By Sigl Walker

The Palmer Lake Historical Society’s annual Return of the Rocky Mountain Chautauqua was held on Aug. 12. Many of the activities took place on the Village Green, including demonstrations of vintage arts and crafts such as spinning, bobbin and tatting lace making, quilting, toe painting, and weaving. There were “bands-on” exhibitions: gold painting from the Western Museum of Mining & Industry and fur pelts from Colorado Parks & Wildlife. Jonathan Ehresman happened to perform card tricks to the delight of the young stars.

This year’s Chautauqua portrayers drew enthusiastic audiences. Ron West appeared as James “Jimmie” Burns, owner of the Portland Mine; Catherine Mcguire portrayed Alice Bemis Taylor; and Richard Marold was an extremely believable Nikola Tesla. Throughout the morning and later in the afternoon, the Frontier Army Band played vintage brass instruments.

The Colorado Frontier Army Band, led by Norman Hughes, entertained with sleight-of-hand. Sandy Smith demonstrated weaving. Presenters Ron West as Jimmie Burns and Catherine McGuire as Alice Bemis Taylor. Photo by Tommy Olson.

Above: The newly restored and furnished 1891 Palmer Lake Jail (shown in inset photo by Mike Walker) was briefly occupied by Bethany Bonser and Renna Lage. Photo by Tommy Olson.

Above: Sandy Smith demonstrated weaving. Photo by Tommy Olson.

Above: From left, Oliver, Naomi, and Zachariah Rosebush enjoyed some cool treats at the Ice Cream Social. Photo by Harriet Hallbig.

Above: The Colorado Frontier Army Band, led by Norman Hughes, performed card tricks to the delight of the young stars. Photo by Tommy Olson.

By Janet Sellers

“I cannot tell you how readable the book of nature is becoming for me; my long efforts at deciphering, letter by letter, have helped me. Now all of a sudden it is having its effect, and my quiet joy is inexpressible.”—Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, 1786.

I am a lazy gardener, and I let nature work hard while I watch. Being a successful lazy gardener requires good preparation but offers lasting, prolific results. Many of us feel that as we garden, we learn nature’s secrets of soil as a living, complex organism. Reading the book of nature is simple, repetitive and fun, but only when using organic and natural processes, as pharma chemical compounds stress the natural health of plants, undermining soil microbiology instead of improving it.

As cool nights appear growth slows, but crops for the next 50 days include: bush beans, beet greens in 30 days or roots in 50 days, scallion, chive and garlic leaves, baby kale, bok choy, mustard greens and lettuces, snow peas, radishes, and spinach. My favorite crop to grow here is decay. The microbiology that is at work in our gardens. We can offer protection of our gardens. The microbiology that we cannot see is at work for the basis of our gardens. We can offer protection from the crazy warm and cool weather with a blanket of mulch such as straw, or if the plant is large enough already, it will self-mulch and protect itself with its leaves. Gardeners know plants have a proprioception response to growing conditions and gravity as related to the shoots of plants, and we find this in the posture of growing plants.

Janet Sellers is an avid nature lover and prolific lazy gardener. Send in easy gardening tips to: Janet.Sellers@ocn.me.