

# Front Porch

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

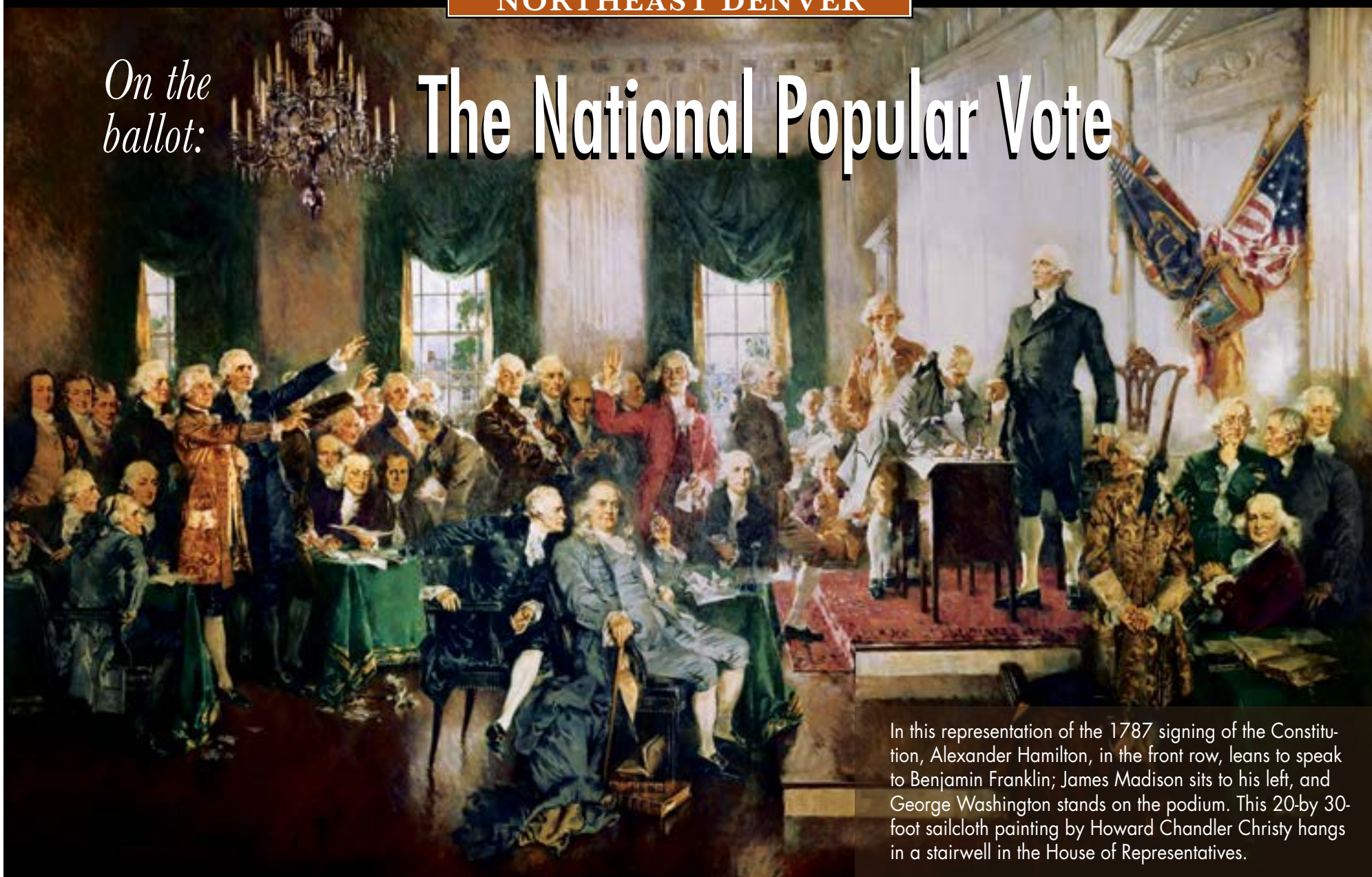
DENVER, COLORADO

NORTHEAST DENVER

SEPTEMBER 2020

*On the  
ballot:*

## The National Popular Vote



In this representation of the 1787 signing of the Constitution, Alexander Hamilton, in the front row, leans to speak to Benjamin Franklin; James Madison sits to his left, and George Washington stands on the podium. This 20-by-30-foot sailcloth painting by Howard Chandler Christy hangs in a stairwell in the House of Representatives.

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Colorado enacted the National Popular Vote (NPV) interstate compact into law in March 2019. In November 2020, voters will see a question on the Colorado ballot asking if they choose to repeal this law. The NPV, when enacted by states with a total of 270 electoral votes, will ensure that the Electoral College vote will match the popular vote winner. The Founding Fathers shown above had long difficult debates on who should get a vote—and they created the Electoral College as “a buffer between the people and the president,” says Lois Court, former state senator and civics teacher. Hamilton wrote: This “intermediate body of electors, will be much less apt to convulse the community with any extraordinary or violent movements.” But the founders did not write into the Constitution how electors should be chosen—that right was left to the states. After two elections in the past 20 years in which the popular vote winner did not become president, 58% of US adults now say the candidate with the most votes should win. *Story on page 7 by Martina Will, PhD.*

### *Life's Pleasures: Food and Art*

For those looking to find some balance in lives that have felt constricted by the pandemic, the annual September Artists Open Studios event—held virtually this year—offers a peek into the lives and work of local artists. *Story on page 11 by Laurie Dunklee.*

And for those longing for some international variety in your diet—either physically-distanced eating out, carry-out, or delivery—check out these four restaurants on or near Colfax that feature Colombian, Mexican and Asian cuisine. *Stories on page 8 and 9 by Courtney Drake-McDonough and Martina Will, PhD.*

## The Pandemic's Impact on City Planning

Two former City Councilmen share their thoughts on long-term impacts of the pandemic, particularly on economic development and housing. Proposed zoning changes for group housing and allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in single-family zoning have raised concerns among some homeowners, as evidenced by this yard sign.

*Story on page 13 by Martina Will, PhD, and Carol Roberts.*



### *Foster Care to Adoption A Challenging, Rewarding Road*

When Deanna and Brad Hamilton decided to grow their family, they considered many paths to having another child. In the end, they opted to become foster parents, going through a process with some hurdles and no guarantee of adoption. In April, however, the state of Colorado legally recognized them as Poppy's parents and son Brooks as Poppy's brother.

*Story on page 15 by Martina Will, PhD.*







Bucky, a deer that is frequently seen in Central Park neighborhoods, did not get the “Stay Out” message from the yellow tape. The area was roped off to prevent people from walking through sand and crushed rock in preparation for new flagstone in the treelawn.  
Photo by Tom Barbour

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## Contents

- |    |  |    |   |
|----|--|----|---|
| 5  | Education at any price?<br>The social cost of pods                                   | —  | Youth Program Locator: New<br>Online Search Tool at<br>DenverGov.org  |
| 7  | Will Voters Repeal Colorado’s<br>National Popular Vote Law?                          | 11 | Artists’ Open Studios Go Virtual  |
| 8  | International Food<br>on/near Colfax:  | 12 | SUN Spot:   |
| —  | Los Parceros Colombian<br>Restaurant   | —  | Central Park Identified As New<br>Community Name  |
| —  | Santos Mexican Café<br>and Grill   | —  | SUN’s Virtual September<br>Meeting: Tuesday, Sept. 15,<br>6:30–8:30pm   |
| —  | Qi-Lin Ramen and<br>East Asian Restaurant  | —  | Seeking Candidates for a Diverse<br>SUN Board   |
| —  | Green Roots Meals  | 12 | Indie Prof: <i>Watchmen</i>   |
| 10 | NE News Updates  | 13 | Covid-19’s Long-Term Impact<br>on City Planning   |
| —  | NE Denver Summer Crime<br>Statistics   | 14 | The ordeal of College during<br>Covid-19: Live on campus?<br>Live at home and 1) study<br>remotely or 2) go to local<br>college? Take a year off? |
| —  | I-70 Nighttime Noise Variance<br>Approved  | 15 | Foster Care to Adoption:<br>A Challenging, Rewarding Road   |
| —  | Planning Board Recommends<br>Zoning Code Changes for<br>Group Living                 | —  | Online Letter at FrontPorchNE.com   |
| —  | StoryCorps: Submit Thoughts on<br>Central Park Name Change                           | —  | All Lives Matter  |
| —  | New City Park Golf Course<br>Opens Sept. 1   |    |   |
| —  | Reminiscences from 1966 & 1946:<br>Eisenhower Chapel and Ashley<br>Elementary School |    |   |

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## Events & Announcements

### AQUATICS

#### **Pools Close Labor Day, Sept. 7th**

As our 2020 aquatics season winds to a close, the MCA would like to thank the community for your patience, understanding, and continued support during a summer like no other. We literally could not have opened without you as the vast majority of our seasonal staff come directly from the neighborhood. Though in many ways this summer has looked different from years past, we hope that the 75,000 visits to our pools this year brought you a splash of normalcy in times that are anything but. We are looking forward to diving into 2021, and we can’t wait to see you back on deck.

### ACTIVE MINDS SEMINAR: BASEBALL!

Thursday, September 10th, 1–2pm, Webinar

Join Active Minds as they trace the history of baseball from its disputed origins to the present day. We will look at the way that “America’s Game” is often reflective of the nation itself. Baseball has often been plagued by scandal, from the 1919 Chicago Black Sox to the “Steroid Era” and the recent revelation of cheating by the Houston Astros. At the same time, Baseball has also seen transcendent figures such as Babe Ruth, Ted Williams, and the man who broke down Baseball’s color line, the heroic Jackie Robinson. Bring your own favorite baseball story to share with the group.

### ACTIVE MINDS SEMINAR: SWITZERLAND

Thursday, September 24th, 6:30–7:30pm, Webinar

One of the world’s richest countries, Switzerland is known for many things, including banking, chocolate, watches, and more. The country is renowned for its neutrality yet maintains an impressive state of military preparedness. Join Active Minds as they journey to the Alps to understand the Swiss, their history, and the current challenges facing Switzerland.

Join in the Active Minds Webinars by visiting [https://www.activeminds.com/events\\_denver.html](https://www.activeminds.com/events_denver.html)

### 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 [stapletoncommunity.com](https://stapletoncommunity.com).

### FACILITY AND PARK RENTALS

**If you see something, say something:** Parks are closed between the hours of 11pm and 5am. If you see any activity in community parks or pools after hours, call 911!

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

Outdoor Sport Fields and MCA Parks: Inquire about reservation availability by emailing [jvaleta@stapletoncommunity.com](mailto:jvaleta@stapletoncommunity.com).

### DISTRICT DELEGATES

This month the MCA will begin the process of soliciting nominations for community Members interested in serving as their District Delegate for the 2021 year. A “Delegate” is defined in the Community Declaration as the natural person selected by Members within a Delegate District to represent such Delegate District and to cast votes on behalf of Members within such Delegate District.

The purpose of the Delegates is to consider proposed community operational budgets. The “CCIOA budget” process allows for a veto, by certain Delegates, of a proposed budget adopted by the Executive Board, as provided for in the Community Declaration. In the event any proposed budget is rejected, the budget last ratified is continued until such time as a subsequent budget proposed by the Executive Board is ratified.

**Nominating a Delegate:** Any Member can nominate themselves or another Member up to the Annual Members’ Meeting. Any Member wishing to “Challenge” their sitting Delegate prior to the annual meeting notice must submit a completed nomination form no later than November 1st. Any seat that has more than one nomination at the printing of the annual meeting notice will be listed as “Contested” and all the voting for that seat will occur at the Annual Members’ Meeting. If a quorum of the District is not present at the Annual Members’ Meeting, then voting will continue until the following delegate meeting scheduled.

**Annual Members Meeting:** The Annual Members’ Meeting is typically scheduled on the third Wednesday of December. This meeting also serves as the annual election of all community delegates for the following year.

Carry on bravely, Lawrence Uhling  
Administrative Assistant  
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Master Community Association

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# Front Porch

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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 80238, Park Hill, Lowry, Montclair, Mayfair, E. Colfax and NW Aurora.

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	Trommeter Orthodontics	10
	Williams Family Dentistry	9
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	Gather and Spruce	8
Dispensary	Starbuds	6

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Fitness	Bladium Sports and Fitness Center	13
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Home Furnishings	Smart Spaces	14
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Liquor Stores	Central Park Fine Wine & Spirits	3
Medical Doctors	Optimal Women's Health, PC	11
	Stapleton Pediatrics	13
Photography	Blue Nose Aerial Imaging	12
Real Estate	Kimberly Austin [Insert]	
	New Perspective Real Estate, LLC	16
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# Getting by with pods—but what is the long term cost?



At an August Zoom meeting of Park Hill Neighbors for Equity in Education, chaired by Andrew Lefkowitz, about 40 participants discussed concerns about pods and equity.

By Martina Will, PhD

DPS has said that the earliest schools will resume in-person learning is October 18, but as parents well know, the district’s projections keep changing. For many, returning to in-school learning is unlikely due to health concerns or fear about the district’s capacity to keep their children safe. For others, hope for face-to-face learning is mixed with anxiety as families await information on DPS protocols, class sizes, and other guidelines. For months, social media posts in neighborhood parent groups have been peppered with education concerns. “I don’t want my child to fall behind” is one theme. Others fear learning loss due to lack of access to the resources their children with special needs rely on. Another recurring conversation centers on forming pods. And some are questioning how pods might more deeply inscribe existing inequities in our already segregated communities and schools. Whereas Adams County 12 (about half the size of DPS) is organizing free pods for some of its elementary and middle school students, DPS has been largely silent on pods. The exception was a mid-August statement from the board urging parents to consider pods’ detrimental implications for public education. The board noted, “We fear that further flight will exacerbate

academic and opportunity gaps among our children.” The statement urged families not to hire away teachers, paraprofessionals, and special service providers. With no clear direction or action from DPS, however, it’s no wonder that parents are organizing pods. A pod is defined as a small face-to-face learning community that supports children’s academic and social needs and parents’ necessity to report to work. Beyond this common ground, pods vary greatly. Some parents or groups of parents are hiring tutors or certified teachers to oversee learning while others are forming cooperatives in which parents alternate days supervising remote learning and outdoor time. Park Hill’s Neighbors for Equity in Education (PHNEE) has been working on equity since its founding in 2017. Recognizing the profound funding, academic, and social inequities across that neighborhood’s four elementary schools, PHNEE wants to identify grassroots solutions. In August, PHNEE hosted a Zoom meeting with about 40 parents and teachers to address pods and equity. PHNEE co-chair Andrew Lefkowitz admits that forming equitable pods is “tricky.” The pandemic is underlining longstanding gaps, says Lefkowitz. “We’ve seen an increase in youth violence since it [the pandemic] happened. We’ve seen the impact of kids not having a place to be during the day, and the ongoing trauma of this moment—that everybody is suffering, but particularly the most vulnerable amongst us are suffering greatest. How do we create spaces to serve those individuals?” Anticipating a need for creative support for students enrolled in on-line learning, a consortium of educators and advocates

came together to form BoldEDU, which centers on “Learning Circles,” their term for pods. Seeking a comprehensive, whole-child approach at an accessible price point, BoldEDU’s Ulcca Joshi Hansen says, “It’s going to look different in every neighborhood, but we hope to empower communities.” A Montclair Park resident, Hansen hopes that as the semester progresses, DPS and the City of Denver will help make spaces such as schools and recreation centers available. For now, the group has confirmed two school-based partnerships: Valdez and Dora Moore. Learning Circles will meet in 5-week cycles at an average cost of \$1,100 per student, with a sliding scale to ensure accessibility. Hansen says BoldEDU has applied for grants to help offset costs. Combining academic support, enrichment and wellness, the program lets gap year students and other community members serve as learning guides. Another option for pods is being offered by Neighborhood Music at Stanley Marketplace, including mixed-grade-level pods for cohorts of ten students each from Swigert Elementary School (2-3 pods); Denver Language School (1 Mandarin pod); and Lowry Elementary (1 pod). At a cost of \$300 per week per child, the pods will be a lifesaver for some and untenable for others, though built into the program are two full scholarships per pod. Those, Neighborhood Music owner Skye Barker Maa says, are almost gone. “We have a lot of families who are calling because they’re furloughed,” she says. Lefkowitz suggests that affluent and

well-educated parents’ anxieties about their children falling behind may be overblown. “Standardized tests measure a very narrow part of what we want our kids to get from school. But even if that’s your primary concern, the contribution of schools to your kid’s standardized test score is maybe thirty percent. At least seventy percent of how your kid does on standardized tests is based on their home life or environment.” Though Lefkowitz is not advocating that parents let their kids become feral, he hopes that as people form pods, they reflect on the larger implications to public schools. Like the DPS board members, he fears that long-term, the pod movement could result in middle class and wealthier parents’ divestment from our public schools. Public education, however incorrectly, has long been viewed as the great equalizer. If more people leave the public schools, what becomes of our schools and the children whose families cannot afford to leave? PHNEE and BoldEDU are working to identify learning sites and ask that community members with businesses or co-working spaces reach out. PHNEE is raising money to create spaces where kids can go during the day and receive support and supervision; to donate, select PHNEE-One Park Hill Fund at <http://donate.dmci.network>. To learn more, go to [PHNEE.org](http://PHNEE.org). Parents interested in exploring BoldEDU’s Learning Circles can go to [www.boldedu.org](http://www.boldedu.org) for more information. Contact Neighborhood Music at [skye@neighborhoodmusicstanley.com](mailto:skye@neighborhoodmusicstanley.com).



Skye Barker Maa is pictured at one of the outdoor locations at Stanley Marketplace that will be used for pods offered by Neighborhood Music.

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# Will Voters Repeal Colorado's National Popular Vote Law?

*By Martina Will, PhD*

Long before he was a rapping, swaggering Broadway sensation, Alexander Hamilton was an unapologetic elitist. To be fair, Hamilton was not alone among the Founding Fathers in this regard. The radical experiment that was our fledgling, fragile republic had to rely on wise and virtuous leaders to govern without self-interest tarnishing their commitment to the public good.

Deeply afraid of government corruption, the founders believed that those lacking in property, education, maleness, and whiteness could more easily be led astray by demagogues preying on base self-interest and emotion. James Madison had studied ancient democracies and found them deficient for this very reason, observing in *The Federalist Papers* that even in these high-minded assemblies “passion never fails to wrest the scepter from reason.”

## Why the Electoral College?

“The word ‘democracy’ does not exist in our founding documents; the founders didn’t believe in democracy. They believed in a republic. That’s a huge difference,” says former state senator Lois Court. Indeed, Founding Father Benjamin Rush called democracy “the devil’s own government,” while Gouverneur Morris equated the masses (commonly referred to as “the mob”) with “poor reptiles.”

A republican government, on the other hand, meant that while power resided in the people, protections—such as the coequal branches of government—would prevent “mob rule” and the tyranny of the majority over the minority.

“The founders created the Electoral College as a buffer between the people and the president,” says Court, who taught civics for years. In *The Federalist Papers*, Hamilton explains electors are needed to reduce the likelihood of “tumult and disorder” and

By law, Colorado currently supports the National Popular Vote (NPV), but a question to repeal it is on the ballot. Five of our 45 presidents have come into office without having won the most popular votes nationwide. The NPV guarantees the presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes.

“mischief.” This “intermediate body of electors, will be much less apt to convulse the community with any extraordinary or violent movements.”

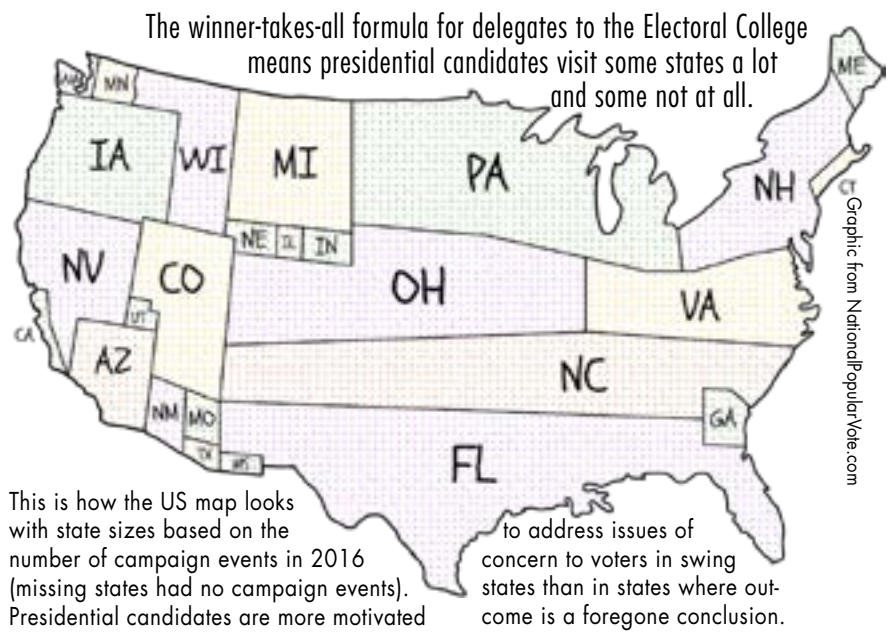
Though the electors' votes typically have aligned with the national popular vote, the Electoral College has become the source of increasing contention in the space of a single generation. In both the 2000 and the 2016 elections, the electors did not chose the popular vote winner. In 2000, the US Supreme Court stepped in to declare George W. Bush the winner. In 2016, the electoral vote went to Donald J. Trump,

though the popular vote went to his opponent, Hillary Clinton.

## The National Popular Vote (NPV)

Court is among those who believe that increasing discrepancies between the electoral and the popular votes reveal the need for fundamental reform. Given the complexity and difficulty of amending the Constitution, she supports the National Popular Vote (NPV). With a measure to repeal Colorado's participation in the NPV on Colorado's November ballot, Court believes Colorado should retain its commitment to it.

The NPV will create a more democratic process, in which all votes for president count, says Court. Under the current winner-take-all system, all that matters is how the majority in a state votes—their electors are bound to go in that direction. “Fifty percent plus one in any given state and that’s the majority in that state. So, it doesn’t matter how many more than that fifty-percent-plus-one vote,” says Court. The NPV will “make every vote for the highest office more consequential.” Down-ballot votes are not impacted by the Electoral College, and would not be impacted by the NPV.



This is how the US map looks with state sizes based on the number of campaign events in 2016 (missing states had no campaign events). Presidential candidates are more motivated

Several nonpartisan surveys including one by the Pew Research Center, suggest that a large proportion of US adults would like to amend the Constitution to eliminate the Electoral College. In the past decade, however, this has become an increasingly partisan issue, with about 2/3 of Republicans preferring to retain the institution (up from about 50% a decade ago).

The NPV is an interstate compact that keeps the Electoral College while fundamentally shifting the nature of future presidential elections by eliminating the winner-take-all approach to electoral votes, which has no basis in the Constitution. Proponents believe the shift would guarantee that all votes—rural and urban, large state and small state—carry equal weight. NPV opponents fear it undermines the founders' vision of elections.

Colorado's status as a battleground state ensures frequent campaign stops, as candidates compete for the state's nine electoral votes. Many other states are treated as "fly-over country," receiving little

if any attention from presidential campaigners who treat the outcomes as foregone conclusions. NPV proponents hope it will encourage greater voter participation in both parties—GOP voters would be more likely to cast ballots in states that always go to the Democrats and vice versa.

Court explains the NPV as “a compact between the states that are saying, we will band together and agree we will tell our electors that they are to vote for the candidate who wins the national popular vote.” Once states with a total of 270 electors have passed the measure, they could then put this compact into practice. The NPV currently has just 196 electoral votes, so the outcome of the measure on Colorado’s ballot will not impact the 2020 election.

For more information, be sure to look for the Colorado Blue Book, a nonpartisan booklet prepared by the Legislative Council Staff that should appear in readers' mailboxes beginning in late September, and will also be available at <https://leg.colorado.gov/> The Congressional Research Service also updated its detailed consideration of both sides of the NPV in October 2019: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43823.pdf>



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# Los Parceros

## Colombian Restaurant

By Courtney Drake-McDonough

Last February, just before Covid-19 hit, Andrés Chaparro was in discussions to purchase Los Parceros, a Colombian restaurant on East Colfax. He was friends with the founder of the restaurant who had sold it to a person who took the authentic menu in a different direction—and customers noticed. Chaparro, an Eastbridge resident who formerly headed a Spanish-language television station, saw the opportunity to bring the restaurant back to its Colombian roots. “I always believed it was a great gem in the Colfax area,” says Chaparro.



Mojarra Frita

“I saw it as a place that had an opportunity to make a difference in Denver’s cuisine and bring a positive side to [Colombia].”

Los Parceros

isn’t Chaparro’s first foray into the restaurant world. He is a partner in La Rola, a Colombian street-food restaurant downtown. The name, Los Parceros, means “good friend,” which Chaparro says is fitting. “We’ve seen an increase in new customers and those returning, who say, ‘Finally, Parceros is back to the roots of Colombian food.’”

Chaparro cites one of his dishes, Bandeja Paisa, as an example of those roots. He says the way it brings together the mix of rice, red beans, ground beef, chorizo, chicharrón, avocado, fried egg, an arepa and fried plantain, “is like a world of flavors.” “There’s no wrong way of eating it,” says Chaparro. “You take a spoon of the rice and mix it with the beans and then go back to the plantain and a little bit of chorizo. Suddenly it’s your own story and you’re building a map of



Picada

Food photos by Jorge Serrano



Los Parceros owner Andrés Chaparro brought the restaurant’s menu back to its Colombian roots. Photo by Christie Gosch

how you want to eat this great dish,” he explains. “It’s more about how we utilize the ingredients to make sure that those coming to the restaurant feel like they are coming to eat in someone’s home.”

That sense of home is reflected in the changes Chaparro made to the restaurant’s interior, making it reminiscent of strolling through cozy neighborhoods in little towns in Central and South America. The intimate space is conducive to Chaparro—who is involved in the kitchen but doesn’t cook—being able to talk to diners, providing a little education about the cuisine for those new to it. “That’s the most amazing part of this—people are so compelled by the story of the dishes,” says Chaparro. “We are all storytellers and I love telling stories. I’m the storyteller when it comes to this food.”

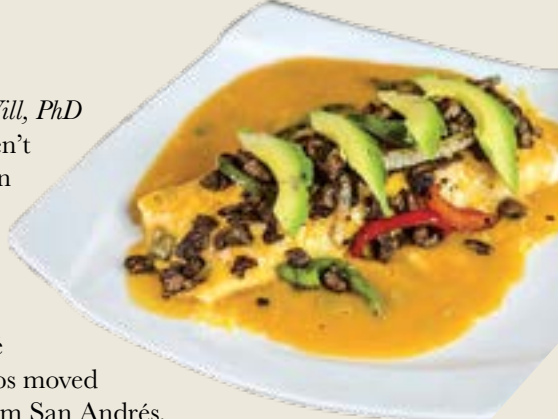
For more information, stop by 5922 E. Colfax or visit [www.losparcerosrestaurant.com](http://www.losparcerosrestaurant.com). Gluten-free & vegetarian options available. tel. 720-379-3808

# INTERNATIONAL FOOD ON/

## Santos Mexican Cafe and Grill

By Martina Will, PhD

“I haven’t taken a week off since I came to this country,” says José Santos. Santos moved to the US from San Andrés, a small town in the state of Jalisco, Mexico in 1998. Driven by a work ethic and a love for his family that is almost palpable, his first job in Denver was selling burritos from a pushcart downtown. He still recalls his first day of work that April, peddling burritos clad in sweater and sneakers. Accustomed to warmer temperatures in Mexico, he was caught off-guard by one of Denver’s unseasonal snowstorms. The memory, however, is symbolic of his profound work ethic, and he says with some pride in his first job here:



Burrito

“I never gave up. I was supposed to work from 7 to noon, but I always stayed until I had sold everything.” In 2008, his persistence paid off, and he bought his own pushcart. A few years later, he owned three, which he located

in different downtown neighborhoods. If you went to a baseball game and bought a burrito back then, it was probably from Santos or one of his employees. Today, Santos owns two restaurants: 3 Girasoles (3 Sunflowers) in Clayton and Santos Café and Grill in Lowry, which opened in May.

Santos admits that opening a restaurant during a pandemic is the biggest challenge he’s faced. He wanted to open a second restaurant so his children would always have work and the family could work together. The timing was unfortunate, however; he signed the lease agreement a few weeks before Covid-19 arrived in Denver. He and his children José Jr. and Ana Karen work daily to ensure this venture’s success. “We weren’t able to do the big grand opening we had planned,” says Ana Karen, who designed a sleek interior space that is spotless and modern. The eclectic menu has something for every appetite at any time of day: a variety of tacos (the *al pastor* are José’s favorite), chiles rellenos, tamales, fajitas and of course, burritos of all kinds, from breakfast through dinner. “American” fare complements these items with hot wings, salads, and several sandwich choices (panini, burger, BLT). For breakfast, feast on chilaquiles, huevos rancheros, eggs benedict, chicken and waffles, country steak, and fresh-squeezed orange juice. The Santos family makes their hollandaise and other sauces and dressings in-house. Santos Café and Grill offers smoothies, drip coffee from Mexico, cappuccinos and espressos, and chai lattes, with very competitive prices. You can also enjoy homemade flan or beautiful macrons sourced from a local baker. Open daily at 7:30am, the restaurant stays open until 7pm except for Saturdays (3pm) and Sundays (2pm). Santos Café is at 1141 Syracuse St., tel. 303-484-9391 or at <https://santoscafeandgrill.com>



The Santos family: Ana Karen, Jose and Jose Jr., work together at Santos Cafe and Grill at 11th and Syracuse adjoining the Lowry neighborhood. Santos photos by Jorge Jacal



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## Qi-Lin Ramen and East Asian Dishes

By Courtney Drake McDonough

The mechanical sign outside, with chopsticks pulling noodles from a bowl, gives people the first indication of what they'll find at Qi-Lin: Ramen. The fake fried rice captured mid-toss from a wok hints at the Chinese food offered there. And the suspended, serpentine Lion Dance figure is further clue that diners are in for an immersive culinary experience. "It's hard for people to travel internationally now, so when they come to our place and



Charlene Thai's new Qi-Lin restaurant at Stanley is visible behind her.  
Photo by Christie Gosch

see all the decorations, it brings them closer to Asian culture," says Charlene Thai, who, along with her husband Robert, own Qi-Lin and sushi restaurant, Misaki, both at Stanley Marketplace.

The restaurant's name, pronounced "chi lin," refers to a mythical creature with a horselike body and dragon head that represents

business prosperity. Open since late July, the concept was inspired by numerous requests for ramen at Misaki. While there wasn't much competition in the area for ramen, there was plenty for Chinese food, so the couple wanted to offer something different. Nearly 40% of the guests at Misaki ask about gluten-free options, so the Thais knew there was a big market. After a lot of research to source ingredients, 70% of Qi-Lin's Chinese dishes are gluten-free, including Kung Pao Chicken and Mongolian Beef. The ramen bowls are not.



One remnant of the previous tenants, Sazza pizzeria, is the large pizza oven. Although Chinese cooking is rarely done in the oven, Qi-Lin uses it to make marinated pork belly for one of their ramen dishes, cooking it for four hours until it's very tender. "That connects us back to Sazza, a place our team loved," says Charlene. They might prepare duck and other dishes in the oven too, in the future.

The restaurant's core dish, ramen, is traditional to Asian cultures. The type of broth and shape of noodles vary depending on the geographic region. Qi-Lin serves a more southern style of Japanese ramen with a pork base but also offers a vegetarian mushroom-base option.

In Japan, etiquette calls for not cutting the noodles, slurping loudly as you eat them with chopsticks and a special spoon, followed by drinking the broth, all to show respect and gratitude to the chef. "If you haven't been to Japan, it's hard to make people understand," says Charlene. "Our customers are so well-mannered, we should put up a sign saying 'It's okay to slurp!'"

Visit <https://www.misakidenver.com/> for information or call 720-288-0011

## DELIVERY ONLY

## Green Roots Meals Authentic Mexican

By Martina Will, PhD

"It was crazy, that first week they closed the restaurants." After building her business over nine years, Central Park North resident Erica Arteaga was hard-hit by the stay-at-home order. One by one, almost all of her 220 restaurant clients called to cancel their orders.

Her inventory—specialty frozen Mexican foods, which she transports to Denver from her family's farm in Aguascalientes, Mexico and family businesses in Houston—left her wondering: what do you do with 150 cases of chiles rellenos?

Arteaga's good friend and Beeler Park neighbor Liz González-Lara had likewise lost her clients pretty much overnight. Her Larimer Square businesses, L Style Bar and Beauty on Location design intricate hairstyles and do professional makeup for photo shoots, weddings and other special occasions. But no one was getting an up-do so they could navigate at-home learning while juggling Zoom calls.



Barbecue Jalisco

As the two entrepreneurs commiserated, a new business was born: Green Roots Meal Delivery. Green Roots delivers frozen carnitas, barbacoa, chicken tinga, black beans and other authentic Mexican flavors to homes around the metro area. Just thaw and heat when you want a break from cooking.

Restaurant clients are returning as the home-delivery list steadily grows. González-Lara and Arteaga take special pride in the large number of returning clients; as Arteaga's father always said "only when they come back do you have a client." To learn more or place an order, visit <https://greenroots-meals.com/> or call 303-952-6194



Crispy Rellenos



Liz González-Lara and Erica Arteaga saw an opportunity in the pandemic.



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# ...NE News Updates



By Carol Roberts and Martina Will, PhD

## 1 NE Denver Summer Crime Statistics

A shooting incident in Fred Thomas Park on August 4 raised neighbors' concerns about crime. District 5 Lt. Kevin Hines said by email on Aug. 21 that the investigation of that incident is a high priority, and partly for that reason the Homicide Unit is handling the investigation (although no homicide was involved). In response to our inquiry about the use of Shot Spotter technology, Hines confirmed that technology is being used in locations where incidents of gun fire and violent crime are the highest. The July report of the District 5 Community Advisory Board showed there were 86 Shot Spotter Alerts in June in the District. NE Denver Crime statistics at right were pulled from the Denver Police Dept. website.

## 2 I-70 Nighttime Noise Variance Approved

The variance for nighttime noise levels during I-70 construction has been approved by Denver's Board of Public Health

& Environment through Sept. 6, 2021. A press release from Denver Dept. of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE) states that "without the variance, construction work would take twice as long to get finished and air quality issues may increase. A longer project may also impact emergency services during day-time hours because high traffic volumes could create longer response times for ambulances, fire and police... DDPHE has not documented any founded noise violations associated with this project."

## 3 Planning Board Recommends Zoning Code Changes for Group Living

Currently, Denver's definition of "household" limits the number of unrelated roommates who may live together to only two. The Denver Community Planning and Development Department released new recommendations approved by the Planning Board proposing: Up to 5 adults of any relationship, and unlimited relatives, in any dwelling unit; Up to a maximum of 10 unrelated adults in larger dwelling units; Minimum off-street parking requirements for larger households in single-unit uses; Prohibit rent-by-the-room configurations in low-intensity residential zones. The proposal will move to City Council, where a public hearing is expected in October.

## 4 StoryCorps: Submit Thoughts on Central Park Name Change by Sept. 4

The local organization Brave Coalition is working with National Public Radio's StoryCorps program to find a range of perspectives on changing the community's name from Stapleton to Central Park. If you'd like your thoughts to be considered, complete the survey at <https://surveys.storycorps.org/oss-partner-bravecoalition> by Sept. 4. StoryCorps has been encouraging people to tell their stories for 17 years, with programs aired through podcasts, NPR broadcasts, and other formats. All StoryCorps stories are archived at the American Folklife Center in the Library of Congress.

## 5 New City Park Golf Course Opens Sep. 1

The redesigned 135-acre City Park Golf Course offers "an 18-hole Par 70 with return-



Happy Haynes, director of Denver Parks and Recreation, speaks at a media event for the opening of the new City Park Golf Course and Club House, which has a stunning view of the Denver skyline and the Front Range. Mayor Michael Hancock is pictured behind her.

ing 9's, full-size driving range with ability to hit woods, large practice area and putting green, state-of-the-art maintenance facility, and a dedicated 4-hole course for the First Tee of Denver program, a nonprofit that teaches youth core values and life skills through the game of golf." The clubhouse offers "a new public restaurant, west facing patio with an unobstructed view of the Denver skyline and mountains of the Front Range, pro shop and various gathering spaces for community groups and private parties up to 200 people." Visit [https://www.cityof-denvergolf.com/city\\_park/](https://www.cityof-denvergolf.com/city_park/)

## 6 Reminiscences from 1966 & 1946: Eisenhower Chapel and Ashley Elementary School

A recent online comment on our February 2019 article about Lowry's historic Eisenhower Chapel reminded an Arvada couple, Carl & Virginia, of their wedding day. "My husband & I were married in the chapel on Friday, May 6, 1966. He was stationed @ Lowry @ the time. The chaplain who married us was on the same plane that my husband was on when they were sent to Viet Nam a few months later. If I remember correctly, there was no charge to be married there. It made us proud when it was put on the Registry of Historical Sites."

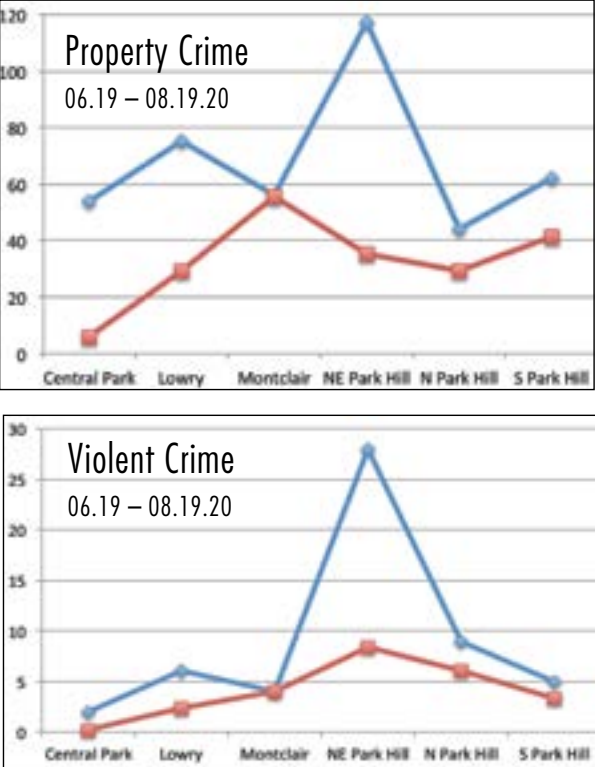
An Ashley Elementary School alum wrote to say he attended when singer Judy Collins was there, commenting in response to our January 2014 article when Zachary Rahn became the new principal: "It's 7 years after this story and I hope that Principal Rahn's plan has succeeded. I attended Ashley from 1946 to 1951 and my favorite teacher was Mrs. Beech. The folksinger Judy Collins attended Ashley at the same time."

## 7 Youth Program Locator: New Online Search Tool at DenverGov.org

The Office of Children's Affairs and the Denver Afterschool Alliance have launched the new Youth Program Locator (<https://www.denvergov.org/youthprogramlocator/>) where families can search online for virtual and in-person activities offered by a variety of organizations across the city. Programs are available for youth ages 3 to 18 years old.



## SUMMER CRIME STATISTICS



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# Artists' Open Studios Go Virtual

By Laurie Dunklee

The eighth annual Central Park Artists Open Studios (formerly Stapleton Artists Open Studios) will spotlight neighborhood artists, this year in virtual form: an online flipbook featuring all 21 artists and links to their websites. The artists present a range of disciplines, including painting, photography, sculpture, jewelry, glass, fiber art and mosaic.

Every September since 2013, artists have opened their studios to meet visitors, show their work and demonstrate how it is made. All art is for sale. “The artists love to see people walk up to their work and smile, and ask, ‘How do you do this?’” said Lin Clark, Open Studios coordinator. “This year, for the safety of our artists and visiting art

Visit  
Central Park Artists  
in their Studios  
CentralParkArtists.org

Two artists featured this year are painter Lance Ray and mosaic artist Joyce Thomas.

Ray moved to Denver in 2015 from Ft. Worth,

Texas. His art includes photography, pencil and graphic art, but 80% of his work is painting, mostly in oils. “My strength is my range of different feels and pathways,” says Ray. “I started with traditional landscapes—like sunsets and skies—and went to more abstract and off-beat subjects.”

Ray is influenced by the music and landscape of the Texas Hill Country and West Texas areas. “I have a huge collection of records and I always listen when I paint—I grew up listening. I associate outlaw country music, like Willy Nelson and Waylon Jennings, with road trips through Texas landscapes and dive bars in small towns.

“Or I start to get a picture in my head and pull out Miles Davis to channel that energy. Thelonius Monk gets me loose with the brush, gets me outside the conforms. I admire jazz musicians who push the boundaries of what’s right and wrong. They inspire me to do something abstract, a little unusual that’s against the rules. You can’t do that in society but you can in art.”

Ray’s most recent work focuses on the built environment, including “unpalatable” things we might not want to look at, like roads and parking lots. “The viewer might get an uncomfortable feeling like, ‘Am I supposed to be looking at this?’ We look down every day, but I say look another second longer, maybe in a different way. Gravel has so many colors, I’ve had to pull out all the paints in my palette.”

Joyce Thomas, a Central Park resident since 2002, designs and builds mosaics, mostly featuring African-American designs, for both indoor and outdoor use. “African-American designs are found in homes and clothing, but you



“We look at art and we get when it’s beautiful,” says painter Lance Ray. “But I like to look at ‘unpalatable’ objects in a different way.” Photos by KDaly Photography

don’t see them in garden décor,” she says. “I wanted to see this creativity outside, but garden stores only have flowers and butterfly designs. I wanted to relate to my culture and to share African-American art and history.”

Thomas admires *Adinkra* symbols from Ghana, West Africa, and uses them on her pavers, sculptures and porcelain tiles. *Adinkra* symbols represent concepts or aphorisms like leadership, mercy, independence or patience. “*Adinkra* convey times in a person’s life and what they mean. I got excited and wanted to share them,” Thomas said.

One of her favorites is *Gye Nyame*, meaning “supremacy of God.” Other symbols she uses are “house of peace,” and “welcome.” *Kete Pa* means “good marriage” and is a popular wedding gift.

Other pieces are a nod to African-American nicknames, including “*Baby Girl*,” a daughter; “*Sistah Gurl*,” a friend; and “*Fly Gurl*,” a woman who is sassy or cool. “I use these nicknames in my art as a way to educate about our culture.”

See Lance Ray’s art at [lancerayart.com](http://lancerayart.com). See Joyce Thomas’ work at [blackscapestudio.com](http://blackscapestudio.com).



Joyce Thomas uses African symbols in her mosaics. She says you don’t need to know their meaning to connect spiritually.

Artists.org. “If you land on art you like, click on the artist’s link,” Clark said.



  
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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](http://www.stapletonunitedneighbors.com). To contact SUN, email [stapletonunitedneighbors@gmail.com](mailto:stapletonunitedneighbors@gmail.com)

## September SUN News

Geoff Horsfall, Vice President, SUN Board of Directors

### Central Park To Be New Community Name

On August 1, SUN announced that residents have selected Central Park to replace Stapleton as the neighborhood name. The name Central Park is a familiar one to all of us as it's the name of the neighborhood's signature park, commuter rail station, community rec center, and a boulevard that runs 4.5 miles north and south through nearly the entire community, among other instances.

The selection of Central Park concludes a seven-week community-driven process to identify a new name. 330+ names were submitted by community members for consideration and an advisory board of diverse community stakeholders narrowed the field of eligible names for a vote of the residents. Three rounds of voting followed, each with between 7,500 and 8,000 votes cast. In the final round of voting, which concluded on Thursday, July 30, Central Park was selected over Skyview with 63% of the vote. SUN, the area's Denver Registered Neighborhood Organization, led the renaming effort with the full support of the City and County of Denver and the Master Community Association (MCA).

**What Came Next** — On August 19, the MCA Delegate Board and Executive Board voted unanimously to change the community name to Central Park. The MCA also voted to recommend the name change to Brookfield Properties, who will take up the issue independently of SUN or the MCA.

For its part, SUN hosted an electronic vote to adopt Central Park United Neighbors as its new name. The vote ran from August 24 through August 31, concluding with a public community meeting. Adoption requires a 66% affirmative vote. Please see the SUN web site

for the results of that vote: [www.Stapleton-UnitedNeighbors.org](http://www.Stapleton-UnitedNeighbors.org)

### SUN's September Meeting: Tues, Sept. 15, 6:30–8:30pm

SUN's monthly meetings begin with updates from community partners such as the Denver Police Department, Northeast Transportation Connections, Denver Public Library, and Denver City Council District 8, followed by announcements, after which a speaker or topic is featured.

### Seeking Candidates for a Diverse SUN Board

There are currently three open seats on the SUN board of directors. SUN welcomes all who are interested to join monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of most months from 6:30–8:30pm via Zoom during COVID-related physical distancing.

Interested candidates should consider how their background would enhance SUN's role in the community and should submit a brief biographical statement (up to 250 words) describing interests and relevant experiences. SUN seeks a board diverse in geography within Central Park, sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, rental/ownership status, and professions. SUN is composed of volunteers and is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community.

Each May, at SUN's Annual Community Forum, a slate of candidates is elected to begin a 2-year term on the SUN board. Any candidate brought onto the board off-cycle would be filling in a term that ends in May of 2021, and would be up for reelection at that time. Potentially filling currently open seats will be discussed at the September 2020 meeting, or later.



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While theaters slowly begin to open and films start to trickle out, we hope to have more movies to review in the coming months. This month, however, I once again give a single, extended review of a great TV series. This month's subject is timely, inventive, and mesmerizing.

### *Watchmen* (HBO—2019)

If you have an aversion to comic books/superheroes, put them aside and enmesh yourself in the wonderful, dense, quirky, surprising, and visually stunning *Watchmen* on HBO. If you are a fan, you will love what creator Damon Lindelof has done with the material. The series deconstructs the “white male savior” of the genre and gives us one of the best protagonists we've ever seen on TV in Regina King's Angela Abraham. A black woman who dons a super-cool costume complete with a mask (!) and face paint to fight the bad guys, Abraham is known as Sister Night—geared in a nun's habit and balaclava to hide her identity. She is smart, tough, foul-mouthed, and a total badass. She is the perfect protagonist for our time.

The show takes place thirty-four years after the events of the book, yet takes on a life of its own. I will eschew the summation of the book and dive directly into the show; you do not have to know the book to follow along and, in many respects, it is more fun if you don't. The book was written in the 80s and reflected Reagan-era Cold War fears. This series focuses on race relations, and even though it came in 2019, it takes on more urgent resonance after the death of George Floyd and the ensuing demonstrations. Now is the perfect time to start this series.



The opening episode drops us into the Tulsa massacre of 1921, where white mobs slaughtered black residents of the “Black Wall Street” area of Tulsa and burned down their neighborhood. The sequence is visceral, disturbing, and all-too-familiar. It then cuts to Tulsa 2019, where the local police force (masked and costumed to hide their identities) is fighting a white supremacist group. The plot goes haywire from there and includes a giant squid attack on NYC in 1985, a subplot on a moon of Jupiter, a long backstory about one of the characters in 1930s NYC, and a trillionaire

building a giant clock (we think) just outside of Tulsa. You read that correctly.

You won't follow the plot and make sense of it all until halfway through the season, so just sit back and enter the universe. The acting is superb, and the style is utterly vivacious: dynamic cine-

matography, spot-on settings, whiplash editing, and a soundtrack that enlivens the action. Of course there is a fair share of special effects, but they are certainly not gratuitous and they always add depth and perspective. The action is generally realist, the settings are familiar, and especially in the period pieces, we don't feel cheated. As with most great shows/films, the secondary

characters are excellent: a startling Don Johnson as the ill-fated chief of police, the enigmatic Tim Blake Nelson as Sister Night's colleague, Jeremy Irons as the mercurial Adrian Veidt/Ozymandias, Hong Chau as the bizarre Lady Trieu, an avuncular Louis Gossett Jr. as a mysterious

avenger, and a fantastically sassy Jean Smart as FBI agent Laurie Blake. All characters shine.

It's a lot, and it thrills.

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# Covid-19's Long-Term Impact on City Planning

By Martina Will, PhD

While a recent Wall Street Journal (WSJ) article suggests that other cities may look to Denver for insights on how to recover from the pandemic, former City Councilman Albus Brooks says he and others on the City of Denver's new Long-Term Recovery Committee (LTRC) are also looking at other urban areas to understand best practices as the City moves forward. Though he agrees with the WSJ that "Denver is well-positioned to come out of

Covid-19 the fastest because of our economic prowess," as a longtime advocate for equity, he hopes pandemic recovery fundamentally shifts our urban landscape to promote economic parity as well. "We're trying to make sure that the most impacted and vulnerable communities receive resources and receive our attention, and make sure that they come out and grow with the community along with everyone else."

For Brooks, the work of the LTRC goes well beyond repairing the economic damage wrought by the pandemic. "Covid is an opportunity for us to rebuild as a city and rebuild with an equitable lens. We see equity... not just as a noun but as an action word." He recalls the push back he would receive as a Councilman seeking to promote women- and



Former City Councilman Albus Brooks joins marchers in the MLK Parade. Front Porch file photo

minority-owned businesses: "Why are we investing in those businesses? They need to work hard just like everybody else," were some of the comments that we received. I think now people are understanding that we live in a divided America." To that end, the LTRC will promote recovery in a way "that everyone recovers and makes sure that those who are behind get a jump start ahead." In concrete terms, this may include technical support, small business loans and

grants, reduced red tape and reduced fees to promote small businesses.

Though Denver is already working towards more walkable and bike-friendly neighborhoods, Brooks hopes pandemic recovery will heighten that momentum to include better home-work balance and a more sustainable urban landscape after residents saw the less congested streets, clearer skies and shorter drive times. "[In the beginning of the pandemic, bike shops] say they tripled their business during these three months. I personally probably rode 500-600 miles." Brooks, who served on Denver City Council from 2011-19, now works in the private sector as Vice President of Business Development and Strategy for Milender White Construc-

tion Company.

Another former City Councilman, Rafael Espinoza (not affiliated with the LTRC), speaks as an architect and a resident in a growing neighborhood about his personal ideas for how the City can address its need for more housing—with or without a pandemic. "Planning and building affordable housing in a growing city is difficult in good times. The loss of revenue to the City caused by the pandemic will make the future housing needs in Denver even more acute and difficult to address," says Espinoza.

Underutilized industrial areas in Denver with old warehouses and big parking lots next to RTD rail lines generate little revenue for the City, says Espinoza. If those areas were redeveloped with multi-story housing units and ground floor retail adjacent to stops, the value of the property would increase, bringing in more property taxes. But more importantly, the development would be filled with Denver residents paying sales and use taxes, which bring in more than five times as much revenue to the City as property tax. The City then would have revenue to build amenities (like rec centers and libraries) for the newly developed areas—and that would also serve surrounding neighborhoods.



Former City Councilman Rafael Espinoza speaks about zoning at a community meeting. Front Porch file photo

The most cost-effective construction for such developments, says Espinoza, would be by private developers. The City should set zoning requirements and offer incentives (more size, height and number of units; both reduced and deferred fees; expedited permitting; and partial property tax rebates) and developers would figure out the most cost-effective way to build what the city needs and wants. The City could, for example, designate a number of affordable

bedrooms required for permitting and allow developers to reach that number by including some unique floor plans or more basic units.

As part of a broader approach to more housing, Espinoza believes accessory dwelling units (ADUs) should be allowed everywhere in the city provided the footprint of the house remains unchanged—but says agreement by adjoining property owners needs to be required if the house is being expanded to add an ADU.

Additionally, says Espinoza, when an area is identified for transit oriented development or mapped for growth, it should be high density—the City should make it unattractive to build three-story townhomes in areas zoned for 12-story buildings adjacent to publicly-funded transit infrastructure.



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# The ordeal of College during Covid-19:

Live on campus?

Live at home and  
1) study remotely or  
2) go to local college?

Take a year off?

By Mary Jo Brooks

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended many normal routines and traditions, but perhaps nowhere more than the annual fall ritual of heading off for college. This year, students are facing a variety of ever-changing scenarios—from on-campus classes, to remote learning, to decisions about whether to defer for a year. For nearly everyone, the experience has been fraught with anxiety and the realization that their plans may continue to change for many months ahead.

That was true for recent East High School graduate May Toll. She was excited to get an email from Occidental

College in mid-June informing her that in-person classes would resume and freshmen would move into the dorms. One month later—after the number of coronavirus cases surged in Los Angeles—she received an update: all classes would be held online and students could not live on campus.

“I was so disappointed and also felt a lot of anxiety about how I was going to succeed working online. I’m an in-person learner and I’m likely going to be a theater major. Doing theater online seems crazy.” She says she’s hiring an executive function coach

to help her overcome some of the online learning disadvantages she has because of ADHD. “I want to figure out how to have

more structure so I can create a way for me to succeed.”

Ivan Tochimani-Hernandez, who graduated from DSST Montview in May, is also feeling some anxiety even though his plans to move to Dartmouth College in September are still on track. The first-generation college student said he knows it won’t be a typical freshman experience. “We’re all going to be in single dorm rooms. We must wear masks at all

times. Some of the classes will be online and they’ve cancelled all of the normal freshman social functions like a camping trip before classes start.”

He says he’s glad freshmen have been given priority—only 50% of students

at Dartmouth are allowed to come to campus. “My parents are still a bit concerned about whether there are enough safety precautions. Since I’m the first in my family to go to college, there’s just a lot of uncertainty about everything,” says Tochimani-Hernandez.

It was that uncertainty that led Griffin Batt to defer college for a year. He was planning to study political science and join the diving team at American University this fall. But he

started getting nervous that classes would end up being offered online, so in July he decided to take a gap year. “Just after I made my decision, American announced it would go 100% online and that students wouldn’t be allowed to move on campus. That sounds so miserable. I’m so glad that I’m not doing that.”

Instead, Batt is applying for an internship with the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade. “In granting a deferral, American University encourages students to do something



Ivan Tochimani-Hernandez, shown working at his internship with the Greenway Foundation, will study on campus at Dartmouth and live in a single dorm room. Photo courtesy of Ivan Tochimani-Hernandez



Griffin Batt, who had planned to study political science and be on the diving team at American University, chose to take a gap year rather than study remotely. Photo courtesy of Griffin Batt

Photo courtesy of May Toll



East High School graduate May Toll is meeting her new classmates at Occidental College in Los Angeles via Instagram. She'll live at home and study remotely.

international or political. Since international travel can’t happen, I figure this internship could be the next best thing.”

Central Park mom Courtney Drake-McDonough says she feels lucky that the pandemic hasn’t drastically changed the plans for her two college students, who will continue their studies at Metro State University. “My kids thought it was important to graduate college without having to take out big loans so they’ve lived at home and taken advantage of scholarships.” In addition to graduating virtually debt-free, she says the arrangement means she’s less worried about them being exposed to the coronavirus this fall. “Although if one of us gets exposed, it could be tough on all of us since we’re all under one roof.”

Ethan and Olivia McDonough are still waiting to hear whether all of their classes will be online or whether it will be a mix

of in-person and virtual. “My kids have always taken 1 or 2 classes online before, so it’s not a huge adjustment for them. But they have noticed that some teachers haven’t fully adapted to teaching online, which can make it difficult to stay engaged.”



Ethan and Olivia McDonough chose to attend college in Denver and live at home. Photo by Courtney Drake-McDonough

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## FOSTER CARE TO ADOPTION

By Martina Will, PhD

**826** days. That's how long Poppy was in foster care. She was fortunate to be cared for and loved by a single family for most of those days. Still, from 3 months to age 2½, she lived in the legal limbo that makes foster care the least-favored option for many who wish to grow their families. Now, after their April 22, 2020 adoption-by-video-conference officially made Poppy their daughter, Brad and Deanna Hamilton reflect on their two-year journey through a system punctuated with obstacles as well as the most profound opportunity.

Discouraged by lengthy adoption wait-lists, they explored foster care. "There are over 400,000 children in foster care and over 100,000 are waiting to be adopted," says Deanna. The same day they enrolled in the required foster care training, they learned that their carriage house tenant was going to be fostering a baby. Deanna began to care for 3-month-old Poppy five days a week while the tenant went to work.

Once certified in CPR and all the other elements of training, the Hamiltons received several calls notifying them of a baby's availability. Each time, however, another family responded before they could. In many cases, they say, these infants had been born to mothers with drug addictions, meaning that the newborns, too, required special treatment. Contemplating their 2-year odyssey, Brad says, "We've learned from this that mental illness is real and drugs are addictive...the kids we have seen in the hospitals and in the system show me that there's no way to use meth and heroin that doesn't affect other people."

When their tenant realized fostering wasn't the right fit for her, Poppy's biological grandparents agreed the Hamiltons should continue to care for the baby. At eight months, the Hamiltons became Poppy's foster parents. Still, they lived with tremendous uncertainty. Poppy's biological mother had parental rights and regularly met with Poppy. "She really



Central Park North residents Brad, Deanna, Poppy, and Brooks Hamilton were a family long before the state made it official in April 2020. Photo by David Winters

loved seeing her daughter twice a week...Every situation is different, but from everything we've seen, these parents are given every opportunity and every resource to succeed. And they don't not succeed because they're bad people," says Brad. Melissa Maile, MSW, In-Home Director for Mount St. Vincent human services agency affirms that parents' inability to care for their children or a positive drug screen in a newborn are common reasons babies enter the foster system.

Both the Hamiltons and Maile acknowledge the system's emphasis on reunifying biological families. "It's very hard, to be a foster parent and be a part of the system because there are decisions that are made every day that you may not agree with...but at the end of the day, everyone's trying to do the best that they can to do what's right for kids and allow parents the opportunity to

have their kids back," says Maile.

In regular communication with both Poppy's biological mother and grandparents, the Hamiltons rode an emotional rollercoaster for much of the two-year period they fostered her. "You can't adopt until the parents' rights are officially terminated by the County," says Brad, who speaks of the cyclical "angst" he and Deanna experienced each time it appeared that Poppy's biological mother might be able to resume caring for her daughter.

This challenge, baked into the foster care system, is the largest hurdle for those who might otherwise consider fostering a child, says Maile. She encourages families to focus on the rich and mutual gift their care embodies, regardless of outcome: "We're teaching children how to build relationships...Even though it hurts and it's sad and your heart will break...you



Brooks and Poppy celebrate the day they legally became siblings. Photo by Deanna Hamilton

have filled in them something so amazing that they're going to carry that with them for the rest of their lives." She says about 40-50% of Mount St. Vincent's foster placements result in adoption each year.

Brad recalls the words of a friend who told him "You're healthy, well-adjusted, capable adults. You have the ability to overcome this. So don't give up on this. You have a two-year-old child that doesn't understand what's going on." Brad shares this advice with others now: "Don't put your own heartache above the needs of an innocent child."

See the Denver Human Services page: <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/denver-human-services/be-involved/foster.html> Additional resources are available at Mt. St. Vincent: <https://www.msvhome.org/foster-care/> and Foster Source: <https://fostersource.org>

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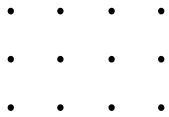


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