

# Front Porch

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

DENVER, COLORADO

NORTHEAST DENVER

JANUARY 2021



Pool photo by Mark Lennihan

This now iconic photo of the first vaccine in the U.S. symbolizes the beginning of a path back to normalcy. The vaccine went to Sandra Lindsay, a nurse at Long Island Jewish Medical Center on Monday, Dec. 14. She was inoculated with the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine by Dr. Michelle Chester in Queens, NY. Ms. Lindsay, who has treated patients throughout the pandemic, said she hoped her public vaccination would instill confidence that the shots were safe. “I have seen the alternative, and do not want it for you,” she said. “I feel like healing is coming. I hope this marks the beginning of the end of a very painful time in our history.”

In the midst of the biggest spike of Covid-19 cases since the pandemic began, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines arrived in Colorado bringing with them much hope and optimism that life will return to normal. Health officials have begun an

education and outreach campaign to address any hesitancy people have about getting the vaccine and remind Coloradans that masks and social distancing will have to continue into the summer.  
*Story on page 4 by Mary Jo Brooks.*

## What’s next for DPS?



Why did Susana Cordova resign? And where will DPS go from here? *Story by Tracy Wolfer Osborne on page 6.*  
This photo by Steve Larson was taken at a press conference at DPS offices during the teachers’ strike in January 2019.

## For the first time in 106 years...No Stock Show

But it can’t be January in Denver without at least thinking about that iconic Denver event. We asked longtime *Denver Post* columnist and writer Dick Kreck to share stock show memories that have spanned his years in Denver—from taking little kids to visit the petting farm and stinky animal pens to his current tradition of meeting his grown kids at the Cowboy Bar for a beer.

*Story on page 14 by Dick Kreck.*

## 2021 Summer Camp Guide coming in the February issue

Instructions for adding camps to the guide are at <https://frontporchne.com/submit-event/>

The deadline for uploading camps is January 12, 2021.





On a warm December day (just before it turned cold and snowed), a group of young deer by Lake Mary at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge watch with interest as people walk right by them—and show no fear or inclination to run.

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

## Events & Announcements

### ACTIVE MINDS: THE AMERICAN WEST

Thursday, January 14, 1–2pm, Online

Join Active Minds for an exploration of how the West was won. Active Minds will tell the story from a variety of perspectives, from the early explorers who ventured into the unknown to the fortune-seekers who raced to the Gold Rush. They will include the often-brutal elements of what was known at the time as “Manifest Destiny” including conflicts with Native Americans as well as Spanish Mexico, all of which added significant territory to the United States.

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

### RETIREMENT PLANNING TODAY: AN EDUCATIONAL COURSE FOR ADULTS

Thursday, January 28 & Thursday, February 4, 6:30–8:30pm, Online

The MCA is excited to sponsor an online workshop that will help you make sense of the choices you face in building your future and planning for retirement. The topics discussed will help you set goals and provide financial strategies you can use right away. Central Park residents can sign up for the two-session workshop at a special discounted rate of \$29! The workshop also includes a private consultation with the instructor to discuss your personal financial questions.

In just two entertaining and informative sessions, you will gain valuable financial planning knowledge they don’t teach you in school. Workshop participants will discover how to:

- Determine the amount of money you need to retire or update your current plan
- Use new tax law changes to your advantage
- Eliminate debt and improve cash flow
- Properly allocate your assets within your employer retirement plan
- Select the retirement plan distribution choice that is right for you
- Use 5 investment strategies to minimize risks and maximize returns
- Ask the right questions when evaluating insurance coverage
- Reduce or eliminate taxes, expenses, delays, and legal challenges with estate planning

This course is educational and non-commercial. No specific financial products will be discussed or sold. Visit our website at [www.mca80238.com](http://www.mca80238.com) to register today!

### ACTIVE MINDS SEMINAR: IRELAND/ NORTHERN IRELAND

Thursday, January 28, 6:30–7:30pm, Online

In January 2020, the United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland) completed the initial stages of its withdrawal from the European Union. Given that the Republic of Ireland remains a member of the EU, the exit deal has significant implications for the lasting peace on the island of Ireland. This, combined with the surprising electoral victory of Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland, has raised uncertainties about the political future of Ireland. Join Active Minds to discuss the history of Ireland and explore its cloudy future.

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

### HARRY POTTER: SAVE THE DATE!

To keep everyone safe this year, we will be hosting a virtual Harry Potter event for all ages, in place of our annual Harry Potter Lock-In. Please mark your calendars for February 4th, 5th, 6th. Check our website, [www.mca80238.com](http://www.mca80238.com), for additional information concerning activity and registration details.

### POOL SEASON PREPARATION

The MCA is re-instating the Resident Membership Card program beginning in March. Additional membership and aquatic programming information will be announced this spring, including instructions for updating household accounts and adding new dependents.

If you are not subscribed to the MCA’s weekly email newsletter, please sign up via [www.mca80238.com](http://www.mca80238.com), to ensure all future announcements and pertinent reminders are delivered straight to your inbox.

Carry on bravely,  
**Lawrence Uhling**  
Administrative Assistant  
[luhling@mca80238.com](mailto:luhling@mca80238.com)

Master Community Association

## Your Trees Need You in Winter

City Forester Michael Swanson offers the following tips for keeping your trees healthy during the winter:

- **Water**—In Colorado’s dry climate, trees need water at least once a month in winter. Water at mid-day when air temperatures are above 40 degrees F. so it will soak in before freezing at night. Water enough to seep at least 12” deep into the soil—when the ground is cold, this may take a couple days. Check soil regularly and water when it is dry. Using the flood-irrigation technique, leave a hose on low-flow for at least 15-20 minutes, moving it around the base of the tree every few minutes until the entire area the width of the canopy is moist. Other watering methods are sprinkler, deep-root fork, soaker hose, or soft spray wand.
- **Mulch**—Apply 3”-4” piled evenly around the tree, leaving a six-inch gap between the tree trunk and the start of the mulch; mulch should extend to the dripline (the circumference of the tree’s widest branches).
- **Protect from sun scald**—Damage



can occur to living cells just underneath the bark of south or south-west-facing trees due to the day-and-night fluctuations during Colorado’s winter months.

Signs of damage include discolored and/or cracked bark or sunken areas within the bark. To avoid sun scald, purchase tree wrap or use butcher paper to wrap the trunk.

- **Watch for emerald ash borer**—This has destroyed millions of ash trees in the Midwest and has been discovered in Boulder and Arvada. It will inevitably arrive in Denver in the near future. There are an estimated 1.45 million ash trees in the metro area, including 330,000 in Denver. That means one in six Denver trees is an ash, with the majority on residential properties.
- **Check out BeASmartAsh.org**—This campaign educates and enlists the help of Denver residents to identify, treat and replace ash trees.
- For more info visit [DenverGov.org/Forestry](http://DenverGov.org/Forestry) or view this Denver Forestry video: [https://youtu.be/Ff3wqWv6R\\_I](https://youtu.be/Ff3wqWv6R_I).

### PUBLISHERS/EDITORS:

Carol Roberts & Steve Larson

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Steve Larson  
Christie Gosch

AD SALES: email [Carol@FrontPorchNE.com](mailto:Carol@FrontPorchNE.com)  
or call 303-526-1969

Letters to the Editor: [FrontPorch@FrontPorchNE.com](mailto:FrontPorch@FrontPorchNE.com)

# Front Porch

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[FrontPorch@FrontPorchNE.com](mailto:FrontPorch@FrontPorchNE.com)  
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Front Porch – NE Denver distributes approximately 23,000 free papers during the first week of each month. Papers are delivered by mail and/or racks in Central Park, Park Hill, Lowry, Montclair, Mayfair, E. Colfax and NW Aurora.

The Front Porch is printed with soy-based ink and the paper contains 30% post-consumer waste. We contribute monthly to replant trees equivalent to the amount of paper used in each issue.





# All the flavors to entice kids. All the nicotine to keep them hooked.

E-cigarette makers and vape shops are enticing kids with flavors like cotton candy, gummy bear and bubble gum. And nationally, over 3.5 million kids are using these flavored e-cigarettes.

Vape shops and tobacco companies say their products aren't ending up in kids' hands, but that's just not true. Many retailers still sell to minors, and many of them in Denver even illegally sold products during the COVID-19 shutdown violating emergency orders.

Let's stop pretending vape shops and the industry care about public health or the health of our children. It's time to stop the sale of flavored tobacco products to protect our kids.

**Take action now by visiting [FlavorsHookKidsDenver.org](https://FlavorsHookKidsDenver.org) to tell City Council Members Chris Herndon and Amanda Sandoval to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.**



Paid for by Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund



Gina Harper, clinical coordinator with pharmacy, measures out the exact amount of the Covid-19 vaccine for a dose before it is administered to the first patients in Colorado at UC Health Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins on Dec. 14, 2020.



*“I now just want everyone to get vaccinated so our lives can go back to normal.”*

State officials say they will begin a robust education campaign to overcome any fears. Doug Farmer, who heads up a trade group representing nearly 300 nursing homes and assisted-living communities in Colorado, says long-term care facilities will have to be diligent in educating the very diverse population of their caregivers in order to overcome any cultural or language barriers that may cause them hesitancy. “We’ll make sure residents and their families know about the safety of the vaccines.” The phase one vaccination process is bringing much needed relief, he says. “It’s been heartbreaking to tell residents to stay in their rooms, that they can’t see their families in person. The social isolation has been very difficult.”

Many in the African American community are especially wary of the vaccination since historically that population has been used—against their knowledge or will—for medical experiments. Saint-Phard says she understands the wariness. “But this is different than the Tuskegee experiment. This is different than other cases where Blacks have been used literally as guinea pigs for experimentation. This vaccine has been tested on tens of thousands of people. I’m not the first person to get this vaccine.”

Saint-Phard added that it’s incumbent on everyone who gets the vaccine to speak out about its safety and urge others to get it when it is offered. She also hopes that since African Americans have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19, that they will get higher priority access to the vaccine.

Determining that priority list in phase two of the vaccine distribution remains a bit of a mystery. State health officials have not released details about who qualifies as “essential” and in what order they should be vaccinated. University of Colorado Health internist and professor of bioethics Dr. Matthew DeCamp says that it will likely become contentious. “The ethics concern is that people are

By Mary Jo Brooks

Central Park resident Dori Buese says it felt “surreal” when she received her vaccination. Buese, who has been a nurse with UC Health for 26 years, has been on the frontlines of the pandemic since March when her orthopedic unit transitioned to Covid-19 duty. For weeks during the initial spike of cases, the mother of three went through an elaborate decontamination process when she returned home from work: undressing in the garage, wrapping a towel around herself and running to the basement where she would shower and sleep. Getting the vaccination filled her with feelings of relief and hope. “I now just want everybody to get the vaccine so our lives can get back to some normalcy.”

UC Health physician Dr. Deborah Saint-Phard agrees. “We’ve been thinking about and hoping for this day for so long. I just want to say thank you to all the researchers who have been toiling all around the

world to get this into my arm. Into all of our arms.”

Saint-Phard says she was surprised at how efficient and orderly the vaccination process was run. After receiving the shot, she downloaded a smartphone app, set up by the Centers for Disease Control, which sends her regular messages checking for any side-effects. So far neither Buese nor Saint-Phard have had any. They will each receive their second shot in early January.

While the December distribution of more than 150,000 doses to healthcare workers and long-term care residents in Colorado went fairly smoothly, many questions remain about whether the vaccine supply will keep pace with demand. And will it be distributed effectively to rural communities and urban clinics serving at-risk populations? Will enough people agree to get vaccinated? Colorado has traditionally ranked low for childhood immunizations—in fact, it had the lowest vaccination rate in the nation for kindergarten-aged children last year.

Photo courtesy of Dori Buese



UC Health nurse Dori Buese, who has been on Covid duty since March, got a photo of herself being vaccinated to show her kids.

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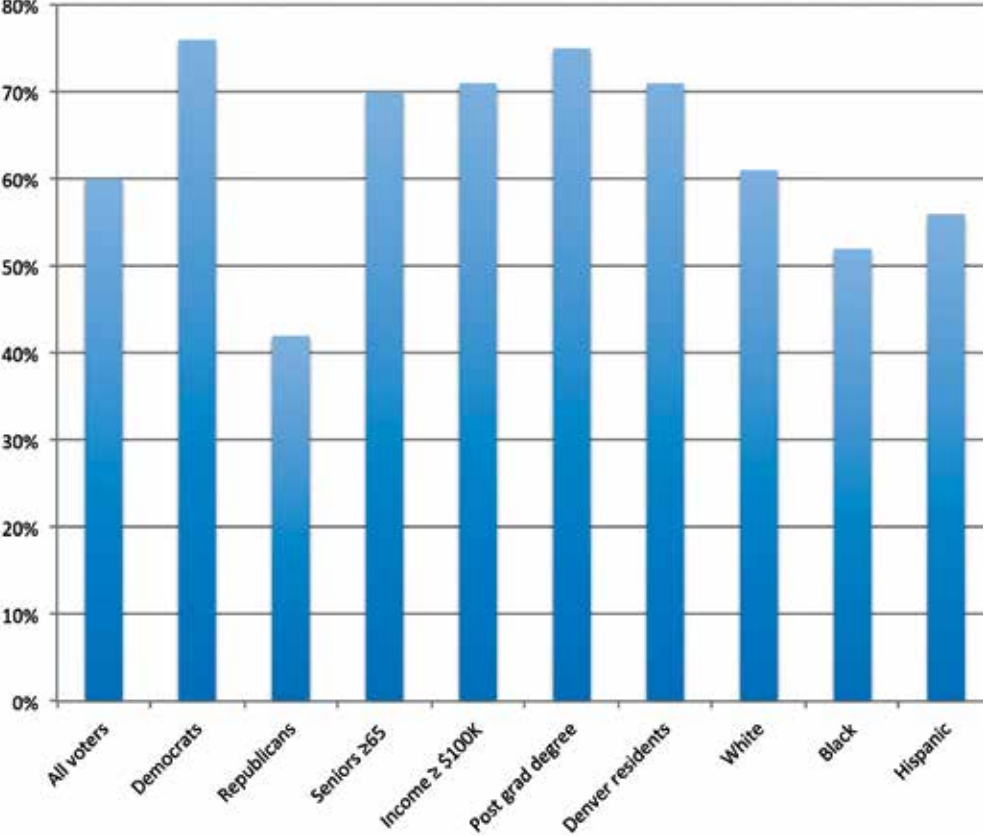


everybody to get the vaccine  
t back to some normalcy.”

likely to disagree about what counts as ‘essential.’ We tend to rely on political processes to make that determination, which are messy and very divided at the moment.”  
Another thorny issue that is likely

to arise during phase two is whether employers will mandate that employees get the vaccination. The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission recently released guidelines saying employers may institute a vaccination

Survey Outcome: Will you get the vaccine?



These findings are from a Nov. 18 to Nov. 24 survey by Magellan Strategies and Keating Research. It was a text and online panel survey of 1,008 Colorado voters who participated in the 2020 general election. The data for “all voters” has a margin of error of +/- 3.09% at the 95% confidence interval. Responses by population subgroup have higher margins of error. This survey was weighted to reflect the voter turnout demographics of the 2020 general election in Colorado. It was commissioned by Healthier Colorado.



Dr. Deborah Saint-Phard received her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at the Schroff Auditorium at the University of Colorado Hospital in mid-December. She has volunteered to help administer the vaccine, since so many nurses and medical assistants have been diverted to help care for Covid-19 patients.

requirement, with some exceptions. Ethicist DeCamp says he thinks in this first phase, most healthcare facilities will strongly encourage vaccination but won’t require it. “It does raise issues over the idea of liberty. Some people may think if they are forced to get a vaccine, that infringes on their liberty. But getting the vaccine will actually give people more liberty and freedom to do things—so it’s a trade-off over different kinds of liberty.”

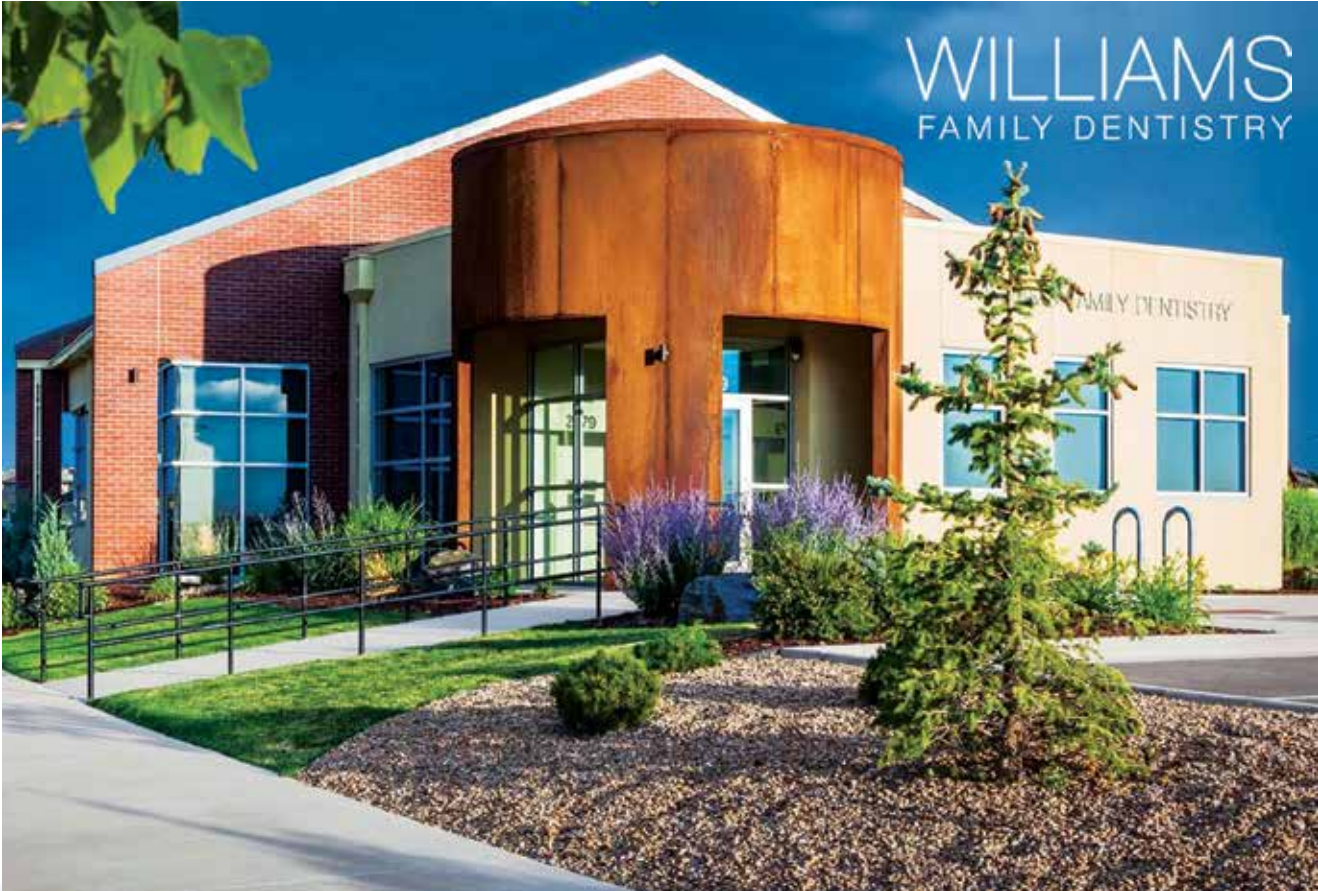
The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has determined employers (with some exceptions) can institute vaccination requirements.

*“Some people may think if they are forced to get a vaccine, that infringes on their liberty. But getting the vaccine will actually give people more liberty and freedom to do things, so it’s a trade-off over different kinds of liberty.”*

—Dr. Matthew DeCamp, Ethicist

warn that the public cannot abandon safety measures for many months to come. It’s unknown whether a person who has been vaccinated can spread the virus, so mask-wearing and social distancing will still be necessary well into summer.

Under Colorado’s three-tiered approach to Covid-19 vaccinations set forth by the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment, phase two, which includes essential workers, people with chronic health conditions, and anyone over 64, isn’t expected to begin until spring. Phase three, which includes everyone else age 18-64, will likely begin early summer. Children have not yet been approved for the vaccine.



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The teachers’ union lead negotiator Rob Gould shakes hands with DPS Board Member Angela Cobián during a break at the strike negotiations. Behind them is Board Member Carrie Olson.

Board’s friendship, and officially closed the book on her 31-year career in DPS as she accepted a new position in Dallas. With a Board evaluation that said her senior team is too attached to the former administration, is it any surprise that two top members of her team, Mark Ferrandino and Jennifer Holladay, also resigned?

So, what’s next for DPS?

Will the Board find someone willing to strike the match? Schoales says it’s unlikely. “Especially if you’re talking about traditionally-qualified candidates, it’s hard to imagine someone new saying, ‘OK, you guys run this.’ I don’t know what kind of fantasy world they’re living in.”

Vernon Jones, Executive Director of Northeast Denver Innovation Zone, isn’t necessarily opposed to abolishing parts of the current system, but says, “We don’t need someone who thinks burning the house down is an accomplishment. An abolitionist isn’t someone who simply destroys,” but “one who dreams and builds some-

thing new. You’ve gotta live somewhere.” He pushes back on the idea the bench isn’t deep. “White supremacy and dominant-culture ideology have shaped who we think is qualified. Who the community says is qualified might be something else.”

The Board’s commitment to community input guarantees the public will have a say in who will be the next superintendent. Board Vice President Jennifer Bacon, says they’re looking into new and innovative ways to include the community in the vetting process and are drafting a new vision and job

description for the superintendent position, both slated for release in January 2021.

*A PDF of Cordova’s evaluation by the Board is linked to this article at FrontPorchNE.com.*

# Cordova’s Sudden Departure?

Cordova’s new hires, “may not be the people she needs, or the people who know the school communities deeply.” They “encourage [her] to reflect...and consider such reflections in her managerial conversations...as it may be necessary to reorganize and eliminate redundancies.” The evaluation ends by promising Cordova will have, “a constructive friend in the Board of Education if she addresses the key opportunity areas.”

This Author’s Takeaway

Does this indicate Cordova’s biggest sin is that her roots are planted in a Boasberg administration? The Board seems willing to overlook this flaw in her DNA as long she’s willing to join their burn-the-house-down approach to revamping Denver education.

It is this author’s impression that the bulk of the evaluation reads like a call to action for Cordova to fire her top staff. It appears that majority members on the Board want to take bold steps into the future, but not before they burn any bridges that may connect them to the reforms of the past. You’re either with us or against us they seem to say, as they hand Cordova a match to join them in burning down the past.

Cordova—instead of scorching the very earth from which she came—handed back the match, declined the



DPS Board members pose with Superintendent Susana Cordova for a photo posted on the Board’s website. Clockwise from front left: Jennifer Bacon, Barbara O’Brien, Carrie Olson, Bradley Laurvick, Angela Cobián, Susana Cordova, Scott Baldermann, Tay Anderson.



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Aiming for the store to be interactive for both kids and adults, toys are displayed out of their packaging so customers can experience them firsthand. The comfortable chairs encourage visitors to get acquainted and share information, reflecting Hagadorn's efforts to create a sense of community in the store.

By Courtney Drake-McDonough

She started out in geology, earned an MBA, worked in aerospace, stayed home with her three kids, and has now opened a children's boutique. That's the circuitous path Caroline Hagadorn took to what may just be her dream job. With a lot of preparation and some serendipity, the mom of kids ages 9, 10, and 12 opened Little Bird Denver at the corner of 22nd and Kearney on Black Friday. Little Bird Denver offers clothing for infants through age 6 (soon, through age 12), toys, and baby gifts. Some of the

# New Kids' Stor

display fixtures came from Hollyhocks, a former Denver boutique. Hagadorn also carries items from Colorado vendors and plans to carry more. "I love creating connections with the local community and interacting with other entrepreneurs who are taking their good ideas and bringing them to life," she says. Hagadorn had been thinking about



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Caroline Hagadorn opened Little Bird children's store with a vision that it will grow into a resource center where parents of young children can get together and share information.



Several life-sized toy dogs—and many smaller ones—lie on the floor or perch in the display windows. "Kids love to cuddle with the big dogs. And several neighborhood dog walkers have found look-alikes for their own pets," says Hagadorn.

# e: Fate or Good Planning?

opening a store since her children were little, envisioning more than just merchandise. "Ultimately, I'd like to grow it into a resource center for parents of young children who are interested in learning more about cloth diapers for example, different ways of baby-weaning, new mom's groups, or toddler playgroups, so parents and kids can get together and build a sense of community," she says.

Though not one to believe in fate, the way Hagadorn got the store's space made her wonder. She'd kept her eye on the block of family-friendly businesses for years—Bang Salon At Park Hill occupied an ideal location with large display windows. One day, Hagadorn knocked on the door and spoke to an employee. "I said, 'I know this

is crazy but I'm starting a new children's store, and I would love to rent this space. I know you guys have this business here, but I just want to throw that out there.'" The next day, the salon owner, Sandra Feldt, called Hagadorn saying she'd been "hoping and praying that someone would knock on the door" and want to take over her space so she could downsize. Feldt moved Bang next door, swapping spaces with her kids' hair salon, Lil B's. Little Bird could then share the larger space with Little B's, divided by a partial wall. Their similar clientele made the venture seem like a natural fit.

The name, Little Bird Denver, comes from Hagadorn's shared love of birds with her 12-year-old daughter, Stella,

who designed the store's logo. The connection between the names "Little Bird" and "Lil B's" is also serendipity, with the kids' salon name referencing Bang Salon.

Despite opening a business during a pandemic, Hagadorn is optimistic. "I've been thinking of this for so long that I had a lot of it fully formed in my mind and knew what I wanted, so when I did encounter those opportunities, I could recognize them and go after them in a very confident way,"

she says, adding that people have been enthusiastic and supportive with their words and shopping dollars.

Hagadorn feels her varied path to this point has been helpful. "I've switched gears both personally and professionally many times in my life, and I know that I can go from doing one thing to something very different and figure out how to make a success of it," she says. "This doesn't have to be something I do forever. But it also might be—it's been pretty joyful so far."

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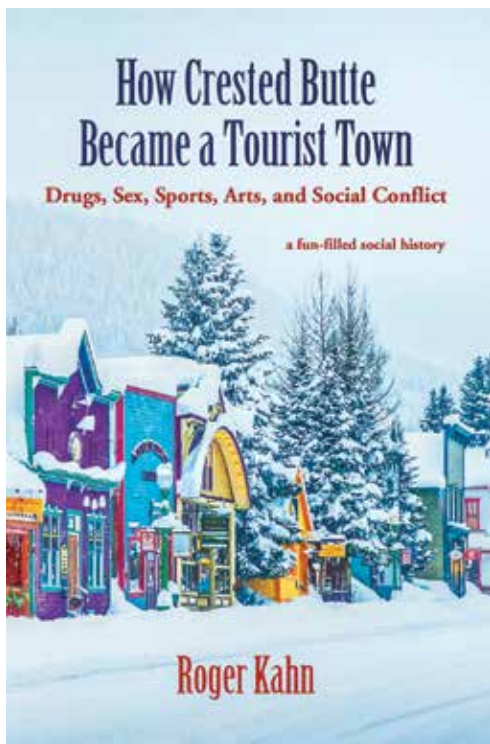






**Roger Kahn**, whose past spans such diverse experiences as research sociologist, community organizer and university professor, is now a small business owner and author. After being connected to Crested Butte for 50 years and spending 10 years writing about it, Kahn this year published, *How Crested Butte Became a Tourist Town: Drugs, Sex, Sports, Arts and Social Conflict*.

Kahn, a resident of Park Hill, writes, “I think of it as a detailed, fun-filled, social history of a typical, modern tourist town and recreation community, or what I call a ‘recreation exurb.’...I watched it evolve from the remnants of a tiny mining town with a working class population of 250 people with a hard work ethic to a population of several thousand residents who have a hard play ethic.”



The long-time editor of the *Crested Butte News*, Mark Reaman, offers this review of the book: “Kahn writes a love story to the small town... when old miners, young ski bums, wandering

hippies, and anonymous outlaws all convened in a idyllic high mountain nirvana that included cheap dope, copious sex and free roaming dogs. ... But that nirvana came with a clash of cultures. ... He delves into the politics of growth and gentrification and ... explains how these communities ... continue to attract interesting, creative people looking for an alternative lifestyle.”

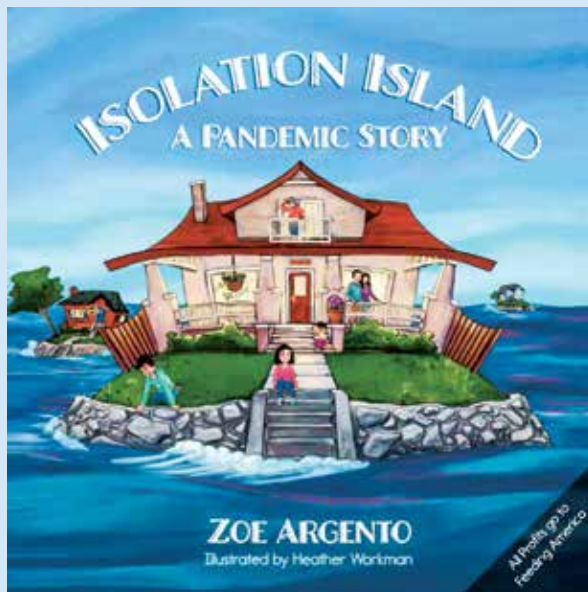
The executive director of the Crested Butte Mountain Heritage Museum, Shelley Popke, writes: “Drawing on extensive interviews, archival research and personal experiences, Kahn vividly describes the social forces that defined the 1960s and 70s in Crested Butte. .... an engaging read about a wild time in a wild place.”

The book is available in hard cover, paperback, or e-book on Kahn’s website: [rmkahn-cbauthor.com](http://rmkahn-cbauthor.com) or on Amazon.

## Books by Local Authors



**Zoe Argento** is a mother, lawyer and writer whose young family has been living as if they were vulnerable 70-somethings in order to keep grandparents safe while staying in touch with them. Her experience with life during the pandemic led her to write a children’s book, *Isolation Island: A Pandemic Story*, to help families handle loneliness and social isolation.



In Argento’s words: Our kids played with each other and made up increasingly creative projects. But all was not well. At least once an hour, screaming arguments erupted among some combination of the kids. (I’ll admit, my husband and I, struggling to manage childcare along with two demanding jobs, did not always keep our cool with these disputes.) My daughter complained regularly of stomach aches that the pediatrician finally attributed to anxiety. At a loss, I tried something new.

“Once upon a time,” I began, “there was a girl who lived in a house just like ours. One day she heard a cracking sound. She ran to the window and saw her street cracking apart. The ocean had rushed in and now each house was separating into its own island ...”

Like most parents, I had discovered that stories work wonders at soothing, entertaining and explaining the world to children. Over the months, I came up with a stream of bedtime stories in which each family lived in a separate submarine or everyone was stuck in bubbles. Telling stories is one thing we can do to help our kids make some sense of it all and deal with emotions they do not yet have the ability to name.

Argento, a Central Park resident, is donating all royalties from Amazon sales of her book to America’s largest hunger-relief organization, Feeding America, which reports that 1 in 4 American children does not regularly get enough to eat. She can be found on Instagram at @ZoeArgentoLives and on Twitter at @ZoeArgento. The illustrations are based on the North Park Hill neighborhood.

**Kathryn Haber** is an organizational psychologist and executive coach who wrote a self-help book based on her experience of losing her mom, dad and brother to pancreatic cancer, her sister to breast cancer, and her own experience of getting a lymphoma diagnosis at a time when she had 3 babies under 3 years of age. The book also includes stories about the experiences of her clients. “As a psychologist,” she writes, “the impetus for writing the book has always been about sharing what I learned through my loss and challenges to help others with their own challenges—life can be hard and we need each other to get through!”

To help make it through these losses and other life challenges, Haber, a Central Park resident, explored spirituality, researched the greatest minds, and concluded that there are Five Choices that can help us live a peaceful and fulfilled life:

1. Faith: Believe in something beyond yourself.
2. Love:

Choosing money, power, prestige over love, turns us away from each other rather than towards one another.

3. Prayer: Spend time each day centering yourself with the divine of yours.

4. Divine Intervention: Seeing our experiences as the universe speaking to us helps us know

we are where we are meant to be, and there are lessons to learn in our spiritual journeys.

5. Vulnerability: When we share our life challenges and stories, we are helping others and ourselves.

Haber illuminates these Five Choices through personal and professional vignettes in her book.

Her story addresses what it means to be human and how we often operate from a position of fear. We find ourselves in “protect” mode, falling prey to our egocentric behaviors rather than thinking beyond ourselves, considering the whole environment, our community, what’s in the best interest of others.

*Fear Less, Love More* can be found on Amazon, Barnes and Nobel and [www.kathrynhaber.com](http://www.kathrynhaber.com).



By Carol Roberts with information about the books provided by the authors.

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# Colorado Teacher of the Year

By Laurie Dunklee

“I’m a nerd—I love to learn and share what I learn. The kids say my enthusiasm is contagious; they get excited when the teacher is excited,” says Gerardo Muñoz, a middle and high school teacher who has been named Colorado’s 2021 Teacher of the Year. The Denver native and resident of Central Park since 2017 teaches social studies at the Denver Center for International Studies at Baker, where he has worked for 14 years. “Many of my students are the third, fourth or fifth member of their family to be in my class,” Muñoz said. “We’re a tight community. Families have trusted our school for years.” Muñoz attributes his success to caring about his students and focusing on their strengths. “I’m always empathetic, and I create a nurturing environment. I believe every young person is exactly who they are supposed to be, but they don’t have the skills yet. I help them to become complete.”

Muñoz earned his bachelor’s degree in history and Latin American studies from the University of Colorado and a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Denver. As Teacher of the Year, Muñoz will receive many professional development opportunities, including membership in the Colorado Education Commissioner’s Teacher Cabinet. He will represent the entire profession in Colorado and be the public face of Colorado’s teachers. “I’ll have a platform to amplify the stories of the 40,000 teachers in Colorado.” Muñoz teaches ethnic studies, world history and community organizing. His style is helping students find their presence in various subjects. “Ethnic studies allows students to reflect on their own identities. Where do my ancestors fit? What is the historical relationship between groups? Students respond to things that feel relevant to their lived experiences.” Students are challenged to become community orga-

nizers. “Contrary to what some people think, teenagers want to make a difference,” Muñoz said. “We discuss how to formulate policy around issues. Community organizing is just connecting with people and finding out what they need. Everything becomes a debating point. The discourse is important because lots of people don’t know how to do that. It’s part of becoming a strong, interdependent society.” He said teaching remotely under Covid restrictions is the hardest thing he’s done as a teacher. “I have relationships with the kids. It’s hard without the informal opportunities to connect, like them dropping into my office or seeing them in the cafeteria. I’m attentive to how this time is affecting them. It helps my understanding to have a 15-year-old daughter who is experiencing it.” Denver Center for International Studies at Baker was ranked No. 7 among Denver’s 58 high schools by *U.S. News & World Report* in 2018. Minority enrollment at DCIS is 76%, and 61% of students are economically disadvantaged. Muñoz said the school earned its high ranking because of the rigorous coursework it offers, including advanced placement classes starting in 9th grade. “Lots of students of color are enrolled in the AP classes, and a very high number go to college.” DCIS does not require admission testing. Muñoz attributes the school’s success to its idealistic programs and opportunities to travel. “Our students went to Spain last year. Kids come here if they want to see the world.”



2021 Colorado Teacher of the Year Gerardo Muñoz is pictured at the Denver Center for International Studies at Baker where he teaches social studies. “I believe every young person is exactly who they are supposed to be, but they don’t have the skills yet. I help them to become complete,” says Muñoz.



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This month I review two excellent, and very different, films. Please keep supporting your local theaters, including the Denver Film Center, through their closures until we can once again sit in a theater and get lost in the beauty of film.

### *The Reason I Jump* (2020)

An absolutely wonderful movie.

As a reviewer, I try to remain dispassionate and evaluate each film on its merits as I try to maintain a critical eye. Certain films, however, make that impossible and break through the critical wall, allowing you to feel its beauty and touch your humanity. *The Reason I Jump*, a feature documentary directed by Jerry Rothwell, is a “cinematic interpretation” of the book by Naoki Higashida. Higashida is a Japanese autistic person who wrote the book in 2007 after he learned how to use a computer. It is a first-person account of what it is like to be autistic and in his words, “live inside your own head.” This film of the same name is not necessarily an adaptation of the book, but an interpretation of it with



autistic people we meet, based on descriptions from Higashida and others. We also see the very real experiences of the families with autistic children: how they are challenged, how they live, how they love, and how they rejoice. As one parent states: “My daughter taught me how to be a great father. She taught what it means to love.” Another parent, as his son plays inside a colorful maze,

remarks “I could never feel the joy he is feeling right now.” It is moments like this, coupled with the astonishing visuals, that soak our emotions. Higashida, at one point (through the narration), unlocks a remarkable idea: “I used to think that If I was cured of autism, I would jump at the chance. But now I realize that I would never want to change.” In the past, autism may have seemed like a curse to many, or as one family relates, “The village thought our daughter was touched by the devil.” The lives we see on film, however,

voiceover narration from the book, stories from families around the word, and poetic visuals and music that take you inside the mind of Higashida and many other autistic people. It is remarkable.

The visuals, sometimes disjunctive, along with the sound, which is sometime discordant, start to make sense a bit into the movie once we realize what they are doing—they are attempting to place us in the mind of the

### *Promising Young Woman*



tell a much different story. They are touched by something much more beautiful, much more love, and much more humanity than most of us would ever comprehend. I comprehend a tiny bit more now and shall forever be grateful.

Now playing at the Sie Film Center’s Virtual Cinema.

You will like this film if you enjoyed *The Diving Bell and The Butterfly*, *The Horse Boy*, and/or *What’s Eating Gilbert Grape*.

### *Promising Young Woman* (2020)

“It’s a sort of beautifully wrapped candy, and when you eat it you realize it’s poisonous.”

Such is how the film is described by star Carey Mulligan, and what an apt description it is. This fascinating and on-the-edge-of-your-seat mixed-genre movie will have you feeling comfortable and then extremely uncomfortable in turns, mostly the latter. Directed by first-time writer/director Emerald Fennell (Camilla Parker-Bowles in *The Crown*), the film premiered at Sundance to uneasy groans and positive reviews, and now you can add this reviewer into the positive category.

The story centers around Cassie (Carey Mulligan), a “promising young woman” whose life takes a turn after her friend Nina is raped and Cassie elects to drop out of medical school to care for her. While tending to her friend, Cassie develops a taste for revenge—in both general terms and later, very specific terms. The ending then shocks and surprises, even more so than the rest of the movie.

While the capable Mulligan’s acting steers the narrative, it is the steady hand of novice director Fennell that really drives the film. The color palette of the film is extremely expressive, providing a counterpoint to the events and highlighting a theme that is then reinforced by the narrative. The visuals, in other words, tell the story. It is a striking first effort by the experienced actor and writer/producer of *Killing Eve* Season Two (a great show in its own right). Fennell is a director to watch, and the film is skin-crawlingly good.

Available at streaming service.

You’ll enjoy this if you liked *Killing Eve*, *Under the Skin*, and/or *The Neon Demon*.

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](mailto:vpiturro@msudenver.edu). And you can follow “Indie Prof” on Facebook and @Vincent-Piturro on Twitter.

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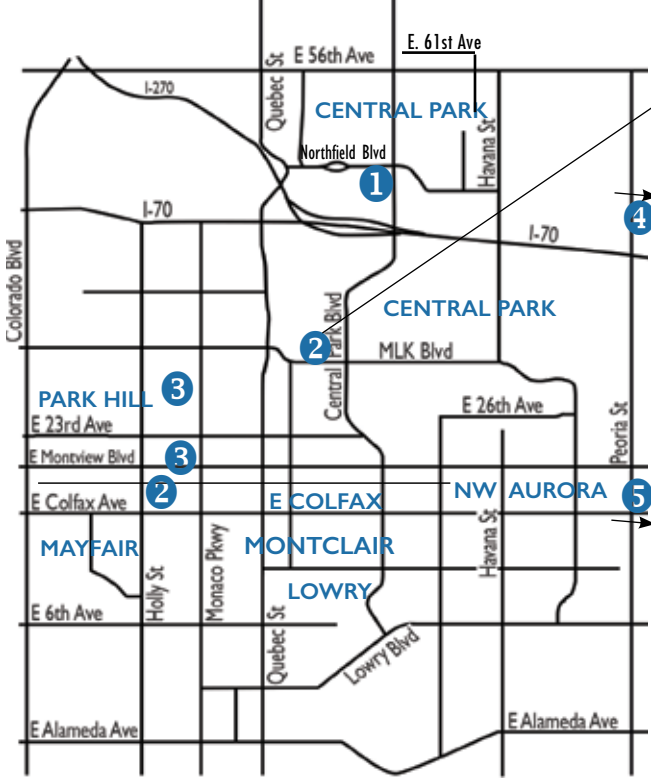
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# ...NE News Updates



By Carol Roberts

## 1 Kappa Senior Apartments



Kappa Tower II construction is well underway at Northfield and Central Park Blvds. The building will have 70 income-qualified units for seniors 62 and older whose income is 30% to 60% of the area median income. The units include 51 one-bedrooms at 600 sq. ft. and 19 two-bedrooms at 875 sq. ft. Amenities will include a community room with a kitchen, a fitness center, a computer center, and extra wide hallways for taking indoor walks during winter weather. Landscaping will include communal planting beds and a dog park.

The projected completion date is March, subject to weather or other possible delays. Preleasing will start sometime in January. Interested parties should call 720-688-1217.

After this building is completed, Kappa Housing will start planning for a second phase of this project that will create an L-shaped building with 30 additional units. Kappa Board Chairman Larry Williams says that will likely take a couple of years to raise the funds and finalize the plans.

## 2 The Great Conjunction

Jupiter takes nearly 12 years to circle the sun; Saturn takes 29.5 years. Every 20 years, Jupiter laps Saturn, creating the “Great Conjunction,” when they typically appear to be separated by about twice the apparent diameter of the moon. This year, though they were in reality hundreds of millions of miles apart, the distance between them appeared to be only one-fifth of the diameter of the moon. According to Space.com, the last time they were visible this close together was July 16, 1623. And the last time they appeared to be even closer together was March 5, 1226.

## 3 Rankings for Best Neighborhoods in Denver

Niche, a Pittsburgh-based firm that does a wide range of national rankings, listed two NE neighborhoods in their top 25 Best Places to Live in Denver—and three more in the top 50 (of 78 Denver neighborhoods). The ranking assesses the overall livability including the quality of local schools, crime rates, housing trends, employment statistics, and access to amenities. 2020 rankings for NE Denver were: South Park Hill #5, North Park Hill #9, Lowry Field #31, Montclair #33, Central Park (Stapleton) #37.

5280 magazine uses its own ranking process with four weighted variables: year-over-year percentage increase in home prices (30%); crime (25%); school rankings (15%); and X factor, things that can’t be easily quantified, such as access to open space, nearby public transportation and the prevalence of restaurants and shops (30%). In the 5280 magazine ratings, South Park Hill was #1 and none of the other neighborhoods in the Front Porch distribution area showed up.

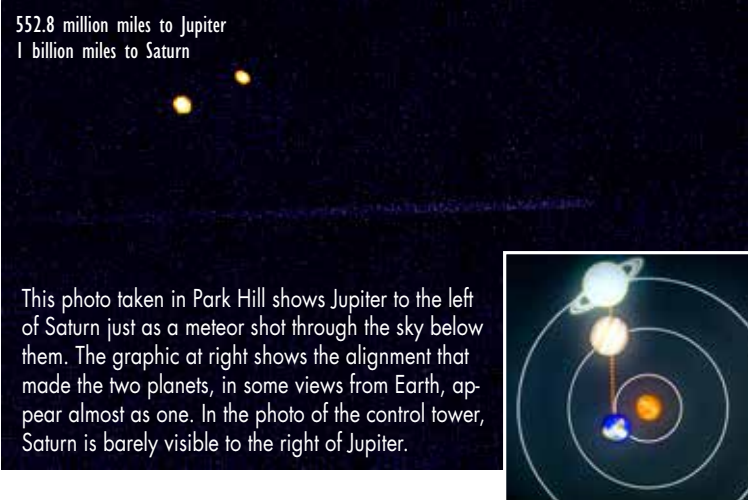
## 4 DPS Announces First HBCU High School

DPS will open its first high school modeled after Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in August 2021 in Montbello. The Robert F. Smith STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math) Academy is named after an East High School graduate, a Black American investor, inventor, engineer, philanthropist and entrepreneur. Smith said in a video announcement: “...the only limitation in your lives will be your own capacity to dream, to work hard, and to build... When I was in school, there were a whole lot of afternoons when I stayed home to study rather than go out with friends...I couldn’t stand the thought of not becoming great.” Principal Shakira Abney-Wisdom said the school’s goal “is to nurture the next generation of Black leaders and learners through a deep understanding of self, reverence for a powerful past, and hope for the possibilities in the future.” For more information visit: <https://www.dpsk12.org/hbcu-steam-high-school/>

## 5 Children’s Recognized for Nursing Excellence

For the fourth time, Children’s Hospital Colorado has received the highest international recognition for excellence in nursing—the

Photo by Sylvia Oboler; Graphic by CBS



Magnet Recognition Program, considered to be the gold standard for nursing excellence—and only 8.6% of U.S. hospitals achieve it. Hospitals must reapply for the designation every four years based on adherence to Magnet concepts and demonstrated improvements in patient care and quality. Children’s Colorado has received this recognition four times consecutively, one of 89 to achieve this distinction out of 543 Magnet-designated hospitals. According to information provided by the hospital, research has shown “Magnet hospitals report improved clinical outcomes, fewer patient falls, fewer medication errors, lower mortality rates, and higher patient and family satisfaction. Magnet hospitals also tend to have lower nursing turnover and an improved nurse work environment.”

Photo by Anne Hazelton



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Longtime *Denver Post* writer and columnist Dick Kreck shares his memories of the Stock Show. He is pictured above with his son Kevin and at right dressed as a cowboy at age 6 1/2. He joins his grown kids for a beer every year at the Stock Show's Cowboy Bar (below). If the stockyards, the petting zoo, and hawkers of miracle cures aren't exciting enough, there's always the rodeo to provide an adrenaline rush.



not incidentally, free beer.

It was supposed to be only for the delegates, but excited Denverites, 30,000 of them, flooded the barbecue grounds. Looters overpowered the staff and took barrels of beer, knives, cups, pails and whatever else they could lay their hands on.

The stock show has become an annual trek for area-school kids loaded onto buses and herded out to the grounds to get a

whiff of Western culture. Little cowboys and cowgirls, outfitted in pink hats, fringed vests and ill-fitting boots, tour the animal pens and listen to hawkers hustling vegetable graters, miracle cleaners and farm equipment. The children's usual reaction to the stock pens—"Ew! This place smells like poop!" That, my dears, is the smell of money. I asked my kids, now adults with children of their own, what memories they have of their visits. "I just remember that long hallway from the Coliseum to the barns and education hall,"

# 2021 Stock Show: *Memories Only*

By Dick Kreck

There won't be any little piggies or cute bunnies or a stick-horse rodeo this year. In fact, there won't be a National Western Stock Show (NWSS) and Rodeo. For only the second time in the event's 115-year history it has been cancelled, this time due to the corona virus pandemic. The only other time it was called off was in 1915 when a hoof-and-mouth epidemic prevented stockmen from shipping their stock to Denver. Through two world wars, the 1918 flu epidemic and the Great Depression, the growers held tight while scaling back in difficult times. Today's stock show debuted in 1906

and the rodeo was added in 1931. The first stock show, founded in 1898 as the National Stock Growers Convention, was staged to take Coloradans' minds off the silver collapse of 1893. It got off to a difficult start. Whipped up by newspaper coverage, the citizenry was in a frenzy over a barbecue scheduled after the show finished its six-day run. The Denver Republican newspaper trumpeted that there would be "six tons of meat," including quail, two bears, and 150 possum, all topped off with 200 pounds of table salt, 200 pounds of brown sugar, 250 pounds of coffee—and,



only for the delegates, but excited Denverites, 30,000 of them, flooded the barbecue grounds. Looters overpowered the staff and took barrels of beer, knives, cups, pails and whatever else they could lay their hands on.

The stock show has become an annual trek for area-school kids loaded onto buses and herded out to the grounds to get a

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said Valerie. “I was so short all I saw was people’s butts.”

As one who grew up in a Los Angeles suburb, the only horses I saw raced at Santa Anita. But when we moved to Denver in 1968, my wife, Mary, an accomplished equestrian who was raised in Denver, thought it would be exciting to take our kids, Kevin and Valerie, to see the animals. We petted the pigs, looked at the bulls and llamas, and the kids rode ponies. As part of the day, we attended an auction. Among the items put up was a vial of Appaloosa semen for \$150. I left to go to the restroom and when I came back I couldn’t find Mary and the kids in the crowded arena. As I looked around, I saw Mary waving.



The auctioneer took that as a winning bid. I said, “Let’s get out of here before they come around to collect.” I didn’t go back for 30 years, fearing someone might recognize me.

The NWSS has become an annual event, drawing more than 700,000 attendees and adding almost \$120 million to the local economy a year through the sixteen-day run that now includes a huge rodeo. It has become more of an urban event—there are sales of hats, jackets and boots, a Western art show, kid-related events like a petting farm, pedal-tractor races, and the ever-popular mutton bustin’, where small children are put on the backs of sheep and generally tossed off. Cash prizes and ribbons are handed out for winning steers, bulls, pigs and even chickens. One competition sure to not make an appearance is the 1914 “best baby” event where naked two- and three-year-olds paraded across the stage for admiring judges.

The show’s organizers haven’t stood pat. The livestock pavilion



Upper Left: In the mutton bustin’ event, kids compete for how long they can ride bareback on a sheep. Upper right: In the petting farm kids can wander in the pen with animals. Above: Hands-on exhibits offer further learning opportunities.

Left: Ranchers lead their livestock from the stockyards to the arenas for judging.



opened in 1909; the Coliseum, site of the rodeo, was dedicated in 1952, and the Hall of Education opened in 1973. A multi-million-dollar expansion of what is now called “the campus” is under way just north of I-70, which is why traffic jams greet inbound commuters.

Even Gov. Jared Polis, as a good parent, takes his children to the show—“We bring our kids in proud support of ranching in Colorado.”

Kevin and Valerie and I still go to the show every January but now we go straight to the Cowboy Bar for a Coors or two and not to the petting zoo. We’ll miss our annual trip this year, but we plan to be there when the NWSS returns Jan. 8-23, 2022.



# Lowry Family Dentistry

Makala Hubbell, DDS

## Complete Care for Adults and Children

We are a family-friendly office providing comprehensive dental care for patients of all ages. We emphasize preventive care services and patient education programs.

## Your Comfort is our Priority

Our friendly, professional team will work to ensure your visit is as relaxing and comfortable as possible. Listen to music or watch a movie during your appointment.

## Dental Care for Every Need

We realize each patient has unique dental needs. We offer a full range of restorative dental treatments to provide personalized care.

## State of the Art Dental Technology

We use the latest technology to ensure quality, individualized care. We utilize digital radiology and intra-oral cameras.

## Convenient Hours

Appointments available Monday through Thursday, including extended evening hours.

**5280** Voted Denver’s Top Dentist for over 10 Years!  
[ THE DENVER MAGAZINE ]



[www.lowryfamilydentistry.com](http://www.lowryfamilydentistry.com)  
**303.366.3000**





# Time to Refresh? Remodel? Or Relocate?

Extra time at home may have you thinking it's time for a change.

As a team dedicated to being true advisors, we're happy to help strategize on smart home investments **even** if selling is years away. And don't forget our **Compass Concierge** program can help by covering the cost of home improvement projects too!

## Top 5 update projects with the biggest bang for your buck.

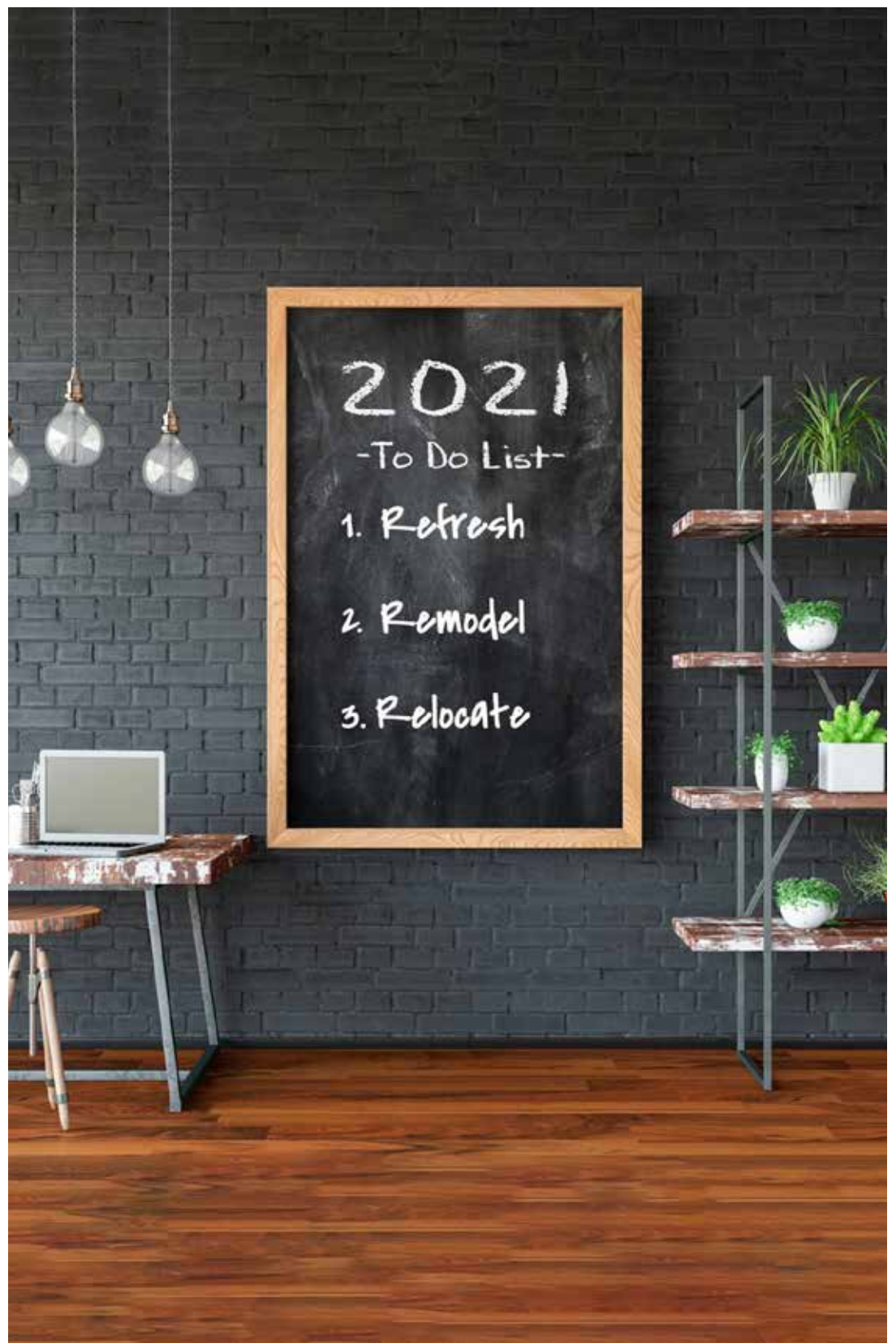
**Paint** — Choose a trending and cohesive color palette

**Light fixtures** — Even just one signature fixture can make an impact

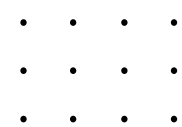
**Flooring** — New carpet and refinished hardwoods

**Countertops** — On trend new surfaces give kitchens and baths a boost

**Appliances** — Buyers love sparkling clean new gadgetry



## Give us a shout if you're thinking of making a change!



## COMPASS

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