating the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's 75th anniversary, this is the ultimate treasure for baseball fans young and old. In this collection of photographs, plaques and stories, lay the biographies of every player inducted into the Hall, including Colorado Springs' own Goose Gosage. Organized by position, each chapter begins with an original essay by a Hall of Famer.

Finding Spring

By Carin Berger (Harper Collins \$17.99)

Spring is all a little bear named Maurice can think about: Where is it? What is it? When will it arrive? Impatient and curious, he sets out but before he finds spring, he discovers something really magical: winter! Illustrated with dioramas and cut-paper collages by award-winning designer and illustrator Carin Berger, this beautiful picture book celebrates the changing of the seasons.

Fly Fishing Small Streams

By John Gierach (Stackpole Books, \$19.95)

Always thought you'd like to try your hand at fly-fishing Colorado's streams? Maybe this is the year, and now,