

Front Porch

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

DENVER, COLORADO

NORTHEAST DENVER

MARCH 2024



Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

Third Graders 'Take a Stand' to Celebrate Black History Month

Terri Gentry, engagement manager for Black communities at History Colorado Center and docent with the Black American West Museum & Heritage Center, led Swigert third graders on a tour of Denver's Five Points historic cultural district in February as part of the students' Black history studies.

Third graders at Swigert International School celebrated February as Black History Month by digging into Denver's own Black history and social justice issues. In addition to touring the neighborhood of Five Points, once dubbed the "Harlem of the West," students studied African American leaders, composed "take a stand" opinion pieces, wrote poetry inspired by Black history, learned a dance popularized by the Great Migration, and created art in the style of the Harlem Renaissance. *Story by Sarah Huber on page 14.*



Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

Legislature Considers Racial Equity Study Bill

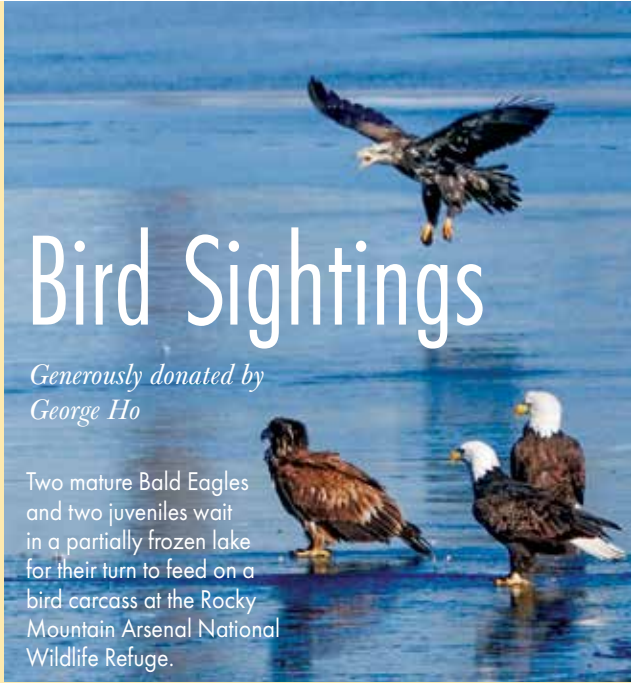
Audience members rose to applaud Sheriece Hurd following her emotional testimony in a public hearing before the Congressional Black Caucus at the Colorado State Capitol. Describing how she had been wrongfully incarcerated and mistreated by the justice system, she spoke in strong support of proposed legislation to study systemic racism in Colorado. *Story by Mary Jo Brooks starts on page 8.*



Photo from the movie Oppenheimer

Annual Oscar Review

The movie *Oppenheimer*, about the Manhattan Project during World War II, received 13 nominations for an Academy Award, including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Actor in a leading role for Cillian Murphy (above). The awards ceremony will be broadcast on March 10. *Story on page 11 by Indie Prof.*



Bird Sightings

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Two mature Bald Eagles and two juveniles wait in a partially frozen lake for their turn to feed on a bird carcass at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.

Bald Eagle's

The bald eagle is America's national bird. Its main diet consists of fish—and it is a very skilled fisherman. Thus, its typical habitat always includes a body of water with fish.

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A splash of water after a successful strike.



The eagle remains dry and flies off with a fish secure in its talons.



At a nearby perch, the eagle dines on its prey.

However, it is also a clever scavenger that likes to steal food from others whenever it can.
Bald eagles fly over water and use their keen eyesight to spot fish near the

water's surface, then they descend and snatch the fish out of the water with their powerful talons.
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coming down from the north. In partially frozen bodies of water, these opportunistic birds may hang around the edge of the ice to steal or share carrions with other predators or scavengers.

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Correction In last month's story "Indoor Lowry Golf Club Offers a Unique Experience," *Front Porch* mistakenly listed Augusta as one of the courses available to play at The Hangar Club. The newspaper regrets the error.

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Michelle Nguyen, operations manager, and chefs Erasmo (Ras) Casiano and Diego Coconati, own Lucina Eatery & Bar in Park Hill. Communication, creativity, and storytelling are key to the trio and staff.



Having a neighborhood restaurant was a goal—to create a space where Lucina Eatery & Bar could gain a regular following, where guests and staff would look forward to seeing each other.

Latin American Cuisine Takes a

By Courtney Drake-McDonough

For Erasmo (Ras) Casiano and Diego Coconati, owners of Lucina Eatery & Bar, the goal is to have diners leave happier than they came in. To do that, they put a premium on nurturing an attentive staff and serving food that is about more than just something to eat: it's about valuing the rich culinary cultures they grew up with.

Although the Park Hill restaurant has been wildly popular since it opened in 2022, the chefs were caught off guard last month when they learned they were semi-finalists for the prestigious James Beard Foundation award for Best Chef: Mountain (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY). Coconati thought such an accomplishment was unreachable. "I've been cooking for 27 years. I thought (a James Beard award) was for a different level of chef—something you look at and think 'It would be nice but impossible to be in that group,'" he says. "We need to make sure it wasn't a fluke and that we keep doing what we've been doing. It's pressure on us but it's great pressure."

Coconati, who grew up in Buenos Aires, Venezuela and Puerto Rico, and Casiano, a first generation Mexican American, met while in culinary school. In 2018, they started Create Cooking School that offered in-home dinners and catering, and then opened a physical space at Stanley Marketplace. (They recently re-branded as Create Kitchen & Bar to acknowledge the popular neighborhood bar side of the space and clarify that the school is for home cooks, not pros.) During the pandemic, the team offered virtual cooking classes and pop-up restaurant events, serving Italian, French, and Southern cuisine.

"One day, we did Latin American food, motivated by the food that we grew up with like tamales and pupusas, and wondered why there wasn't a restaurant that had all of this," says Casiano. "I always wanted a neighborhood spot because you have people who are always in the area that you get to know. If our doors are open and we're hospitable, we'll gain our own following because we want to see them and they want to see us."

They opened Lucina, named after Casiano's mother, and began serving Latin American food with Spanish influences, drawing from Indigenous foods and those that came after Columbus, paying respect to each different culture. Dishes include pozole, empanadas, ceviche, mussels with chorizo, and paella on Fridays and Saturdays.

Despite Coconati and Casiano both being chefs, the proverbial "too many cooks in the kitchen" isn't an issue. "We like to play around with making new flavors," says Coconati. "We do some research and do a dish from a specific country to show the respect to those ingredients. It's about completing a story of the dish, what country it comes from or why they do it that way."

Michelle Nguyen, who had been the first employee at the cooking school, now serves as operations manager for both Create and Lucina and is a co-owner of Lucina. The trio is now busy planning to open a third establishment called Xiquita in Uptown in late spring or early summer. Xiquita is a play on the word "chiquita," which is Casiano's father's term of endearment for his wife, Lucina. The restaurant will feature cuisine from various parts of Mexico, including Mexico City, Sonora, Oaxaca, and the Yucatan.

Calling it a deep dive into his culture, Casiano says guests will see someone making masa and housemade tortillas to order and will smell the influences of Mexico. "There are countless opportunities for dishes because our dining populace hasn't explored all of it yet and, honestly, as chefs, neither have we," he says.

Coconati feels Xiquita is a good move for the business, saying it's important to "ride the wave." "People like



Verdures, a popular menu item at Lucina, is a lively mixture of pumpkin in a sweet and spicy glaze topped with cheese and pumpkin seeds. Photo courtesy of Casey Wilson





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Deep Dive into Storytelling



A colorful wall mural is an example of décor reflecting Lucina’s owners’ mission to celebrate vibrant culinary cultures of Latin-American countries with Spanish influences, drawing on Indigenous traditions and post-Columbus adaptations.

what we’re doing so I think now is a good time to keep the momentum going.” Part of the team’s confidence in opening a new restaurant is due to the interest and loyalty from their staff. “We have continuous check-ins with our team asking what they want from us and telling them there’s a path to more if they’re interested,” says Nguyen, who offers a unique perspective, having been an employee before becoming an owner. “Ras and Diego have always kept me in conversations of what they were thinking.”

Conversations and storytelling are key to the team. “We don’t know a people or culture until we’ve sat around the dinner table with them,” says Casiano. He sees the restaurant dining table as an extension


of that. “We want people to be curious and ask ‘Where does this come from?’” says Casiano. “These are questions we love hearing and our staff is good at relaying the stories we’ve told them. And they tell their own, personal stories about the dish too. Food is storytelling. It ties the entire world together.”



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Mayor Mike Johnston and other mayors traveled to Washington D.C. in January to appeal for federal aid and expanded work authorizations for the thousands of migrants that have been arriving in the U.S.

By Mary Jo Brooks

It's been a challenging first six months in office for Mayor Mike Johnston as he launched an ambitious plan to end

homelessness, dealt with 40,000 migrants arriving in Denver, tackled rising crime rates, and struggled to find enough money in the budget to pay for it all.

Mayor Johnston Assesses Migrant

Nevertheless, in an interview with *Front Porch*, Johnston remained upbeat about where the city is headed. "Denver is a place where we just find a way to solve problems, so we will. We will figure it out. And we *are* figuring it out."

Migrant Crisis

One of the most complicated challenges has been the arrival of 40,000 migrants—largely from Venezuela—to the City in the past year. Per capita, that's more than any other city in the country. It is estimated that Denver will have to spend nearly \$180 million this year on housing, healthcare, education, transportation, and other costs associated with the migrant crisis. In January, Johnston traveled with other mayors to Washington, D.C. to ask for federal dollars

and increased work authorizations for the migrants. He was disappointed to receive just \$9 million, which will barely cover about three weeks of expenses.

Johnston blames the collapse of the bipartisan plan to reform immigration. "The federal legislation would have very easily solved this problem. It would have given us the resources we needed. It would have increased work authorizations so people could get to work and support themselves so we wouldn't need to spend tax dollars to support them."

Budget Cuts

He says that the inaction by Congress has forced him to announce a first round of city budget cuts. By reducing hours and services at the Denver Motor Vehicle Department and Parks and Recreation Centers, he says the City can save \$5 million. For the indefinite future, the Central Park Rec Center will be closed on Fridays, the Hiawatha Davis and MLK Centers will be closed on Sundays, and Lowry's Montclair Center will be closed on Mondays.

"The hard truth is that there are many more cuts to come," says Johnston. "This is maybe one-thirtieth of the cuts we'll have to make across the city. They'll be in all different departments in different places with different impacts, but they will not be easy decisions. They will not be fun and they will not be painless."

Johnston says the City will also have to cut back on the amount of services that can be offered to the migrants, but he is proud of how

so many Denver residents have come forward to help the newcomers. "Yesterday we had a legal clinic, and we had more than 200 volunteers from around the city. People who have taken days off work to come here and help translate or do legal applications or take care of people's kids while they're doing work. That is the spirit of Denver. People are pulling together."

And despite the overwhelming budget challenges facing the city, he is convinced that ultimately Denver will emerge a stronger city. "I think we'll look back 10-15 years from now and be proud that the city has responded to this cri-

"From what the White House has told us, this was potentially the largest single year decline of homelessness of any city they know of in America."

—Denver Mayor Mike Johnston

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Crisis, Budget Cuts, Homelessness Initiative

sis with dignity, with humanity, and with a response that I think befits the American spirit, and is one that we'll be proud of—even if it isn't easy."

House1000 Initiative

The other major challenge that Johnston has faced is keeping his campaign promise to move 1,000 people who were living in encampments on city streets into temporary housing by the end of 2023—a goal that he met in the final days of December. According to the City's dashboard that tracks the House1000 initiative, at press time 1,283 people had been moved into temporary or permanent housing, with only 26 people moving back onto the streets. Johnston is proud of that achievement. "From what the White House has told us, this was potentially the largest single year decline of homelessness of any city they know of in America."

One of the criticisms that Johnston has received from Northeast Denver residents is that the vast majority of these people are being sheltered in the Central Park neighborhood. According to the city's dashboard, 537 individuals are living in 2 converted hotels and a micro-community near I-70. Johnston says those sites were filled first because of the "unique opportunity" of available hotel stock near the site of the former Stapleton airport, but he said four other sites are operating and two more are about to open in other parts of the city.

Some residents contend that these Northeast shelters have led to increased crime and they point to a January Denver Police report showing Central Park had the highest rate of crime compared to any other neighborhood, with 399 incidents reported. The next highest neighborhood was Five Points with 346 incidents. Johnston says he wasn't aware of the report but stated that police patrols have been increased and that residents can call 3-1-1 anytime they are concerned about activity in the area. "We have a direct line that prioritizes any reporting that comes from anywhere in Northeast Denver around these sites." In addition, he says he personally drives by them "pretty regularly to check in and see how things are going and to talk to business leaders in the neighborhood."

Perhaps the biggest criticism of the House1000 plan is that it focuses too much on temporary shelter and not enough on finding long-term housing solutions. Johnston says finding affordable housing is his top priority and that his administration has already secured permanent housing for 500 people. Soon, he says, his administration will undertake a "comprehensive, even more ambitious plan

to build more units of permanently affordable housing. We will work to bring on 3,000 units this year, and that's not just for folks that are experiencing homelessness, that is for teachers, and nurses, and firefighters, and retail workers who serve the city and can't afford to live in the city."

Johnston says to achieve that goal his administration will have to build new units and convert some existing market-rate housing into affordable housing. "It is a very ambitious task. It's almost three times what the city has done before."



Photo courtesy of the Mayor's Office

Johnston, who is fluent in Spanish, listened to concerns from Venezuelan migrants at the city's welcoming center in north Denver.

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March 2024

Legislature Considers Racial Equity Study Bill

By Mary Jo Brooks

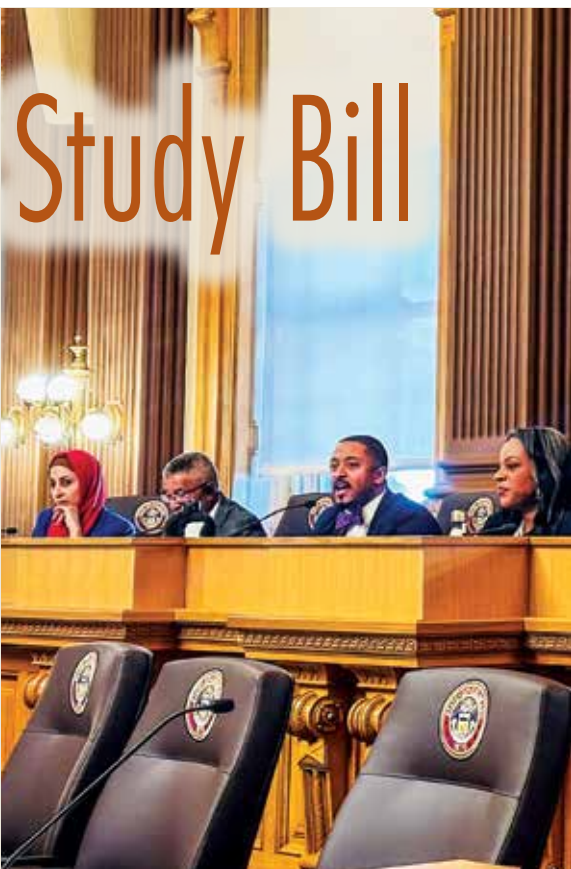
On the first day of February and the start of Black History Month, dozens of Black Coloradans went to the state capitol building to describe how racism and discrimination had impacted their lives. Sil Morgan-Smith talked about redlining by realtors and other forms of housing discrimination. Sheriece Hurd described how she was mistreated by the criminal justice system. Michael Atkins spoke about how

“While we’ve made steps to improve the lives of all people in Colorado, I know that we have much work to do.”

—State Senator James Coleman

even after 40 years of involvement with Denver Public Schools—first as a student, then janitor, then teacher, then principal, and now director of Black student assessment—he sees that the education system “still grapples with the persistent challenge of closing the access gaps for most of our Black students.” The public hearing was hosted by the Congressional Black Caucus to show support for a bill that supporters say will help uncover the systemic inequities that Black citizens

face. The “Racial Equity Study” bill would create an independent task force to study the lingering impacts from slavery, systemic racism, and the degree to which the state government perpetuates discrimination. “While we’ve made steps to improve the lives of all people in Colorado, I know that we have much work to do,” said Sen. James Coleman, one of the sponsors of the bill. “By focusing on healthcare, housing, education, the criminal justice system, and the economy, this study will provide crucial insights, allowing us to quantify and qualify the pervasive inequities that persist.” Although Colorado was not a slave state, the legislation notes that “The Ku Klux Klan wielded great influence and power in Denver and in state politics in the 1920s” which “transpired to policies, systems, and practices adopted at the state level.” The legislation goes on to describe how those systems led to racial inequities in homeownership, health outcomes, education, access to jobs, and the criminal justice system. Rep. Leslie Herod, another sponsor of the bill, highlighted that imbalance in the justice system when she spoke at the public hearing. “While Black Coloradans make up five percent of state residents, we constitute 17 percent of people in jail and 18 percent in prison. The criminal justice system has been set up to house Black people.” Herod praised members of the Black community who showed up to tell their stories and said the legislation was drafted in response to community concerns about why these negative trends hadn’t been reversed. The study will be conducted by History Colorado, the state’s historical society, in coordination with a Black equity steering committee, which will be made up of current and former lawmakers,



Members of the largest Congressional Black Caucus in Colorado history convened a public hearing about racial

community leaders, and other experts. It is expected to take two and a half years. In an interview with *Front Porch*, Herod pushed back when asked whether a study is really needed when so many statistics about racial disparities are already known. “Quite frankly, we haven’t had a historical study like this—sanctioned by the State, specifically looking at inequities created by government to Black people. And then looking at what those remedies should be.” She noted that over the years, the government has created some programs that tried to reverse the trends. “Some have had some success, and some of them had no success. But until we get at the root causes and really understand as a collective the basis for the discrimination, I don’t think we’ll be as successful as we want to be.” Herod says she feels quite confident that the bill will pass the legislature and be signed into law, despite opposition from Republican lawmakers. At a committee hearing that followed the public testimony, Republican Sen. Larry Liston said he



Michael Atkins, Javon Brame, Si Morgan-Smith, and Anna Jo Garcia Haynes (left to right) were among several panels of witnesses who talked about the systemic racism they have experienced living in Denver.

Front Porch photos by Christie Gosch

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inequities in housing, healthcare, education, employment, and the criminal justice system. They support a racial equity study bill to uncover the root causes of persistent discrimination and to generate ideas for how to eradicate it.

was worried the study would be used to make a case for reparations. “Personally speaking, I’m against reparations for anybody for any reason,” said Liston. “Unfortunately, there were injustices that were done 150 years ago...we’ve tried to address them.”

When asked whether reparations might indeed be one of the recommendations to come out of the study, Herod said “I don’t want to predetermine anything. I’m not sure there will be reparations, but I would assume that they will be part of the conversation.”

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...NE News Updates



on a virtual reality headset and take a space walk at the Hangar in Aurora's Stanley Marketplace. "Space Explorers: The Infinite" is a production created by two virtual reality studios that uses 360-degree videos gathered over two years in and outside the space station. More than 24 astronauts from around the world are featured doing science experiments, exercising, eating, and taking a space walk. The experience takes about 45 minutes and is divided into four "chapters." Participants walk through the space station and choose from 60 short videos that let them experience many different aspects of life in space. Tickets start at \$25 for children and \$45 for adults. Children must be at least 8 years old. "The Infinite" runs through May 5. For more information, go to theinfinitexperience.world/en/denver

2 Check to See If You Have Unclaimed Property

Last year, the Colorado State Treasurer returned \$52 million to more than 71,000 claimants through its Unclaimed Property Division. The average claim was \$733.78. According to Unclaimed Property Director Bianca Gardelli, there's at least a one in seven chance "that there's unclaimed property, like gift certificates, unpaid wages, or uncashed checks with your name on it." To see if you are owed money, visit colorado.findyourunclaimedproperty.com.

3 Proposed Changes to Sidewalk Repair Ordinance

A committee of homeowners and other stakeholders is recommending adjustments to a sidewalk repair ordinance passed by voters in 2022. The committee, established by Denver's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, proposed that homeowners pay a flat rate of \$148.64 instead of being charged by linear feet. It would also change the way discounts are given to low-income homeowners. The committee sought public feedback in February and will formally present its recommendations to City Council on March 4, with a goal of

a final vote in June. Voters passed the initiative to improve the 2,300 miles of sidewalk in Denver. Under the old system, homeowners were responsible for paying for all repairs. The voter-passed initiative was designed so that property owners would instead pay an annual fee that would be put into a general fund for repairs. After an outcry from residents that the new system put an undue burden on homeowners with corner lots, the committee was formed. "We want to



Mike Murfitt, a volunteer with Can'd Aid and a BMX trick rider, helps fit helmets on Ashley Elementary students receiving free bikes through the program.

4 Ashley Elementary First Graders Get Bicycles; School Doubles in Size

A non-profit organization that tries to encourage children to spend more time getting exercise outdoors donated 70 bikes to first graders that attend Ashley Elementary in Northeast Denver. Can'd Aid enlisted the help of local volunteers to build the bikes and sponsored an appearance by professional BMX rider Mike Murfitt to show students some biking tips and tricks. Can'd Aid is a national non-profit that has donated more than 18,000 skateboards and bikes to underprivileged youth.

The student population at Ashley Elementary has doubled this year because of the influx of migrant students. Since the school does not have a Parent Teacher Association to support students and families, Central Park United Neighbors (CPUN) created a GoFundMe page to raise money for grocery cards and other support. To donate, visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/ashley-elementary-refugee-drive>.

5 Mayor's Plan to Combat Auto Theft

Mayor Mike Johnston announced a plan to combat Denver's high rate of auto thefts. The Denver Police Department will install 111 cameras across the city that will read license plates and flag stolen cars and vehicles associated with violent crimes. Denver International Airport installed a similar camera system last year and has seen a 90% decrease in thefts over the past six months.

In addition, Johnston said the City will host events this spring for owners of KIA and Hyundai cars, top targets for thieves, to upgrade software to make them more difficult to steal. Johnston also urged all Denver residents to register their vehicles with DenverTrack, which gives police consent to use GPS data to find the car. Some 30 cars are stolen every day in Denver, including the mayor's car, which was stolen from his Central Park home last November (it was later recovered).

In addition to new technology, Johnston's plan includes hiring additional police officers, increasing patrols, and making permanent a pilot program that brought together a team of detectives focused solely on auto theft. To register your vehicle and learn more about what you can do to prevent your car from being stolen, visit denvergov.org/denvertrack.



Visitors to "Space Explorers: The Infinite" use headsets to experience life in the International Space Station.

By Mary Jo Brooks

1 Take an Immersive Space Walk at Stanley Marketplace

If you've ever wondered what it's like to be an astronaut working in the International Space Station, the Denver Center for Performing Arts is giving you a chance to put

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This is Oscar month, so we get straight to the films. I reviewed *The Holdovers* in the February column, *Past Lives* in December, and I will post reviews of *The Zone of Interest* and *Anatomy of a Fall* next month. The latter two will fight it out for the Best International Feature this year, and rightly so. This was a wonderful year for the movies, and I hope you get a chance to see all of them. And the nominees are...

Maestro

This is a lush film from director/star Bradley Cooper, about the life of famed composer Leonard Bernstein, and one with its fair share of criticism (for several different aspects). Those criticisms are readily available, so I will stick to the film analysis here. And it is quite the film: the cinematography—alternating between color and black and white—is gorgeous, the sound is expertly crafted, the editing is perfectly placed, the settings/costumes/period aspects are impeccable, and the acting is wonderful. Cooper as Bernstein and Carey Mulligan as his wife Felicia Montealegre are marvelous, and they blend into the characters without a trace of the seams. Cooper as director is also masterful, and watching his directorial progress shall be an interesting endeavor. I don't think this is a serious contender for Best Picture, but it is serious art.



Killers of the Flower Moon

Caveat: I am Martin Scorsese scholar and fan (the latter for about 40 years now). I have taught entire semesters on him and his films, I have written about him, and I have read extensively on him. I come to his films with a more detailed and exacting eye than most. To top it off, I am an Italian American from New York, so I have an acute understanding of his personal past. All that said, I am not immune to criticizing Scorsese when needed. Here, however, I don't see any need—the film is a gigantic swing for the fences that just tops the wall. It is big, it is epic, it is a wild ride, and it is intensely thoughtful. It includes the trademark Scorsese touches: dynamic cinematography, relentless editing, wall-to-wall sound, wonderful period touches, and intricate performances. If you think the Scorsese catalogue is all Mafia movies, think again: his career spans six decades with all manner and genres included. This film, about the Osage murders of the 1920s, is no less the cinematic accomplishment than any of his best films. Yes, there are criticisms of this film, as there have been of most of his films, but I will let you wade into them on your own. I see this as a master director who is still (at the age of 81) at the height of his powers. I only hope we get to see more. I see a silver medal for this one.

Poor Things

Director Yorgos Lanthimos fashions a bizarre, surreal, fantastic, and semi-insane fairy tale—the Grimm kind, not Disney—that surprises, delights, and titillates. To sum up the story in a few sentences is futile, but let's just call it a postmodernist take on *Frankenstein* that goes beyond the horror and gruesomeness of Mary Shelley's tale while taking a wonderful dive into feminism. Emma

Stone is spectacular in a role that sees her grow from a baby (in a woman's body) to an intellectual and complex woman who sees the world for what it is. Willem Defoe, in an electric performance, is the Doctor in this scenario, and in a reversal, he is the scarred, monster-esque character who is both brilliant and insane. If you know Lanthimos' work—such as *Dogtooth*, *The Lobster*, *The Favorite*—you have an inkling of what to expect. If you don't know his work, well, then I wish I could see the look on your face as you watch it! This is the most cinematic of the nominees, and the film delights in being a film. I loved it, and I see the bronze medal here. Stone and Lily Gladstone are both deserving of the Best Actress award.



Barbie

So much has been said about this fantastic, breath-of-fresh-air film that I am left with offering you my personal take on it. I start with co-writer and director Greta Gerwig who orchestrates a masterful, gargantuan production. She is a budding superstar director and in the biggest snub of the year, was not nominated for Best Director. It is truly shameful. Margot Robbie is luminous and deserves way more credit than she gets for not only being a true movie star, but a visionary producer as well. Ryan Gosling is just great as Ken (if you don't get the joke, you should). Anywhere else, he'd be the star. America Ferrera is her usual, fantastic self, and she delivers a monologue that should be required learning at all levels. I haven't laughed this much in a theater in a long, long time. I laughed at the absurdity; I laughed at the wit, I laughed at the characters; I laughed at the devastating criticisms of, well, everything, and most of all, I laughed at myself: an older, white male, who teaches and writes about film. It taught me quite a bit, especially about orientation and representation. It is not often that I laugh *and* learn. Thank you, Barbie.



American Fiction

This is an important film that everyone should see and discuss. Jeffrey Wright is fantastic, the story is sharp and funny, and the commentary is blistering. Wright plays a fledgling writer/professor who pens a satire of a stereotypical "Black story" that he believes most people want to read. He soon finds that everyone takes the story to be true, and he is pressed into creating an entire charade around the writing, the writer, and that writer's backstory. The point of the film is that such stories diminish the Black experience, pigeonhole Black writers into surface-level tropes, cater to White audiences, and restrict most other Black experiences. Nobody would want to see a story about a Black professor whose estranged family gets together for a funeral, right? The film is wonderfully written and acted, but I found it a bit uneven and technically limited. Still, I am thrilled that it was nominated in the category if for no other reason than everyone should see it. Along with *Barbie*, I enjoyed the levity while at the same time delivering searing social and political commentary. Put this on the "must-see-soon" list.

Oppenheimer

Another film that doesn't need much explanation, so I will give my argument for why it is the best film of the year. You can read my previous Oscar columns for a more in-depth explanation of how I see the Best Picture category, but in a nutshell, it is the sum total of all the other categories. For example, add up Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Acting, Best Cinematography, Best Editing, Best Musical Score, Best Sound Design, etc., and for the film that scores highest across the board, you get the Best Picture. *Oppenheimer* wins because it is technically brilliant, wonderfully acted, expertly directed, and flawlessly executed in every category. I see wins for Best Picture, Best Director (Christopher Nolan), Best Actor (Cillian Murphy) and several other technical categories. Vincent Pitorro, PhD, is a Professor of Film and Media Studies at MSU Denver. Contact him directly at vpituro@msudenver.com or follow him on Twitter. For more reviews, search *The Indie Prof* at FrontPorchNE.com.

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LOCAL EVENTS

March thru early April

View and add local events FREE at FrontPorchNE.com/events. Submissions by the 17th will be considered for printing in the upcoming month's issue.

Please double check event dates and times using contact info provided.

NE DENVER/NW AURORA EVENTS

- 3/2 & 4/6—Bluff Lake Bird Walks.** 2-hour walk at 8am. 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. Free but must RSVP at blufflake.org/birdwatching
- 3/8 Friday—Creativity and Dementia.** A Special Event With Anne Basting. 12:30–1:30pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org
- 3/8 Friday—Goatflox and Chill.** 6pm. 8246 Northfield Blvd. The Shops at Northfield. Pre-register at shopsatnorthfield.com
- 3/9 Saturday—Cockpit Demo Day.** A close look inside select aircraft. 10am–2pm. 7711 East Academy Blvd. wingsmuseum.org
- 3/9 & 3/16—Indoor Goat Yoga.** 10am, 12pm, and 2pm. 8246 Northfield Blvd. The Shops at Northfield. shopsatnorthfield.com
- 3/14 Thursday—Active Minds Presents Spices.** Trace the spice trade from colonialism to the hundreds of varieties used today. 1–2pm, Free. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. activeminds.com
- 3/14 Thursday—Educational Wine Tasting.** 6–8pm. Must be 21. The Cube, 8371 Northfield Blvd. Tickets at mca80238.com
- 3/18 Monday—Death Café.** Normalize conversations around death. 2–3:30pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org
- 3/23 Saturday—Farm Egg Hunt.** Tickets required. 9am–12pm. The Urban Farm, 10200 Smith Rd. theurbanfarm.org/egg-hunt-2024
- 3/23 Saturday—Central Park Egg Scramble.** Bring your own basket to collect eggs. 10am–12pm, Runway 35 Park. mca80238.com
- 3/23 Saturday—Guided Site Tour.** Focusing on behind the scenes conservation and land management. Bluff Lake Nature Center. 2pm. 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. Free but must RSVP at blufflake.org
- 3/24 Sunday—Central Park 5K.** 8801 MLK Jr Blvd. central5k.com
- 3/28 Thursday—Active Minds Presents Vietnam.** A look back at the evolution of Vietnam. 1–2pm, Free. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. activeminds.com
- 3/30 Saturday—Sage Blessing and Traditional Stories.** Doug Good Feather from the Standing Rock Lakota Nation. 10:30am–12pm. Aurora History Museum, 15051 East Alameda Pkwy. auroramuseum.org
- 3/30 Saturday—Spring Fling and Bunny Photos.** Free photos, music, giveaways, and crafts. 11am–1pm. The Shops at Northfield, in the plaza on Main St. shopsatnorthfield.com
- 3/31 Sunday—Easter Tea and Craft Fair.** 9:15–10:30am. Services at 8am, 9:30am, and 11am. Montview Blvd. Presbyterian Church, 1980 Dahlia St. montview.org
- 4/5 Friday—Nature Wonder Walks.** Enter the wonder by slowing down, breathing, and reconnecting. Bluff Lake Nature Center. 1–2pm. 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. Free but must RSVP at blufflake.org
- 4/5 Friday—Waking Your Garden Up in the Spring.** Learn what needs to be done to get your yard and garden growing. 3–4pm. Schlessman Library, 100 Poplar St. denverlibrary.org

METRO EVENTS

- 3/1 & 4/5—First Friday Art Walks.** On Santa Fe. 5:30– 9:30pm. denver.org/things-to-do/denver-arts-culture/denver-art-districts
- 3/14 Thursday—Art & About Tours.** For visitors with early-stage Alzheimer's or dementia and their care partners. 1–2:45pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org
- 3/7 Thursday—Winter Warriors.** A Film & Reflection on the 10th Mountain Division in World War II. 6–8pm. History Colorado Center, 1200 N. Broadway. Free, register at: historycolorado.org
- 3/9 to 3/17—28th Annual Denver Jewish Film Festival.** JCC Mizel Arts and Culture Center, 350 S Dahlia St. jccdenver.org
- 3/10 Sunday—Music in the Galleries.** A family-friendly performances at noon and 1pm. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org
- 3/10 & 3/24—Meditation to Start Your Week.** Led by Denver's first Black women-run wellness studio. 10:30–11:30am. Center for CO Women's History, 1310 Bannock St. Pay what you can. historycolorado.org
- 3/14 Thursday—1340 Penn After Hours: Women Artists.** Hear racy tales and explore taboo topics while sipping cocktails. 7–9pm. Molly Brown House Museum, 1340 Pennsylvania St. historicensever.org
- 3/15 to 3/17—48th Annual Denver March Pow Wow.** Denver Coliseum. Tickets sold at the door. denvermarchpowwow.org
- 3/15 to 3/17—Rocky Mountain Horse Expo. National Western Complex.** Tickets at coloradohorsecouncil.com
- 3/16 Saturday—St. Patrick's Day Parade.** Starts at 9:30am. Begins on Wynkoop at 19th, turns down 17th St then turns NE down Blake St proceeding all the way up to 27th. denverstpatricksdaysparade.com
- 3/20 Wednesday—Excess to Extremism: How Colorado's National Guard Spoiled Denver's Kitchens.** 1pm & 7pm. History Colorado Center, 1200 N. Broadway. historycolorado.org
- 3/22 to 3/24—Denver Home Show.** National Western Complex. For tickets and \$2 off, go to homeshowdenver.com
- 3/23 Saturday—Askkanwii: Diasporic Community of Colorado Series #2.** Screening of the documentary *Evalo*. 5–7pm. Aurora History Museum, 15051 East Alameda Pkwy. Register at: historycolorado.org

KIDS AND FAMILIES

- Tuesday–Friday—Local Library Storytime.** Different age groupings and locations. Info at denverlibrary.org
- Wednesdays—Mornings at the Museum.** Ages 3–6, 10:30–11:15am. Free. New programs every week. Aurora History Museum, 15051 East Alameda Pkwy. Register at auroragov.org
- 3/6 & 3/20—Kids Game Club.** Drop by to play games in a fun, relaxed environment. Ideal for ages 5–12. 3:30–5:30pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org
- 3/9 Saturday—Family Nature Adventure Days.** Free crafts and activities, no registration required. Bluff Lake Nature Center. 10am–1:30pm. 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. Free but must RSVP at blufflake.org
- 3/9 Saturday—CSU Spur 2nd Saturdays.** Free. Lots of family-friendly programming. 10am–3pm. 4817 National Western Dr. csuspur.org
- 3/10 Sunday—Foxy and Shmoxy: Art Detectives.** Foxy and Shmoxy help young children access and experience art in unique ways. 10:30am–12pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org
- 3/12 Tuesday—Chess Club for Grades 3–6.** Play chess and learn new strategy skills to compete against your peers. 4:30–5:30pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org



Okareka Dance:
Mana Wahine from
New Zealand.

- 3/14 Thursday—Raspberry Jam for Teens.** Explore what you can do with a Raspberry Pi computer. 4–6pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org
- 3/14 Thursday—Create Playdate.** An early-childhood program for families with children ages 3-5 and their siblings. 10am–12pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org
- 3/16 & 3/17—Children and Family Make and Take: Leprechaun Gardens.** Connect and create together. Ages 5 and up. 10am & 1pm both days. 1007 York St. Register at botanicgardens.org
- 3/7 Sunday—Peter and the Wolf & The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra.** 2:30pm. Tickets start at \$10. Boettcher Hall. coloradosymphony.org
- 3/17 Sunday—Spanish Storytime at Tattered Cover Kids.** 5pm. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. stanleymarketplace.com
- 3/21 Thursday—Kids Book Club.** Theme is pet shelters & animal rescue. K–5th grade. 4–5pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org
- 3/22 Friday—Ice Play on the Greenway.** Explore the frozen elements on the trail. 4:30–5:30pm. 9450 Smith Rd. Register at: sandcreekgreenway.org
- 3/24, 3/27 & 3/30—Art Crawl: Guardians of the Galleries.** 10:30–11:15am. For caregivers with infants–14 months. Registration required. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org
- 3/27 Wednesday—Youth Gaming Night.** Play Xbox and Wii Games with friends! Snacks will be provided. Ages 5–17. 6–7:30pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org
- 4/2 Tuesday—Tiny Tots Ocean Adventure.** Tiny Tots Orchestra Performance for toddlers and early elementary students. 9:30am in the southeast atrium. 2001 Colorado Blvd. Free but reserve tickets at dmns.org
- ## MUSEUMS, ETC.
- American Museum of Western Art.** Open M, W & F from 10am–4:30pm. Admission is \$5. 1727 Tremont Pl. anschutzcollection.org
- Aurora History Museum.** Admission is free. Closed Mondays/holidays. 15051 East Alameda Pkwy. auroragov.org
- Center for Colorado Women's History.** International Women's Free Day: Mar. 8. 1310 Bannock St. historycolorado.org/center-colorado-womens-history
- The Children's Museum.** Reservations & tickets at mychildsmuseum.org
- Clyfford Still Museum.** Children 17 and under are free. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org
- Denver Art Museum.** SCFD Free Days Mar. 12 & 24. Youth 18 & under always free. 100 W 14th Ave. Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org
- Denver Botanic Gardens.** SCFD Free Day Mar. 9, must register. 1007 York St. botanicgardens.org

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Denver Firefighters Museum. Hours: Tues–Sat, 10am–4pm. 1326 Tremont Pl. denverfirefightersmuseum.org

Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Orcas exhibit opens Mar. 15. 2001 Colorado Blvd. dmns.org

Denver Zoo. SCFD Free Day Apr. 7. Lottery for free events at denverzoo.org. 2900 E 23rd Ave.

The Forney Museum of Transportation. 4303 Brighton Blvd. forneymuseum.org

Four Mile Historic Park. SCFD Free Day Mar. 22. Open Wed–Sun, 10am–4pm. 715 S. Forest St. fourmilepark.org

Historic Denver/Molly Brown House Museum. SCFD Voter Free Evenings Mar. 5 & Apr. 2, 5–7pm. Tue–Sun, 10am–5pm. 1340 Pennsylvania St. mollybrown.org

History Colorado. Free general admission for kids every day. 1200 Broadway. historycolorado.org

Kirkland Museum of Fine and Decorative Art. Tue–Sat, 11am–5pm; Sun 12–5pm. Ages 13+ welcome. 1201 Bannock St. kirklandmuseum.org

Museo de las Americas. Free 1st Fridays and always free for under 13. Tue–Fri, noon–6pm. Sat, noon–5pm. Closed Mon/Sun. 861 Santa Fe Dr. museo.org

Museum for Black Girls. Hours: Wed. 11am–6pm (half price), Th–Sun, 11am–7pm. 500 16th Street Mall. Tickets at themuseumforblackgirls.com

Museum of Contemporary Art Denver. Free for under 18 and healthcare workers. 1¢ admission 1st Sat. of the month. 1485 Delgany St. mcadenver.org

Museum of Illusions Denver. 951 16th St Mall. moidenver.com

National Ballpark Museum. 1940 Blake St. Check for days/hours at ballparkmuseum.com

The Urban Farm. Open to the public Saturdays only from 9am–1pm. 10200 Smith Rd. theurbanfarm.org

Wings Over the Rockies Museum. Lowry resident free day Mar. 28. 7711 East Academy Blvd. wingsmuseum.org

PERFORMANCE/THEATRE

3/1 to 3/23—My Brilliant Divorce. Strikes a chord for any woman who has been through one. 3654 Navajo St. onthestage.tickets/everyman-theatre-co/season

3/1 to 3/23—125 “NO”s. A comedy rife with gawping, gabbing, and a little stinky cheese. 717 Lipan St. buntport.com

3/4 to 3/27—Eleanor. Deborah Persoff brings to vibrant life the many facets of Eleanor Roosevelt. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St, Aurora. vintagetheatre.org

3/5 to 3/10—Hairspray. Can a girl with big dreams (and even bigger hair) change the world? Buell Theatre. denvercenter.org

3/8 to 3/10—Stravinsky’s The Firebird. Stravinsky meets Elfman in this enchanting performance. Boettcher Hall. coloradosymphony.org

3/8 to 3/17—Colorado Ballet Presents Cop-pélia. A comedic ballet. Ellie Caulkins Opera House, 1385 Curtis St. coloradoballet.org

3/10 Sunday—Okareka Dance: Mana Wahine. A contemporary Maori (indigenous) dance company from New Zealand. 2pm. Newman Center, 2344 E. Iliff Ave. newmancenterpresents.com

Through 3/10—Rubicon. Based on a true story, Rubicon tracks the career of one of history’s most effective spies. Kilstrom Theatre. denvercenter.org

3/14 to 3/17—Shrek the Musical. A hilarious stage spectacle based on the Oscar®-winning, smash hit. Buell Theatre. denvercenter.org

3/15 to 3/17—Mean Girls: High School Edition. The Mile High Youth Theatre. The People’s Building, 9995 E Colfax Ave., Aurora. Thepeoplesbuilding.com

3/16 Saturday—Gobs O’Phun 30th Annual St. Patrick’s Day. 8–10:30pm, doors open at 7pm. 71 East Yale Ave. swallowhillmusic.org

3/16 to 4/20—Cost of Living. Recipient of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize. Curious Theatre Company, 1080 Acoma St. curioustheatre.org

Through 3/17—Cebollas. Three Latinas are forced to take an unexpected road trip. denvercenter.org

3/20 Wednesday—Sphinx Virtuosi. Chamber orchestra of accomplished Black and Latinx artists. Newman Center, 2344 E. Iliff Ave. friendsofchambermusic.com

3/22 to 5/5—Noises Off. A relentless, high-energy farce. Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd. Arvada. arvadacenter.org

3/23 & 3/24—Wild Women - Never Say Never. A salute to terrific women everywhere, back by popular demand. Dairy Arts Center (23rd) and Su Teatro (24th). storiesonstage.org

3/23 to 4/14—Gem of the Ocean by August Wilson. Follows the lives of Black Americans thru each decade of the 20th century. Aurora Fox Arts Center, 9900 E. Colfax Ave. aurorafoxartscenter.org

3/23 to 4/20—Guadalupe in the Guest Room. A celebration of life, new beginnings, and the healing power of telenovelas. The John Hand Theater, 7653 E. 1st Pl. firehousetheatercompany.com

Through 3/24—The Legend of Georgia McBride. He’s young, he’s late with the rent, and he just found out he’s going to be a dad. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St, Aurora. vintagetheatre.org



Just Between Friends children’s resale event.

3/29 & 3/30—Denver Rock Orchestra: Ladies of the 80’s. Female-founded, committed to accessibility/accountability. The People’s Building, 9995 E Colfax Ave., Aurora. thepeoplesbuilding.com

4/3 to 4/7—ACT Ninth Annual Human Rights Film Festival. Connecting at the intersection of art, culture, and social justice. CO State University, Fort Collins. actfilmfest.colostate.edu

4/7 Sunday—One Night Stand Presents: Sleuths and Spies. Short plays and one poem about brilliant detectives, shady private eyes, and sinister secret agents. 1460 Dayton St., Aurora. onenightstandtheater.org

Through 5/5—Space Explorers: THE INFINITE. Immersive experience inspired by NASA missions. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. denvercenter.org

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

For a more extensive list, go to www.FrontPorchNE.com and search for Charitable Opportunities.

College Access Mentor with Minds Matter Colorado. 2 hours a week during the school year. Info at mindsmatterco.org/volunteers

Denver Public Schools. Numerous volunteer opportunities with students and schools. equity.dpsk12.org/get-involved/volunteer-services

Denver Rescue Mission. To find volunteer opportunities, go to: denverrescuemission.org/volunteer/#opportunities

Food For Thought Denver. Providing food for students and their families. Sign up to volunteer or donate at foodforthoughtdenver.org

Project Worthmore. Help bag and deliver fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, and household necessities to refugees. projectworthmore.org

Reach Out and Read Colorado. Help sort and pack children’s books for underserved families. Email info@reachoutandreadco.org for details.

Reading Volunteers Needed One hour a week. No experience necessary. Email contact: Pil, 2011@partnersinliteracy.org.

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) For volunteer opportunities, email Cathy Law at claw@voacolorado.org

Ronald McDonald House Charities Volunteer. Info at ronaldhouse.org under “How You Can Help”.

Sand Creek Greenway Volunteer Opportunities. Nov. 4 workday, 10am–12pm. Info or to register to volunteer at sandcreekgreenway.org

Single Volunteers of Greater Denver. Meet others and assist nonprofit organizations for events/activities. Info at svgd.org

Spark the Change Colorado. Direct service programs that leverage the expertise of skilled volunteers in fields like mental health and empowering aging. sparkthechangecolorado.org

Village Exchange Center A non-profit formed to serve immigrants and refugees in Aurora & Denver. villageexchangecenter.org

Volunteers of America Colorado Branch For volunteer opportunities go to voacolorado.org/volunteer-opportunities/

GREEN AND SUSTAINABILITY EVENTS

3/4 & 3/29—Knowing Your Home Renovation Class. A foundational understanding of how a house works. Denver Tool Library. 555 Santa Fe Dr. Register at denvertoolibrary.org

3/5 Tuesday—WORKNOW Spring Green Job Fair. Learn about careers in the skilled trades and Green companies in insulation, heat pumps & electrical. 12:30–3pm. 646 Mariposa St. eventbrite.com/e/worknow-spring-green-job-fair-tickets-837985947527?aff=ebdssbdestsearch

3/9 Saturday—Planning Your Garden Workshop. Learn the ins and outs of planning your growing space. 1–3pm. Pay what you can. 1031 33rd St. dug.org

3/9 Saturday—Maker Mornings: Global Recycling Day. Family programming: explore how to protect the earth and create art from reused and recycled items. 10:30am–12:30pm. Registration required. 1250 Bannock St. clyfford-stillmuseum.org

3/11 to 3/22—Electronics Recycling Drop-off Event. \$5 car/individual for small load or \$10 for anything larger. Additional charges for some items. Facility open M–F, 8am–4:30pm, Sat. 10am–2pm. Techno Rescue, 3251 Lewiston St, Suite 10. More info at auroragov.org/recycle

3/12 Tuesday—Power Tools 101. Learn how to safely and effectively use Denver Tool Library’s most common power tools. 555 Santa Fe Dr. Register at denvertoolibrary.org

4/5 Friday—Sustainability Fair 2024. Denver vendors share ideas and opportunities on more sustainable ways of living. Free with general admission. 11am–3pm. 100 W 14th Ave. Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

4/11 to 4/14—Just Between Friends Children’s Resale. Save 50–90% on everything your kids need. Register to sell by Mar. 15. National Western Complex, 4655 Humboldt St. Free tickets at denverjbfale.com

4/13 Saturday—Basics of Organic Gardening. Explore the most important aspects of organic gardening in metro Denver. 10am–12pm. Pay what you can. 1031 33rd St. dug.org

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Third Graders ‘Take a Stand’ to Celebrate Black History Month

By Sarah Huber

Even as some schools and school districts around the nation have gutted their Black history studies, students at Swigert International School marked February as Black History Month “by celebrating the assets and beauty of Black culture,” says third grade teacher Lindsay Edge. “It’s important to tell the first part of the story—the kidnapping of Black people from their home in Africa and enslavement—but not to stop there.”

The Swigert third grade team has been developing its Black history unit since 2021. This year the unit covered the arrival of enslaved Africans to American colonies in 1619, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Great Migration, and finally, the resistance and joy of the Harlem Renaissance.

Third-grader Avery Duncan says the unit taught her “that it’s important to know how other people feel because if you don’t know, you can’t really fix it.” Her fellow student Olivia Waas agreed, saying, “When you know what the history was and what people have been through, you can help.” Many students expressed outrage or frustration over Jim Crow laws even as their schoolwork “helped them discover the importance of listening to others’ stories and telling your own story,” says Racha Kobitarty, a former software engineer who is student teaching in Edge’s classroom as she earns a degree in education.

“Students aren’t here to take the guilt of their ancestors. We say, ‘How cool it is that we have the opportunity to do better.’”

—Lindsay Edge, Swigert third grade teacher

Throughout February, third-graders read books on African American leaders, tried their hands at art and poetry in the style of the Harlem Renaissance, and even learned steps to the Charleston, a dance popularized by Black youth moving north in the 1920s. In one of her poems for the unit, Chloé Fish wrote that she feels she might “explode” when thinking about people being mistreated in response to their skin color. “All people should have the right to do their thing,” she says.

Swigert principal Shelby Dennis notes, “This isn’t a typical third grade social studies unit, and as an IB (International Baccalaureate) school, our teachers have really created an authentic and meaningful experience. It helps to show our young students the importance of individuals sharing their talents and stories and how that impacts historical and present-day society.”



Left to right: Chloé Fish, Avery Duncan, Olivia Waas, and Ethan Li, all third-graders at Swigert International School, brainstorm ideas for their “take a stand” opinion pieces on a local or global issue, written in response to their Black history studies during Black History Month.

This was the first year students were assigned a “take a stand” opinion piece as part of the unit. Students brainstormed how they could affect change before composing essays on topics such as homelessness, immigration, bullying, and the environment. Ethan Li says he wanted to write about the cost of housing because “when I think about other people, I can’t imagine what it’s like if I couldn’t afford my house.”

Edge explains, “For our two or three Black students in the classroom, once they see that this (unit) is not just going to be a story of oppression and misery but instead see their history and culture placed on a pedestal and admired, it feels great.” Of her White pupils, she adds, “Students aren’t here to take the guilt of their ancestors. We say, ‘How cool it is that we have the opportunity to do better.’”

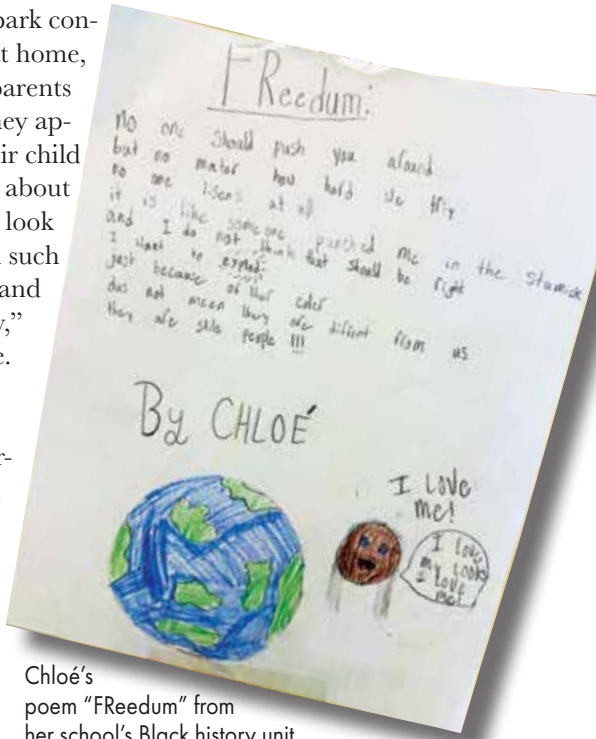
This was also the first year the unit culminated with a field trip to Five Points, dubbed the “Harlem of the West” and once a hot spot for performances by Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, and Billie Holiday. Terri Gentry, engagement manager for Black communities at History Colorado Center and docent with the Black American West Museum & Heritage Center, led students on a walking tour through the historic cultural district. “Learning these stories teaches us to understand our present and envision our future,” she says. “It transforms our experiences from being invisible to sharing a collective memory, giving us a voice in our present, and a seat at the table to direct our future.”

Parents have been supportive of the history studies, though Edge acknowledges, “I could lose my job if I taught this unit in another state.” She previewed the unit on Back to School Night to give plenty of time for feedback. Several parents have used the

lessons to spark conversations at home, and Black parents have said they appreciate their child “is learning about people who look like them in such a complete and positive way,” recalls Edge.

Caroline Dane, Swigert IB coordinator and mom to two students at the school, loves that her children are studying history from a “super relevant and powerful” perspective. “I am grateful this generation will have the empathy, awareness, and understanding that this unit lays the groundwork for.”

When Edge asked her students if parts of Black history were “too sad to learn,” she says, “they overwhelmingly said, ‘It’s our responsibility to learn this, to change, and to respect the culture.’” Kobitarty, who herself is an immigrant from Syria, says “Our students are learning that their voice matters.” Teaching Black history has been “a reminder that every person has the power to create change.”



Chloé’s poem “FREEDOM” from her school’s Black history unit.

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Step 3

Download the updated MY MCA app! The improved MY MCA app allows you to view and present all memberships in your household! Search MY MCA in your phone’s app store or find the app link on the MCA website. Use your ActiveNet login information to login to the app.



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MARCH EDUCATIONAL WINE TASTING

Thursday, March 14, 6–8pm, The Cube

Save the date for our next educational wine tasting! This tasting will take place at the Cube (8371 E. Northfield Blvd) on Thursday, March 14 from 6–8pm. Tickets are \$40 and are available at mca80238.com.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

If you are looking for a space to create and maintain your very own organic garden, this is your sign to get involved in the Central Park gardens!

For more information about the MCA Community Gardens, please contact Jenna McDevitt at jmcdevitt@mca80238.com

ACTIVE MINDS: Spices

Thursday, March 14, 1–2pm. Sam Gary Library

From the bland diets of Europeans in the early 16th century to the myriad of culinary flavors available today, spices have had a huge impact in the world. Join Active Minds as we trace the rise of spices from colonialism and the spice trade to the hundreds of varieties that are commonly stocked in nearby supermarkets.

ACTIVE MINDS: Vietnam

Thursday, March 28, 1–2pm. Sam Gary Library

It has been almost 60 years since U.S. soldiers began fighting a ground war in Vietnam. Half a century later, Vietnam is a very different country with a rapidly growing economy and relatively friendly relations with the United States. Join Active Minds as we take a look back at the evolution of Vietnam today. We will cover the history as well as Vietnam’s current and future role in the region.

Jennifer Olsen
Communications Manager
Jolsen@mca80238.com



CENTRAL PARK EGG SCRAMBLE

Saturday, March 23, 10am–12pm, Runway 35 Park

The Annual Egg Scramble will begin at 10am with the first scramble starting at 10:15am.

The first scramble is for children ages 6 and older (parents are not allowed in the scramble area for this age group). The second scramble will begin at 10:30am and is for the age group 0-5 (parents are allowed in the scramble area).

Make sure to bring your own basket to collect eggs!

There will also be photo opportunities with the Easter bunny, activities and sponsor giveaways.

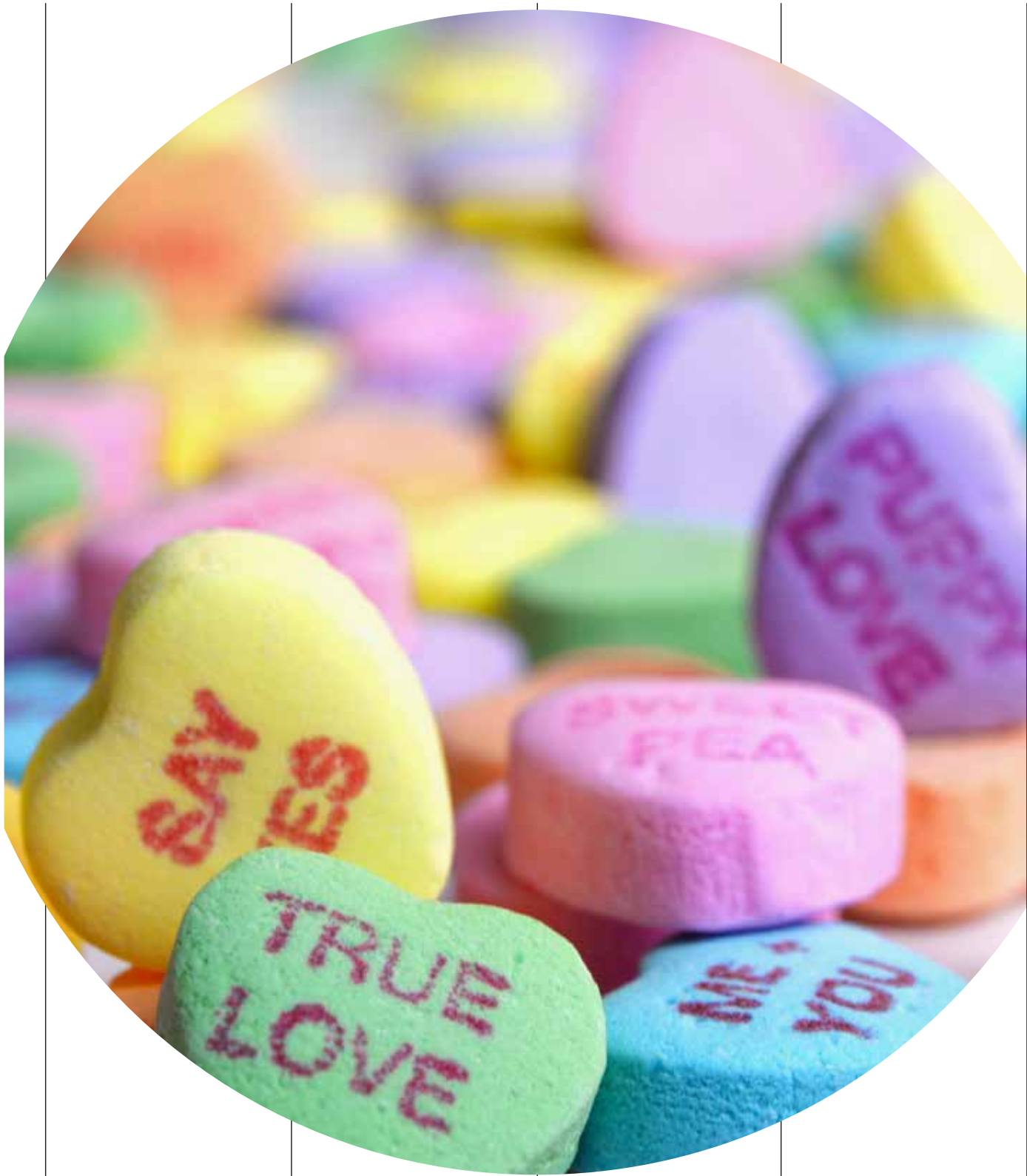
The 2024 Egg Scramble will be held on Saturday, March 23 at Runway 35 Park.



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