

Front Porch

Distributed to the Stapleton, Park Hill, Lowry, Montclair, Mayfair, Hale and East Colfax neighborhoods

DENVER, COLORADO

FEBRUARY 2012

STAPLETON



Locally Made Sports Equipment Used Worldwide

Gibson Athletic equipment, used throughout the world for ballet, gymnastics, fitness and children's therapy, is made in northeast Denver. The company is owned by Stapleton residents Tamara and Brian Smith,

shown above in their nearby factory with sons Colin (left), 4, Brayden, 9, and Carter, 7. The Smiths look for creative ways to use their in-house woodworking, steel fabrication and sewing capabilities to grow their

company, which currently has over 40 employees. Tamara manages marketing and finance while Brian is in charge of product development, manufacturing and operations.

By John Babiak

Driving streets of Denver's Montbello neighborhood Industrial Park one sees countless non-descript prefabricated one and two-story buildings. Signage of

all styles reflects the names of hundreds of companies. Some are recognizable Fortune 500 companies, while others leave you wondering what is the nature of the business being conducted behind the tall exterior walls.

One of these is Gibson Athletic, located on quiet Lima Street in the middle of the park. While it may not be a name brand to most, it is held in high regard by competitive athletes, and is known around the globe as one of the *(continued on page 26)*

SDC Votes to Take Affordable Housing Issue to City

By Carol Roberts

In an important and emotional meeting on January 26, the Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC) voted to communicate to the City and County of Denver that Forest City is not on pace to meet its requirement that 10% of all for-sale homes in Stapleton be affordable housing. At this time only 5.6% of for-sale units in Stapleton are affordable housing.

Michael Kearns, a member of the SDC Board, presented the findings of a committee (Kearns along with Justin Ross and Stephen Miller) on the current state of the Affordable Housing Program in Stapleton. The report stated, "Frustrations within CAB and Housing Diversity had gotten so bad that they had jointly requested that SDC suspend future land sales to Forest *(continued on page 10)*

Building a Library For the Future



The photo shows the main part of the library looking to the east. The technical, electrical and IT systems are being installed and will ultimately be under the raised flooring.

By Jon Meredith

The new Sam Gary Branch Library in Stapleton will open this summer and it promises to be a community center, both for Stapleton and for the surrounding neighborhoods. The library will have an open feel, comfortable chairs and couches and a fireplace that invite visitors to stay and appreciate all that the library has to offer. It is a building with amenities for today's library customer, but it is also designed for the future and has already qualified for LEED silver certification. It has multiple locations for computer use, easy access to holds and checkout and community rooms for public use. The heating and cooling systems, as well as all the cables for computers and electricity, are under an elevated floor, making any future changes to the floor plan easy and economical.

City Librarian Shirley Amore says her staff has been instrumental in the design of all the new facilities. "Libraries have always evolved to keep up with the times. Modern libraries are *(continued on page 27)*

Printed with soy-based ink. Paper contains 40% postconsumer waste.

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Like us at Front Porch Newspaper



Warm winter days offer opportunities to view wildlife and beautiful vistas of Longs Peak and the Front Range from the Rocky Mountain Arsenal.



CALENDAR

Nearby events that are FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC or are nonprofit.
(Additional events are listed on pages 16-19. Recurring events are listed on page 17.)

FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 4
2040 Health Summit 8am-1:30pm
Denver School of the Arts
Free lunch., RSVP at summit@2040health.org
or 303-468-3241
www.2040partnersforhealth.org (See page 19)

Saturday, Feb. 4 & Mar. 3
Denver Art Museum - SCFD Free Days
720-865-5000, www.denverartmuseum.org

Monday, February 6
House Agricultural, Livestock, & Natural
Resources Committee Hearing on Tiger
Salamander as official state amphibian, 1:30pm
Public attendance encouraged to show support
State Capitol Building, Room HCR 0107
200 East Colfax Avenue
naturerangerjohn@aol.com (See page 15)

Sun., Feb. 5 & Mon., Feb. 6
Denver Zoo - SCFD Free Days 303-376-4800
www.denverzoo.org

Tuesday, February 7
House Dist 8 Rep. Beth McCann Town Hall
Meeting on the State and Local Economy
Montview Presbyterian Church, McCollum
Room, 7-8:30pm
303-866-2959 (See page 19)

Tuesday, February 7
Children's Museum, Target Tuesdays
1st Tuesday nights free, 4-8pm, cmdenver.org

Thursday, February 9
Active Minds Seminar—The Soviet Union:
The Road After Collapse, 7-8pm Stapleton MCA
Community Room, 2823 Roslyn St
Events@stapletoncommunity.com

Friday, February 10
Visions of Love: Chocolate and Wine Experience
at Anchor School for the Blind, 5:30-8pm
2550 Roslyn St, \$45 per ticket
303-377-9732 (See page 19)

Monday, February 13
Relay For Life of NE Denver Kickoff Party, 6pm
SmartSpace, 2373 Central Park Blvd.
Info on the July 20 event at Founders Green.
Appetizers & drinks served 720-524-5414,
www.nedenverrelay.com

Thursday, February 16
Denver Zoo - SCFD Free Days
303-376-4800 www.denverzoo.org

FEBRUARY

Monday, February 20
Denver Botanic Gardens - SCFD Free Day
720-865-3500 www.botanicgardens.org

Saturday, Feb. 25 & Mar. 3
Saturday Night Live for kids ages 7-12, 6-9pm
Drop kids at the Rec Center and go out for
Restaurant Week. \$10/child
www.stapletoncommunity.com or email
events@stapletoncommunity.com
(See MCA column at right)

Monday, February 27
Denver Museum of Nature and Science
SCFD Free Day 303-322-7009
www.dmns.org

MARCH

Tuesday, March 6
Swim Team Parent Meeting, 6-7pm
Central Park Rec Center
Pools@stapletoncommunity.com

Tuesday, March 6
Children's Museum, Target Tuesdays
1st Tuesday nights free, 4-8pm, cmdenver.org

Thursday, March 8
Swim Team registration for returning
swimmers, noon. Stapleton MCA
Pools@stapletoncommunity.com

Thursday, March 8
Active Minds Seminar, 7-8pm
Stapleton MCA Community Room
Events@stapletoncommunity.com

Thursday, March 15
Swim Team registration for returning
swimmers, noon. Stapleton MCA.
Pools@stapletoncommunity.com

Thursday, March 15
Swim lesson registration begins
for new resident swimmers, 12pm
www.stapletoncommunity.com
(New nonresident swimmers start
registration at noon, April 1)

*The Front Porch welcomes submissions
of upcoming local events (see
information on p.17) and story ideas.
Deadline is the 15th for the next issue.*

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

STAPLETON

What is your Community DNA?

This month we would like to challenge the community to remember to show their gratitude when something is done well. It is common for the disgruntled to express their opinion; however, those who are satisfied say nothing. We want to challenge you to let a teacher, instructor, waiter or staff person know when you appreciate something.

If you are at the Rec Center and the staff greets you with a smile, let them know you appreciate it! If you take a class and the instructor does a great job, let them know! If you order at one of the restaurants and they do a good job, acknowledge it! Let's make it a point this month to comment on the little things we appreciate, but often take for granted. This will help to offset the 10 percent who complain about everything.

If you have an idea you would like to have featured, please send it to StapletonDNA@stapletoncommunity.com. This is meant to provide a monthly topic and action for our community, so feel free to let us hear from you.

Active Minds Seminar

The Soviet Union: The Road After Collapse

What was known as the Soviet Union dissolved in December 1991. Join Active Minds as we explore the history of the Soviet Union as well as the causes of its failure. In addition, we will discuss the continued relevance of the Russian Federation, the influence of Vladimir Putin, and ongoing challenges to democracy in the region.

The seminar begins at 7pm on Thursday, Feb. 9 in the Stapleton MCA Community Room located behind King Soopers at 2823 Roslyn St. Everyone is welcome. For more information, visit www.ActiveMinds-ForLife.com.

2012 Stapleton Swim Team

It is that time of year to prepare for the upcoming swim season. It's hard to believe the summer will be here before we know it. We will be holding a parent information meeting on Tuesday, March 6, at the Central Park Rec Center from 6-7pm. We will provide details of our upcoming season and the registration process at this meeting.

We will have three registration dates this year. For all returning swimmers, registration begins at noon on March 8. For all new resident swimmers, registration will begin at noon on March 15, and for all new nonresident swimmers, registration will begin at noon on April 1. If you have any questions, please email pools@stapletoncommunity.com.

2012 Summer Movies

Well, planning is underway for the summer outdoor movie season. If you have suggestions for movies you would like to see on The Green this summer, email them to events@stapletoncommunity.com.

SAVE THE DATE-- Saturday Night Live... for kids only!

The Stapleton MCA and Central Park Recreation Center are partnering during 5280's Restaurant Week. Drop your child off at the Rec Center and go grab dinner. The event is from 6-9pm on Saturday, February 25 and Saturday, March 3. "Saturday Night Live" is designed for all children ages 7-12. The cost is \$10 per child per night. There will be a variety of fun activities including access to the swimming pool! For more information, go to www.stapletoncommunity.com or email events@stapletoncommunity.com.

If you have questions or comments about the information above, please feel free to contact events@stapletoncommunity.com or call the MCA office at 303.388.0724.

Diane Deeter
Director of Programming and Events



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Front Porch

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The Stapleton Front Porch is published by Stapleton Front Porch, LLC, 2566 Syracuse St., Denver, CO 80238. 33,000 papers are printed. The free paper is distributed during the first week of each month to homes and businesses in Stapleton, Park Hill, Lowry, Montclair, Mayfair, Hale and East Colfax.



FALL HEAD OVER HEELS...

..at Northfield Stapleton.

Come cozy up to a delicious dinner and a romantic comedy or simply stroll through Main Street and browse for the perfect gift that says "Be Mine". Make your date night even easier by taking the new Central Park Blvd. exit off I-70.

..at Northfield Stapleton.

Come cozy up to a delicious dinner and a romantic comedy or simply stroll through Main Street and browse for the perfect gift that says "Be Mine". Make your date night even easier by taking the new Central Park Blvd. exit off I-70.

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Registration opens February 11th

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Sign up for Lil' Kickers in February and get free use of the inflatable fun zone for the month.

To sign up your child or to get more information, visit bladiumdenver.com or contact April Nies at (303) 320-3033 x109, DenverLK@bladium.com

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Food Bank Supports Projects Feeding From Ten to Thousands



On Friday mornings, volunteers at Westerly Creek School fill backpacks with food for students who, without breakfast and lunches at school, might lack enough nutritious food over the weekends. Boone Moskowitz, 4 (front) and Gina Belich (left) place food in a pack as Willa, 7, and Maisie Moskowitz, 9, JoNell Herndon and Emilie Vivien pause to watch. Boone and Willa recently had birthday parties at which they asked their guests to bring food for the Westerly Creek Food Pantry.

By Carol Roberts

“People should never feel bad about asking where to get help. I know there are a lot of folks out there that are newly unemployed that have never been in this situation before and we definitely want them to get help and not be hungry and struggling,” says Janie Gianotsos of the Food Bank of the Rockies.

Westerly Creek Elementary school parent JoNell Herndon echoes Gianotsos’ sentiment. “Everyone needs help at different times. I know of single moms whose husband left or families who suddenly have no job. More

families are struggling than people realize. It’s super cool to have a way to help people in our community at those times.”

Herndon suggested at a PTA meeting that the school start a food pantry to be sure every student can thrive—and volunteers, including Jen Seward and Ann Margaret Donnelly Williams stepped up to help make it happen.

With \$375 in seed funding donated by local businesses, backpacks donated by Wal-Mart and weekly bagels donated by Einsteins, the program got off the ground quickly.

Herndon says donations have come in from a wide range of (continued on page 9)

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The Congresswoman

Rep. Diana DeGette on Why Congress Is So Dysfunctional

Editors' Note: This interview with Congresswoman DeGette is the first in a series by the Front Porch with individuals we believe will be of interest to our readers.

Jon Meredith: Congress now has an approval rating of about 10 percent. Is that good or bad and do the legislators care?

Congresswoman DeGette: Well, it certainly isn't a good thing. We have serious issues which legislators really do care about. Institutionally there are serious problems and we have to improve the comity in Congress. There has to be a true willingness on both sides to compromise on important issues. This year is the worst I have ever seen with the 87 new Tea Party Republicans who will not find middle ground. Voters need to vote for people who work to get things done.

JM: Is this the way the Founding Fathers envisioned the legislative branch?

DeGette: The Founders said that the House is hot tea and the Senate is the saucer to cool it off. The rampant use of the cloture rule has slowed all Senate business to a standstill. The Senate's rules need to be changed so that key legislative issues can pass with 50 plus 1 votes.

JM: Is the Norquist tax pledge that Republicans have signed a big part of the problem because any Republican who raises taxes will be primaried out?

DeGette: The Norquist Pledge is part of the problem. Eighty-seven Tea Party members have an absolutist view on every issue. When Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) is worried about a primary, the Tea Party has gone too far.

JM: Should there be term limits so that legislators will not be so tied into getting re-elected every two years?

DeGette: We have term limits; they are called elections. Voters need to look closely at their representative's record and be sure they can in fact work in a bipartisan manner.

JM: What would help Congress get things done?



Diana DeGette, who has represented Denver in the U.S. Congress since 1997, is pictured in her Denver office with her book about her battles in Congress on stem cell research and reproductive rights.

DeGette: It is important for members to socialize and get to know one another. It used to be that members would stay in Washington on the weekends and get together socially. That was when most members were men. Now there are many women members who want to be with their families on weekends and male members often have wives who work in their districts. We need the opportunity to get to know each other as individuals. The Tea Party members would sit together and never interact with other members, even Republicans, when they first came in.

JM: Is spending by third-party groups in the recent presidential primaries a sign of what is to come during the 2012 election and how do these advertisements affect elections?

DeGette: Ever since the Citizens United decision, Congress has been concerned about huge corporate and wealthy individual donations. Millions were spent recently in Iowa to bring candidates down. We need to pass a bill where disclosure is required so people know where the money for the ad came from.

JM: How difficult a job is Speaker of the House?

DeGette: It is the most difficult job in Washington. Speaker Boehner has to deal with 78 ideologies, which is impossible.

JM: What exactly does a Whip do?

DeGette: A whip counts votes to ensure that when legislation comes to the floor there are enough votes to pass it. I have to make sure there are 218 votes to pass or defeat legislation. The Tea Party caucus put Speaker Boehner in a horrible position prior to the holiday recess by refusing to pass the Senate bill to keep the Social Security payroll tax cut and unemployment benefits. Other Republican members did not want to go home and face constituents after increasing taxes and ending unemployment benefits at Christmastime.

JM: Who is your best friend on the Republican side; why and how did you get to know them?

DeGette: My closest Republican friend is Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri. We both have been in the House for almost the same amount of time. The women in the House try and get together for dinner a few times a year and that is how I got to know Jo Ann.

JM: What changes are necessary to make Congress more functional?

DeGette: There need to be more mothers in Congress. Moms have a way of getting things done by consensus.

JM: Do you play much golf with the Speaker?

DeGette: When I was first elected my children were 2 and 6. Now they are 18 and 22. There hasn't been a lot of time for golf.

JM: What will you do after Congress?

DeGette: I would like to become a chef or be a professional musician.

Congresswoman DeGette won a Congressional cook-off last year. The recipe that won, Adobo Chicken Tostadas con Crema, is on the Front Porch website.

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Featured Properties

- ① 9857 E 31st Ave | \$1,150,000
- ② 8735 28th Ave | \$585,000
- ③ 2741 Clinton Way | \$539,900
- ④ 2260 Uinta St | \$329,900
- ⑤ 2555 Central Park Blvd | \$325,000
- ⑥ 2838 Central Park Blvd | \$269,900

2012 Transaction Legend*

- Sale
- Leased or Managed
- Under Contract

* Representing buyers and sellers. Square feet numbers indicate finished space. Property locations on map are approximate.

npre

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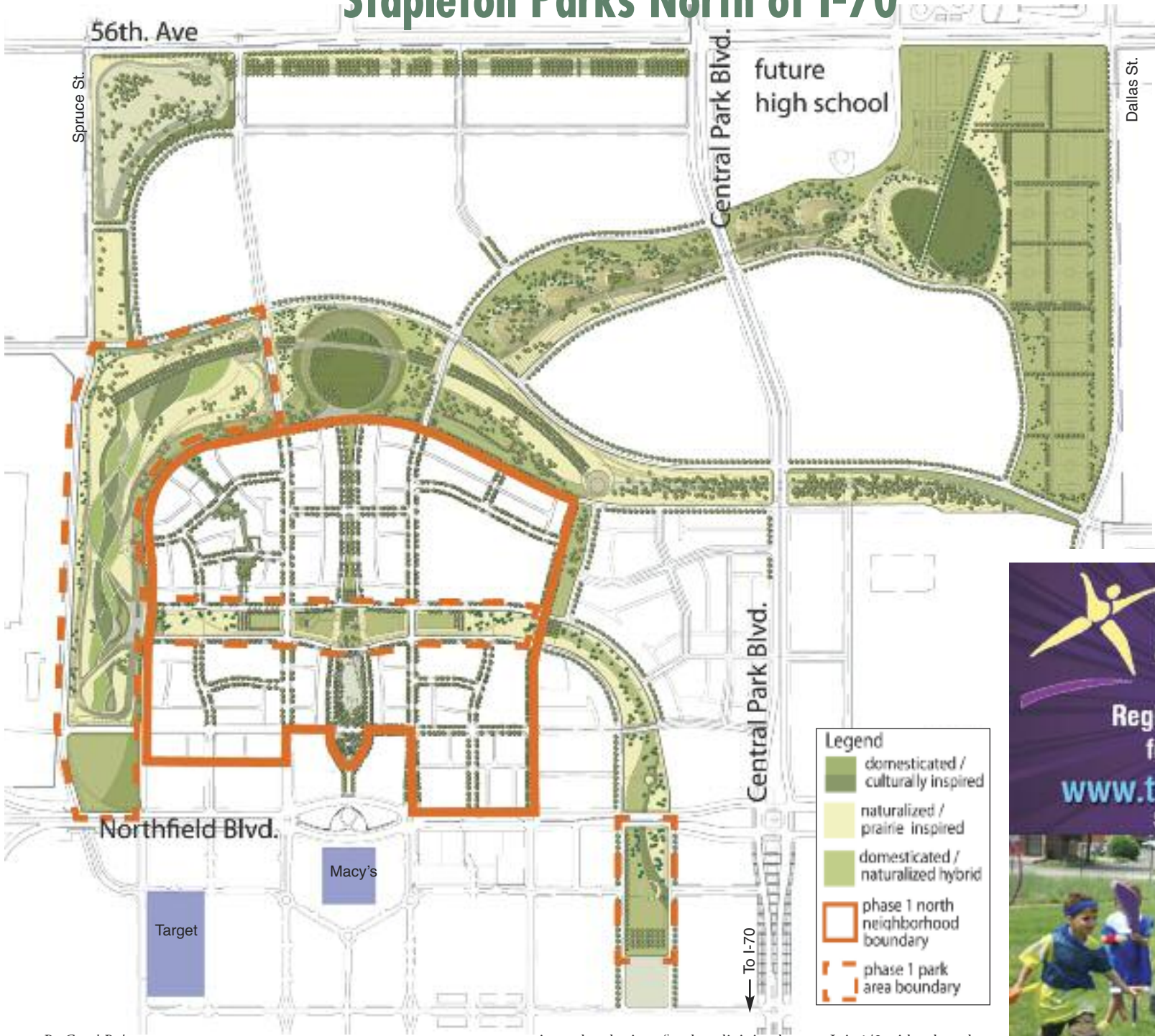
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Stapleton Parks

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50 acres, phase 1 park area (red dashed line)
Phase 1 construction starts Aug. 2012 and will be completed Aug. 2013

300 acres south of I-70
75 acres, Greenway Park
80 acres, Central Park
30 acres, Fred Thomas Park
10 acres, Recreation Center
105 acres, Westerly Creek (Montview to Sand Creek)

Although most of the green area is trunk park, the area directly north of Macy's is an in-tract park that may have uses similar to Founder's Green in the 29th Avenue Town Center.

By Carol Roberts
The landscape architecture and design firm Civitas, hired by Stapleton Developer Forest City, unveiled their preliminary ideas for the parks in Stapleton north of I-70 at a community meeting on January 25. Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and offer input.
Most of the park area shown on the map is trunk park that will be maintained by Denver Parks. The darker colors represent higher intensity use. The east-west area marked above as first phase development is proposed as a higher intensity area for informal sports, pic-

nic and gatherings for the adjoining homes. It is 1/3 wider than the 29th Ave. Parkway. The colors also convey the idea that landscaping will be designed in a way that offers visual variety as walkers or bicyclists move through the area on paths that will rise and fall with variations in the topography. The north-south section marked as first phase on the west side of the map is an example of this. Portions of the parks are designed for drainage during heavy rains, with some detention ponds that may hold water for temporary periods but would generally be dry and are expected to be home to local wildlife.

An advertisement for 'The Logan School Summer Adventure Camp'. It features a purple background with a yellow logo of a person jumping. Text includes 'Registration Now Open for Summer 2012', the website 'www.theloganschool.org', and 'Summer Camp Link'. Below this is a photo of children playing on a field with colorful equipment. Text at the bottom says 'Day and Overnight Camp For Children ages 5-14', 'Hands-on, Experiential Summer Camp In Lowry', and 'We Thrive on Adventure!'.



OVARIAN CYSTS

by Valerie B. Ginsburg, MD

Stapleton OB-GYN
Example PHYSICIAN NETWORK
Valerie B. Ginsburg, MD
2807 Roslyn Street (behind King Soopers)
303-403-6333
Open Mon - Fri, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Stapleton Family & Occupational Medicine
Example PHYSICIAN NETWORK
Rick Artist, MD
Elizabeth Buisker, DO
Kristine Walsh, MD, MPH
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Open Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri, 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Wed, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sat, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



What are ovarian cysts?

Ovarian cysts are fluid-filled sacs that can form in the ovaries. They are very common, particularly during the childbearing years.

What are the symptoms of ovarian cysts?

Often, the cysts don't cause any symptoms. You may not realize you have one until a routine pelvic exam. Ovarian cysts can, though, cause problems if they twist, bleed or rupture.

If you have any of the symptoms below, it's important to have them checked out, because they can also be symptoms of ovarian tumors.

- Pressure, swelling or pain in the abdomen
- Pain during sex
- Pain during your period
- Pelvic pain

Can cysts be prevented?

No, unfortunately, cysts cannot be prevented. Fortunately, most cysts do not cause symptoms, are not cancerous and often go away on their own. However, you should consult with your doctor if you notice any of the following:

- Changes in your period
- Pain in the pelvic area
- Pain or pressure in the abdomen or pelvic area

How are they treated?

Most functional ovarian cysts will disappear without treatment. Your doctor may schedule a second pelvic exam in one to three months to see if the cyst has changed size. If the cyst has not disappeared after several menstrual cycles, gets larger or causes pain, your doctor may suggest surgically removing the cyst.

Another option is to take birth control pills, which can prevent ovulation. This may prevent new cysts from forming.

If you would like to make an appointment with Dr. Ginsburg, please contact the Stapleton OB-GYN office directly.



Sen. Bennet Comes to Stapleton Zero Energy Home to Talk about Proposed Bill



By Carol Roberts

Senator Michael Bennet came to New Town Builder's net zero home in Stapleton for a press conference to explain how his proposed SAVE Act would make such a home more affordable. SAVE stands

for Sensible Accounting to Value Energy. Under the SAVE Act, federal mortgage loan agencies would consider a homeowner's expected energy costs when determining the homeowner's ability to make monthly mortgage payments.

Simply put, if energy-saving features built into a home save a homeowner \$100 a month on utility bills, for example, mortgage lenders would be allowed to consider that \$100 as money the homeowner would have to put toward a mortgage. Bennet says it

Sen. Michael Bennet, left, listens as Gene Myers, New Town Builders president, explains how the zero energy home's power generation and usage is displayed on the TV screen. When lights were turned off, the display showed that energy usage immediately went down.

would lead to more complete and accurate mortgage underwriting, encourage investments in home energy improvements, and create more than 80,000 jobs. The bill is a bipartisan effort sponsored by Colorado's Democratic Senator Michael Bennet and Georgia's Republican Senator Johnny Isakson. Isakson, who has 30 years experience in the residential real estate industry, states he supports the bill "because it has the potential to create jobs without any cost to taxpayers, and it will also improve mortgage underwriting in this country by including energy as a factor in the process." Bennet says of the SAVE Bill, "It's very, very simple. All it says is that people who lend money for projects like this can calculate in the cost of that borrowing the energy savings that are produced. Right now, home lenders are precluded from including energy costs in their calculations, which means there's not an incentive (continued on page 9)

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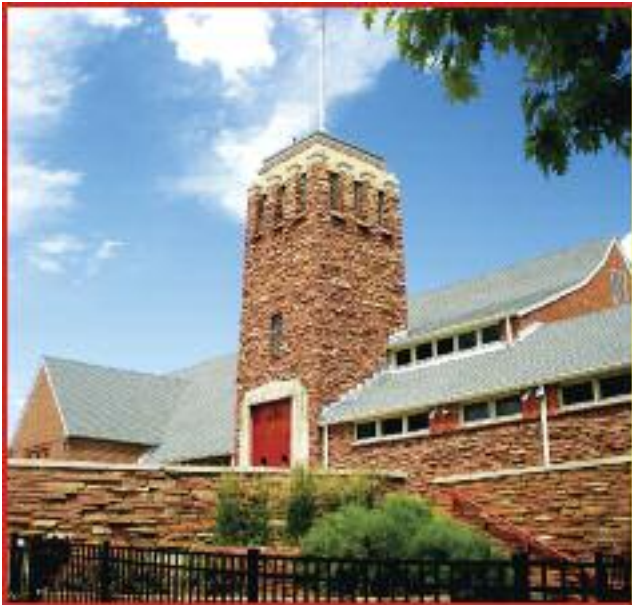
New Dog Park in Lowry

A new, first of its kind, five-acre dog park opened in Lowry in December. The dog park has three distinct fenced areas including a high-energy play area, a low-energy play area, and an agility area, which is



set to open once native grasses have been established and agility equipment has been installed in approximately two years. The dog park has a four-foot high fence around the perimeter, two shade structures with benches, old recycled fire hydrants and rolling hills. The surface is a mixture of squeegee and sand, providing a soft play surface for the dogs that is made to drain well and keep the park mud free. It is located adjacent to 16 acres of open space. This project was paid for with tax increment financing in a partnership between

Left: The Westerly Creek Dam is visible just south of the dog park.
Lower left: The dog park uses old fire hydrants as traditional “doggie decor.”
Denver Parks and Recreation and the Lowry Redevelopment Authority.
The park is just south of the traffic circle at Lowry Blvd. and Yosemite Street (near Big Bear ice rink). From the traffic circle go south on Yosemite Way, turn right (west) on Sports Blvd., and park along Sports Blvd. The path to the dog park heads south from Sports Blvd. starting where it crosses Westerly Creek. Visitors are asked to stay on the path when walking to the enclosed area and stay off the dam. The open space native grasses are not yet established.
Information courtesy of Denver Parks and Recreation.



Messiah Community Church, ELCA - Coming events!

Evolution Weekend, Feb. 11, 12, 2012
Sat., Feb 11: 9:00 a.m. - Noon, Seminar with Lee Wimberly, "Exploring the Gap Between Science and Religion"
Sun., Feb. 12: Adult Forum at 11:00 a.m. with Dr. Richard Stuckey, Curator of Paleontology and Evolution at Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Pre-Easter and Holy Week activities
**Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, Service at 6:30 p.m.; *Wednesdays during Lent, Services at 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; *Palm Sunday, Apr. 1, we join with St. Thomas Episcopal Church; *Maundy Thursday, Apr. 5, and Good Friday, Apr. 6, Services at 6:30 p.m.
*Easter, Apr. 8, Festive Communion Worship at 9:30 a.m.
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Sen. Michael Bennet and Gene Myers, president of New Town Builders, in front of a New Town Builders zero energy home in Stapleton.

Bennet Bill

(continued from page 7) for a lot of home buyers who would like to be in energy efficient homes. What this will allow people to do is put the fixed costs at the beginning to be able to afford to get into a place that's energy efficient. It's going to be a long time before the housing market comes back. But there's going to be a lot of retrofitting to existing real estate that would put people back to work, cost the federal government and the taxpayer absolutely nothing, and generate job growth in Colorado and across the United States."

Gene Myers, President of New Town Builders, explains that new homes get a HERS rating (Home Energy Rating System) by a government-sanctioned independent third party to quantify the energy savings of the home. Under Sen. Bennet's proposed bill, the traditional PITI (principal, interest, taxes and insurance) formula used by mortgage lenders could be expanded to add an energy (E) factor to the formula. Myers used the following example to show how the bill would enable home buyers to qualify for a more expensive zero energy home.

PITI + E Comparison

Item	Typical home	Zero energy home
Purchase price	\$368,500	\$424,278
Principal and interest*	\$1,407	\$1,620
Taxes	\$305	\$354
Insurance	\$75	\$75
Energy cost from HERS Rating	\$260	--
Total Monthly Ownership Cost	\$2,047	\$2,049

*Based on a 4% interest rate 30-year fixed first mortgage for 80% loan.

Food Bank

(continued from page 4) sources. A grandparent, who at one point in life had relied on a food bank, donated \$100. Cassie Moskowitz' three children Maisie, Willa and Boone, have chosen to have birthday parties where their guests bring donations to a non-profit organization. Willa and Boone recently had parties and donated four large boxes of food to the Westerly Creek Food Pantry. "We're a lucky family," says Cassie. "We don't need anything. When we started talking about how they could use their birthdays to do some good in the world, this was something they were really excited about."

Another source of food is having individuals and groups volunteer at the Food Bank to earn credits for a member agency. Every three hours worked earns a credit and each credit is worth 20 pounds of food. Volunteers need to give the name of the organization when they sign up. Children need to be at least 14 and under 16 need to be with an adult.

The Food Bank's program allows non-profit organizations to become member agencies, which allows them to obtain food at a fraction of the cost of buying at the grocery store. Although the Food Bank works with 11,000 agencies and provides over 84,000 meals a day, they also work with

programs that feed as few as ten.

Gianotos explains how it works. "There are a lot of items at the food bank that are absolutely free—dairy and produce and all bread and bakery. Then we have donated products for which we charge 8¢ a pound, so an average cost to an agency is probably about 3¢ a pound. The food needs to go to the ill, needy or infants, per the IRS regulations. We go visit every couple years or if we hear of a problem we'd go check that out. The food can't be sold and it can't be required that someone go to a prayer service or a class to get the food. It has to be available to the people that come and need it." Agencies can go online and select the products they want and the food bank pulls the order and has it ready for them; the produce and bread selection varies so agencies select those when they pick up their food.

With a \$1 donation, the Food Bank can provide four meals or five pounds of food. A non-profit organization interested in becoming a member agency should call Cindy Mitchell at 303-371-9250 x 250. People in need of food can call the Hunger Free Colorado hotline at 720-382-2920 or visit FoodBankRockies.org/findhelp and enter their zipcode to find the nearest food pantry.



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Stapleton Front Porch

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Affordable Housing

(continued from page 1)

City until the committees were satisfied that Forest City was making acceptable progress towards their contractual requirements for the development of affordable housing and rental housing within Stapleton.”

The report clarifies that Forest City is not contractually required to meet the 10% goal throughout the (life of the) development—they need to meet it at completion. But the Stapleton Affordable Housing Plan does state... “Forest City shall endeavor to develop or cause to be developed Affordable Housing Units at a pace consistent with the pace of development of market rate housing at Stapleton.” Kearns’ report notes, “Of course we as a committee should be concerned when actions are not on pace to meet the ultimate requirements.”

Kearns’ report also addresses a statement in the Stapleton Affordable Housing Plan that “...the parties have assumed that approximately 8,000 for-sale dwelling units and 4,000 multi-family rental units will be developed at Stapleton upon final buildout.” The report concludes that the construction of 4,000 rental units is an assumption based on market conditions and is not a requirement. However some CAB and SDC members point out that 4,000 rentals is the number cited in the Green Book, which was adopted as part of the purchase



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Westerly Creek Park

Editor's Note: Stapleton United Neighbors (SUN) submitted to the Front Porch a letter and position paper on the completion of the Westerly Creek North Park. They also made a statement at the North Stapleton Parks Meeting on Jan. 25 and at the SDC meeting on Jan. 26 (see story above). SUN's concerns and Forest City's response are summarized below.

SUN Statement Summary

SUN strongly supports the development of the Westerly Creek North Park without any further delay.

Missing Link—Without that park, Stapleton’s planned system of trails and parks will remain unfinished, and thousands of residents will be left without safe and practical access to Sand Creek and its trail system.

An Unfulfilled Commitment—From the beginning of Stapleton redevelopment, potential home buyers were sold on promises of an extended system of walkable green space and parks.

A Safety Risk—The area has high, steep, and unstable banks, considerable airport construction debris, including extensive large concrete rubble, rusty wire and rebar, and discarded lumber.

Forest City Response Summary

The land where the North Westerly Creek “signature park” is to be located along the Sand Creek Greenway is not yet available for development because Denver International Airport, which still owns the land, must first conduct an environmental investigation to determine if contamination exists and what it may take to remediate that area before a park can be built. Forest City pledged to make a \$5.4 million contribution to the cost of constructing that park, but that money was redirected to fund the Swigert-McAuliffe International School (SMIS), which was urgently needed to accommodate Stapleton’s rapidly growing population of young families.

The full SUN position paper and response from Forest City are posted at www.FrontPorchStapleton.com.



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go back to reports of 2007 and 2008, we were very much closer to the 10% goal. Right now it's very difficult to make it work. I don't know of anyone in the city that makes this program work today. It's not because we haven't tried. We can't sell houses with some of the constraints in the program.

"We welcome the opportunity to work together to figure out what's the right solution, because we don't have it

by ourselves. That is paramount to moving this issue forward. And we are as committed as ever, and that's why we continue to hold out land for future for sale programs to make sure we haven't missed that opportunity. I know we've debated this time and time again, but I think the best thing is to move forward as John (Moye) and Happy (Haynes) have put forth in the motion. Let's get everybody together and let's figure it out. Let's do it with the people who can control the answer, and then we can go see if we have any other partners to bring in. I am fully on board with that approach."

Above right: SDC member Justin Ross casts the only dissenting vote based on concerns that the issue of affordable housing would "get taken up the ladder and lost."

did that before the city had an inclusionary zoning plan. What we put in there we all believed in. We still do. And I will tell you that I welcome the opportunity to have a dialogue between the city and the board and ourselves about how we can figure out a way to make something work. Today the program that's in place on (affordable) for-sale simply isn't working. It worked when the market was going like this (up). If you

Above: SDC votes to have Forest City meet jointly with the city and SDC to address the issue of reaching affordable housing goals.

Above left: John Lehigh, President, Forest City Stapleton, says he supports the motion to meet with the city about the affordable housing program. Left: SDC Board Chairman King Harris listens as Michael Kearns presents a committee report on contract terms regarding affordable housing.

"Do I want to stop development in my neighborhood? Absolutely not. It doesn't bode well for my business. It doesn't bode well for anyone. But I think it's time to put the ball in Forest City's park and make them do something about it. We've been complaining and talking about this for a very long time and the only response we get is, 'Yes we want to, but the process is broken.' I feel like their drive is much more focused on single-family residences. When there's a bump in the road with single family, we clear it really fast. But this affordable housing bump, not so much.

"We want to know that you (Forest City) are working in that direction. The last thing we want to do is be here 20 years from now, still sitting at 5.6% and you've built your 12,000 homes. Do you know that this is happening, that we're failing the contract? What can we do about it?"

John Lehigh, president, Forest City Stapleton, spoke at the SDC meeting about the motion to meet with the city regarding affordable housing:

"We worked painstakingly to come up with the (affordable) plan we arrived at. We

agreement between the City and Forest City, and therefore should be treated as a rental unit requirement. They believe passionately that a diverse mix of housing, including one-third rental, is key to the Green Book goal of a diverse community.

Justin Ross, an almost 10-year Stapleton resident, has been on CAB for eight years, on the Housing Diversity Committee for six years, and is now an SDC board member. He was the lone dissenter on the SDC vote to meet with the city. "Part of the reason I voted no is because I feel that it derails what we're trying to get accomplished. I feel that what will happen is it will get taken up the ladder somewhere and it will be lost at the CAB or SDC level for some time while development continues to go.

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Premium Fishwrap*

by Jon Meredith

Opinion Versus Fact

Fishwrap has been an outlet for me to spout whatever comes to mind over the last few years. The good people at the Front Porch never tell me what to write and, for the most part, they publish whatever I do write (and they are still in business). But when I write news articles for the paper, I seem to have difficulty separating my opinion from the facts surrounding the issue I am covering.

Just like Jack Webb of Dragnet fame, my editor sends me out to cover a political or educational issue and says, "Remember, just the facts, Jon." Invariably, I submit an article I believe is worthy of a Pulitzer only to have it returned in a subsequent email with enough corrections to get any high school freshman an F for the assignment.

I have a difficult time separating my opinion from the facts—the simple who, what and when of events. Is it that I am stubborn and hardheaded, partly (my wife would say for sure), or is it that we live in an age where it is difficult to separate fact from opinion?

When Dragnet was airing, Walter Cronkite would come on the evening news and give us a half-hour wrap of the day's news followed by a statement saying, "And that's the way it is on" ... whatever day it was. That was the way it was, no frills, no paid "experts," no spinning from both sides, no opinion unless you clearly knew it was opinion,

and there were never any Lohans, Kardashians or Trumps used to "spice up" the news.

Today, "news" is mostly opinion and not fact, along with loads of sensationalism. There is the "conservative" TV news station and the "liberal" one. The local Denver paper carries AP, Washington Post and New York Times national stories and columns with few written by their own staff. And then there is the blogosphere, where anyone can and does have their opinions, no matter how little sense they might make (I fit in there quite nicely). Finally, the radio dial, which is nonstop blathering strictly from one side or the other.

So where and how do we find the facts? How will Obamacare really affect me and my taxes? Is Iran truly a national security threat such that we may need to go to war with them? Can we really cut the deficit and create jobs at the same time? The only way to really find out is to choose publications which you trust and to get involved yourself. Last month, I interviewed State Representative Angela Williams and she asserted "individuals getting involved makes a big difference." Diana DeGette, our U.S. Congresswoman, confirms this point, saying, "Members of Congress always listen closely to their constituents."

This brings all of us, very unfortunately, to this year's Presidential contest and our statewide general election. More than ever before, we will be inundated with advertisements which will espouse a defamatory version of one side's candidate with an unrealistically positive version of their own. Almost all Americans disdain the amount of money there is in politics. If you feel this way, don't listen when the political action committee (PAC) ads come on.

They are the ones where a candidate doesn't state their approval of the ad. Basically, there are absolutely no restrictions on what these ads can say or how much money these organizations can pour into political races.

The only way to counter this duplicitous effort to sway public opinion in order to alter elections is to think for ourselves and realize the commercials aired by PACs are opinions or entirely fiction and certainly are not fact.

With my skill for manipulating opinion and the seemingly unlimited amount of money involved, maybe I should get into the attack ad business. Then again, I would have to become the type of person who thinks these things up, and hopefully, I am not that person.

Jon Meredith lives in Stapleton. He can be reached at jon.meredith@q.com.

**Fishwrap is a slang term that started in the '30s and refers to the transient value of yesterday.*



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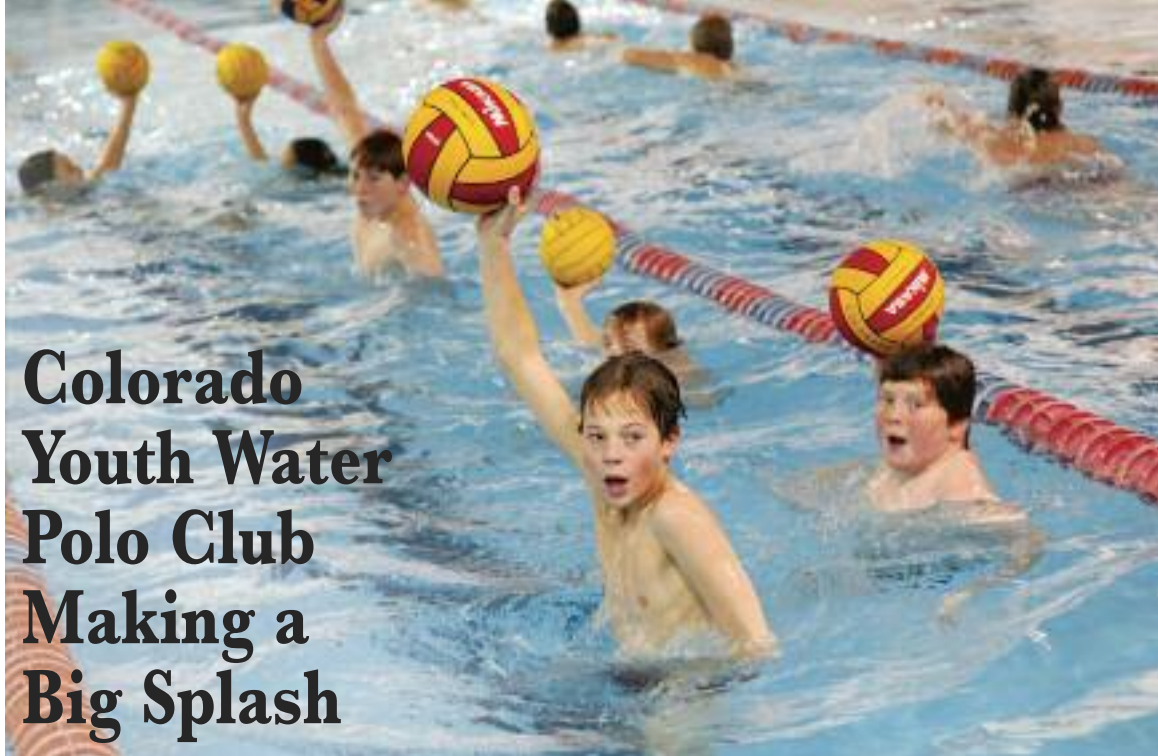
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Colorado Youth Water Polo Club Making a Big Splash

By John Babiak

On Monday evenings a dozen or so Denver youth can be found bobbing like apples in the indoor pool at the Hiawatha Davis Jr. Recreation Center in the North Park Hill neighborhood. While they are not playing “Marco Polo,” they are in a state of constant motion, swimming back and forth in heads-up freestyle, treading water, banging bodies and excitedly communicating plays, all while chasing, throwing and catching a colorful water polo ball. Beneath the assortment of synthetic waterproof skull caps that neatly conceal their hair are the young, high-energy, co-ed members of the Colorado Water Polo Club.

The club welcomes girls and boys between the ages of 6–18. It serves “aquatic-oriented” kids who, when on land, play basketball, soccer, lacrosse or baseball, and enjoy wrestling with their siblings too.

Colorado Water Polo was founded by Grier Laughlin in the spring of 2003 with eight boys that he recruited from Smoky Hill and Grandview high schools. Laughlin was an 11-time Cherry Creek High School swimming All-American and former Dartmouth varsity swim captain. He was introduced to water polo while in college and loved the built-in challenges and the change that it gave him from his routine swimming sessions. He formed the club, in part, to give young Denver- and Aurora-area swimmers the opportunity to explore and experience an alternative swim sport. Over the years the club has steadily grown and today offers programs, team workouts and games at both indoor and outdoor pools throughout metro Denver, Aurora and Boulder. The Hiawatha Davis Jr. Rec Center serves as the club’s NE Denver base of operation.

Tragically, Laughlin died in an automobile accident. But his vision for the club and its members is being carried out by Park Hill resident Mark Isenburg, who serves as the club’s head coach. Isenburg, a USA Water Polo-certified coach, is supported by three assistant coaches and one adjunct volunteer coach, Craig Ackley, an art teacher at Denver East

High School, who lives in Lowry and found the new pool location.

On any given weekday evening, Isenburg and his assistants can be found training their players and, on weekends, supporting club teams during their scrimmages. Games are played against teams from within the club, as well as teams from opposing clubs from Fort Collins and Loveland. In addition, Colorado Water Polo teams participate in tournaments held locally or out of state.

“A great way for a child to be introduced to the sport is to join our 12 and under youth league,” says the enthusiastic Isenburg. However, first he encourages prospective players and their parents “to view and even join in on a practice ses-

session at any one of our practice pool locations, and then decide if water polo is for you. “The Hiawatha Davis Jr. pool plays host to youth league practices on Monday evenings from 5:30–6:30pm. The pool also serves as the training site for competitive 13–18-year-old players on the same night, from 6–7:30pm.

Children do not necessarily need to be great swimmers or stellar athletes to join a team. Being able to swim 25 yards without resting or stopping, and practicing safe behavior in a pool are the principal prerequisites. “One aspect to our club, and a credit to the kids, is how welcoming they are to interested or new members, girl or boy, and the camaraderie that exists between the teammates,” adds Isenburg. Team members and families often participate in social events and perform community service projects.

For more information about the Colorado Water Polo Club, its offerings and fees, as well as the sport of water polo, visit coloradowaterpolo.com or contact Mark Isenburg at misenburg@comcast.net. The Hiawatha Davis Jr. Rec Center is located at 3334 Holly St. in North Park Hill.



club’s head coach. Isenburg, a USA Water Polo-certified coach, is supported by three assistant coaches and one adjunct volunteer coach, Craig Ackley, an art teacher at Denver East

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Park Hill Inventor Focuses on Safety

By Jon Meredith and Carol Roberts

Entrepreneur, inventor and Park Hill resident Brian Conaway, noticed, when his daughter was ready to graduate from a child safety seat, that the seat belt didn't fit her properly. His engineering knowledge and inclinations kicked in—and he designed and built a product to solve the problem. The device, which he calls the Ride Tight, is a seatbelt adapter that, Conaway says, positions a seatbelt to fit passengers correctly.

According to Conaway, factory seat belts in cars are designed to fit a 5'7" male weighing 175 pounds. He points out that children who have recently graduated from child safety seats, as well as many shorter people, often put the shoulder strap behind them because the belt chafes their neck—an improper use of the belt that compromises safety.

Before selling the Ride Tight, Conaway contracted with the Naval Air Warfare Center to have it tested at the crash test lab the US government uses for military vehicles, which also provides tests for private companies for a fee. He explains, "Regulations are always written after a product is developed,



Park Hill resident Brian Conaway (left) demonstrates how his invention, the Ride Tight, works on a seatbelt to make it fit properly on children and short people. He is working with Brian Bogucki, Vice President of Operations at JCB Precision Tool and Mold, Inc. in Commerce City, to produce the device locally. Below: Photo shows how the Ride Tight shifts the position of the seatbelt to fit a shorter person without chafing the neck.

not before. Innovation leads to regulation. With Ride Tight, we crash tested it to the booster seat standard and it actually outperformed the booster seat." Conaway then took the data to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and for several years petitioned them to take his product and his data and update the standard under which child restraints are regulated. The response: "We're not going to change the regulation but you are free to sell the product. It's a good product. It meets all the performance

requirements. But, you can't cite a regulation that it's an alternative to a booster seat because we don't have a classification for anything besides booster seats."

Conaway explains that Colorado requires that children be in a booster seat until their 8th birthday, when they can graduate to seatbelts. He cites U.S. traffic safety statistics that show that "children ages 9 to 15, all women and all seniors are killed at twice the rate of others due to improperly fitting seatbelts." So, because booster seats are required until age 8, Conaway's target market is 9 to 90. He says, "If you're a short person, seatbelts don't fit you and research shows they don't protect you."

Conaway, who was a childhood friend of Odyssey School Director Marcia Fulton (both grew up in Iowa), now is a reading buddy at Odyssey school. He recently did some informal tests with 9- to 15-year-olds from the Odyssey school to determine if they had objections similar to his daughter's—that seat belts are uncomfortable. He found that the students he tested were much more likely to use the seatbelt properly when strapped in with the Ride Tight because the shoulder strap did not bother them, and, he says, the

belt will remain in the proper position and will be correct the next time that passenger uses it. After observing Odyssey students' impressions of the product, Fulton commented, "As a parent and educator, I am always thinking about the safety of kids. Anything that helps children be safer is good."

Conaway points out that he is a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician and throughout his career has developed many other devices with safety in mind. He says, "I have a passion for protecting people."

Conaway, thinking of himself more as an inventor than a marketer, originally made an arrangement with a company to sell the Ride Tight in retail locations. However, the company did not meet the terms of their agreement and Conaway took back the license



Check out a video of Ride Tight at www.FrontPorchStapleton.com

to sell it. In the meantime, he obtained an MBA and, with the encouragement of his wife Diane, has now taken on the job of marketing the Ride Tight, which he originally invented 12 years ago. Conaway has had experience with manufacturing in China and has decided that, in many cases, it is cheaper and more efficient to manufacture in the United States. The Ride Tight is being produced in Commerce City.

The Ride Tight is available at RideTight.com and costs \$24.95 for two.

For more information visit RideTight.com or call Brian Conaway at 303-399-3071.

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Where Bald Eagles Gather

*Skirting the river road, (my forenoon walk, my rest,
Skyward in air a sudden muffled sound, the dalliance of the eagles,
The rushing amorous contact high in space together,
The clinching interlocking claws, a living, fierce, gyrating wheel,
Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling mass tight grappling,
In tumbling turning clustering loops, straight downward falling,
Till o'er the river pois'd, the twain yet one, a moment's lull,
A motionless still balance in the air, then parting, talons loosing,
Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting,
their separate diverse flight,
She hers, he his, pursuing.
—The Dalliance of the Eagles, by Walt Whitman*

For as long as I can remember, it has been a practice of the Babiak family to make excursions into nature when we travel near or far. It was an activity that my father included in our family car trips throughout the northeast U.S. states and Canadian providences, where I grew up. My dad would have turned 91 this past January 1. In his honor and the many good memories that he underwrote, I have continued this custom.

This past December, my family drove to Minneapolis to visit friends and family. Our drive was interrupted several times by bald eagle sightings made by my three keen Nature Rangers from the back of our van. Their observations prompted conversations about our nation's emblem; its near demise and now impressive comeback. It also catalyzed my "Googlers" to employ their Droids and navigate throughout the Internet in hopes of locating destinations in Minnesota where we might have first-person encounters with bald eagles. Several locations were nominated and then fervently debated. We finally decided we would make a side trip to the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, Minnesota.

During our visit to the center, we learned that over 2,300 nesting pairs live in Minnesota, second only to Alaska, which is home to over 10,000 pairs. In Colorado it is estimated that 40–60 pairs live here throughout the year.

Designating the Tiger Salamander as Our State Amphibian

Last month we wrote about an initiative started by my Nature Ranger students to make the tiger salamander our official state amphibian and the next emblem of Colorado. A bill designating the western tiger salamander was drafted in early January. An unprecedented 29 representatives and senators joined Representative Angela Williams as co-sponsors. On January 19, House Bill 12-1147 was introduced and assigned to the House Agricultural, Livestock and Natural Resources Committee for further action. On February 6 at 1:30pm we will testify before this committee in support of the bill. Public attendance at the hearing is encouraged to show legislators there is support for this bill. Follow us on Facebook: Colorado for the Tiger Salamander.

Today, North America is home to well over 100,000 bald eagles. Their population has recovered from near extinction. In the 1960s their numbers were reduced to 417 breeding pairs in the lower 48 states. Hunting and extensive use of pesticides, particularly DDT, nearly doomed the creature. DDT altered the hormones that regulated calcium metabolism. Thin shell, calcium-deficient eggs were laid and then broke under the weight of nesting adults. Other interesting facts include:

- While courting, eagles playfully flirt in the sky. They often pair for life. Their aerial ballet inspired Whitman to scribe his dalliance poem.
- The bald eagle became our national emblem in 1782. Ben Franklin preferred the wild turkey.
- Their body is covered with 7,000 feathers and an adult's wingspan is 6–8 feet.
- An eagle can see a rabbit from one mile and an eagle's nest can weigh up to 4,000 pounds.

In Colorado, the best time to view nesting and transient bald eagles is between October and March. As many as 1200 eagles spend their winters here. It is not unusual to find dozens gathering and roosting on trees near reservoirs, lakes and rivers. Excellent viewing and interpretive programs can be experienced at the annual Eagle Festival (February 3–5, 2012) held at Pueblo Lake Colorado State Park, through the Rocky



Rescued bald eagle Angel poses for visitors at the National Eagle Center. Photo by Marko Babiak

Mountain Bird Observatory's Bald Eagle Watch program and at Barr Lake State Park, both in Brighton. You can also study a bald eagle in the Denver Zoo's Condor and Eagle Aviary exhibit. A great way to take in the life of a nesting pair is to view them through an online bird camera. Marko and I like to visit the Xcel Energy Bird Cam website. We spy on many nesting raptors including a bald eagle pair that live in a 6-foot-wide by 5-foot-deep nest at the Fort St. Vrain Generating Station in Platteville, Colorado.

Marko and John Babiak are Stapleton residents. Marko, 10, is an avid wildlife photographer. John teaches Nature Rangers ecology classes to students at Steck, Roberts Westerly Creek and Odyssey. He also leads a summer-long nature day camp at the Rocky Mt. Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. He can be reached at NatureRangerJohn@aol.com.

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DENVER METRO EVENTS

Looking for what to do in Denver? Visit www.denver.org/what-to-do or new www.GalleryGuideDenver.com. Search art galleries by district, medium and style; info on nearby points of interest, First Friday Art Walks, exhibition openings, maps of Denver's Public Art collection, links to recommended cultural itineraries.

Art Walks and Exhibits:

2/3 Friday- Santa Fe Arts District. Santa Fe Dr. between 10th and 6th. www.artdistrictonSantaFe.com

2/3 Friday- North Denver's Tennyson Art Walk. Tennyson St. and 44th Ave. www.denverartwalk.squarespace.com

2/3 Friday- Old South Pearl Art Walk. www.oldsouthpearl-street.com

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Kentwood CITY PROPERTIES

2/3 Friday- Cherry Creek Arts District. www.cherrycreeknorth.com

2/3 Friday- Highlands Square First Friday. 32nd and Lowell, North Denver. www.highlands-square.com

2/10 Friday- Aurora's East End Second Friday Art Walk. Gallery openings, music, theater, food and more. 5-8pm. Map to all venues at Fletcher Plaza/MLK Library (E Colfax at Elmira).

2/24 Friday- Final Friday at Denver Art Museum. 6-10pm. *Untitled* is Denver Art Museum's Final Friday series. Local music, cash bar, munchies, offbeat art encounters, unique de tours of the DAM collection. General admission applies; members free. www.denver-artmuseum.org

Free Wednesday Activities for Seniors. 1st Wed., 10am, crafts/light lunch; 2nd Wed., 12pm, big lunch/entertainment; 4th Wed., 12pm, light lunch/ bingo. RSVP: 303.439.7554 for big luncheon, 303.807.0619 for other services. Bosworth House, 1400 Josephine St. Sponsor: Assistance League of Denver

2/11 Saturday to 2/12 Sunday- Advance Auto Parts Monster Jam. Pepsi Center. Tickets: \$20-\$50. Discount coupons available at select Advance Auto Parts Stores. www.pepsicenter.com www.monsterjam.com

2/11 Saturday and 2/12 Sunday- Bourbon Street Brass: Straight Up. Mardi Gras and Street-Party Traditions come alive with "Mr. Tap," The Hot Tomatoes and Denver Brass. Newman Center for Performing Arts, Univ. of Denver. Tickets: \$43-\$24. 303.832.HORN or www.denverbrass.org

2/11 Saturday to 2/19 Sunday- Colorado Garden and Home Show. Colorado Convention Center, Downtown Denver. Expo with flowering gardens, 1,400 booths; spring landscaping, patio and outdoor projects. Tickets: \$12; \$10 at King Soopers; kids 12/under free. www.gardeningcolorado.com or 303.932.8100

2/12 Sunday- Living History Day. Historic demonstrations, sewing, quilting, blacksmithing, wagon rides, etc. 12-4pm. General admission applies. www.fourmilepark.org

2/16 Thursday- Colorado Federation of Garden Clubs. For all gardeners. Glenda: 303.377.3580.

2/21 Tuesday- Lecture- A Dome Where the Buffalo Roamed: Preserving Our Capitol. Presented by Colorado History Museum. Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 1370 Grant St. 1pm and 7pm. Cost: \$8.50 general public, \$7 members. Reservations required. 303.866.4686, www.historycolorado.org

2/24 Friday- Third Annual Delightful Dishes and Dreamy Get-aways. Presented by Colorado Hotel and Lodging Association to benefit Food Bank of the Rockies. 15 food stations, hosted bar, live and silent auction. Brown Palace Hotel Ballroom. 6-9pm. Tickets: \$49. www.coloradolodging.com or 303.297.8333

2/25 Saturday to 3/9 Friday- Denver Restaurant Week 2012. 200 restaurants offer multicourse meals for mile-high price \$52.80 for 2; tax/tip not included. www.denverrestaurantweek.com

2/26 Sunday- Boxes of Life: Keepsakes as Art. Create one-of-a-kind Box of Life with found objects, collage and photography. Mizel Museum, 400 S. Kearney St. 10am-3pm. \$41 members/\$55 nonmembers; www.mizelmuseum.org

Denver Urban Homesteading Farmers Market. Indoor, year-round farmers market and homesteading school specializing in local and organic foods. Thursdays and Fridays 3-7pm, Saturday 9-3. 200 Santa Fe Dr. FREE. www.denverurbanhomesteading.com for classes and seminars.

Denver IDEA Café. FREE. Startup Workshop and speakers presented by Small Business Chamber of Commerce. 2-3:30pm. Fridays. Panera Bread, 13th and Grant. www.SmallBizChamber.org or 303.861.1447

Single Volunteers of Greater Denver. Visit www.svgd.org for volunteer opportunities for singles: local projects, charitable social events and working vacations abroad.

Volunteers of America Foster Grandparent Program. Seeking adults 55+ with lower incomes who love working with kids and can give 15/more hours/week. Small stipend given; transportation reimbursed. www.voacolorado.org, 303.297.0408 (Naomi Taggart)

Live Music at The Soiled Dove. 7401 E 1st Ave, Lowry. Tickets: www.soileddove.com

Denver Public Art Tours. FREE Public Art Tours by foot, bike, scooter, for art and architecture lovers. Reservations required. Schedule/signup: www.denvergov.org/publicart. Also download PDF of Denver's Public Art Guide.

Denver 2 for 1 Tix provides weekly 2 for 1 ticket and admission discounts for metro Denver arts and entertainment. www.denver2for1tix.com

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

2/7 Tuesday- Children's Hospital Colorado Free Parenting Seminar Series, Taking Care of Your Teen: Dating Ups and Downs. Don't ignore signs your child is in a bad relationship. Children's Hospital Colorado experts answer questions, give warning signs and how to discuss it. 6:30-8pm. FREE. Free child care if pre-register. Children's Hospital Colorado, 13123 E 16th Ave., Aurora. Register: www.childrenscolorado.org/events

2/16 Thursday- HIV testing at Rocky Mountain Cares non-profit for holistic HIV care. FREE. 1-5pm. 3rd Thursday monthly. 4545 E 9th Ave, #120. 303.393.8050, Adrian Pilarski

LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS

Active Minds – Info on all sessions: www.ActiveMinds.com. FREE.

2/7 Tuesday- U.S. Internment of Japanese-Americans. 10:15-11:15am. Jewish Community Center. 350 S. Dahlia St. Lil Shaw: 303.316.6359

2/9 Thursday- The Soviet Union: The Road After Collapse. 7pm. Stapleton Master Community Assoc., 2823 Roslyn St. RSVP: 303.388.0724

2/21 Tuesday- Spain. 11am-12pm (10:45 refreshments). Temple Emanuel, 51 Grape St. RSVP: Jodi, 303.388.4013 x307

2/28 Tuesday- U.S. Internment of Japanese-Americans. 5:30-6:30 pm. Tattered Cover, 2326 E. Colfax. 303.322.7727

LIBRARIES

For more library programs, check events calendar at denver-library.org. All branches closed Monday 2/20, Presidents' Day.

Art Contest voting Vote online for your favorite bookmark and poster designs for Teen Summer of Reading Program, created by local teens. Last day to vote: Monday, 2/13. Winners announced online by 2/16. <http://teens.denverlibrary.org/artcontest>

Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. 720.865.0250. Closed Mondays, Wednesdays and Sundays.

2/7 Tuesday- Tech Petting Zoo. 4-6pm. Check out eBooks and place holds when library's closed. A large collection of eMedia-downloadable eBooks, audio eBooks, and eFlicks available on your portable device (including Kindle) or home computer 24/7. DPL's Tech Staff will provide FREE instruction to set up the software. Bring your laptop and/or e-reader, tablet or smartphone.

Thursdays- All ages storytime. For kids who can sit, listen to stories and participate in songs. 10:30am.

Thursdays and Fridays- Book Babies. Babies 6-23 months with parent/caregiver. Share books, songs, finger plays. 11:15am. Please attend only ONE session/week.

Fridays- Tales for Twos. Storytime for 2-year-olds and caregivers. Stories, songs, movement activities. 10:30am.

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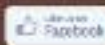
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Schlessman Family Library, 100 Poplar St (1st and Quebec). 720.865.0000. Closed Wednesdays and Fridays.

Tuesdays- Tales for Twos. 10:15am through May 8.

Tuesdays- Preschool Story Time. 11:30am through May 8.

Thursdays- Bookbabies. 3pm through May 10.

2/4 Saturday- Make and Take Studio. Felt Fortune Cookie Craft. 10am.

2/11 Saturday- Make & Take Studio. T-shirt Embellishing. Bring your own T-shirt, short or long-sleeved, any color. 2pm.

2/12 Sunday- Colorado Authors Series. Flint Whitlock: *The Beasts of Buchenwald*. 2pm.

2/18 Saturday- Lincoln Log Throw Down. Lincoln Log building contest; build a log cabin in fastest time and win a cherry pie. 10am.

2/26 Sunday- Civil War at Riverside Cemetery. 2pm. Denver's oldest operating cemetery is final resting place of more veterans of Civil War than any other in CO. People who changed U.S. course during Civil War shaped CO and Denver. Presented by Fairmount Heritage Foundation volunteer Ray Thal.

2/27 Monday- Easy Homemade Bread. 6:30pm. Learn to make bread by several methods, new and traditional. Samples & recipes included.

KIDS AND FAMILIES

Thursdays in February- Star K Kids. Puppets, stories, activities, outdoor explore for ages 5 and under. 9:30 & 11am. Morrison Nature Center, 16002 E Smith Rd, Aurora. 303.739.2428, www.auroragov.org/nature

2/4 Saturday- Home Depot Kids Workshop. 9am-12pm. FREE how-to clinics first Saturday of month for ages 5-12. Each child gets Home Depot apron, wooden project and project pin. Metro-area Home Depot stores. www.homedepot.com

2/8 Wednesday- "Create Playdates" at Denver Art Museum. Kids 3-5 roar, bang, stomp 2nd Wed./month, 10am. Art making, story times, scavenger hunts. Included in museum admission; 5 and under free. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. www.denverartmuseum.org or 720.865.5000

2/11 Saturday and 2/25 Saturday- Lowe's Build and Grow Kids Clinics. Bring kids to a Lowe's store to build FREE wood project: free apron, goggles, project-themed patch, certificate of merit on completion. 10am. www.lowesbuildandgrow.com

2/12 Sunday- Bring Your Family to Neverland. Interact with characters from Colorado Ballet's production of *Peter Pan*, opening 2/24. Cost: \$50 single tickets; \$150 for family of four; kids 5 and under free. 5:30-8pm. Palazzo Verdi, 6363 S Fiddler's Green Circle. specialerevents@coloradoballet.org or 303.339.1610

2/12 Sunday- Junior Rangers. Animal Superstars. 1:30-3:30pm. Ages 6-12. Morrison Nature Center, 16002 E Smith Rd, Aurora. Reservations required. 303.739.9428, www.auroragov.org/nature

2/15 Wednesday- Summer Planning Tips & Camp Preview. Activities, safety, find a best fit. Directors from Altogether Outdoors Summer Camps answer questions (about all camps) and assist with registration. 6:30-7:30pm. FREE. Stapleton MCA Community Rm. Contact: Tommy Feldman, 720.249.2997. Attendees have chance to have AO Camps' Climbing Tower at Stapleton Block Party!

Through 2/26 Sunday- Silly Jack. Denver Puppet Theatre, 3156 W 38th Ave. Tickets: \$7 ages 3 and up. 303.458.6446, www.denverpuppettheater.com

Denver Museum of Miniatures, Dolls and Toys Workshops- Ages 4 and up. Cost from \$5. Museum adm: \$6 adults, \$4 children 5-16, under 5 free. 1880 Gaylord St. www.dmmtdt.org

Tiny Tots Love Music, Denver Brass. Special concert for tiny tots and parents; introduce little ones to magic of live music. Various dates/locations. Tickets: www.denverbrass.org

Tiny Tots, Inside the Orchestra. 45-minute concerts by Colorado Symphony for kids 6 and under who sit next to musicians and hear classical music they may recognize! Various venues/dates through mid-February. Concerts: 9:30 and 10:30am. \$5; children under 2 free. Tickets: www.jrsg.org

2/11 Saturday- Victorian Valentines. 10-11:30am or 2-2:30pm. Centennial House, 1671 Galena St. Aurora. Ages 6+. Discover history and creativity of old-fashioned, handmade and elaborate Victorian Valentine cards; create your own. \$5 (\$4 Aurora residents). 303.739.6667

Through 2/14 Tuesday- Southwest Rink at Skyline Park. FREE ice skating in Downtown Denver. Bring skates or rent for \$2. Mon-Fri 12-10pm. Sat/Sun 9am-10pm. Reduced hours on holidays. www.downtowndenver.com

Through 3/11- Louisville Winterskate. Outdoor ice skating and Friday night carriage rides. Call for hours, 303.449.3137. 824 Front St, Louisville. www.bceproductions.com

Through 3/11- Flatiron Crossing Winterskate. Outdoor rink outside the mall. Call for hours, 303.449.3137. www.bceproductions.com

To submit information for the Front Porch "Local Event" Listings

Email information in the following format by the 15th of the month to FrontPorchEvents@gmail.com. Events will be run subject to space available.

Date in numerical format (mm/dd), day of week- Name of Event. A one- or two-sentence description. Time. List cost or if free. Location. Contact information.

Press releases for suggested stories should be sent separately to FrontPorchStapleton@gmail.com

KIDS CAMPS AND CLASSES

Aurora Fox Theater- Drama classes ages 4 and up. Lisa Mumpton: 303.739.1573 or www.aurorafox.org (continued on page 18)

RECURRING EVENTS

4th Monday
SUN Board Mtg. 7:30pm,
MCA, 2823 Roslyn St.
stapletonunitedneighbors@gmail.com

Every Tuesday
Stapleton Rotary Club - 7:30am
Stapleton Community Room
2823 Roslyn St.
www.denverstapletonrotary.org
AA Open Discussion Mtg.
7:30pm. MCA, 2823 Roslyn St
303-912-7075

AA Open Meeting 6:00pm
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
22nd and Dexter. For info call
Shirley at 303-726-2998

1st Tuesday
Breast Cancer Support Group
5-6:30pm AF Williams Family
Medicine Clinic, Conf Rm.
(west entrance) 3055 Roslyn
(at MLK) 720-848-9000

2nd Tuesday
Parks Advisory Group, 7:30am,
7350 E. 29th Av, 3rd fl.
Lcorrell@dotnet.net

3rd Tuesday
Greater Stapleton Business
Assoc. 8am MCA, 2823 Roslyn
St www.stapletonbusiness.com
303-393-7700

4th Tuesday
Adoptees in Search General
Meeting, 7:30 - 9pm; Montview
Presby. Church, Study Group
Room. AISCTC.org 303-232-
6302

Every Wednesday
Weekly Weeders, Bluff Lake
Nature Center 9am-12pm,
303-945-6717

2nd Wednesday
Adoptees in Search Support
Group, 7-8:30pm; Montview
Presby. Church, Robinson Rm.
AISCTC.org 303-232-6302

2nd Wed. (Odd-numbered mos.)
SUN Transportation Committee
6:30pm MCA 2823 Roslyn St.
stapletonneighbors@msn.com

2nd & 3rd Wednesday
Lowry Peak Speakers Toast-
master Club. Noon-1pm, Pin-
nacoli Assurance: 7501 E.
Lowry Blvd, Denver 80203
lowrypeak.freetoasthost.org
lpstoastmasters@gmail.com

3rd Thursday
Stapleton Citizens Advisory
Board Mtg, 7350 E. 29th Ave.
7:30-9am 303-393-7700

1st Saturday
Bluff Lake Birders, Nature
Center 7-9am. BluffLakeNatureCenter.org. Neighbor-
hood Partners Environmental
Team 9am-Noon. Contact
Lcorrell@dotnet.net for info.

2nd Saturday
NE Denver/Park Hill MS Self-
Help & Support Group, Dist. 2
Police Station, 10:15-11:45am
3821 Holly St. 303-329-0619

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(continued from page 17)

Art Students League of Denver- Programs for kids and teens. 303.778.6990, www.ASLD.org

Small Hands Art Studio- Art classes. Stapleton location. www.smallhandsart.com

Start Art- Art classes. startartkids.com

The Art Garage- Classes ages 4 and up. 6100 E 23rd Ave, Park Hill. www.artgaragedenver.com

The Urban Farm- Embracing Horses; info@theurbanfarm.org

Club J- After-school programs at Jewish Community Center for kids grades K-5. www.jcc.org

DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

Montview and Colorado Blvd.
www.dmns.org

2/1 Wednesday- Nonmember registration opens for summer day camps.

Opens 2/3 Friday- Lizards and Snakes. More than 60 live snakes and lizards on display.

2/16 Thursday- Science Lounge. Cocktails/entertainment every 3rd Thurs. of month. 6:30-9:30pm. \$8/members; \$10/non-members

Planetarium- *Wildest Weather in the Solar System; Black Holes; Cosmic Journey; One World, One Sky; Big Bird's Adventure.* www.dmns.org/planetarium/current-shows

IMAX Movies- *Tornado Alley 3D, Flying Monsters 3D.* Various times. Tickets: \$8/3-18; \$10/adult

NORTHFIELD EVENTS

Events at The Shops at Northfield Stapleton
303.375.5475 www.NorthfieldStapleton.com

Bass Pro Events- 720.385.3600,
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www.HarkinsTheatres.com

Improv Comedy Club and Dinner Theatre-
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Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays- Wild Rides.** 9:30-11:30am Wed and Sat, 1-3 pm Sun. 2-hour guided viewing tour.

Saturdays- "Wild" Talks. 1pm. Join a naturalist every Saturday for 10-minute mystery "wild" talk.

Sunday Matinees. Nature movie every Sunday at 1:30 pm. Families welcome.

SPORTS AND FITNESS

2/4 Saturday- SnowDash Extreme 5K Adventure Race. Climb over nets, through tunnels, uphill and more. Portion of proceeds benefits American Lung Association. Echo Mountain, www.SnowDashColorado.com

Fridays through 3/16- Friday Night Yoga Club. Located in different Denver studio each week 5:30-9pm. Live music, food, beverages, massage, acupuncture treatments. Portion of proceeds benefits Chanda Plan Foundation. www.fridaynightyogaclub.com

NORTHEAST DENVER EVENTS

2/1 Wednesday- Prayers for World Peace. Interfaith prayers to create peace in world. 7:30pm. Free Center of Light, 2300 Forest St. Denver@CentersOfLight.org or 720.308.9944

2/2, 2/3, 2/4 Thursday-Saturday- Spiritual Seminars with Spiritual Master Mother Clare Watts. 7:30pm. \$25 each. Center of Light, 2300 Forest St. Denver@CentersOfLight.org or 720.308.9944 for each program title.

2/4 Saturday- The Bid Easy. Park Hill School's Annual Party & Silent Auction. 6-10pm. Proceeds support the school that's supported Park Hill for 100+ years. FREE. Park Hill Golf Club, 4141 E 35th Ave. www.parkhillelementary.org

2/8 Wednesday- St Elizabeth's School Admissions Open House. Walk-in Open House for school tours and admissions info. Affordable, private Episcopal school currently enrolling K-5 for the 2012-13 school year. 10am-4pm. Free. 3605 Martin Luther King Blvd. (West end of Clayton Campus). www.stelizabethsdenver.org or 303.322.4209

2/25 Saturday- Aeromodeling Expo. Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum. 10-4pm. Radio-controlled planes, helicopters and jets; food, hobby vendors, Make and Takes for kids and more. FREE with museum admission. www.wingsmuseum.com

2/27 Friday- Free Conscious Movie. Vanishing of the Bees. 7:30pm. Center of Light, 2300 Forest St. Denver@CentersOfLight.org, 720.308.9944

3/3 Saturday- Beads, Booze and Bids. Westerly Creek Elementary Pardi Gras Auction.

6-11pm. \$20/ticket. Summit Conference and Event Center, 411 Sable Blvd N. Aurora. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Beads-Booze-and-Bids-2012/207150429378194>

Fridays- i Play. 5:30-7pm. Open yoga; instructor present. Kids welcome. Donation only. 2212 Kearney St. www.mysacredi.com

Denver School of the Performing Arts. Various dance and music performances; many free! See website for details. Quebec and Montview. www.dsa.dpsk12.org/performance

Central Park Recreation Center Info: www.denvergov.org/recreation, 750.865.0750 or Facebook Central Park Recreation Center. Registering for sports programs.

THEATRE

2/17-2/19- Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance. Buell Theatre, 14th and Curtis, Denver Center for Performing Arts. www.denvercenter.org

2/24-3/4 Colorado Ballet's Peter Pan. Ellie Caulkins Opera House, 14th and Curtis, Denver Center for Performing Arts. www.coloradoballet.org

Through 2/5- The Elephant Man. Presented by Phamaly. Aurora Fox Theatre, 9900 E. Colfax. www.aurorafoxartscenter.org, 303.739.1970

Through 2/11- Dearly Departed. Spotlight Theater Company at John Hand Theater, 7653 E 1st Pl. 720.880.8727, www.johnhandtheater.com

Through 2/19- The Whale. Ricketson Theatre, 14th and Curtis. Denver Center for Performing Arts. www.denvercenter.org

Through 2/19- The Importance of Being Earnest. Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd. 720.898.7200, www.arvadacenter.org

Through 2/19- Becky's New Car. Vintage Theatre, 2119 E 17th Ave. 303.839.1361, www.vintagetheatre.com

Through 2/25- String of Pearls. Avenue Theatre, 417 E. 17th Ave. www.avenuetheater.com, 303.321.5925.

Through 2/26- Taming of the Shrew. Stage Theatre, 14th and Curtis, Denver Center for Performing Arts. www.denvercenter.org

Through 4/19- How I Became a Pirate. Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd. 720.898.7200, www.arvadacenter.org

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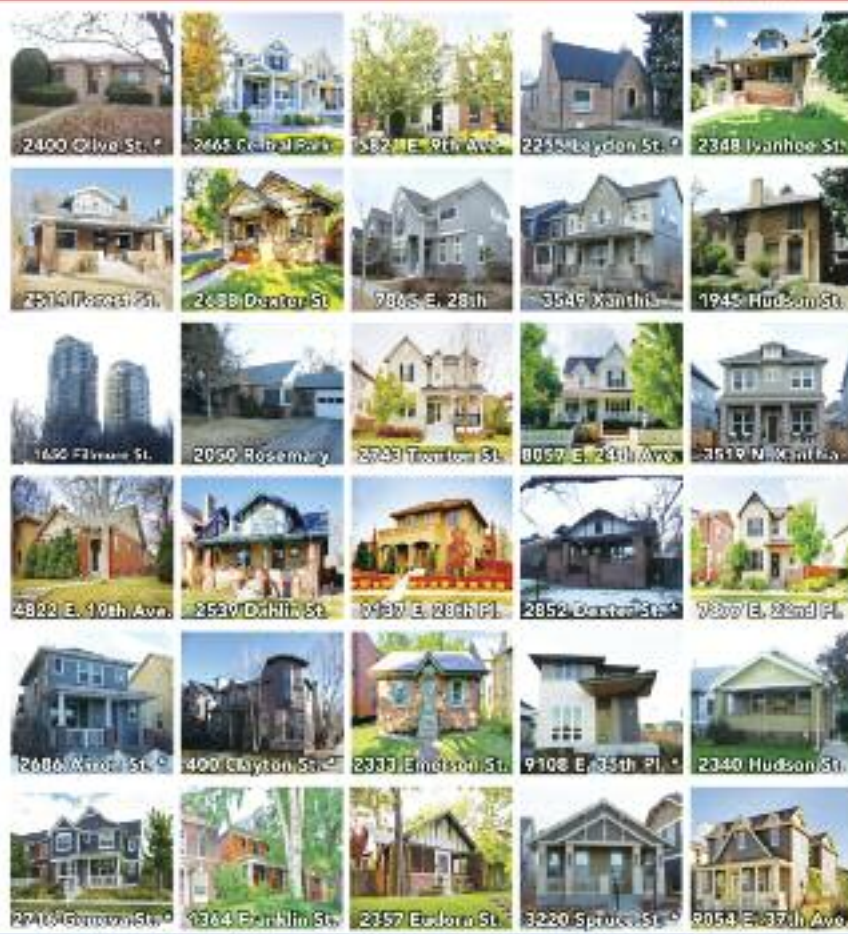
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Events and Announcements

Beginning Feb. 1—Urban Farm Reservations for Garden Plots

Starting February 1, new gardeners will have access to all un-reserved plots at the Urban Farm’s community garden (current gardeners’ renewal period ended 1/31). Community members may secure plots ranging in size from 8'x10' to 10'x15'. Seasonal fees are small plot: \$60; medium: \$70; large: \$85. Community garden participants are required to have an Urban Farm membership, which costs \$45 and includes immediate family members. The membership year is Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2012. A garden plot application can be downloaded from <http://theurbanfarm.org> or call 303.307.9332. The Farm is located at 10200 Smith Rd.

Thursday, Feb. 2—Dine Out for Girl Scouts

In honor of the Girl Scouts’ 100th anniversary and to celebrate Dine Out for Girl Scouts, more than 70 restaurants statewide will donate 20 percent of their sales on Thursday, Feb. 2 to the organization. Nearly 30 percent of Colorado Girl Scouts are from economically disadvantaged, underserved and at-risk communities. Northfield’s Ling and Louie’s and Jim ‘N Nick’s B-B-Q are among the participating restaurants. For all participating restaurants visit www.girlscoutsofcolorado.org/dine-out-for-girl-scouts.

Saturday, Feb. 4—Free 2040 Health Summit Invites Community to Share Ideas

People living and working in NE Park Hill, Greater Park Hill, Stapleton, E. Montclair, NW Aurora and the University of Colorado’s Health Sciences campus are invited to a free Neighborhood Health Summit focusing on discrimination in health care, health care information and a new Health Stories project. The summit will be held Saturday, Feb. 4, 8am–1:30pm at the Denver School of the Arts, 7111 E. Montview. Speakers include medical students in family medicine who recently completed a study about minorities and discrimination faced in their health care experiences. The keynote speaker is State Senator Irene Aguilar, MD, addressing the importance of community involvement in health care change. Also, the Latino Aging Wave Initiative will discuss current research about the aging Latino population. Breakout groups will cover insurance exchanges proposed changes to state policies on aging and long-term care, and The Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved will sign up people to tell their stories for the new Health Stories project. A free lunch is provided, but space is limited; reservations required at summit@2040health.org or 303.468.3241. To learn more, visit www.2040partnersforhealth.org.

Tuesday, Feb. 7—Beth McCann Town Hall Meeting
House District 8 Representative Beth McCann will host a Town Hall meeting on the state and local economy on Tuesday, February 7 from 7 to 8:30pm. The Budget Directors for the city of Denver and the state of Colorado, as well as the Director of DU’s Strategic Issues Program will discuss economic trends and the tough budgetary choices facing the city and state. Free. Montview Presbyterian Church - McCollum Room, 1980 Dahlia Street, Denver, CO, 80220. Contact: 303 866 2959.

Friday, Feb. 10—Anchor School’s “Visions of Love” Wine and Chocolate Event
The public is invited to “Visions of Love: Chocolate and Wine Experience” at Anchor Center for Blind Children on February 10, 2012 from 5:30-8:00 p.m. Visions of Love features an exploration of fine wines, decadent chocolates, and hors d’oeuvres while allowing participants to see the school’s facilities and learn about their mission. Proceeds from the event will help Anchor School offer services to visually impaired infants, young children and families, providing hope and a nurturing environment where children can reach their highest potential. Tickets are \$45 per person. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.AnchorCenterEvents.com.

Saturday, Feb. 11—2nd Annual Read and Romp Kids’ Event and Benefit
Read and Romp is a family event that benefits Reach Out and Read Colorado. The storybook-themed activities for children 2–8 include games and arts and crafts based on classic children’s storybooks. The event will be held Saturday, Feb. 11 at the PPA Event Center (www.dppa.com/EventCenter), by Invesco Field. Tickets: \$10/person, ages 2 and up. Call 303.623.3800 or visit www.reachoutandreadco.org/readandromp.

The nonprofit Reach Out and Read Colorado (www.reachoutandreadco.org) works to make literacy a standard part of pediatric primary care by assisting doctors and nurses to distribute free books statewide to children in need ages 6 months to 5 years.

Memorial Pavers for the Stapleton Library
Families and businesses can support programming at the new Stapleton library by purchasing a sandstone paver for the walking path at the front of the library. Names and messages will be engraved on the red pavers. A 4”x 8” Individual Paver with 3 lines of text (20 characters per line) is \$125. A 12”x12” Family Paver with 5 lines of text (30 characters per line) is \$500. A 12”x12” Corporate Paver with a logo now has a “NE Denver Corporate Paver Special” price of \$1000 (regular price \$1500). The branch at Stapleton was approved as an Enterprise Zone Project by the Colorado Economic Development Commission. Qualifying donations of \$100 or more may be eligible for a state tax credit of 25% of the donation up to \$100,000 (consult your tax advisor). To purchase a paver, visit www.dplfriends.org/ or contact Brenda Ritenour at 720.865.2046 or brittenour@denverlibrary.org.

Construction and Renovation on Colfax
More than \$20 million in construction and renovations are underway on East Colfax including: Phoenix on the Fax at Colfax and Poplar with 50 apartment units and Pasquini’s Pizza on the ground floor with a 4,500 square foot space that will include a patio and delivery to surrounding neighborhoods; Ace on the Fax, a new Ace Hardware store at Colfax and Pontiac, which is in a renovated 1947 building with a restored Art Deco façade; and GB Fish and Chips next to Mod Livin’, the third location for this local restaurant. Watch for upcoming Front Porch stories about these businesses as they open.

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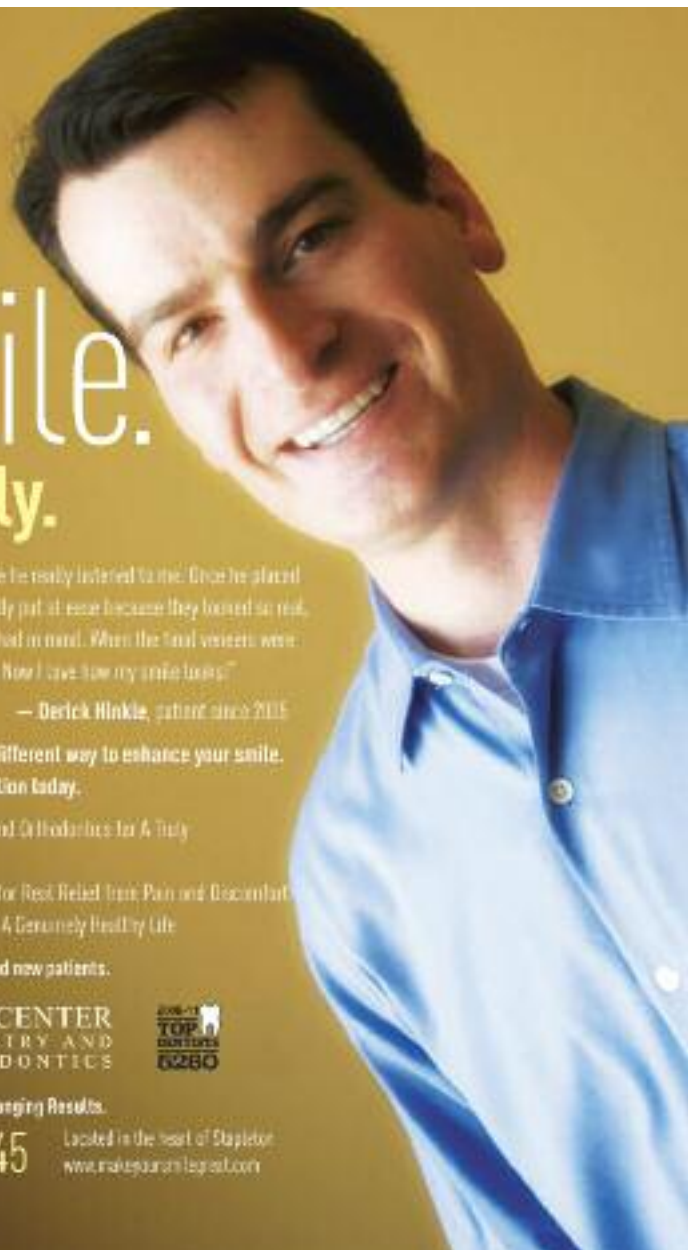
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TUF Kids Share Their Enthusiasm with Stock Show Visitors

By Carol Roberts

The Urban Farm (TUF) provides the opportunity for almost 3,000 kids a year, many of whom are on field trips, to have a farm experience. And about 300-350 participate in the Urban Farm's riding program, Embracing Horses, says Donna Garnett, director of the Urban Farm.

The students who are representing the Farm at the stock show are the "TUF kids."

They are among the 25 or so who are in the Urban Farm's Ambassador program, "which requires a pretty intense level of involvement," says Garnett.

These kids are at the Stock Show to inform Stock Show visitors about programs at the farm—and they speak passionately about what the Urban Farm means to them.

Alexis Haynes, 17, (back row, middle, black jacket) a senior at DSST, says, "It's a



Urban Farm participants talked about the Farm's programs to young visitors at the Pony Trails exhibit at the Stock Show.

big goal of mine to go to the Olympics in dressage, which is a sports discipline for horseback riding." Her horse, Lucero, is at the farm, and that's where she practices. "I've been riding for my entire life... like from the womb! The Urban Farm is truly my home away from home. My school is very rigorous. Every time I get stressed and feel like I'm going to break down, just putting my feet on the gravel road, I relax. There's a spirit in the farm that's strong and therapeutic. Each one of those animals is my friend. I truly couldn't live without it. In fact I'm kind of scared to go off to college."

Emmalee Gale, 18, (far left) attends DSST and wants to study equine management in college. She has been going to the farm for eight years. "I've been obsessed with horses since I was little. Before I moved to Denver I lived in Chicago and there were no stables around. So when I came here it was my first priority to find a stable. I started as a beginning rider. I didn't know anything about horses at all. Over the years I moved up in the different levels. Now I'm working at the farm as an assistant instructor and I've been riding at jumping shows."

Jerry Ntepp, 12, (center front) lives in

Park Hill and attends Morey Middle School. He says, "I first went to the farm when I was six. It's a really fun experience. You get to make tons of friends and learn about all kinds of stuff. Not just animals but sometimes even politics and a bunch of stuff." Jerry will compete at the stock show next year. "I just want to place and have fun and learn about responsibility and a bunch of things I have to learn because I'm not quite ready for stock show yet. I want to know that I've improved. I'm going to bring a horse that I borrow from Donna. The event is called 4-H Western pleasure."

Three to five TUF kids are expected to show horses next year, says Garnett. "The Stock Show is the big deal. This is the Super Bowl for the kids."

TUF still has a few openings in the Embracing Horses winter/spring program that runs February to April. And they are already taking registration for the summer riding camps that start in June (but are usually filled by March) for kids who want to be in 4-H and take the horsemanship or other programs.

The Urban Farm is located at 10200 Smith Rd. in Stapleton. For more information visit www.theurbanfarm.org or call 303-307-9332.



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DSST Students Build Basketball-Playing Robot

By Margo Warnock

Forty-two students from DSST (Denver School of Science and Technology) have committed to a six-week challenge, applying all they know about physics, math and computer science. They are participating in the FIRST Robotics Competition (For Inspiration & Recognition of Science & Technology), a global contest for 9th- to 12th-graders with the goal of exposing students to science and engineering. Each year, teams of students around the world work for six weeks to design and construct a robot that can participate in a game designed by FIRST. This year's game is a version of basketball where the robots must score points by shooting hoops.

After the season kickoff on January 7, the students of Team Brute Force jumped into six weeks of planning and building, devoting more than eight hours of their time each week to achieve their goal. These students work with adult mentors from a variety of industries applicable to this competition. They get the chance to use the skills they learn in

school in a real-world situation.

Additionally, students get the opportunity to learn an assortment of new skills including hands-on building, design, real-world sales and marketing, and team organizational skills. All of the students agree that Brute Force is "more than a team, but a family." DSST's Brute Force will be competing at the University of Denver March 22-24. They are posting their progress weekly on their YouTube channel: DSSTRobotics "Hot Shots Know Balance" or at www.dsstrobotics.org.

DSST Stapleton (www.dsstpublicschools.org), located at the corner of Valentia and Montview, is known for academic rigor and for pushing

ing students to uphold a set of six core values: respect, responsibility, curiosity, integrity, courage and doing your best.

Margo Warnock is a sophomore at DSST and part of Brute Force's PR and Support Team.



Left: Discussing robot design are, from left, Henry Benerman, sophomore, Chauncey Wenner, engineering industry mentor, Khabir Salahadyn, lead technical build mentor, and Allison Fisher and Adrian Ward, both 8th-graders from DSST Middle School.

Above: Freshmen Olivia Tonti (left) and Steven Chiu (right) fasten custom chassis elevating wheel brackets as mentor Khabir Salahadyn discusses the project with them.

Below: Sophomores Margo Warnock (left) and Katie Ferguson support the Brute Force DSST High School Robotics Team by helping them with logistics, fundraising, award applications, YouTube, public relations and documentation.



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Teeth Talk

By Brett Kessler, DDS

“How long will my dentistry last?” This is a question that I frequently get asked.

The best answer that I can give is, “Nothing lasts forever, but it could last a really long time if you take care of it.”

Teeth are subjected to a series of daily occurrences that can hinder longevity.

First: Chewing. Most restorative materials (silver, tooth-colored fillings, porcelain fillings and crowns) are made to withstand the forces of chewing food up to a certain limit over time. This being said, the more you chew, the more quickly things can break down. For example, if you chew a lot of gum, grind or clench your teeth, your dental work (and your teeth) will break down sooner. The stress is cumulative—meaning it adds up over time. If a crown or tooth breaks while you eat a sandwich, it means it has reached its limit and the sandwich was the proverbial “straw that broke the camel’s back.” If you must chew gum, do it 5 minutes to get your breath freshened, then spit it out.

Your teeth should only touch if you are chewing food. If you are not chewing food and your teeth are touching, that is considered clenching. Stop it! If you can’t stop, see your dentist to help you manage the forces of your bite. Your dentist may see signs of clenching or grinding and may alert you to these concerns.

Second: Home care. How well do you brush and floss your teeth? The better the home care, the more likely your dentistry (and your teeth) will be long-lasting. There is one great truth in dentistry: “clean teeth do not decay.” You should go to the dentist regularly

for checkups and cleanings as recommended. Your teeth will be clean when you leave but the plaque (bacteria) starts to grow quickly and must be removed carefully, thoroughly and regularly by you or it’s doomsday for your restorations (and teeth)! Professional fluoride treatments are recommended by the American Dental Association for both children and adults to reduce dental decay. It really helps.

Third: Diet. Plaque (bacteria) loves sugar. It processes the sugar and lactic acid is produced as a byproduct. Lactic acid lowers the pH of the oral cavity, making the teeth more susceptible to breakdown. Soda (even diet soda) is a restoration killer. It drops the pH of the oral environment immediately. Once the pH falls below 5.5, the enamel (the hardest substance in your body) starts to melt away. The average pH of regular or diet sodas ranges from 2.47–3.35. If you sip on the soda, the buffering power of your saliva to bring the pH back up is never fully realized, leaving your restorations (and your teeth) susceptible to problems. Medical conditions such as gastric reflux and bulimia will also further melt your teeth away. Ask your dentist for special toothpastes and other adjuncts that may help keep the pH of your mouth in a safe range.

There are several other minor factors. If the top three—chewing, home care and diet—are addressed, your new restoration (and your teeth) will predictably last for years to come.

Brett H. Kessler, DDS, is co-owner with his wife, Gina Kessler, DDS, M.S., of Town Center Dentistry and Orthodontics in the 29th Ave. Town Center. Contact them at 303.321.4445 or www.makeyoursmilegreat.com with any questions. They are pioneer business owners and residents of Stapleton.

Bad Pet Breath May Be a Bigger Stink than You Realize

By Dr. Deanna Miller

We all love kisses from our beloved pets, but sometimes the breath behind the kiss leaves us wondering what they are eating. The stinky breath is not only a problem for our noses. Bad breath is a sign of periodontal disease, which can cause many problems for our pet’s health. Statistics show that 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats over the age of three suffer from periodontal disease. The hidden bacteria in the dental tartar causes the smell to turn our noses, but also, it gets into your pet’s system and begins damaging the heart, liver and kidneys as well as causing bone infections. Could your pet have the start (or an advanced case) of periodontal disease? Pets rarely, if ever, give obvious signs of mouth pain, or problems. We only notice how bad it must have been once we take care of the problem and see how well they are acting.

So how do you know if there is a problem requiring attention? Things to look for in your pet’s mouth are a dark pink or red line at the edge of the gums where they contact the teeth, uneven tartar buildup (worse on one side or one tooth), pink gray or tan teeth, broken or missing teeth, gum swelling or sores. As the disease progresses, you can see red, inflamed or bleeding gums, gum recession, halitosis (bad breath), decreased appetite, not playing with toys, and teeth loosening or falling out. Despite advanced periodontal disease, in most cases the pet is still eating and seems “fine.” Since our pets are not brushing and flossing daily, it is up to us as pet

owners to take charge of our pet’s dental health to protect them from the problems of less than stellar dental hygiene. Prevention of arthritis, heart, liver or kidney disease starts with regular dental care at home, with an occasional periodontal therapy and teeth cleaning done by your veterinarian.

Most vets offer cleaning and polishing to remove the tartar and disease-causing bacteria. Since over 15 percent of dental disease is below the gum of a normal-looking tooth, talk to your vet about dental X-rays to ensure that unseen problems are detected and corrected before they become more serious. Anesthesia is required for dental work. Ask your vet about “low impact” anesthesia and other safety precautions that ensure your pet goes home without a hangover. Once a pet’s mouth is restored to the best possible condition, there are many options to delay the recurrence of dental disease. Brushing daily with a pet-safe toothpaste is recommended; however, if your pet or lifestyle disagrees with this, products are available to delay the return of disease-causing bacteria. Dental chews, dental rinses or dental diets are good options to clean the teeth if your pet won’t tolerate a toothbrush. Keeping your pet’s mouth clean and healthy will help your pet live a longer and healthier life.

Dr. Deanna Miller, the owner and lead veterinarian of Rising Sun Animal Care, an American Animal Hospital Association-certified (AAHA) veterinary clinic located in Lowry (303.577.0195), is dedicated to serving her neighbors and their pets in the northeast Denver area. She lives in Stapleton and has a 10-year-old daughter and 7-year-old son.

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Editor's note: When letters to the editor cite specific people or businesses, the Front Porch offers that person/business the opportunity to respond in the same issue.

Jan. '12, Aerotropolis

Thank you for the recent article on the "Aerotropolis" concept for future Denver/DIA development. In my opinion the idea has potential only if supported by a futuristic Intermountain to Gulf Coast Freeway (a.k.a. the COLO- GULF). More specifically, Denver needs to connect directly to Dallas, TX via interstate to tap into the vast human capital of the nation's most populous state as well as the deep sea port of Houston, one of the nation's business ports. The ability to better move goods and services from the Gulf of Mexico to Denver must be included in any serious "Aerotropolis" proposal.

West Hammond

Jan. '12, Pediatrician Interview on Vaccines

I just read your article and am very concerned. I wonder if you or doctor O Leary have done any research outside of the mainstream media on vaccines? (obviously not). Knowing through extensive research how dangerous these vaccines are, I am appalled at this article.

Either you or the doctor were paid or bribed to write this article, or you really have no idea what is actually in vaccines. I recommend doing some REAL research before you release such a dangerously bias article.

Do you really know anything about these vaccines? Please ask yourself this before sending thousands of innocent children to go get them. (when the actual news or real facts come out, you will feel horrible for violating these poor children and people)

Please let me know if you really haven't done the research, or if you are on the payroll of those who are depopulating our planet.

Truth keeper and child protector, Kipp Cousino (this is my oath and profession in this life)

Response from Dr. Sean O'Leary:

Mr. Cousino's letter illustrates how passionately some people feel about immunizations. To answer his specific concerns:

1) I gain nothing financially by researching, promoting, or administering vaccines. Further, several studies have shown that most pediatricians and family physicians at best break even from giving vaccines, and many actually lose money in the proposition. They give vaccines to improve the lives of children.

Letters to the Editor

- 2) The ingredients of vaccines are publicly available and most have been in use for more than 50 years and have been shown to be extremely safe.
- 3) Regarding sources of information, most of the accurate information about vaccines comes from scientific journals, which means the information is scrutinized extensively by experts in the field prior to publication. This is in contrast to much of what is available on the Internet, where anyone can claim anything as "fact," with no outside scrutiny. I have visited many of the anti-vaccination websites. Some are quite well written and convincing, but unfortunately are filled with claims that are completely false. It can be hard for a parent who doesn't review medical literature on a daily basis to separate truth from fiction in such a setting. For scientifically accurate information, I recommend checking out www.immunizationinfo.org, www.childrensimmunization.org, or www.aap.org.
- Sean O'Leary, MD, MPH

Response from the Front Porch:

The publishers of the Front Porch have no financial interest in children's vaccines. We rely on interviews with medical experts whose knowledge is based on peer-reviewed scientific research.

Jan. '12, Views From the Tower

Smiling happy faces make a nice front page. Not everyone will be happy with preserving the control tower complex.

Some think that the control tower is unsightly and unwelcoming, that it looks like watch towers seen in prison yards or like guard towers seen in Holocaust camps, the dark windows at the top are gloomy and intrusive.

I am in favor of tearing down the control tower complex and installing a park with green grass, trees, bushes, park benches with room for our children to explore, learn and grow through play. Many of the great cities of the world are where people live close to the ground, like Florence, Italy.

Let's create a beautiful space that represents the best that life can be. Where we can smell the green grass, see the beauty of the blooming trees, feel the warm sun on our faces. Now that will give cause for many people to smile.

Nancy McCurdy, Denver Resident

Proposed Carwash near Montview and Central Park Blvd.

After learning about a 6 bay car wash going in directly across from homes on 21st Ave, we expressed extreme concern to Forest City. Thanks to over 100 residents adding names to a previous letter sent to the Front Porch, and many more voicing concerns online through StapletonConnect.com, Stapleton Moms and by email, a better parcel was selected. We are grateful that Forest City and the car wash owner moved it to a location with less impact on residences.

In an urban neighborhood, quality commercial development is not only a reality, but an important ingredient. This is challenging in today's economy, but we strongly implore Forest City and the SDC to maintain high standards, better collaboration with residents, and engage in transparent communication that puts residents first and continues to make Stapleton an international model for urban development.

We learned a lot through this experience. Residents must be proactive to shape this community we love. Projects take months or years to be realized, and we must be engaged from the beginning, not just when stakes are put in the ground. Please get involved with the Community Advisory Board (CAB) to shape our future and Stapleton United Neighbors (SUN) to be an influence on our current community.

Dan & Erin Oltersdorf

Response from Tom Gleason, Vice President Public Relations, Forest City Stapleton, Inc.:

In response to concerns expressed by residents who live north of a proposed auto wash planned for the area zoned for commercial uses south of Hangar 61, Forest City and the developer, a Stapleton resident, will move the car wash to the east, placing it on the frontage of Central Park Boulevard. This location eliminates the direct interface between the car wash and the residences to the north. It is also a compatible use with DSST and Bill Roberts because car wash trip counts are generally low and peak operations are on weekends when the schools are closed. As with all commercial development, the design of the car wash had to secure approval from the Stapleton Design Review Committee, a group of design professionals and citizens who review the design of all commercial development at Stapleton.

Forest City retail brokers are talking with other potential retailers for the area south of Hangar 61, including a coffee shop and convenience store with gasoline pumps—uses allowed under that parcel's commercial zoning. Our goals for the property are to bring retail services that are lacking and/or in further demand to the Stapleton area and to also provide expansion land for the adjacent church, if needed. Such uses may include coffee shops, fast food and quick serve restaurants, convenience stores, drug stores, banks, gas and retail shops.

The citizens of Denver, Aurora and Commerce City who created the Stapleton Development Plan envisioned Stapleton as a diverse, mixed use, urban community that was an extension of the surrounding neighborhoods. Our commercial development is designed to provide services needed by residents of Stapleton and those surrounding neighborhoods.

Tom Gleason

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Front Porch will publish letters to the editor as space allows—they may be edited for length. Please email FrontPorchStapleton@gmail.com. Submit by the 15th for consideration in the following month's issue.

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DPS Forms Committee to Discuss Education Issues Facing Park Hill and Stapleton

By Sophia Briegleb, SUN Education Committee

Swigert International School, the newest school in Northeast Denver, has been open for only six months and already is feeling the pinch. The elementary school initially planned to offer three classes per grade, to allow for space for a large middle school on the second and third floors of the SMIS building. However, in 2011-2012, Swigert offered four kindergarten classes and in 2012-2013, to accommodate one of the largest bubbles in Stapleton, will offer at least five kindergartens. McAuliffe International School opens next year with up to 160 sixth-graders. In a few quick years, the brand-new 900-student facil-

ity will be filled.

This is one of the pressing issues facing Denver Public Schools (DPS) and the Park Hill and Stapleton communities. Also on the minds of residents are the upcoming high school (planned to be located at Central Park Blvd and 56th Ave.) capacity, community feeder patterns and school boundaries. It's clear that these education issues need to be addressed now.

Therefore, DPS formed the Greater Park Hill/Stapleton Community Committee in January. Comprised of 40 parents, teachers, principals and community members in Park Hill and Stapleton, the com-

mittee represents the 14 schools located in Central Northeast Denver: Ashley, Denver School of the Arts, Denver School of Science and Technology, Hallett, McAuliffe, Odyssey, Park Hill, Smiley, Smith, Stedman, Swigert, Westerly Creek, William Roberts and Venture Prep. According to DeVita Bruce, deputy community engagement officer for DPS and a resident of Stapleton, "the committee is charged with discussing issues relevant to this community to include, but not necessarily be limited to, developing and strengthening schools and community feeder patterns and to ensure that ex-

isting and new schools in the Greater Park Hill/Stapleton community are high quality and represent the diversity of the community."

All meetings are open to the public and will take place at 5:30pm on the third Tuesday of each month. Meetings will be located in various schools in Park Hill and Stapleton. Meeting locations, agendas and minutes will be available at www.stapletonunitedneighbors.org/education and [communityrelations.dpsk12.org/stories/storyReader\\$69](http://communityrelations.dpsk12.org/stories/storyReader$69).

Sophia Briegleb is chairperson of the SUN Education Committee

Passing on Colorado's Legacy of Skiing

By Chris Roberts

- Did you know?
- On February 7, 1937, the now-closed Berthoud Pass ski area opened for the first day of lift-assisted skiing in Colorado.*
 - Colorado's ski resorts (28 areas are listed at coloradoskicountry.com) have 23 percent of the skiing-related tourism market in the U.S., bringing in approximately \$2 billion every year to Colorado's economy.**

Having grown up in Colorado, I am no stranger to skiing—my parent had me in lessons when I was five. As I was listening to the news recently about the record low snowfalls, and the promise that several inches of fresh powder would offer some of the best skiing so far this year, it hit me: I have a five-year-old and the ski season is half over! If I don't get out there soon, he will be six before he learns—and we all know that the "not-getting-hurt-when-you-fall time" ends abruptly at a child's sixth birthday. So, it was decided, we were going skiing—and, what the heck, we'll take our three-year-old too.

At the last minute I remembered that when I was five, I had an instructor skiing backwards in front of me so I wouldn't go too fast. That was our first hiccup—I can't

ski backwards. "Just put them in lessons," one of my friends said, but I am too proud a father for that. I was determined to do it myself, at least for the first day. A quick Google search revealed that I was not the only one who could not ski backwards. In fact, there are many products for sale that would allow a parent to ski behind their child, while he held onto a harness. Unfortunately though, we were leaving in an hour and I couldn't be sure I'd find harnesses at the ski resort.

As we were driving out of town, we passed a Petsmart. A light bulb went off in my head! "Hold on just a sec," I told my wife as I ran into the pet store. I wondered later whether she was more confused by me going into the store or coming out with my purchase. But I had guessed right—an extra-large dog collar fits around the waist of both three- and five-year-olds. Two collars and two leashes later, we were ready for the slopes. "Why did you get us dog collars, Dad?" my son asked. "No, son, you're confused—those are ski harnesses," I replied. Luckily, he bought my story.

Dog-leashed up at the base of the bunny hill, we stared up the length of the "magic carpet ride" lift—a motorized carpet that slowly and gently takes you 50 feet to the top of the bunny hill. "This is fun!" both of my boys said. "That's great, boys,

but we haven't even started skiing yet..." "What?!" they said in unison. When we got to the top, I got everyone turned and facing down the hill. "We're not going down the hill, are we, Dad?" the five-year-old asked. "Yeah, of course we are. That's what skiing is!" I answered. With a little trepidation, we started down the hill. They were scared, but with our trusty "ski harnesses," we kept our speed under control and everyone had a fun day.

Bottom line, it's never too late to enjoy Colorado's skiing legacy. And families with fifth-graders should check out the Colorado Ski Country USA Passport Program, which offers three days of free skiing for fifth-graders at the 21 participating ski resorts. Visit <https://passport.coloradoski.com/>.

*Berthoud Pass, Colorado's First Ski Area, www.cyberwest.com/cw06/v6adwst3.html

**Economic Impacts of Climate Change on Colorado, July 2008, www.cier.umd.edu/climateadaptation -> select Colorado


Chris Roberts is a member of the SUN Board.

MLK Bike Lanes To Be Extended from Quebec to Central Park Blvd.

By David Vogel

The Denver Department of Public Works recently confirmed that it will extend the bike lanes on Martin Luther King Blvd. all the way to Central Park Blvd. sometime in 2012. Currently, the bike lanes end about a block west of Quebec. When these bike lanes are completed, MLK will change from three lanes to two lanes in each direction between Quebec and Central Park Blvd. This change will mean safer travel corridors for bicyclists in Park Hill and Stapleton and, with fewer lanes, slower traffic speeds along this stretch where speeding has been a problem.

David Vogel is chairman of the SUN Transportation Committee.



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New Stapleton Resource Center to Focus on Alternative Transportation & Neighborhood Safety

By Angie Malpiede

A new, free and open to the public community resource center will open in Stapleton on February 6. Activities and resources at the center will focus primarily on alternative transportation and neighborhood safety. The goal of the center is to serve as a catalyst for behavioral change among residents, employers and employees that will lead to a safer, healthier community. Sponsored by the Stapleton Transportation Management Association (TMA), the Denver Police Department, the COP Shop and the Major Taylor Bicycling Club of Denver, programs and resources will include:

- “Try Transit Program”—a “hands-on” experience on how to find transit information and resources and a direct experience using the Denver metro area transit system
- Purchase of RTD bus passes
- Information and resources on carpooling, vanpooling and eGo CarShare
- Walking clubs and biking programs
- Saturday classes to introduce biking to participants, young and old
- Cycling 101—teaching rules of the road, with updated cycling laws and information
- ABC Maintenance—teaching riders how to maintain their tires, brakes and chain
- Cycling Safety—helping riders learn trail safety
- Once-a-month Saturday bike rides for families, June through October
- Neighborhood Watch Program training
- Training on crime prevention techniques for business owners and employees in and around their businesses

- Speed Watch—training small groups of citizens to conduct radar documentation
- Bike registration
- Submission of General Offense Reports (including criminal mischief, theft, theft from a motor vehicle or lost property)
- Center hours starting Monday, February 6 will be: Monday–Friday, 10–3; Saturday, 9–noon. The public is encouraged to stop in and visit. A name for the center is yet to be determined.

For more information, call Angie Malpiede, 303.468.3231, or Sergeant Eric Knutson, 720.865.2356.

Angie Malpiede is Director of the Stapleton Area Transportation Management Association (TMA).

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Gibson Athletic

(continued from page 1) leading manufacturers of quality ballet, gymnastics, fitness and children's therapy products. On any given day, Olympic hopefuls may be found catapulting off Gibson-made vault boards, ballerinas stretching on wall-mounted ballet barres, university athletes tiptoeing atop their balance beams, everyday fitness enthusiasts tossing around 10-pound medicine balls filled with 'green' recycled materials, and determined neighborhood school students working their way to the top of an 18 foot long Gibson climbing rope.

For co-owners Brian and Tamara Smith, Gibson was the perfect launching place for the couple to express their passion for promoting fitness and the wellbeing of children and adults alike. The enthusiastic and imaginative Stapleton residents and Westerly Creek School parents acquired Gibson in 2005 from another local husband and wife team, Gibson founders, Mike and Holly Gibson. The Gibsons started their entrepreneurial effort out of their Littleton garage 35 years ago and steadily grew into one of the most reputable gymnastics and ballet apparatus manufacturers in North America. For the Smiths, the business has proven to be a soft landing from their one-time careers in Washington D.C where they worked in politics and the financial industry. The two were lured here



Carter Smith, 7, demonstrates the double squeezer, part of the Moving Mountains product line that helps children with sensory disorders.

after they experienced Colorado's high country and many skiing venues. The Smiths were equally drawn to Denver's entrepreneurial atmosphere and athletic lifestyle.



Liz Schmidt (rear), the special needs teacher at Westerly Creek School, is shown next to the sensory integration cabinet designed as a prototype by Brian Smith and donated to her classroom. The changing light colors in the strands and water tubes, along with the moving bubbles, help Schmidt's special needs students calm themselves. Schmidt says after spending 15 minutes in the "sensory room," the students are better able to learn in the classroom. Tamara Smith, shown with sons Colin and Carter, calls the equipment "a feel-good product line that we are incredibly proud of."

Within Gibson's modest industrial space, Tamara Smith leads marketing and finance, while Brian Smith oversees product development, manufacturing and operations. Their cooperative inventiveness spurs them to look at ways to leverage their in-house woodworking, steel fabrication and sewing capabilities, in hopes of discovering ways to grow the company. Their efforts led them to establish a new business division, Rage Fitness Supply. Skilled seamstresses, metalsmiths and woodworkers use premium construction materials to craft innovative fitness products, including kettle bells, slam balls and pull-up systems, that can be found in recreational gyms, fitness centers, CrossFit™ training facilities, military-style exercise camps, mixed martial arts clubs and even residential workout rooms.

The team of 40+ US employees is what the Smiths agree sets Gibson apart from their competitors. "The people we

have are an amazing team" says Brian Smith. "They are very collaborative and innovative, always coming up with ideas to improve our products or create new ones."

Gibson's talented craftsmen and women have attracted the respect of international sporting goods corporations including Spalding and American Athletic, a major supplier of gymnastic equipment for Olympic Games, the Special Olympics and NCAA championship events. These companies and many others have forged product development, testing and manufacturing relationships with Gibson.

Three years ago Gibson entered into a relationship with FlagHouse Corporation, a 55-year-old global supplier of physical activity, recreation, education and special needs products. Flaghouse turned to Gibson's workforce to manufacture a unique line of "sensory integration" products for children and adolescents with sensory challenges. Stapleton's Westerly Creek Elementary School was the recent recipient of one such component from Gibson. The system generates a multi-sensory environment that provides a comfortable, tranquil surrounding in which students can experience and control a variety of sensory experiences, including those that are balance, tactile, sound and light based. The system enables special needs teachers to engage students in educational and therapeutic activities. "The children's therapy products are very near and dear to my heart," says Tamara Smith, the mother of three boys. "The equipment that we are developing helps children with autism and sensory disorders. It is a feel-good product line that we are incredibly proud of."

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Library

(continued from page 1) designed to be like beehives, where people can see and be seen, congregate for conversation and learning.” Amore goes on to say, “Specifically, we need to have facilities that promote a love of reading by children ages 0 to 3 to get them started on a life of learning.” The library is also busy with people looking for jobs and learning languages. Amore points out that most of the immigrants to this country in the early 1900s learned English at public libraries.

The new branch has been funded by Better Denver Bonds, passed by voters in 2007. The bonds have allowed renovations for many libraries and the construction of three new branches, Green Valley Ranch, Colfax at Irving and Sam Gary. Quentin Rockwell, the owner’s representative for construction of the three new facilities for Denver Public Library, notes, “All three new libraries are designed by different architects, and due to the input from the library staff and community members, they each have their own feel and amenities. They are all built to promote the use of libraries by today’s library patron.”

Councilman Chris Herndon states that the new Green Valley Ranch branch is “beautiful, well-designed and much needed; however, it is never open.” That branch is open four days a week for eight hours, the same hours as many other Denver branch libraries.

The libraries are a service provided by the City of Denver

Right: The adult nonfiction area will have comfortable furniture located around a fireplace at the west end of the library. Windows on both sides of the fireplace bring in natural light.

Below left: The library, located at Roslyn St. and 29th Drive, is just north of the 29th Avenue Town Center in Stapleton. The building is expected to be completed and turned over to Denver Public Library in early summer, and the library will have 60 days to move in before opening to the public.

caused decreases in city services. On January 23, 2012, the final report was issued and it proposed creating separate districts for some city services, including libraries and parks. Creating separate districts for city services would require approval by Denver voters, but passage would guarantee funding for those services outside of the general city budget process. The funding would most likely come from increased property taxes.

With the Internet widely available, detractors of additional funding for libraries, such as Vincent Carroll in a recent Denver Post column, ask why more money should be invested into what are becoming relics. Do we need the library open for additional hours when circulation of books will surely decrease in the coming years as more people move toward eBooks?

At this time, Mayor Hancock has not committed to a campaign for a separate library district although most cities surrounding Denver have them. Shirley Amore points out, “Colorado Springs can’t even keep streetlights on but as a result of being a separate tax district, their libraries are open on average 60 hours a week.”

Mike King, a Stapleton resident, former president of SUN and president of the Denver Library Foundation Board, is committed to finding the funding to allow libraries to remain open enough hours to serve their customers. He says, “What good are these buildings if they are not open

enough hours to serve the public? Walk into any library, anywhere in the city and you will see a flurry of activity throughout the day.”

Amore is adamant about the value of libraries to early childhood education, saying, “I have never seen a parent curled up with a child reading a story from a Kindle.”



Below: The IT room provides a space to access cables and upgrade servers to adapt to changing needs in the future. A single hard drive is visible at the top right of the storage racks.

Bottom: Most of the library has raised flooring with tiles made of cement and steel. These removable tiles allow access to racks that carry cabling for future expansion.



to its citizens and funded through the city budget process each year. Budget issues have affected services in all areas of the city. The library has specifically had to reduce hours and employees. A Structural Financial Task Force Report was originally ordered over a year ago by then Mayor Hickenlooper to address the constant revenue problems that have



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