

Happy New Year! from the volunteers at Our Community News

Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area



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Free



Local Events

See pages 23-27 for details of these and many other local events.

- Wescott FPD Christmas tree chipping, Sat., Jan. 9, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
- El Paso County's annual Christmas tree recycling program (TreeCycle), Sat.-Sun., Jan. 9-10, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- El Paso County Hazardous Materials & Recycling Collection Facility, Sat., Jan. 9, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
- NEPCO Meeting, Sat., Jan. 9, 10 a.m.-noon. Water Commissioner.
- Tri-Lakes Land Use Committee Meeting, Mon., Jan. 11, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- Foot Care Clinic, Wed., Jan. 13
- Chess Nuts, Wed., Jan. 13, 5-9 p.m.
- Tri-Lakes Community Blood Drive, Tue., Jan. 19, 3-7 p.m.
- Palmer Lake Historical Society: Annual Potluck Dinner and Membership Meeting, Thu., Jan. 21, 6:30 p.m.
- Monument Library: Computer Help Lab, Fri., Jan. 22, 9-10 a.m.
- Warriors Ice Fishing Tournament, Sat., Jan. 23, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Monument Library: Homeschool Books/Materials Exchange/Give-away, Mon., Jan. 25, 1-2 p.m.
- LPHS/UNC Joint Concert with LPMS Symphonic Band, Wed., Jan. 27, 7-9 p.m.
- Monument Library: Bonfils Blood Center Community Blood Drive, Sat., Jan. 30, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- PRHS/LPHS/LPMS/MA Combined Concert, Tue., Feb. 2, 7-9 p.m.
- CERT Training, Thu.-Sat., Feb. 4-6
- RMMA Concert, Sat., Feb. 6, 7 p.m.
- Heartsaver CPR/First Aid Class, Sat., Feb. 27, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. ■

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This year marked the 82nd Anniversary of the Yule Log Ceremony in Palmer Lake. The ceremony on Dec. 13, in memory of lifelong Yule Logger Harry Krueger, featured bagpipers, a hammered dulcimer player, carols, story telling, wassail drinking, and of course the hunt for the Yule Log. The ceremony began with an invocation, then the trumpet call sent log hunters to the trail in search for the hidden Yule Log. Once back to the Town Hall, the Yule Log Ceremony commenced. The Yule log and Kindling log were set ablaze and log hunters enjoyed sharing in a warm cup of wassail. **Above:** Kurt Voelker carries in the kindling log for the fire. The kindling log is half of last year's Yule Log that is saved to start the fire. *Caption by Audrey Burkart. Photos by Molly Porter.* See additional photos of the Yule festivities on page 22.

Baptist Road Rural Transportation Authority, Dec. 28

In 2016, CDOT may help pay off BRRTA revenue bond debt

By Jim Kendrick

At the Dec. 28 Baptist Road Rural Transportation Authority (BRRTA) regular board meeting, BRRTA District Manager Elaine Johnsen, who is the funding optimization manager for the El Paso County Budget Administration, and Mark Andrew, who is the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Region 2 North program engineer, formally advised the BRRTA directors that CDOT had tentatively approved a second reimbursement payment of \$12.51 million to BRRTA in early 2016 to pay for all I-25 Baptist Road

interchange expansion construction costs.

This second state payment will allow BRRTA to redeem all its remaining privately-held revenue bond debt a decade early, before the end of 2026 as currently scheduled. The rest of the money that will be used to redeem BRRTA's remaining existing revenue bond debt for BRRTA's financing of expansion of the state's I-25 Exit 158 will come from BRRTA's existing debt service fund, which was budgeted to have a starting balance for 2016 of \$2.38 million. The final total cost of recalling

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Palmer Lake Town Council, Dec. 11

Town Attorney Larry Gaddis retires; Fire Chief Margo Humes departs

By James Howald



Above: Palmer Lake Mayor Nikki McDonald presents outgoing Town Attorney Larry Gaddis with an Award of Appreciation. *Photo by James Howald.*

The last meeting of the Palmer Lake Town Council in 2015 brought changes to the town's staff, and expressions of gratitude to volunteers for their efforts. Town Attorney Larry Gaddis, who had announced his intention to retire earlier in 2015, received an award of appreciation for his service to the town. The town's new attorneys were introduced to the board. Fire Chief Margo Humes also received an award of appreciation.

(Continued on page 7)

An important message for our readers

Our Community News needs you now!

For 15 years, our volunteers have provided unbiased reporting on important local issues, including real estate development, fire departments, school districts, and water availability. We have provided a platform for advertising local businesses without competition from larger markets. We have published letters to the editor to allow you to express your opinions on events in the Tri-Lakes area.

Now we find that we have more tasks than we have volunteers. Some vital jobs where we could use your help:

- Ad sales coordinator. We are looking for one dedicated volunteer who loves *OCN*. Commitment is about 45 hours a month and is very busy the second half of each month.
- Bookkeeping assistant.
- Reporting on local meetings, what they talked about and what they decided.
- Counting and lifting tubs of papers to take the mailing to the post offices and stacks of papers to local businesses once a month.
- People with strong arms and backs to help load and unload mailing tubs from a truck at two locations (three hours a month)
- Driving rental truck to various post offices and the printing plant once a month.
- Preparing post office paperwork, tub labels, subscription labels, etc. once a month.
- Backup managing editor, keeping track of content and word counts and preparing the new content spreadsheet each month.

The time and skills involved vary greatly from job to job. *OCN* will provide whatever equipment and training you need.

Please join us today! Meet a group of interesting and committed people. Learn new skills—use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit your community and celebrate unfiltered information.

Please call Managing Editor Lisa Hatfield at 339-7831, or email editor@ocn.me to see what you can contribute. Contact us today! We are waiting to hear from you. If you can spare some time to help ensure that *OCN* continues to provide a vital service to our wonderful Tri-Lakes community, please contact us by Saturday, Jan. 16.



Above: Our 2014 crop of volunteers included, from left, Nancy Wilkins, Mike Wicklund, Wayne Claybaugh, RaeJean Claybaugh, Lisa Hatfield, Allen Alchian, James Howald, Jackie Burhans, Harriet Halbig, John Heiser, Chris Pollard, Arjun Gheewala, Janet Sellers, Mark Aggers, and Bernard Minetti. *Photo by Wayne Claybaugh.*