

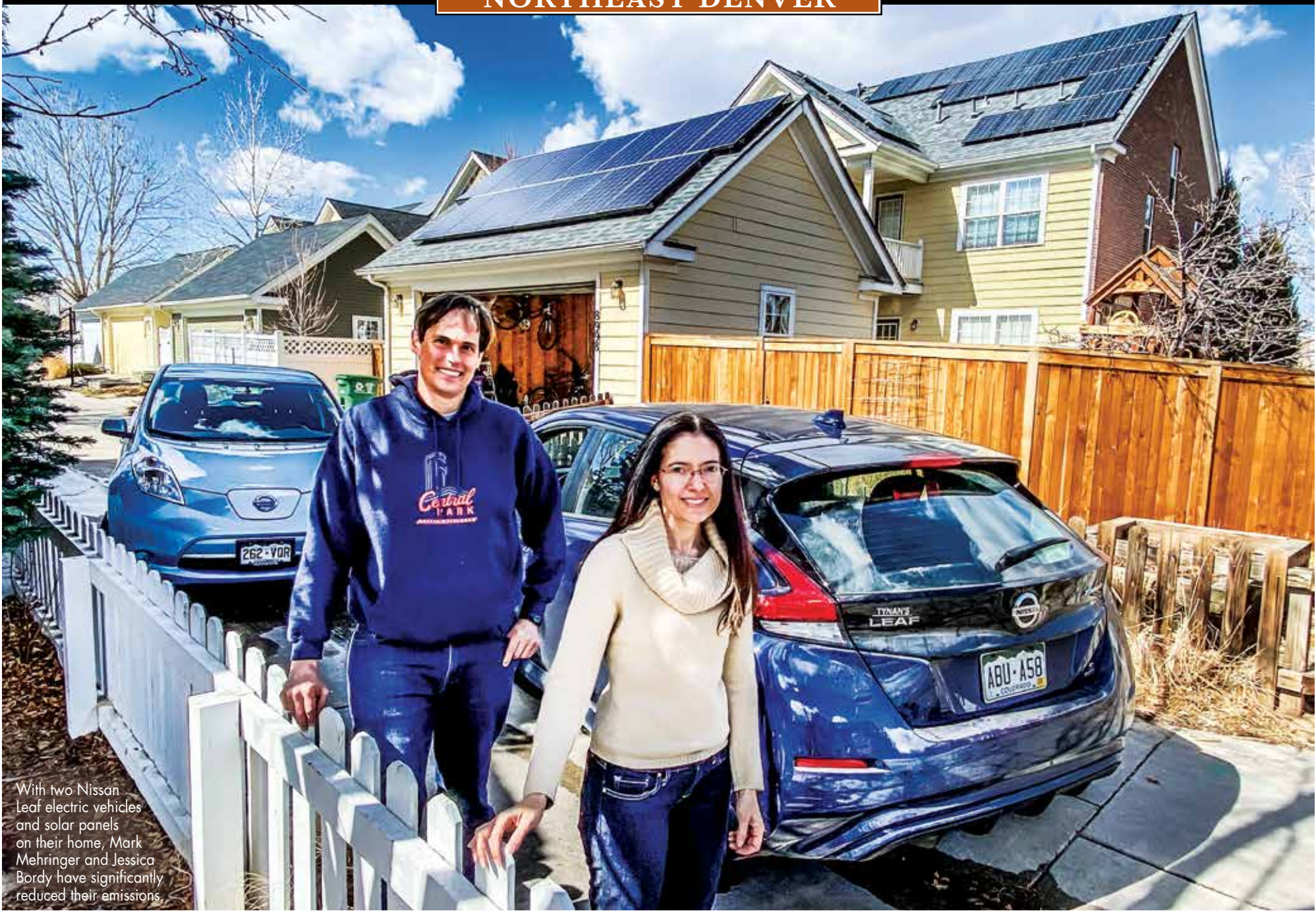
Front Porch

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

DENVER, COLORADO

NORTHEAST DENVER

APRIL 2021



Front Porch photo by Steve Larson

With two Nissan Leaf electric vehicles and solar panels on their home, Mark Mehringer and Jessica Bordy have significantly reduced their emissions.

The Electric Vehicle Revolution Is Here

Will Ferrell went to Norway to check out all the electric vehicles (EVs) there, our federal government is changing to EVs, and EVs are showing up around our

neighborhoods. For those not ready to get an EV, maybe it's time for an e-bike; we talked to neighbors about both. *Story on page 14 by Tracy Wolfer Osborne.*



Front Porch photo by Steve Larson

PLAY BALL

In the early days of baseball and well into the 1950s, trains were a critical partner that made it possible for teams to circulate from one city to the next.

Left: Vintage baseball player Roger Hadix closes his talk on "our national pastime" and its connection with railroads, with a rousing "Hip Hip Huzzah," at the Forney Museum of Transportation.

Story by Ken Lutes on page 8.

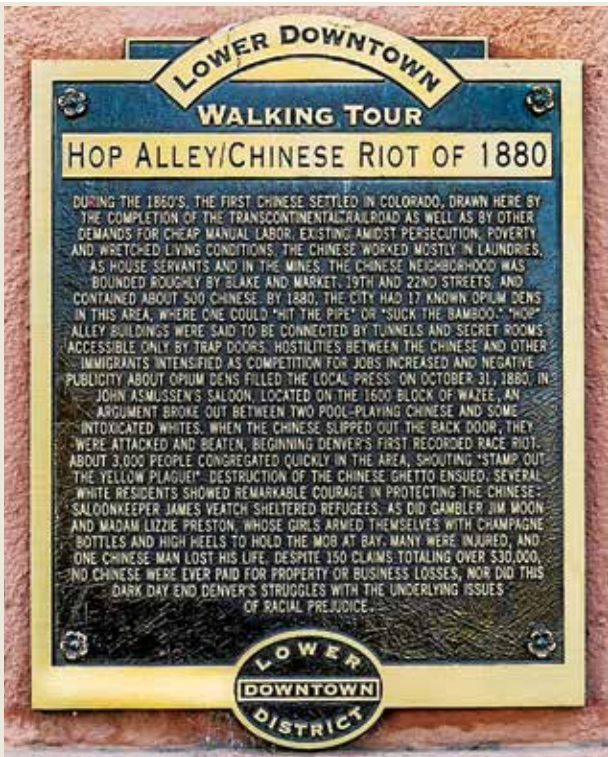


Photo by Gil Asakawa

Addressing Anti-Asian Hate

Columnist Gil Asakawa reminds us of the long history of anti-Asian hate as he looks back at the anti-Chinese riot in Denver in 1880. The downtown Denver plaque about the riot, shown above, is "an example of history written from a white-centered perspective." Efforts are underway to replace it with a more accurate and appropriate one that celebrates Denver's historic Chinatown. *Story on page 10.*



Harrison and Connolly Murante couldn't get to the mountains to ski after the recent record snow storm so they came up with the next best thing—building a ski jump off their front porch.

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Events & Announcements

Active Minds: Putin's Russia

Thursday, April 8, 1-2pm, Online

Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russia has been accused of illegally invading Ukraine and hacking the U.S. to influence the 2016 presidential election. Having stretched his influence far beyond the term of his first official Presidency and now having returned to the role and consolidated his power, Vladimir Putin's leadership of Russia suggests a return to an authoritarianism that, for some, feels similar to the days of Soviet control and the Czars of old. Join Active Minds as we examine the story of Russia under the influence of Vladimir Putin.

Active Minds: China Belt & Road Initiative

Thursday, April 22, 6:30-7:30pm, Online

In 2013, China announced a massive \$1 trillion international transportation and trade infrastructure construction program known as the Belt & Road Initiative. This program, which is well underway, aims to finance, build, and supply material for roads, bridges, tunnels, railway lines, seaports, and airports for over 100 countries in the world. China is billing this as a modern version of the ancient Silk Road. Join Active Minds as we explore the history of the Silk Road as it informs an understanding of this contemporary effort.

Join in the Active Minds webinars by visiting https://www.activeminds.com/events_denver.html

MCA Aquatics

The 2021 aquatic season is approaching fast and to ensure everyone splashes back into summer with ease, we would encourage you to take note of these valuable resources for the most up-to-date information and timely aquatic related updates and announcements.

If you are not subscribed to the MCA's weekly email newsletter, please sign up via www.mca80238.com. Community news and upcoming event newsletters are sent weekly on Wednesdays and throughout the summer get the latest aquatic-related announcements and pertinent reminders bi-weekly on Fridays, delivered straight to your inbox.

Get familiar with the Active Pass, our new resident membership program, and your key to summer. The Active Pass provides residents with access to all 7 community public pools without paying the daily entry fee. Residents planning on visiting the pool more than 5 times during the pool season should consider this option. Find out more about the newly launched Active Pass, including details on getting yours today at www.mca80238.com.

The MCA is seeking applications for 2021 swim coaches. A coach's primary duties include instructing swimmers on water confidence, helping improve swimming technique, and developing areas of swim advancement. Applicants must have a swimming background and maintain certifications in Lifeguarding, CPR with AED, and First Aid. For further requirements and application details please visit www.mca80238.com.

Whimsy Art Class

Friday, April 9, 5:30-7:30pm, Online

Save the Date! The MCA has paired up with the Whimsy Art Studio located in Northfield for a virtual painting class! More event details including the chosen painting and pricing will be posted on our website soon.

The MCA Showcase, A Community Talent Show

Friday, April 23 - Friday, April 30, Online

Do you have a talent you would like to perform for the community? Then we want to hear from you! The MCA Showcase is returning for its third year for all **amateur** performers in the Central Park community. We encourage all ages and talent varieties to apply now at www.mca80238.com. Applications will only be accepted through April 16! As we continue to navigate events during the pandemic, this event will be held virtually. The virtual program will go live on our website on April 23. Cast your vote for your favorite talented community member before it closes on April 30! Winners will be announced on May 3, including audience-choice, judges-choice, and first runner-up.

Canine Courtesy: The Doo-Doos & Don'ts

Though it is not illegal to allow your dog to poop on someone else's property, it is illegal if the excrement is not removed immediately. Be a good neighbor and bear in mind that some people put a lot of work into maintaining their landscaping. It is best to avoid any conflict by steering your canine to the tree lawn, which is public right of way. Denver Ordinances (Sec. 8-73.) requires that all dog excrement is removed immediately from any property that is not your own, public or private! To report complaints or City Ordinance violations regarding dogs or other animals call Denver's Animal Control at 3-1-1 or 720-913-1311.

Lawrence Uhling

Administrative Assistant
luhling@MCA80238.com

Master Community Association

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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.



Ready for a Refresh?

If you’ve wrapped up spring cleaning and found 10 years of old paint in the garage that needs disposal, we can help!

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Sunday, April 11, 2021

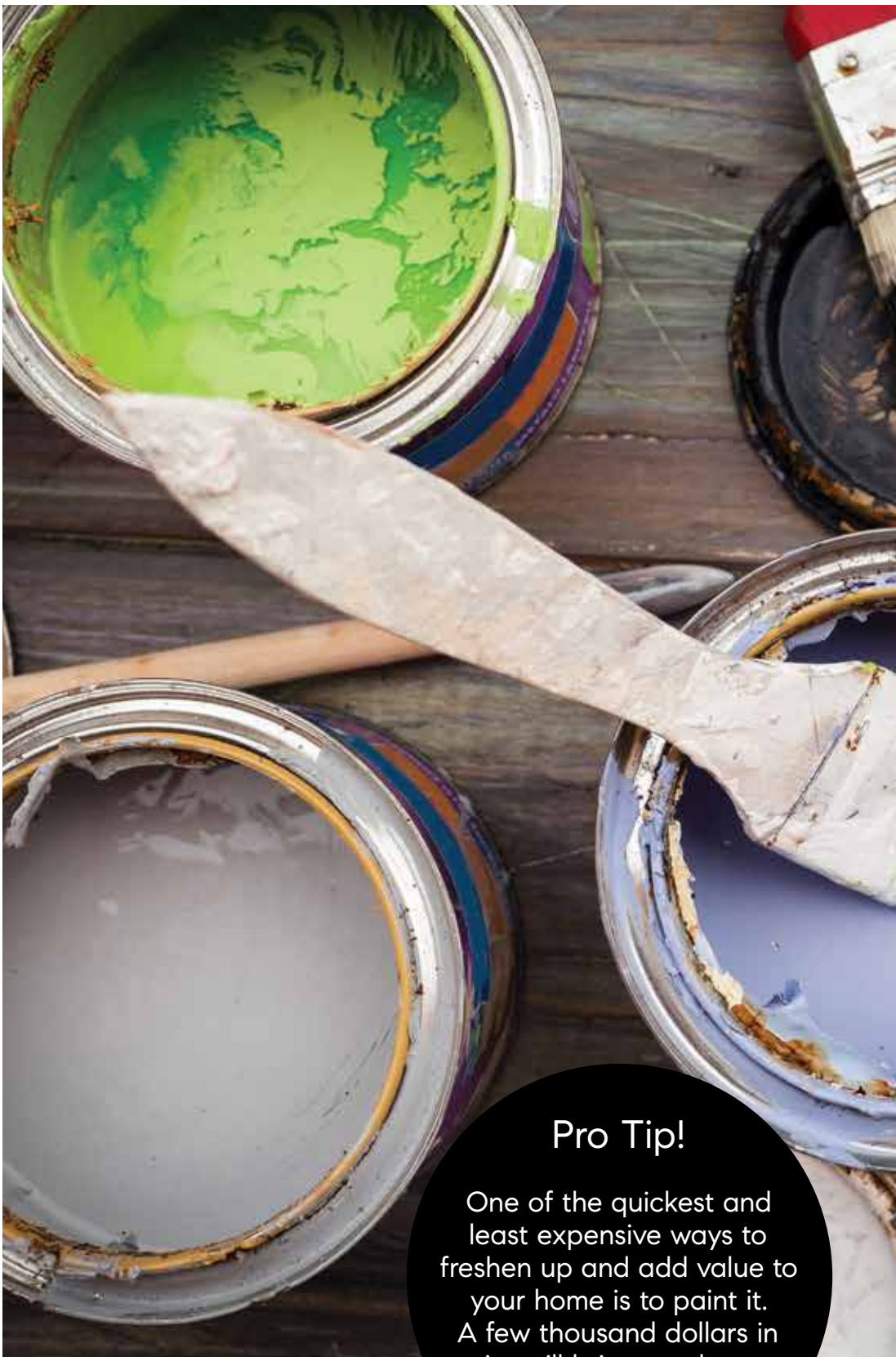
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Let's Talk about Gender Diversity in Policing

By Martina Will

The lack of racial and ethnic diversity in law enforcement made headlines in 2020. Social as well as broadcast media engaged in well-deserved criticism of public safety departments across the U.S. Far more pronounced than the lack of racial and ethnic diversity, however, is the absence of gender parity in law enforcement. This rarely makes headlines or the talk show circuit and seems to be an accepted norm by the general public.

The City of Aurora appointed its first woman Police Chief, Vanessa Wilson, in 2020. She is the exception that

proves the rule. As of July 2020, women represented only 14% of Denver's police force, a figure that aligns with the national average. Chief Paul Pazen told KDVR in a July 2020 interview that he was encouraged by a new class of cadets at the Denver Police Academy that was 31% female and said DPD had set a goal of 30% women on the force by 2030.¹

2030 is three decades into the twenty-first century! And even this lofty goal is not close to representative. A criminology professor quoted in the KDVR article pointed out that women officers are better at exploring options rather than making

impulsive decisions; this quality alone is vital to good policing. So why aren't women coming into or staying in law enforcement despite the skills they could bring to so many situations faced by police?

Sexism and Reprisals

"I'm the only female on my detail. I get questioned every time I'm making a decision," says one police officer. After well over two decades in public safety, male colleagues with much less experience still question her decisions because of her gender, she says.

Multiple experienced and successful women officers from around the metro area were interviewed for this article. All are passionate

about their work and committed to serving the public, but say the work culture does not support women. They are not referring to questions of family leave or work-life balance. They are referring to insidious enduring sexism and a culture that punishes women who speak out.

This article includes no identifying factors like agency, department or rank to protect the women from reprisals for speaking out. Their words reflect almost a century of collective experience and overlap in many places. Each officer peppers her interview with multiple examples of demotions, transfers, and other punitive measures

taken against female colleagues who spoke out against sexual harassment, professional incompetence, and disrespect by male subordinates.

Some of these tactics were the subject of a civil rights complaint that the Denver Police Department settled for \$280,000 in 2020.² That complaint contended that the department was "rife with sexism, including at the highest levels." In response to her formal complaint, then-District Commander Magen Dodge was moved to a different, isolated position. This is one way whistleblowers within law enforcement are silenced, according to officers interviewed.

"I've been bullied, and I've been harassed," says one officer. The women sharing these very serious concerns are not "disgruntled former employees." They are long-time public servants who remain passionate about their profession and frequently refer to it as "a calling." They say things like "I don't work for my sergeant. I don't work for my lieutenant. I don't work for the Chief....I work for the citizens." But they say that the pervasive culture of law enforcement does not support women who voice their concerns or women in authority generally.

One officer reflects how different her

career would be if she were a man. "They would love me because I would be a man's man and a cop's cop...I am assertive and I know the rules and regulations, I hold people accountable." But as a woman, "they will not stand for it." As reflected in Dodge's complaint, all the officers interviewed say that outspoken female officers are relocated or demoted and replaced with less experienced or less competent women



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who are not considered threatening.

**“Bright, New and Shiny” vs.
“Stay Focused. You’re a Cop.”**

It seems there are always women who will stay silent and comply with the existing culture. These typically younger, less experienced “bright, new and shiny” officers are complicit for the sake of job security and a possible promotion. The women interviewed believe that replacing outspoken women with women who play along is how departments avoid EEOC complaints, making it hard to prove gender bias and hold anyone accountable.

“We still have females...who are sleeping their way to the top...and show as much cleavage as they can get away with,” says one officer. They laugh at men’s jokes and use their “feminine wiles” to their advantage, but they do not stand up to a culture that ostracizes and punishes women who refuse to play the game, the officers concur.

“Stay focused. You’re a cop” says one officer of the newbies who play into the “Madonna and Whore dichotomy.” As they fulfill the stereotypes, they hold back change for women as a whole, the officers suggest.

Lack of female mentorship is another problem, the officers confide. One likens the competition for the limited spots allotted women, to “crawdads that are trying to get out of the bucket...and they pull each other down.”

At its foundation, these problems begin with recruitment and

hiring practices. “We can’t just put people in a position that they haven’t been drawn to, that it’s not been a calling for them or they’re not qualified for.” Several cite the screening process and the quality of those recruited, which begins with the Civil Service Commission. “Don’t recruit a Black guy because he’s Black. Recruit a young Black man that has wanted to be a cop since he was a little boy.”

Not everyone is called to do this work, they agree. “I wanted to be an officer because I saw the relationship be-

Data compiled by the National Center for Women and Policing indicates that women are less likely to respond impulsively or use excessive force or deadly force than their male counterparts, despite encountering similar levels of danger.

tween my community and the police department just going downhill, and I said ‘Well, the only way to make a difference is to get in there and make a change.’ Not a lot of people feel that way,” she says. Those who come in drawn by the salary “tap out like the fourth year.”

The consensus is that good officers view this career path as a calling, not a job. Some enter law enforcement thinking, “Let me do this for four or five years and then I’ll quit and do

something else.” That is not what makes for a great officer. To endure, they say, “You have to be willing to be smarter than the b.s. that happens and really decide that you’re going to make it your career.”

Why Does It Matter?

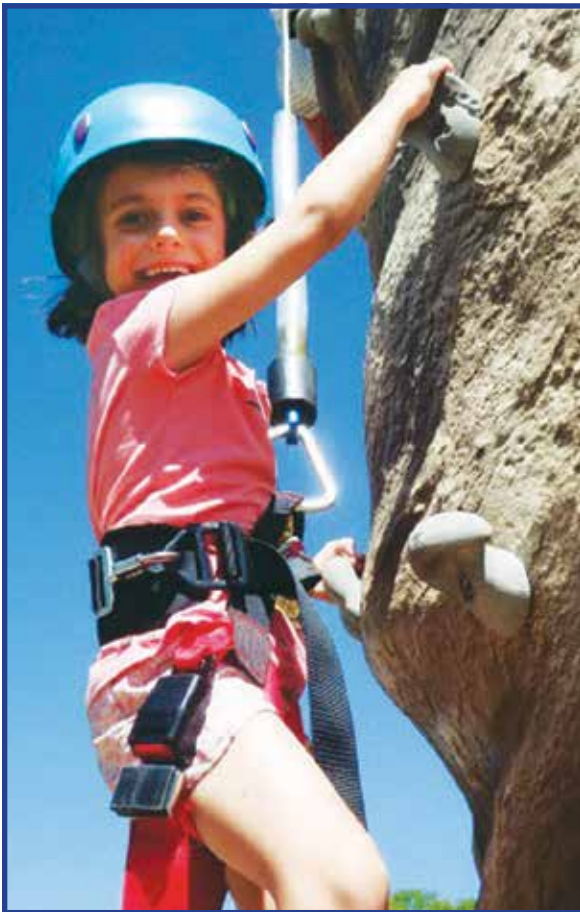
If we want to promote better policing and ensure that our public safety departments respond effectively to community needs, our departments need to look like the community. Data compiled by the National Center for Women and Policing indicates that women are less likely to respond impulsively or use excessive force or deadly force than their male counterparts, despite encountering similar levels of danger. That means a happier public and fewer lawsuits and fewer \$280,000 settlements. “Recruiting & Retaining Women—A Self-Assessment Guide for Law Enforcement” is a manual published by that organization.³

One seasoned officer reflects on her years of service, including multiple promotions, and says, “I went through it [gender bias] my entire career. If I had my exact same personality and I was male, I would be executive staff.” Diversity hiring fairs will not succeed in bringing more women into a field that remains stuck in outdated and sexist notions.

¹ <https://kdvr.com/news/problem-solvers/want-to-reform-police-departments-in-metro-denver-experts-say-hire-more-women/>

² <https://www.denverpost.com/2020/03/20/denver-police-gender-discrimination-complaint/>

³ <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/bja/185235.pdf>



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How is Our Mental Health after a Ye

By Mary Jo Brooks

Sixteen-year-old Kate Sun said she'd always been a happy, active kid. A junior at George Washington High School, she played four sports and had a weekend job. But when the pandemic hit, all of that went away. "I couldn't see my friends. I was completely isolated. The pandemic has been very hard on me."

In talking with friends on social media, she quickly realized she wasn't the only one struggling with mental health issues, so she

"I see so much depression and anxiety in high school juniors and seniors. These are the years they looked forward to—this magical time of life. Instead, they are working through grief and loss. It's important to allow them time to grieve."

Zaneta Evans,
Mental Health Center of Denver

decided to do a research project polling other students. The results? Eighty-eight percent of the high schoolers said they felt loneliness some or all of the time and 85-percent said they felt sadness some or all of the time. "The results didn't surprise me. Everyone I talk to is hanging on by a thread waiting for this to be over," said Sun.

The results also don't surprise mental health professionals in Denver, who have seen a large spike in children and adolescents reaching out for help. Referrals to the school-based team at the Mental Health Center of

Denver (MHCD) have more than doubled.

Program manager Zaneta Evans sees children as young as five years old at MHCD's Dahlia Campus and at the Crisis Center on Colfax. "Young children are struggling with isolation but they don't know how to express it, so parents think their children are acting out," said Evans. "Teens feel like they're alone on an island. They wonder why they feel anxious or don't have any energy or interest in doing things they used to love."

While the Crisis Center has offered in-person counseling throughout the pandemic, many of its other centers have used telehealth communication, which presents its own challenges. "Some families don't have access to computers or reliable internet, and when you're talking to children or teens at home, you don't know how much

"The loss of so-called water cooler conversations—with co-workers, at the grocery store, with neighbors—those things contribute to our well-being and when they're removed from us, there's a real sense of loss and isolation."

Randi Smith, psychologist

privacy they have—whether a parent is within earshot," said Evans.

During this pandemic, MHCD has tried some innovative ways to help children and teens—sending art therapy kits to families and using the Minecraft computer game to help kids talk

about their feelings. MHCD is also setting up a telehealth kiosk at Academy 360 Elementary School in Montbello for families which don't have computer access.

Park Hill therapist and Metropolitan State University professor Randi Smith says that in addition to children and youth, the parents of young children are also reporting increased levels of anxiety and depression as they juggle jobs and childcare duties. "It's such a challenging time. A lot of people that I see say 'What's wrong with me? Why am I not coping better with this? I haven't lost my job, I haven't lost a loved one. So why am I so

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Year-long Pandemic?

affected?” Smith says it can be difficult to determine when to seek professional help, but anyone who is feeling hopeless or having suicidal thoughts should immediately reach out.

Smith is also seeing an increase in couples seeking marriage counseling. “The pandemic has forced couples to spend much more time together than usual and all the minor irritations pile up.” Although she normally prefers in-person counseling to telehealth, she has noticed that with marriage counseling, having both partners on separate screens—even in the same house—can foster better dialogue. “They’re more polite. I’ve seen some couples who have made much more progress because it’s brought down the level of hostility when they’re not next to each other.”

Smith thinks that although cases of Covid-19 have been declining, the mental health crisis is far from over. Vincent Atchity, president and CEO of the advocacy group Mental Health Colorado, goes one step further. He thinks the mental health crisis will get much worse before it gets better. He’s especially worried about what will happen to students next fall when they return to school. “We’ll have a great disparity between kids who have managed

to do okay and kids who have been flailing because they don’t have stability in their homelife. Those kids will be thrown together and expected to meet the same kind of performance metrics.” His organization has been supportive of an effort making its way through the state legislature to scale back standardized testing to give both teachers and students some time to recover from the education inequities caused by the pandemic.

Atchity says he also applauds an effort by state representative Dafna Michaelson Jenet (D-Commerce City) to provide all school children in Colorado with an optional mental health screening before school starts in the fall, but he worries there won’t be enough places to refer students to get help. “We’ve got massive issues when it comes to access to care. Last

year, Colorado ranked 47th for access to mental health care. We just don’t have the capacity to meet that need, so I’m very worried about what schools will be facing.”

If there’s a silver lining to all of this, Atchity says that the pandemic has finally gotten more

people talking about mental health issues in ways they never have before. He hopes that will eventually lead to additional resources to meet the spiraling demand.

“Kids who haven’t had good support systems at home during the pandemic are going to come back to school and fall behind in a dramatic way and potentially cycle into increased insecurity, generalized despair, and anxiety about their prospects.”

Vincent Atchity,
Mental Health Colorado



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Photos for Front Porch by Steve Larson

Where Baseball Hits the Tracks: Two Museums Make a Connection

By Ken Lutes

Baseball and trains have a shared history in the U.S. From the early days of baseball until the 1950s, baseball teams traveled by train and many teams were named for train lines.

A collaborative presentation of the National Ballpark Museum and the Forney Museum of Transportation, “Where Baseball Hits the Tracks” treated about 30 visitors to some entertaining history about America’s pastime.

Colorado Springs sports historian and author Roger P. Hadix wore a replica uniform of the 1882 Denver & Rio Grande Reds baseball team, a team comprised of D&RG employees that played in Colorado Springs. This upcoming



Roger Hadix sports a vintage baseball uniform and handlebar moustache, fashionably worn by 1880s players.

season will mark his 27th season with the organization. His vintage team plays by the rules of 1864, when teams played barehanded, and a ball could be caught on one bounce for an out.

Hadix spoke of a time in 1888 when Albert Spalding took his Chicago White Stockings and an all-star team to Denver for two matches then rode the D&RG to Colorado Springs. Both teams played poorly and left after six innings—with all the gate receipts! “Colorado Springs felt cheated and telegraphed the next town in Utah and told them to watch out for those charlatans.”

Paul Caputo, deputy director of the National Association for Interpretation based in Fort Collins, gave a talk on



An expert on names of baseball’s minor league team names, Paul Caputo acknowledges an audi-

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Paul Caputo expounds on his theory that “you can tell the story of the United States by understanding where minor league baseball teams got their nicknames,” many of which are based on the railroad industry.



ence member who has attended many of those teams’ games.



Former Colorado Rockies pitcher Mark Knudson explains, “Major league players still congregate for card games, as they did on the trains. That camaraderie was born on the train, which became an extension of the club house, where team bonding happened.”

the nicknames of minor-league baseball teams. He told of the Bowling Green Hot Rods, who play in Bowling Green, Kentucky, where Chevrolets are manufactured, and who have the alternate nickname of Sinkholes; a sinkhole there once “swallowed up 14 Corvettes.”

Caputo related how the Rocky Mountain Vibes in Colorado Springs got their name. A name-the-team contest resulted in the Rocky Mountain Happy Campers, but three weeks before they were due to unveil their logo, the president of minor league baseball learned of a nearby marijuana dispensary called the Rocky Mountain Happy Campers, and the team could not use that name.

“But we can’t tell the history of the United States without trains,” Caputo said, and mentioned 11 minor-league

teams with train-based logos, including the Bakersfield Train Robbers, the Omaha Golden Spikes—named for the final, golden spike that joined two railroads in Utah, thereby forming the Transcontinental Railway—and the Denver Zephyrs. “The word ‘zephyr’ means ‘gentle westerly wind,’ but the Denver Zephyrs team was named for the passenger train that traveled from Denver to Chicago from 1936 to 1973.”

Speaker Mark Knudson is a right-handed pitcher who helped the Denver Zephyrs win the American Association championship in 1991 and was the first hometown product to play with the Colorado Rockies in their 1993 inaugural year.

“I sold tickets in the parking lot at

Mile High Stadium when I was in high school,” Knudson said. “I was at the game on July 4, 1982 when the Denver Bears drew 65,666 for the annual Fireworks Game, a minor-league record for a single game.” The Denver Bears changed their name to the Denver Zephyrs in 1984, after nearly 30 years as the Bears. “Playing for the Zephyrs was a thrill for me. I’d grown up sitting in the stands and then had the chance to play on the field, knowing that it was just a matter of time before Denver would become a major-league city.”

Rail routes began giving way to air routes by the mid-1950s. By the time the renamed Los Angeles Dodgers and San Francisco Giants played their first games on the West Coast in 1958, traveling by air had become more practical.

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Remembering Denver’s Chinatown in the Midst of Renewed Anti-Asian Hate

On March 19, the Asian Chamber of Commerce and Councilwoman, Jamie Torres, hosted a press conference attended by Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) leaders, other community leaders, and Mayor Hancock to make a collective statement of condemnation of Anti-Asian violence. Gil Asakawa was one of the AAPI speakers.

By Gil Asakawa

Hate crimes against Asians are on the rise. Again. But this time, there’s a difference from last year’s wave of hate: The “mainstream” media, from newspapers to television news, has been reporting on the spike.

Hate crimes against Asians in America are nothing new, and certainly the numbers became noteworthy with the coronavirus pandemic and political leaders like the former president calling it the “China Virus” or “Kung Flu.” The media covered some stories last year, but didn’t fully treat the outbreak of racism as a tragic side-effect of the coronavirus.

The difference now, a year after the pandemic began, is the ferociousness of the attacks, how elderly Asians have been targeted, and the fact that more Asians and Asian Americans are willing to speak out about their experiences. There’s been a year of consciousness-raising and urging our community members to call out incidents. Before, it was difficult to get even young Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) to report to law enforcement; now it seems like more of us are willing to be on the record with cops and journalists. That’s good.

Amidst this wave of attacks, a group of Asian Americans in Denver calling ourselves the Re-envisioning Denver’s Historic Chinatown Project has been working to remind people that the level of hate against Asians existed even in the earliest days of Asian immigration to this country.

On October 31, 1880, there was an anti-Chinese race riot in Denver that left businesses and residences destroyed in Denver’s now-forgotten Chinatown district. One man, Look Young, was beaten to death and then hanged from a lamppost, and many others were injured. None of the over \$50,000 of damage and property was reimbursed.

The riot was sparked by a bar fight in a pool hall between two Chinese men and four white men. The fight poured into the streets and alleys of downtown Denver; within a couple of hours, thousands of white folks stormed through the eth-

nic enclave—in what’s today called LoDo—busting in windows and chasing the Chinese out.

This race riot was used as an example of why Chinese should no longer be allowed to come to America. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, to this day the only law barring immigration to the U.S. by a population’s country of origin. (The legislation remained on the books until 1943.)

But the riot didn’t completely rid Denver of what had been a thriving Chinatown district where Chinese people lived, worked, and established a cultural hub. Even with Chinese immigration closed off, Denver’s early Chinatown was part of Colorado’s ethnic mix into the late 1800s.

By then, the Japanese had been invited as the next wave of cheap immigrant labor from Asia. Like the Chinese (and the Black and Latinx communities), the Japanese settled in certain parts of town because of “redlining” laws that controlled who could live where. The Japanese took over part of what had been Chinatown and then spread out for blocks, where they operated dozens of businesses in the post-WWII years along a stretch of Larimer Street.

A small plaque attached to the wall of a building kitty-corner from Coors Field at the bustling intersection of 20th and Blake Streets is the only reminder of the Chinatown district. The plaque is part of a “Lower Downtown Walking Tour” and is titled “Hop Alley/Chinese Riot of 1880.” It describes the Chinese district of the time, but focuses on the opium dens and the negative “hop alley” reputation. It describes the fight that started the riot and notes that “one Chinese man lost his life” without mentioning his name, but then goes on to name the white people who saved fleeing Chinese by letting them into their businesses, includ-



This illustration of Denver’s anti-Chinese race riot on Oct. 31, 1880 was drawn by N.B. Wilkens and published in Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, Nov. 20, 1880.

ing a whorehouse madam.

I applaud that white people rescued some Chinese, but the description strikes me as a classic example of history written from a white-centered perspective, emphasizing the white saviors over the victims. The title should not focus on “Hop Alley” and should make clear at a glance that it was an anti-Chinese riot.

The Denver Asian American Pacific Islander Commission (DAAPIC, of which I was a member until December) agreed to replace this plaque with a more accurate plaque that would commemorate the historic Chinatown district and note the anti-Chinese race riot. I helped draft a proclamation that was made by Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock last year for the 140th anniversary of the riot on October 31, 2020.

I’m working with a group whose immediate goal is to replace the plaque—we already have some funding from Molson Coors. And we have the support of Lower Downtown Denver’s business organization to find artists to paint a mural (or murals) on the large wall of the building where the plaque is mounted, though we’ll need to raise funds to get all this done.

We also want to eventually place other markers to note Chinatown locations (including where Luck Young was killed), install interactive kiosks to educate people, and, years down the line, open an Asian museum —maybe in the building that had been a Chinese community center! We also hope to launch annual Lunar New Year celebrations in the district. Eventually, we hope some Asian-owned businesses will return to LoDo. As buildings are vacated, wouldn’t it be cool to have some Asian restaurants and shops?

This is a long-term project. Nothing will change overnight, except hopefully the plaque. But it’s heartening to be involved in a project like this that reflects and remembers the hardships that Asians faced a century and a half ago, and to use that memory as one remedy for fighting the hatred that we still face today.

Gil Asakawa is a journalist, cultural consultant, and speaker. He has written “Being Japanese American” (Stone Bridge Press, second edition 2014) and is working on “Tabemasho! Let’s Eat!” a history of Japanese food in America, for 2022 publication. He blogs at www.nikkeiview.com

On the 140th anniversary of the race riot of 1880, the City celebrated the resilient and thriving Chinese community that exists in Denver today. On October 31, 2020, Mayor Michael Hancock proclaimed that date to be known as Denver’s Chinatown Commemoration Day.



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What a year it has been—certainly in every aspect of life, but for our purposes here, the film industry. When the pandemic hit and everything closed down, the 2020 Oscars had just taken place. Soon after, theaters closed

a group that eschews the modern conveniences to live a life on the road. They live mostly alone, but they also congregate at RV parks and intermittently work together. McDormand, fantastic as usual, is riveting and understated as the drama plays out on her

worn and weathered face. The film reminds of Neorealism, the great Italian movement that was the opposite of Hollywood cinema. And it may take the biggest prize given out by Hollywood.

Sound of Metal (Amazon)

This is a touching and emotional film from relative newcomer Darius Marder. It tells the story of rock drummer Ruben (a wonderful & riveting Riz Ahmed) who suddenly loses his hearing. Frantic and obsessed with raising the money he needs for cochlear implants and getting back to his former life with girlfriend and lead singer Lou (Olivia Cooke), he winds up at a home for the deaf run by the avuncular Joe (Paul Raci). Initially reticent, he soon learns sign language, teaches drums to deaf children, and befriends the other residents. Yet he still holds onto his dream, sells his motor home, and eventually has the surgery.

This use of film sound is simple and ingenious, and we connect to character through that underused aspect of the art form. Film is as much an auditory experience as it is visual. This film gives us that gift.

Mank (Netflix)

Hollywood loves a film about film, and this telling of the writing of *Citizen Kane* fits the bill. Shot in black and white and starring Gary Oldman as mercurial writer Herman J. Mankiewicz, it is at once a love poem to Hol-

lywood while shining a spotlight on the patriarchy therein. Mankiewicz was a successful Hollywood writer when he was tapped by wunderkind Orson Welles to write what many considered the greatest film ever made. The film was almost destroyed before it was released, however, when the real-life subject of the film, William Randolph Hearst, offered to buy it and kill it. Luckily for us, RKO Pictures declined.

While the film is very much candy for cinephiles, I found it lacking in inspiration. The irony here is obvious—*Citizen Kane* was one of the most inspired films of all time, from script to directing to acting to costuming to editing. Yet for me, *Mank* falls a bit flat.

The Trial of the Chicago Seven (Netflix)

This sprawling and energetic film written and directed by Aaron Sorkin (*The West Wing*) covers the trial of the infamous titular group. What could be just another courtroom drama is juiced by the snappy writing, the relentless pace of the editing, and a standout

Minari (VOD)

Imagine the pitch for this screenplay: “A young Korean family moves to rural Arkansas because the father wishes to start a farm while the mother goes to work in a chicken sexing plant. And, oh yeah, a wacky grandmother moves into their trailer with



and remained so through the fall, when most Oscar candidates are released.

So we all watched from home as online platforms had our full attention. Yet, in the midst of this, we also gained a better appreciation for the importance of art, and especially, film. Movies will go on, but how we watch them may be permanently changed. The Oscars this year reflect this, with two films each from Netflix and Amazon. On the positive side, this year’s group is one of the most diverse ever, including more nods for women and people of color than ever before. Let’s hope that trend continues as well. And the Oscar goes to...

Nomadland (Hulu)

Since its debut at film festivals last fall, this earnest and touching film, directed by Chloé Zhao, has been the Oscar favorite. It stars the wonderful Frances McDormand as a 60-something woman who wanders around the American west/southwest, living out of her van, and working jobs from town to town. She is part of an ever-growing community of nomads around the U.S.,



performance from Sasha Baron Cohen as Abbie Hoffman. It also has a lot to say about democracy, and what has/has not transpired since that trial in the wake of the 1968 Democratic National Convention. As usual, a film about the past tells us more about today than it does the time period it covers. I could see this film winning the big one.

them.” Somehow this film made it to the screen, and the finished product is heartfelt and emotional, even poetic at times. In a world where violence against Asian-Americans is omnipresent, this movie humanizes a group that has been demonized since the mid-1800s. It is based on a semi-autobiographical story from writer/director Lee Isaac Chung, and the personal touches of the script and on the screen are evident. A great supporting performance from Youn Yuh-jung as the grandmother breathes life into the film at the midway point. She may be receiving an award on Oscar night.

One Night in Miami (Amazon)

See my 3/21 review online at the Indie Prof archives of The Front Porch: <https://frontporchne.com/category/indie-prof/>

Promising Young Woman (VOD)

See my review from 1/21 in the archives listed above.

The Father and Judas and the Black Messiah

Presently only in theaters, and I am not quite ready for that yet.

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

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Child Tax Credit Is a Reality; Bennet's Work Made it Happen



Colorado Senator Michael Bennet was interviewed on national television numerous times in the days after the American Rescue Act was signed. The child tax credits in the Act are based on the American Family Act that Bennet and Sen. Sherrod Brown first introduced in the Senate in 2017.

By Carol Roberts
During the Democratic primary, Sen. Bennet ran on his American Family Act, which was subsequently endorsed by the Biden-Harris campaign and now has been included in the American Rescue Act.
“In a way, this is my dream come

true,” he says. It’s an idea he’s been working on for several years. Under the American Rescue Act, the child tax credit is expanded from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for children ages 6 and 17, and \$3,600 for children 5 and younger. For the first time in the U.S., families will qualify to receive the child tax credit

as a monthly stipend. These monthly payments will provide up to \$300 per child from July to year end, and the remainder of the credit can be claimed on 2021 tax returns.
This increased child tax credit that will reduce child poverty in the U.S. by 50%, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, has only been approved for one year; Bennet is already at work to get it extended. Given the polling on this provision of the bill when it was passed (95% of Democrats support the bill, 73% of Republicans support this provision), Bennet says, “I think we are in an incredibly good place to make an argument about why we should make it permanent.”

NE Students Get Academic Recognition in Nat’l Programs

By Carol Roberts

A total of 34 students in six NE Denver High Schools were recognized in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program or the National Merit Scholarship Program.
The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964 by executive order of the president to recognize some of our nation’s most distinguished graduating seniors for their accomplishments in academics, leadership, and service to school and community. It was subsequently expanded to include the arts and career and technical fields. Of the nearly 3.6 million students expected to graduate in 2021,

We were able to track down a few of these academic all-stars to learn what they want to study in college.



Julia Rehring, Presidential Scholar Candidate & National Merit Finalist, Northfield HS, applied/computational mathematics and computer science.

Edwin Wojcik, National Merit Finalist, DSST Conservatory Green, molecular biology.



Guinevere Draut, Presidential Scholar Candidate, Denver School of the Arts, mathematics, music, and cognitive science or astronomy.

4,500 candidates were selected. Approximately 600 semifinalists are currently being selected, with 121 finalists to be announced in April, plus an additional 20 in the Arts and 20 in Career and Technical Education.



Benjamin Parent, Presidential Scholar Candidate, GW HS, mechanical engineering.

The private non-profit “National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) was established in 1955—a time in which there was concern that the United States was lagging behind in the Cold War scientific race, but the public was indifferent to rewarding intellectual accomplishment. NMSC was created to identify and honor scholastically talented American youth and to encourage them to develop their abilities to the fullest” (nationalmerit.org). Of the 1.5 million entrants to the National Merit Scholarship program, 15,000 advance to finalist and approximately 7,600 finalists win merit scholarships based on their academic record, the school’s curriculum and grading system, PSAT score, the high school official’s recommendation, and the student’s activities, leadership and essay.

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...NE News Updates



By Carol Roberts

1 Status Update: Central Park Development

Central Park is in its 21st year of the 25-year Tax Increment Financing being used to build out the neighborhood. Park Creek Metro District's (PCMD) annual report submitted Sept. 1, 2020 shows total debt of \$226,191,750, the last of which will be paid off December 1, 2051. The special district tax in Central Park will remain at approximately its current level until the final debt is paid off. The administrative and overhead costs of Westerly Creek Metro District (WCMD) and PCMD are approximately 3% with 97% going to debt service for infrastructure.

PCMD anticipates that all regional and local infrastructure will be completed by 2025. About 10% (310 acres) are still under development or remain to be developed—122 acres are residential for sale and the rest are rental or commercial uses. A Q&A with more detail, along with supporting documents and an explanation of Central Park's two metro districts, is posted at FrontPorchNE.com with this article.

2 Neighborhood Saddened by Death of Central Park Woman

Neighbors passing the home of Jasmin Cigarroa, 24, in the 7800 block of E. 28th Ave. didn't have to know her to know she was loved. The entrance to her home overflowed with candles and flowers and the neighborhood was plastered with posters that she was missing.



According to multiple news reports, she went missing on March 10 and her body was found March 12 in rural Adams County. On March 19, Cigarroa's husband was charged with first-degree murder.

3 Credit Union of Colorado to Build Headquarters in Central Park

Credit Union of Colorado plans to build a new headquarters at 40th and Central Park Boulevard, near I-70 and the Central Park A line Station. The

Axton Ranch Mountain Park is the first new mountain park in Denver's system since Conifer's James Q. Newton Park in 1939. It consists of 450 acres near Golden Gate Canyon and is less than an hour's drive from Denver.



Photos for mountain park, Valor apartment and public restroom courtesy of City of Denver

Credit Union, with more than 140,000 members throughout Colorado, is expected to open in late 2022. It will be a full-service branch with drive-up and ATM services. The building will be energy efficient and follow environmental construction practices.

4 72 Income-Qualified Units Coming on Colfax

On March 8, City Council approved a series of contracts totaling \$15,642,843 to provide much needed housing, shelter and services for people experiencing or transitioning out of homelessness, including some of the first expenditures from the new Homelessness Resolution Fund approved by Denver voters last November. One of the contracts, Valor



Valor on the Fax

on the Fax, is a 72-unit affordable housing development that may begin construction as early as this month at 7900 E. Colfax Ave. It will offer supportive housing to individuals transitioning from homelessness, with a focus on residents who have suffered from a brain injury. The apartments will be income restricted to households earning up to 30 percent of the area median income.

City Update

5 Denver Acquires New Mountain Park

On March 1, the City Council approved adding Axton Ranch Mountain Park to the City's Mountain Park System. The land was donated to Denver by the Axton family after four generations of operating the land as a cattle ranch since 1954. With conifer and aspen stands, meadows, ponds, a

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An advertisement for 2021 Summer Camps at ÜG (Übergrippen). It features a photograph of a child climbing a colorful indoor climbing wall. Below the photo are several logos for partner organizations: UberOlympics, ÜberWarrior, 1 SUMMIT, Eco Grippen, SNOWRECKED, and ÜG SUPERHEROES. The text reads: "2021 SUMMER CAMPS AT ÜG", "Registration is now open!", "Sign up online or at the front desk | www.ugclimbing.com/camps", "6 unique camps for kids ages 7-13 years old!", and "Email camps@ugclimbing.com for more info." The ÜG logo and "INDOOR CLIMBING CRAG" are at the bottom right.



A downtown public bathroom will open this spring on Champa St. near the 16th Street Mall.

small creek and a trail constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps, it is located near 14,000 acres of adjoining public land and is adjacent to the Roosevelt National Forest and near the Arapahoe National Forest, Golden Gate Canyon State Park and Jefferson County Open Space. A plan will be developed for the park's long-term vision, including environmental education and programming opportunities for adults and children.

6 New Public Bathroom Being Installed Downtown

The new public restrooms on Champa (one standard, one ADA compliant) just off 16th St. are anticipated to be available for public use this spring after utility connections are completed. An attendant will be present during operational hours and the restrooms will have touchless entrances, hand sanitizer stations and space to queue. The new facility, measuring approximately 18' x 7.5' is installed in what was previously a parking area.

An advertisement for SIXstringsTWELVE GUITAR STUDIO. It features a stylized guitar graphic on the left. The text includes: "SIXstringsTWELVE GUITAR STUDIO", "GUITAR LESSONS", a list of benefits: "Acoustic and electric", "Strengthen memory, focus, creativity", "Learn how to listen, practice, play", and "Learn how to play your favorite songs", and contact information: "In Person and Online Lessons" and "Jeff 303.909.8016".

An advertisement for FANTASTIC SAM'S CUT & COLOR. It features a close-up photograph of a woman with short, blonde hair. The text includes: "TIME TO CUT LOOSE", "FANTASTIC SAM'S CUT & COLOR", "29th Ave. Town Center", "7341 E 29th Ave, Denver 80238", "303-316-7701", "FANTASTIC SAM'S", "7341 E 29th Ave, Denver 80238", "Valid at this location only.", "Not valid with any other offers. WS", and a small logo for "M.L.K. Jr Blvd" and "E. 29th Ave".



Photos for Front Porch by Steve Larson

The Electric Vehicle Revolution Is Here

61st and Peña Station (left) and the Central Park Station are the only RTD stations with electric vehicle chargers, though RTD has designed several Park-n-Ride locations that are EV ready (conduit has been placed or space is available for conduit in the future). Central Park Station is RTD's pilot program for EV technology and has the capacity to expand from two to six chargers there. Before the pandemic RTD was providing about 1,000 charging sessions per year. During the pandemic year that fell to 250.

credits, gas savings, and fewer maintenance costs, it feels like the right time." He calls range-anxiety more "mental than a real-world problem." And says, "For 98 percent of your trips, there is no worry, but if you want to go up to the mountains in Colorado or on a road trip somewhere, you have to make sure there are enough chargers on the way, so you don't get stranded. You have to do a little more research to make sure you can make it. I don't think the tipping point [for most people] isn't about the cars; it's about the chargers." Revare's tipping point was "doing right" by his almost-2-year-old daughter, Hema. He says, "One day the next generation will judge us on what we did to combat climate change." Going electric will be his answer.

For short trips, e-bike users express just as much enthusiasm about their vehicle as EV drivers. Central Park resident Shalon Bowens rides her new, tomato-red e-bike everywhere—to King Soopers and to her job as a Program Manager at It Takes a Village, a sexual health clinic. Bowens, who's lost 70 pounds since adopting her e-bike last year, says it isn't just about getting from point A to point B.

Riding a bike has changed her whole perspective. "I pull over and see things now. I notice things I've never noticed before." It's that refreshing experience that helps fuel her for tough days at the office, helps keep her focused on the hope instead of the hardships. "There's so much anxiety right now, people worried about making rent, ending up homeless. Riding my e-bike takes all that away because I'm free."

Revare says e-bikes "are just flat-out fun to ride," and the e-bike turned out to be very cost-effective for his family when they decided they could downsize to one car.

Bowens received her free e-bike through a pilot program called Can Do Colorado Community Challenge. The program, which awarded 13 e-bikes to low-income essential workers, was part an initiative to help Coloradans return to work post-COVID-shutdown, as well as part of Colorado's ambitious plan to combat climate change. Will Toor, the Director of the Colorado Energy Office, said in a Colorado Public Radio article that the second e-bike giveaway, which will also include the City of Denver and the Regional Air Quality Council, will award more than a 100 new e-bikes. "I think there is significant potential over time for e-bikes to play a really important role in replacing a lot of those short-to-medium distance automobile trips," he said. And e-bikes are only a small part of the going green equation.

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By Tracy Wolfer Osborne

Until recently, most Americans seemed to think of electric vehicles (EVs) as something out there in the future. But as sports fans watched Will Ferrell attempt a Norway trip to see all the EVs in that country, the point of the Super Bowl ad was clear—EVs are not futurist anymore, they're everyday American cars. "Customers who had never considered buying an EV, after driving one as a loaner during the repair of their gas-powered vehicle, are suddenly talking about getting an EV for their next vehicle," says General Manager Matt Marr at Fowler Chevy.

Central Park resident and Leaf-owner, Mark Mehringer, who hosted an EV forum as part of Central Park United Neighbors' (CPUN's) sustainability program, says the benefits of owning an EV far outweigh the drawbacks—they're cleaner, quieter, overall cheaper, and they offer quick acceleration. An additional benefit in cold weather, he adds, is that the electric heater warms up much faster than a gas engine heater—and has no emissions when you have to sit and wait in your car and need the heater on.

Brad Revare, also a Central Park resident, says sticker shock and range anxiety aren't the obstacles they used to be. He's in line to buy Volkswagen's SUV, the ID.4 which starts at \$39,995. He calls that a bargain considering Tesla's comparable model is north of \$80k. "It's the most price-accessible electric SUV that's out there right now," says Revare. "And when you factor in the federal and state tax



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Brad Revare, pictured with 2-year-old Hema, appreciates being able to go farther and faster, particularly uphill, without getting hot and sweaty (especially when riding to work). And, he says, “It’s just flat out fun to ride.” With the e-bike, his family downsized to one car, saving money and lowering their carbon footprint.

to produce a luxury electric sports car, the electric vehicle (EV) industry has both accelerated—there are 27 new EVs on the market today—and remained idle. EVs account for only two percent of vehicles sold in the U.S. But new legislation may be just the fuel to finally push the EV revolution into overdrive. President Biden, signed an executive order to electrify all 645,047 vehicles in the federal fleet, making the U.S. government the auto industry’s top consumer.

The federal government isn’t the only one pushing the EV revolution. Forty-five states and the District of Columbia provide incentives for certain EVs including: tax credits and rebates, exemptions from emissions testing, and utility-rate reductions. California, New Jersey, and Massachusetts have made it illegal to sell new gas-powered vehicles after 2035.

Colorado’s current EV plan for a large-scale transition of Colorado’s transportation system to zero emission vehicles relies on Xcel’s Transportation Electrification Plan (TEP). Xcel’s TEP programs are designed to help customers overcome cost barriers

to EV adoption, to increase awareness of EVs and their benefits, and to encourage vehicle charging during low-cost times. The City and County of Denver—also reliant on TEP—aims for an 80 percent reduction

in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 with a 100 percent of light-duty vehicles being electric that same year.

“20 or 30 years from now, Americans’ mass adoption of electric vehicles will seem

like something that was always going to happen. I can tell you, from where I’m sitting, it’s never felt inevitable before. It feels inevitable now,” writes Robinson Meyer in a February 7 article in *The Atlantic*.



Coming in the future?

In August 2017, then-RTD General Manager Dave Genova (with mike) and the manufacturer of the EZ10 driverless vehicle offered demonstration rides to the public in the Pepsi Center parking lot.

In January 2019, RTD launched a six-month demonstration project with an autonomous vehicle (AV) shuttle at the 61st and Peña commuter rail station. The project’s main goal was to assess the viability of autonomous services in providing first and last mile connections to and from transit. It was the first on-road deployment of an AV shuttle in Denver or in Colorado.

Some service disruptions did occur due to snow and heavy rain, and his first generation vehicle lacked of heating and had a limited battery range, issues addressed in subsequent generations of the vehicle.

RTD is in the early stages of potential automated shuttle pilot projects in two locations: the Denver Technology Center and the Colorado School of Mines. No further info is available at this time.

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