

Front Porch

80238, Park Hill, Lowry, Montclair, Mayfair, NW Aurora, East Colfax

DENVER, COLORADO

NORTHEAST DENVER

JULY 2020

BLACK LIVES MATTER



The 80238 community showed up to support Leah Peters after she posted on Facebook that she and her family would march on June 6 to show their outrage at police brutality, systemic oppression, and White supremacy.

Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

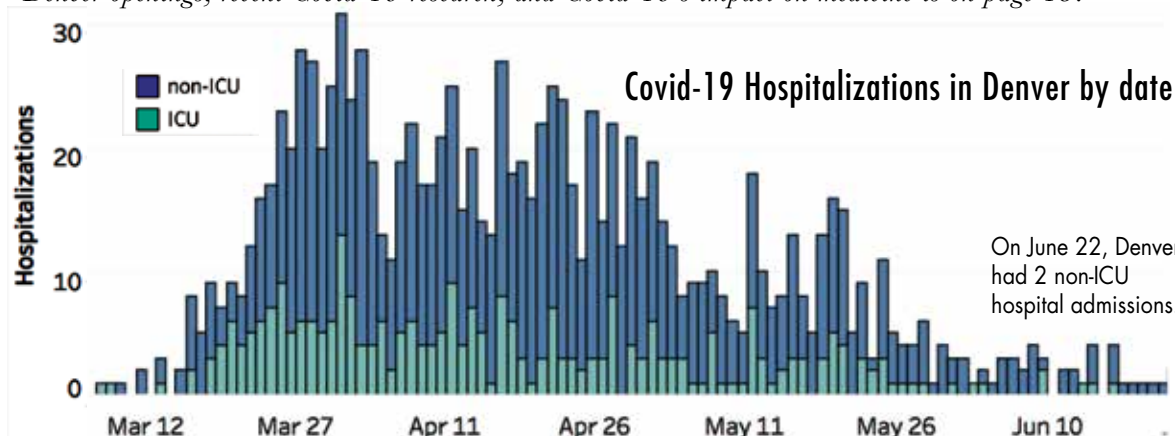
“Our country, our society are just in a different place,” says Councilman Chris Herndon. “It just feels different,” says Amanda Allshouse, president of the registered neighborhood organization, comparing current with past discussions about changing the name of the community. Delegates to the Master Community Association who were reluctant to use their authority to change the name last year now say they will vote for their board to recommend a name change. The Colorado legislature was the first in the nation to pass a comprehensive police reform bill. And even before that bill was passed, the Denver Chief of Police publicly and pointedly committed to many of its

policies. These changes all happened less than a month after George Floyd was murdered. [Until the community selects a new name through a series of email votes in July, the *Front Porch* is referring to the community as 80238.] *Stories by Martina Will, PhD and Carol Roberts are on pages 5, 8 and 9.*

Covid-19 Denver Update

Though Denver was on target for hospitalizations, testing and positivity rates as of June 24, officials stated strongly that masks need to be worn “for the foreseeable future.” To be sure we don’t lose the progress we’ve made and can continue gradual openings, “Keep wearing masks where required and even where not required,” said Mayor Hancock in a press conference on Covid-19 status in Denver.

Free testing continues at the Pepsi Center. Denver has been meeting its target of 150 tests per 100,000 people (1,100 tests a day.) The positivity rate on June 24 was 3% and will need to stay at 5% or lower to continue the gradual openings. *Information on Denver openings, recent Covid-19 research, and Covid-19’s impact on medicine is on page 15.*



On June 22, Denver had 2 non-ICU hospital admissions.

Talking to Children about Racism



Story on page 14 by Martina Will PhD


Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch



This photo of wildflowers (that bear a resemblance to drawings of the coronavirus) was taken along the path around Lake Mary at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge at the moment the sun popped through, creating silver linings in the clouds.

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

Corrections

- The photo of Razz Cortés-Maceda on p. 11 of the June 1 paper was actually of her daughter, Gaby Corica.
- The bipartisan bill for a national public health corps that Rep. DeGette co-sponsored, noted on p. 13 of June issue, is HR6808.

Pick up a Front Porch at Safeway or other locations

Even while rec centers, libraries and businesses are closed, the *Front Porch* will continue to be delivered to the racks in the Lowry and Mayfair Safeways and to sidewalk racks listed at <https://frontporchne.com/more/rack-locations/>

Comment on and Share Stories at FrontPorchNE.com

Send Letters to the Editor to Carol@FrontPorchNE.com

Events & Announcements

STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY NAME

The Master Community Association (MCA) is announcing that it is taking steps to remove the name “Stapleton” as it relates to the community and its operations.

The current conversation regarding racism and social injustice has increased awareness and education within our community. As a community that aims to foster inclusivity, diversity and respect, maintaining the current name only serves to divide us.

The 11 elected MCA community delegates met on Wednesday, June 17 to begin the process of removing the name Stapleton from the community. While the renaming process must also include the City and County of Denver and the community’s developer, Brookfield Properties, the MCA’s community delegates will vote to recommend to the MCA board the following action items:

- Remove the Stapleton name from all branding, marketing and community outreach materials, including signage and websites.
- Move to commit to update MCA governing documents to remove the singular reference to Stapleton as the community name
- Support SUN’s efforts to identify a new community name as quickly as possible, while permitting engagement with the entire community
- To send a resolution to the City and County of Denver and Brookfield Properties requesting that they replace the name Stapleton with a new community name as the neighborhood identifier

It is our hope that a change in the official name of the community, we will send a strong message that we are an inclusive neighborhood that does not support racism, hatred or bigotry. Rather, we are a thriving community that values diversity, inclusion, equity and respect, and we encourage others in our community to join us as we stand up against systemic racism.

AQUATICS Pools open July 1st!

Reservations must be made in advance for each available facility. Please visit our website to make your reservation today! Space is limited. Please limit your reservation requests to no more than one visit per 24-hour period. *One visit to any facility will count as your daily total; accumulating multiple reservations across various facilities will not be permitted.

The pools in our community are all public pools. They were financed with tax exempt bonds which is how the Park Creek Metro District funds all infrastructure. The

MCA does not own the pools we are only the operator. Entry fees have always paid for a portion of pool operations.

A few reminders before you dive in:

- All patrons within our facilities MUST wear a mask while outside of the water. In addition, patrons shall maintain a minimum distance of 6 ft. between themselves and other guests outside their immediate family.
- Locker room access will not be permitted. All patrons must arrive and depart from our facilities in their swimming attire.
- All food and beverages, and use of portable coolers, is prohibited. Portable camping chairs are allowed as long as they are easy to carry in and out.
- We ask patrons to exit our facilities without delay after their reservation is finished. Our staff will implement thorough disinfecting procedures between each reservation window, and we appreciate that patrons offer them adequate space and time to do so.
- Be respectful of our seasonal staff and other visitors around you. Remember, treat others the way you want to be treated.

Resident Membership Cards

We have suspended the Resident Membership Card program for the 2020 swim season. New residents may still register for a household account via our website; however, no new membership cards will be issued this season. There will be no penalty for expired memberships in 2021 and residents will be able to renew without visiting the office. Any memberships that were renewed prior to June 12, 2020 will be automatically extended for the 2021 season.

FACILITY AND PARK RENTALS

The Cube and Community Room: Closed to reservations through August 2020.

Outdoor Sport Fields and MCA Parks: Inquire about reservation availability by emailing jvaleta@stapletoncommunity.com.

FARMERS MARKET Every Sunday, 9am-1pm, Founders’ Green

Come check out the new and improved Farmers Market. The new market features Colorado-grown produce, tasty baked goods, specialty meats, gourmet items, and so much more! We hope this market will enhance the neighborhood and the surrounding communities with an experience where fresh and wholesome products are easily found. For a complete list of vendors, please visit our website.

Carry on bravely,
Lawrence Uhling, Administrative Assistant
www.stapletoncommunity.com

Master Community Association

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Front Porch – NE Denver distributes more than 25,000 free papers during the first week of each month. Papers are delivered by mail and/or racks in Stapleton, Park Hill, Lowry, Montclair, Mayfair, E. Colfax and NW Aurora.

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- 9 Community** - join active and independent adults living exciting and engaging lifestyles
- 10 Community garden and garden shed** - grow all of your favorite things alongside your neighbors
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Our July issue is courtesy of these businesses!

Click to find them at www.FrontPorchNE.com > Business Directory

Blood Donation	Vitalant Blood Center	12
Churches	Augustana Lutheran Church	14
Community Organization	Stapleton Master Community Association	2
Dance Classes	Dance Institute LLC	8
Dental	Lowry Family Dentistry	9
	Nestman Orthodontics	15
	Williams Family Dentistry	7
Design and Remodeling	Diane Gordon Design	7
	Gather and Spruce	11

Dispensary	Starbuds	4
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Stapleton

New Name?



By Martina Will, PhD and Carol Roberts

Seeing the massive change in community awareness of racism after George Floyd’s death, representatives of neighborhood groups and the city quickly started on the path toward a new name for the Stapleton neighborhood. At the same time, individuals in the community, through rallies and yard signs, are showing their support for the protests and for Black lives.

Voices in the community

“I just felt compelled—especially as I thought about my own kids and the kind of people I want to raise them to be, to show our outrage at police brutality, systemic oppression, and White supremacy,” Leah Peters says of her Facebook post that she and her young children would march in Central Park. She wanted an event in her own neighborhood that parents would feel comfortable taking their small children to, believing strongly that it is incumbent on White people “to stand up where they are...and be vocal about racial justice.” She welcomed others to join in and prepared for backlash or silence. Instead, on June 6, an estimated 300 to 400 people showed up to march and rally in Central Park.

As a White woman, Peters admitted she

With protests reflecting increased awareness and outrage about racism, leaders of four entities came together in early June in response to community sentiment and set in motion a process to change the Stapleton name. What played out in 2019 as four separate responses to a proposed name change, in 2020 became a shared view that the right time is now. Each of the four entities plays an essential role in implementing this change: The Master Community Association (elected delegates below); Stapleton United Neighbors (represented by President Amanda Allshouse, left); Brookfield (Stapleton’s master developer); and the City of Denver, represented by Mayor Michael Hancock (above) and Councilman Chris Herndon (right), shown here in Zoom meeting photos.

Concerns about the name Stapleton were raised before development began in 2000 and have come to the forefront periodically since then. With a plan to have a new name by August, what some may see as a sudden change, others see as a change decades in the making.



had misgivings about organizing a march. But she reached out to Denver activists who countered her caution with “Who do you think should be organizing people in Stapleton if not you?”

Jazmine Pace, a rising senior at East High School who lives in Conservatory Green, was among the event speakers. “Fighting for what I believe in, fighting for my rights and other people’s rights, and

fighting for equality and justice for people who look like me has always been a passion of mine.” She says it’s essential that White people understand their complicity with systemic racism as well as their ability to change those systems. “I’ve been dealing with racism my entire life...White people in particular need to know that their voices are much louder than mine in this issue, unfortunately, and that everyone needs to become aware of what is happening to minorities and Black people in particular. They need to stand up for what is right because they have the most power in this country, unfortunately.” Pace also attended a student-centered protest with peers from East High School and says, “That was really incredible to see: all my classmates and everyone who was joining together to make a change... one of my classmates said when she was speaking at one of the rallies, ‘We were born tired,’ and that really resonated with me because we’ve been fighting against injustices our entire lives.”

Rename St*apleton for All worked for years to change the community’s name, says Board Chair Liz Stalnaker, but its petition stalled at 572 signatories in 2017. Renewed interest in the issue, however, led to almost 11,000 (continued on p. 6)

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Stapleton's Name Will Change



Above and lower right: Leah Peters says she didn't expect her idea for a march in Stapleton to be well-received, but was thrilled by the large turnout and community support.

(continued from page 5) new signatures in June 2020. "When we downloaded the petition data, the number of Denver signatories surpasses the number of total votes in the entire 2019 referendum," says Stalnaker. For those who believe the name change has come about suddenly, she points to decades of activism by Juju Nkrumah and others. "This is an issue that's bigger than just one community; the values of the Green Book were that we were supposed to be seamlessly integrated with our surrounding communities, which are mostly communities of color...it's time."

Rename's future steps include supporting organizations like MCA and SUN as well as small businesses that wish to transition to the new name. Fireside, a marketing company, has offered free assistance with rebranding. Businesses can visit <https://meetfireside.com/newname/>. To sign the Rename petition or participate in their upcoming events visit renameforall.com.

What about the community's vote on the name in 2019?

The legal name "Stapleton" appears in the covenants that govern the master-developed community. Although a change to the covenants requires a quorum (50% plus one) of property owners to be binding, one clause—the name of the community—can be changed by a majority vote of the community association (MCA) board. The covenants, based on state law, establish a



system of elected delegates who can recommend such a change to the board. Last year, a majority of the delegates felt a name-change decision should be made by a vote of the community, not by the board. Ballots, along with a stamped, self-addressed



The Black National Anthem
*Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of liberty*

Above: Jazmine Pace, 17, who sang the Black National Anthem, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, was among the speakers at the June 6 rally in Central Park.

envelope were sent to all property owners. One ballot question asked if the name Stapleton should be removed (with a name yet to be selected if the vote were in favor). With 33% of possible voters responding, the vote was 65.2% to keep the name and 34.8% to change it. A separate question asked if the covenants should be amended so any future name change could only be made by a vote of the owners (not by a vote of the board). That question, with 31.4% responding, did not meet the quorum, so the MCA board retained the authority to recommend a name change. Ultimately, removal of the name would have required a replacement name that the delegates could recommend to the board and the board could recommend to the master developer, which has the final say about the name for the first 20 years of the development (until October 2021). In 2018, the registered neighborhood organization, Stapleton

A video excerpt from this rally is posted at FrontPorchNE.com

Front Porch photos this page by Christie Gosch



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These signs were viewed at Stapleton homes in a 6-block walk on Father's Day.

United Neighbors (SUN), also held a vote on changing their name and 58% were in favor but it did not meet the bylaws requirement of 66% to change the name.

After years of discussion and the recent votes, most residents, regardless of their views on making the change, have learned why the name is troubling and why the subject has resurfaced—Mayor Ben Stapleton was a member of the KKK.

What's different this year?

“The place where we were as a society last year compared to now is a totally different place,” says Councilman Chris Herndon, who did not support the name change a year ago. “This is an awakening that is happening and the community has spoken... I don't believe anyone can argue with all the things that have happened in the past month. With Facebook groups changing their names, that beautiful march in our neighborhood, you just know that it's right to have a more inclusive name of this community.”

Herndon asked Mayor Hancock to remove the name Stapleton from the City's systems—and Hancock has said the City will accept input on potentially renaming landmarks and public places associated with racist groups or ideologies.

SUN President Amanda Allshouse echoed Herndon's sentiments. She and other SUN board members observed numerous groups removing Stapleton from their names and heard concerns about the community having a divisive name. The SUN board met in the first week of June and agreed an inclusive process for finding a new name was needed. “We saw that need and that's what we set out to fill.

“It's always been import-

Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch



At the June 20 “Community Rally for Change” in Central Park, elected officials and activists spoke about the many implications of renaming the community, as well as the work that remains to be done. An estimated 200 people attended the event organized by Denver School Board member Tay Anderson.

ant for me that SUN support where the community is on issues,” says Allshouse. She adds that the board has numerous conversations to decide if they need to pause and gather evidence or whether they can just take a position because it's their best judgment that their action is something the community would support. “This is a big thing, but it seems like there's resounding community evidence of support for this. It is different than in the past where we have been collecting feedback first. It just feels different.”

Herndon and MCA Executive Director Keven Burnett both point to the long history of concern about the name Stapleton that started even before construction began. The name ended up in the community's covenants as a “by-product” of the decision by the city and the developer to refer to the community as Stapleton, says Burnett.

MCA delegates including Christie Spilsted, Josh Nicholas, and Hope Miller reflected powerfully on their own shift in thinking over the past year during the discussion prior to the MCA delegates voting unanimously to move forward with a name change.

“This is the first step,” says Herndon. “...there's much more work that needs to be done. Let's not suddenly come up with a name and then we go back to our way of life before. I want to challenge us to look at our systems, to look at our behaviors, to see what we are doing to break down these barriers to create a society that I want my daughter and my son to be proud of—that they don't have to go through what I did growing up as a kid.”



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CO Among First in Nation to Enact Legislation

Law Enforcement Integrity Act

By Martina Will, PhD

With Gov. Polis' signing of the Law Enforcement Accountability and Integrity Act on June 19, Colorado became the first state in the nation to implement comprehensive police reform since the brutal killing of George Floyd ignited nationwide protests. The sweeping measures (see inset) have brought Colorado into the national spotlight as a possible model for other states. Rep. Leslie Herod, who represents House District 8, was one of the bill's sponsors, and explains how legislators were able to move so quickly on reform.

"I have been working on these issues since I heard about what happened to De'Von Bailey and the lack of justice that his family received, and Elijah McClain's death, it just made the calls for change even louder," says Herod, reflecting on the August 2019 killings of two young Black men—Bailey, shot in the back while fleeing Colorado Springs police and McClain, who died after Aurora police placed him in a carotid control hold. The new law specifically bans both of these actions.

Strong bipartisan and law enforcement (Colorado Fraternal Order of Police and the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police) support for the legislation made for swift passage in both houses. Herod says demonstrators demanding police reform made all the difference. "The law enforcement lobby was not



For a 2016 Front Porch story about police officer training on when shooting would or would not be an acceptable response, our writer, with a training gun, participated in a scenario of a man approaching with a bat while holding a baby.

supportive of my initial request for fleeing felon [the measure that bans the use of deadly force if someone is running away] or to change the use of force standards in Colorado; we met in November to talk about just that and I was told that change didn't need to happen, we didn't need any state laws to regulate or oversee what's happening with law enforcement at the local level."

"It wasn't until we had the protest movement coming from the people that we were able to have the political momentum to get something passed through the general assembly," Herod says.

According to Colorado Public Radio, Colorado ranks fifth in the nation for fatal law enforcement shootings, and time will tell whether these reforms lower officers' propensity to discharge their weapons. When asked if she sees a connection between

police tendency to use deadly force and high gun ownership (35% of Coloradans own guns), Herod says "I do believe that there is some synergy with how quickly people are willing to take somewhere else's life and we should definitely be concerned about that. I do believe in principle in gun control, absolutely."

Recruiting new law enforcement, and especially ensuring a racially and ethnically diverse pool of recruits, has long been a challenge

in Colorado and nationally. While all of the negative press and greater oversight suggest that enlisting new candidates may continue to be difficult for some time, Herod hopes promoting integrity will lead to more children wanting to grow up to become police officers. "I believe people are not trying to be law enforcement officers because they see law enforcement officers killing people in our communities, on their social media feed on a regular basis."

Herod says she will look to the community to guide her moving forward. "The work doesn't stop," she says. She and other legislators are exploring banning ketamine as well as promoting greater citizen oversight.

Most of the Act's provisions go into effect in 2020, with a few measures taking effect in 2023. No additional funds are included to implement reform, which Herod says can be achieved by shifting priorities within departments.



Legislation sponsor Rep. Leslie Herod says, "It would not have happened without the voice of the protesters. Protest does lead to policy change."

The Law Enforcement Integrity Act:

- Mandates body cameras, makes video of police misconduct publicly available (to public within 21 days, to victim's family 72 hours prior to public release), and holds officers accountable when they fail to record.
- Requires data collection and public reporting on policing including demographic data of individuals encountered, type and severity of force used, civilian searches, forced entries into homes, and the unholstering and discharging of a firearm.
- Reins in use of deadly force by officers: (1) outlaws chokeholds; (2) outlaws deadly force against someone fleeing the police who does not pose an immediate risk; (3) outlaws the use of deadly force to arrest people for minor offenses and non-violent offenses; and (3) requires non-violent means before resorting to any force.
- Requires officers to intervene to stop excessive force. Failure to intervene by an officer is a criminal offense.
- Decertifies bad officers.
- Creates a publicly available database to prevent rehiring of officers who are found untruthful, terminated for cause, or decertified.
- Ends qualified immunity of officers found liable. Victims of police misconduct can bring a lawsuit for violation of their constitutional rights.
- Protects protesters from police use of tear gas and projectiles: prohibits shooting rubber bullets indiscriminately into a crowd and targeting at someone's head, torso, or back. Prohibits using tear gas without warning, time to disperse, and a route to disperse.
- Authorizes attorney general lawsuits against bad police departments to force change and bring criminal charges against officers for violations of POST standards.

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Denver Police Chief Paul Pazen held a virtual town hall on June 3 to listen to community concerns and respond to questions. The Front Porch transcribed questions from that session and edited for length and clarity.

I'm concerned at the overly aggressive response by DPD to the protest—the use of rubber bullets and the treatment of those trying to peacefully protest. How do you plan to hold police responsible for their actions?

Accountability is a big part of what we need to do to build some trust. Just like I have to hold our officers accountable for their actions I must be held accountable as well. We will absolutely have an independent review to include the Office of Independent Monitor. We certainly do not want to negatively impact peaceful protests. We must focus on the individuals that are causing harm to the people of Denver and our community.

We have to do a better job of identifying those individuals that are causing the violence or destruction and hold them accountable without negatively impacting the folks that are here to really get their voices heard.

Will you require observing officers to intervene when their fellow officers is using unnecessary force, especially when someone is already contained?

Yes, you're right. We saw this on the video and any one of those three other officers could have intervened. We need to make sure that doesn't happen here—that there is a duty to intervene. We see what horrific tragic loss of life can happen when officers don't intervene in these unnecessary uses of force.

Is there a way the police can show they are not above their badge in a way that honors all people as equals?

We have to acknowledge that law en-



Protesters and police clash in downtown Denver during a demonstration against police brutality on Thursday, May 28, 2020.

Q&A with Chief Pazen

forcement historically, as well as this department and individual officers, have made mistakes. It's about building trust, and when that trust is violated, it's very difficult to bring it back. We must hold ourselves accountable for our actions and pledge to do better, but we certainly need the community's help and input—and that's what we are asking for here.

Is there any policy to remove police officers that are involved or associated with any white supremacist or racist group? If not, do you plan on implementing one?

Racism has no place in law enforce-



Chief Pazen spoke at a community meeting in August 2019 following a string of 80238 burglaries.

ment and certainly doesn't have any place in the Denver Police Department. When we look at not just what happened in Minneapolis and the last several days here in Denver, some of this is structural racism that impacts the criminal justice system, the

public health system, and our economic system. We have to look at this in a holistic approach. But when we talk about officers that may have any kind of racist biased views, we can't tolerate that. Together we need to make sure that those folks aren't hired within the police department and if they are identified that they're immediately removed.

What characteristics will you prioritize in hiring?

What's in somebody's heart is really something that's difficult to measure. Identifying and hiring officers that care about people and care about their neighborhoods gives us an opportunity to do better. And it's a way that we can get diverse backgrounds and diverse perspectives, not just from the outside but from the inside, to help change law enforcement and to change this police department. If we have folks like myself who grew up in North Denver, who you know are deeply connected to the community, you want those strong ties. People who care about our city and want to improve and who are open to learn new perspectives, those are the types of characteristics that we're looking for in the women and men that make up the police department.

What can the Denver Police Department do to ensure they know and feel that we are being heard and that pain is also being felt?

It's important that our department listens now. Words are just words until they become actions. Marching and talking with young leaders really helped me get a better-informed perspective on what's taking place. I can tell you that there's a greater level of awareness and a greater level of understanding, but this is just a start. We have a long way to go. The fact that thousands of folks from every walk of life, young old, different races, different religions, different sexual orientations are all coming together, we all need to listen to this message and be present for it. This is not just our city, this is not just our state, and it's not just our country. They're having similar protests across the globe. I believe this is the tipping point and we have to do better—our commitment is we're going to be open and do better.

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...NE News Updates



By Martina Will, PhD and Carol Roberts

1 Sprouts To Open July 22

The newest Sprouts at 3555 Central Park Blvd. (just north of MLK) will open July 22 at 7am. Though no further details are available about opening day, those seeking work can still apply at sprouts.com/careers. Like all Sprouts stores, this location will feature grocery pickup and same-day online ordering via sprouts.com/order. According to the Sprouts corporate office, their stores have plexiglass barriers at the registers, they take staff temperature daily, and ask staff to stay home if they have any symptoms. All employees wear masks and staff in multiple departments wear gloves.



2 Stanley Opens with Two New Businesses

Stanley Marketplace is now open from 7am-9pm daily after a 73-day Covid closure. They have added large tents that allow patrons to consume food and beverages outdoors while social distancing. And two new businesses have opened:

Third & Logan pairs the gluten-free mochi specialty baked goods from Third Culture Bakery with Logan House Coffee's beverages. Third & Logan is open from 7am-2pm daily.

Elita Specialty Market & Kitchen took over

the former Juniper Pig space to offer a unique "Mediterranean- and Latin-inspired fast casual menu." Elita is open from 11am-6pm daily.

3 Control Tower Owner Expects Building To Remain an "Eat & Play" Destination

The old control tower is owned by EPR Properties, a publicly traded Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) that specializes in "experiential real estate." Their \$6.7 billion portfolio has properties in 44 states and Canada that include theatres, gaming, amusement parks, and "Eat & Play" family entertainment centers—like Punch Bowl. "Our focus is on long-term tenants and stable properties," says Brian Moriarty, Vice President of Corporate Communications. "We recognize what the tower means to the community; we recognize its iconic location." Moriarty says they are talking to a variety of future tenants and it's likely to remain an "Eat and Play" destination like Punch Bowl.

"Our intent is to have long-term relationships," he says, referring to AMC Theatres, which, for 20 years has been their largest and longest tenant. He acknowledges that Covid-19 makes the current situation more complicated and likely will extend the time needed to find a new tenant. But as a large publicly traded company with a strong balance sheet, he says they will get through Covid "to the other side."



Punch Bowl will not re-open in control tower building.

4 DPS To Remove Cops from Schools

The Denver School Board unanimously passed a resolution to end 18 positions that put Denver police in schools (School Resource Officers, SROs). The resolution states "from the 2014-15 school year through the 2018-19 school year, DPS students were ticketed or arrested at school by police officers at least 4,540 times, with the vast majority being Black or Latinx students between the ages of 10 and 15 [data from Padres & Jovenes Unidos], thereby introducing them to the criminal justice system."

The resolution cites DPS's obligation to protect students from systemic racism—and says the perpetuation of the school-to-prison pipeline is incompatible with creating equitable schools. The Superintendent is directed to reallocate the funds to increase the number of behavioral health professionals within DPS. The resolution also calls for a monthly discipline report by race/ethnicity, age, and school, showing suspensions and incidents when police are called. In addition, it calls for a community group to draft a new policy that ensures students will no longer be referred to law enforcement while on school grounds.

A *Chalkbeat* article, through an open records request,



DPS school board members Tay Anderson and Jenifer Bacon on June 5 hold a press conference at South High School to announce their proposed DPS resolution to remove Denver police officers from schools. The resolution passed unanimously.

quoted emails from three teachers who supported removing the police due to fear and trauma they'd seen in their students. Three high school principals wrote of positive experiences with SROs and expressed concern about them leaving.

5 City Council Approves Nov. Ballot Measure Re: Key Appointed Positions

Late at night on June 22, after hearing more than two hours of public statements on defunding the police, Denver City Council voted to place a question on the ballot asking voters if the city charter should be changed to require Council approval of 11 mayoral cabinet appointees and 3 public safety positions. The vote was 12 in favor and one "pass" by Councilman Hinds. Many of the same people who came in an organized group favoring defunding the police also spoke in favor of this ballot question. Councilman Flynn, who favored putting the question on the ballot, did raise the point that as was seen in the DPS Superintendent and CU President selections, there were qualified candidates who chose not to be considered due to the public process.

State Updates

Legislature Refers Gallagher Amendment to Nov. Ballot for Repeal Vote

Those who have lived in Colorado for awhile have heard about the state's Gordian Knot [frontporchne.com/article/cutting-gordian-knot/]. It's a trifecta of amendments to our state constitution that limit lawmakers' control over revenue; the three amendments dictate, in conflicting ways, the way much of the state's tax revenue can be used. One of the three, the Gallagher Amendment of 1982, limits state-wide property tax revenue to a formula that is 45 percent homeowner taxes and 55 percent commercial taxes. As the population has grown and property values have increased, residential tax rates have dropped to maintain the ratio. As a result, local property tax revenue to school districts has dropped dramatically.

Passage of the measure would eliminate the constitutional requirement that the residential assessment rate be changed in order to maintain the 45% homeowner and 55% commercial tax ratio. Over time, the measure, if passed, is expected to result in higher property tax revenue for local governments and reduce the state aid requirement for school finance. Local government taxes provide fire protection, police, ambulance, hospital, kindergarten through twelfth grade education, and other services.

Colo Adds Vaccine Exemption Requirements

In June, the Colorado House passed SB-163, a School Entry Immunization bill that supporters hope will encourage higher vaccination rates for children before they enter kindergarten. Colorado consistently ranks among the states with the highest non-medical exemption rates, and this bill requires those seeking a non-medical exemption to submit a form signed by a medical professional or take an online course to receive an exemption. According to the final approved text, "In 2017, more than 9,000 Colorado children...were hospitalized or went to an emergency department to be treated for a vaccine-preventable disease, resulting in \$55.5 million in charges." As of our publication, Gov. Polis had not yet signed the bill into law but has said he will.

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Shortened Legislative

By Todd Engdahl

One of the most extraordinary—and short—sessions of the Colorado General Assembly ended June 15 after lawmakers pushed out a stack of notable legislation.

Despite the stresses of an interrupted, socially-distanced and masked session, legislators passed bills to:

- Set new standards for police conduct (SB 20-217)
- Repeal the state's death penalty (SB 20-100)
- Create collective bargaining rights for state employees (HB 20-1153)
- Increase benefits and make other changes to unemployment insurance (SB 20-207)
- Require employers (with some exceptions) to provide paid sick leave for employees (SB 20-205)
- Start setting up a state-run retirement savings plan (SB 20-200)
- Restructure and refinance the state's reinsurance program, which is intended to help control medical insurance costs (SB 20-215)
- Set up more uniform procedures for requesting exemptions from school enrollment immunization requirements (SB 20-163)

Most important, lawmakers managed to patch together a \$31.7 billion 2020-21 state budget, but only by making significant cuts to K-12 support and higher education. And the legislature set in motion four tax policy changes that could be significant in the future. Those include:

- A measure to exempt Colorado's tax code from recent federal tax cuts, thereby raising revenue needed to balance the budget (HB 20-1420)
- The proposal to voters for repeal of the Gallagher Amendment; doing so would ease the distortions in the current property tax system (SCR 20-001)
- Another referendum to voters, this one to raise taxes on nicotine products (HB 20-1427)
- A change in school district finance law that could allow future legislatures to raise property taxes (HB 20-1218)

The legislature also passed an 11-bill COVID-19 relief package financed with \$70 million in emergency federal funding. The bills are designed to provide aid to small businesses, renters and people who need help with utility bills, among other things.

All but the death penalty repeal were passed during the legislature's truncated 15-day "second" session.

Jan. 8—Things Started Normally

The official legislative journals will record it only as the "Second Regular Session of the 72nd General Assembly," but the truth is that the Colorado legislature had two regular sessions this year.

The first ran from Wednesday, Jan. 8 to Saturday, March 14, with no work done on weekends and holidays. It was pretty much like the first couple months of any legislative session.

There were concerns that there wouldn't

be enough state revenue to support new spending proposed by interim committees and Gov. Jared Polis' plan to expand the state preschool program.

There was lots of chatter about whether majority Democrats would be able to complete 2019's unfinished business on big dreams like paid family leave and public option health insurance.

Bills were introduced, committees held hearings, routine work was done during floor sessions, bills were negotiated behind the scenes, news releases were issued and the Joint Budget Committee labored to make mid-year tweaks to the 2019-20 budget and to build the

2020-21 budget, line item by line item.

There was little sense of urgency—there never is in the first half of any 120-day legislative session. But the first session did see passage and signing of some notable bills in addition to the death penalty repeal, including:

- HB 20-1031, replacing Columbus Day with an observance honoring Mother Cabrini
- HB 20-1048, banning workplace discrimination based on hair styles
- SB 20-014, allowing students to take excused absences for mental health concerns
- SB 20-123, removing bans on compensation for college athletes

Mar. 9—Things Started Changing

The mood at the Capitol started to change as the Covid-19 pandemic began to dominate the news. By Saturday, March 14, legislative leaders had decided to recess because of the growing health threat. It was only the 67th day of the 120-day session.

One key parting action taken by lawmakers was to formally ask the Colorado Supreme Court if the mandated 120-day session needed to be consecutive, as has always been the case. A never-used legislative rule held that session days did not need to be consecutive during a declared state health emergency, but lawmakers wanted a ruling.

Later in March, the court ruled for non-consecutive days, giving lawmakers some breathing room beyond what would have been the scheduled adjournment date of May 6.

State Budget Deadline Looms

But lawmakers faced another, firmer deadline—the end of the fiscal year on June 30, the last date on which a new state budget could go into effect. In practical terms the budget needed to be adopted in early June so school districts could set their own budgets based on the amount of state aid.

After a lot of phone calls, Zoom meetings and fits and starts, lawmakers decided they needed to reconvene in mid-May.

The Joint Budget Committee went back to

work on May 4, starting to cut the almost-finished budget it had left behind in March. And then it had to slash even more after updated revenue forecasts on May 12 revealed the depth of state revenue losses. The process took longer than expected.

May 26—Reconvening

The Capitol was very different from the one lawmakers had left in March. Visitor temperatures were checked at the entrance, clear plastic panels separated legislator desks, some lawmakers sat in the galleries and a few participated remotely from home. Lobbyists and citizens were thin on the ground. Most everybody wore masks—except for some Republicans.

Once lawmakers got settled, the Democratic majority moved quickly. Of the 651 bills brought during the entire session, 66 were introduced during the brief second session, and they included the biggest bills of the session.

The Republican minority objected to the speed with which major proposals were introduced and moved, and they even used parliamentary delaying techniques a few times. The Democratic juggernaut kept moving, although there were significant concessions on some bills, such as the Fair Tax Bill, HB 20-1420. The Police Accountability Bill gained strong bipartisan support after a series of amendments were added, and there was even a little compromise on the immunizations bill.

Killing Bills

Lawmakers' other job during the second session was to kill bills.

The revenue situation made it impossible to fund most proposals with price tags, including several bills proposed by 2019 legislative study committees on early childhood education, school safety and substance abuse.

And legislative leaders, determined to spend as few days as possible in the Capitol during the pandemic, jettisoned other bills they deemed unimportant, unlikely to pass or too controversial or complicated to pass quickly.

Efforts to eliminate the statute of limitations on some sex crimes, set eviction protections, require greater state oversight of RTD, approve bail reform and pretrial release and require safe firearms storage all failed, as did some environmental bills.

All in all, some 316 bills either were post-

Session Still Produces Landmark Bills

2020 was not a typical 120-day continuous session. The legislature met for 67 days before the Covid shut down; they then resumed for 3 weeks to finish the session.

poned indefinitely (which requires individual votes) or just allowed to die in committee or on the floor calendar after lawmakers went home.

Democratic plans to pass a broad family leave bill and provide lower-cost health insurance, along with the governor's preschool funding dreams, never got off the ground.

Lawmakers adjourned on Monday, June 15, the 84th day of the session, not using all the flexibility the Supreme Court gave them.

Looking Ahead

Most observers expect that the 2021 session will face even harder budget decisions, given that recession effects usually last for two or three years and that most of the transfers and other tricks used to balance the 2020-21 budget won't be available next year.

And there will be a lot of new faces when the legislature convenes next year. Nine senators and 13 representatives won't be returning because of term limits or because they're not running again. Democratic House Speaker KC Becker of Boulder is among the term-limited. Democratic Senate President Leroy Garcia is in the middle of his term.

Todd Engdahl owns Capitol Editorial Services, a firm that provides legislative coverage, intelligence and analysis to private clients. During a long career as an editor and public policy journalist, he served as executive city editor of *The Denver Post*, founder of *DenverPost.com* and a founder of *Education News Colorado*, which later became part of *Chalkbeat Colorado*.

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SUN Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 6:30-8:30pm; a break at 7:30pm allows attendees to depart after an hour, though all are welcome to stay until the end. Meetings are held at Central Park Recreation Center, 9651 MLK Jr. Blvd. For information about SUN, visit www.stapletonunitedneighbors.com. To contact SUN, email stapletonunitedneighbors@gmail.com

July SUN News

By Amanda Allshouse, SUN President

SUN Statement Affirming Black Lives Matter

The recent protests against systemic racism and police violence have brought a moment of clarity to our world, country, and local community. As your Registered Neighborhood Organization, it is our responsibility to foster and advocate for an inclusive community on behalf of our diverse residents. We want to make clear that we strongly condemn all forms of racism and bigotry. Our desire is to live in a community that is safe and welcoming to ALL that live here and visit. We want to take this moment in time to acknowledge that BLACK LIVES MATTER.

SUN Seeking Community Cohesion Around an Alternative Community Name

To make this community a more inclusive place for all residents, one of SUN's actions is engaging the community to synthesize suggestions, vet options, and recommend solutions for a community-identified alternative name. In anticipation of the need for SUN to change its name, and in the absence of a clear alternative, SUN revisited this discussion as we were seeing the widespread support for anti-racism efforts in the weeks following the murder of George Floyd. After SUN's announcement on June 12, the MCA announced support for SUN's process on June 14. At the monthly MCA delegate meeting on June 17, delegates voted unanimously to support SUN's process and, in August, to recommend the name that emerges to the MCA board.

The MCA board will then vote on sending this recommendation to the developer, Brookfield, which has the final authority to change the name and has said it would support the community's choice of a new name. Mayor Hancock and Councilman Herndon also have expressed support for the community-identification of an alternative name.

In early July, a SUN-appointed Advisory Board will be working to narrow the set of community-suggested names from over 120 to a smaller set. This smaller set of names will then be voted on by the community in July. SUN is asking for help connecting with all members of the community during the month of July. During this month, adults who live (owners and renters) in the footprint of this community in Denver and Aurora will be asked to vote on the narrowed list of alternative community names. To receive this invitation from SUN, any household that does not currently receive emails directly from SUN should sign up on SUN's website: www.StapletonUnitedNeighbors.org

SUN Bylaw Vote, 2018 and Current Procedures

In 2018, SUN was asked to remove the community name from its organization name, but without an alternative name suggested. SUN offered "Central Park United Neighbors" as an alternative organizational name for community vote. Among 452 ballots submitted, the affirmative vote (58%) fell short of the 66% affirmative requirement. As the 2018 vote was for a bylaw change for SUN, the vote was restricted to adult owners and renters in this community in Denver as SUN is a Denver Registered Neighborhood Organization (RNO).

The current community-identification of an alternative name will not exclude adults who own and rent in the Aurora part of this community, as this step is independent of a bylaw change for SUN (which would be restricted to Denver residents). After an alternative community name has been identified, the SUN board will initiate a petition to gather 100 signatures for a bylaw change for SUN's name to align with the newly-identified alternative community name. After receiving a petition with 100 signatures, SUN would announce with at least 30 days' notice a community meeting for a vote to take place.



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Theaters are still closed, but movies live on. This month, I review three new releases that are all available through different online platforms, including the Denver Film Center at denverfilm.org. Please keep supporting local theaters and new movies!

Shirley (2020)

This darling of Sundance tells the fictional story of real-life writer Shirley Jackson's ("The Lottery") encounter with a young couple as she writes a new novel in her Vermont home circa 1950. The couple, engaged by Jackson's (philandering) husband to help with the housework, become entangled in the affairs of the house as well as the events of the novel. Director Josephine Baker crafts an intricate film of relationships, intrigue, and lies to complement the wonderful acting and visuals. The performances of the ensemble are all excellent: Elisabeth Moss as Jackson, Tom Stuhler as her husband, Odessa Young as the young helper Rose, and Logan Lerman as her boyfriend Fred round out the principals. Young and Moss particularly shine as their relationship undulates around the whims of reality and through the gothic horror of Jackson's writing.

The cinematography is particularly expressive: its close-ups and soft focus draw us in to the characters while filtering out much of the surrounding frame. The net effect is to mirror the artistic process, one in which the outside world exists merely as a foil, or even a muse, to the interior world. Such is the place where Jackson lives, and she pulls Rose in. It makes for a tantalizing mix of reality and gothic horror that allows the film to enter the world of the writer. The film we are watching, in essence, becomes her book.

Now available through the Sie Film Center, Hulu, and/or other VOD outlets.



John Lewis: Good Trouble (2020)

This is certainly one of the documentaries we need right now. A straight-ahead biography of civil rights icon and long-time Congressman John Lewis, it not only delves into this great man's life, but it also gives us a history lesson in the civil rights movement. Dating back to his start with Martin Luther King in the 50s, the film walks us through the struggle from the Edmund Pettus Bridge to the death of MLK and right up to the

present day. Lewis is a walking history lesson and an inspiration to millions. Director Amy Porter uses archival footage, old interviews, new interviews, and recent footage to tell a story that gives us the grounding to contextualize current events. It is captivating.

Starts July 3—Sie Film Center website

Irresistible (2020)

I rarely review comedy, but this new film from writer/director Jon Stewart (yes, *The Daily Show* guy) is perfect for our time. With a stellar cast—Steve Carell, Rose Byrne, and Chris Cooper—and Stewart's biting, searing social/political commentary, we get a parable for the political-economic complex of our era. When political operative



Carell finds a local hero primed for a mayoral run, he de-camps to the small town to run the campaign. Rival political operative Byrne then arrives to oppose him, and the suddenly high-stakes race is on. While we seemingly get the normal big-city folk vs. the small-town rube set-up, all may not be what it seems. Stay till the end.

Available on most VOD outlets.

Vincent Piturro, PhD, is a Professor of Film and Media Studies at Metropolitan State University of Denver. He can be reached at vpiturro@msudenver.edu. And you can follow "Indie Prof" on Facebook and @VincentPiturro on Twitter.

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Walking Through History With Papa Ray



Photo courtesy of MollyGargPhotography.com

Veteran Ray Burns served 29 years in the military, including in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

By Martina Will, PhD

When Ray Burns strolls through his Westerly Creek neighborhood each morning and afternoon, he rarely goes alone. Burns, who will celebrate his 100th birthday on August 5th of this year, usually moves down the sidewalk with one of the many neighbors who affectionately refer to him as “Papa Ray.” Though he’s been walking for his own health and fitness for years, his walking has a new purpose, as he strides towards his goal of reaching 100 km before his 100th birthday, raising money for three charities.

Three decades ago, when he learned he

had a major heart condition, his doctor advised him to walk—and he’s been walking ever since. Finding himself ahead of his centenarian goal, he recently decided he could start taking Sundays off. He now walks 2km daily to achieve his goal.

Burns likes to talk as he walks with his neighbors and supporters, and after 99 years, has a lot of stories to tell, from his childhood on a farm in rural Arkansas during the Great Depression to his military service. “He saved us really,” he says of Pres. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who ushered the US through the Depression and most of World War II. “I was about ten years old, but old enough to know things

were bad...when he started creating jobs, [like] the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] camps for the young men that gave them \$30 a month and they’d work at parks, and about \$20 of that went to their parents for them to live on.”

Burns recalls FDR with special fondness as the president who led the country through both the Great Depression and World War II. “He and Churchill and Stalin and de Gaulle, they made a great team. They worked together.”

After graduating high school, Burns joined National Guard Company B, 153rd Infantry Regiment early in 1940. He was called to active duty in December 1940, one year before the attack on Pearl Harbor. He served in the military for 29 years, during World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, including in the US Army and the Army Air Corps (which eventually became a separate branch, the US Air Force).

When asked how he views the current protests in light of his own service in the war against fascism, he says “It’s sad, you know. We’ve got the greatest country in the world...and I’ve seen it deteriorating to the point...certain groups hate one another—and I’ve always said, you know militarily-wise, I don’t think anybody will ever take us, but I think we’re gonna destroy ourselves from within.”

Burns worries about a generation of young people in debt from student loans, unemployed, fearful for the future and unable to buy into the American Dream of homeownership.

As the *Front Porch* goes to press, Papa Ray has walked 100km and raised \$13,551 for charity. To donate, go to: <https://www.paparaywalks100.org/> All funds raised will go to Operation USA, Mile High United Way Covid Relief, and Feeding America. More information about each charity is located at the website as well.

“It’s sad...militarily-wise, I don’t think anybody will ever take us—but I think we’re gonna destroy ourselves from within.” —Ray Burns, who will turn 100 on Aug. 5

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Ray Burns is walking 100km before his 100th birthday on Aug. 5 to raise funds for Covid relief and other charities. To contribute, visit www.paparaywalks100.org. Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch



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Talking to Children About Race & Racism

By Martina Will, PhD

Children are not colorblind. Even infants recognize differences we ascribe to race. Early in life, when children are acquiring language, they are also gaining an understanding of race and differences, says Children’s Hospital Colorado pediatrician and North End resident Dr. Brandi Freeman. Regan Byrd, who has been leading anti-oppression workshops in Denver for close to a decade concurs, saying, “Kids start categorizing and understanding races and relevant categories as early as age 3.” Given how early in life children perceive difference, how and when should parents talk to their children about race and racism? Is it ever too soon?



Children’s Hospital pediatrician Brandi Freeman reassures a child during an appointment. —Photo by KUSA

From their earliest years, children absorb both positive and negative messages from television, toys, books, and other experiences. Byrd and Freeman agree that by middle school, children have already formed their ideas about race, and conversations therefore need to begin much earlier. It is never too soon to talk to children about race, says Byrd; she suggests picking up on cues from children’s comments and reactions as they watch TV and observe everyday life. Ensuring that children have access to diverse images in the books and other media they consume will present more op-

“You should be introducing racial diversity and racial complexity early in your child’s life. We can’t ignore the truth of our country.”
—Regan Byrd

portunities to talk about race, racism, and anti-racism. “You should be introducing racial diversity and racial complexity early in your child’s life,” Byrd says. “We can’t ignore the truth of our country,” says Freeman, and parents need to engage in age-appropriate conversations with children about what they are seeing and hearing.

Byrd recommends initiating simple conversations when kids are young, such as: “We’re all human. People are connected. People have similar experiences; however, some people get treated differently because of their skin color, and we have to work against that.” Byrd says parents should use the pronoun “we” to describe things, rather than using “you.” “We as a family, we are anti-racist, and we work together to combat how racism affects other people.”

Freeman shares three recommendations to parents for talking to their children about race and racism:

- 1) “Make sure you are talking to your children at all levels; recognize that children have different levels of knowledge and make sure things are age-appropriate. It’s important to acknowledge that difference and bias exist.”
- 2) Parents need to examine and confront their own biases and model the behavior they want to see in their children.
- 3) Encourage children to challenge their own racial stereotypes. “Usually, kids are doing this through their friends and stereotypes they’ll see on television, but if they have personal experience with someone from a different background, it is a much more positive way to help them interact and under-

stand that a stereotype is not a real representation.”


Both Byrd and Freeman encourage parents and caregivers to be intentional about the media their children are consuming and to watch with their children so they can foster open conversations about the images and portrayals of different people. “Buy books that Black parents buy for their children. Buy books that give them a holistic sense of Black people and Black identity....Black parents already do this with their children. We as Black people are out looking for alternate, positive representations of Black people,” Byrd says. Freeman echoes the importance of positive images for kids; she recommends Common Sense Media, a website that reviews media content and offers recommendations for age-appropriate programming with diverse characters.

“The mistake a lot of White parents make,” says Byrd, “is that they think this work doesn’t need to take place unless there are children of color; no, it needs to be done in general. I don’t care if you have an all-White school: they need to be reading books about Black people and Black people’s lived experiences. That’s how we learn to humanize and understand other people.” Even at a predominantly White school, Byrd stresses the need for children to learn about race and racism.

For additional resources, see the list at Children’s Hospital Colorado: www.childrenscolorado.org/racism. Regan Byrd offers individual consultations as well as group anti-oppression trainings, and a new session of her White Anti-Racist Allyship: Beyond the Basics workshop begins July 2. See <https://www.reganbyrdconsulting.com/>




Regan Byrd says parents can teach anti-racism by ensuring their children see diverse, non-stereotypical images in books and TV shows.




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Covid-19 Denver Update

(continued from page 1)

Libraries

Bookdrops in Park Hill, Stapleton and Lowry, among others, are open. Curbside service will begin by appointment on Tues. July 7.

Parks

Playgrounds are open but not sanitized, frequent hand washing or sanitizer is recommended. Recreate in groups of 10 or less, distance yourself by 6 feet, masks are recommended.

Covid-19 Articles of Interest

The *Front Porch* selected the following articles to offer additional understanding of the coronavirus. They can be found at TheConversation.com.

How the coronavirus escapes an evolutionary trade-off that helps keep other pathogens in check

Viruses walk a fine line between severity and transmissibility. If they are too virulent, they kill or incapacitate their hosts; this limits their ability to infect new hosts. Conversely, viruses that cause little harm may not be generating enough copies of themselves to be infectious...

Older people tend to get highly destructive infections, while younger hosts, although just as infectious, remain largely unscathed.... [The] age-based pattern of SARS-CoV-2 permits it to have its evolutionary cake and eat it too: ravaging older individuals with high virulence, yet maintaining younger individuals as vehicles for transmission.

By Athena Aktipis, Asst. Prof. of Psychology, Arizona State University and Joe Alcock, Prof. of Emergency Medicine, Univ. of New Mexico

Can people spread the coronavirus if they don't have symptoms? 5 questions answered about asymptomatic COVID-19

When people do get sick from the coronavirus, it takes on average of five days and as many as two weeks to develop symptoms that can range from very mild to extremely dangerous.... A recent mass testing campaign in San Francisco found that 53% of infected patients were asymptomatic when first tested and 42% stayed asymptomatic over the next two weeks.

Another recent paper compared the evidence from 16 studies and estimated the overall rate of asymptomatic infection to be 40%-45%. Though none of these studies is perfect, a lot of evidence supports a true asymptomatic rate of around 40%.

Compared to most other viral infections, SARS-CoV-2 produces an unusually high level of viral particles in the upper respiratory tract – specifically the nose and mouth... Researchers have found that pre-symptomatic people shed the virus at an extremely high rate. Since SARS-CoV-2 is present in high numbers in a person's nose and mouth, it is that much easier for the virus to escape into the environment.

Universal mask wearing is the best tool to limit transmission, and there is evidence to back that idea up... I and many other infectious diseases researchers are convinced that it [asymptomatic spread] is playing a major role in this pandemic.

By Monica Gandhi, Professor of Medicine, Division of HIV, Infectious Diseases and Global Medicine, University of California, San Francisco

The first in a series: The World After Covid-19

Covid's Long-Term Impact on Medicine

By Martina Will
PhD

North End resident Dr. Glen Mays admits to not owning a crystal ball. Still, as a specialist in health policy and health economics, and chair of the Department of Health Systems Management and Policy at the Colorado School of Public Health, he possesses a unique vantage point from which to reflect on the lessons of recent epidemics and the current one and contemplate the future. He is optimistic that medicine will shift in new ways a result of Covid.

"For 30 years we've been talking about tele-medicine and thinking around the edges, but there've been policy barriers to really doing it on a broad scale, and Medicare and Medicaid pay only for very limited things; this pandemic really opened the floodgates to tele-health and tele-medicine, and we've learned very quickly how to scale this work up." Mays believes these changes will continue to enhance how people interact with doctors and receive medical care well after the current pandemic is under control.

A key lesson learned from Covid, he says, is, "We've learned a lot about the constraints of our current healthcare system and its limited surge capacity." Everyone has paid the "very steep price" of "literally shutting down the economy to avoid overwhelming our health care system because our capacity was so constrained, particularly on the inpatient side." Mays faults cost-control measures over the last three decades that resulted in fewer hospital beds per capita, for example, than in other industrialized nations. Hospitals and healthcare systems, he says, will have to address how to meet excess capacity so they won't be caught off-guard



The post-Covid world is sure to lead to significant changes in medicine as we know it according to Dr. Glen Mays. —Photo courtesy of Dr. Mays

in the next pandemic. And yes, that's right. There will be other pandemics, fostered by climate change and other factors, which Mays predicts will bear down with "more frequency, more intensity."

A third area where he sees room for growth in the post-Covid-world is in the very nature and design of the US healthcare system.

The pandemic underscores "the limits of our fragmented, federated kind of healthcare delivery systems in the US." While Mays says it is too soon to know whether this experience represents a tipping point that will signal a shift to universal coverage or a single payer system, he thinks those states that hadn't opted to expand their Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act (aka "Obamacare") may now take steps to do so. "We're still going to see the problems of not having any universal coverage system in place with health insurance losses and job losses and the economic effects that that has on hospitals and health care providers," he observes. But perhaps new models will emerge.

In light of the way the coronavirus has especially devastated communities and individuals with comorbidities like hypertension, heart disease and diabetes, Mays hopes that "prioritizing prevention" will be one of the other takeaways of this experience. Short-term, however, he worries that the pandemic has kept people from receiving vital medical, mental health, and substance abuse screenings, routine vaccinations and preventive treatments. As unemployment pushes more people off their employer-provided insurance policies and co-pays and deductibles loom, some people may well choose to forgo preventive screenings, exacerbating inequities and making them even more susceptible to Covid and other illnesses.

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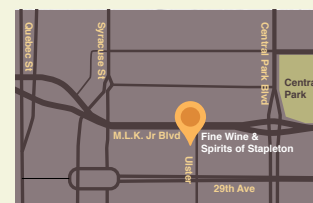
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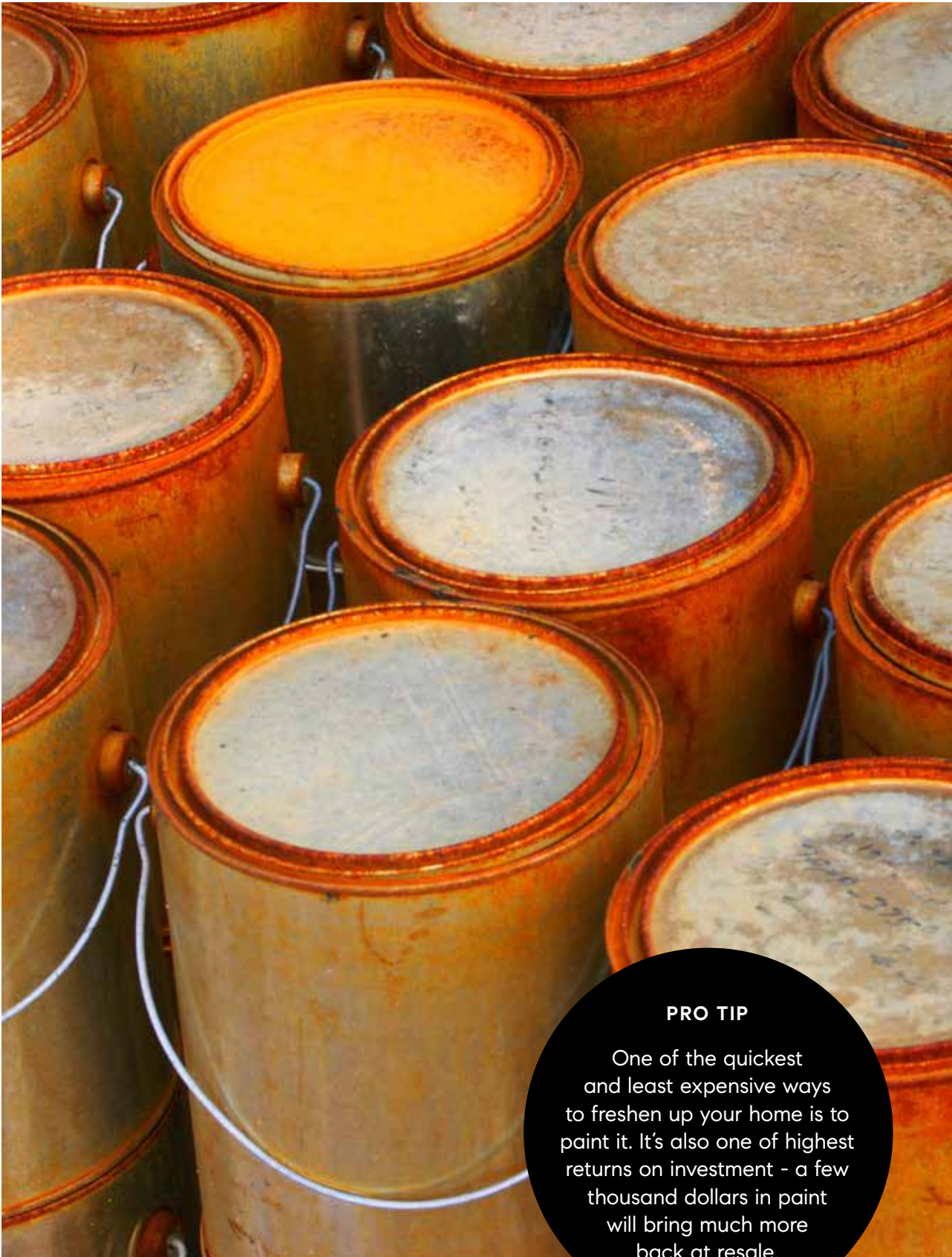
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