

Front Porch

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NORTHEAST DENVER

DECEMBER 2017

Blossoms of Light



Color schemes change every year at Blossoms of Light. This year, the Alpine Garden will have more lights than ever before, with a blue, teal and cool white palette to evoke a frozen, iced wonderland.

By Courtney Drake-McDonough

The Denver Botanic Gardens has always been an oasis in the city, but during the holiday season, it's also a winter wonderland. Nearly a half a million individual lights dot the expanse of the gardens, enhancing shrubs, trees and terrain. A record-breaking year,

more than 130,000 people attended Blossoms of Light in 2016, an increase of more than 37,000 over 2015. Staff attribute the increase to Denver Botanic Gardens being more present in the public's mind both on a local and national level thanks to the 2014 Chihuly exhibit and the notoriety of the Corpse Flower in 2016. "It's our largest

public event of the year," says Allison Kiehl, associate director of events. "It's a big revenue driver for us, especially in the winter months when attendance is lower."

Denver Botanic Gardens began Blossoms of Light in 1988. Every year, the number of lights and span of the show increases. *(continued on page 38)*

Zoom In On Colorado's History Through 100 Objects



Staff from History Colorado Center are setting up an early chair lift from the Aspen ski area, one of the final touches for the exhibit *Zoom In: The Centennial State in 100 Objects*, which opened in November. These objects, selected from more than 15 million in the museum's collection, illustrate the sweep of the state's history from prehistoric times to the present day. The story of how the exhibit came together is on page 8.

From Stapleton to Iraq: A Soldier's Story

By Laurie Dunklee

It was a change in plans, to say the least. Chris and Kim Schmitt's expectation of a large wedding in October 2016 was derailed when Chris was told in April 2016 that he would be deployed to Iraq.

(continued on p.14)




Stapleton soldier Chris Schmitt spent the holidays in Iraq last year. These were the 2016 decorations for soldiers in his platoon.

Rain may have dampened the clothing of attendees at the Winter Welcome in the 29th Ave. Town Center, but spirits were high and the reflections in the water made for great photos.



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CORRECTION

The correct telephone number for the new CareNow clinic in Eastbridge is 720.458.6825.

Events & Announcements at Stapleton



On Monday, Dec. 11, the MCA, SUN, the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB), the Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC) and the Stapleton Foundation will host a Community Discussion regarding the community name. Two opportunities for the community to provide input in-person regarding the community name will be available on this date.

The meetings will take place in the MCA Cube at 8371 E. Northfield Blvd., from 1:30–3:30pm and 5:30–7:30pm. Dr. Nita Mosby Tyler will facilitate. At numerous meetings over the past several months, the available time for public comment has not been able to accommodate the number of persons wishing to speak about the community name. These meetings are an opportunity for in-person feedback for all who wish to provide it.

Sweet William Market

Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 2 and 3, The Cube
The Sweet William Market will be from 9am–4pm on Dec. 2 and 10am–4pm on Dec. 3 at The Cube, located at 8371 Northfield Blvd.

Christmas Concert at The Cube

Thursday, Dec. 7 6:30pm, The Cube
The Colorado Wind Ensemble will play a Christmas-themed concert at The Cube starting at 6:30pm. There will be a concession stand available serving drinks. This event is free and open to the public.

Active Minds Seminar

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

Thursday, Dec. 14, 6:45–7:45pm

Dinosaurs!

Join Active Minds as we look at new discoveries changing our thinking about dinosaurs, one of the most fascinating creatures ever to inhabit our planet. From the Dinosaur era beginnings to mass extinctions, we'll look at the types, habits and history of these amaz-

ing creatures, plus new technologies to study these prehistoric giants and what's newly learned about their existence and demise.

Thursday, December 21, 6:45–7:45pm
Saudi Arabia

With over 20 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, Saudi Arabia's importance to the U.S. (and world) has been clear for some time. Join Active minds as we tell its story, history, recent transition in generational power of the Saudi royal family and complicated role of Wahhabi Islam and Sunni Islam there and in the region.

Christmas Movie at the Cube

Friday, Dec. 8, 5pm

Join us at The Cube first for *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and a showing of *It's a Wonderful Life* immediately after. The Christmas movies are free and open to the public. The Cube is located at 8371 Northfield Blvd.

Wine Education Series

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7pm

The MCA's fall Wine Education Series will feature an educational aspect to wine tasting. This sit-down tasting will showcase different wines from different regions with a wine educator leading the discussion. Tickets: \$10; \$20 the day of the event. To purchase tickets, visit stapletoncommunity.com. Must be 21 to attend and no refunds allowed.

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
Communications Manager
jolsen@stapletoncommunity.com



Santa's Best Christmas Trees

Visit your local tree lot for your 2017 Christmas tree! Santa's Best Christmas trees will be located at each of The Greens: 29th Ave. and Roslyn St., and at 49th Place and Valencia St.

Get the latest on 

Master Community Association 

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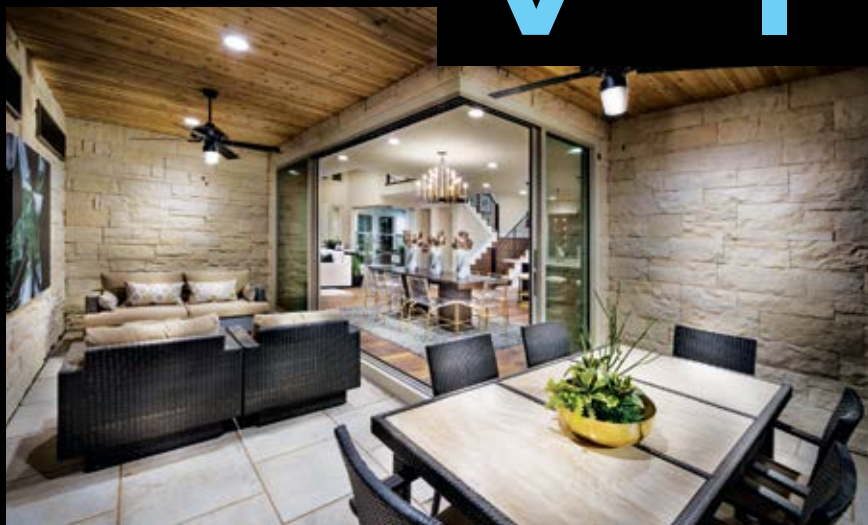
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Marlon Green

The Jackie Robinson of Commercial Aviation

By Melinda Pearson

Pilot Marlon Green broke racial barriers when he won a Supreme Court case banning racial discrimination in airline hiring practices. Green started his career with Continental Airlines at Stapleton International Airport in 1965. Now, two large graphic screens bearing his image have been installed at the new Eastbridge retail development in Stapleton. Green was inducted into the Colorado Aviation Hall of Fame in October.

Although far from a household name like Jackie Robinson, Marlon Green was similarly pioneering in breaking through racial barriers. Local author Flint Whitlock chronicled Green's inspiring history in his 2009 book, *Turbulence Before Takeoff: The Life and Times of Marlon Dewitt Green*. Racism impacted virtually every stage of Green's life, and yet he persisted, becoming one of the first black commercial airline pilots in the country.

Stapleton United Neighbors' president, Amanda Allshouse, was influential in bringing Green's story to life through these graphic screens. Allshouse had come across Green's story while researching local history, she said, and brought it to the attention of Evergreen Development, who then worked directly with Marlon Green's daughter Paula Green to procure the photographs. Evergreen is installing a commemorative plaque next to the graphics to give an overview of Green's remarkable story.

Early Life and Air Force Career

According to Whitlock, Green, who was born in Arkansas in 1929, was always a high achiever. His academic prowess in high school earned him a scholarship to Xavier University Prep School in New Orleans, where he was valedictorian.

After a brief stint in seminary, which was cut short under circumstances that appeared to have racist overtones, Green decided to join the Air Force in 1947, which was still segregated at that time.

Green began in the maintenance unit but developed a keen interest in flying and quickly moved up the ranks in the Air Force. He was one of very few black

cadets at the flight school in Randolph, Texas, where he earned his wings and officer commission, specializing in multi-engine aircraft.

During this period, Green was corresponding with one of his teachers from Xavier, a woman named Eleanor Gallagher, and he proposed to her. "She was from Boston, from a very, let's say, prejudiced family," recounted Whitlock. "When they heard that she was going to marry a black man, her father said, 'You're throwing your life away. I never want to talk to or see you again.'" Unable to get married in Louisiana where Green was to be stationed, the couple tied the knot in Los Angeles in December 1951. Once married to a white woman, however, Green wasn't allowed to live in Louisiana due to the laws against mixed-race marriages, so he was reassigned to the Strategic Air Command (SAC) base, Lockbourne, in Columbus, Ohio.

Green experienced racism throughout his life, and certainly during his tenure in the



Marlon Green began his aviation career in the Air Force, where he earned his pilot's wings and became a commissioned officer.

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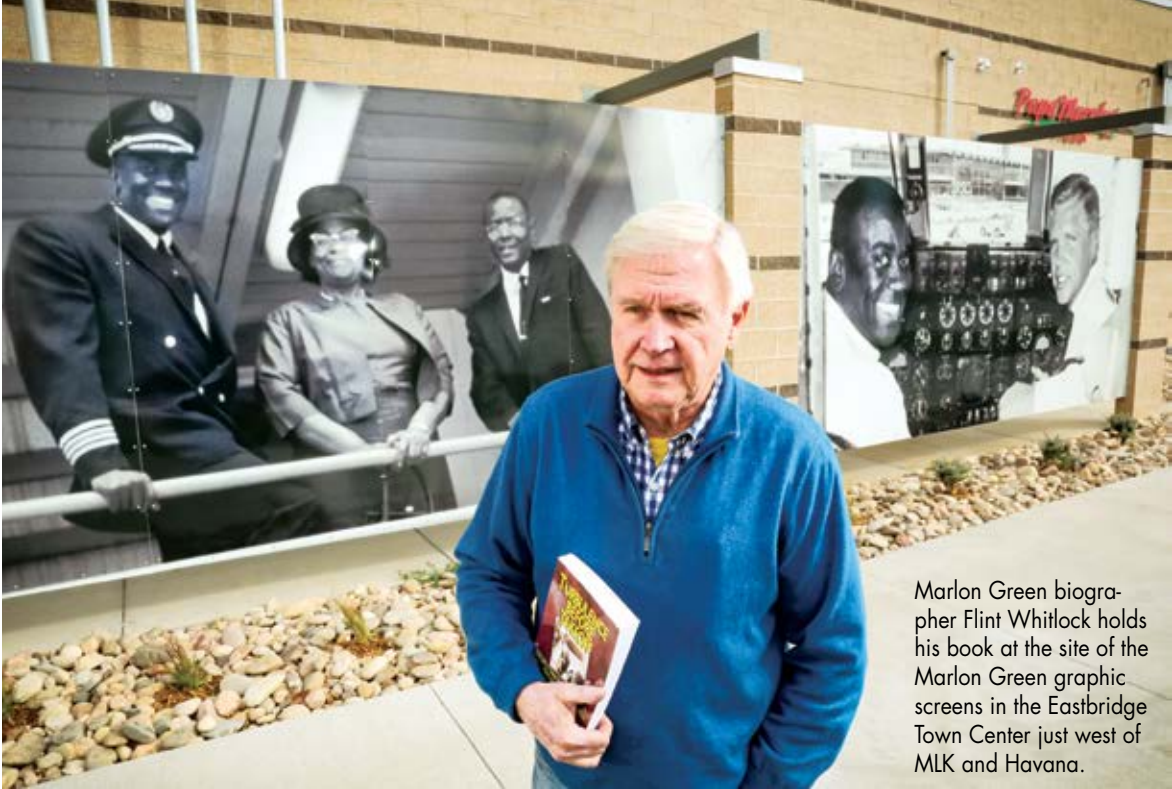
Air Force. “General Le May refused to shake his hand in a receiving line, barbers on base wouldn’t cut his hair, and he had his promotion from second lieutenant to first lieutenant held up for about six months because one day he was written up for wearing a pair of nonregulation mittens,” recounted Whitlock. But nonetheless, in the Air Force, Green flew planes and earned regular wages.

Applying for Commercial Pilot Jobs

While stationed in Japan, Green read in *Time* magazine that U.S. domestic airlines were moving away from discriminatory policies that had kept black pilots from flying. With a growing family that would ultimately include six kids, Green resigned his Air Force commission in 1957 and moved back to the States, where he began applying for jobs with commercial airliners and other corporations that needed pilots.

With over 3,000 hours of flight time, Green was more than qualified, but hundreds of his applications were uniformly rejected. “He got everybody he could think of—senators, congressmen—to write letters of support for him, but still nothing,” said Whitlock.

“Even if your qualifications were 100 percent perfect, we wouldn’t hire you because you’re black,” Green was told by the vice president of United Airlines, according to Whitlock. Whitlock said the airlines were afraid that white customers would refuse to fly if they found out the pilot was black. And, in a country that still adhered to Jim Crow laws



Marlon Green biographer Flint Whitlock holds his book at the site of the Marlon Green graphic screens in the Eastbridge Town Center just west of MLK and Havana.

of segregation, finding separate hotel and restaurant accommodations for a mixed crew presented logistical problems, especially in the South.

Job applications to commercial airlines



Green courted future wife Eleanor Gallagher, pictured here in 1950, clandestinely.

required applicants to check off a box designating their race and include a photograph. After rejections from major airlines back East, Green sent in an application to a smaller, regional carrier, Denver-based Continental Airlines, without checking off the race box or enclosing a picture.

In 1957, Green got an interview with Continental and tested in Denver with a group of white pilots. He knew from talking with them he had better qualifications than many of them, but in the end Continental

hired every other applicant except Green. According to Whitlock, this event was what gave Green “rocks in the jaws”—a feeling of anger so intense that Green finally turned to the law for recourse.

“Rocks in His Jaws”

In August 1957, Green got in touch with the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Commission and sued Continental Airlines, arguing that the company had illegally discriminated against him. But his suit was thrown out of Denver District Court due to jurisdiction issues, as Continental was involved in interstate commerce. To support his family, Green started working menial jobs and became increasingly destitute and desperate.

Through connections at a Catholic church Green attended in Denver, he found attorney T. Raber Taylor to represent him. Green’s suit continued through the Colorado Supreme Court, which ruled against him in 1962, after years of back and forth that laid waste to Green’s

finances. Taylor and Green decided to take the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, and many supporters helped, including Robert F. Kennedy, who filed an amicus brief. The court heard the case in March 1963, and a month later came back with “a unanimous verdict in Marlon’s favor,” said Whitlock. “They said that Continental discriminated against him because of racial animus.”

After working out details related to seniority, in 1965, Continental finally hired Green, who flew out of Stapleton International Airport at the beginning of his 14-year career with the airline. While he was not the first black pilot—another man, David Harris, began flying with American Airlines in 1964—it was because of his persistence that the industry opened its doors to people of color.

Green’s successful case resulted in the establishment of the Organization of Black Airline Pilots (OBAP) and helped open up employment for black women to work as part of the cabin crews in commercial airlines. “His victory was really a signature event in airline history and race relation history. It wasn’t just him getting a job as a pilot,” noted Whitlock.

To read more, see Flint Whitlock’s *Turbulence Before Takeoff* (2009). Not only does it tell Marlon Green’s story in full, but it provides the backdrop of the civil rights struggle by interspersing highlights from the news of the time throughout the book.



The Greens, shown here in 1958 with family friend Cleo Moran, had six children together. Photos from *Turbulence Before Takeoff: The Life and Times of Marlon Dewitt Green* by Flint Whitlock.



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“...a place where you can come and get the big sweep of Colorado history...” —Jason Hanson

By Melinda Pearson

In November, History Colorado opened a new exhibit in a 3,700-square-foot, brand-new gallery space. *Zoom In: The Centennial State in 100 Objects* showcases 100 unique objects that have shaped Colorado, providing a history from early Paleoindians, who lived along the Front Range 13,000 years ago, to the 21st century, represented

by the story of Boulder’s Crocs shoes.

Zoom In is presented by Colorado State University and explores the diverse history of Colorado’s people

and places through material artifacts and stories that go with them. The exhibit shares stories that are well known—like that of Margaret “Molly” Brown—alongside others that are less familiar—like a hammer from Dearfield, an early 20th century African-American settlement.

Jason Hanson, the chief creative officer for the exhibit, said the process for putting it together was much faster than usual. It began late last summer, inspired by similar “100 objects” exhibits by the British Museum and the Smithsonian. “We know that there are people looking for that overview



This ancestral Puebloan basketry tray, made of willow and yucca, may have been used by the people who lived at Mesa Verde from 900-1100 AD.

of Colorado history and we wanted to provide that,” said Hanson. “We thought this was a really good way to give you a place where you can come and get the big sweep of Colorado history in one spot.”

The exhibit will be a great fit for local fourth-graders, who study the history of Colorado, as it very intentionally aligns with state standards, said Hanson.

History Colorado’s collection contains over 15 million items, said Julie Peterson, the exhibit developer, so sifting through them to arrive at 100 was no small feat in such short time. “We wanted to pull some of the most striking and illuminating objects within our collections and give folks the chance to see them in a really impressive setting,” said Peterson.

It was a team effort, with curator James Peterson making a list of some of his favorite objects in the collection, and

Above: An electrician installs lighting for the new exhibit. History Colorado used their space creatively to convert offices and a board room on the third floor to create a gallery for the new core exhibit.

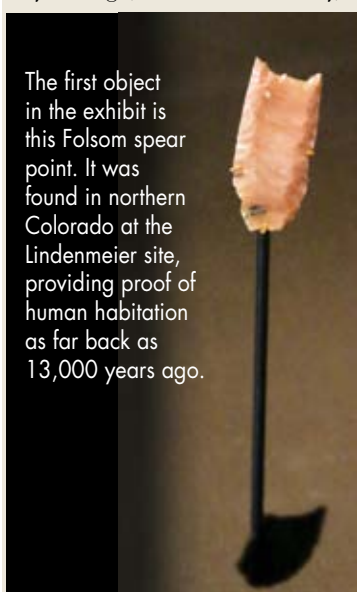
Below: Sean Sausett, exhibit technician, consults the plans for the layout and display of the new exhibit.



then consulting with historians and other stakeholders across the state to shape the final product over months. Staff consulted



Spanish coins in the exhibit tell the story of the Spanish conquistadors and settlers whose arrival in Colorado had a lasting impact on the Southwest region.



The first object in the exhibit is this Folsom spear point. It was found in northern Colorado at the Lindenmeier site, providing proof of human habitation as far back as 13,000 years ago.

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Left: Kimberly Kronwall, exhibits registrar, checks to be sure Gen. Dwight Eisenhower's jacket is ready for the exhibit. Clothing, stored in the design and production studio, illustrate the fashion, function, and culture of Colorado's history.



This hammer belonged to Charles Rothwell, one of the original founders of Dearfield, an African American agricultural colony near Greeley, where African-Americans escaped the racism and

segregation they often encountered in white majority Western communities.



During the Great Depression and the dust bowl conditions that followed it, farmers like Pete Einspahr, Jr. were hit hard. With no money for a Christmas present for his three young sons in 1935, Einspahr salvaged parts to construct this toy tractor and combine. It became a beloved toy and family heirloom.



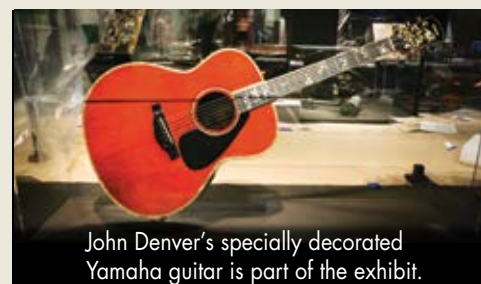
License plate number 2 was fashioned by one of Denver's first drivers around the turn of the century, before the state began officially issuing licenses in 1913.

closely with tribal representatives and consultants on all of the American Indian artifacts "We reached out to them to make sure that they seemed appropriate for display, that we were interpreting them correctly," said Hanson.

The exhibit runs in chronological order, and as a visitor follows the path, themes of Colorado's history of boom-and-bust cycles, resilience and violence emerge. Each object tells a story, from what Hanson calls "showstoppers," like John Denver's special edition Yamaha guitar, to Colorado

astronaut Jack Swigert's space suit, sweat-stained around the collar in testament to the nerve-racking experience of space flight.

Visitors will be asked to ponder what they would add as the 101st object. "Everyone is part of this story," said Hanson. "Not always the famous people that you've heard of. We're all part of this ongoing story ... The things in our lives will one day end up in exhibits like this."



John Denver's specially decorated Yamaha guitar is part of the exhibit.



Jason Hanson, chief creative officer, directs Abby Krause, design and production manager, to assume the position of the 10th Mountain Division soldier in



the exhibit. The soldiers, who wore white uniforms in winter for camouflage, trained in Colorado. *Zoom In* had a much shorter installation timeline than most similar-sized exhibits that the center has assembled.

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Community-Wide Discussion Dec. 11 About the Stapleton Name

By Carol Roberts

After several months of conversations about the Stapleton name, five community organizations have jointly concluded that what’s needed now is to hear what residents and neighbors think. A decision was made to bring in a facilitator, Dr. Nita Mosby Tyler, who has skills and

experience in talking about issues associated with race and diversity, which can be emotional or contentious subjects. These will be public meetings for residents and people from surrounding neighborhoods to express their opinion on whether the neighborhood name should or should not be changed—and do it in a safe setting where they won’t be

called out for expressing an opinion, regardless of where they stand on the issue. Some individuals from the groups sponsoring the meetings have indicated they want to hear how the community feels, make a decision within their group, and move on with their mission—and not have this discussion continue over an extended time. The five organizations sponsoring the meetings are the MCA, SUN, the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB), the Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC), and the Stapleton Foundation.

Community Discussion About the Stapleton Name

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Changes in Stapleton Signage



In November, Forest City removed the Stapleton logo from the E. 29th Ave. Town Center monument sign.
Photo by Gregory Diggs

Forest City Vice President Tom Gleason responded by email to an inquiry about the removal of the Stapleton logo from the E. 29th Ave. Town Center sign at E. 29th Avenue and Quebec Street. “Forest City chose to remove the logo on our E. 29th Avenue Town Center monument sign as we evaluate managing our comprehensive signage program over the next two years. Given the monument sign is located in what’s been identified as the 29th Avenue neighborhood, this is an opportunity to promote the neighborhood location as opposed to reiterating the community name. The same philosophy has guided us in naming 11 new neighborhoods, 50 parks and 15 schools on the former airport property over the past 15 years without utilizing the Stapleton name.”

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Crossing attendants and A Line horns will continue pending the outcome of a hearing by the Public Utilities Commission.

PUC Grants Rehearing on A Line Crossings

By John Fernandez

Guidelines have been set for timing at street-level crossings of high-speed commuter trains because the regulators and operators are concerned that “if crossing lights flash for too long, people become distrustful of whether a train is coming at all,” according to a Public Utilities Commission (PUC) decision statement. In such situations, the fear is that frustrated motorists, cyclists or pedestrians might then try to cross the tracks in the face of an oncoming train. Horns and “crossing attendants” (i.e., flagpersons) have remained at street crossings along the A Line because RTD’s positive train control system has not been able to consistently meet the high bar on these timing regulations.

On Sept. 8, RTD applied to the Federal

Railroad Administration (FRA) for approval of the Positive Train Control (PTC) system based on the timing level they have achieved. FRA granted that approval on Sept. 28. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC), however, has separate authority to regulate rail crossings in Colorado. On Sept. 27, they denied a request from RTD to change the warning time scheme RTD had proposed before the A Line went into service. The scheme had been approved by the PUC but not achieved by RTD in actual train operations. RTD was requesting permission to change from a constant warning time to one that allows variable warning times. They asked for approval to add up to 15 seconds to the minimum 20-second warning time mandated by the federal government.

The denial from the Sept. 27 PUC meeting was issued in writing on October 25, and less than a week later, on Nov. 2, RTD filed an appeal of the PUC decision and requested to present additional information. On Nov. 9, the PUC Commission agreed to allow a rehearing of RTD’s application. As of this writing, the date for a rehearing has not been set but a PUC spokesman said a December hearing is possible.

Meanwhile, residents along the A Line continue to suffer from the loud horn soundings as the A Line trains pass through each crossing every seven and a half minutes during much of the day and night. Until PUC grants approval of the variable warning times requested by RTD, the applications by Denver and Aurora for a quiet zone will remain on hold.

It is unknown what new evidence RTD and its concessionaire, Denver Transit Partners, can provide the PUC. The commission’s October denial of the first three amended crossing time applications contains strong language. Some examples:

- “The warning times at these crossings are already longer than what we normally see at typical crossings in Colorado because of the large width of the crossings along this alignment.”
- “... the erratic operation of the gates at the crossings.”
- “The request by RTD to now provide up to an additional 15 seconds of warning time means the crossings would no longer provide a constant warning time, but rather an inconsistent warning time of anywhere from the warning time prescribed by the Commission to an additional 15 seconds above that prescribed warning time. This puts establishment of the quiet zones along these commuter rail corridors at jeopardy of not being able to be established because of inconsistent warning times at the crossings.”
- “Perhaps RTD’s Concessionaire has reached the point in time where the path forward to complete this project is a different warning system that will provide the required warning times at the crossing within an electrified power system environment.”

That last comment in the majority decision (Commissioners Jeffrey Ackerman and Wendy Moser) prompted a strong rebuttal by Commissioner Frances Koncilja: “As a result of this decision of the Majority, RTD is left with two unsatisfactory options: keep the flaggers in place—a solution that RTD has told this Commission is unsustainable ... or scrap the system (which will likely cost millions of dollars—we do not know how much) and ‘try something different.’”

At its Nov. 16 meeting, the commissioners expressed a desire to see the matter resolved in an expedited fashion.

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After 22 Years, Tower Lands Punch Bowl

By Courtney Drake-McDonough

The air traffic controllers guiding planes in and out of the old Stapleton Airport couldn't have imagined this new life for the building at the base of the control tower. And for years, despite committee meetings and brainstorming sessions, the committee searching for a reuse of the tower couldn't imagine it either.

Then, almost two decades after the airport closed, Councilman Chris Herndon thought of Robert Thompson, who has made a commitment to saving and renovating old structures for his Punch Bowl Socials throughout the country. It was a match made in heaven as far as the community was concerned. After three years of construction, the building in the shadow of the control tower now has a new life



Three days before opening, owner Robert Thompson (right), executive chef Brad Conroy (middle), and general manager Matt Boutwell pause briefly for a photo at the Punch Bowl Social entrance as final preparations for opening swirled around them in the building that had been sitting empty since 1995.

as Punch Bowl Social, an "Eatertainment" destination with 15,000 square feet inside and 14,000 outside—a southern-style restaurant with bowling, numerous games and activities, and space where customers can put their feet up and relax in a lounge chair. The building's aviation history dictated Punch Bowl's design aesthetic. "We're celebrating the 1950s' golden era of flight," says Thompson. "Think about those old Pan Am ads you see from the '50s and '60s—that was a lot of our inspiration for what we're doing." At the entrance is a hostess station made from an old trunk. A stair railing with mid-century modern, geometric laser cutouts of airplanes. The Stapleton Punch Bowl Social is the first Punch Bowl to have an expansive outdoor space with games, a beer



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garden and unique lounging spaces. That includes a tongue-in-cheek, 18-inch-deep astro-turf-filled swimming pool with lounge chairs where guests can linger and, says Thompson, dip their toes “in the water that’s not there.”

The Stapleton location’s menu is the same as the Broadway location, which changes seasonally and is sourced from many Colorado vendors to support local business and reduce the company’s carbon footprint. At the helm of the culinary program is Hugh Acheson, a James

Beard award-winning, *Top Chef* judge, cookbook author and restaurateur. Thompson says their histories and experiences make for

an ironic pairing. “I’m from Mississippi originally but I like the modern stuff—I like what the South is becoming more than I like its history,” says Thompson. “Hugh is a Canadian who moved to Georgia and sort of adopted the South so he and I work really well together because we create these menu concepts that are some combination of what my view of what the South is *becoming* and his Canadian interpretation of what he thought the South *was*. It’s really fun.”

The concept of combining punch served in vintage punch bowls with southern-inspired cuisine and an entertainment venue came naturally to Thompson who opened a similar concept 20 years ago. Then, as a 25-year-old, he wrote a business plan, raised \$2.2 million and opened a 22,000-square-foot upscale pool hall and restaurant. “For me, it started with being young enough back then that I was not risk-averse,” says Thompson. “I’ve always had a willingness to take some educated risks.” With the Punch Bowl Social concept, Thompson took a restaurateur’s perspective and applied it to the entertainment side of the business. “That’s what I saw was missing out there, and I had the background to accomplish it with Punch Bowl.



Bar manager Patrick Sproull shakes up a drink at the downstairs bar in the main entry area.

I took those disciplines I used in the past and applied them to the restaurant space, understanding that the current generation of millennials really wants an experience.”

Thompson thinks the demographics for the Stapleton Punch Bowl Social won’t be all that different from the Broadway location. He thinks weekend brunches and early dinners are going to be extremely popular with families. Bowling, and other games, inside and out, will appeal to multiple generations. Private karaoke rooms will likely be popular during the day for tween and teen parties, but will be taken over by adults later at night. Because of the type of liquor license

they have, after 10 pm, guests under age 21 are not allowed at Punch Bowl. Stapleton residents told Thompson they wanted a place where the whole family could go but that they also wanted a place they could go late at night. “I think the profile of the location is going to act exactly like the local community wants it to—we can’t control that—they decide how to activate us.”

Thompson keeps his finger on the pulse of things from the company’s corporate offices on the third floor. Previously, the office was in Glendale but it helped justify the expense of the Stapleton renovation to get multiple uses out of the building. The shorter

commute to work from his Park Hill home is an added perk for Thompson.

When asked if he’d do the whole Punch Bowl Social project again if he knew then what he knows now, Thompson says, “100 percent! We’d do it again, absolutely.”



Punch Bowl has two bowling lanes on the ground level in addition to these four lanes on the second level. Mid-century modern sofas and fox hunting photos create an unexpected home-like atmosphere around the bowling lanes. Left: Airline and travel themes are woven into the decor. Here a bookshelf style wall of suitcases surrounds the area where bowling shoes are stored.



Behind this circular bar on the east side of the second floor are two karaoke rooms that can be rented by up to eight people. Other rental activities include bowling, bocce, bonzini and ping pong. Elsewhere around the facility are an array of free activities including board games, giant Jenga, darts and bags.



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Chris Schmitt (left) and fellow soldiers are pictured in Texas where they had intensive training for six weeks before mobilization to the Middle East.
—Photos courtesy of Chris Schmitt

A Soldier's Story

(continued from page 1) "We thought we had a year to plan the wedding, but after I got called up we went to the courthouse and got married," says Chris, a non-commissioned officer (NCO) in the Colorado National Guard.

Chris was deployed from August of 2016 to July of 2017, at Fort Carson and Fort Bliss, Texas, for training and then to Iraq.

Chris, 39, a supervisor of training units for once-a-month reserve soldiers

at Buckley Air Force Base, was surprised when he got the call. "I always know I can be deployed, and I knew my unit was ready to mobilize, but I had been told I wasn't going. It turned out they needed an experienced NCO to run the platoon, so I went."

Before 9/11, the National Guard was less-often deployed overseas. "We wear more than one hat, between helping in Colorado and in national missions," Chris says. "Since things ramped up, it's not a shock to get deployed overseas. If the Army needs you, you step up."

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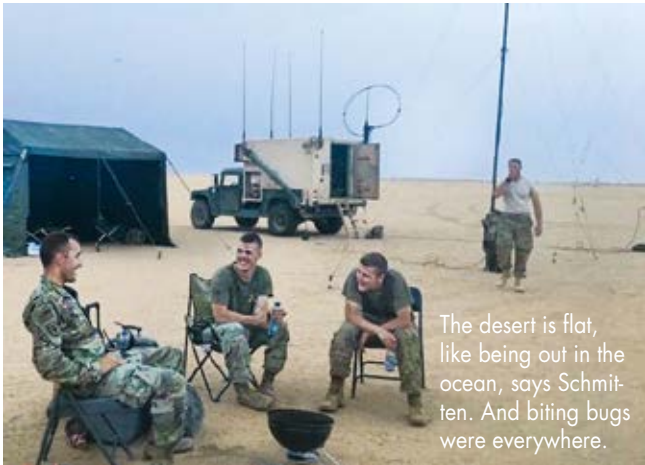


Left: General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, signed the platoon's wall on Christmas Day. Schmitten says that was "a big deal" for the troops. Above: Thanksgiving dinner.

Chris was a platoon sergeant in Iraq, in charge of 18 men and four women from Aurora. "They were an artillery unit comprised of police officers, firefighters and Costco workers," he says. "Seventy percent were in their 20s, and one was 18. Our job was loading, cleaning and shooting the rockets, while keeping the weapons system in top shape.

"Every day I made sure my guys were emotionally and physically fit, and actively engaged in something. Some days there's not a lot to do, so I made sure they were working on something like their schoolwork. I was like their father; they'd tell me about their issues at home and I'd listen and help them work through it. Keeping them safe was my No. 1 priority."

Chris' surroundings in Iraq were a far cry from Colorado. "The landscape is very different: vast, flat and lonely. It's dangerous anytime you are in the Middle East. You have to be aware and take precautions. We were continuously training, in case something happened. We had security around the perimeter of our camps, as well as inside.



The desert is flat, like being out in the ocean, says Schmitt. And biting bugs were everywhere.

The flat desert is like being out in the ocean: we could see people coming from a long distance away. I was always on guard; for over 300 days I put my platoon's safety first. I'm glad to be home."

He said the desert bugs were a challenge. "There are lots of bugs everywhere; I wore a scarf on my bald head because the bugs bite. The locusts are like giant grasshoppers that bite. It can be miserable. So you focus on the people. It helped that I was deployed with other Colorado people so we could talk about home and the mountains."

Occasional barbecues gave them a break from the chow hall food. "We got tired of eating MREs [packaged, ready-to-eat meals] all the time, so we'd barbecue some ribs. It reminded us of home."

The holidays were a difficult time. "It was tough for my guys," said Chris. "A lot came out during the holidays.

But we were like family, we got through it together."

Kim says she was concerned for his safety. "He sheltered me; he always said he was safe. But I worried for him every day, especially when he moved around. In scarier places there was less communication. He'd tell me in code where he was, by referring to conversations we had had about those places.

"I'd see the news so I knew

it was scary. At some point I stopped watching the news," says Kim. "I didn't even decorate because it didn't feel like Christmas."

Spending a year apart is a challenge for any couple, especially for newlyweds. "Our first year married, we were 5,000 miles apart," said Chris. "It was hard to keep the newlywed vibe going, but we did."

Communications were difficult, Chris said. "We had email and morale calls, but it took trial and error to get around the time difference. Internet connections were spotty; we got FaceTime in Kuwait but sometimes we couldn't call or email for days.

"So we wrote letters. It was cute to see the younger people writing love letters. Kim sent care packages with snacks and love notes. She sent the *Front Porch* every month. I love our community and that kept me in touch. It took me away from where I was to read about life back home."



After spending the first year of their marriage apart, Chris and Kimberly Schmitten had a joyful reunion on July 8, 2017.



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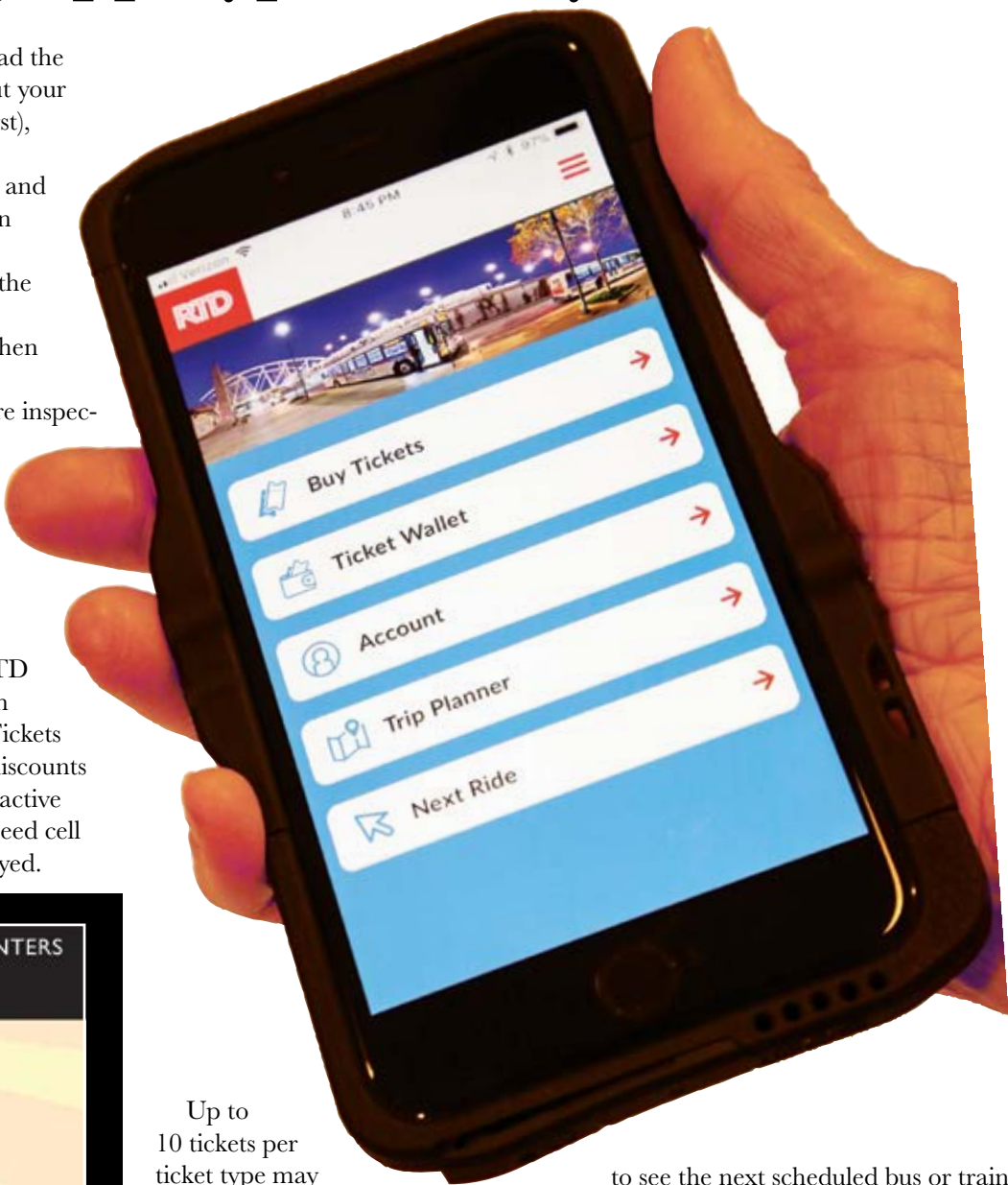
New RTD Mobile Ticketing App Bypasses Payment Hassles

By John Fernandez

RTD patrons now have a new way to avoid paper tickets or cash payments to ride the agency's trains and buses—a "mobile ticket" that is purchased with a credit card using the free "RTD Mobile Tickets" app for Apple or Android devices. The mobile ticketing app, which should accelerate boarding procedures, supports purchase of a day-long pass within a selected fare category (Local or Regional/Airport). One-way ticket purchases are not available on the app. The day pass expires at 2:59am on the day after purchase, whether or not the electronic ticket is used. RTD spokesperson Tina Jaquez says the agency hopes to refine the service next year to allow tickets to be purchased in advance of the day one wants to travel.

- Using the app to buy a ticket:
- On the day of travel, select the ticket type (choose regular or discount fare, also choose single or enter number of tickets).
 - Enter credit card information (as of

- our test, if you then choose to read the terms and conditions, it wipes out your credit card info, so read terms first), choose whether to save the card.
- Approve the transaction amount and a "Transaction Successful" screen appears.
 - Go to the Ticket Wallet and tap the name of the pass just purchased.
 - Wait until just before boarding, then choose "Activate Ticket."
 - Show activated ticket(s) to the fare inspector. An activated ticket displays a moving timestamp to help prevent taking a screenshot of a ticket and sharing it with someone else or otherwise using tickets fraudulently.
- The mobile ticket is available for day pass purchases on all regular RTD services, but not special services such as BroncosRide or Access-a-Ride. Tickets cost the same as cash, and normal discounts are available (e.g., seniors, children, active military). Purchased tickets do not need cell phone or Wi-Fi services to be displayed.



Up to 10 tickets per ticket type may be obtained in a single purchase, with a maximum of 20 tickets per ticket type in a day. Tickets for each passenger must be activated before boarding an RTD vehicle. Email receipts are available for all mobile ticketing purchases.

The "Trip Planner" function enables users to enter starting and ending locations to find the best route using RTD bus and train services.

The "Next Ride" function allows users to enter a route, stop or station

to see the next scheduled bus or train.

The RTD Mobile Tickets app, first available in October, joins the "MyRide" service that RTD that debuted in May. With MyRide, transit riders load a card with up to \$200 and tap it on a validator before boarding a bus or train. MyRide purchases are valid for unlimited one-way trips within that direction of travel and a selected fare category (Local or Regional/Airport) during a three-hour transfer window. Each rider must have their own card.

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Felicité (2017—Senegal)



Not long ago, Senegal was one of the top filmmaking countries in the world. Senegal native and filmmaking legend Ousmane Sembene was primarily responsible for the rise and apex of the industry in his native country, but he passed away in 2007 and the industry fell on hard times. Losing its voice and leader, the country then lost many of its theaters in an economic downturn. The once flourishing industry is now making a comeback, and we are starting to see more cinema from this proud country. *Felicité*, directed by Alain Gomis and starring the wonderful Véro Tshanda

Beya Mputu as the titular character, is the highlight of this re-emergence.

The film tells the story of Felicité, a singer in a small bar and a single mother living in Kinshasa. The opening sequence in the bar is lively, enigmatic, alluring, and engrossing. The rest of the film, while see-sawing between frenetic and thoughtful, will retain the wonderful humanist qualities from that opening sequence and always recall the elegance, ebullience, and defiance of Sembene’s cinema. This is a film that deserves to be *felt* as much as watched, and the

emotions and rhythms—both of the film and the music therein—track the action beautifully.

The plot turns early in the film as Felicité learns that her son is in the hospital after an accident. Just getting to the hospital is an adventure through the streets of Kinshasa, but once there, she finds

that her son may lose his leg if not operated on immediately. The catch: she has to pay an unruly amount of money, in cash, right away. Of course, she doesn’t have the money, and she has to (literally) fight and scrape for it. She gets some help, but her strong will and passion rule the day. Still, nothing ends tidily in this world.

The film is wonderfully shot, with an abundance of close-ups on Mputu; the director knew what he had in her and concentrated his camera on her wonderful performance. The close-ups have the effect of getting us “close” to the character and en-

veloping us in her world. That world may be small, but it is dense and complicated. The cinematography is also beautiful, vacillating between dusty realism and darker, stylized sequences. The aforementioned music is omnipresent and lush, and serves as “a chorus,” according to director Gomis: “it’s a way of saying ‘Once upon a time ...’ and having a distance, to allow the film to be something other than a social drama, and to produce a dialogue between the viewer and the film.”

That dialogue is a breath of fresh air.

You’ll enjoy this film if you liked *Boyhood*, *Girlhood*, and/or *Hidden Figures*.

Opens 12/8 at the Sie Film Center.

Stranger Things 2 (Netflix)

“Are you always so serious, Piturro? (sometimes)

“Do you only watch dark, disturbing films?” (mostly)

“Do you ever watch comedies?” (never)

These are typical questions (and my answers) I receive from readers and students. Most think I sit around in dark rooms watching dreary and devastating films every night (that is partially correct). But I do have a sense of humor, and I do have my guilty pleasures. *Stranger Things* is one of them, and some of that is because I grew up during the time period depicted in the film. And yes, if you’ve seen season one, the ’80s are still very much alive in season two; only this time so much so that they become a character in the film, sometimes even annoyingly so. But the charms of season one that made the show the sleeper hit that eventually caught *fire* are still there: the quirky storytelling, the



ridiculous plot, the sorely lacking parents, the ’80s backdrop, and the wonderful cast of kids. Oh those kids!

Seasons two of many shows falter when they either try to copy exactly what they did in season one or rather, do a complete U-turn from season one. The best sequels give us just enough of the good stuff from the original and add a dash of change and a spoonful of spice. *Stranger Things 2* does just that: we get two new (substantial) characters in Joyce’s boyfriend Bob (Sean Astin), and Max (Sadie Sink), a (gasp!) girl who is added to “the party,” as the boys call themselves. We also get more of the bad guys—who turn into not-so-bad-guys along the way—and we get more of the “upside-down” as well. The most lauded aspect of season one, however, is where season two also shines: Mille Bobbie Brown. Brown is again sparkling as Eleven. She and the boys really carry the show and remain the heart of the show. And that is exactly why you should turn off *The Cure* for a few minutes and get binging on *Stranger Things 2*! Totally.

You will enjoy this show if you enjoyed the first season of *Stranger Things*, *Stand by Me*, and/or *Super 8*.

Now awaiting your binge on Netflix.

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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Hygge = Coziness, Contentment...

By Anne Hebert

When Denver's sunset arrives at 4:35pm on Dec. 1, sun-loving Coloradans may find themselves bemoaning the dark and cold that befalls them for 14 and a half hours a day as winter officially approaches. They might want to adopt the Scandinavian concept of hygge.

Hygge (pronounced hoo-gah, hue-gah or hee-gah depending on whom you talk to) is a fundamental aspect of Scandinavian culture that has no direct English translation—but its approximate meaning is “a concept that evokes coziness.” A growing topic on lifestyle blogs and sites like Pinterest, the practice of hygge means cultivating and enjoying the small moments in life, creating a sense of contentment, inspiration and appreciation. A hygge lifestyle represents an alternative to fast-paced American culture, incorporating more of this Scandinavian custom into our own lives and the lives of loved ones.

Hygge is starting to show up in the marketing of U.S. businesses, associating the concept of hygge with goods and services that range from health and wellness to clothing and décor.

Two such businesses in Stapleton are just getting off the ground.

Living in Sweden and working in Denmark gave Stapleton resident Amanda Meyer a firsthand understanding of hygge. “As part of surviving the long Scandinavian winters, I became drawn in by flickering candles and a sense of coziness,” she explains. The simple, streamlined aspects of hygge seemed a natural fit for a neighborhood business concept. Meyer says “marketplace shopping” has reintroduced consumers to the “butcher, baker, candlestick maker” experience with shops and vendors offering small batch merchandise and personalized service.

Meyer began Hygge Cashmere by re-styling and giving new life to cashmere sweaters and selling them at a reasonable price point. “Cashmere is known for its soft comfort,” says Meyer. “It’s completely hygge.” When considering a marketing strategy, Meyer realized her front porch, near the Stanley Marketplace, draws regular travel by pedestrians, cyclists and cars. She collaborated with other vendors who embrace the hygge concept and began Posh Porch, a pop-up shopping experience open several times a year to sell handmade



Tara Duncan and Miki Tynan will open Hygge Birth and Baby in Stapleton in 2018. As certified doulas, they share a passion for helping women experience an empowering and tranquil birth experience surrounded by a “tribe” of family and friends.

clothing, furniture, kitchen items and gifts. Her plan is to continue to grow and eventually open a brick-and-mortar location.

A Posh Porch holiday event will be held at 9198 E. 25th Drive on Dec. 9 and 10 from 11am–4pm. For information, email amandapacker@yahoo.com or call 303.717.8763.

Founders of another local company, Hygge Birth and Baby, also say the concept of hygge was part of the inspiration for their new business. Stapleton residents Miki Tynan and Tara Duncan, as certified doulas, share a passion for helping women avoid an unpleasant birth experience. “That’s where hygge came in,” says Duncan. “Hygge Birth and Baby is a place and state of mind that empowers women to deliver their baby in an intimate, cozy atmosphere where they feel most comfortable.”

Doulas provide continuous physical, emotional and informational support to a mother before, during and shortly after childbirth.

Duncan and Tynan will open the Hygge Birth and Baby birthing center in Stapleton in mid 2018. They envision a tranquil, hygge birth environment incorporating earthy, natural elements. “Our emphasis at the birthing center will be on a sense of community,” explains Duncan. “A woman can be surrounded by her ‘tribe’ consisting of her doulas, family and friends to help enhance her birth experience.” The center will also offer home birth services attended by hygge-certified doulas. A partnership with the University of Colorado Hospital will provide access to the facility and its physicians and nurses should the need arise. For more information about Hygge Birth and Baby, visit www.hyggebirthandbabydenver.com.

Amanda Meyer, Rosemary Jackson and Craig Jackson (back row) and Olivia Meyer, Madelyn Jackson and Vivian Meyer (front row) are pictured at the “Posh Porch,” a Hygge-inspired pop-up shopping experience. Meyer was introduced to Hygge while living in Sweden and Denmark.



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One aspect of hygge could be described as the positive feelings we have when we spend time with people we care about. This setting at a popular street food market in Copenhagen would be considered hygge-like.

By Carol Roberts

Shortly after hearing the word hygge for the first time this past spring, we had the opportunity to stay with a family in Norway and visit Copenhagen, Denmark. The translation “cozy” is said to be about 80% of the word’s meaning. Our trip offered the opportunity to learn about the other twenty percent.

When we first asked about hygge, we sensed, not an unwillingness to talk, but, a slight pause that seemed to mean, “It’s such a well-known part of everyone’s life that no one feels a need to define it.” Our guide in Copenhagen said, “It’s sort of bred into you at a very early age. Everyone knows what it is to be hygge. With the Danes, they don’t think about it too much. It just occurs.” Ivar, a late 20s young man in our host family said it this way, “Norwegians feel it’s almost like a human right to have hygge.”

Between conversations on our trip, books, magazine articles and online comments, we have pieced together some of the hard-to-define aspects of what hygge is to the Scandinavians.

Translating hygge as coziness implies a kind of physical comfort—but hygge is more about good feelings in interactions with others. It is an attitude of mindfulness and being present in the moment.

It is a way of being with other people. It’s appreciating the simple things in life. A Scandinavian commented online, “American life is so rushed. You have to slow down for it. Hygge is not something you can do in a rush.” Another said, “You can’t just go out with your high salary and buy hygge like a package that you can install. You need to spend time on it.”

Norway and Denmark are consistently at the top of a survey called the World Happiness Report (the U.S. placed 14th this year)—and hygge

seems to be an essential component of the happiness formula that keeps them there.

But understanding hygge requires some understanding of Scandinavian culture—where wellbeing, work-life balance and egalitarianism are promoted by the government. “You’d struggle to find a Norwegian who wants to work more than the 40-hour week,” commented Ivar. In Denmark, the official work week is 37 hours long. That leaves 16.3 non-work hours in the day for work-life balance. And other factors also contribute to a culture where hygge can thrive. When Danish workers get laid off or chose to change jobs, the government provides unemployment and training for a new job. The government also provides health care and higher education.

In the book *Living Danishly* (which is both informational and humorous), the British author Helen Russell does a one-on-one happiness survey of the people she meets

while living in Denmark. So far, she has only met 8s, 9s and 10s on a scale of 10. She learns that with higher taxes to pay for the government benefits, Danes have discovered that after their basic needs are met, more money doesn’t lead to more happiness.

They focus on what gives them a better quality of life. A trash collector explains that he’s happy to work five hours a day, keep in touch with the lives of those on his route, and coach a soccer team after work.

Some Americans are finding hygge-like time in our rushed culture, but the Scandinavian meaning of the word seems to require a compatible culture for it to thrive in the way it exists there.

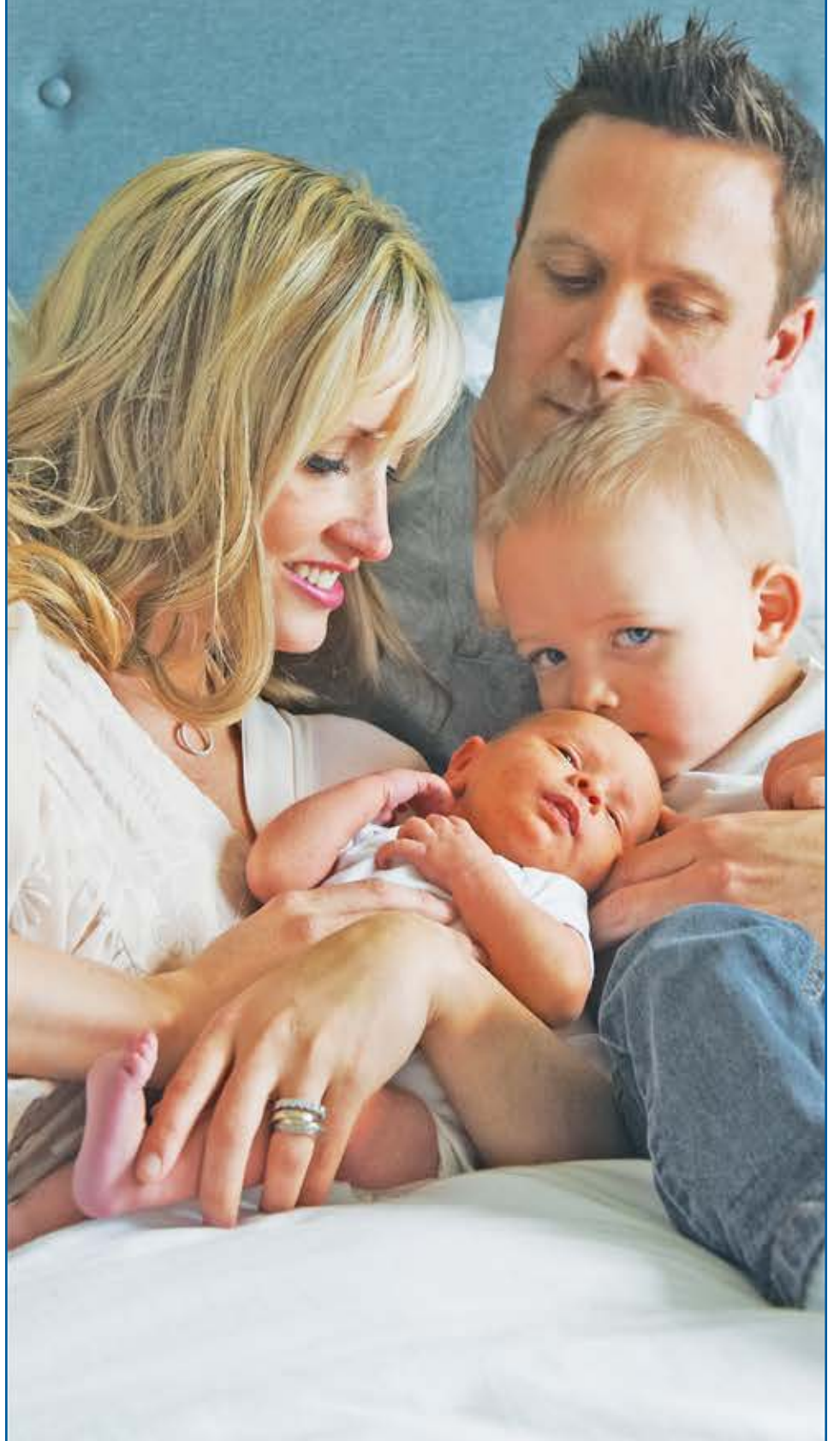


As is now happening in the U.S., businesses in Norway and Denmark use hygge to create an association with positive feelings, as seen on this gift shop sign. A bar called itself the hyggeligste (coziest) backyard in Copenhagen. And there, of course, everyone understands what the word means.



Many families in Norway have a cabin where they get away on weekends and holidays (which are more frequent than in the U.S.) for hygge time—enjoying simple pleasures and spending time with loved ones.

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Community Rallies Around Middle School

By Melinda Pearson
Local middle school, Denver Discovery School (DDS), is in transition. With the sudden departure of three lead administrators in as many months and the revelation of budgetary and other woes, the tight-knit school community is rallying to regain its footing.

In 2014, DDS opened in the Greater Park Hill/Stapleton (GPH/S) enrollment zone, helmed by first-time principal, Kristen Atwood. Innovation plans called for a small, 360-student school that promised large-school amenities and high achievement. Like its big-school counterpart, McAuliffe International, DDS offered a longer school day and robust electives in addition to traditional core classes. DDS also provided personalized and project-based learning.

Problems and Solutions
Flash forward to 2017, and things have changed. Atwood unexpectedly resigned in August, and Dana Ellis came on board as in-

terim principal. Transparency took the forefront, as veteran principal Ellis began to communicate openly with parents about a host of issues, including budgetary woes, discipline and teacher retention.

Ellis stepped down due to health reasons in November, and the school is seeking new leadership. But in the wake of the turmoil, “people are coming together. It’s difficult, but we’re working together to get through it,” said parent Ann Margaret Williams, who is chair of parent-teacher organization, Friends of Denver Discovery School (FODDS).

Budget
To the surprise of many, Ellis revealed that DDS had overspent by about \$250,000 over multiple years. According to DPS Deputy Superintendent Susana Cordova, DPS had been aware and counselled Atwood. “Over time, the previous administration looked at having more students in an effort...to offer a more robust course of studies,” said Cordova. Enrollment had substantially increased to 450 students, but the additional



When Denver Discovery School first opened in the fall of 2014, students lined up to welcome their teachers with high fives.

funding those students brought wasn’t enough to cover program costs.
To balance the budget, interim principal Ellis let go an assistant principal, and DPS has paid back the school’s budget shortfall. In addition, parents and the Stapleton Foundation rallied to raise over \$70,000 this year through FODDS. DPS will also provide additional budget assistance this year, said Cordova.

Culture
Concerns about school culture emerged as a priority this fall. Issues ranged widely, including student defiance, fighting between students and safety incidents, according to reports in the school newsletter and police records.

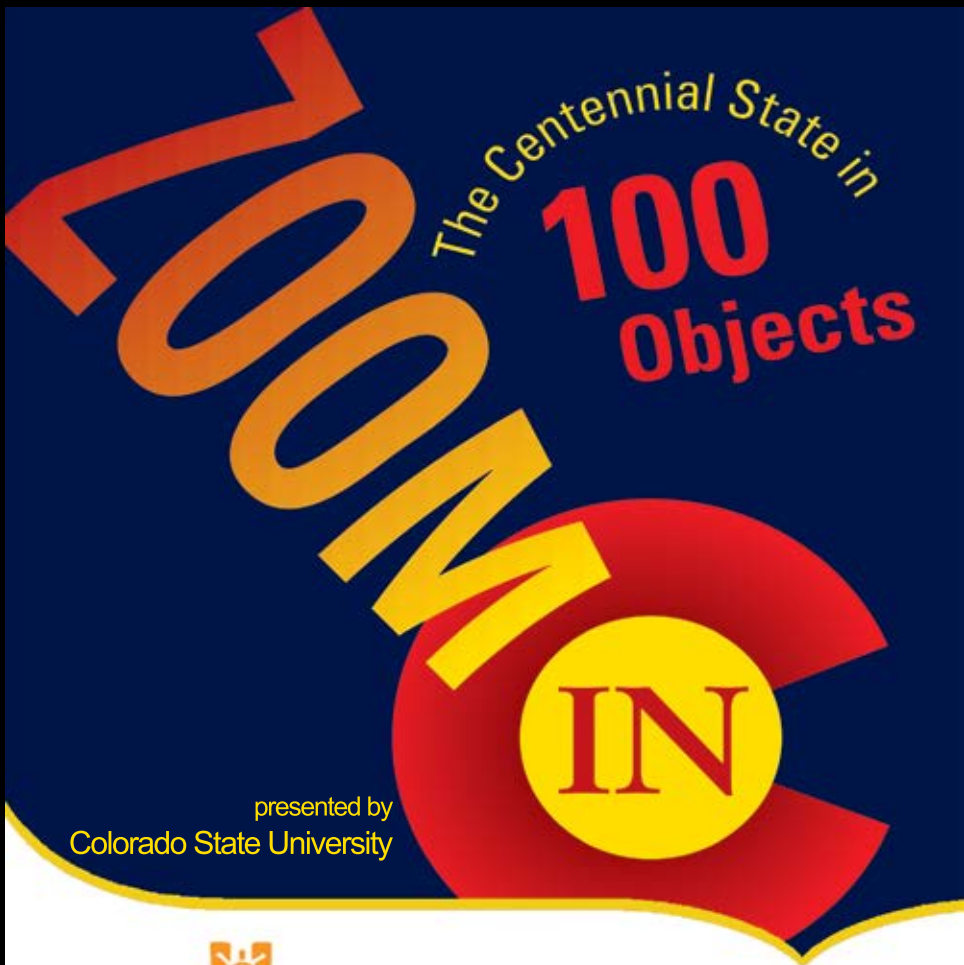
In response, the community stepped in. A new behavioral expectations plan was developed and DDS held a schoolwide community event, “Denver’s Not Alone,” “to increase personal power and self-esteem, to shift dangerous peer pressure to positive peer support, and to eliminate the acceptability of teasing, violence, and all forms of oppression.” DDS is in the district’s “top ten” list

of schools, said Cordova, prioritized to receive support around equity, opportunity and social emotional needs. Williams noted that many new parents have contacted her about getting involved in improving the school.

Academics
DDS dropped to “Yellow” status from “Green” on recent School Performance Framework (SPF) reports. In part, the shift resulted from poor performance on measures of academic gaps for historically underserved students. But in part, growth scores on standardized tests for all students showed a marked decline from 2016 to 2017, with math growth particularly concerning. Growth scores compare students to ones who scored similarly in the past and indicate that almost every subgroup of students at DDS underperformed their peers in the 2017 tests, especially in math.

But the community is responding. According to FODDS meeting minutes, goals for improving academics include “training teachers on behavior management/discipline and culture/diversity, reducing classroom sizes as able, and staffing adjustments to better utilize

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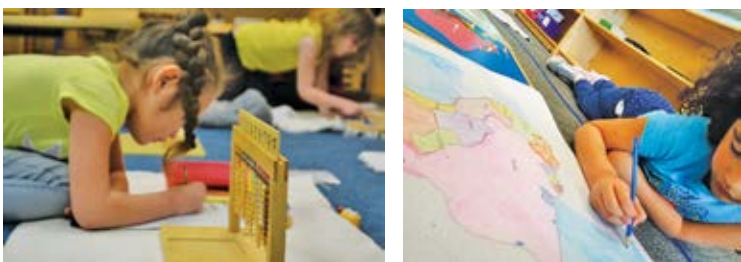
HistoryColoradoCenter.org

The Dance Institute logo features a stylized figure of a dancer. Below it, the text reads 'Making Memories for a Lifetime'. There are two photos of dancers: one of a young girl in a black leotard and one of two girls in blue dresses.

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teachers’ untapped talents.”

Teacher Retention

DDS has a higher than average rate of teacher turnover, according to Instructional Superintendent Heather Haines, and parents have been very concerned. To turn the school around, “what helps is teacher morale and strong leadership,” says parent Debbie Marshall. “If you have a strong leader, parent support, good morale, teachers can do really hard things.”

Parents are working to support the teachers, while the district is providing funds to hire paraprofessionals since a quarter of classes have more than 30 students. Haines says teachers will participate in school hiring and continue to engage in teacher-led professional development. The school is also carving out more professional development time, perhaps by shortening the 8-hour school day or adding late-start or early-release days. The incoming sixth grade class will be around 125 students, 15 less than current grades.

Leadership

The pressures of competition within the GPH/S enrollment zone may have led the previous administration to make some unsustainable programming choices. “A lot of our advice to Kristen was...be the best DDS, you don’t have to be McAuliffe,” said Cordova.

New leadership is needed to fulfill the school’s original vision. As Marshall says, “Whoever the new leader is going to be, that’s going to be so important.” The Principal Advisory Committee has been formed and a survey sent to identify desirable characteristics. Candidates will be identified and interviewed in December, with a new leader coming on board in January.

Parents and administrators agree that the school is now moving in the right direction. The parent community is committed to “moving on and moving forward,” said Williams. The district is equally invested. “We know how important schools are to communities and to families. It is always our goal to work in collaboration with our kids and their families on making our schools the best that we can,” says Cordova.



Photos courtesy of the First Gear Skid School

The Skidcar System® attaches to the bottom of a vehicle and simulates skids on wet or dry pavement. Used as a training tool, it helps teach drivers to respond safely on slick and icy roads.

By Anne Hebert

When a vehicle starts to skid, a rush of adrenaline may prompt drivers to make accident-causing errors. Colorado drivers know this feeling all too well as winter driving conditions can make city and mountain driving nothing short of treacherous.

Michal Michalkow, an emergency medical technician (EMT) and owner of First Gear Skid School, has seen firsthand the aftermath of accidents that occur when road conditions are poor. The inspiration for opening his school came from the realization that drivers, if properly trained, can avoid many roadway crashes.

The school, which initially trained first responders, now trains licensed drivers of all ages. Michalkow points out that most driver education courses don’t include winter and hazardous driving instruction—and lack of experience and the temptations of distracted driving can create a dangerous combination on icy roads.

Using the Skidcar System®, a mechanism that attaches to the bottom of a vehicle and simulates skids and spin-outs, Michalkow instructs four to five students per class to “handle a vehicle in stress-

ful situations.” Focusing on a “point of fixation,” he teaches students to look where they want to go in a skid instead of concentrating on the direction they want to avoid. “It’s amazing how well this technique works,” he says. “Through repetition and a one-step-at-a-time approach, students learn skills and retain muscle memory to react appropriately in hazardous conditions.”

Stapleton neighbors Will Draper and Lily Martin became licensed drivers in 2017. A driver education course and behind-the-wheel practice taught them rules of the road, basic safety and responsible driving tips. What neither teen experienced was hands-on training that addressed driving in adverse weather and hazardous road conditions.

Knowing he would feel better about his son’s safety with some additional training, Will’s dad, Doug Draper, researched

hazardous driving schools and decided on the First Gear Skid School class to give his son an added layer of experience and confidence. Will and Lily took the class together and Doug went “along for the ride” to learn for himself what the training entailed.

A junior at George Washington High School, Will says he experienced his first vehicle skid during training. Will drives his sister and cousin to school in his 2003 Subaru and was slightly nervous about the prospect of driving on icy streets. He says he was glad to have a chance to learn what losing control of a car feels like in a controlled setting.

Lily, also apprehensive about driving in bad weather, wanted to learn the skills it takes “to respond confidently” if her car begins to slide on slick roads. “Learning to turn into the skid was new and kind of scary,” she says. It took her a while to get used to it, but once she did “it wasn’t that hard.”

Both teens said they felt safe the entire time. “Michal put everyone at ease before we ever got into the car,” Draper says. Martin adds that the class “put responsible driving in perspective.” “It’s nice to know I can keep myself and others safe,” she says.


First Gear Skid School sessions are held almost year-round and begin with an hour of classroom instruction followed by three hours of behind-the-wheel instruction. Michalkow says students take turns driving and “have the chance to learn from their mistakes and those of their classmates.”

For more information about First Gear Skid School, visit www.firstgearskidschool.com or call 720.202.6414.



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Panasonic Riding Data to the Future



The 100,000-square-foot operations hub houses 30,000 square feet of office space, storage and testing areas including an auto “buck” for simulating the experience of driving an autonomous vehicle, and a test-bed for Panasonic’s high-density Wi-Fi equipment.

By John Fernandez

Riding RTD’s A Line train past the 61st & Peña station, the view to the east is of a warehouse-looking building highlighted by pulsating colored lights and a big “Panasonic” sign. This is Panasonic’s one-year-old operations hub for a new business unit focusing on “smart cities.”

Panasonic Enterprise Solutions Company reflects the Japanese electronics giant’s shift in emphasis away from consumer electronics to a business-to-business and business-to-government focus. This new corporate direction began with the redevelopment of an obsolete factory site in Japan at Fujisawa into the world’s first sustainable smart town. Residents there rely on solar energy by day and fuel cells and batteries at night. Few people own cars because public transit and shared vehicles are readily accessible.

Panasonic’s Peter Jacobson, who focuses

on smart buildings and smart energy, says the scale of Panasonic’s projects will range from buildings to districts to corridors and cities. Since one company can’t provide all the technologies, Panasonic is positioning itself to be the “trusted partner” in planning and deploying systems for such large projects.

Denver out-competed 22 other cities seeking the new research facility because of the city’s “progressive reputation relative to technology and their strong commitment to regional collaboration,” says Jacobson. Indeed, Colorado has recently seen announcements of a number of new, high-tech projects. In mid-November, the Colorado Department of Transportation announced it will partner with Arrivo to test a high-speed transportation pod system along the E-470 corridor near DIA. This follows on the heels of the state’s selection in September as one of 10 “global” finalists in the Hyperloop competition to demonstrate the feasibility of an airline-speed vacuum tube transportation system.

One of the challenges, acknowl-

edged Jacobson, is to bring Panasonic’s comprehensive approach to North America and translate it to Western values. For example, at the Fujisawa Sustainable Smart Town

in Japan, the accepted balance between privacy and security may be different than in the U.S. To ensure safety, smart cameras there recognize people who live in the town, and those who



Peter Jacobson, a “Sustainability Consultant” with Panasonic, sits outside a mock-up control room being used to test a “data ecosystem” between vehicles and traffic management systems for CDOT’s RoadX program.

FOR KIDS (cont’)



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Building a Smart City

The goal is to develop the 382-acre site, called Peña Station NEXT, into a local version of the Fujisawa smart city. A study to determine how the project can go from net power positive to become carbon neutral will be finished early in 2018 and will provide guidelines for developer L.C. Fulenwider Inc. to create a mixed-use community with residential, retail, offices, dining, hotels and parks.

At Peña Station NEXT, Panasonic is the “major tenant and smart and sustainable general contractor for this living lab,” according to George Karayannis, executive director of Real Estate Development Solutions at Panasonic. He says the lab serves three purposes: “To vet emerging technologies, to validate the vendors, and most importantly, to create a business case for deployment of these technologies.”

Technologies under evaluation by the Panasonic CityNOW team include:

- A micro-grid merging solar panels with back-up batteries with a goal of energy self-sufficiency.



- Smart street lights that dim with increased ambient light and can flash in emergencies.
- Video-camera-based smart parking sensors.
- An “array of things sensor,” a small, beehive-looking device sometimes referred to as a “Fitbit for cities,” able to sense and measure many variables of interest to infrastructure managers, such as temperature, air particles (air quality), noise, humidity and solar cloud coverage. It can also count cars and people to help with parking and traffic flow.
- Electric vehicle charging stations.
- Autonomous electric shuttles with its partner EasyMile (see September 2016 *Front Porch* article frontporchne.com/article/a-glimpse-of-the-future/).
- Connected vehicle technology such as is being deployed as part of CDOT's RoadX project.
- High-density Wi-Fi for use in settings such as stadiums and concert venues.

Future Activities

Future activities at Panasonic's CityNow site will include:

Peter Jacobson stands next to the batteries that help create a net-power positive micro-grid at Peña Station NEXT. The rooftop solar array is 259kW using Panasonic's high-efficiency HIT panels.



- Deployment of an “interactive kiosk” at the 61st and Peña Station NEXT enabling users to get real time information on transportation, shopping, dining and emergency service options.
- Creation of a smart mobility test lab.
- Construction of a “Smart City Innovation Showcase,” an immersive main street to demonstrate all manner of smart city technologies in an intimate setting.

Jacobson says these technologies are organized around five “solution pillars” of activities at Peña Station, all preceded by the word “smart”: energy, buildings, living (emphasis on dwellings), streets and mobility.

Despite the whiz-bang appeal of the various technologies, Karayannis says the biggest challenge is developing the business models that allow for a profitable collaboration among many stakeholders. The micro-grid is a good example, requiring participation by not only Panasonic but key players such as Xcel Energy, Denver International Airport, the City and County of Denver, land developer L.C. Fulenwider, multiple hardware and software vendors and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

Beyond Peña Station NEXT

A Panasonic project with the Colorado Department of Transportation's RoadX program may be able to reduce crashes by



as much as 80 percent and vastly increase roadway capacity, says Amy Ford, CDOT's communications director. That project will determine the best way to communicate information about road conditions and the vehicles themselves to drivers and eventually to self-driving cars. Two options are being considered for this “statewide data ecosystem.”

One option is the use of existing cellular phone networks. This option, available through an app, may be deployed along I-70 between Golden and Vail as soon as this spring, says Ford. That service is being developed by HERE, a German-owned mapping and “real-time transportation data analytics” provider.

The second option, using Panasonic's “roadside assistance units,” would create a fast, highly secure Wi-Fi network for communication between vehicles and sensors installed along the roadway. The roadside units, referred to as the Dedicated Short-Range Communications (DSRC) system, will begin field testing in two to three years.



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Voters Approve Bonds, Taxes, Green Roofs

By John Fernandez

Denver voters approved all the measures presented to them in the Nov. 7 general election. They ranged from a citywide \$937 million bond package to relatively small special district taxes. The biggest surprise of the election evening was approval of Initiated Ordinance 300 that will now require green roof features (gardens and/or solar panels) on new buildings or additions exceeding a threshold size. Results of the two special district elections are reported here as well because they interact with the citywide issues. Highlights of each measure are presented below.

**Denver GO
Bonds 2017.**

Denver GO Bonds 2017. None of the seven project categories received less than two-thirds support, with the transportation package proving most popular at 75 percent. Projects are roughly evenly split between repairs and improvements. Transportation accounts for 44 percent of total spending and will go toward 287 miles of road paving, 33 miles of sidewalks and 49 miles of bikeways. Other bond funds will pay for renovations at dozens of city libraries, recreation centers and police and fire stations. In addition to city projects, the bonds will support

capital improvements at six cultural and art organizations as well as a new outpatient Ambulatory Care Center for the Denver Health and Hospital Authority. (Details on project categories are provided in these earlier *Front Porch* articles: frontporchne.com/article/vote-7-categories-denver-bond/ and frontporchne.com/article/will-ne-denver-benefit-bond-upcoming-ballot/.)

Projects of particular interest to northeast Denver include \$55 million to cover Denver's match for a proposed bus rapid transit (BRT) system on Colfax from downtown to the Anschutz Medical Campus and another nearly \$22 million for Colfax streetscape improve-

Denver General Obligation Bonds		
Referred Questions	Millions	Yes – No
2A Transportation/Mobility	\$431.0	75-25%
2B Cultural Facilities	\$116.9	71-29%
2C Denver Health Facility	\$75.0	69-31%
2D Public Safety	\$77.0	72-28%
2E Library System	\$69.3	73-27%
2F Parks/Recreation Centers	\$151.6	73-27%
2G Public Facilities	\$16.5	68-22%
Total	\$937.3	

Initiated Ordinance 300		
"Denver Green Roof Initiative"		54-46%

Results reported on Secretary of State web site Nov. 14, 2017.
Voter turnout = 31.67% (142,952 ballots cast of 451,316
registered voters.)

ments. (Full funding of the Colfax BRT will require a successful grant application to the federal government.) And \$27 million was approved to widen E. 56th Ave. from Peoria St. to Pena Blvd.

Many of the 460 projects are shovel ready and the first bond sales are expected next spring. In the meantime, the city is hiring an outside project

management firm to oversee the entire program including project sequencing. The general obligation bonds must be issued within 10 years of voter approval and bond proceeds from a specific issuance must be expended within three years.

Hotelier Tax

The owners of large Denver hotels voted 50-2 to increase the lodging tax from 14.75 percent to 15.75 percent to generate an estimated \$8.7 million annually. Half of that amount will support renovations and expansion of the Colorado Convention Center (80,000-sq.-ft. multi-function meeting space, 50,000-sq.-ft. rooftop terrace) approved by voters in 2015 and largely paid for through an extension of taxes on car rentals and hotel stays. Ironically, some of these funds may be needed to address the added cost created by voter approval of the green roof initiative (see below).

Colfax BID Tax

Commercial property owners in the Colfax Business Improvement District (BID) increased their property tax rate from 7.846 mills to 11 mills. The \$2.5 million in anticipated revenues will support the BID's "Streetscape" project (trees, public art, lighting, protected bike lane) as well as new marketing and branding efforts. The Colfax BID extends in a two-blockwide corridor from Grant to Josephine streets. In combination with the bus rapid transit (BRT) set-aside and streetscape improvements approved as part of the Denver GO Bonds 2017, it represents increased city focus on revitalizing Denver's original main street. The city has purchased two properties recently farther east on Colfax (7900

and 8315 E. Colfax, near Trenton and Valentia streets) and may explore creation of an urban renewal authority on Colfax east of Monaco to accelerate redevelopment of catalyst properties. Meanwhile, RTD will start its 15L Colfax Route Improvements Project in 2018, an \$11 million effort to provide larger, more attractive bus shelters, more trash cans and benches and “bus bulbs” (curb extensions) at some stops to provide more waiting space for passengers and to speed up bus operations.

Initiated Ordinance 300

This citizen initiative was a true dark-horse proposal, outspent by its opponents 10 to 1 and opposed by many organizations and luminaries including the mayor. Its basic appeal must have been persuasive: to beautify building roofs, lessen the heat island effect, build capacity for on-site storm drainage management, and improve building energy sustainability. Opponents expressed displeasure at a new government mandate and decried the cost added to new buildings or significant additions. The measure applies to new buildings of 25,000 sq. ft. or larger or additions that bring a structure to that threshold. The green roof features (gardens and/or solar panels) will have to cover 20 to 60 percent of a roof on a sliding scale based on building size. Industrial buildings are subject to a different formula. The requirement does not apply to residential buildings less than four stories or 50 feet in height.

The ordinance requires Denver city officials to create an advisory group to guide the measure's implementation and to create exemptions with a cash-in-lieu payment. The City Council would have to wait six months before amending or repealing the initiative. Any such action would require a two-thirds majority.

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A map of downtown Denver, Colorado, showing major roads and numbered locations. The map includes the following roads and landmarks:

- Roads:** E 56th Ave, I-270, I-70, Colorado Blvd, Central Park Blvd, MLK Blvd, E 26th Ave, E 23rd Ave, E Montview Blvd, E Colfax Ave, E 6th Ave, E Alameda Ave, Monaco Pkwy, Quebec St, Lowry Blvd, Havana St, Peoria St, and Holly St.
- Numbered Locations:**
 - 1:** Located at the intersection of E 26th Ave and Peoria St.
 - 2:** Located on Colorado Blvd, south of E 23rd Ave.
 - 3:** Located on Colorado Blvd, south of E Colfax Ave.
 - 4:** Located on Central Park Blvd, north of MLK Blvd.

Amazon HQ2 Bid Released with Sites Redacted. In October, Colorado submitted its bid for Amazon's second headquarters site. Only a month earlier, Amazon announced the project and invited suitors to submit sites capable of hosting 50,000 employees in a complex, at buildout, of 8 million square feet on 100 acres of land. The Colorado proposal is titled "Welcome to Your New Frontier" and runs a mere 23 pages plus a 52-page appendix. When released publicly in response to open records requests, the document was heavily redacted by the state to not reveal potential financial incentives nor to impair Amazon's ability down the line to negotiate with landowners. Two sites in Stapleton were included among the 30 sites submitted by cities and developers. Eight locations were featured in the proposal but were blurred out in the redacted proposal. Amazon has said a decision on HQ2 will occur sometime in 2018.



Above: Sazza Restaurant Owner, Jeff Rogoff, uses glassware made from recycled glass, mix-and-match silverware donated by customers, and unique, hand crafted, one-of-a-kind seasoning racks on each table.
 Below right: Locally made spirits and beer are served at Sazza Restaurant’s full bar.

By Anne Hebert
 With a passion for farming, beekeeping and cooking, Jeff Rogoff has turned what he loves into his life’s work. His second metro area Sazza Restaurant is now open at the Stanley Marketplace. He and a partner have owned and operated the flagship location in Greenwood Village for 11 years. Sazza (salad and pizza = Sa+Zza) prides itself on creating new combinations of classic fare. Their business ethos

is rooted firmly in the practice of creating local, organic, scratch-to-table food with ingredients free of pesticides, additives and preservatives. “Everything brought into the restaurant is here for a reason,” Rogoff explains. “We don’t just want to make a profit, we also want to make a difference.” Whenever possible, Sazza uses locally sourced, organic ingredients for their pizzas, salads and desserts, including a recent harvest of 25 lbs. of honey from beehives located on the land just west of the Stanley.

Catering to individual dietary tastes and restrictions is “part of what they do” with available gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan and dairy-free menu items. Boasting “artisanal American crust” prepared with organic flour or whole grains hand milled in-house, pizzas are made-to-order. Their “signature

Salads & Pizza with



Light fixtures are original to the Stanley and were repurposed in the restaurant.
 dessert pizza” incorporates seasonal, locally grown peaches, pears and berries. The chocolate cake is made using an adaptation of Rogoff’s mother’s recipe. Sazza’s full bar features organic soft drinks, wines, and locally made spirits and beer. Employees wear donated T-shirts repurposed with the restaurant logo. Waste is recycled or com-



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Augustana Festival Christmas Concert | Sunday, December 17 | 7:30 pm | Choir, Handbells, Organ, Orchestra
Longest Night: A Service of Healing and Hope | Wednesday, December 20 | Noon • 6:30 pm
Christmas Eve Worship | Sunday, December 24 | 3 pm • 5 pm • 11 pm
Christmas Day Worship | Monday, December 25 | 10:30 am

Augustana LUTHERAN CHURCH
 Sunday Worship: 8 am | 10:30 am
 5000 E Alameda Ave | Denver CO 80246 | 303-388-4678 | www.augustanadenver.org

a Focus on Local and Sustainable

posted whenever possible with very little sent to the landfill.

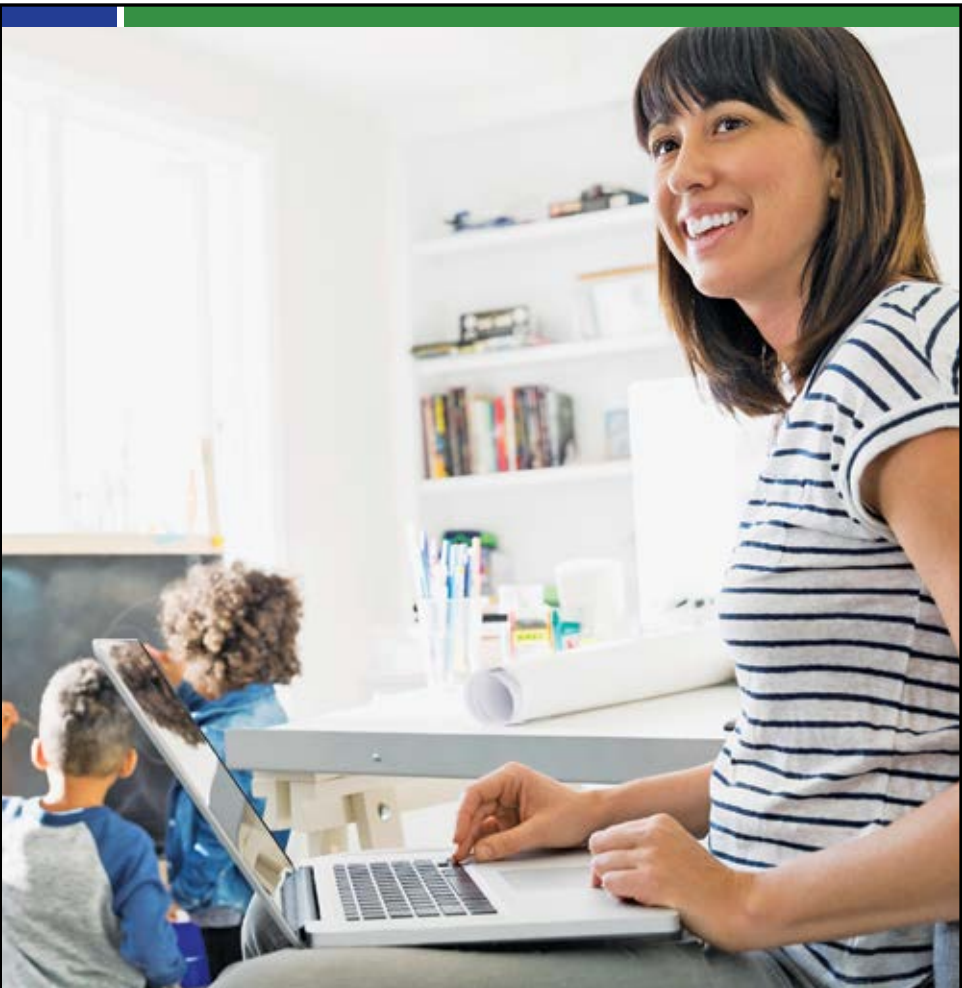
The same level of detail and dedication to sustainability is found in the family-friendly restaurant décor. Glassware is made from recycled glass. Customer-donated mix-and-match silverware is used in place of newly purchased pieces and light fixtures in the dining room are original to the Stanley. Beetle-kill pine and recycled tile create a “look and feel” that highlights Sazza’s mission of environmental responsibility.

A partnership with Logan House Coffee provides ingredients used in Sazza’s coffee ice cream. Grain mash from Cheluna Brewing Co. is used in specialty pizza crust recipes. Cooperative relationships with other Stanley businesses provide Sazza employees an opportunity to receive discounted merchandise and services as part of their employee benefit package. Rogoff emphasizes that buying and partnering with small, local businesses helps sustain the local economy.

Embracing a community-minded philosophy, Sazza’s community room is available free of charge for nonprofits to use for meetings. To emphasize ties to farm and nature, local artist Tracey Barnes created the room’s custom light fixtures using repurposed tractor parts embellished with bees and flowers. Eventually,



The Sazza community room is available free of charge to non-profit groups and may be rented for parties and events.



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(left to right) Alexa Fuller, NP, Katie Rustici, MD, Sarah Shepard, DO and Peter Kim, MD



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Treecycle 2018

NEW COLLECTION SCHEDULE THIS YEAR

Treecycle Collection Schedule

January 2018

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20

Tree Set-Out Days
All trees must be set out by 7 a.m. on Friday, January 5th or by 7 a.m. on Friday, January 12th to ensure collection by Treecycle crews.

Treecycle Collection Days

PARTICIPATING IN Treecycle IS SIMPLE, AND RECYCLING YOUR TREE AFTER THE HOLIDAYS IS AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3!

- 1 Remove all decorations, lights, and the tree stand from your tree.
- 2 Set your tree out for collection at your normal trash set-out location by 7 a.m. on Friday, January 5th or by 7 a.m. on Friday, January 12th.
- 3 Reclaim free mulch made from your tree at the annual Mulch Giveaway & Compost Sale in May.



For detailed program guidelines and additional information, visit DenverGov.org/Treecycle or call 311 (720-913-1311).

The Book Worm



CHILDREN
Beyond the Bright Sea

by Lauren Wolk, ideal for fourth grade and up

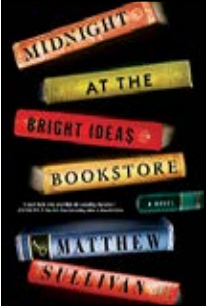
Crow washed ashore on an island off Massachusetts when she was a baby. Fisherman Osh took her in and raised her with the help of a beloved neighbor. People avoid Crow because they think she's a diseased orphan from nearby Penikese island, which once housed an abandoned leper colony (a real place in the early 1900s—you can look it up). One night, Crow spots a fire burning there and can't figure out why—it's a bird sanctuary now. When they investigate the next day, they find a new scary keeper who's digging for something. Crow's search for answers leads her to discover secrets from her past about who she really is, and sets her on the trail of possible buried treasure! A great historical mystery that's hard to put down.



YOUNG ADULT
The Disappearances

by Emily Bain Murphy, ideal for seventh grade and up

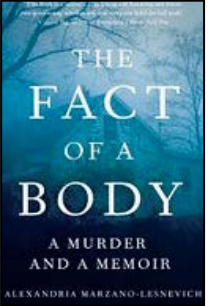
Aila and her brother are living with their mom's childhood best friend and her family in the isolated, mysterious town of Sterling. Their mom has just died and their drafted dad is off to fight in WWII. They have nowhere else to go. Every Sterling resident devastatingly loses something every seven years. The smell of flowers, colors, their reflection in the mirror, and dreams, to name a few. No one knows why. Aila's mom was the only person to leave and regain the things she lost. Townsfolk are suspicious she's the cause and they don't welcome Aila. Now it's one month before the next disappearance and tensions are high. Can they stop the next one? Do clues hidden in their mom's Shakespeare book hold the answer to what's happening? I loved this debut novel. It has a very memorable setup, and a unique story unlike anything I've read before.



ADULT FICTION
Midnight at the Bright Ideas Bookstore

by Matthew J. Sullivan

Lydia Smith lives a low key and quiet life as a bookseller at a local Denver bookstore. When a regular named Joey commits suicide at the bookstore and Lydia finds his body, things take a drastic and gruesome turn. Joey leaves Lydia all of his possessions, which contain a trail of clues that are somehow connected to the dark past she has tried to forget. As she works to solve the puzzle of Joey's death, Lydia must come face-to-face with her own history and deal with it once and for all. This debut author once worked at the Tattered Cover Book Store and the book contains lots of local flair.



ADULT NONFICTION
The Fact of a Body: A Murder and A Memoir

by Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich

The author writes a story about Ricky, a pedophile who killed a 6-year-old neighbor. He stuffed him in his closet and then helped in the days-long search for the missing boy. It's never in doubt that Ricky committed the crime; just what was his intent? A frustrating legal distinction relevant to his punishment. A staunch opponent of the death penalty, the author is a lawyer working on Ricky's death row appeal case. She can't understand why she believes Ricky deserves to die. Heartbreakingly, it's revealed that the author also suffered sexual abuse at the hands of her grandfather and the toll it took on her when her family never talked about it, and covered it up, even though both her parents are lawyers. For fans of true crime fiction, and devastatingly honest memoirs.

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December & Early January Events

NORTHEAST DENVER/ NW AURORA EVENTS

Santa's Best Christmas Trees. Local tree lot for your 2017 tree. Located at each of The Greens: 29th Ave. and Roslyn St., and at 49th Place and Valencia St.

12/1 Friday—Tree Trimming Party at Stanley. Stanley Marketplace, 4-6pm. Bring an ornament from home or make one for the Stanley tree. www.stanleymarketplace.com

12/1 to 12/20—Denver School of the Arts. Montview and Quebec. Dec. performances, tickets/complete listings: www.dsapresents.org, www.dsa.dpsk12.org/performances

12/2 Saturday—Inside the Orchestra—Christmas Tiny Tots at Stanley Marketplace. Guest appearance by Santa and Mrs. Claus, hot cocoa, jingle bells caroling, etc. 9:30am-12pm. Tickets: www.insidetheorchestra.org

12/2 to 12/3—Sweet William Market. Northfield Event Center, 8371 Northfield Blvd. #C 9am-6pm. www.sweetwilliammarket.com

12/3 Sunday—Holiday Caroling. Caroling with Neighborhood Music teachers/staff 4:15pm. Meet at Stanley Marketplace or any of neighborhood pools closest to your home. NM teachers will set up at each pool with cocoa, candy canes, cookies, music and jingle bells. Look for red Santa hats. <http://neighborhoodmusicstapleton.com/events/>

12/4 to 12/10—Tiny House Holiday Village. The Shops at Northfield. Northfield Stapleton. com. 303.375.5475

12/7 Thursday—Christmas in Narnia. 6pm. Be3, 1195 Newport St. www.be3umc.org

12/7 to 1/12—Youth at DAVA Holiday Show and Sale: Peace in the Universe. Downtown Aurora Visual Arts youth exhibit. Hand-made holiday gifts for sale. Opening reception 12/7 4-7:30pm. 1405 Florence St. Mon.-Fri. 10am-5pm and by appointment. www.davarts.org

12/7 Thursday—Holiday Fine Arts Market. Art Gym (1460 Leyden) metalsmiths, printmakers, digital artists, painters, illustrators, performing artists, sculptors and culinary artists will offer smaller, affordable artwork for holidays. Reception 12/7, 5-8pm. Gallery hours Tues.-Sat. 9am-6pm. www.artgymdenver.com/event/holiday-fine-arts-market/

Visit our online calendar
to view more events or submit events
FrontPorchNE.com > Events

12/8 Friday—Christmas Movie at The Cube. 5pm. Join us first for *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and then showing of *It's a Wonderful Life*. Free, open to public. The Cube: 8371 Northfield Blvd.

12/8 to 12/10—Gypsy Farmhouse Holiday Market. Northfield handmade/homemade pop-up boutique, 47th and Main across from Charming Charlie. Free admission. www.northfieldstapleton.com

12/7 Thursday—Christmas Concert at The Cube. 6:30pm. Colorado Wind Ensemble will play Christmas-themed concert. 6:30pm. Concession stand serving drinks. Free, open to public.

12/9 Saturday—Eastbridge Home for the Holidays. Visits with Santa, kids' crafts, live ice sculpting, carolers, hot chocolate. Eastbridge Town Center, 10155 E. 29th Dr. www.eastbridge-towncenter.com

12/10 Sunday—Aurora Symphony Orchestra—Holiday Celebration. Featuring *The Snowman*, Academy Award-nominated short film based on Raymond Briggs' classic children's book. Hear the ASO perform the score live with the film, plus holiday favorites and sing-along. Tickets \$35-\$20. www.aurorasymphony.org/holiday.html

12/10 Sunday—Holidays at the Hangar. Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum and Lowry Community Master Assoc. host 3rd annual. 12-4pm. Carolers, holiday treats and photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. With valid photo ID, residents of zip code 80230 (Lowry) gain access for member price (discount at door only). <https://wingsmuseum.org/event/holidays/>

12/10 Sunday—St. Martin's Chamber Choir presents A Winter's Night: Christmas with British Composers. 7:30pm. Montview Presbyterian Church. \$15-\$45. www.StMartinsChamberChoir.org

12/10 Tuesday—Community Partnership Event at the Hangar at Stanley. A FREE family event including BBQ and pizza dinner,

beverages, games and children's activities (bouncy castle, face painting) and a silent auction. Learn about a local non-profit organization, The Street Fraternity that provides a place of brotherhood and personal growth for urban young men ages 14-24—a safe space where these young men are able to avoid violence, drugs and gangs while enjoying a hot nutritious meal. Tax deductible donations to help Street Fraternity serve more young men will be welcomed. For more info contact Yoal Kidane at 720-227-7317.

12/13 Wednesday—Wine Education Series. 7pm. MCA fall series with sit-down tasting of different wines from different regions with wine educator leading discussion. \$10 stapletoncommunity.com; \$20 day of event. Must be 21; no refunds.

12/14 Thursday—Active Minds (Free)—Dinosaurs! 6:45-7:45pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. 720.865.0325. www.ActiveMinds.com

12/16 to 12/23—Free Carriage Rides. Northfield. Complimentary horse and carriage rides 12/16 1-9 pm and 12/23 10-6 pm. Pick up and drop off in front of Bass Pro. www.northfieldstapleton.com

12/17 Sunday—Gymtegrity Gingerbread Jam Program. Class/skills showcase of our athletes age 3 and up. One-hour show; open gym follows. Competitive gymnastics teams will do routines. Coaches/staff available to answer questions 2:30 pm. \$5/family with open gym, gingerbread cookies, warm drinks. 4720 Lima St. www.gymtegrity.com

SEASONAL/HOLIDAY EVENTS

To 12/2—Denver Gay Men's Chorus Holiday Concert. Do You Hear What I Hear? Laughter and Light. Central Presbyterian Church, 1660 Sherman St. Tickets: www.rmarts.org

To 12/23—Colorado Railroad Museum's Polar Express. Performances/train rides week-ends and select days. Tickets: www.coloradorailroadmuseum.org

To 12/23—Denver Christkindl Market. Vendors from Germany/other countries, local artisans, carolers, traditional German food/drink. Skyline Park, 16th and Arapahoe. Hours vary. www.denverchristkindlmarket.com

To 12/24—Santa's Village at Chatfield Farms. Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms. www.botanicgardens.org

To 12/24—Santa's Flight Academy. Visit Santa at Cherry Creek Mall. www.shopcherrycreek.com

To 2/14—Downtown Denver Rink at Skyline Park. FREE ice skating; bring skates or rent: \$6/pair. www.downtowndenver.com

To 12/31—A Hudson Christmas. Holiday lights, wagon rides, Santa, music, etc. Select dates, 5-8pm. www.hudsongardens.org

To 12/24—The Nutcracker. Presented by Colorado Ballet. Tickets: www.coloradoballet.org

To 1/1—Blossoms of Light. Denver Botanic Gardens, 1007 York St. www.botanicgardens.org

To 1/7—Denver International Airport's Ice Skating Rink. 9am-9pm. Free; complimentary skates available. www.flydenver.com

12/1 to 12/2—9News Parade of Lights. Marching bands, giant balloons, floats. Fri. 8pm and Sat. 6pm. FREE. Info: www.downtowndenver.com

12/1-12/2—Sing We Now of Christmas. Holiday favorites performed by Colorado Choir. Augustana Lutheran Church. Tickets: www.augustanaarts.org

12/1 to 12/3—Women's Bean Project 2016 Holiday Open House. Treats, beverages, food, music, new products, free photos with Santa. 9am-5pm Fri. 12/2, 9am-3pm Sat. 12/3 and Sun. 12/4. 3201 Curtis St. www.womensbeanproject.com

12/1 to 12/2—Winterfest on South Pearl. Fri. 5-9pm, Sat. 11am-5pm. Free. Horse and wagon rides, live music, holiday market and Santa. Old South Pearl. www.southpearlstreet.com

12/1 to 12/3—4th Annual Denver Holiday Flea. Sports Castle, 1000 Broadway. Locally made goods, crafts, drinks, etc. 12/2 Flea Holiday Party 5-9pm, \$30. Sat. 12/3 10am-6pm \$5, Sun. 12/4 10am-5pm \$5. www.denverflea.com

12/1 to 12/31—Zoo Lights. 5:30-9pm. Denver Zoo. 720.337.1400 www.denverzoo.org

(continued on page 30)

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(continued from page 29)

12/2 Saturday—1940's White Christmas Ball. Magical '40s and '50s holiday party. Mingle/dance among vintage vehicles, movie set lights/props, re-enactors, sleighs. Big bands, vintage acts; special appearance by Hollywood's 1940's tap dancing/singing troupe The Satin Dollz. Hyatt Regency Denver. http://1940sball.org/1940sball/1940s_christmas_ball

12/2 Saturday—Brunch with Father Christmas. Four Mile Historic Museum, 9am-12pm. Reservations required. 715 S. Forest St. www.fourmilepark.org

12/2 Saturday—Lights of December Parade. Holiday parade featuring community organizations, floats, high school marching bands, Santa. www.downtownboulderholidays.com

12/2 to 12/10—57th Annual Georgetown Christmas Market. European-type market: handcrafted gifts, carolers, horse-drawn wagon rides, roasted chestnuts, and St. Nicholas. 1st two Dec. weekends. 10am-6pm. FREE. www.georgetown-colorado.org

12/2 to 12/16—Olde Golden Christmas. Historic Downtown Golden, Washington Ave. Weekends thru 12/24. Santa, Christmas parades, carriage rides, dog cart rides, carolers, etc. www.visitgolden.com

12/5 Tuesday—City of Aurora Holiday Tree Lighting. Musical performances, holiday goodies, and Santa. 5-7pm. Aurora Municipal Center, 15151 Alameda Pkwy. www.auroragov.org/events

12/8 to 12/9—Colorado Symphony Presents Handel's Messiah. Boettcher Concert Hall, 1000 14th St. Tickets: www.coloradosymphony.org

12/8 to 12/17—Yuletide Teas. Molly Brown House. Saturdays and Sundays. Sittings: 10:30am, 12:30pm and 2:30pm. jwilms@mollybrown.org or 303.832.4092x17. www.mollybrown.org

12/9 Saturday—Colorado Women and Men's Chorale Holiday Sing-Along. 2:30pm. Augustana Lutheran Church. Tickets: www.augustanadenver.org

12/9 Saturday—Nick's Annual Food Drive with Santa and Live Reindeer. 10am-6pm. Free professional photo with Santa for every 10 cans donated. Reindeer visit 11am-4pm. Nick's Garden Center, 2001 S. Chambers Rd. www.nicksgardencenter.com

12/9 Saturday—Winter Fest on Fillmore Plaza. Cherry Creek North. 10am-2pm. Free. Live ice carving, face painting, fire pits, complimentary treats/beverages, ornament decorating, entertainment. www.cherrycreeknorth.com

12/9 to 12/10—Denver Jackalope Indie Artisan Market. McNichols Civic Center, 10am-5pm. Free admission. 150 local, curated and

hand-selected artisans, crafters and DIY enthusiasts. www.jackalopeartfair.com

12/9 to 12/23—Nutcracker 2017 from Ballet Ariel. Tickets: 303.987.7845. 470 S. Allison Parkway. www.balletariel.org. www.lakewood.org/tickets

12/9 to 12/24—Breakfast with Santa. Downtown Aquarium, seatings begin 8:30am, reservations required. Sat. and Sun., 12/9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24. www.aquariumrestaurants.com/downtownaquariumdenver

12/15 to 12/17—Colorado Symphony presents A Colorado Christmas. With Colorado Children's Chorale. Boettcher Concert Hall, 1000 14th St. \$22-\$84. www.coloradosymphony.org

12/15 to 1/2—Denver Pavilions Holiday Carousel. 11am-9pm, \$3 or free with voucher from Pavilions Merchants. www.denverpavilions.com

12/17 Sunday—Augustana Christmas Concert and Festival. Choir, handbells, organ and orchestra. Augustana Lutheran Church, 5000 E. Alameda Ave. 303.388.4678. www.augustanadenver.org

12/17 Sunday—Tuba Christmas Concert. 1pm. Skyline Park, 16th and Arapahoe. Register 9am; rehearsal 10am. Turnhalle room, Tivoli building, Auraria Campus. FREE to public, \$10 participant fee. 303.556.8123 or www.tubachristmas.com

12/20 Wednesday—Holiday Brass at Boettcher Concert Hall. Colorado Symphony Brass presents seasonal favorites. Tickets: www.coloradosymphony.org

12/22 to 12/23—Colorado Symphony Presents Too Hot to Handel. Boettcher Concert Hall, 1000 14th St. Tickets: www.coloradosymphony.org

12/24 Sunday—"Jewish Christmas" Chinese Pop-up at Rosenberg's Bagels. 5-10pm, Rosenberg's Bagels at Stanley Market-place. Follow Rosenberg's Bagels on Facebook for tickets/info. 3rd annual Chinese food pop-up Jewish Christmas proceeds benefit Project Angel Heart. Classic Chinese-American Cuisine and two classic holiday movies.

12/31 Sunday—A Night in Vienna. Presented by Colorado Symphony, Boettcher Concert Hall, 1000 14th St. Tickets: www.coloradosymphony.org

12/31 Sunday—New Year's Eve Downtown Fireworks Display. 2 shows: 9pm and 12am. 16th St. Mall. www.downtowndenver.com

12/31 Sunday—Noon Year's Eve at Denver Children's Museum. 9am-4pm. Ball drops on the hour from 10am-3pm. www.mychildsmuseum.org

12/31 Sunday—Zoo Year's Eve at Denver Zoo. 5:30-9pm. Special New Year's activities included with Zoo Lights admission. www.denverzoo.org

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

12/24 Sunday—Christmas Eve at Montview Presbyterian. 3pm and 5pm family services. 7:30pm traditional candlelight service. 10:15pm Westminster Choir. 11pm Prepare to welcome Christ Child as Christmas Day begins at 12am. Montview Blvd. Presbyterian Church, 1980 Dahlia St. www.montview.org

12/24 Sunday—Denver Presbyterian Christmas Eve Service and Reception. 10am. McAuliffe International School/Smiley Campus, 2540 Holly St. www.denverpres.org

12/24 to 12/25—Augustana Christmas Worship. Christmas Eve, 3pm, 5pm and 11pm. Christmas Day, 10:30am. Augustana Lutheran Church, 5000 E. Alameda Ave. 303.388.4678, www.augustanadenver.org

DENVER METRO EVENTS

To 12/3—Denver Potters Association Show. Features Castle Clay Artists and guests. Wood, clay, ceramics, glass jewelry, etc. 6th Ave. United Church, 6th and Adams. www.castleclayartists.net

To 12/8—Denver Recycles Leafdrop 2016. Free leaf compost drop-off weekdays 8am-2pm. 720.865.6810 or www.denvergov.org/denverRecycles for locations/info.

To 1/14—Women Artists in Paris. Denver Art Museum; exhibit ticket required. www.denverartmuseum.org

12/1 Friday—First Friday Art Walks. Santa Fe Arts District, Tennyson Art Walk, River North (RiNo) Art District, Golden Triangle Museum. www.denver.org/things-to-do/denver-arts-culture/denver-art-districts

12/1 to 12/3—Colorado Symphony presents All Beethoven. \$13-\$25 www.coloradosymphony.org

12/2 Saturday—Young Entrepreneurs Marketplace. 10am-2pm. Young Americans Center, 3550 E. 1st Ave. Repeats 12/9 Sat., 10am-2pm, Young Americans Center Belmar, 401 S. Pierce St. www.yacenter.org

12/5 Tuesday—Colorado Gives Day. www.coloradogives.org

12/9 Saturday—Cockpit Demo Day. Free with admission. Wings Over the Rockies Museum, Lowry. 10am-2pm. www.wingsmuseum.org

12/14 Thursday—Seeding Change: Chinook Fund 2017 Grantee Event. Bringing together diverse community of donors, supporters and grantees statewide. Learn about Chinook Fund,

build community and celebrate social justice work across Colorado. Stories of change from volunteer community/grantees working in criminal justice reform, LGBTQIA organizing, disability rights work, etc. 5:30-8pm. Posner Center, 1031 33rd St. RVSP: email.office@chinookfund.org

12/15 Friday—Cine-Talk Series, Star Wars: The Last Jedi. 12/15 only (opening night), Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum private screening of new Star Wars: The Last Jedi. Arrive on time for speaker from Corellian Droidworks: Colorado Chapter who will demonstrate fully functional R2D2 and BB-8 droids built from scratch. <https://wingsmuseum.org/event/cinetalk/>

12/16 Saturday—6th Annual Denver Beer Festivus. Beer festival showcasing 50+ Denver-area craft breweries. Wings Over the Rockies. 4pm. Tickets: www.denverbeerfestivus.com

12/23 Saturday—32nd Annual Winter Solabration. Celebration of Christmas and solstice customs, storytelling, dance, juggling, etc. The Joyful Ballroom, 3695 W. 72nd Ave, Westminster. Tickets: www.wsolstice.org

12/31 Sunday—New Year's Eve On The Rocks: Migos, Post Malone, Young Thug & Lil Yachty. Red Rocks Amphitheatre's first-ever New Year's celebration. www.topeventpromoter.com/performers/new-years-eve-on-the-rocks

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

To 12/20—Jewish Aging Mastery Program for Older Adults. 12-week program each Wed. 10-11:45am. Staenberg-Loup Jewish Community Center. To achieve sustainable behaviors to improve health, financial security, well-being, community connectedness. \$150. www.jccdenver.org/event/jamp/

To 12/27—Aging Mastery Program (AMP) Classes. Free. Helps older adults/boomers build own aging well playbook. 10 core classes in peer-supported environment. The House Worship Center, 2150 S. Holly St. RSVP requested: 303.355.3423, x105. Joann Thompson (jthompson@caahealth.org). 26-participant limit.

12/10 Sunday—Denver Jingle Bell Run/Walk for Arthritis. 8am-12pm. Washington Park. www.jbr.org

12/16 Saturday—Denver Ugly Sweater Run. Downtown Denver, 20th and Market St. 11am. www.theuglysweaterrun.com

12/16 Saturday—Scramblin' Scrooge 1M/5K/10K. Denver City Park. 8am. www.featonthetstreet.com

12/23 Saturday—A Christmas Carol Classic 5K, 10K and Tiny Tim 1K. Denver City Park. 9am. www.featonthetstreet.com

12/31 Sunday—New Year's Eve Resolution 5K. Washington Park, 12pm. www.resolution5K.com

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KIDS AND FAMILIES

To 1/27—Denver Puppet Theater. The Snow Queen. 3156 W. 38th Ave. www.denverpuppettheater.com

12/1 Friday—Home Depot Kids Workshop. 9am-12pm. FREE how-to clinics first Sat. monthly, ages 5-12. Get Home Depot apron, wooden project, project pin. Metro-area Home Depot stores. www.homedepot.com

12/5 to 12/26—Tuesdays in December Four Mile Historic Park Small Settlers. Ages 2-5 accompanied by parent/caregiver. 9-10am. \$5/child adults free, members free. 7150D. Forest St. Advance register: 720.865.0814 or education@fourmilepark.org www.fourmilepark.org

12/7 to 12/10—Disney on Ice Presents: Follow Your Heart. Pepsi Center. www.disneyonice.com

12/7 to 12/28—Star K Kids. Thursdays, 9:30 and 11am; kids 5 and under. Morrison Nature Center, 16002 E. Smith Rd., Aurora. www.auroragov.org/nature

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

LECTURES AND CLASSES

www.ActiveMinds.com
12/5 Tuesday—Active Minds (Free): Afghanistan. Jewish Community Center, 350 S. Dahlia St. 10-11am. 303.316.6359.

12/21 Thursday—Active Minds (Free): Spices. Windsor Gardens, 597 S. Clinton St. 2-3pm.

12/21 Thursday—Active Minds (Free)—Saudi Arabia. 6:45-7:45pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. 720.865.0325.

12/26 Tuesday—Active Minds (Free): The History of Tea. 5-6pm. Tattered Cover, 2526 E. Colfax. 303.322.7727.

DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

IMAX. Dream Big 3D: Engineering Our World; Conquests of the Sky 3D; Wonder Woman 3D

To 1/1—Nature’s Amazing Machines. Free with admission. www.dmns.org

To 1/15—Ultimate Dinosaurs. Free with admission. www.dmns.org

MUSEUM FREE DAYS

12/1 to 12/29—Clyfford Still Museum Free Friday evenings. 5-8pm. www.clyffordstillmuseum.org

12/2 Saturday—Denver Art Museum. SCFD Free day. www.denverartmuseum.org

12/3 Sunday—Denver Museum of Miniatures, Dolls and Toys. SCFD Free day. www.dmmtdt.org

12/5 Tuesday—Children’s Museum Free Target Tuesday. 4-8pm. www.cmdenver.org

12/8 Friday—Four Mile Historic Park. SCFD Free 2nd Friday, 12pm-4pm. www.fourmilepark.org

12/10 Sunday—Denver Museum of Nature & Science. SCFD Free Day. www.dmmtdt.org

12/10 Sunday—Four Mile Historic Park. SCFD Free day. 12-4pm. www.fourmilepark.org

12/29 Friday—Clyfford Still Museum. SCFD Free Day. www.clyffordstillmuseum.org

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

www.fws.gov/refuge/rocky_mountain_arsenal/

12/9 Saturday—Winter Raptors. 1-3pm. Learn to identify birds of prey native to Refuge; bring camera and binoculars. RSVP required.

12/10 Sunday—The Masked Bandit. 10am. Learn about ferrets in the refuge’s one-of-a-kind ferret exhibit.

12/16 Saturday—Wildlife Viewing Tours. 9:30-11am. Free 2-hour refuge bus tour. RSVP required.

THEATRE

To 12/17—Honeymoon in Vegas. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St., Aurora www.vintagetheatre.com

To 12/23—Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd. www.arvadacenter.org

To 12/23—Hi-Hat Hattie, Musical Biography of Hattie McDaniel. Aurora Fox Arts Center, 9900 E. Colfax Ave, Aurora. www.aurorafoxartscenter.org

To 12/23—The Miracle Worker. John Hand Theater, 7653 E. 1st Pl. www.firehousetheatercompany.com

To 12/24—The Santaland Diaries. Denver Center for the Performing Arts. www.denvercenter.org

To 12/24—A Christmas Carol. The Jones Theater, Denver Center for the Performing Arts. www.denvercenter.org

To 12/29—A Year with Frog and Toad. Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd. www.arvadacenter.org

To 12/31—Comedy Sportz. Avenue Theatre, 417 E. 17th Ave. www.avenuetheater.com

12/1 to 12/24—Santa’s Big Red Sack. Avenue Theatre, 417 E. 17th Ave. www.avenuetheater.com

12/13 to 12/17—Elf The Musical. The Buell Theatre, Denver Center for the Performing Arts. www.denvercenter.org

12/22 to 12/31—I’ll Eat You Last: A Conversation with Sue Mengers. Vintage Theatre. 1468 Dayton St., Aurora Cultural Arts District. www.vintagetheatre.org

1/6 to 2/3—Rumors. Spotlight Theatre Company at the John Hand Theater. www.thisisspotlight.com

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Ronald McDonald Family Rooms at Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children. At Presbyterian/St. Luke’s Hospital for once-a-week commitment, 6-month minimum. www.ronaldhouse.org under “How You Can Help” for info.

Reading Volunteers Needed. For students in K-8 grade. 1 hour, 1 student, 1x week. During school hours. julie@partnersinliteracy.org or 303.316.3944 ext. 241.

Project Worthmore. Nonprofit organization of committed community members give, volunteer, mentor, befriend refugee neighbors. 1532 Galena St., Ste. 380. 720.460.1393

Single Volunteers of Greater Denver. Volunteer, not-for-profit singles group, meet others and assist nonprofit organizations for events/activities. www.svgd.org

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Practicing Kindness Together Can Change the World



Left: Kindness Yoga offers adult yoga and barre classes seven days a week. A variety of yoga is available and each instructor brings his/her own background and experience to their yoga practice. Kids’ yoga is also available.
Above: Certified Yoga Instructor, Blair Vaughn leads a class.

By Anne Hebert

When the team at Kindness Yoga read the Stanley Marketplace “Stanifesto,” they found a “unique and palpable” sense of community that created an ideal environment for their new studio. “The Stanley feels very heart-centered – it’s a great fit for us,” says Alex Lee-Ammons, marketing director.

Kindness Yoga has built their business by encouraging a “sense of community” with a commitment to community involvement and support. With ten metro area studios, including two new studios recently opened in the Bonnie Brae and RiNo neighborhoods, Kindness believes yoga should be accessible to everyone, regardless of

income. One of the only donation-based fitness businesses in the area, monthly and yearly paid memberships help to sustain the business model. For those who wish to participate on a pay-what-you-can basis, the suggested donation is ten dollars per class.

Certified yoga and barre instructors bring a wealth of diverse training and backgrounds to make each teaching style and class unique. “Kindness is a movement, enhancing health and happiness,” says Lee-Ammons. “Through practicing kindness together, we believe we can change the world.”

The Stanley location offers a variety of adult yoga and barre fitness classes seven days a week. Kid’s yoga classes are available

on select days/times to children aged three to 11. Kids’ yoga is offered concurrently with an adult class, giving parents the opportunity to focus on their practice while children participate in a more interactive, activity-based class. Kids learn how to master skills and manage stress through a focus on movement and breathing techniques. Lee-Ammons says it’s important to give kids a space to nourish their bodies and minds.

With installation pending, the Stanley Kindness studio will soon include a float tank. The tank, filled with salt water, provides a deep, meditative experience while soothing skin and muscles and easing pressure on joints. Good for pregnant women and sports recovery, float tanks are often cited as powerful tools enabling relaxation and deepened creativity.

For information about Kindness Yoga locations, class schedules, memberships, and upcoming events, please visit, www.kindnesscollective.com or call 720.787.4128.



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Open Enrollment for Health Care Ends Jan. 12



U.S. Congresswoman Diana DeGette

By Diana DeGette

Now's the time to go shopping—no, not for the holidays just yet, but for health insurance coverage.

It's open enrollment season, a time to compare policies and find the coverage that works best for you and your family as the new year approaches.

Even if you're already signed up for health insurance this year, it's a good time to visit connectforhealthco.com and compare plans. You might wind up saving some money. And for most people, financial assistance is available.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, when you purchase insurance through the exchanges, you no longer can be charged higher premiums just for being a woman. And people with pre-existing health conditions won't be charged more than anybody else—again, thanks to the ACA.

Don't be fooled by those who say the ACA is imploding; it's alive and serving the people of Colorado through our state exchange, Connect for Health Colorado.

The ACA was devised to put affordable coverage within everyone's reach, and it's been doing so for millions of people. So many constituents have told me how it has helped them avoid having to make the horrible choice between treating an illness and going broke.

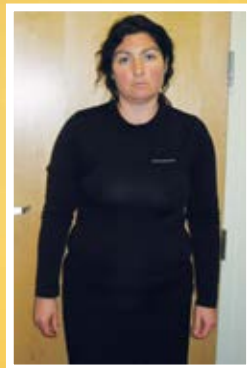
Enrollment in the exchange is simple—connectforhealthco.com walks you through every step of the process. And it only takes a few minutes.

In Colorado, open enrollment lasts until Jan. 12—but why wait? Have a look at your options now, pick a plan that's right for you, and spread the word!

Diana DeGette represents Colorado's First District to the U.S. Congress.

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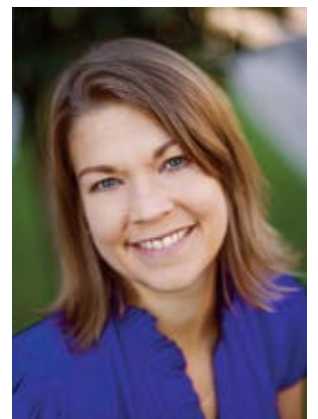
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Middle Schoolers Pass AP Exams



Photo courtesy of Denver Language School
Nine members from last year's eighth grade class at Denver Language School (above) successfully passed the AP exam in Spanish or Chinese last spring.

By Melinda Pearson

Last spring, nine brave eighth-graders at Denver Language School (DLS) took and successfully passed college-level Advanced Placement (AP) exams in either Chinese or Spanish Language and Culture. This represented a 100% pass rate in the pilot of year of DLS's AP program.

"We knew our students were at a really high level," said principal Kathy Benzel, "And we wanted to give them the opportunity to show what they know and to have that excellent acknowledgment of where they're at in terms of their linguistic journey at that point in time."

The school selected nine eighth-graders, out of a class of about 22, that it felt would be able to rise to the challenge and helped them to prepare. Middle schools don't typically offer AP exams, according to Benzel, and DLS is the only Denver school she knows of that does.

Credits from AP exams don't expire, noted Benzel, meaning that it is likely that the middle schoolers who passed these exams could use them for college credit and/or placement in future language classes

Students at the public charter school typically begin full immersion into Mandarin Chinese or Spanish in kindergarten or first grade. They take all of their classes in the "target language," said Benzel – even math classes – yet continue to post impressive results on other tests administered in English, such as PARCC tests and, now, AP exams.

The 100% immersion model that DLS offers is unusual in DPS, where schools typically offer a more graduated program. Benzel says that, while it is a challenge for young learners to adapt, the rewards in terms of fluency and "brain benefits" are extraordinary.

The West campus of DLS, which is just southwest of Cherry Creek Mall, serves grades K-2 and the East campus, located just west of Lowry, serves grades 3-8, with a current total enrollment of about 750 students. Although DLS is a popular choice among DPS families, Benzel reports that spots regularly open up from their waitlist, particularly in Chinese. To learn more, please visit their website at www.denverlanguageschool.org.

Aurora Approves Creative Learning Preschool

By John Fernandez

The first non-residential use in Stapleton Aurora has received unanimous approval from the Aurora Planning Commissioner. Owner Dan Mitzner expects the school to open in July 2018, replacing the existing leased facility in Quebec

Square. The new location is a 0.43 acre parcel at the southeast corner of E. 26th Ave. and Moline St. The 4,800 square foot school will accom-



Creative Learning Preschool at E. 26th Ave. and Moline St. in Aurora is expected to open in July 2018, serving 65 children ages 1 – 4.

modate 65 children ages 1–4. Earlier issues with parking supply were resolved with a reconfigured parking lot and allowance for two-way vehicular travel.

MCA Annual Meeting

By Melinda Pearson

The annual Stapleton Master Community Association (MCA) Members' Meeting took place on Nov. 8. CEO Kevin Burnett reviewed the history, purpose and structure of the MCA, the activities and events it produces and reviewed the budget for the coming year, which was approved on November 15.

MCA is the fastest-growing community organization in Colorado and the largest in the city of Denver, according to Burnett, and its budget for 2018 will be approximately \$7.3 million dollars, up from about \$6.6 million in 2017. Its top three revenue sources for 2018 will be residential assessments (52%), Park Creek Metro District taxes (17%), and commercial assessments (16%). Residents' fees will rise from \$40 to \$43 monthly in 2018. The top expenses for the MCA are the parks (18%), expenses related to Park Creek Metro District (18%), and the pools (17%).

As the Stapleton community continues to grow, so too will the budget, rising above \$8 million by 2021, but Burnett does not expect resident assessments to rise much beyond \$45/month as the addition of expensive infrastructure slows.

In 2018, control of the executive

board of the MCA will shift from being controlled by a majority of Forest City representatives to a majority of owner representatives, but Burnett and board members believe that it will be a "smooth transition" that will maintain the "status quo."

During the community comment period, Stapleton resident Sinead O'Hannon spoke of the movement to change the name of the community, described multiple action items in that campaign and asked the MCA for permission to set up informational booths at MCA events. Burnett assured her that the MCA will be listening to residents' concerns and hopes to hear from the larger community of 25,000 residents on the issue. Councilman Chris Herndon and a resident named Ann also weighed in on the issue, highlighting the positive aspects of the name.

MCA delegate candidates were introduced, and voting for delegates continues through Dec. 20. For details on the Annual Members' meeting, delegate bios and the 2018 budget, visit the MCA Stapleton website at www.stapleton-community.com/board-meeting-agendas/2017-annual-members-meeting.

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Fee from Stapleton Home Sales May Go toward Affordable Housing

By John Fernandez

Each time a property is sold in Stapleton, a “community fee” is paid to the Stapleton Foundation (“Foundation”) to support education, transportation and wellness programs that benefit the broader community. The Foundation receives

upwards of a million dollars annually from this “Community Investment Fee” (CIF), which is equal to 0.25 percent of the sales price after the first \$100,000.

The Foundation’s chief executive officer, Landri Taylor, told the *Front Porch* he will recommend to

the Stapleton Foundation board that funds from the CIF be used to preserve existing affordable for-sale housing units in Stapleton. Deed restrictions place a cap on the price at which such units can be sold during a 15-year period. Next year, for the first time, affordable for-sale units will begin “timing out” of the program.

A report prepared for the Foundation by BBC Research & Consulting in September estimated that by 2031, all of the 391 existing affordable homes in Stapleton at the time of their study could reach the end of their deed restrictions. Those restrictions place a 3.5 percent per year cap on the

price appreciation that the owner can gain on resale. To keep homes in the affordable program, the city has the option to purchase the home at the restricted maximum sale price in the first sale after the deed restriction expires.

Stapleton developer Forest City is obligated through its development agreement with the city to provide a minimum of 10 percent of for-sale homes as “affordable” units. According to Tom Gleason of Forest City, as of Nov. 16, 503 affordable homes, (6.8 percent) of homes currently meet that criterion. The existing deed-restricted units are targeted at households earning no more than 80 percent of the area median income (AMI). BBC concluded that without such deed-restricted units, the private sector is unlikely to produce any units affordable even for households earning 100 percent of AMI.

Taylor was not prepared to state how much of the CIF dollars would be committed to preserving affordable units. He said it at least depends on how many units will be timing out in any given year. One possible source of matching funds would be the city’s new affordable housing fund. BBC estimates that 40 percent of the existing affordable units are at risk of converting to market rate in the next five years and the remainder will expire by 2032. BBC also stated the price difference between affordable attached units and the median price for a market rate attached home in Stapleton was about \$230,000 or \$84 per square foot.

BBC estimates the acquisition cost of a home timing out of the program at the maximum sales price, then re-sold to an income-qualified buyer would range from \$16,000 to \$29,000 per unit. Acquiring all 391 affordable deed-restricted units (at the time of the study) and converting them to a land trust product would cost \$5.4 million in 2017 dollars.

Taylor hinted at this new initiative in an Oct. 26 update to the Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC), saying, “We are excited about the possibility.”

Compared to the current deed-restricted model of affordable homes, the advantages of a land trust model are: It preserves affordable units in perpetuity; it benefits more households since price appreciation is permanently capped; and it takes land value out of the equation.

If the Foundation acts on Taylor’s proposal, he would anticipate asking the city if it would be willing to at least partially match the CIF funds to help preserve the affordable units. The *Front Porch* contacted Denver’s Office of Economic Development but did not receive a reply.

The city’s draft “Housing an Inclusive



Mollie Fitzpatrick presents information from BBC Research’s study on home affordability in Stapleton to the Stapleton Foundation board. Forest City Senior Vice President Jim Chrisman is seated at right.

Denver” plan includes this proposed “key action”: “Explore partnerships across key nonprofit and foundation partners to preserve existing affordable homes in high-opportunity areas, such as Stapleton, to resell to qualified buyers.” It goes on to say, “The City and its nonprofit and foundation partners are already taking steps to explore long-term preservation of these homes to ensure future income-qualified homeowners can purchase homes in these high opportunity areas.” Further, Denver is said to be actively considering formation of a citywide community land trust. Taylor says he will not be recommending that the Foundation create such an entity and would rather work with an existing trust, possibly one to be formed by the city.

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Coldwell Banker	4.8%	670
Sotheby's	4.5%	627

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The SUN Spot

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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

December SUN News and Events

On-line Input: Community Name and Sustainable Neighborhoods Program

SUN is currently soliciting feedback from all who seek to provide it on both the community name and SUN's application to the City and County of Denver's Sustainable Neighborhoods Program (more information is below). Input received prior to December 9th factored into the application for the Sustainable Neighborhoods Program, the form will remain open through December 15th, <http://surveys.verticalresponse.com/a/show/461957/c8eea17589/0>

Monthly SUN meeting, Dec. 5 at Central Park Recreation Center

Note date earlier in month: this is in place of the 3rd Tuesday meetings in December.

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SUN Outreach Hour (6:30-7:30): After updates from Denver Police, state Historian Dr. Patty Limerick will facilitate a group discussion of the shape and outline of an annual community event where members of the community could reflect on the past and on controversial historical figures and events. The planning of this event was prompted by comments made during her interview on NPR's Colorado Matters in August in the context of monument removal and dorm renaming. Dr. Limerick described an annual event where (paraphrased): At such a day of reflection, once a year, we as a community could reflect on stories of people, and also look back on ourselves, and think about how we are or are not learning from cautionary tales (with help from historians and skilled facilitators.) The interview is available via CPR, this topic begins at minute 15:30: <http://www.cpr.org/news/story/a-cu-dorm-and-a-charlottesville-like-debate>

Community members are encouraged to attend the 12/5 meeting with suggestions for the nature of what should be included in such an annual event.

SUN board meeting 7:30pm-8:45: The tentative agenda includes board votes on SUN's application to the Denver Sustainable Neighborhoods Program, the 2018 SUN calendar, and on SUN board candidate Mandle Rousseau (see November 1st *Front Porch* for Bio). Board members will provide updates on plans for a Preschool Expo, coordination with the MCA for inclusivity and diversity efforts, and a recap of the 11/14 instance of Denver Talks: Citizen.

As the December 11th meetings for gathering input on the community name occur after this date, neither meeting (Outreach, Board) includes the community name as an agenda item.

Community Discussion on the Stapleton Name, Dec. 11 at The Cube

On December 11, 2017 the MCA, SUN, the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB), the Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC), and the Stapleton Foundation will host community discussions regarding the community name with Dr. Nita Mosby Tyler as facilitator. On this day, two opportunities for the community to provide input in-person regarding the community name will be

available: 1:30-3:30pm and 5:30-7:30pm. Both will take place in the MCA Cube at 8371 E. Northfield Blvd. At numerous meetings over the past several months, the available time for public comment has not been able to accommodate the number of persons wishing to speak about the community name. These meetings are an opportunity for in-person feedback for all who wish to provide it.

Sustainable Neighborhoods Program Application

Contributed by: Geoff Horsfall, SUN board of directors, Sustainability Committee co-chair

The SUN Sustainability Committee is currently organizing an application for the City and County of Denver's Sustainable Neighborhoods Program. This program provides resources and support to neighborhoods seeking to organize workshops, projects, and events that enhance the livability of their neighborhood and reduce the ecological footprint of its residents. Participating neighborhoods earn program credits for their efforts while the city provides in-kind resources, such as printing, venue and catering fees, and staff time to support projects. You can learn more about the Sustainable Neighborhood Network here: <https://www.sustainableneighborhood-network.org/sustainable-neighborhoods-denver>

The Sustainability Committee's vision is to plan projects and events in Stapleton aligned to five broad goal categories (Air, Land, Energy, Water, People) and associated target areas established by the Sustainable Neighborhoods Program. Examples of potential projects include tree planting in community parks (Air), a movie night/dinner fundraiser (People), and picking up trash in Westerly Creek (Water). In considering potential projects, benefit to residents both in and outside of the Stapleton community, and connecting residents across community borders in and outside of Stapleton are both important factors, with a goal of synergistically connecting people and building community while promoting sustainability.

A parallel effort will be to establish "Green Teams" around sustainability-focused topics about which a group is interested. Green teams would be a go-to in the community for residents interested in a sub-topic of sustainability, and would support events under the Sustainability Committee umbrella. This additional structure would again build community and connect people with similar interests while promoting sustainability.

SUN is currently collecting feedback from residents to identify which projects are of greatest interest to the community (see survey link above). If you would like to participate in efforts around sustainability with SUN, please contact Geoff Horsfall at geoff.horsfall@gmail.com

Amanda Allshouse, President of the board of directors for Stapleton United Neighbors

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Letters to the Editor

Please, no more "Stapleton Stops."

I live in Stapleton, near a four-way stop, just a couple blocks from an elementary school and near a park. It's a busy area, with kids playing, bicycle riders, joggers, folks walking dogs, etc. At all hours of the day and night, I see drivers rolling through the stops signs, sometimes blowing through. I assume it's mainly people who live in the area. After all, we drive these streets every day. We know the route. We pass this intersection frequently. We've never had a problem. I've taken to calling it a "Stapleton Stop," because I think it's us who are the offenders. But God forbid we miss something, just one

time. We're in a hurry. We are distracted. We're late to drop the kids off at school, or for work. We're headed to something we think is important. That one time could lead to a tragic outcome. It could change your life, and your family's life, forever. And the lives of others and their families. So please, no more Stapleton Stops. It's not worth the few seconds we save. It's not worth being forever sorry for making a terrible mistake. It's not worth it, period. Please, no more "Stapleton Stops."

—Randy Loveland

Creative Use of Space by DU at the Solar Decathlon

The mandate of the recent international Solar Decathlon held in Denver was to focus on homes designed to be "affordable, innovative and highly energy efficient."

One of the ways that the student-led partnership between the University of Denver and UC Berkeley showed their creativity was by using Murphy Wall Beds. Part of their bedroom design included moving walls on tracks so that during the day, not only did the vertical beds close up against the wall, but the actual walls moved in toward the beds, allowing over 350 more cubic feet for the communal



living area. (The attached photo shows the moving walls on ceiling tracks that ran in the November *Front Porch* article, "Innovations at the Solar Decathlon.")

DU/UC Berkeley ended up third out of 13 in the competition, narrowly beaten out of second place by the University of Maryland. Their house is going to Denver

Habitat for Humanity, which plans to install the project on a temporary lot while they prepare a permanent lot for the house. After installation on its permanent lot, the home will be sold to a family in need. Smart Spaces, a local family-owned business, donated the Murphy Beds and cabinetry and gave some hands-on instruction to the students on wood-working, adding a skill to the many they learned throughout their two-year-

long project.

—Deb Beckmann, owner, Smart Spaces, Murphy & Wall Beds

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Blossoms of Light

Front Porch photos from the 2016 Blossoms of Light

Above: Based on popular demand, the Gardens' Amphitheater interactive light display will return. Individually programmable LED lights on sticks are controlled through a computer program that is sound-reactive. Patrons can interact with three different instruments, a drum, keyboard and microphone to influence what happens on the light field. Every 15 minutes, a predesigned light show is displayed, synchronized to music.

Below: To be respectful of the Japanese culture, Kiehl and Horvath work closely with the horticulturalist in charge of the Japanese Garden area. The team is careful to follow the strict rules regarding what color palette can be used. Some of the plants are very old and can only have spotlights used on them.



(continued from page 1) This year will be the first in which 100 percent of the lights are LED. "Using LED lights takes way less power so we are able to put more strings of lights onto the same power circuit than incandescent," says Kristi Horvath, senior events coordinator and co-lead with Kiehl on the project.

Installation for the winter show begins right after Labor Day with final touches being added until mid-November. Everything comes down in January. Designing the shows starts a year in advance, however, with Kiehl and Horvath talking about the 2018 show before 2017 has even begun. They change the colors and design schemes of approximately two-thirds of the show to make sure they have something fresh for guests to see each year. They also plan the viewer's experience, making sure there are complementary colors to enjoy at every turn. Kiehl and Horvath also handle less artistic, but important logistics from ticketing to snow removal, to path closures.

Kiehl worked on *Blossoms of Light* by herself for several years, but in 2016, with the increase of visitors to the Gardens, Horvath joined the efforts so they could expand the show. Together, they have learned a lot about

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Left: Although Horvath and Kiehl work together to design the Blossoms of Light display, there are some areas in which horticulturalists have a hand. The Solarium, tucked off of a path, is one. In 2016, the building housed a teddy bear Christmas scene. The horticulturalist surprises the team with each year's design.

Right: Anyone who purchases tickets online or in advance will enter through this Welcome Garden to the south of the Visitor's Center entrance along York Street. More trees will be decorated in this area and the lights will be multicolored.



Above: Aspen and birch trees line the path in front of the Solarium. This year, the trees will be covered in classic red and green colors with purple accents.

Right: At the Tower Pond, next to the Science Pyramid, the color-illuminated water flows freely but sometimes freezes, making for a dramatic effect. The large snowflakes are back making a popular stopping point for a photo opportunity, even during the day.

Blossoms of Light — Nov. 24 to Jan. 1

5 – 9pm, \$10 – \$15. \$5 additional at gate. Tickets at: botanicgardens.org/events/special-events/blossoms-light

power requirements, stringing lights across 23 acres of gardens and how much squirrels like to chew on power cords, resulting in the need to restring and repair sections of lights.

As in years past, there will be carolers some nights of the show, food and drink options, and Halospex glasses to purchase that enable guests to see either snowflake or snowman shapes in every twinkly light they view.

New this year, there will be several guarded exit points on the one-direction path, allowing parents with a crying child or someone in need of a restroom break to veer off the path. This is also the first time there will be a nightly limit to the number of tickets sold to keep crowd size lower for a better guest experience. Kiehl and Horvath also offer these tips: purchase tickets in advance, attend in the first two weeks of the show and arrive after 7:30pm.



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