

Front Porch

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

DENVER, COLORADO

STAPLETON

MARCH 2017



Community Welcomes Refugees



By Melinda Pearson

The day before Valentine's Day, Isabella Bird Community School celebrated its refugee community with a strong showing of love by giving away books and art supplies to refugee students. The event was coordinated by Suzanne Tonini, the school librarian, who wanted the newcomer students to know that "they are an important part of our community," and for Izzi B's mainstream students to understand "refugees are not associated with terrorism."

Contributions of over 1,000 homemade valentines, art supplies and gently used books poured in from area schools, including Bill Roberts, Swigert, Good Shepherd Catholic School and Denver Language School, as well as Girl Scout Troop 60580 and community members. For those who contributed, "It's a jump-starter for a conversation about what it means to not have a safe place to live and what it means to come to a country like ours," said Tonini. Nearly a dozen parent volunteers were on hand at the event to help the students select items.

Tonini also coordinated special lessons at the school, teaching students in grades K-5 about what it means to be a refugee. "Several classroom teachers are expanding on this lesson, using children's literature ... to extend the conversation and deepen children's understanding of the refugee experience." Last fall, fourth-grade teacher Angie Costello saw the need for books that show diversity; she applied for and won a \$1,000 grant from the DPS Foundation A to Z Fund to purchase books with diverse characters for her classroom library.

The outpouring from the community was so great that each of the approximately 70 children participating was able to choose up to 10 books and 10 types of art supplies. Even so, there were extra books, and Tonini is setting up a free library where both refugee and non-refugee Izzi B students who lack large home libraries can select books throughout the year.

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Yotam Ghebremeskel and other refugee students gather in front of a giant Valentine at Isabella Bird Community School after receiving gifts of books and art supplies.

City News

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First get the basic answer, then read what we learned from the engineers about how the system really works.

Page 4—The R Line is Open by John Fernandez

Learn about the newest light rail line.

Page 10—What is Denver's Immigrant Policy?

by Carol Roberts

The mayor, the chief of police, the sheriff, and the city attorney stood in front of 500 people and made Denver's policy crystal clear.

Page 16—E. Colfax's Future: "Main Street" style development and bus rapid transit

by John Fernandez

Don't hold your breath but it's in the works.

How Has Your Neighborhood Evolved Over Time?

The *Front Porch* distribution area has old neighborhoods and new neighborhoods. We'd like to hear observations from people in all our neighborhoods for an upcoming article on how our neighborhoods have changed over time...whether appearance, neighborliness, demographics, transportation, schools, development, city amenities, or other issues. Email Melinda@FrontPorchStapleton.com.

Gratitude and Rebuilding at The Urban Farm

After stray dogs killed a dozen animals at The Urban Farm, the community stepped in to help rebuild. Neil Cowan, along with others, helped build higher, sturdier fences. Hayden Smith, 9, drew the images hanging on the fence as a memorial to the animals that died.



By Melinda Pearson

As reported last month, two stray, domestic dogs caused the deaths of a dozen animals at The Urban Farm Stapleton (TUF) in January 2017. The Farm's prized goat herd was entirely lost, along with several sheep and rabbits. The incident also damaged many fences and enclosures.

Community Response

After news of the tragedy spread, the community took the bull by the horns and fundraising efforts sprouted

across local schools. "The response has been tremendous," said Michael Nicks, executive director of The Urban Farm. Student leaders in McAuliffe International School's "Spark Change" club voted to send \$400 of money they had previously raised to The Urban Farm. When they delivered the donation, they also helped prepare the office building for renovation, part of McAuliffe's ongoing volunteer service to the organization.

Students at Swigert International School hatched a plan for a bake sale. The fifth-graders' culinary efforts raised almost \$900, which was then supplemented by

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Like us at Front Porch Newspaper for updates on local news and events.



Denver residents flocked to City Park to enjoy the surprisingly warm days in February.



Most of the events listed below are FREE or support nonprofits. Additional events are listed on pages 20-22. Also visit FrontPorchStapleton.com to view additional events and to submit events.

MARCH

Wednesday, March 8

Stapleton resident swim & dive team registration, 12pm. More information about the Stingray program at www.stapletoncommunity.com

Thursday, March 9

Active Minds Seminar "Peace in Northern Ireland" 6:45-7:45pm, Sam Gary Library* activeminds.org

Through March 10

10am-5pm M-F or by appt. DAVA (Downtown Aurora Visual Arts) 1405 Florence St. Aurora, CO 80010 www.davarts.org

Saturday, March 11

15th Annual Collaborative Health Fair, 8:30am-3:30pm. Renaissance Denver Hotel 3801 Quebec St. Free health screenings and activities for whole family www.caahealth.org 303.355.3423

Wednesday, March 15

Stapleton resident swim lesson registration, 12pm. Nonresidents can register for all swim programs on Wed., April 5 at noon. More info at www.stapletoncommunity.com

MARCH

Friday, March 17

Friday Night Films - Cinema series at The Cube,* 6-9pm. Visit stapletoncommunity.com for film details.

Saturday, March 18

Knights Nite - Parents Night Out, 5:30-8:30pm at DSST Stapleton High School, 2000 Valentia St. Kids 7 and up will enjoy arts & crafts and games. Dinner provided. Proceeds support DSST Service Learning. Sign up at: DSST-Service-Learning.SquareSpace.com

Thursday, March 23

Active Minds Seminar "The Soviet Union: The Road After Collapse" 6:45-7:45pm, Sam Gary Library* activeminds.org

Locations

*More info. on these events at www.stapletoncommunity.com
Sam Gary Library: 2961 Roslyn St.
The Cube: 8371 E. Northfield Blvd.

Events & Announcements at Stapleton



Swim & Dive Team Registration

Wednesday, March 8, 12pm

Stapleton residents can register for the Stingray Swim and Dive teams via your online ActiveNet account or in person at the MCA office or The Cube. Registration begins at 12pm. Nonresidents can register for the Stingray Swim and Dive teams on Wed., April 5 at noon. For more information about the Stingray program, visit www.stapletoncommunity.com.

Swim Lesson Registration

Wednesday March 15, 12pm

Stapleton residents can register for all swim programs beginning at noon on March 15. Registration can be completed via your online ActiveNet account or in person at the MCA office or The Cube. We can no longer accept registrations over the phone. Nonresidents can register for all swim programs on Wed., April 5 at noon.

Saturday Night Live...For Kids Only!

Saturday, March 11, 6-9pm

Stapleton MCA and Central Park Recreation Center are partnering to host a night of fun for children ages 7-12 from 6-9pm. The first SNL will be held on Sat., March 11 at the Central Park Rec Center. Early registration will be open until the end of business Wednesday (4pm) prior to each SNL event date. Registrations will be accepted at the door, \$20 (cash only) per participant. Join us for a night of fun with games, dinner, snacks and more!

Active Minds Seminars

This is a free, no-reservation-needed public program brought to you by the Stapleton MCA. Location: Sam Gary Library 2961 Roslyn St.

Thursday, March 9, 6:45-7:45pm

Peace in Northern Ireland

In July 2005, the Irish Republican Army announced the end of its armed campaign and called on its supporters to use "exclusively peaceful means." Despite deep differences, many of which remain unresolved, a fragile peace appears to have tak-

en root in the region. Join Active Minds as we explore the historical causes of "the Troubles" in Ireland as well as the potential for a lasting end to the violence.

Friday Night Films

Friday, March 17, 6-9pm

Join the MCA for our Friday Night Film series at The Cube that will explore thought-provoking interpretations in the world of film. Dr. Vincent Piturro, the "Indie Prof," will lead a discussion before and after the showing. The event will start at 6pm and feature the foreign film, *Mustang*. This event will be held at The Cube at 8371 Northfield Blvd. Films are \$5 for residents and \$10 for nonresidents. Price of admission includes popcorn and a drink of your choice (beer, wine, soda or water)! Purchase tickets at stapletoncommunity.com.

Thursday, March 23, 6:45-7:45pm

The Soviet Union: The Road After Collapse

What was known as the Soviet Union dissolved 25 years ago this past December. Join Active Minds as we explore the history of the Soviet Union as well as 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.

Friday Night Tastings-Beers & Cheers

Friday, March 24, 6pm

The MCA will be hosting a series of educational Beer Tastings at The Cube! Resident tickets are \$15 and nonresident tickets \$20. Day of event all tickets are \$20. Purchase tickets at stapletoncommunity.com.

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

Jennifer Olsen
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Corrections from February Issue

Art Garage address in the Camp Guide: The correct address is 6100 E. 23rd St. (the online version is now correct).

Denver Biscuit Company in the Stanley openings article: The correct website is www.denbisco.com



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Front Porch

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By John Fernandez

Trains have been blaring their horns 144 times a day for a year as the A Line and freight trains pass through Stapleton area crossings and other residential areas. A year ago, neighbors thought the A Line opening would bring quiet zones and an end to 18 freight train horns a day. Instead the horns have increased eight fold.

What is the problem, exactly, and why is it taking so long to fix? The explanation is complicated, so we offer a simplified version first. For readers living with the noise and hungry for a better understanding, we researched the technical details.

The short version

RTD says the problem is *not* train safety. The crossings are operating safely (and are backed up by crossing guards and horns) and the trains are operating safely. Positive train control (PTC) is in control of the trains 95 percent of the time and there are two back-up systems that make it “fail safe.”

The continuation of horns is occurring due to a federal requirement that the wait times at all the traffic crossings is constant so that motorists don’t get frustrated or confused by erratic crossing closures. Due to train speed variations or wait times at stations, the arrival times at gates

can vary, and the prediction software has not been accurate enough to ensure constant warning times. Data is being collected from train operations thus far to refine the system so the timing is consistent at all crossings.

RTD is encouraged enough by recent performance improvements to indicate, off the record, that compliance with FRA requirements can be achieved by early spring. The agency says the line has experienced only four major disruptions since opening April last year and has achieved a “daily average on-time performance of 87.3 per cent.” RTD continues to impose a monthly penalty on DTP of \$250,000 for non-performance under its concessionaire agreement and says the operator is motivated to solve the warning time problem as soon as possible.

To understand why it’s taking so long, read on.

The technical explanation

“Iterative refinement of software” is beginning to reduce the “extended gate down times” at the A Line’s 12 crossings with local streets. Between December and the end of January, RTD reports a 15 percent increase in the number of gate closures that remained within 10 percent of the target goal, from roughly 50 percent of the time to 65 percent.

For example, a street crossing with a design

A flagger stands at the Ulster St. crossing on the A Line, one of the worst performing intersections in the corridor on timing.

warning time of 30 seconds would satisfy regulators’ requirements if the warning time fell within 27 to 33 seconds 90 percent of the time. “Warning time” is defined as the elapsed time between when crossing warnings begin (bells clang, lights flash and the crossing gates descend and close, securing a crossing) and when a train arrives at the intersection itself.

Despite this recent improvement, RTD

does not anticipate getting out from under waivers enforced by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for another 60 to 90 days. Those waivers allow RTD to operate the A Line without certification of its positive train control system (PTC) by the use of horn soundings and “crossing attendants” (flaggers). The current waiver expires April 30.

Once the A Line PTC is certified, applications



RTD Systems Lead Jeff Whiteman explains positive train control to the media.

by Denver and Aurora for a quiet zone along the commuter rail line can be accepted by the federal government. RTD general manager Dave Genova has said previously that he expects the FRA to

approve the quiet zone applications within 60 to 90 days of submittal. Once the quiet zone is approved, all trains in the A Line corridor, including freight trains, can pass through the street crossings without sounding their horns (except in case of emergency).

RTD is attempting to create the first PTC designed from the ground up for a new rail service. Congress mandated PTC in 2008 and railroads have until 2018 to comply. PTC is designed to eliminate the possibility of train-to-train collisions, excessive speeds, or dangers for railroad work crews. Through GPS and wireless communication, the system continually tracks a train’s location and speed.

This contrasts with the basic design of automatic train control (ATC), the traditional train signaling system. ATC uses fixed “blocks” of track circuitry for detecting a train’s location and establishing maximum train speeds by block. RTD uses ATC as the PTC back up.

RTD Systems Lead Jeff Whiteman describes ATC as “good and reliable but not very smart.” At a media briefing last month, Whiteman provided this example of an ATC block: it might be as long as two miles, the distance required to stop a train traveling at 79 miles per hour. Once the circuitry in that block is triggered by the train’s arrival, the warning time for the upcoming train crossing is set and cannot be altered.

The system works well for technology such as freight trains with their relatively constant speed, infrequent stops and huge mass. The

system is less efficient for commuter rail transit characterized by frequent stops and starts, variable speeds and variables introduced by the behavior of train operators, motorists at crossing and patrons at platforms (e.g., pedestrians crossing in front of a train attempting to leave a station).

ATC and PTC both are grounded in the premise of prediction

– attempting to predict when a trail will arrive at a crossing. Prediction is necessary because of the “braking curve”, the extended period of time required to stop a (continued on page 5)



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A directory with links to these businesses can be found
at www.FrontPorchStapleton.com > **Business Directory**

R Line Around Anschutz Campus Opens



Left: The new R Line train pulls into the Florida Station. Right: The train crosses the Colfax bridge, a unique elevated platform. Below: RTD Board Chair Larry Hoy and RTD Executive Director Dave Genova ride the train.



View video at FrontPorchStapleton.com

By John Fernandez
The R Line opened for revenue service on February 24 after nearly four years of construction. The project was endorsed by metro area voters in 2004 when they approved the FasTracks program. Unlike all the other rail passenger lines in the FasTracks system, the R Line is unique in that it does not originate in central Denver and radiate to outlying communities. Instead, it is a circumferential line linking suburban communities to each other and to pre-existing lines including the A Line commuter rail and the E, F and H lines serving



the southeast and downtown Denver. The R Line directly serves Northeast Denver with two light rail stops at the Anschutz Medical Campus and one at the Peoria Station. Key features of those stops include:
Peoria: a cross-platform transfer for riders switching between the A and R Lines.
Fitzsimons Parkway: a free shuttle bus service provided by the University of Colorado running

continuously between 5:30 am and 7 pm. Aurora will be constructing a 12-foot-wide “multi-use path” this spring to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists traveling from the station into the campus. It will be located along Ursula Street.
Colfax: the station is elevated above the state highway meaning patrons can access the line without having to cross Colfax on foot. The station is also notable for the enhancements provided by Aurora including street level public art and the grand arch above the platform. The arch is lighted

at night and helps provide shelter from the elements.
The R Line extends 22 miles south from the Peoria station to the Lincoln station in Lone Tree. The full trip requires 55 minutes of travel time and costs \$2.60 one-way. A regular fare traveler to DIA pays \$9.
The R Line will run much more quietly than the A Line, blowing muted horns only at gated crossings. As a light rail facility, it is not subject to same safety measures as mandated by the federal government for commuter rail sharing freight corridors as occurs on the A Line.

A Line Horns

(continued from page 3) train of a certain mass traveling at a given speed. Simply stated, it can take a long time and distance to stop a train.
PTC, with its foot-by-foot knowledge of where a train is and how fast it is traveling, aims at reducing the gate down time that would otherwise be established by an ATC. If the A Line ran with ATC as the default signaling system, it estimates the 37-minute trip from downtown to the airport would

run seven to eight minutes longer. But it has to do so while also maintaining a “constant warning time”. That constant warning time is deemed essential by RTD and the FRA so that motorists don’t get frustrated or confused by erratic crossing closures and attempt to “beat the system” by racing trains to the crossing or slaloming around gates in the absence of a train.
The basic problem is that the prediction software has not been accurate enough to ensure constant warning times. RTD and its operator, Denver Transit Partners, have been going through a process of “iterative refinement of software up-

grades based on recent data.” The data pertain to the three behaviors identified above as well as two additional complications: “train meets” (where two A Line trains travel through a crossing relatively soon after one another) and when a freight train crossing is added into the mix. Additional complications arise when street crossings are in proximity (e.g., Dahlia St.-Holly St.-Monaco Pkwy.) or when stations are on the “near side” of a crossing (e.g., the Ulster St./Central Park station for eastbound trains). Without a “constant warning time”, crossing gates would fly up and down in

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Urban Farm



Top left: David Rowan puts his full weight into digging up an old fence post as he, Alex Bully and Neil Cowan put up new fencing.

Below: Claire Rowan and other Urban Farm kids write thank you notes to the many people who donated a total of almost \$12,000 to rebuild and restock.

(continued from page 1) a grant from Swigert of more than \$400, bringing their total contribution over \$1,300. Individuals across Denver have come together, and donations have blossomed to over \$12,000 to date. Nicks also said a donor in Montrose has offered five Nigerian goats to the Farm.

In the short term, TUF hopes the seed money will allow them to re-stock their herd with five Nigerian dwarf goats, four Boer goats, and three Shetland sheep. Donors who contribute \$1,000 or more will get to name one of the new animals.

On top of the financial generosity, adults and children have flocked to TUF, offering helping hands. While the grownups mended fences and enclosures, shoring up security around the property, the kids from 4-H sat down to hand-write thank-you notes to the donors who contributed funds. The temporary fence built by the volunteers allowed the farm's remaining livestock to return from off-site locations.

Animal Programs at The Urban Farm

Goats, sheep and rabbits are central to

many TUF programs like field trips, Storybook Farm summer camp, fiber arts, animal husbandry, and 4-H. Nicks described a field trip program called "Literature in Action," where students get a book about an animal and then come to the farm to interact with the animal and spend time in the barn. "Goats and rabbits are perfect for the younger age group. The rabbits are small enough that the kids can hold them. Nigerian goats are very tame and used to kids, and you don't have to worry about them stepping on their toes," he said. "Those animals are really important to the program that we do in terms of education, especially younger education."

Older children particularly reap benefits from programs with the Boer goats, and

TUF hopes to reestablish a herd soon to teach them about the goat life cycle and where food



comes from. "I've actually had middle-school students come out and look at the Boer goat and ask me if it's a dog," said Nicks. Continuing to introduce urban kids to agriculture is

an ongoing mission of the organization, one that depends on maintaining a healthy herd.

Future Plans

In the short term, with the contributions, the Urban Farm is digging in and hiring a contractor to redesign their enclosures so they have fewer gates and a more secure structure. This will include new, eight-foot fences that replace the shorter ones that were breached by the dogs. These fences might feature "coyote rollers"—lengths of PVC pipe on rope—at the top to prevent future incursions.

The organization continues to grow its programs through collaborations with a variety of partners on other projects. The City and County of Denver owns all of the structures on the property and recently agreed to direct \$500,000 to update the old weather station, bringing the building up to modern ADA standards. "That helps us tremendously," said Nicks. An Inspire grant through Great Outdoors Colorado is allowing them to build an urban garden with fences. And two years of work with an architect will bear fruit in the redesign of their aquaponics building—think

greenhouse—featuring a pole and beam design and greatly improved ventilation.

In the long run, the farm would like to build a "birthing barn" to give their animals a safe, quiet, heated shelter in which to give birth. The estimated cost of this barn is \$30,000. When asked, Nicks allowed that anyone contributing that amount would likely get to name the barn. Any takers? Please go to theurbanfarm.org.

org to learn more about The Urban Farm's many animal and agricultural programs, and to make a donation.

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A Pastor, An Imam, and a Rabbi Walk into SpiritCon and...



Left: Keynote speaker, Bishop Karen Oliveto, emphasized the spiritual importance of empathy and diversity in her opening address to SpiritCon participants.

Right: Robin Yasui and her children Elise-Isabella and Marcus Estacio listen to Bishop Oliveto's address.

By Melinda Pearson

With that headline, it may be tempting to look for a punchline—but the act of bringing together Christians, Muslims and Jews to find commonalities and unity is no laughing matter these days. At SpiritCon, the attendees were united in their diversity, said Pastor Eric Smith of Park Hill United Methodist Church. “And,” he added, “we have each other’s backs.”

About 20 speakers and 150 attendees came together on Feb. 4 in Park Hill at the site shared by Park Hill U.M.C. and Temple Micah to learn about one another’s spiritual traditions. Bishop Karen Oliveto, former head pastor of the legendary Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco, gave the keynote address.

Oliveto expressed concerns about an

“empathy deficit in this country,” where empathy is “the capacity to place oneself in another’s shoes.”

Calling for a spirituality that increases empathy everywhere, she also said “the world God created points to the fact that sameness is not sacred. Diversity is a reflection of God’s creativity,” and thus “difference is something not to be shunned but embraced and celebrated.”

The day was filled with talks such as “Guided Meditation,” “Mystic Traditions of Abrahamic Faiths” and “Spirituality of Social Justice: Malcolm, Martin, and the Contemporary Religious Resistance Movements.” Participants could move freely from one to another, reflecting upon connections among the faith traditions represented, learning about spiritual practices and topics. For example, the Rev. Jasper Peters, who led the social justice workshop, urged listeners to “pray with your feet,” encouraging them to use

their spiritual awareness to inform their activism, in the tradition of leaders like the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Organizer and sci-fi buff Cheri Harlan was inspired by Comic Con, the iconic annual conference that brings together fans of comics, movies and science fiction, as well as *The Faith Club*, a book about three women (Christian, Jewish, Muslim), who forge deep bonds through shared exploration of their separate faiths.

Although her planning began over a year ago, it turned out “the event was very timely,” said Harlan, and the audience receptive. “Park Hill has a tradition of being very open to different ethnicities and sexual orientations,” said Harlan. “So it’s not incongruous with the general tenor of our neighborhood.”

In a follow-up conversation with *The Front Porch*, Pastor Smith, Imam Abdur-Rahim Ali, Dr. Carroll A. Watkins Ali, and Rabbi Adam Morris reflected upon

the conference and its significance. The leaders of the different faiths agree they consider themselves non-extremists. “There’s an emotional maturity where you can have a different idea from someone else, call God a different name ... but you still are in relationship, in partnership, in friendship,” said Rabbi Morris. He believes modeling that complexity and maturity is what is needed now. “This is what heals the world,” agreed Dr. Ali. Through educating yourself about religions you don’t know, you challenge assumptions about different faiths, said Pastor Smith. “We are diverse within our own religions.”

SpiritCon was the third in a series of interfaith events coordinated among Park Hill UMC, Temple Micah, and the Northeast Denver Islamic Center. It will be held again next year on February 3.

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What’s life like for you as an LGBTQ high school student?

Editors note:

Just as this article was being completed, the Trump administration announced the withdrawal of federal guidelines that protected transgender students’ right to use bathrooms that correspond to their gender identity. The new approach addresses this as a states’ rights issue rather than a civil rights issue protected by the federal government, as it was under the Obama administration. The Colorado Civil Rights Division in 2013 ruled in favor of transgender students’ rights, so Colorado is one of 17 states that gives transgender students this legal protection.

DPS Superintendent Tom Boasberg responded to the *Front Porch* request for the DPS policy with this statement: “Denver Public Schools will always welcome, support and protect our diverse student body. Supporting the whole child includes making sure all of our students feel safe and respected at school, regardless of their gender identity. DPS will continue our policies and practices of support and equity for all students regardless of their gender identity, as well as immigration status, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, creed or sexual orientation.”

By Anne Hebert

A national survey shows most LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) students have experienced harassment and discrimination in school.¹ What is life like for our local students? Members of Northfield High School’s (NHS) Gender and Sexuality Alliance talked openly and articulately with the *Front Porch* about their experiences.

The club exists to provide support, inclusion and encouragement to everyone who wants to join,” says group president Hunter Swenson. Vice President, Shay Mannik agrees. “Our group is a safe place for us to make friends, support each other and ask

questions. People need to know what exists in order to accept it.” “The group offers a place to “share, talk and be open. It makes me feel a sense of togetherness – that I’m not alone. It is so wonderful and important,” says Kaylea Chidester.

At NHS, about 10 percent of the student body belongs to the student-created Gender and Sexuality Alliance, formerly known as the Gay/Straight Alliance, which has members who identify as gay, straight and everywhere else on the spectrum. The name of the club has changed to more accurately reflect personal identity and group inclusiveness.

“The terms gay or straight really became outdated,” says Nicole Foster, NHS staff facilitator for the group. “The identity spectrum includes gender identity, gender expression and presentation, sex assigned at birth, and sexual and romantic attraction. Certainly, it’s a much broader spectrum than simply gay or straight.” LGBTQIA is the acronym the students use, with IA added to include Intersex, Asexual and Ally.² Foster says with just a 45-minute meeting of their group every two or three weeks, a lot happens in these kids’ lives between meetings.

National educational and medical organizations acknowledge the importance of attending to the physical and emotional needs of transgender and gender nonconforming youth. The American Academy of Pediatrics Section on LGBT Health and Wellness states, “There are many normal variations in gender presentation, gender identification, and sexual orientation,” and their vision calls for inclusion and elimination of health disparities for this population.³

The GLSEN National School Climate Survey found “U.S. middle and high schools remain hostile environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) students.” But their data also offers

Four members of the Gender and Sexuality Alliance share experiences from their lives. Left to right: Caroline Carranza, Shay Mannik, Kaylea Chidester, Hunter Swenson.



evidence that school-based support systems can be vital for helping these and all students thrive. LGBTQ students who experienced harassment and discrimination at school had lower GPA’s, lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression.

At NHS, the group has found a network of support that begins with the school administration. “Principal Amy Bringedahl has made it her priority to provide an environment that encourages diversity in all forms,” says Foster. “She is conscientious about addressing students using correct pronouns and has designated the faculty restrooms as gender neutral facilities for students,” enabling them to choose the most comfortable option.

Caroline Carranza emphasizes the importance of having a network of others who face similar experiences. “Many people have no empathy or understanding because they just don’t worry about things they don’t have to deal with in their own lives. Its reassuring to know that you’re not alone.”

The group affirms that, for a variety of possible reasons, NHS is a much more accepting and inclusive school environment than many. “Perhaps it’s because it’s a pretty new school, or because the students arrived at the same time and weathered a year fraught with administrative turmoil. It’s really hard to pinpoint why,” says Foster. The students agree. “We came in and made new friends togeth-

er,” says Swenson. Carranza points out “kids are much more accepting than you’d think.” Mannik agrees, saying, “There’s a much more relaxed social ranking and fewer cliques at NHS. I think that the individual differences of students make a more accepting environment.”

Swenson, Mannik, Chidester and Carranza are all “out” to their families. Coming out wasn’t easy for any of them. Mannik lived in Georgia before moving to Colorado. “I was afraid to come out because my peers viewed the LGBTQIA community quite differently.” Identifying as non-binary and preferring the pronoun “they,” Mannik felt they had to conform to assigned gender identity there because the environment was less accepting. Adopting a joking manner with their parents made coming out a bit easier. “I remember writing a note to my mom and tossing it to her as I left,” Mannik says. “By laughing and being less serious, my comfort level around coming out was a little better. My parents are accepting,” Mannik asserts.

Swenson says coming out to others was “nerve wracking” and happened in a series of steps. The process has brought the question, “Are you a boy or a girl?” Swenson has found by taking the opportunity to respond with an explanation of gender and identity, most people are accepting and even become comfortable asking additional questions.

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Chidester is a child of older parents. “They really don’t understand the whole thing and my mom is the person I’ve confided in. My dad knows a little from talking to my mom, but we haven’t had a conversation about it. If I’m dating a boy, my parents are happy to talk about that, but they don’t discuss it if I’m dating a girl.”

To achieve their goals of outreach and education, the club sponsors two projects each year. This year they chose to raise funds to attend the Cherry Creek Diversity Conference and support the Rainbow Alley Gay prom. Rainbow Alley, a program at The Center—Advancing LGBT Colorado, is a teen group providing support and a safe space to youth ages 11 to 21. The prom enables teens to attend the event in clothing that best expresses their identity and with a date of their choice.

Attending LGBTQ events offers members of the Gender and Sexuality Alliance the opportunity to gather with others who share their concerns and have fun at the same time. The participants agree that protests should be peaceful and can incorporate a sense of fun into the message. They point out the annual Pride Fest held in the summer. “People who don’t agree with you or your lifestyle can enjoy it because it’s so celebratory. It’s hard not to enjoy something when everyone else is having such a good time,” says Swenson.

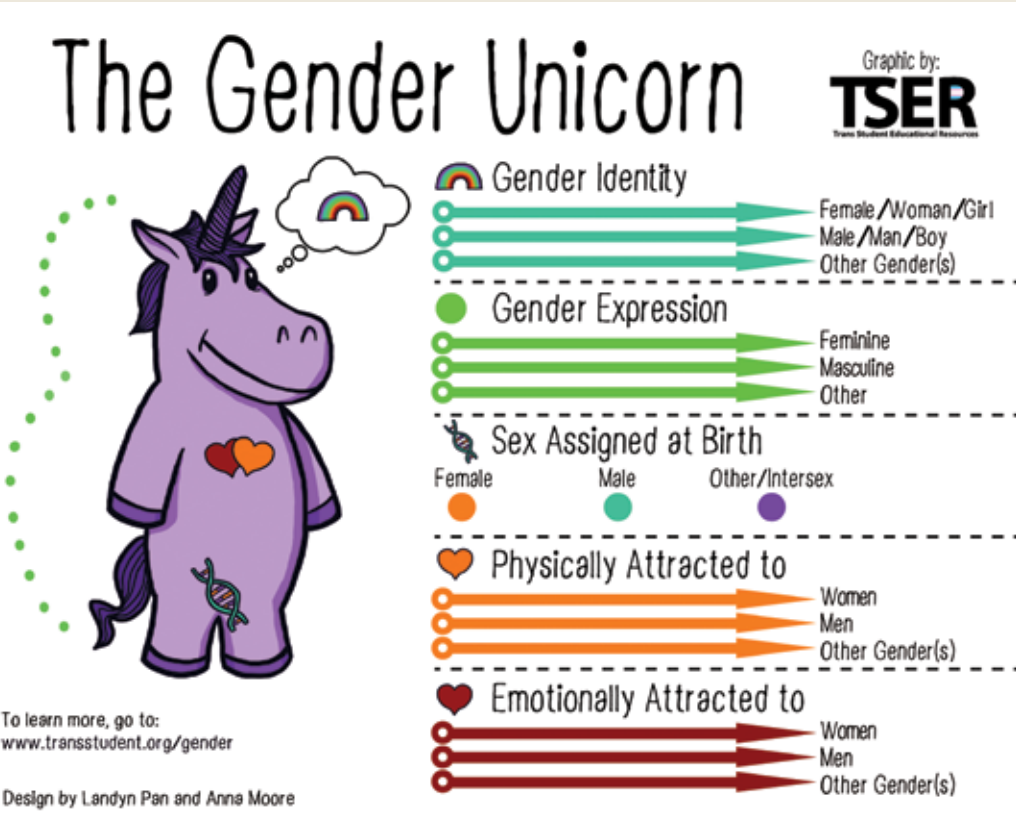
The group unanimously concurs that the current political and social climate in America

has raised their anxiety about discrimination in the future. “So many things can change under this new administration and blatant homophobia makes things far scarier,” says Mannik. Carranza and Chidester say online comments and talking to conservative family members create stress in their lives. Swenson points out that they live in a pretty insulated environment now and wonders what things will be like after they leave NHS. Carranza is clear about what they need to do. “Advocating for ourselves is more important now than it’s ever been.”

¹Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN). “The 2015 National School Climate Survey—The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth in our Nation’s Schools.” www.glsen.org/nscc

²Intersex: Someone whose physical sex characteristics are not categorized as exclusively male or exclusively female.
Asexual: A person who is not attracted to anyone or does not have sexual orientation.
Ally: A person who does not identify as LGBTQIA but supports the rights and safety of those who do.

³American Academy of Pediatrics, Section on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health and Wellness. <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/Committees-Councils-Sections/solgbt/Pages/About.aspx>



The Gender Unicorn, a graphic created by Trans Student Equality Resources (TSER), hangs on the bulletin board in the club’s meeting space, to illustrate the spectrum of gender identity and sexuality. For more information, visit www.transstudent.org

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Denver Takes A Stand



By Carol Roberts

Based on concerns expressed by individuals and organizations in Denver following President Trump's Jan. 28 travel ban, Mayor Michael Hancock gathered the city officials and top law enforcement officers for a community information session clarifying Denver's policies. Place Bridge Academy, which works with newcomer immigrant and refugee students, offered their 650-seat auditorium—and concerned community members nearly filled it. Hancock's position, which received loud approval from the audience, was clear from the start, "We recognize that President Trump's actions have wreaked havoc on this nation. We recognize that President Trump's actions are void of acknowledging the humanity of the people he was talking about. The reason we're here today is you're worthy and you matter. And in Denver we'll remain an open and inclusive and a city of opportunity."

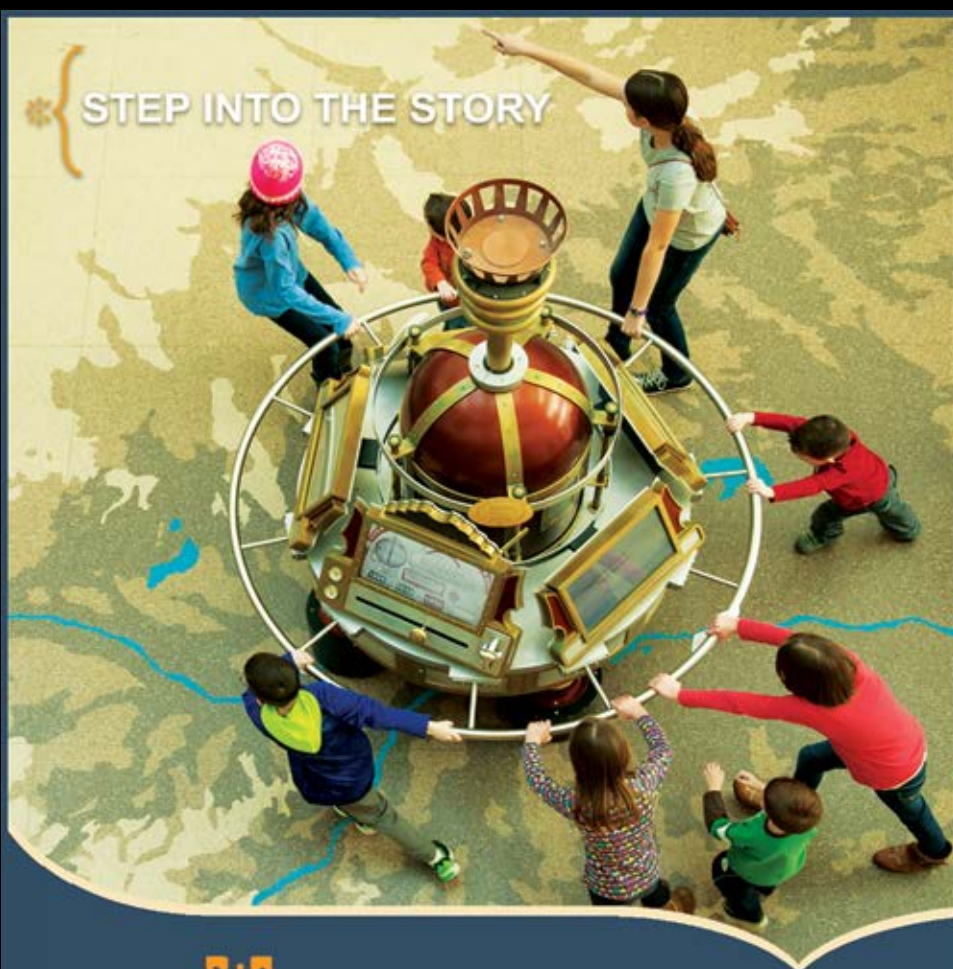


Denver Sheriff Patrick Firman

"We will not become immigration law enforcement officers. Our officers will continue to serve and protect all residents of Denver regardless of where you come from. You're in Denver now."

Acting U.S. Attorney Bob Troyer, in attendance with his wife and seven or eight volunteers from his staff (and some of their spouses), clarified the role of the U.S. attorneys' 200-person office in Colorado: U.S. attorneys follow the law to protect people and prosecute those who hurt them under federal crime laws. For victims of a hate crime or a civil rights violation, it doesn't matter if they are a citizen. Everyone in this country has rights under the constitution and civil liberties protection that are enforced by the U.S. attorney's office.

Troyer clarified that the U.S. attorney's office is not involved in immigration policy and does not assist in implementing deportation. But he strongly made the point that U.S. attorneys can only provide assistance and prosecute cases they know about—and they were there to answer individual questions after the group session.



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on Immigrant Rights and Policies

On Feb. 11 Mayor Hancock held a community meeting to clearly state Denver's position in the wake of the president's travel ban. Approximately 500 people attended the meeting held at Place Bridge Academy, a DPS school that serves newly arrived refugees and immigrants.

View video at FrontPorchStapleton.com



Police Chief Robert White followed up on Troyer's point that people need to communicate with law enforcement in order for them to do their jobs. "Denver police department does not do ICE work and has not done ICE work since Trump has been president. We do not detain or question individuals about their status. From a police perspective, it does not matter to us whether you're documented or undocumented or a citizen or not. Everyone who is living or traveling in Denver is treated the exact same—and we do not work hand in glove with the federal government for deportation."



Denver Police Chief Robert White

ACLU Legal Director Mark Silverstein pointed out that not only does local law enforcement not have to participate in immigration enforcement, they, in fact don't have the authority to arrest and enforce immigration laws. He went on to explain, however, that

President Trump has changed the criteria for deportation. Previously people with serious legal convictions or people with a history of multiple convictions for less serious offenses were prioritized. "That has changed. New priorities include just about everyone. Just about all the 11 million without legal status in this country."

Silverstein said President Trump has ordered a return to the "secure communities program" in which information on any arrest, even for the most minor offense, went to ICE. If ICE was interested in that person, they sent a detainer to the local sheriff. When the person was going to be released, the detainer asked sheriffs to keep holding the person to give ICE time to make the pickup. "Local law enforcement was working hand in glove with the deportation machinery of the federal government, which made people afraid to call the police when they needed help," said Silverstein.



Qusair Mohamedbhai, legal counsel for Colorado Muslim Society

Three years ago the ACLU persuaded every sheriff in Colorado not to comply with immigration detainers, the first

state in the country to cease cooperation with the secure communities program. Silverman says Sheriff Firman is "holding fast to that." Sheriff Firman said they are doing what they have to do legally but nothing more than that. He explained that anyone can call and ask when someone will be released and they give that information to all callers.

Will federal funds be withheld from Denver as a result of having sanctuary city policies? City Attorney Kristen Bronson said her office has taken a very close look at President Trump's executive orders and they do not believe Denver is in violation and can have federal funds taken away. "If the federal government seeks to try to deny grants or take away federal funding based on the current executive orders as they're drafted, we'll file a lawsuit and fight that."

Colorado receives about 2,000 refugees a year, with 25% of those placed in Denver. Denver's Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs works with the newcomers on citizenship and provides referrals to non-profits and other government agencies. Jamie Torres, director of that office, says they meet the newcomers halfway, expecting the newcomers will do their part to get to know the commu-

nity and make the integration process work.

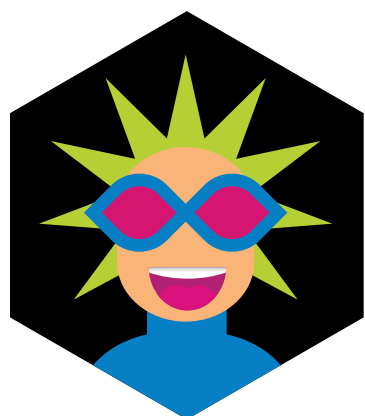
What can the community do to help? Qusair Mohamedbhai, legal counsel for the Colorado Muslim Society says fear and paranoia about Muslims and refugees is based on lack of knowledge. He suggests visiting a mosque and getting to know your Muslim neighbors. "And the next time you hear rhetoric that is hateful against Muslims, challenge it based on your own personal experiences with the Muslims in your community."

The ACLU trains volunteer lawyers, who can sign up using a form on their website at ACLU-CO.org

Citizens can contact Jamie Torres to learn ways they can help: jamie.torres@denvergov.org or 720-913-8471.

As the event ended, DPS School Board member Barbara O'Brien announced the board was working on a resolution making clear teachers do not cooperate with ICE. The resolution, passed on February 16, says immigration law enforcement activities at schools interfere with students' constitutional rights and states DPS will not collect information on students' immigration status and will not provide access to students without a valid search warrant.

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Tires Slashed on 54 Vehicles —Neighbors Step In

By Melinda Pearson

In four separate incidents from Dec. 31 through Feb. 7, numerous residents of the Northfield Apartments, an income-qualified rental complex in Conservatory Green, had their tires slashed. In total, 54 vehicles in the parking lot and surrounding streets were vandalized by an unknown suspect(s), with some vehicles damaged more than once.

"It's been very challenging for our residents," said Brandi Stevenson, the on-site Healthy Homes Healthy Living program officer, noting there is a lot of emotion and stress when people can't get to work or get groceries due to transportation problems.

In response, Conservatory Green resident Marcus Tuepker started a Go-FundMe campaign to raise money for the repair or replacement of their tires.

"I walk to Target almost every day, and I walked by the apartment complex and saw all the flat tires and was shocked by it," said Tuepker. When he went to the complex to offer his help, he found a tow truck driver already assisting, but it became clear that funds to replace the tires were needed, "so it just seemed like the natural next step to see if we could raise the money."

Over the course of about five days, the campaign raised \$3,440 (after fees, \$3,138.43), from nearly 100 people, most of them immediate neighbors. Tuepker noted there was an uptick in outside

donations after a poorly researched article in *Westword* criticized the fundraising efforts. The article poked fun at Stapleton, incorrectly assuming that the funding campaign involved affluent neighbors contributing to other affluent neighbors. The silver lining was that the blowback on social media from the inaccurate *Westword* article resulted in greater interest in the incident and perhaps more donations.

Northeast Denver Housing Center and Ross Management, who manage the complex, have decided to match the funds raised by the community campaign, bringing the total to \$6,276.86. The funds were distributed based on how many tires each had to replace. The 31 residents who had tires slashed once each received \$114.12, for example, while the unfortunate one whose tires were slashed four times received \$456.48, with proportional amounts for the 16 who experienced two slashings and the seven who were slashed three times.

Stevenson, who helped coordinate the disbursements, is grateful for the efforts of Tuepker and the surrounding community, not only for the financial assistance but for "bridging the gap" between residents and their new neighborhood.

Councilman Herndon's office helped facilitate the repair of street lighting by Xcel, which will better illuminate the parking areas. Lt. Ian Culverhouse says the police have been investigating the incidents but to date have not identified any suspects. Stevenson said the complex has installed additional surveillance measures and is just "praying another incident doesn't happen."

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June 2017



Tower Renovation Bigger than Expected but Moving Along

By Melinda Pearson

Despite the “skeletal” look of the old airport control tower, construction is now proceeding apace, according to Robert Thompson, founder and CEO of Punch Bowl Social. “We had a lot more demolition that was required on the project than was initially anticipated,” said Thompson. “The city deemed the floors structurally unstable for our use and required we demo out the floors.” Thus,

the striking appearance of the building, which appears to be wholly supported by vertical beams as of this writing. “It would have been immeasurably more simple to have leveled the entire building and start over,” said Thompson, “but we took this assignment very seriously when the city asked us to do it ... this was an opportunity for us to give back to Denver and Colorado.” Part of the challenge of the project has been to juxtapose the old and the new, a



Second floor



Third floor
Punch Bowl Offices

In order to preserve the historic control tower structure while adhering to city code, the construction crew for Punch Bowl Social has had to demolish most of the floors and parts of the facade. Punch bowl offices are on the third floor. The first and second floors are open to the public; opening is expected late June or early July.

excitement of the surrounding community. “My kids think I’m a celebrity,” said Thompson, a Lowry resident who is regularly approached at the grocery store by neighbors eager to know when Punch Bowl Social will open.

And as a family man, Thompson appreciates the needs of the Stapleton neighborhood. “It’s rowdy at a Punch Bowl at brunch, it’s loud,” says Thompson. “If you have a couple of loud kids like mine—I have a 3½-year-old and an 18-month-old—you can’t have a calm meal, ever.” He anticipates that many local families will be drawn to the entertainment complex during the day and early evening hours, when the hubbub of Punch Bowl Social will drown out the noise of their children. Plans also include a 14,000-square-foot outdoor activity area, with bocce, hopscotch and other games for kids and an outdoor “flex space” that can host weddings and rehearsal dinners for hipster millennials or anyone else who fancies a party under the iconic control tower, with a mountain view and the ambient sound of bowling balls crashing into pins amid the peals of children.



Ground floor
Project Manager Dan Irvin explains that many of the supporting posts needed to be strengthened with new steel panels.

“distinctive but complementary” arrangement that will preserve the structure of the old control tower while adding 5,000 square feet of modern space to the base of the building. The upside of the continuing demolition is that the nagging graffiti problem is remedied on an ongoing basis. The additional work has been factored into the plans and the budget, with the restaurant/bowling alley/bar slated to open by the end of June or early July, said Thompson, much to the

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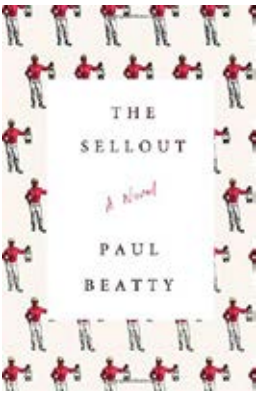
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The Book Worm

Book reviews by librarians at the Park Hill Branch,
Denver Public Library

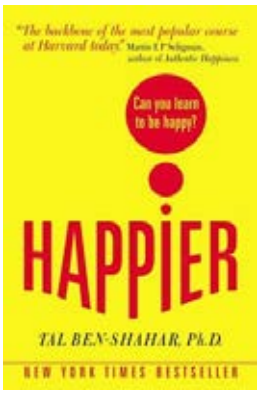


ADULT FICTION

The Sellout

By Paul Beatty

Punctuated by blistering satire, Paul Beatty's novel *The Sellout* is the story of an unnamed, pot-smoking urban farmer in Los Angeles who, by a tragic series of events, becomes the owner of a willing slave. The ensuing court case ends up going all the way to the Supreme Court. With this very prescient social commentary, Beatty became the first American to win the Man Booker Prize since its inception in 1969. *The Sellout* is hilarious and at times feels like the best stand-up from Dave Chappelle, Richard Pryor or Chris Rock.



ADULT NON- FICTION

Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfillment

By Tal Ben-Shahar

Everyone can be happier. Happiness is focusing on enjoying the journey of life, setting meaningful challenges for yourself and treasuring your loved ones. Tal Ben-Shahar offers "Time-In" sections for deeper reflection as well as more in-depth exercises to explore your thoughts as they arise during the reading. Ben-Shahar's examples have charming names like the hamburger principle, the lasagna principle, the drowning model and the lovemaking model. This book is recommended for anyone who is interested in the meaning of happiness, the role of happiness in our lives and ways to increase it. If you are interested in doing Experiments in Happiness, be sure to check out the program series at the library in March on Friday afternoons.



YOUNG ADULT FICTION

The Sun Is Also a Star

By Nicola Yoon

You never know what your day will hold. With scant hours to prevent her family's deportation to Jamaica, Natasha unexpectedly meets and falls in love with Daniel, a young man striving not to let his own immigrant parents down. Alternating perspectives from each of them give the novel a wide appeal and you will fall in love with the characters as they fall in love with each other. Both bittersweet and hopeful, the lyrical writing style weaves a romantic and moving tale that will especially appeal to fans of *Eleanor & Park* by Rainbow Rowell.

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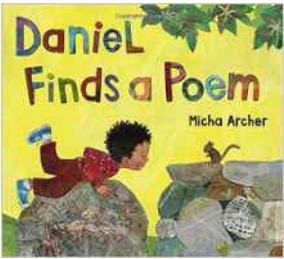
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CHILDREN'S FICTION

Daniel Finds a Poem

By Micha Archer

This story begins with Daniel noticing a sign in the park announcing a Poetry in the Park event on Sunday. Daniel wonders, "What is poetry?" Each day of the week he asks a different animal what poetry is and receives a descriptive reply. Each animal's idea of poetry is different than the others, but all are beautiful. Spider says that poetry is "morning dew when it glistens." Squirrel, says it is "when crisp leaves crunch." By Sunday Daniel combines his animal friends' interpretations of poetry and creates a lovely poem. A beautiful book that shows that poetry is all around you. Recommended for preschool through second grade.

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IMAX—Dream Big: Engineering Our World

By Carol Roberts

The new IMAX movie, *Dream Big: Engineering Our World* is entertaining, educational and inspiring for all ages—and the 3D effects are icing on the cake. The movie is about engineers and aspiring engineers who start with nothing and create something, large or small, that improves people's lives.

In the realm of big engineering projects, viewers learn the secret ingredient used to build the Great Wall in China that explains why so much of it is still standing today. And what solution did engineers come up with to be sure the tallest building in China could withstand the high winds in typhoons? That building, the Shanghai Tower, has 128 stories and houses 16,000 people.

The smaller engineering projects, in their own ways, are just as impressive and focus on broadening engineering's appeal to girls and minorities who might not have considered it as a profession.



Left: CU Engineering graduate and executive director of Bridges to Prosperity Avery Bang speaks at the opening of *Dream Big*.



Determined robotics club students from a Phoenix high school with minimal funding go head to head with MIT and other colleges in an underwater competition. Through a lot of hard work and innovative use of cheap materials they make a clunky looking but functional robot they name Stinky. But in the end it wasn't their technical engineering

Movie photos courtesy of © American Society of Civil Engineers



Scenes from the IMAX movie, *Dream Big*. Top: Workers near the completion of the bridge. Left: School children who previously had to walk through the river to get to school, happily cross the bridge. Right: Avery Bang interacts with local residents.

skills that solved a problem at the competition, it was out-of-the-box thinking that led them to a cheap drug store product to plug a leak and get their robot functioning again.

CU Engineering graduate Avery Bang is featured in the movie for her work on engineering projects in remote places around the world that have a big impact improving lives. Bang is executive director of Bridges to Prosperity, which built a bridge in Haiti that connects children to a school and residents to a hospital. She spoke at the opening night of *Dream Big*, reiterating the lesson the Phoenix robotics students learned: the engineering skills may be the least challenging part, the hard part is figuring out how the project can be done with the people and resources available. Bang's challenges were training local workers, implementing safety standards, and finding materials strong enough to build a safe bridge over a rushing river, but light enough to be carried by local people to a remote location.

Dream Big is currently showing at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science Phipps IMAX theater.



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Making Colfax “A Walkable Main Street” *and* An Effi

Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of three articles prepared by the Front Porch on transit-oriented development (TOD) sites in NE Denver.

By John Fernandez

Transit oriented development (TOD) along Colfax is an entirely different proposition than what is found at the Fitzsimons Parkway light rail or Central Park commuter rail stations. For starters, the corridor is not a newly developing area. It hosts 150,000 of Denver's 680,000 residents, it is the most heavily used bus route in the RTD system, and there isn't much vacant land available. Increasing capacity and creating a successful TOD along Colfax will be a gradual multi-pronged process.

As transit service improves on Colfax between downtown and the Anschutz Fitzsimons campus, redevelopment pressure will increase.

With that pressure will come negatives as well as positives. Greater densities and mix of uses can displace some residents and small businesses as property values and rents increase.

Beginning in April, Denver is embarking on a federally funded “TOD Implementation Plan” to identify infrastructure needs that would help make Colfax a “walkable main street.” TOD, the term used to describe dense, walkable development around high-frequency transit stations, is a key element of the city's economic development strategy. The new plan will develop strategies to avoid displacement while encouraging new investment in the area. The \$1.8 million project is expected to take 18 to 24 months.

Another step toward improving transit on Colfax, the 15L Route Improvements Project, is nearing the end of its preliminary design phase. This RTD project aims to improve the rider

experience and accelerate bus travel times on the 15 Limited (the high-frequency bus service that runs on Colfax between Broadway and I-225) with the following physical and operational improvements:

- New bus shelters that are larger, more attractive, lighted and equipped with security cameras.
- More trash cans and benches.
- Bus bulbs (curb extensions) at some stops providing more waiting space for passengers and speeding up bus operations.



Construction is expected to start in 2018 on the 15L Route Improvements Project that will include new larger, more attractive bus shelters.

- Queue bypass lanes at four locations where the bus typically gets delayed by congestion (the bus can share a right turn-only lane).
- Transit signal priority (TSP) at many of the Denver intersections enabling the bus to get an earlier or longer “green” signal.

Project manager Lacy Bell of RTD says the 15L project has an \$11 million budget and construction is expected to begin in 2018.

Bell says all of the planned improvements will be compatible with what is expected to be the following phase in Colfax mass transit enhancements: bus rapid transit (BRT). A joint Denver-Aurora study, began with a simple but daunting problem statement: how does this high-frequency bus corridor accommodate a 20 to 30 percent increase in person trips by 2025 without expanding the roadway?

Having examined everything from streetcars to monorails, Denver settled on BRT that runs the length of the corridor and has exclusive lanes between Broadway and Syracuse during the extended morning and afternoon rush hours. BRT features include high-frequency (every five minutes), low-level boarding, real-time bus arrival information and the ability to purchase tickets before boarding, greatly reducing bus “dwell” time at the curb.

Denver is working on an application for federal funds to support the implementation of such a BRT project. Currently unanswered questions about BRT are whether Denver or



Colfax is shown above as it looks now and at right with exclusive lanes for bus rapid transit. Denver is working on an application for federal funds to support the implementation of this project. The source of \$50 million in matching funds from Denver is unknown at this time.

RTD would operate this \$135 million system and the source of funds for a Denver match of \$50 million or more.

Denver's TOD manager, Chris Nevitt, believes the TOD Implementation Plan “would definitely help Denver get into a position to receive federal funds for the BRT,” but he emphasizes it is not for planning infrastructure. It is to harmonize land use, economic development and infrastructure plans and address impacts on low-income residents and low-revenue businesses that might be displaced.

One reason Denver decided to undertake



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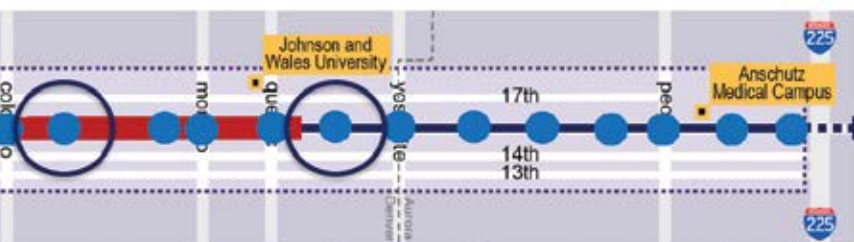


this planning project stems from developers' perception of BRT as compared with rail transit. Quoting from Denver's application to the Federal Transit Administration: "The East Colfax Corridor is particularly important to conduct comprehensive TOD planning because, unlike rail projects, empirical evidence shows that BRT does not attract large scale TOD in the same way as light rail. Convincing developers to invest in TOD projects at station areas along Colfax will take careful planning and investment of

significant resources by Denver to create the market for TOD."

Just as improvements to transit service are being made step by step, redevelopment near transit stops along Colfax will occur incrementally.

Visit FrontPorchStapleton.com to read the prior two TOD articles: "A Line Train Stimulates Central Park TOD" (December 2016) and "R Line Bringing Development to Fitzsimons" (November 2016).



The Bus Rapid Transit corridor will run from the Auraria campus downtown to the Anschutz Medical Campus.



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Each month, the Indie Prof reviews a current film in the theater and second film or series available on DVD or instant-streaming service. For his film choice this month, he highlights multiple Oscar-nominated documentary shorts.

Follow "Indie Prof" on Facebook for updates about film events and more reviews.

Oscar-Nominated Documentary Shorts (2016)

Oscar season is one of my favorite times of the year, and not because of the actual ceremonies. My favorite part is watching the short programs on local screens: the Oscar-nominated short animated films, live-action films, and documentaries. The documentaries are always particularly good, and they've produced two Academy Awards for Denver filmmakers: Donna Dewey for *A Story of Healing* in 1998 and Daniel Junge for *Saving Face* in 2013. I learn a lot from these films every year, and this year is no different. Three of the five films tell stories about Syria, one tells the story of a Holocaust survivor's violin, and the other follows a doctor who cares for terminally ill patients. Yes, the topics are serious, but they get to the heart of cinema's ability to move us. What follows is a short description of each.

Joe's Violin is directed by Kahane Cooperman and Raphaella Neihausen and tells the story of a Holocaust survivor, the violin he donated to an instrument drive on a radio station, and the Bronx girl who lands the violin. Eventually, the girl learns to play



Joe's Violin

a graveyard for refugees escaping the horrors of Syria, and the film chronicles the refugees as well as the hardships faced by the Coast Guard.

Extremis is directed by Dan Krauss and it follows Dr. Jessica Zitter, a palliative care doctor as she moves from patient to patient and one uncomfortable conversation to another. Much like the other shorts, this one in particular would have benefitted from a longer format—although watching it would have been that much more heart-wrenching.

Watani: My Homeland is directed by Marcel Mettelsiefen and follows a Syrian widow over a three-year period as she leaves her homeland to find a better life for her children.

a song Joe's mother used to sing to him, and well, just have the tissues handy.

The White Helmets is directed by Joanna Natasegara and follows volunteer rescue workers who try to save

victims of the strife in Syria and Turkey. It is quite remarkable to hear/see everyone's story in this film—both the volunteers who risk their own lives as well as the heartbreaking stories of those they save.

4.1 Miles is directed by Daphne Matziaraki and is focused on a Greek Coast Guard ship and its commander patrolling the seas off the coast of Lesbos. The waters have been

It rounds out a stellar group of films.

The winner of the category is almost irrelevant; all of the films are deserving, but even more importantly, all are worthy subjects and outstanding works of art.

Unfortunately, the Oscar Short Docs will be playing at the Sie Film Center only through March 2. After that, it will be available on Shorts HD Channel. No release dates for Amazon and iTunes have been given.

Sneaky Pete (Amazon)

The trend of excellent original programming on cable networks is a phenomenon in its infancy. We are going to see a glut of new programming from every direction in the coming months and years, and sorting through them/finding them will be difficult. I will focus on what I call "cinematic TV," those shows that most resemble the wonderful art of the cinema in both its production values and in story/acting. One of the better shows to grace the small screen is *Sneaky Pete*, an Amazon original series. It has all the elements of a great film.

In the pilot we meet Marcus Josipovich (Giovanni Ribisi), a prison inmate who is about to be released. His roommate, Pete, is a prodigious talker who has regaled Marcus with stories of his youth and his family. Upon his release, Marcus finds that he cannot return to his NYC home because a mobster is out to get him (to settle a past debt). Marcus decides to hide in plain sight, assuming the identity of his former cellmate Pete, and integrating himself into Pete's estranged family. While Marcus thinks he will hide out for a short time in rural Connecticut, he finds his new life to be more than he bargained for.



This is a well-written, professionally produced, and engaging series that is dominated by the acting. Ribisi is fantastic, and he carries the series the way most other protagonists of cinematic TV only wish they could. The secondary characters are also very strong, making the cast one of the best ensembles on TV. If *Sneaky Pete* echoes another recent show with an excellent ensemble cast, *Breaking Bad*, there is good reason for that. Bryan Cranston is one of the creators of the show, and he does a turn as the Mafia boss out to get Marcus/Pete in the first season. Cranston adds to the talented ensemble and brings a certain gravitas to the part. The total package works in interesting ways, and it is one of those shows that begs for the binge.



Sneaky Pete

You will like this if you enjoyed *Breaking Bad*, *Rectify*, and/or *Goliath*.

Season One now available on Amazon Prime.

Vincent Piturro, Ph.D., is an associate professor of Cinema Studies at Metropolitan State University of Denver. He can be reached at vpiturro@msudenver.com.



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Just the Facts

The Hardest Stuff in Colorado

by James Hagadorn



Susie Moss and James Hagadorn look at Colorado fancy diamonds, shown above.

Under the grubby soils of northern Colorado lies the nation's biggest diamond deposit. Its crystalline bounty was almost found by accident. In the late 1960s, Colorado State University geologists were studying some rather unusual, crumbly rocks northwest of Ft. Collins. These drab-green exposures were notable because burrowing animals liked to tunnel through them and because only certain types of trees and bushes thrived atop them. The rocks also contained a variety of "indicator" minerals that tend to form under high temperature, high-pressure conditions that prevail deep in the earth. The geologists mapped the distribution of these rocks and found they originally formed in a series of funnel-shaped volcanic pipes. The worn-down tops of the "kimberlite" pipes—named after Kimberly, South Africa, where they are abundant—are visible from outer space. They extend from southern Wyoming all the way down to the People's Republic of Boulder. A decade or so after their discovery, a student was grinding down samples of these rocks so they could be examined under the microscope. They made an astounding observation. Rather than the rocks being ground down by the polishing grits and plate, the rocks were etching grooves into the polishing plate. The likely culprit? The hardest mineral in the world. Analysis of the wafer-thin rock samples by the professor down the hall provided confirmation. Diamonds! Such diamonds are birthed a hundred miles beneath North America, as extremely high-pressure conditions force carbon atoms to glue together in nearly indestructible honeycomb-like networks. Such crystals are incredibly rigid, resistant to breakage and brought to Earth's surface by the deepest of volcanoes. These minerals formed hundreds of millions to billions of years ago when North America was a wee youngster. Thus, they tell us about what Earth was like long before forests towered or dinosaurs lumbered. Most of Colorado's diamonds don't look

anything like those that a jeweler might facet. Rather, they're small crystals that have holes like Swiss cheese or that have diverse shapes like triangles, cubes, and 12-sided dodecahedrons. They come in a rainbow of unusual colors including purple and lime green, and often contain microscopic blebs of liquid or other unknown gunk. These oddball crystals have recently become a treasure trove of untold scientific information. For example, new analytical techniques allow us to identify the gunk inside these crystals and use its chemistry to understand how our planet evolved. Scientists, myself included, have been leveraging museum collections of these diamonds to understand how our continents and major mountain ranges formed and even to learn where our planet's water came from (it comes from rocks, not comets). By knowing how and where diamonds like these are formed, we can better predict where future diamond deposits may be found. Some of them might bear incredible beauties. Like the 16-carat yellow diamond found in Colorado's kimberlites, which was the largest cut diamond ever from an American mine. No doubt there are more in the ground—both here and in Wyoming—just waiting to be discovered. Though most people think of diamonds as being used in engagement rings, they also have important industrial uses as abrasives and in cutting or grinding applications. Industrial diamonds are typically tiny and are straightforward to synthesize in the lab. As a result, most of the world's diamonds are not on rings but are synthetic diamonds embedded in drill bits, used as polishing powders, or lining the edge of saw blades. If you don't have time to hike out to Colorado's kimberlite deposits to see tiny diamonds in person, check your garage—you probably have your very own mini-industrial "diamond" collection! James Hagadorn, Ph.D., is a scientist at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. Suggestions and comments are welcome at jwhagadorn@dmns.org.

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Sold | Jody E. Donley

2733 Havana St \$670,000

4 4 3 2,745 ft²



This beautifully classic brick-clad home has all 4 bedrooms on the upper level, a main-level study and a gourmet kitchen. Ride bikes to upcoming Eastbridge Town Center and have room to store them in the 3-car garage.

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DENVER METRO EVENTS

Through 3/5—Denver Restaurant Week. 200+ restaurants offer multicourse meals for special pricing. See website for menus/pricing. www.denverrestaurantweek.com

3/3 Friday—First Friday Art Walks. Santa Fe Arts District, Tennyson Art Walk, River North (RiNo) Art District, Golden Triangle Museum, Navajo Street Art District. www.denver.org/things-to-do/denver-arts-culture/denver-art-districts

3/4 to 3/5—Rocky Mountain Train Show. Denver Mart, 10am-4pm. Adults and kids 12 and up \$9. Under 12, scouts in uniform and active duty with military ID Free. Admission good both days. 451 E. 58th Ave. www.rockymountaintrainshow.com

3/5 Sunday—Denver Young Artists Orchestra, Stories in Music: 2017 DYAO Gala. Dinner and silent auction, 5-8pm, Wellshire Inn. Dinner/dessert tickets \$105, dessert only \$20. www.dyao.org

3/7 Tuesday—The Denveright Process: How to Create the City We Want. 5:30pm coffee and networking, 6pm presentation. Montview Presbyterian Church, McCollum Room, 1980 Montview Blvd. www.lwv.org

3/10 to 3/12—Rocky Mountain Horse Expo. National Western Complex. Tickets from \$10. www.coloradohorsecouncil.com

3/11 Saturday—Meet Molly Brown Tea. Molly Brown House, sittings 11am and 1pm. Reservations required, \$24/members and children, \$26 nonmembers. www.mollybrown.org

3/11 Saturday—St. Patrick's Day Parade. Largest St. Patrick's Day Parade West of Mississippi. www.denverstpatrikscdayparade.com

3/12 Sunday—Denver Brass: Brass and Bagpipes Returns to Its Roots. Tickets \$22-\$44, Newman Center for Performing Arts, DU Campus. www.denverbrass.org

3/16 Thursday—Harlem Globetrotters. 7pm. 1st Bank Center, Broomfield. Repeats **3/18 Saturday** at Pepsi Center, downtown Denver. www.harlemglobetrotters.com

3/17 to 3/19—Denver Brass Presents Brass and Bagpipes: Celtic Fling! Tickets \$22-\$44. Newman Center for Performing Arts, DU Campus. www.denverbrass.org

3/17 to 3/19—Denver Home Show. National Western Complex. 400 experts for renovation ideas. Plus, Tiny Home Village for trends in small space living. On 3/17, military and First Responders in uniform or valid ID free. <http://homeshowdenver.com>

3/19 Sunday—League of Women Voters Women to Watch. 2-4pm. Montview Presbyterian Church. Honor 13 women who have faced significant challenges. www.lwv.org

3/24 to 3/26—42nd Annual Denver March Pow Wow. Denver Coliseum. www.denvermarchpowwow.org

4/3 Monday—League of Women Voters Education Briefing. 5:30 pm. How to get the schools our children deserve. Montview Presbyterian Church, McCollum Rm., 1980 Montview Blvd. www.lwv.org

4/4 to 4/9—6th Annual Women + Film Festival. Presented by Denver Film Society. www.denverfilm.org

4/5 to 4/9—Denver Auto Show.

Free-\$12. Colorado Convention Center, 700 14th St. www.paragonexpo.com

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

3/5 Sunday—That Dam Run. 5K and half marathon, Cherry Creek Dam Rd. 9am. www.rundenverseries.com

3/12 Sunday—Running of the Green Lucky 7K and Walk. Benefits Volunteers of America. LoDo. Registration begins 7am. www.rotg.org

3/18 Saturday—Lucky Laces 5K/10K. City Park, 9am. www.featon-thestreet.com

KIDS AND FAMILIES

3/2 to 3/30—Star K Kids. Thursdays 9:30 and 11am; kids 5 and under. Morrison Nature Center, 16002 E. Smith Rd., Aurora. www.auroragov.org/nature

3/2 to 4/30—Denver Puppet Theater. The Emperor's New Clothes. www.denverpuppettheater.com

3/4 Saturday—Home Depot Kids Workshop. 9am-12pm. FREE how-to clinics first Sat. monthly, ages 5-12. Get Home Depot apron, wooden project and project pin. Metro-area Home Depot stores. www.homedepot.com

3/5 Sunday—Junior Rangers. Ages 6-12, 1:30-3pm. Learn about plants/animals of Star K Ranch. RSVP required, 303.326.8650. www.aurora.gov/nature

3/7 to 3/28—Tuesdays in March Four Mile Historic Park Small Set-tlers. Ages 2-5 accompanied by parent/caregiver. 9-10am. \$5/child adults free, members free. 715 S. Forest St. Advance register: 720.865.0814 or education@fourmilepark.org www.fourmilepark.org

3/7 to 3/28—Little Wings Club. Tuesdays in March, 11am-11:45. Kids 11 and under. Activities, stories, crafts for kids and their adults. Free with admission. www.wingsmuseum.org

3/10 Friday—Four Mile Historic Park Hay Bales and Tall Tales. 12-1pm. Free with admission. 715 S. Forest St. www.fourmilepark.org

3/11 Saturday—Cockpit Demo Day. Wings Over the Rockies Museum, Lowry. www.wingsmuseum.org

3/11 to 3/25—Lowe's Build and Grow Workshops. Bring kids to Lowe's stores to build FREE wood project: Monthly, 2nd and 4th Saturdays. Free apron, goggles, project-themed patch, merit certificate on completion. 10am. www.lowesbuildandgrow.com

3/18 Saturday—Knights Nite-Parents Night Out. Arts/crafts, dodgeball, games, dinner provided for kids ages 7+ while parents enjoy night out. Dropoff 5:30, pickup 8:30. DSST Stapleton High School, \$20 1kid/\$30 2 kids/\$35 family. Advance register: dsst-service-learning.squarespace.com. Same day register \$25. Supports DSST service learning.

3/18 Saturday—Young Eagles Flight Experience. 3rd Saturday of month, experience thrill of flight with Colorado pilot at Centennial Airport. 8am-12 pm. Ages 8-17. Register: www.wingsmuseum.org

3/19 Sunday—Ballet Ariel Presents A Little Cinderella. Returns for one show only. Perfect short, story ballet. 3pm. D.L. Parsons Theatre at Northglenn Rec Center, 11801 Community Center Dr., Northglenn. Tickets: www.balletariel.org or 303.945.4388. www.balletariel.org

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LOCAL EVENTS

LECTURES AND CLASSES

3/7 Tuesday—Active Minds (Free)—The National Parks. 10:15-11:15am. Jewish Community Center, 350 S Dahlia St. 303.316.6359. www.ActiveMinds.com

3/7 Tuesday—Lowry Speaker Series Presents “An Evening with Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald: Up Close and Personal with Some Endangered Species.” 7-8:30pm, Bishop Machebeuf High School, 458 Uinta Way (Lowry). Free. No reservations needed. Full-time veterinarian, comedian and 11 seasons on Animal Planet TV. Info: Karen House at 303.757.7658.

3/9 Thursday—Active Minds (Free)—Peace in Northern Ireland. 6:45-7:45pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. 720.865.0325. www.ActiveMinds.com

3/11 Saturday—Active Minds (Free)—Women of Denver History. 1-2pm. Denver Central Library, 10 W 14th Ave P'kway. 720.85.1111. www.ActiveMinds.com

3/11 Saturday—Italian for Travelers. 8-hour, 3-week course for beginners interested in basic communication skills before leaving for Italy. Italian Institute. 3/11-3/25 9-11:40 a.m. Course materials included. Enroll: www.italianinstitute.com, 303.733.4335. Cost: \$199. <http://italianinstitute.com>

3/14 Tuesday—Active Minds (Free)—Music of Aaron Copeland and the American West. 12:30-1:30 pm. Tattered Cover, 2526 E. Colfax. 303.322.7727. www.ActiveMinds.com

3/23 Thursday—Active Minds (Free)—The Soviet Union: The Road After Collapse. 6:45-7:45pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. 720.865.0325. www.ActiveMinds.com

3/28 Tuesday—Active Minds (Free)—The Story of Salt. 5-6pm. Tattered Cover, 2526 E. Colfax, 303.322.7727. www.ActiveMinds.com

MUSEUMS—DENVER ART MUSEUM

Through 4/2—Star Wars and The Power of Costume. Denver Art Museum features original costumes from the movies. Exhibit ticket required. www.denverartmuseum.org

Through 5/28—Shock Wave: Japanese Fashion Design, 1980-90s. View gorgeous works of Japanese designers who started fashion revolution in Paris in 1980s-90s. www.denverartmuseum.org, <http://denverartmuseum.org/exhibitions/shock-wave>

Through 8/31—Then, Now, Next: Evolution of an Architectural Icon. Trace North Building's history and evolution. Included in price of general admission. Free for youth 18 and under. www.denverartmuseum.org, <http://denverartmuseum.org/exhibitions/then-now-next-evolution-architectural-icon>

3/24 Friday—Denver Art Museum Untitled Final Fridays. 6-10pm. Adult evening out final Friday monthly. www.denverartmuseum.org

View more events or submit events

FrontPorchStapleton.com > Events

MUSEUMS—DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

Through 4/13—IMAX. Extreme Weather. www.dmns.org

3/4 Saturday—Girls and Science. 9-5pm. Be inspired by women in science; talk with women scientists, participate in activities, learn about opportunities in science, math, technology engineering, etc. www.dmns.org

3/10 to 8/13—Vikings: Beyond the Legend. Special exhibit. Separate ticket required. www.dmns.org

3/16 Thursday—Science Lounge—Time Travel. Cocktails and entertainment 3rd Thursday monthly, ages 21+. 6:30-9:30pm. \$10/members; \$12/nonmembers. www.dmns.org

3/23 Thursday—Engineers Night Out for Families. 6-8 pm. \$12 members, \$15 nonmembers. Design and build buildings, bridges, etc. Enjoy special presentation of Dream Big 3D: Engineering Our World. www.dmns.org

MUSEUMS—FREE DAYS

3/3 to 3/31—Clyfford Still Museum Free Friday Evenings. SCFD Free Day. 5-8pm. www.clyffordstillmuseum.org

3/4 Saturday—Denver Art Museum Free Day. SCFD Free day. www.denverartmuseum.org

3/5 Sunday—Denver Museum of Miniature Dolls and Toys. SCFD Free day. www.dmmtdt.org

3/7 Tuesday—Children's Museum Free Target Tuesday. 4-8pm. www.cmdenver.org

3/10 Friday—Four Mile Historic Park Free Day. SCFD Free day. www.four-milepark.org

3/13 Monday—Denver Museum of Nature & Science Free Day. SCFD Free day. www.dmns.org

3/22 Wednesday—Denver Botanic Gardens Free Day. SCFD Free day. www.botanicgardens.org

3/31 Friday—Clyfford Still Museum Free Day. SCFD Free day. www.clyffordstill-museum.org

NORTHEAST DENVER/AURORA EVENTS

3/1 Wednesday—Ash Wednesday Worship/Communion. 11am and 7pm. Soup lunch at noon, pancake supper 5:30-7pm. Augustana Lutheran Church. 5000 E. Alameda Ave. 303.388.4678, www.augustanadenver.org

3/2 to 3/25—Varied Perceptions Show at Art Gym Denver. Works by Andrew Beckham, Marcus DeSieno & Amy Theiss Giese. Opening Thurs., 3/2 5-8pm with light refreshments/hors d'oeuvres. Free and open to public 1460 Leyden St. 303.320.8347 <http://artgymdenver.com>

(continued on page 22)

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LOCAL EVENTS

(continued from page 21)

3/26 Sunday—Aurora Symphony Orchestra—Spring Masterworks—Arabian Nights. Music of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade and Vanhal: Concerto for Two Bassoons. www.aurorasymphony.org/masterworks.html <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2597015>

NORTHFIELD EVENTS

3/3 Friday—Harkins Theatres 18 New Release. Before I Fall, Logan, The Shack, Table 19. www.harkinstheatres.com

3/10 Friday—Harkins Theatres 18 New Release. Kong: Skull Island, The Last Word. www.harkinstheatres.com

3/17 Friday—Harkins Theatres 18 New Release. Beauty and the Beast, The Sense of an Ending. www.harkinstheatres.com

3/25 Saturday—Harkins Theatres 18 New Release. CHiPS, Life, Personal Shopper, Power Rangers. www.harkinstheatres.com

3/31 Friday—Harkins Theatres 18 New Release. The Boss Baby, The Zookeeper's Wife. www.harkinstheatres.com

PERFORMING ARTS

3/31 to 4/2—The Little Mermaid by Colorado Ballet. Featuring enhanced score that includes narration and lyrics for this classic love story set "under the sea." Opens with special performance of Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1. Tickets: \$30 to \$155. 303.837.8888, www.coloradoballet.org, <http://coloradoballet.org/performances/the-little-mermaid>

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

3/1 to 3/31—Rocky Mountain Wildlife Refuge. See website for March programming: http://www.fws.gov/refuge/rocky_mountain_arsenal/

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

3/17 Friday—The Odyssey School Auction. The 11th annual benefit auction. 7-10pm. The Savoy at Curtis Park, 2700 Arapahoe St. <http://odysseydenver.org/>

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers Needed at Ronald McDonald Family Rooms at Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children. At Presbyterian/St. Luke's Hospital. Seeks volunteers to make once-a-week commitment for 6-month minimum. www.ronaldhouse.org under "How You Can Help" for info.

Single Volunteers of Greater Denver. All-volunteer, not-for-profit group of singles who want to meet others and perform community service assisting nonprofit organizations for events/other activities. www.svgd.org

THEATRE

Through 3/5—Brilliant Traces. Vintage Theatre. 1468 Dayton St., Aurora Cultural Arts District. www.vintagetheatre.org

Through 3/12—An Act of God. Garner Galleria Theatre, Denver Center for the Performing Arts. www.denvercenter.org

Through 3/12—Two Degrees. The Jones Theatre, Denver Center for the Performing Arts. www.denvercenter.org

Through 3/12—The Book of Mormon. Avenue Theater, 417 E. 17th Ave. www.avenuetheater.com

Through 3/18—Sabrina Fair. Spotlight Theatre Company at John Hand Theater. www.thisisspotlight.com

Through 3/19—Billy Elliot. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St., Aurora Cultural Arts District www.vintagetheatre.org

Through 4/15—Bus Stop. Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd., Arvada. www.arvadacenter.org

Through 5/19—A Year with Frog and Toad. Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd. www.arvadacenter.org

3/3 to 3/5—Shen Yun. Buell Theater, Denver Center for the Performing Arts. www.dcpa.org

3/8 to 3/18—An American in Paris. Buell Theater, Denver Center for the Performing Arts. www.denvercenter.org

3/16 to 4/23—Travelers of the Lost Dimension. Stanley Marketplace, intimate (45 seats per performance) Denver Center production at Stanley Marketplace. Tickets include 1 beer coupon from Stanley Beer Hall. www.travelersofthelostdimension.com

3/17 to 4/11—Oddville. Avenue Theater, 417 E. 17th Ave. www.avenuetheater.com

3/21 to 3/26—Kinky Boots. Buell Theater, Denver Center for the Performing Arts. www.denvercenter.org

3/24 to 4/7—Chinglish. Aurora Fox Arts Center, 9900 E. Colfax Ave. www.aurorafoxartscenter.org

3/30 to 4/30—The Baby Dance. Cherry Creek Theatre, Shaver Ramsey Gallery, 2414 E. 3rd Ave. www.cherrycreektheatre.org

3/31 to 5/21—The Intelligent Life of Jenny Chow. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St., Aurora Cultural Arts District. www.vintagetheatre.org

4/1 to 4/29—Crimes of the Heart. Fire House Theater Company at John Hand Theater, Lowry. www.firehousetheatercompany.com



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IN MARCH

Wild Flowers

Polished

Pilates Evolution

OPEN
IN APRIL

Concourse

Cattivella

Kitchen Next Door

OPEN IN
MAY/JUNE

Endorphin (May)

Los Chingones

Hash Tag

Havana St.
(lone block)

Kitchen
Next Door

Polished
Hair & Nail Studio

Wild Flowers
Home, Gift & Garden

Endorphin
Fitness

Hash Tag

Los Chingones

Constellation
Ice Cream

Cattivella
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KELLER WILLIAMS

INTEGRITY REAL ESTATE

Home, Gift and Garden Shop “A Truly Sensory Environment”

By Anne Hebert

Early March is the projected opening date for Wild Flowers, a home, gift and garden shop, in its new Eastbridge

location. This will be the second location for owners Brian Tepp and Jonah Bradley who have owned a shop in the Congress Park neighborhood for 10 years. “The store is truly an experience,” says Bradley. “Beautiful scents of lush plants, sounds of water trickling from our selection of running fountains and unique gift items combine to create a truly sensory



The first Wild Flowers store is located in Congress Park.

environment.”

The 2,000-square-foot shop will be divided into three large departments: Health and Plants; Home, Gifts and

Jewelry; and Bath, Body and Cards for every occasion. Wild Flowers also offers classes in terrarium building, fresh flower arranging, and art. Complimentary giftwrap and delivery services will also be available.

While the pair plans to carry a similar mix of merchandise

found at their Madison St. location, they will enhance their line of children’s merchandise in the Eastbridge store.



Jonah Bradley, left, and Brian Tepp will be opening their second Wild Flowers shop in Eastbridge. The shop carries items for the home including gifts and plants as well as greeting cards.

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Tepp and Bradley are residents of Park Hill and are familiar with Stapleton as a live/work/shop mixed-use community. Bradley says, “We really love the development in Eastbridge and are looking forward to opening our small business and becoming a part of the neighborhood.”

“One of our favorite events of the year is Mother’s Day,” Bradley says. “Each year, we offer extended hours and a beautiful selection of gifts, houseplants and plants for outdoor containers and gardens. It’s a great way for us to help our customers begin to get ready for spring.” Looking forward to replicating the event in their new location, Bradley and Tepp see it as a perfect opportunity to introduce themselves to the community.

Wild Flowers is known for its “mascots”—animals who make themselves at home during business hours and delight and entertain customers. “At the Madison St. store, we have a couple of dogs, a frog named Carlton and a goldfish pond. We will definitely have an array of store animals in our new location—perhaps even some colorful birds,” Bradley says. These special “greeters” help make the Wild Flowers experience special for animal lovers of all ages.

Regular store hours are Mon.–Sat. from 10am to 6pm and Sundays from 11am to 5pm. Visit www.wildflower-shome.com or call 303. 333.4050.

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Full Hair/Nail Services with A Braiding Bar

By Anne Hebert

Polished Hair and Nail Studio owner Lisa Hintgen is excited about the upcoming opening of her new space in the Eastbridge Town Center. “We believe we’ll be open for business in late March,” she says.

The salon will offer services for men, women and children. Full hair and nail services will be available, and a braiding bar will be a spot for kids and young adults to try the newest braided hairstyles.

Having just returned from a trip to London and Paris, Hintgen visited salons to see what was trending in the European market. “Braiding bars are extremely popular there,” she says. “We absolutely want to bring our customers a really superior experience.”

Men, women and kids are all welcome at the salon. “Men are really taking great care of themselves, and we will cater to them with special services that include haircuts, manicures and pedicures,” says Hintgen. “We want everyone to feel welcome and come and enjoy our salon.”

Polished will also offer IBX Nail, a patented nail treatment done in the salon. The treatments are designed to improve the health of the nail and nail bed and protect nails from flaking and chipping.

“We are really looking forward to becoming a part of the business community here,” says Hintgen.

For more information about Polished Hair and Nail Studio, visit www.polishednailboutique.net.



Pilates Evolution owner Natalie McLaren in her new studio with instructor Marlie Fisher.

For Men and Women: A Full Body Workout that Strengthens, Lengthens and Tones

By Anne Hebert

Pilates Evolution Stapleton is now open in the Eastbridge Town Center. “It’s a completely new fitness option for men and women in our neighborhood,” says studio owner Natalie McLaren. “The method is a combination of cardio, strength training and Pilates and provides a different workout than traditional Pilates classes.”

McLaren, a five-year Stapleton resident, fell in love with Pilates Evolution after visiting her sister’s studio in California. Believing it would be a great fit in Colorado, she opened her first studio in Cherry Creek eight years ago. She says, “I am thrilled to open a studio here to share the workout with my friends and neighbors.”

Lagree Fitness is a new evolution of Pilates that incorporates high intensity and quick transitions to offer a faster pace than traditional Pilates methods. The method covers all the elements of physical fitness in every move done during each session. The yield is a full-

body workout that strengthens, lengthens and tones by enhancing cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, core strength and balance—as well as offering the benefits of a healthy, positive mindset.

Classes are 40 minutes each and available throughout the day to accommodate the schedules and lifestyles of members. Each class is set to fun, motivating music. Class spaces may be reserved for a group setting—or by appointment for one-on-one private sessions. Group classes are limited to 10 students per class to ensure an intimate workout experience. Private sessions are a good choice for Pilates “newbies” or those who have past injuries or other considerations.

Information about Pilates Evolution, along with membership information, class schedules and new member discounts can be found by visiting www.pilatesevolutioncherrycreek.com.



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By Melinda Pearson
“Lift, lift, lift. Faster!” chirps the cheerful voice of Sarah Stabio, owner and instructor at The Bar Method Stapleton. The class of 15 sock-clad women silently obeys their gentle drillmaster, raising their legs higher and higher as their faces flush and their breathing labors. Within 20 minutes of class starting, legs are shaking uncontrollably across the mirrored room.

The Bar Method is an exercise studio that offers a unique blend of yoga, Pilates, ballet, and physical therapy. It makes use of a ballet barre for stability and stretching, but as part of a small, national franchise, The Bar Method has a specialized approach. Founder Burr Leonard based her methods on classes she took from Lotte Berk, a German ballerina with a legendary status in the world of barre fitness.

The class focused on repeated, small muscle movements, sometimes using light weights or cushions, with balance and core strength being key aspects of the hour-long workout. According to Stabio, the idea is to “work a group of muscles to exhaustion, and then stretch them out. The flip-flopping of that allows anyone to do this workout five–six days a week.” The upbeat music and highly personalized instruction help keep the students going through the quietly intense class.

The studio represents the culmination of a year-long journey for Stabio. A longtime student of The Bar Method in Cherry Creek, she grew tired of the commute from Stapleton. When she looked into opening her own studio, she learned a rigorous six-month teacher training was part of the deal. “I did not set out on this path to be a teacher. I always wanted to be the owner and I loved the workout,” said Stabio. “I definitely was a fish out of water at training.”

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Stabio quickly took to her task, however. She remodeled her Conservatory Green basement, equipping it with the padded carpet, floor-to-ceiling mirrors, and sturdy barres necessary to teach free classes as part of her training.

Like many students, Daphne Manns has been coming to The Bar Method classes

ever since the beginning of the basement days. "It's a very positive atmosphere," said Manns. "They're really attentive and make sure you're doing it right without injuring yourself." She also finds it a "great seat workout"—Bar Method code for "good for the tush"—and says she has much better posture as a result.

Despite the intensity, the cheeky shirts sported by students (e.g., "Will Tuck for Tacos" and "Shake It Till You Make It") give a hint of the playful culture that Stabio encourages. Stabio opted for a dedicated childcare room over showers, and has built a horizontal climbing wall there to encourage fitness in the younger set.

The Bar Method keeps mall hours due to its location and also sells high-end workout clothing and gear. The studio schedule and pricing can be found at <http://denver-stapleton.barmethod.com/>.



New Stanley Restaurant Biscuit-Centric Southern Food and Retro Decor

By Courtney Drake-McDonough

Denver Shader couldn't find the kind of biscuits he loved when he moved from Florida to Colorado. So he opened the Denver Biscuit Company. "All of my concepts are totally selfish," says Shader. "It's food I want, that I can't find, that I think I can do better." Shader's new location at the

Stanley Marketplace marks the first time he has taken one of his trio of concepts out from under one roof. In three other locations, Denver Biscuit Company shares space with Fat Sully's Pizza and the Atomic Cowboy bar, providing food and libations from early morning to late night. Branching off with the biscuit business came as a result of people requesting biscuits past the 2pm closing. The new location is open from 8am to 10pm or later.

Shader chose to open the solo concept at the Stanley because it combined everything he'd been looking for: an old building, a sense of community and easy access for multiple neighborhoods. "The scope of the project is once in a lifetime," Shader says. "The location is amazing—the rooftops of Stapleton, combined with Aurora and the hospitals—it's super-unique."

The character of the Stanley, as well as the ability to start fresh with the Denver Biscuit Company, allowed Shader to play around with the atmosphere

of the restaurant. "There were no constraints. The scope and size and history of the building and the fact that it was a factory really lent itself to adding some polish," says Shader, who added brass fixtures, polished lights and a glitzy arrow marking where to pick up to-go orders. Retro décor is sprinkled throughout the space, part of Shader's love of mixing old and new. "My team calls me a hoarder but I pick up stuff wherever I am and we have a lot of storage so we always have it when we need it," he says.

Shader's passion for Southern food touches every aspect of the biscuit-centric menu with house-made fried chicken, sausage, shrimp and grits, gravy and jams. When asked for the ideal biscuit criteria, Shader says "It has to have a lot of layers, has to have the flake and it has to be full of butter. It has to be rolled, layered, folded and tender inside with a little bit of crispiness outside." It also has to be huge. Shader demonstrates with his hands, saying "as big as a cat's head." More information at www.denbisco.com or call 303.377.7900.



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“Good Fast Food” at New Lowry Restaurant



Chop Shop owners Christian Anderson and Clint Wangsnes are shown in a patio area of the restaurant with garage doors that open in warm weather.



By Laurie Dunklee

When it comes to eating out, fast food isn't always good—and good food isn't often fast. “Our specialty is offering high-quality meals quickly,” says Christian Anderson, co-owner and general manager of Chop Shop casual urban eatery, opened in late January in the Lowry Town Center.

Specialties at Chop Shop include slow-cooked short ribs, bacon-wrapped meatloaf, vegetarian fare and a 72-hour, slow-cooked onion soup. Chef/Co-owner Clint Wangsnes, a Park Hill resident, brings two decades of culinary experience to Chop Shop. “Clint has worked in all sorts of restaurants, all over the country,” said Anderson. “That gives us great flexibility to do whatever we like, to be creative. We serve everything from hamburgers to fried rice to meatloaf.”

Anderson, a native of New Haven, Conn., came to Denver in 2001 to pursue a degree in international business from the University of Denver. “After graduation I was working

for Beverage Distributors, a local wine and spirits distributor, and I met Clint's wife, Marci Austin. We were all hanging out one night and Clint had this idea for a chef-driven, fast-casual place that serves great food quickly. So in 2014 we opened the first Chop Shop at 4990 East Colfax. We were under-capitalized so we opened on credit cards. It was nerve-racking. But we kept at it and got a following.”

He said they always wanted to open in Lowry. “We like the family-friendly area. So we were happy when the Salty Rita's space became available—it was serendipitous the way it worked out for us.”

The 2,200-square-foot Lowry restaurant has more seating than the Colfax space, including two patios, one of them heated. “Colfax is cozy, while this one is more spread out.

The neighborhood has been really receptive,” Anderson said.

Chop Shop's meats are cooked *sous vide* style. *Sous vide* is French for ‘under vacuum,’ where foods in pouches are steamed at low temperatures to cook evenly and retain mois-

ture. “We use time, pressure and temperature to cook our meats,” said Anderson. “It lets us produce thoughtful dishes because the work is on the back end. Our short ribs cook for 48 hours. There's always something being cooked.”

While the Lowry eatery serves the most popular Chop Shop dishes, new menu items have been added. “We're doing banh mi Vietnamese sandwiches and homemade corn dogs for the kids. Even the hotdog is homemade,” said Anderson. New cocktails include a gluten-free spiced blood orange margarita.

Chop Shop is open seven days a week, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., at 200 Quebec St., on the main street of the Lowry Town Center. For more information see coloradochopshop.com or call 303-364-1102.



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Jose Ramos, general manager (left) and owner Kyle Fabra show off some of their cinnamon rolls.

Cinnamon Rolls, Espresso and Saving the Planet

By Laurie Dunklee

Can cinnamon rolls save the planet? “Our vegan cinnamon rolls are a small step toward positive change for the planet, people and animals,” say the founders of Cinnaholic, opened in December in Northfield, next to the Harkins movie theaters.

Baker Shannon Radke and her husband, Florian, started Cinnaholic in 2010 to serve homemade cinnamon rolls without animal products. “Raising animals for food requires heavy consumption of the world’s resources; vegan food uses a fraction of the resources to produce the food we need,” says the Cinnaholic website.

But Cinnaholic doesn’t emphasize the vegan philosophy. “We don’t hang out the vegan shingle because most people just come in for a fresh cinnamon roll,” said Kyle Fabra, owner of the Cinnaholic franchises in Northfield and Cherry Creek. “Some of our customers like the social impact of our non-animal-based ingredients, and some eat vegan for health. But most don’t know our cinnamon rolls are vegan—they just know they are delicious.”

Cinnaholic offers the cinnamon rolls with a variety of different toppings, including fresh fruit, chocolate chips, nuts, cookie dough and vegan cream cheese. “They are ‘build your own,’ with 20

frostings and 20 toppings to choose from. They are made fresh throughout the day,” said Fabra. “You won’t get one that’s been out of the oven for more than 25 minutes.”

He said they offer a full espresso bar with Novo coffee, nitro cold-brewed coffee and kombucha fermented tea from Happy Leaf, a local company.

Fabra is a former Army Ranger medic who served in Afghanistan for four years. “I joined up after 9/11,” he said. “It was a great experience that taught me a lot about leadership. With so many different personalities in the military, getting things accomplished is a learned ability. You need to be fair and consistent, and respect people. Knowing that helps me hold on to the right employees, people who are friendly and helpful.”

Cinnaholic began in Berkeley, Calif., and now has 14 stores in the U.S. Twenty more locations are under development, guided by the Radkes’ philosophy: “The fewer animal products we consume, the more people we can feed.”

Cinnaholic is at 8302 Northfield Blvd., Suite 1570. Hours are 11am–9pm, Sunday through Thursday; and 11am–10pm, Friday and Saturday. For more information, call 720.335.6007 or see www.cinnaholic.com.

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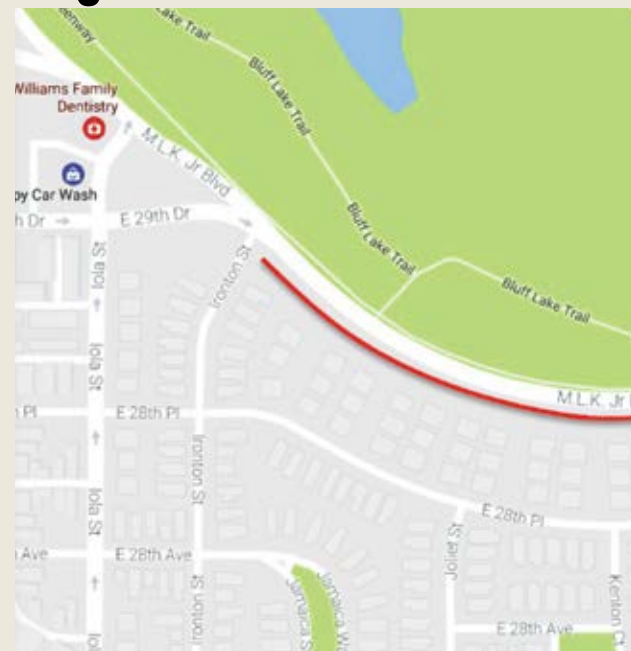
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Neighborhood Vote to Deter



Residents and tenants near a recommended noise wall (location identified by red line) will soon be voting on whether to actually construct the wall. The wall would extend from Ironton Street to where Moline

By John Fernandez

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have concluded that noise walls on the south side of MLK from Ironton St. to Moline St. are a "reasonable and feasible" means for mitigating noise impacts on adjacent residences in that three-block stretch. Under the state and federal protocols, a vote by affected property owners and residents will determine whether the noise walls would actually be constructed.

The cost of the walls, which could vary in height between 8 feet and 12 feet, is roughly estimated at \$1 million–\$1.3 million. Denver would be responsible for funding the wall construction but has not yet identified a source of funding to pay for the walls.

The MLK project will extend the four-lane arterial roadway from Havana St. east to Peoria St. where it will align with Fitzsimons Parkway at the Peoria St. intersection. (See the March and December 2016 *Front Porch* for more details on the proposed improvements.) Total project cost is estimated at \$16.5 million not counting the noise walls. The project is funded approximately half by Denver and half by a federal grant.

The federal monies trigger an "environmental assessment" (EA) and make the project subject to federal environmental regulations including noise limits. Denver, as the project sponsor, commissioned a noise analysis that found the subject properties would suffer a substantial increase in noise impacts due to the roadway project. Saying the EA is still in draft form, Denver Public Works staff were unable to specify the impact in decibels. However, CDOT's website says "substantial increase impact occurs when there is a projected 10-decibel increase over existing noise levels. Impacts such as these require mitigation consideration and analysis, which will result in the construction of noise barriers if they are determined to be feasible and reasonable."

Evidently, much of the discussion between Denver, CDOT and FHWA has revolved around whether noise walls at this location are "feasible and reasonable." CDOT's website states: "A barrier is feasible if it can be constructed without major engineering or safety issues and provide a substantial noise reduction to the adjacent receivers. Reasonableness deals with whether the barrier can be designed to achieve a noise reduction design goal of 7 decibels, whether the barrier can be constructed in a cost-efficient manner, and the desires of the community. All three of these criteria must be met for a barrier to be considered reasonable to build."

Denver contested the finding of feasibility and reasonableness on several grounds including:

- A solid noise wall constructed between the planned sidewalk along MLK Blvd. and the existing townhomes would preclude direct sidewalk access to new RTD bus stops near Kingston St. and Moline St. and require pedestrians to walk around the walls to reach the bus stops.
- A solid noise wall would also preclude direct access to the new parking spaces along the south side of the MLK Blvd. extension, requiring people to walk around the walls and over longer distances to reach their destination.
- A noise wall would cause sidewalk shading, resulting in the potential for icing during winter months.
- Noise walls could be considered graffiti targets.
- Noise walls would partially-to-completely block the views to the north of the open space and parklands along the MLK extension.
- Stapleton redevelopment follows design standards in the

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mine Fate of MLK Noise Wall



Street runs north and south. Federal and state agencies have concluded the wall is necessary to mitigate the impact of noise from increased traffic on MLK Blvd. once it is extended east to Peoria Street.

“Stapleton Green Book” and noise walls are inconsistent with these design guidelines. Along these lines, existing portions of MLK to the west of this project area were constructed without noise walls.

Bar Chadwick, Denver’s special projects manager for Stapleton, says in the end, Denver agreed to the finding of feasibility and reasonableness to prevent further delays in the project that was originally slated to begin construction last summer. Otherwise, she said, the “conversations could have gone on forever.”

Denver Public Works is preparing a “public outreach” process for working with the affected property owners and residents, including how the voting will occur. While details of the public outreach process remain to be worked out, the voting test itself is straightforward: if 50 percent or more of the residents/owners vote “no,” then noise walls would not be required and would not be designed into the MLK Jr. Extension project. Conversely, a “yes” vote of 50 percent or more would trigger the requirement for a noise wall.

The “benefitting receptors” (affected property owners and/or current tenants) will be voting on the noise wall location and height but not the colors or materials of the noise walls. Those aspects of the design would be addressed later if the vote supports inclusion of the walls as a project element.

DPW staff estimate that the public outreach process will add two months to the timeline for completing the EA and requesting federal issuance of a “FONSI” or Finding of No Significant Impact. Until CDOT and FHWA sign off on the FONSI, the project cannot move forward.

Denver still hopes to get the project under construction this year and estimates a one-year construction period. The project was originally slated to begin construction summer of 2016 but has been delayed because of the noise wall issue and the need to update traffic modeling.

New Dayton-Emporia Connection Near Stanley to Open This Summer

A new street connection between Stapleton and northwest Aurora will be paved sometime this summer, according to Andrea Amonick, Aurora’s Development Services Manager. The Dayton/Emporia connection is the fourth of four street connections identified in a 2006 intergovernmental agreement between Denver, Aurora and the Park Creek Metro District. The goal was to reintegrate the former Stapleton Airport site into adjoining neighborhoods. Three such street connections have already been built and opened to public usage: Fulton, Iola and Kingston Streets.

The IGA linked the Dayton/Emporia construction to the beginning

of development in Stapleton Aurora but with an opening date of no later than June 1, 2017. Amonick said negotiations with a private landowner, the Dayton Industrial Center, for a small parcel (669 sq. ft.) needed to accommodate Dayton where it will “T” into 25th Avenue are nearing completion. “It may delay the final turnover of the land but we should see the road completed this summer. Condemnation would only delay the process,” Amonick said. PCMD is constructing the road with financial contributions from Denver and Aurora totaling \$500,000. Grading and utilities for the roadway are well underway.

Aster Conservatory Green Apartments Phase 2



Construction is expected to begin late summer on this 265-unit market-rate apartment project. The unit mix is 36 percent one bedroom, 57 percent two bedrooms and 7 percent three bedrooms. Tom Gleason with Forest City says the project has received all necessary land use approvals and first units should be available early summer 2018. KTG is the architect. A contractor has not yet been selected. The project is located in the southwest quadrant of the Northfield Boulevard/Central Park Boulevard intersection. A two-acre parcel immediately adjacent to the intersection is being reserved for a future affordable rental housing site.

City Answers Questions about Affordable Housing

At the Feb. 21 SUN meeting, Mayor Michael Hancock said the issue of affordable housing in Stapleton has been a “challenging one.” He acknowledged, “We don’t have very much at our disposal except to penalize Forest City if they don’t meet the goals before the development ends.” Hancock did not specify what those penalties might be or how they might be enforced. He did say, “We hope to be more collaborative with Forest City. We are in contact with them on a quarterly basis. We’ll use the housing trust fund... to set aside financing for both for rent and for sale. I think the TOD at Central Park is going to be a tremendous opportunity to close some of the gaps and to bring affordable housing to the marketplace.”

Hancock was responding to questions posed by the *Front Porch* regarding Forest City’s obligation to provide a minimum of 10 percent for-sale units “at a pace reasonably consistent with the pace of development of market rate housing at Stapleton.” Affordable for-sale housing now constitutes only 5.5 percent of for-sale housing in Stapleton.

By email, At-Large Councilperson Robin Kniech has told the *Front Porch* an “in-depth analysis of the build-out to date including density per acre” is underway to determine whether Forest City has



Mayor Hancock responded to residents’ questions at the SUN meeting. Rick Padilla, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Development stands behind him.

set aside enough land to eventually meet the 10 percent affordable goal. She said, “There is every possibility that Forest City is on track. The city has an obligation to work with Forest City and to walk through the results [of the analysis] with the community.”

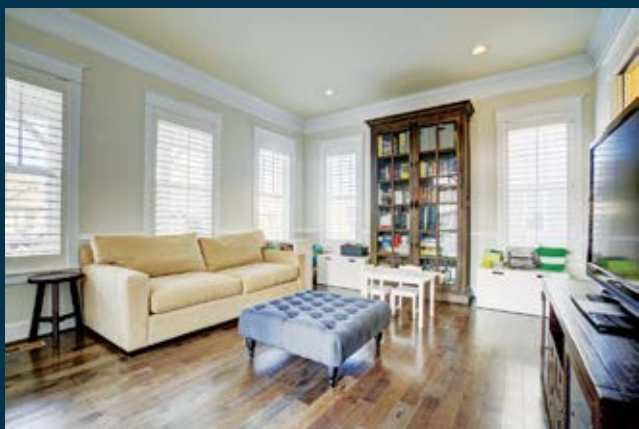
The issue of affordable housing has

become more critical as Stapleton approaches build-out. Stapleton is two-thirds to 80 percent built out depending on the total build-out number, which ranges from 12,000 to 14,000 dwelling units. The concern of groups like the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) has been that Forest City would be allowed to reach build-out of market rate units without constructing all the required affordable for-sale dwellings.

Two aspects of the affordable housing issue in Stapleton have been clarified recently. First, the city says the Green Book reference to rental as one third of the total housing is a goal, not a requirement. Second, Forest City is obligated to meet the 10 percent for-sale affordable goal regardless of whether the city is able provide financial support.

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SUN Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 6:30pm (Block Captain meeting) and 7:30pm (Board meeting) at the Central Park Recreation Center, 9651 MLK Jr. Blvd. For information about SUN, visit www.stapletonunitedneighbors.com. To contact SUN or confirm meeting time, email stapletonunitedneighbors@gmail.com

SUN Board Elections Coming Up

By Amanda Allshouse, President SUN Board of Directors

Annual SUN Elections—Searching for Candidates

SUN board elections will take place at the Annual Community Forum on Tuesday May 16. Of the 15 seats on the SUN board, six are up for election.

If interested in a seat on the SUN board, please submit a 200 – 250 word bio by Friday March 17 to StapletonUnitedNeighbors@gmail.com, and attend the SUN board meeting the evening of March 21 from 7:30 – 8:45pm in the Central Park Recreation Center. Bios of recommended candidates

will be published in the April issue of the *Front Porch*, and posted on SUN's website at www.StapletonUnitedNeighbors.org.

If slated, you will need to attend the Annual Forum on Tuesday May 16, and the June SUN board meeting the following month. Board members are expected to:

- (1) Attend eight or more of the 10 SUN board meetings each year (7:30-8:45 on the 3rd Tuesdays of 10 months out of the year);
- (2) Chair or serve on at least one SUN committee, or as a SUN liaison on a Stapleton Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB) or Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC) committee (Parks Advisory Group, Zoning and Planning, Housing Diversity, Community Communications and Design Review) or serving as a SUN liaison to Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC), or with a group within the Stapleton Foundation;
- (3) Attend and help host the Annual Kickball Tournament (September 9, 2017, time/location TBD);
- (4) Author at least one article per year for the SUN Spot section of the *Front Porch*;
- (5) Be responsive to email and respectfully engaged and informed on topics of importance to the community.

A nominating committee has been formed to identify members of the Stapleton community who are committed to leading efforts to organize neighbors according to SUN's mission. Please consider sharing your voice and experience by becoming a candidate for the SUN Board of Directors. As

Stapleton is always growing, SUN is committed to a diverse board and welcomes residents from all areas and parts of our neighborhood.

March 21 SUN Meetings Central Park Rec Center

SUN block captain/Outreach meeting (6:30 – 7:25pm) – after updates from Denver Police, guest speakers include Councilman Chris Herndon, Nourish Community Market, and WalkDenver.

SUN board meeting (7:30pm – 8:45pm) after open comment, we will meet and introduce candidates for the 2017 slate, discuss the status of the 2017 SUN survey, and other new business items.

Mayor Hancock at February SUN Block Captain Meeting, Excerpts from Q & A

How has crime changed with the increase in population? There has been an increase in violent domestic crime, however in the past 52 weeks both violent index crimes and property crime are down 1%.

Composting? All of Stapleton will be included in the city's composting program in March. The city will start to disincentivize the use of trash (vs recycling and composting).

Affordable Senior Housing? (Answered by Lee Ferguson from Forest City)—There is no designation for senior ownership, however there are financing programs for senior affordable housing. 35% of affordable rental will be for seniors. In some parts of the city,

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) i.e. carriage houses are a solution.

What does the Mayor ask of us/SUN?

- Review, provide feedback on and vote for 2017 bonds in November. Visit www.denvergov.org/2017GObond.
- Stay engaged as a community—Stapleton has always been a leader in community engagement
- Denver Days—Participate and know your neighbors (host a block party!)
- Prevent crimes of opportunity—Lock doors, cars, windows. Know your neighbors and your surroundings and be alert.

Is Denver a Sanctuary City? Will police participate in Immigration roundups? This city is open and inclusive. The immigration system, however, is broken. There should be a better plan for people here illegally. Mass deportation, fear and chaos threatens our economic security and safety, and creates an “underground.” It is against the law for the federal government to threaten us, our city attorneys have read the executive order, we cooperate, but we do not hold people for longer than a person rightfully should stay in jail (without a federal warrant).

Charter schools—The final discussion of the evening involved community members expressing frustration with interactions with Denver Public Schools (DPS). Though the Mayor mentioned having met with Superintendent Tom Boasberg earlier in the day, DPS is independent from the office of the mayor and the City of Denver. The mayor voiced his personal support for the choice process of which charter schools are a component, adding he thinks the DPS Board should consider fixing a school before it is closed and turned into a charter.

Sandoval Campus Issues—The mayor said he was not fully briefed on the most recent source of discordance between the Stapleton community and DPS. SUN has established a committee to track progress of and advocate for Northfield High School in the wake of the decision by DPS to place a second Stapleton DSST high school on the Sandoval campus prior to the completion of Northfield High School.

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Letters to the Editor

Thumbs Up for George

As part of a successful effort to foster a unified school culture, George Washington High School has recently instituted a curricular model providing freshman and sophomore students exposure to a full range of subjects and then assisting in the choice of a pathway (College Prep, Advance Placement, International Baccalaureate, or Career Connect) to focus on as juniors and seniors. For students seeking greater academic challenges, GW has expanded its AP curricula and continues to provide the rigorous academic experience of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program.

Since its inception more than 30 years ago as Colorado's first IB program, GWIB students have performed at the highest levels academically in Denver. In 2016, GWIB students scored an average of 30 on the ACT and outperformed the world mean in 14 of 22 subject areas. GWIB students earn a high school diploma, as well as an International Baccalaureate Diploma.

GW is one of the most racially, economically, and culturally diverse high schools in Denver. Its speech and debate program (ranked 13th in the nation) and robotics teams are nationally recognized, and the school regularly produces National Merit and Boettcher Scholars. The GW boys' basketball team is a favorite to win the state 5A championship. Recent graduates attend top colleges and universities including the Air Force Academy, Brown, Columbia, Colorado College, Cornell, Duke, Georgetown, Harvard, Stanford, UC Berkeley, University of Chicago, and the University of Virginia.

As the parent of a current sophomore at GW and a 2016 graduate, I know from direct experience that we have a tirelessly dedicated community of teachers, administrators, and parents. Principal Scott Lessard is committed to promoting all facets of the GW community and furthering a unified George culture. I urge prospective parents to seriously consider GW – great things are happening at George!

—Tim Bakken

No Wall on MLK

The proposed sound wall in Bluff Lake between Iola and Moline would be tragic for our community. It's fundamentally against the principles upon which Stapleton was created: namely close community, shared spaces, and inclusivity. Walls are physical, social, and emotional barriers. They're unwelcoming to friends, neighbors, and visitors. They're also expensive and ugly.

Second, a wall will increase crime by providing a canvas for graffiti and cover for thieves. Right now, open lines of sight help neighbors look after one another and our neighborhood. Recognizing something that doesn't seem right is impossible when it's happening on the other side of a giant wall. Currently, police patrolling MLK can quickly and easily see down alleys and courtyards allowing them to identify suspicious situations day or night. A wall will provide additional cover for car break-ins and garage thefts.

Third, the wall isn't going to prevent sound from affecting bedrooms in houses along MLK which are on the second floor of our homes. The wall may reduce sound on the first floors, but these are the spaces where we make dinner, entertain friends, listen to music, and watch TV. These aren't the most sensitive spaces in our homes. The sound of traffic at night, when you're lying in your quiet bedroom on the second floor of your house, isn't going to be reduced by the wall.

Fourth, the sound wall will limit the views of the mountains we love so much. How many of you have wandered to the north end of a courtyard to watch a beautiful sunset or exploding thunderstorm rolling across the plains? That won't happen anymore. And this summer when the Eastbridge Town Center is complete, imagine walking along a grey concrete trail next to a grey concrete wall with no view of the mountains.

Vote "NO" to the wall. Tell CDOT and the Federal Highway Administration to keep their wall out of our neighborhood.

—Jonathon Fitzpatrick

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Front Porch Speaks Out on Train Horns

The A Line horns are loud and disruptive and need to end as soon as possible. The community has been amazingly patient with RTD on this issue. But it's been more than a year and that patience is wearing out. As the weather warms, windows open, barbecues happen and park playtime increases. The impact of the 144-daily crossings of Ulster and other area streets with horns blaring LOUD-LOUD-SOFT-LOUD at each crossing will become less and less bearable.

We acknowledge the complexities RTD faces in designing the train signaling system. One television reporter at the recent media briefing said RTD's efforts at explaining the system design made his head hurt. We are also reminded of the Donald Rumsfeld quote: "There are known knowns...But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know." Our understanding of PTC and its integration with ATC is certainly limited, even to the point that important questions have probably not been asked because we don't know enough to ask them.

Even so, it was one thing to have 18 freight trains announce their passage at each crossing. It is literally an order of magnitude difference when 144 commuter rail crossings are added to the mix. RTD, DTP and the FRA owe northeast Denver some relief—and soon. The community deserves full transparency on this matter from RTD and the regulators:

What is the likelihood that the PTC system will be certified by May?

What are the options should problems continue to plague the constant warning system?

Could a quiet zone be established using the ATC, accepting the penalty of longer train trips?

Could FRA accept a bit more variability in the constant warning time system and allow RTD/DTP more time to perfect the PTC while implementing the quiet zone in the meantime?

Dear RTD and FRA: If the horns keep blaring, pretty soon we won't be able to hear you.



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Librarian Suzanne Tonini, who coordinated the event, explains to refugee students how they will “shop” for books and art supplies.

(continued from page 1)

The Newcomer Program

Izzi B is home to the Newcomer Center, a program that enrolls refugee children who hail from a wide array of countries including Burma, Nepal, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, Iraq, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia. The children are part of DPS’s English Language Acquisition (ELA) Program, which serves students with limited English language skills, and many of them have received little to no formal education even in their native tongues. The only other school in DPS to serve a significant refugee student population is Place Bridge Academy, in south Denver. The program was deliberately established by the original administrative leaders at Izzi B.

Currently, there are three dedicated classrooms for the Newcomer students: ECE, K and a blended 1/2. Each of these is staffed with a teacher and paraprofessional through the DPS ECE



ESL Teacher Sophie Glover, along with many parent volunteers from the mainstream side of the school, were on hand at the event to help students like Busime Matabishi choose books and art supplies.

classrooms and receive in-class support.

Refugee students at all grade levels join their peers for non-academic classes, such as P.E., art, music and library, as part of the focus on inclusion and integration at Izzi B. In addition, mainstream students serve as volunteer “ambassadors,” paired up 1:1 with refugee students and acting as “buddies and positive role models,” said Kim Hundley, dean of culture, playing with them, eating lunch with them, and introducing them to American culture.

Hundley, who oversees the Newcomer Program and English language instruction, helps marshal an array of services to serve the students both at the school and in the wider community. “A huge part of our philosophy is that social-emotional part ... it is emblematic of who we are,” says Hundley.

To connect with students and their families, Izzi B uses eight “community navigators,” who collectively speak 90 languages, and a family liaison. A full-time school psychologist/social worker helps with students’ social-emotional needs, and Izzi B’s on-site family service center further supports the Newcomers with food, counseling and access to safety net resources. Monthly meetings and parent-teacher conferences for Newcomer students are held at an apartment complex in NE Denver to accom-

modate the nearby families, who often lack the resources to get to the school for meetings.

Hundley also works with outside agencies, like Lutheran Family Services and Jewish Family Service, on placement and therapy. Hundley notes that so many students have experienced significant trauma. “They don’t really tell stories, but you can see it in their behavior, and in their art,” so she is working to enhance therapeutic opportunities for these children, including art and play therapy.



Wharka Por Aung excitedly picks up a book he likes. For some of the children it may be the first-ever books or art supplies of their own.

The children were joyful on Refugee Love Day, however, with most of them squealing and chatting as they filled their bags with books and art supplies. As part of its focus on supporting their newcomers, Izzi B hosts similar events on a regular basis. The school has previously collected donated costumes for Halloween for their refugee students and pajamas for ECE and K refugee students—which come in handy when they earn “pajama days” in their classrooms. “The reason that drew me here is the chance to work with this population of kids ... they are such lovely and loving people,” said Hundley.



Amisa Shamshu Alame chooses among books with assistance from ESL teacher Sophie Glover. Behind them, Haysham Shamshu Alam appears to be contemplating his selections.

or DPS ELA departments. After about a year, these students join traditional classrooms. In the upper grades, where there are fewer newcomers, refugee students are integrated into mainstream

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