

# CU INDEPENDENT

## *magazine*

SPRING 2020

## **‘VAPING’S DEAD’:**

**HOW A BOULDER  
FLAVOR BAN  
KILLED A LOCAL  
BUSINESS.  
AND WHAT IT  
MEANS FOR  
USERS.**



## **INSIDE:**

**CU'S DIVERSITY PLAN  
YELLOW DELI ABUSE  
RALPHIE V RETIRES  
MEMORIES OF iTunes**

*Graphic by Mengchen Gong*

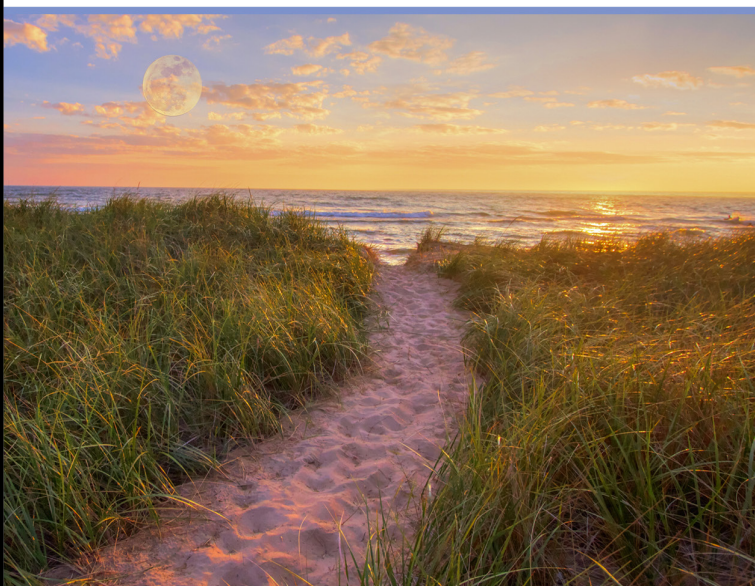
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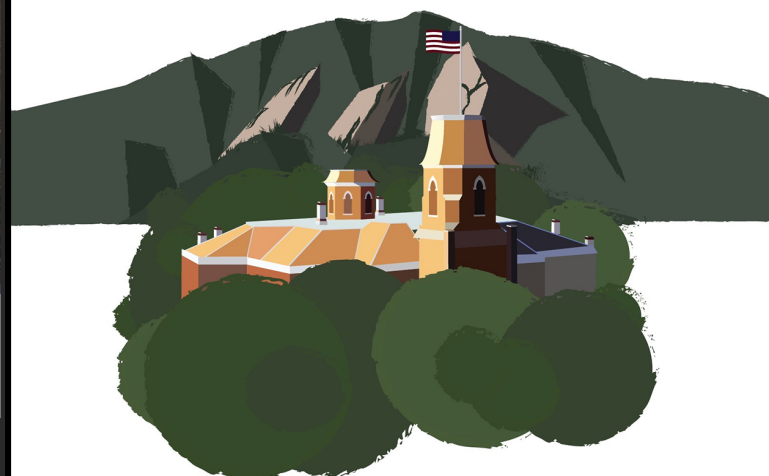


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# Los Seis: Nearly 50 years later, lives of six Chicanx students are remembered

by Isabella Fincher and Zack Cohen

At the University of Colorado Boulder, the story of Los Seis (The Six) seemed almost non-existent. There was little to commemorate the lives of the six Chicanx activists who were killed in car bombings nearly 50 years ago. That was until CU Boulder Master of Fine Arts student Jasmine Baetz decided that their history needed to be told.

On May 27, 1974, CU law graduate Reyes Martinez, CU Boulder junior Neva Romero and CU graduate Una Jaakola were killed in a bombed car at Chautauqua Park.

Two days later, a second explosion on 28th street took the lives of former CU students Florencio Granado and Heriberto Teran, along with pre-med student Francisco Dougherty.

The FBI files on the case were lost in a fire, and no one was ever charged for the deaths.

Now, CU has granted permission for the installation of a temporary memorial. The seven-foot-tall sculpture stands in front of Temporary Building No. 1, west of the Recreational Center. The sculpture's murals depict the faces of Los Seis, with each mosaic encircled with a text dedication to the activists and Chicanx students.

Baetz said even she was not aware of the tragic history until watching the documentary "Symbols of Resistance: Martyrs of the Chican@ Movement" on campus. After that, she decided to act.

"If I didn't go into a (screening of the film) I would have graduated without knowing about the activism of this campus and a tragedy that deserves to be marked," Baetz said.

Baetz worked with over 100 community members to make the sculpture a reality. She received funding through the Arts in Society Organization, the Boulder Arts Commission, Office for Outreach and Engagement, The Archive Transformed and a Beverly Sears Graduate Student grant.

CU's campus has seen little in the way of

remembrance. A mural of the students painted in 1987 was displayed in the University Memorial Center but was later removed during the center's renovation. Tucked away in Norlin Library at the base of stairwell 26 is another mural dedicated to Los Seis, though it gives no information regarding the deaths. For some CU students, the 1974 tragedy is news to them.

"I would have graduated without knowing about the activism of this campus and a tragedy that deserves to be marked."

"I had noticed the memorial in front of Sewall Hall, but I didn't know what it was for," said CU senior James Bell.

Temporary Building No. 1, where the memorial stands, also holds important history for the Chicanx community. In 1974, the building was occupied by Chicanx students for 18 days as part of a protest against the university's budget cuts to their financial aid. The funding was critical for Chicanx students attending school through the Educational Opportunity Program. Los Seis died during the building's occupation.

During the 1960s, students used the building as their meeting place for what was then the early days of the student group United Mexican American Students (UMAS).

But the memorial's future is unknown as CU has not confirmed if the sculpture will be permanent.

"If the sculpture is removed from this location, it loses its charge and relevance," Baetz said. "This was the building being occupied, which housed all of the educational opportunity programs in the



The sculpture in front of Temporary Building No. 1. Each mosaic is encircled with a text dedication to the members of Los Seis and Chicanx students. Sept. 3, 2019. (Robert Tann/CU Independent)

1960s. This is about placemaking."

Lisa Schwartz, community program outreach advisor for the Office of Outreach and Engagement, said her office is in support of the sculpture staying in its current position.

"This collaborative public artwork addresses critical issues of racial equity," Schwartz said. "(The sculpture is) of great importance (and) clearly signals CU Boulder's respect for diverse communities on our campus and the collective and institutional willingness to make space for healing dialogue and genuine respect for differences."

Baetz obtained a microgrant from the Office of Outreach and Engagement before beginning work on the piece.

UMAS y MEXA, a student coalition between

the United Mexican American Students and Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanx de Aztlán, also back the permanent stature of the sculpture. Beginning nationally in the late 1960s and founded by some of Los Seis, UMAS became a student activism group centered around the promotion of equality and inclusion of Chicanx and Latinx students.

"UMAS y MEXA is important on this campus because of its history," said UMAS y MEXA Co-Chairman Mateo Vela. "It's about building upon that legacy of activism that was established here in the '60s and '70s and making sure that Latinx and Chicanx students are being represented here on the CU Campus."



# CU's new diversity plan is here: What is it and how will it work?

by Noelle Videon and Anna Haynes

The long-anticipated final draft of the IDEA Plan has officially received its stamp of approval from University of Colorado Boulder Chancellor Philip DiStefano — almost four years after the concept for a more welcoming campus for all had originally been proposed. The Inclusion, Diversity and Excellence in Academics (IDEA) Plan is what CU characterizes as its “blueprint for diversity, equity and inclusive excellence.”

The plan comes after years of false starts. In Summer 2017, CU spokesman Ryan Huff told the CU Independent the plan, then called the Diversity, Inclusion and Academic Excellence Plan, was “currently in the implementation phase.” Later, Vice-Chancellor Robert Boswell told the CUI the university hoped to finalize the plan by Spring 2018. Previous versions of CU’s

diversity-oriented webpage had touted deadlines long since missed, the CUI previously reported.

In Fall 2019, the plan arrives four years after DiStefano originally announced its formulation following a scathing climate survey that showed students of color felt unwelcome on campus. In 2017, the CUI published an investigation into racial hostilities on campus that also examined the early stages of the plan.

While many recommendations are highlighted

throughout the 51-page document, the plan is centered around IDEA’s three key goals: climate, infrastructure and leadership. The recommended plan of action to achieve these goals is centered on moving the process of increasing diversity of the faculty, staff and student-body from the “periphery” to “core institutional functioning.” This means that diversity initiatives should be taken at all levels of

CU’s organization. The plan states that faculty “must have access to training, tools and techniques to enhance inclusivity in pedagogy, hiring and climate.”

“Our plan will put accountability for diversity and inclusion at the center of our day-to-day work,” Deputy spokesperson for CU Deborah Méndez-Wilson said. “This will be long-term, impactful work

to permanently instill these values into all of our efforts and in every corner of our campus.”

Beginning in 2017, a total of 28 students and faculty members were appointed to both author and revise the plan over a period of 18 months, with Initiatives Director of Social Climate Strategy Alaina Beaver as the committee facilitator.

In an attempt to simplify the plan, Beaver explains, “It spells out our collective values, our goals, and some actionable areas of recommendation.” She added it’s meant to be updated on a regular basis to evolve with CU’s



Fitzgerald Pickens, president of CU’s Black Student Alliance, speaks to a crowd on campus about CU’s reaction to a racist incident involving a student. Oct. 8, 2019. (Casey Paul/CU Independent)

ever-changing population and demographics to more effectively serve the needs of what she calls “our real community.”

“Our student population will not look the same in ten years as it does now,” Beaver said.

The Statement of Need, a statement prefacing IDEA’s plan of action, addresses what CU deems as the campus population inadequately reflecting “the full diversity of local and national communities.” While acknowledging this fact, it stresses a greater need to not only “recruit and retain,” but ensure that all students and faculty are included and supported throughout their time at CU.

“We’re actually going to start moving past being all talk, which is kind of how it has felt for a little while,” Beaver said during an event at this fall’s diversity summit. “Important talk. Not to minimize the talk.”

Beaver acknowledged the amount of time that the IDEA Plan has taken to reach implementation.

The plan outlines the development of the Council for Community and Inclusion (CCI), which will be responsible for implementation. The CCI will work with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement (ODECE) to oversee the implementation of the plan. An “implementation strategy” is being made by head of the ODECE Robert Boswell, Assistant Vice Chancellor Merna Jacobsen and other faculty members.

Recent CU psychology graduate Abby Tracer, who attended the talk, is hopeful but has a “healthy dose of skepticism” about the plan.

“I just want to hear more from our leadership,” Tracer said. “I think it’s important to speak when we have the opportunity, especially from a student perspective.”

CU’s diversity plan webpage indicates that CU is currently in the process of “(cultivating) partnerships for long-term, iterative growth according to the IDEA Plan’s goals and recommendations.” Beaver and Jon Leslie, interim senior associate vice chancellor of strategic communications, elaborated on the next steps for the plan at the diversity summit.

“Once we have a sense of our forward direction, we need to capitalize on that momentum and actually move forward in doing things that are in alignment with our goals,” Beaver said.

She stressed collaboration across departments and with administration to make “real progress.”

A report on the plan will be submitted to the CU System, which requires that each campus submit a report on “diversity, equity, inclusion and access activities.”

“When you want something to be great, I think it’s important to be critical of it,” Tracer said.

## Much of the plan boils down to the acronym **CLIMB**:

**C**ultivate success for a diverse undergraduate and graduate student body with new financial resources and programming.

**L**earn and lead effective efforts to attract and retain a diverse faculty and staff.

**I**ncrease financial resources and incentives to undertake diversity and inclusion work.

**M**ove accountability for diversity and inclusion from the periphery to core institutional functioning.

**B**uild institutional infrastructures and human capacity to implement the plan.



# Inside the wild frat formal that contributed to the split between SigEp and the IFC

by Tory Lysik

The University of Colorado Boulder was aware of a Sigma Phi Epsilon (SigEp) winter formal where fraternity members were kicked out of the hotel and a member given summons for trespassing and property damage. The incident also contributed to the fraternity's split with Interfraternity Council (IFC) on The Hill.

When SigEp first announced its split with IFC on The Hill and its intentions to rejoin CU, public details of the formal were scant but police records obtained by the CU Independent show a wild night that eventually led to students being expelled from the fraternity.

Shortly after midnight on April 13 2019, police were called to Winter Park Mountain Lodge as the hotel was in the process of removing the fraternity and other formal-goers. One fraternity member discharged a fire extinguisher into a hallway. The member was removed by hotel staff but snuck back in before everyone was kicked out. The member told police that he snuck back in because "I paid \$300 to have fun with my boys," according to the police records. He was found later that night consuming marijuana in a hotel room at a party with about 30 people in a room.

By the end of the evening, all formal-goers were removed from the hotel and a SigEp member faced a summons for trespassing and property damage. Formal-goers also stole alcohol from the hotel bar, but charges were not pressed, according to the notes.

Greek Advocate and IFC spokesperson Marc Stine said that issues with the fraternity had been at play even before the formal. Stine said the IFC on the Hill took "a lot of time" working to remediate SigEp's violations. SigEp had been undergoing IFC investigations, with judicial hearings held to address legal charges including assault and disorderly conduct. While the IFC did not expel SigEp, Stine said that the chapter's behavior had

made the possibility of expulsion more likely. However, the fraternity voted to leave the IFC on the Hill before further judicial board decisions could be made.

SigEp originally stated in a press release in September of 2019 that it decided to reaffiliate with CU to improve the "membership experience" and "chapter culture" and had not included any information on its IFC investigations or the formal. The chapter was granted provisional status with CU that month.

"I paid \$300 to have fun with my boys."

"When the incident at the hotel happened we were notified shortly after," Stephanie Baldwin, CU assistant director for Fraternity and Sorority Life said.

"Matters were resolved between hotel management, the individual responsible parties, as well as the chapter's executive board," said Jake Weidemann, SigEp's chapter president that served from Dec. 2018 until Dec. 2019, who would only comment through SigEP Cheif Communications Officer Heather Kirk. "Members of the executive board and standards board conducted an internal membership review with the interviews occurring in May, and made decisions based on the individuals' history within the chapter and their commitment to standards moving forward."

Weidemann attended formal and, according to him, also went through being interviewed by other members through the internal membership review process. Before being president he served as the representative for SigEp during IFC on the Hill



Graphic illustration by Mengchen Gong/CU Independent

judicial board hearings.

According to Baldwin, the events did not influence the university's decision to grant provisional affiliation. Fraternity members were upfront and informed the university after the events occurred, she said.

Baldwin said CU is changing to a "restorative justice" process. It is written in the constitution of the Office of Student Conduct that CU acts as an advisory committee to its Greek system. These committees work with local officials of greek organizations and national headquarters when necessary.

"We have a great relationship with conduct in that they help guide," Baldwin said. "The students really do manage the process."

According to Baldwin, CU admits that SigEp members are students first. The behavior of one

student reflects on everyone, no matter the organization they are involved in, she said. CU officials have spoken to national headquarters who agree the chapter has work to do within itself.

Through a process facilitated by the fraternity's national organizers and university officials, SigEp says it has been working to meet CU standards.

In December, CU voted to allow SigEp to affiliate with the university, just days after its Arizona State University chapter was removed from the campus for hazing. Earlier that fall, the fraternity also left the North American Interfraternity Conference because of a worry that the conference was not doing enough for students in terms of safety.





1. Trey Udoffia says a prayer prior to kickoff at the final Rocky Mountain Showdown in Denver. **By Nigel Amstock**
2. The Buffs celebrate a touch down late in the fourth quarter in a play against the Nebraska Cornhuskers. **By Nigel Amstock**
3. Junior guard McKinley Wright IV expresses his disappointment over the Buffs' loss against the Northern Iowa Panthers. **By Casey Paul**
4. CU student Melissa Campanella holds up a sign during the State of the Campus address. Students came to draw attention to a racist incident on campus. **By Casey Paul**
5. A protestor from the graduate student union protests graduate fees on Farrand Field. **By Kara Wagenknecht**





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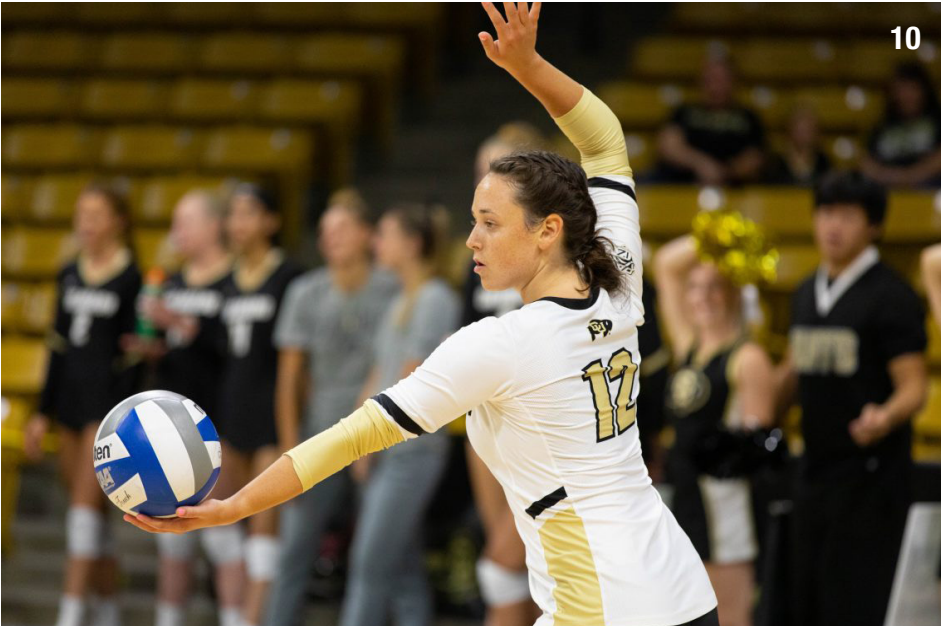
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6. Fitzgerald Pickens, president of the Black Student Alliance, speaks to students after a walkout during the chancellor's address. **By Casey Paul**  
7. Children strike for climate action on Norlin Quad. **By Ryan Corbett**  
8. Rappers Olu and WowGr8 of EARTHGANG perform at The Fox Theter. **By Ryan Corbett**  
9. GG von X gives an improvised performance to Parabéns by Pablo Vittar during CU's drag show. **By Isabella Fincher**  
10. Senior defensive specialist Rachel Whipple gets ready to send the ball over the net. **By Casey Paul**  
11. Emily Koehn competes in the Open over fences on Breeze. **By Vyla Carter**  
12. Freshman hockey defender Jacob Hager watches the action against the University of Jamestown. **By Kevin Wu**





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**13.** Brittany Howard performs for a sold-out crowd at the Boulder Theater. **By Zack Cohen**  
**14.** Senior guard Quinessa Caylao-Do calls out to her teammates during a game. **By Casey Paul**  
**15.** Freshman midfielder Roo Yarnell-Williams shows her excitement in between plays against the Baylor Bears. **By Kevin Wu**  
**16.** U.S. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan speaks during the eighth annual John Paul Stevens Lecture at Macky Auditorium. **By Nigel Amstock**  
**17.** Scarlet McCauley stands near the University Memorial Center where, as a freshman, she was harassed by a member of Resurrection Church. After hearing about allegations of the church's cult-like practices, McCauley joined for a year, collecting evidence of the church's spiritual and emotional abuse. She hopes CU Boulder will do more to mitigate the church's influence on campus. **By Ryan Corbett**



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# *Investigation:* Yellow Deli restaurant linked to organization accused of child abuse

by Nicole Dorfman

Graphic illustration by Lucas Luna,  
special to the CU Independent

**Y**ou know your favorite late-night sandwich spot, the Yellow Deli? It's tied to an organization with a deep history of physically abusing children and religious fundamentalism, a nine-month CU Independent investigation has found.

Yellow Deli, the all-day, all-night Boulder cafe frequented by students has been open about its evangelist roots, but behind the cheap sandwiches and free Wi-Fi is a darker history. CUI's investigation is based on interviews with 12 ex-members of Twelve Tribes, a religious organization linked to the restaurant, and reviews of over 400

pages of Twelve Tribes documents obtained both publicly and through sources.

Twelve Tribes in Boulder opened the Yellow Deli on Pearl Street in 2010 and is a part of a global network of 74 communities worldwide. Other businesses owned by the organization, such as farms and factories, have been the subject of other media investigations that have uncovered abuse and potential child labor violations. The CUI did not find direct allegations of child abuse at the Yellow Deli but in an undercover visit to Boulder's Twelve Tribes' compound where all Yellow Deli employees live, a young child appeared to be beaten.

Six ex-members of Twelve Tribes told the CUI they were witnesses or victims of child abuse in Twelve Tribes locations around the globe. Others described intense control exerted by the group on its members.

"Childhood was hell," said Alex, an ex-member who agreed to talk with the CUI without the publication of his last name. At a Twelve Tribes compound in Cambridge, New York, he described being beaten bloody sometimes to the point of collapsing.

"That's my only childhood milestone, to stay alive till the next day," he said. Local and national representatives for the Twelve Tribes did not return multiple requests for comments, which included phone calls and a detailed list of questions sent by reporters. In the past, representatives for the group have defended their practices as a part of their religion.

*"That's my only childhood milestone, to stay alive till the next day."*

Samie Brosseau, the founder of a non-profit that helps people transition out of cult-like environments, did not mince words in an interview with the CUI, saying the Twelve Tribes is a cult. Brosseau grew up in a Twelve Tribes compound and fled when she was 18. She said her parents held her in custody, but she finally escaped out the front door of an isolated Massachusetts cabin to try and find her way to a modern world she had never lived in before.

"The Twelve Tribes' narcissistic cult leader uses gaslighting as a way to control the religion," Brosseau said.

Her non-profit, Liberation Point, works with people from "high control groups" to readjust to life, as she had to after leaving the religious group.

Ex-members describe beatings with rods as punishment for even small infractions, like not singing loud enough during religious ceremonies. Much of the rationale the groups use for physical striking is rooted in religion, documents about

the Twelve Tribes' theology show. Much of this happens in compounds the group built to house members and host religious events. "We all live together, like a big extended family," the group's website reads. In Boulder, all of the employees of the Yellow Deli live in a compound on 5325 Eldorado Springs Drive.

Reporters from the CUI entered the compound twice in August at the invitation of Yellow Deli employees without disclosing they were gathering information for a news story. While there, a young child appeared to have a red mark underneath her right cheek after being escorted from the bathroom where wailing sounds were heard by the reporters. The screams and hitting noises appeared to be a beating with a large wooden rod, which the reporters later found under the bathroom sink. The apparent beating matched the descriptions of multiple ex-members' experiences.

"The emotional damage they cause lasts long after people escape," said Hannah, an ex-member who lived in the Island Pond community in Vermont. "My parents were being punished. The cult would say if you were sick it was because God was punishing you for being evil."

Ali, another ex-member who spoke with the CUI on the condition her last name not be published, lived in the New England communities and had similar experiences.

"They say suffering or hardship to a disciple is like sunshine to a plant," she said. "The Twelve Tribes prepares and encourages you to receive suffering."

While at the compound in August, CUI reporters only entered two of the buildings — one where the community holds prayer gatherings and a building where they eat meals. The prayer building is where the apparent striking of the child was heard as well as where three two-foot wooden rods were found.

Alex, from the New York compound, detailed "vicious beatings" with rods similar to those found in the Boulder compound. Of the ex-members the CUI reached out to who spent

time in the Colorado communities, few were willing to retell their stories publicly, insisting on anonymity to avoid reprisal from the community.

“You talk out of line or sometimes you never even knew what the hell you did but all of a sudden you’re getting your feet beaten bloody with the rods,” Alex said.

Child-rearing is heavily regulated by a book at the center of the group called the “Authority Teachings.” The CUI obtained a copy of the teachings through an ex-member network that now works to expose the group. The teachings instruct parents to physically discipline their children to instill obedience and help achieve the tribes’ ultimate goal: 144,000 male virgins. The group says it needs to produce that number of male virgins to bring the second coming of Jesus Christ and the apocalypse, as cited in the book of revelations. At the Yellow Deli, the group distributes whimsically-designed pamphlets that introduce customers to its beliefs.

The Authority Teachings states that parents are supposed to strike their children or create “stripes that wound,” according to the text reviewed by the CUI.

“These stripes are the only way the heart can be reached,” the text reads. “Injury is to impair soundness of health; to wound. But stripes or marks from loving discipline shows love by the parent.”

The author of the teachings is the Twelve Tribes founder, Gene Spriggs. He founded the group as a small Christian community in Chattanooga, Tennessee, preaching in his home and baptizing people in the lake behind his house. Spriggs started a group in 1972 that would become the Twelve Tribes and opened the first Yellow Deli to support the group soon after. The group is commonly cited as having between 2,000-3,000 members. Since its founding, the tribes have faced accusations of being a cult and spouting fundamentalist ideology.

In the teachings, Spriggs states that “the goal of the rod is to break the willful resistance of a child’s rebellion, which would take him to the second death.”

Second death is described in the teachings as a spiritual death where people suffer in “The Lake of Fire” or Hell. Brosseau said the Twelve Tribes uses the concept of second death to cultivate obedience in the community, a key tribute of cult-like behavior.

Within the Authority Teachings, the cult also acknowledges that some people call their discipline “child abuse.” Spriggs worked quickly to discredit this logic in the teachings.

“There are people who have created theories that using the rod to discipline is called child abuse, this causes some parents to be afraid and to question the use of discipline ... This is why the antichrist will be able to come in, because all of the restraint of lawlessness is being removed,” Spriggs writes in the Authority Teachings.

Spriggs and his followers have attracted other investigations by the news media. A documentary aired on a German TV network sent undercover reporters to compounds that uncovered “systematic beatings” of children. An Inside Edition investigation in 2018 found instances of child labor in the upstate New York community, the same which Alex grew up in. Along with the CUI reporters’ trip to the Boulder compound where a beating appeared to be heard, no one directly tied the same behavior from other compounds to the Boulder community but many said practices are similar across communities.

The tribes’ teachings came to Boulder with 63-year-old Andrew Wolfe, a long-time organization member and current leader in Boulder. Wolfe set up the Boulder Community in 2009 with the intention of spreading it beyond its eastern U.S. roots. During that year, Boulder leaders began holding meetings in their homes and finally got a building lease on Pearl Street in 2010 — the building that houses the Yellow Deli.

A community leader told the CUI reporters while at the compound that the Boulder Twelve Tribes community members cycle between working at the Yellow Deli and at the compound five days during the week. During Saturday and Sunday, all community members return to the compound for

the Sabbath — a period where they do not work and gather for religious ceremonies. Profit from the Yellow Deli directly funds the expenses at the compound.

During the CUI’s undercover trip to the Boulder compound, reporters observed about 30 members, 15 of whom were children. Many of the children appeared to be extremely obedient and close with the adults who oversaw them. Much of the behavior the reporters noticed seemed to coincide with the group’s teachings.

During that trip, when Wolfe was asked if the Twelve Tribes was a cult, he said, “if the Twelve Tribes is a cult, the Catholic Church is a cult.”

However, Brosseau, the ex-member and Liberation Point founder, argued that “in a catholic church, that’s only one part of (a member’s) life.”

In a cult, she said, members’ lives completely revolve around religion. Brosseau also said that other characteristics classify the Twelve Tribes as a cult such as totalitarian leadership with a charismatic and narcissistic leader, black and white thinking, controlling knowledge and isolation. Other experts, like Catherine Mann who has a PhD in religious psychology, told the CUI the tribes meet the definition of a cult.

Brosseau said Yoneq, founder Gene Sprigg’s Hebrew name that his followers affectionately call him, employed all of these methods to “indoctrinate and maintain control over Twelve Tribes members.”

Luke Wiseman, the most powerful ex-member interviewed for this story, described Twelve Tribes inner workings as an authoritarian and “threat-based system.” At one time, Wiseman was a national leader, called a “tribal leader,” who worked very closely with Spriggs and his wife Marsha.

Wiseman said when members leave, they’re considered dead to the community. While he is likely seen as socially dead to Twelve Tribe members, he says he still loves his former community.

“All of us who left love our friends and family in the Twelve Tribes. And we have not cut them off,” Wiseman said. “But they’ve cut us off.”

## Inside the CUI’s investigation of the Yellow Deli

by Lauren Sandal

It was a short, off-hand story from a classmate that lead us to a cult just above the Boulder Valley.

My reporting partner Nicole Dorfman and I had set to find out what was going on in the Yellow Deli, a 24-hour restaurant and frequent study spot on Pearl Street that earned a reputation of being a cult.

Over the summer, we took two trips to the deli. We amplified our college student-credentials, showing them our more vulnerable side to garner their interest in us. We did not tell them we were reporters. Journalists are not well-liked in the community.

Over home-style cinnamon rolls and a peachy cold drink, I learned about who they were and what they believe. The Yellow Deli employees and I connected over Christianity.

The visit included an eerily perfect garden tour with an orange-hued sunset and an introduction to their history in Boulder. In other circumstances, it would have been a pleasant evening at a rural outpost overlooking our college town. But there was something off.

The abuse detailed in the “Authority Teachings,” a manual written by Spriggs on the group’s beliefs and practices of child-rearing, became real to us.

The research Nicole and I pored over showed a clear pattern that was hurting children physically and manipulating people’s self-esteem to reduce them into something incapable of surviving without the community.

Researching this story brought Nicole and I face to face with deep questions about this community and about our own. When does connection become abusive? How much belief is too much belief, especially when that belief involves hurting children?

**This story has been abbreviated for print. To read how the CUI investigated the Yellow Deli, go to our site, [cuiindependent.com](http://cuiindependent.com).**



# 'Vaping's dead'

An illustration of a hand holding a black vape device. A large, billowing cloud of light blue and white vapor rises from the device, filling the upper half of the page. The hand is rendered in shades of orange and brown. The background is a solid light gray.

by  
*Robert Tann,  
Hannah Metzger,  
Anna Haynes  
and  
Julia-Rose Kibben*

## As sweeping regulations hit the vape industry, Boulder's new ban on flavored products spells major changes for businesses and users.

Xander Kahn uses vape products for what he calls "the right reasons." Looking to end his cigarette addiction, Khan switched at the age of 16 to other nicotine devices, opting for flavored liquids delivered through a battery-powered "mod." Now a 20-year-old junior at the University of Colorado Boulder, Khan is a daily vape user.

"I had originally started with higher concentrations of nicotine in the juice and I've been able to work my way down to six-milligram(s)," Khan said. "I've been looking to go down to three and then to zero and then to stop altogether. And that's kind of why the mod industry got started. It's really just to have you wean off of it and use less and less nicotine until you're at the point where you're just doing the mouth motions."

Now, new laws in the City of Boulder spell major changes for users and the industry. On Sept. 17, Boulder City Council formally approved a ban on all sales of flavored vaporized products and raised the legal age to buy nicotine and tobacco to 21. Council also approved a 40 percent sales tax on all remaining legal vape products, which Boulder voters approved on Nov. 5.

It's a move that Khan said he did not see coming, at least not in Boulder.

"I thought it was just going to be a lot more regulation within the industry itself, kind of like where the weed industry is going," Khan said. "I was surprised to see it was just a cut-off ban."

For people looking to wean off cigarettes by using flavored products, Khan said the decision is unfair. While vaping comes with a host of risks and health effects, for Khan and other users, particularly nicotine addicts, it still gives them a better alternative.

"(The city is) taking away our own freedom and choice to be able to say, 'I realize I'm still addicted to nicotine, however, I don't want to go back to known cancer-causing cigarettes,'" Khan said. "So, I feel like they're kind of taking away that choice

from us to do a safer alternative. Maybe not completely safe, but safer."

Taylor Turbyne, a CU junior, turned to Juul after "bumming cigarettes" from people during the summer. The USB-like device has been the subject of national scrutiny due to its alleged predatory marketing towards younger people and its high nicotine concentration. One pod is roughly equal to the same amount of nicotine in a packet of cigarettes.

Turbyne feels the company has only hurt the vape industry's image.

"I think it absolutely had a negative impact because Juuls were targeted to kids," Turbyne said. But Boulder's ban extends to many other vaporized products, and Turbyne worries a ban could lead users back down the path of cigarettes.

"I think (the ban) is silly to say the least," Turbyne said. "Young kids, they're already addicted to nicotine. So, with the ban, they're just gonna turn to cigarettes. I'm gonna try to cut out nicotine altogether. I think that cigarettes are a bad path, but that's the position that Boulder's putting people in."

Propelled by continuing reports of vape related deaths, the Trump administration has announced plans to implement a country-wide ban of all flavored vaporized products. But both Khan and Turbyne feel the apparent crisis has become sensationalized.

"I feel like a lot of the headlines were clickbait," Khan said. "Yes, the deaths actually occurred, and it's an actual serious thing that we should be looking into. And we have really only scratched the surface of it because it's so recent."

Industry regulation should have been the alternative to a ban, said one local business owner. Now, because of Boulder's decision, her shop faces closure.





Xander Kahn blows out a cloud of vapor from his mod. Sept. 25, 2019.  
(Casey Paul/CU Independent)

Ginger Tanner has owned the Boulder Vape House for over six years. Her husband, Sean, had been addicted to cigarettes since high school and found success in quitting by moving to flavored vape products. Now, the couple run their business to give nicotine users a choice outside of cigarettes.

“When (Sean) ended up seeing that transition in his life, he found an opportunity to help other people,” Tanner said. But following the city’s decision to clamp down on products, Tanner had no choice but to close her store for good in late October. In 2018, around 97 percent of Boulder Vape Houses’ sales came from flavored e-liquid products.

“It’s heartbreaking,” Tanner said. “We have seen thousands of people convert from smoking cigarettes to using vapor products to never coming in any longer because they’re no longer vaping even. As an industry that is not big tobacco, and is disrupting big tobacco, (the ban) is absolutely mind-blowing.”

Tanner hoped the city would have opted for stricter regulations for both the vape industry and legal sellers. She supports raising the buying age to 21, which she agrees would help remove the teen demographic who have access to products much

like liquor stores and dispensaries.

“You’re putting regulations on businesses like ours, but there is not regulation that is going to change for cigarettes,” Tanner said. “Why are we being subjected to more scrutiny than alcohol (or marijuana)?”

Boulder’s decision came after pressure from area parents, many of who have children in Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) and were alarmed at the growing rate of teen vape use. Around 33 percent of BVSD students admitted to consuming tobacco vapor, exceeding the Colorado average of 26.2 percent. The national average is even lower at 13.2 percent.

Tanner has a 14-year-old daughter and though she has been surround by a vaping environment most of her life, Tanner said she and her husband have been “proactive” about educating her about the risks.

“It’s the parents’ role to parent their children,” Tanner said. “She understands ‘you’re going to be an adult when you’re an adult.’ If she was caught vaping or using drugs or alcohol, there would be consequences.”

Tanner also felt that the introduction of Juul opened a Pandora’s Box for the industry. She was

hesitant at first to stock the product, which at the time contained more nicotine than anything else on the market. But she and her husband needed to keep up with demand, so like many other sellers, they carried it.

As for cigarette rates, Tanner believes they may soar as a result of the ban.

“It is very sad to have customers come in and hear, ‘what does Boulder want me to do? Go back to smoking cigarettes?’” Tanner said. “I hear it every day.” She added that despite media headlines of vape-related deaths, it is incomparable to cigarettes. The culprits of many vape-related instances have also been found to be illicitly purchased THC pods.

480,000 people die annually in the U.S. due to lung cancer from cigarette use. Currently, there have been 11 reported vape related deaths, though hundreds have been hospitalized. Still, Tanner asks, “how is that even a comparable factor?” Ultimately, her closure is a blow to the community, Tanner said. For years, she and her husband have spearheaded the Hill Block Party, an event meant to give back to the community. “We’ve always donated our own money into the community of this event, providing thousands upon thousands of dollars,” Tanner said. “The event was always focused on our community

awareness, getting college students involved with the community up here. It has never been about our business, but trying to get people to acknowledge that the Hill is a district that they can come and hang out for food, retail and entertainment.”

With Boulder Vape House gone, Tanner said the event will cease to exist.



Ginger Tanner stands in her shop, Boulder Vapor House. Tanner and her husband, Sean, say they have no choice but to close their shop following the city’s ban. Sept. 19, 2019. (Ryan Corbett/CU Independent)

Dylan Sylvest, shift lead at Boulder Vapor House, vapes for his own mental health. Following three concussions that led to nerve damage, Sylvest relies on nicotine to raise his dopamine levels and lessen pain. He also has hypomania, a condition of persistent mood elevation, and he said vaping keeps him “from

bouncing off the walls.”

He has vaped regularly for six years, and with the ban in Boulder, he has had no choice but to “stock up” on flavored products.

“I thought I had a life in the nicotine industry ... but if everything’s going away, I don’t know anymore,” Sylvest said.

Getting out of Boulder is one thing, but should a national ban be put in place, Sylvest said he “doesn’t know what he’ll do.”

He blames the Food and Drug Administration for letting vape-related issues slide until it ultimately snowballed into both local and



and national outcry. Like Tanner, Sylvest wished there had been more regulation by the department instead of cities like Boulder choosing a ban.

"Nobody wants to put in the time and research to know what actually works," Sylvest said. "They just want to ban it and say 'now that's something I don't have to worry about anymore.'"

Sylvest intends to do everything possible to avoid cigarettes. He and Tanner see the industry that they are in as a combat to big tobacco.

"Go back to cigarettes, that's what you are being told," Sylvest said. "At least we are giving you a chance (to quit cigarettes)."

As for the 40 percent sales tax approved by voters in November, Sylvest said with businesses like Boulder Vapor House closing, a tax won't be much help for the community.

"40 percent of 0 is 0," Sylvest said. He added that vaping is already expensive enough, with the mods he uses costing around \$100. The average price for a pack of cigarettes in Colorado is \$5.65.

"Vaping's dead," Sylvest said.

"Smoking's back," Tanner added.

Bonnie Dahl, owner of head shop The Fitter, called the 40 percent tax the "nail in the coffin" for e-liquid products, and she expects it will be popular with most Boulder residents.

"The big issue regarding all these new regulations in the city of Boulder is the fact that all the neighboring cities will then get the business and sales tax revenue," Dahl said. "It also will probably create a new black market in Boulder."

The rise of a black market is likely, according to then Boulder Mayor Pro Tem Sam Weaver.

"It would be the natural response," Weaver said. "We expect that other cities in Boulder County will be behind us so a black market will be harder and harder to materialize."

Dahl said Juul's increased marketing ultimately led to the backlash. She said she has seen her sales of Juuls drop as customers move towards products that allow them to exhale CBD or essential oils.

"The end result is that (Juul) addicted a whole new generation of young people who never had intentions to use nicotine and were never cigarette smokers," Dahl said.

"We know (the ban) will affect our business revenue, but it now seems very inevitable that this is not just a Boulder movement, but much larger at the national level."

According to Weaver, the industry is a "free-for-all" when it comes to licensed sellers of e-liquid products. He said the closure of businesses like Boulder Vapor House was "collateral damage."

"We did not intend to shut anyone down," Weaver said. "Decisions that representatives have to make will have some winners and some losers."

Joelle Rossback, the mother of a high school freshman and member of "Advocates for Clean Teens," is a winner in that game.

"We're responsible for (the ban)," Rossback said. "Our group came to be just from hearing from our kids in the district, in particular Boulder High, (about) how rampant the vaping is. They see it in the locker rooms, they see it in the bathrooms, they see it in the classrooms. And I will tell you that my daughter in middle school was offered vaping products."

Rossback said she believes the ban will help



Dylan Sylvest has vaped for six years. He uses nicotine to lessen the pain of nerve damage due to his three concussions. With Boulder's ban, Sylvest has stocked up on flavored e-liquids, doing everything possible to avoid cigarettes. Sept. 19, 2019. (Ryan Corbett/CU Independent)



Customers inside the Boulder Vapor House on University Hill. With the business closing, its owner says the annual community Hill Block Party will cease to exist. Sept. 19, 2019. (Ryan Corbett/CU Independent)

curb teen vaping. To those who rely on it to quit cigarettes, Rossback said, "it's moving from one addiction to another."

"(Vaping is a) worse addiction because the nicotine is so incredibly addictive," Rossback said. "The suggestion would be to use FDA-regulated products like nicotine patches, nicotine gum and things like those."

Still, Rossback said, "sadly, I do think that some will end up going in the direction of cigarettes."

"I think this is more about preventing more kids from getting addicted," she added.

As for a national ban, Rossback called it a step in the right direction. She said cigarettes still need to be reigned in but called vaping an "emergency" that needs immediate action. As for an alternative to Boulder's ban, Rossback said there is nothing else that could have been done.

"Let's be real, the adults can order online, they can go drive 10 miles or five miles or whatever it is, they can get what they need," Rossback said.

Boulder Mayor Suzanne Jones said the decision was not easy for City Council, which was "very concerned about the impact on local business but

had to prioritize public health concerns."

"We are sympathetic to businesses that are quite responsible," Jones said. "But then there are a whole number of businesses that were clearly not being responsible and selling these products to underage users."

She said she recognizes that some people have turned to vaping as an alternative to smoking cigarettes, but called the fear that the ban will turn people to big tobacco an "argument that industry people" brought to the city.

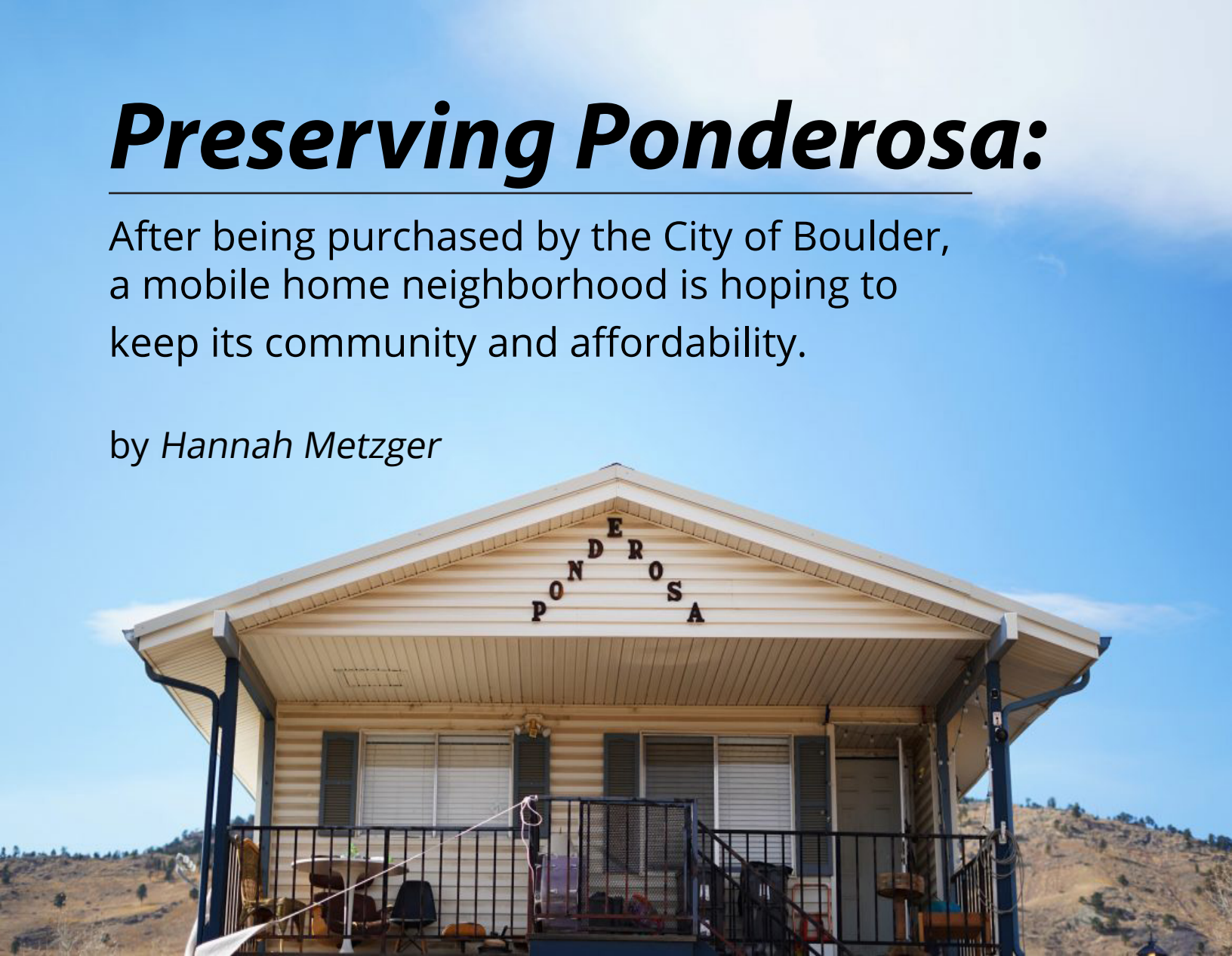
"I think that the bigger problem is keeping younger people from getting addicted to nicotine in the first place," Jones said. "We should learn from history around the tobacco industry and how it promoted deliberately and misleadingly that tobacco was safe and then fought regulations while people died from lung disease. We need to not repeat that cycle with the latest generation of nicotine delivery devices. Public health and taking care of youth is job number one."



# Preserving Ponderosa:

After being purchased by the City of Boulder, a mobile home neighborhood is hoping to keep its community and affordability.

by Hannah Metzger



The community building of Ponderosa Mobile Home Community on Nov. 22, 2019. Ponderosa was purchased by the City of Boulder in 2017 and was annexed into the city in 2019 (Hannah Metzger/CU Independent)

The Ponderosa Mobile Home Community may seem out of place in affluent Boulder, but it's a haven for its 190 residents – more racially diverse, more tight-knit and less expensive than the surrounding city.

Residents want to preserve their paradise and are cautiously optimistic about the city's plans to reconstruct Ponderosa, gradually replacing the mobile homes with permanent affordable housing built by Habitat for Humanity.

Ponderosa is an aging park. Several lots sit empty and filled with trash, while others are newly renovated and sport white picket fences. Only one-fifth of the mobile homes were built after 1976,

meaning the vast majority do not meet the federal construction and safety standards that were established that year.

In 2017, the City of Boulder bought the park for \$4.2 million. A vote on Oct. 22 by Boulder City Council annexed the land, which had been within Boulder County but outside the city limits.

Ponderosa, which has 68 units, is planned to be redeveloped unit by unit, with current residents given the option of keeping their mobile homes or purchasing a Habitat for Humanity home. No new residents will be permitted, and all lots will be developed into Habitat homes following the death of current residents.

"Many households are grateful for the effort and the opportunity for improved living conditions," said Crystal Launder, a housing planner for the city. "Some distrust that the city will allow residents to remain in their homes."

After annexation, the city will be responsible for replacing the park's current infrastructure, paving the streets and putting in new sewer and water systems.

Launder said the city plans to break ground to replace infrastructure in June. Construction of homes on vacant sections of the property is set to begin in the fall.

The city is offering to buy out mobile homes from residents, allowing those who choose to buy a Habitat home to use the equity from their mobile home as a down payment, a financial opportunity Richard Watkins is grateful for.

To Watkins, the affordability of Ponderosa is one of its most important traits.

"It's the only place you can be in Boulder at this price," he said.

One realtor's website puts Boulder's median home value at \$752,000 with other real estate agencies estimating the average price of a detached, single-family Boulder house to be over \$1.2 million. By comparison, the median home value in the U.S. is \$231,000.

The city intends for the Habitat homes to cost from \$111,000 to \$190,000, with payments for low-income families not exceeding \$800 per month to maintain affordability, as reported by the

Colorado Independent. It's a significant increase to Ponderosa's current \$540 lot rent, as most residents already own their mobile homes. But that increase is worth it for Watkins.

"We've been just renting the lot all these years, so having the city do it and turn into actual houses means we actually own something," Watkins said.

Watkins said he has already seen improvements in the park under Boulder's ownership. After a recent snowstorm, the dirt roads of the park were plowed for the first time in years. Watkins is confident about the future of the park and excited to take the city up on its offer to develop his plot into a Habitat home.

"My trailer is from 1953, and it has no value and they're giving me quite a lot of value for it," Watkins said.

This is the case for many Ponderosa

residents. Half of the mobile homes in Ponderosa are 50 years old or more, according to a survey conducted by the city in August.

Watkins has lived in Ponderosa since 1974 and has become sentimentally attached to the community. He has multiple sclerosis and called Ponderosa, "the last place I'll be independent."

To him, Ponderosa's diversity and sense of community sets it apart from the rest of Boulder. His neighbors range from his former Boulder High School classmates from 1972 to immigrants from Germany, Mexico and Africa.

Reyna Espinoza has lived in Ponderosa with her family of six for five years. Espinoza is a recent graduate of Boulder High School and,



Richard Watkins poses outside of his mobile home on Nov. 27, 2019. Watkins has lived in Ponderosa for 45 years but is unsurprised by the upcoming redevelopment. "When I moved in here in the '70s, I knew that this could turn into condos so easily," he said. (Hannah Metzger/CU Independent)



like many Ponderosa residents, is of Mexican descent.

According to a city survey, 46.2% of Ponderosa residents identify as Hispanic. Only 9.26% of Boulder’s population is Hispanic or Latino.

“It’s great living here since there are a lot of Mexican and white people living here and we all get together,” Espinoza said.

This kind of tight-knit community is what drew Espinoza’s family to Ponderosa in the first place. They had previously lived in an apartment complex but found a sense of peace and tranquility within Ponderosa that the apartments lacked.

“I feel like the community is more connected,” Espinoza said. “Our neighbors really like to be together. It’s a really peaceful neighborhood ... and you can pretty much live your life here without anyone being all involved in it.”

Fernando Perez agrees with Ponderosa’s interconnectedness. Perez and his family have lived in Ponderosa for 10 years, having come to Ponderosa seeking a strong sense of community.

“It’s really quiet; it’s really nice,” Perez said. “People come together for every occasion.”

Both Espinoza and Perez said that their families have yet to decide if they will keep their mobile homes or opt for a Habitat for Humanity house. However, both families are generally unconcerned



Reyna Espinoza, 18, poses outside of the fence of her mobile home in Ponderosa on Nov. 27, 2019. Espinoza and her family have lived in Ponderosa for five years. (Hannah Metzger/CU Independent)

about the impending changes.

“I feel like it’s a good idea as long as they don’t change the way we’re living,” Espinoza said

Preserving Ponderosa’s community is resident Bernard’s central concern.

Bernard, who preferred not to use his last name for privacy reasons, is originally from Germany and has lived in Ponderosa for 22 years.

A former drug user now five years clean, Bernard said that Ponderosa has allowed him to live freely, always offering acceptance and support.

“I have lived a very wild life, and Ponderosa never punished me for that,” Bernard said.

Bernard said he feels such a part of the community that he wore a sign on his chest reading, “I am Ponderosa” at the last Boulder City Council meeting discussing Boulder’s purchase of the park.

“It is not a community like those apartment complexes across the street where one neighbor doesn’t have a clue who the next-door neighbor is,” Bernard said. “This place is of great importance for how we move into a future as mankind.”

Some residents are concerned that Ponderosa may begin to feel like an apartment complex as 66% of the Habitat units are going to be duplexes and another 15% are going to be triplexes and fourplexes. Only 19% will be single-family homes or stand-alone carriage homes.

Still, Bernard is hopeful about the community’s



Bernard poses in the living room of a mobile home he is renovating for another resident on Nov. 27, 2019. Bernard has lived and worked in Ponderosa for 22 years, calling the community, “very open, hard-working, full of heart.” (Hannah Metzger/CU Independent)

future.

“The city has never really let us down,” Bernard said. “It was basically a good-naturedness of the city to let us survive.”

Bernard said that he knows of multiple residents moving away out of fear of the city’s plans for Ponderosa.

He said others are being permanently pushed to other plots in the community because their mobile homes are in spaces where “tension pumps” must be installed to prevent street flooding. In 2013, Ponderosa suffered from a catastrophic flood, causing significant damage that eventually lead to the city becoming involved in the community to help replace infrastructure. Bernard said he’s currently renovating a mobile home for one of those displaced residents to move into.

“Ponderosa has absolutely blossoming future potential,” Bernard said. “But we have a few people who suffer.”

### About the project:

This article is one in a five-part series on Boulder’s hidden working class. The CUI’s Hannah Metzger looks at a side of Boulder often not associated with the affluent city.

The series explores the lives of working class citizens as well as changing minimum wage laws in Colorado and a breakdown of affordable housing in Boulder.

You can read the full series at [cuiindependent.com](http://cuiindependent.com).



# The Global Climate Strike alone won't save the planet

by Savannah Mather

I, like many other people, have always been a fan of a good protest. Nothing says “stick it to the man” like a large group of passionate people holding up signs, yelling in uniformity. The University of Colorado Boulder is no stranger to protests and strikes. The Global Climate Strike held at Norlin Quad on Sept. 20 drew a considerable amount of attention from both students and faculty alike, but I cannot help but wonder if this will just be another commemorative event for Boulderites to show off to everyone else that their climate change signs are the best.

Protests, marches, strikes and organized groups have strong roots in shaping this nation's history. Those who agree that history repeats itself would probably also notice that our current social and political climate seems to be reverting back to these fundamental strategies. In the age of Black Lives Matter, March For Our Lives and #MeToo, the bus carrying all of these social issues picked up climate change on the side of the road and told it to get comfortable.

The strike at Norlin played out like many other national strikes have in the past: lots of hand-written signs that were posted all over Instagram and Snapchat, adrenaline highs from yelling at absolutely no one in particular about plastic straws and a few inspiring messages from those who really believed that the turn out would change the world. And then it was over.

The official Global Climate Strike website provides tips on how to “make your own climate strike graphics,” a page to download images for your own poster, and a “#climatestrike art-making kit,” but no individual tips on how someone can actually limit their environmental impact. There should at the very least be a reminder to all of those stressing over the aesthetic of their signs to remember to recycle them when the strike is over.

As someone who has participated in a march

before with March For Our Lives in Washington, D.C., I can attest that protests are great in unifying people that are fighting for the same cause. It is extremely rewarding to stand shoulder to shoulder next to complete strangers who are just as passionate about something as you are. However, I have not seen a single legislative or political change in regards to gun control. These marches took place all over the country and rather than policy change, we are left instead with bulletproof backpacks and fear of whether or not we'll be a victim of the next mass shooting.

“In the age of Black Lives Matter, March For Our Lives and #MeToo, the bus carrying all of these social issues picked up climate change on the side of the road and told it to get comfortable.”

Climate change is without a doubt one of the most pressing issues of our time. People care so much about it that 150 countries planned events of their own on Sept. 20 to raise awareness and urge institutionalized and individualized action that will increase efforts towards sustainability.

Like many other protests, the Global Climate Strike was organized by socially involved youth who urged students and faculty to walk out of their classes or their jobs in an effort to enhance environmental advocacy and civic engagement.

Increasing awareness and demanding lawmakers to do something about the current environmental crisis is important. However, people forget that it's one thing to hold up a sign with words describing the world's problems and another to



Students gathered on Norlin Quad to strike for climate justice. Sept. 20, 2019.  
(Ryan Corbett/CU Independent)

take individualized action towards solving them. Of course, there is no harm in participating in protests, marches and strikes. However, I cannot help but wonder if participating in them is more for our own self-fulfillment rather than for demonstrating the need for political change.

Myself and residents of my hometown walked down Pennsylvania Avenue the day March For Our Lives held its first march with high hopes that Congress would see all of our young faces desperately fighting for gun control. I cannot say that our efforts were put to waste, or that I didn't at least for a second feel like what I was doing was going to leave a mark on history. I will say, however, that I am extremely disappointed with the lack of response and acknowledgment from Congress and the President. Am I surprised? Honestly, no. Not in this political climate.

It would be wrong to say that I am here to tell all of the youth climate strikers that their efforts were useless, but I do hope they realize government officials aren't always moved by homemade posters.

Last month, the Trump administration proposed a plan to revoke regulations on methane leaks

produced by oil and gas companies. In 2017, the President removed climate change from the list of national security threats. These are just two examples among a much longer list of actions the President has taken to otherwise reverse all progress against climate change. This means we are retaliating against a government that doesn't consider climate change a threat in the first place. Our signs and our chants mean nothing in the eyes of a bunch of officials receiving hefty paychecks from big oil and gas companies.

Organized assembly does have wonderful effects in the eyes of social and political movements. We see that throughout U.S. history, protests and movements don't actually work in influencing government officials, but they do prompt people to be politically active by doing one thing: voting.

The 2020 election is not too far away, and for those of us who participated in the Global Climate Strike, we must remember that signs, marches, chants and hashtags are all great. But they mean nothing without your vote too.



# Retire your university meal-plan and buy your snacks off-campus

by Vayle LaFehr

C U Boulder students suffocate under the weight of college tuition, living expenses and university fees. Likewise, dining hall meal plans are ridiculously overpriced, costing students thousands more than they would pay for food from the grocery store. CU also marks up prices for the most basic of food items, such as toiletries and other necessities in on-campus markets. Students should ditch their meal-plans and save their money.

Federal data shows that the price of a typical college dining hall contract has increased by 47% in the last decade. At the same time, national food costs only rose by 26%. Undergraduates who buy into dining hall contracts typically spend much more on food than the average American. And this difference isn't always hundreds of dollars; sometimes, it's thousands.

Reasons for cost inflation include labor, facilities, demands from students for higher quality food and increased earnings. Many universities generate a lot of revenue from their dining halls, markets and cafés. CU charges about \$7 per meal. For a 15-19 meal-per-week contract that adds up to between \$3,150 and \$3,990 per academic year. In comparison, a student can eat for less than \$11 a day using store-bought or grocery items, depending on where they go for food. This comes out to about \$2,310 maximum per academic year. Students can save upwards of \$1,890 per school year by opting out of the meal plan.

There are three notable stipulations to the CU meal plan. First, if students do not use all of the swipes on their Buff OneCard that week, the swipes are not reimbursed or refunded. Second, freshmen aren't allowed to opt-out if they live in residence halls on campus unless they have a medical disability waiver. Third, any upperclassman who decides to buy a meal plan is subject to pay tax on it. With these limitations and pressures on consumption, CU doesn't put adequate effort into

providing financial help or less costly alternatives for a basic and daily necessity: eating. Furthermore, CU doesn't really even give freshmen the ability to choose a less expensive method.

CU does, however, offer supplemental cash for use at campus cafés and markets. They call this Munch Money. Depending on the number of meals a student buys for the semester, students have anywhere between \$150 and \$270 in Munch Money. Munch Money is pre-loaded onto students' Buff One cards. Still, this extra cash translates to little more than a few cups of coffee and snacks in the dorm.

For example, the University Memorial Center charges \$2.39 for a Kind bar. Whole Foods in Boulder charges \$1.99, while bars are even cheaper at the Safeway in Boulder at a \$1.69. Likewise, Bobo's Oat Bars are \$3.29 at Kittredge Market and can cost up to \$3.99 at the William's Village Market, whereas they are only \$2.49 at the Target in Boulder.

But not every student can afford a car or take extra travel time to get to places like Whole Foods, Safeway and Target. The most convenient option is eating on campus between classes, club meetings and other school obligations and so students wind up paying these ridiculous prices.

Why won't the university provide student discounts or, at the very least, charge reasonable prices for something as simple as a granola bar? There are many reasons, but the simple answer is that CU has no obligation to.

Students don't address their own financial exploitation at CU. My prescription is, if you can, opt out of the dining meal-plan and buy your snacks off-campus. You could save over \$1000. As a freshman, you may not have this opportunity yet. If you would like to address a greater cause, demand more transparency about over-priced meal plans and cost inflation in campus markets.

# Students should not have to surrender academic life to the fear of gun violence

by Zoe Schact

I n a big lecture hall filled with over 100 students, each set of eyes focused on the professor and the glowing, projected screen behind him. Suddenly, a fraternity pledge ran into the room screaming. Not one student paid attention to the professor anymore. I got down to hide. The girl next to me stood to run. Our professor yelled, "Hey!" and lunged towards the screaming pledge. A majority of those in class naturally followed the University of Colorado Boulder's guide for an active harmer scenario (Run, Hide, Fight), and my constant awareness of exits in rooms suddenly became needed information. The pledge ran away and those in the lecture hall were left with adrenaline-filled veins, thinking about how easy it would have been for the pledge to be an active shooter.

Students are constantly ready for there to be an attack, but this should not have to be the case. The fear of an active shooter noticeably impacts students' lives. In 2017, 6.7% of high school students reported that they did not go to school because of safety concerns. For many, this is not a surprising number. School shootings and mass shootings have become more common within the lifetime of us Generation Z young adults.

"I feel it is possible there could be an attack here at CU, but I also know that it is unlikely," CU freshman Zoe Papier said. "I know I was more afraid of it in high school."

As of 2018, 25% of active shootings occurred in school settings. A survey conducted with teenagers aged 13-17 in 2018 stated that 57% of teens worry a school shooting could happen at their school. The looming threat of attacks at school is the new reality for students.

While many people beg for gun control and reforming mental health within the country, students' newfound anxiety surrounding these horrific events is ignored. But all the talk on social

media and in the news media leads students to be more anxious. Experts have linked the threat of mass shootings to be damaging to mental health.

As attacks continue, young people's mental health suffers because of their preparation for everything that could, and sometimes does, go wrong. Bulletproof backpacks started trending in 2016 and sales have continued to grow since. For the 2019 school year, they were even sold on the shelves of Office Depot. A majority of the sales for these backpacks come from parents. These companies directly target worrisome parents and have even gone as far as putting Disney symbols on the bags.

Even though fraternity pledges screaming in lecture halls are not a threat to students' safety, this scenario demonstrates just how quickly an attack could occur here. Because of this, students walk around prepared for an attack at any moment. This anxiety has lead students — like me — to constantly plan exit strategies and think through life or death scenarios.

"Yes, I do plan for exit strategies," said CU freshman Jessica Ladymon. "I already have a diagnosed anxiety disorder, but on top of that, I lived in Aurora right next to the theater on the night of the shooting. (I) haven't been to a movie since."

This fear is not fair. Students should not feel unsafe when at school. CU's mission statement is "to shape tomorrow's leaders, be the top University for innovation, and to positively impact humanity." Anxiety driven by the potential of violence negatively impacts students' potential to be tomorrow's leaders, as well as their ability to contribute to CU's innovation and to positively impact humanity. Students should not feel like they are risking their lives to get their degree.



# ‘The queen of campus’: Ralphie V remembered by her team for spirit, personality

by Ellie Jeffries



CU’s Ralphie Runners lead Ralphie V down the field before kickoff at Mile High Stadium. August 30, 2019. (Casey Paul/CU Independent)

A thousand-pound buffalo and a football tradition unlike any other, the University of Colorado’s Ralphie run is a spectacle that ignites fans from Folsom Field and beyond. Tuesday, Nov. 12 marked the end of an era as CU announced Ralphie V’s retirement. A spunky, full of personality buffalo, Ralphie V has had more than a successful career at CU.

At 13 years old, Ralphie V’s retirement comes after 12 seasons of leading the Buffaloes football team as their live mascot. Fond memories from Ralphie handlers, runners and coaches characterize the one of a kind Ralphie V as the icon of the university.

“She’s the best,” said John Graves, Ralphie Program manager. “It’s an honor that I get to care for Ralphie V.”

Graves headed the program during a transition

phase in 2007, when Ralphie IV retired, working closely to train her successor. Now nearly a decade later, Ralphie V’s retirement comes under unique circumstances. Rather than suffering from fatigue as she entered older age, Ralphie V’s stamina only increased. She’s is the fastest Ralphie to date.

“She’s been unique compared to the other Ralphie’s in that she’s actually sped up throughout her career,” Graves said. “She was so eager and excited to run that she was starting to leave her pen and run before we wanted her to.”

For Graves, the length of her career and force in which she runs are a testament to what a powerful buffalo she is.

“She knows she’s the queen of the campus,” Graves said. “She acts like that when she runs out onto the field.”

Ralphie is meant to embody the great qualities

of CU including tenacity, determination and spirit. Ralphie V embodied these to the max, always putting on a show for the student body who were eager to cheer her on during the game opener and at half-time.

“She is the great icon of the university,” Graves said. “Everyone looks to her leading the football team out onto the field and representing our great university.”

For the Ralphie Handlers, sometimes dubbed the “Ralphie Runners,” their bond with Ralphie V is strong and their memories plentiful.

Savannah Spakes is in her second year with the program and has run exclusively with Ralphie V. Looking back on her time with the retiring buffalo, she recounted her calm, cool and collected temperament when she’s not rearing to run.

“At showings, she is usually really calm or relaxed,” Spakes said. “She’s hanging out with her eyes closed and the little kids always ask if she’s sleeping or napping, she just is so relaxed and happy in front of people. She can be that calm.”

During her time as a handler, Spakes saw her relationship with Ralphie V become closer and more trusting as the buffalo got to know her.

“She’s not as trepidatious around me as she was as (when) I was a rookie,” Spakes said. “Being able to get up close to her and know that she knows who I am is really cool.”

Lewis Schiebel is a veteran on the team and in his fourth year of Ralphie running. For him, gameday runs have stuck out as his favorite memories with Ralphie V.

“Gamedays are always special,” Schiebel said. “The emotions and excitement, as well as the success we have, are always memorable.”

Unknown to many, a buffaloes personality can be quite complex.

“She’s dynamic,” Schiebel said. “She has moods and emotions just like a person.”

After spending four years with Ralphie V, Schiebel is familiar with the varying moods of the personality-packed buff.

“There are days she’s not trying to run us into the dirt,” Schiebel said. “Then other days she’s really fired up and we’ll go to practice or be at a game and she’ll run our tails off.”

After watching her speed increase and

her ability to take cues from Ralphie runners decrease, Graves determined that retirement was the best option for her. The biggest and strongest Ralphie yet, she lived up to her iconic role within the university. As the team and CU says goodbye to Ralphie V, many prepare to say hello to Ralphie VI in 2020. Graves already knows what he’s searching for in that next buffalo.

“We’re mostly looking for a buffalo that wants to be around people,” Graves said. “Who wants to lead the football team onto the field.”



CU Ralphie Runners charge down the field as Ralphie, the CU mascot, runs with them. Sep. 7, 2019. (Casey Paul/CU Independent)



## Driven by her older brother, Haileigh Adams eyes professional soccer

by Adam Bender

Growing up the younger sister of a Canadian Football League quarterback, Haileigh Adams admitted she always felt in her brother's shadow. Her brother, Vernon, passed for over 5,000 yards and threw nearly 50 touchdowns in his final two seasons in high school. At that time Haileigh Adams said that almost no one knew her by her first name, just as Vernon's sibling.

"All the time people would come up to me, (and say) 'oh you're Vernon Adams' little sister,'" Adams said. To that she would always respond, "no, I'm Haileigh Adams."

But Adams said she is proud of her brother, who is now in his fourth year in the CFL and looking to make a name for himself at the professional level. It's a drive that has sparked motivation for Adams to pursue a similar path with her passion: soccer. Now a sophomore defender for the University of Colorado women's soccer team, Adams is eyeing the big leagues post-college.

"(Vernon) motivates me so much," Adams said. "Me and him are very competitive, so every time we're both back home we're both trying to beat each other in races, in anything. We'll go out and we'll play football sometimes, we'll play soccer sometimes, we just try to beat each other."

It's a sibling rivalry that is alive and well today. "(Haileigh) thinks she's a better athlete than me," Vernon laughed. "Low key she is."

Adams' soccer journey began in high school, where she steadily improved, scoring two goals and being named the most inspirational player during her freshman year. A year later, she scored five goals and earned the Defensive Player of the Year Award. Toward the end of her sophomore season, she tore her ACL and consequently had to sit out games while she went through rehab during her junior year.

Adams said there was a time when she thought she'd never get back to where she was after her

accident.

"It was a big step back," Adams said. "It took me forever to get back. I wasn't very confident. And then my coach, he just threw me up top. He (said) you have the speed. Although I didn't have it at the time."

Adams switched to forward her senior year and scored 14 goals with 10 assists, earning first team All-Conference and conference MVP.

Portland State was a school eyeing Adams, despite her ACL tear. Vernon, while at Eastern Washington, reached out to then Portland State recruiting coordinator Justin Wagar to convince him to bring Haileigh to the university. However, with Wagar 14 years into his career, he was looking for a change. After Portland State's head coach suddenly retired, Wagar landed a spot at Grambling State, bringing Adams with him.

Adams earned second team all-conference honors her freshman year at Grambling State and first team her sophomore year. She was the first player in the Southwestern Athletic Conference to earn an invite to the U19 United States Women's National Team Training Camp in 2018. Following in her older brother's footsteps, Adams will also finish her collegiate career at a Pac-12 school with professional aspirations.

"I want to play better soccer," Adams said. "I felt like CU was the perfect place to help me get there and prove my skills because when I came here I definitely learned a lot that I need to know."

Colorado head coach Danny Sanchez was thrilled to add a player of Adams' caliber prior to the 2019 season. Sanchez said Adams will likely be a large part of CU's back end in the future.

"I think she'll play a big role going forward for us," Sanchez said. "(She's) super positive, technical and very coachable. We feel she's a player that's definitely going to help us."

## CU's basketball team bond in China, talk season ahead

by George Hakala

The University of Colorado men's basketball team traveled to China for the fifth annual Pac-12 China Game in November, a tradition created through the Pac-12 Global Initiative.

CU spent the week in Shanghai as part of an effort to expand the cultural horizons of the Pac-12.

"Anytime you are fortunate enough to experience a different culture, that in itself is really a blessing," said sophomore forward Evan Battey. "I think that was good for us, on the court and off the court. It was really fun. It was a good trip."

The opportunity wasn't limited to the court. Colorado players also spent time with children from the Yao Ming Foundation, a youth development organization founded by the famed Chinese basketball player in the wake of devastating 2008 earthquakes. Players also went to the Shanghai Disney Resort and played an exhibition game against the Peking University of Beijing.

"Disney Shanghai was awesome to go to and an awesome experience with my brothers," Battey said.

A foreign trip is a great chance for any team to spend time with each other. According to Battey, the team often couldn't find cell service, allowing them to talk and bond even more as a team.

"All our guys had fun, (and) really bonded over there in China," Battey said. "If you are put in a different circumstance than you're used to, you tend to hold on to people you have close to you. We just bonded and really embraced that different culture with each other."

While the trip was a wonderful time and a great experience for the team, they still have a long season ahead.

"We went over there to win a game and we won the game, (we) had a great experience but that's behind us," said head coach Tad Boyle. "It's time

to move on and that's what we need to do. Every game is important and they're all equally important."

Boyle hopes not to see fear in the eyes of his team.

"I hope they're approaching it just like every other game," Boyle said.

A quick international turnaround poses a new challenge for CU. While the famous mile-high air of Boulder tends to be an advantage for CU sports, readjusting to the altitude threatened the Buffs. Beyond that, finding physical comfortability on the court after spending a week abroad with two long-distance flights will be tough.

"I think they're still feeling some of the effects physically, I know I am," Boyle said. "But that's what this week is for, to get that out and get back into the routine."

"Doing everything right, getting your workouts in, (and) your practices in," said Battey about getting re-adjusted to Colorado. "That's how you get in shape and get back to (the) mile-high (altitude). It's a blessing to be back and I'm thankful we got the win over there, so all's well."

Following the trip, Colorado broke in the AP poll for the first time since January 2014, being ranked 25th. The noise around Buffs basketball has steadily risen this year, after impressive performances in the NIT and Pac-12 tournaments last year. Continuing to play with a chip on their shoulders is a focus for Battey, and following No. 1 Kentucky's loss to an unranked Evansville team, one that appears quite important.

"My focus is to not buy into the noise," Battey said. "Obviously that's all good and dandy but you see what happens when teams that are ranked high get full of themselves. I'm trying my hardest not to let that happen ... to myself."



# Memories of iTunes: A reflection

by CU Independent Arts Staff

**With the release of Apple OS X Catalina comes the death of iTunes which will be replaced by Apple Music. While it was online music, it still felt a bit like walking into a music store – something that doesn’t really exist in the world of streaming today. We asked our staffers and editors to share their memories and pay tribute to the monumental platform.**

## The computer room:

For me and others who came into this world in the late '90s, the computer room used to be a space in daily life—and sacred space at that. The internet used to feel wholesome, a place to explore the frontiers of youtube and niche .coms. As I grew older, scouring iTunes for new types of music became a huge part of the computer room ritual. One year, I was given an old iPod classic for Christmas, complete with a touch wheel that clicked as it was turned, full of burned CDs ripped from YouTube songs with lowercase titles. Using the accompanying \$15 gift card, I purchased something online for the first time. I christened this occasion with the purchase of the music video for the hit song “Hey There Delilah” by the Plain White Tees. I watched it endlessly.

– Camille Sauers, Former Arts Editor

## The visualizer:

I remember buying a 250 GB iPod classic because I was obsessed with ripping off CDs from the public library and burning them to my computer. When I was 14, I burned copies of Wilco’s “Sky Blue Sky” and “Yankee Foxtrot Hotel,” both of which were admittedly a bit mature for my age. I would rip entire artist discographies to my iTunes library, loading up my iPod and taking them with me

wherever. I think the coolest thing about iTunes that not many people remember is the visualizer, which streaming services haven’t adopted. I loved iTunes’ graphics, which synced with songs and produced wave patterns along with the beat. It was awesome and will surely be forgotten.

– Zack Cohen, Arts Editor

## The replay button:

As a child, I abused iTunes’ endless replay loop. I obsessively played my favorite songs over and over, unsteadily belting out Birdy’s cover of “Skinny Love,” Adam Lambert’s “Whataya Want From Me” and Florence and the Machine’s “Never Let Me Go” in my living room’s makeshift recording studio. When I discovered iTunes tracked plays per song, I was horrified to see DHT’s cover of “Listen To Your Heart” already had 583 plays with my other favorites trailing close behind. My Dad, tired of my bubblegum pop hits, encouraged me to expand my listening, helping me download Pink Floyd, the Ramones, Queen, Bobby McFerrin and Blue Oyster Cult. However, after mindlessly clicking through a few “cultured” tracks, I returned to my overplayed favorites, letting the comforting predictability wash over me, and reached once again for the replay button.

– Izzy Fincher, Arts Editor



Graphic by Jacob Newman/CU Independent

## The autoplay:

iTunes was the first platform that I utilized to begin engaging with the music world. Through my best friend introducing me to Lil’ Wayne and learning every lyric of “6 Foot 7 Foot” or the countless indie songs that my siblings and I bonded over, iTunes provided the spark. However, once I shifted away from the platform, iTunes wouldn’t let go. Each time I plugged my phone into the aux of my Mom’s Chrysler minivan in hopes to listen to my Spotify playlist, Ed Sheeran’s “A-Team” would blast through the speakers at a deafening level,

forcing me to fumble my phone around as I struggled to stop the noise. The auto-play feature on iTunes defaulted to the first song in my library every time I plugged my phone into the aux, even if I hadn’t used the platform in years. To this day, I cannot listen to that song without thinking of the anger it ensued upon me in my Mom’s minivan. To be honest, I’m not really going to miss iTunes.

– Benny Titelbaum, Staff Writer



The 99 cent wonder:

I have iTunes to thank for the majority of my earliest musical memories. I remember my Dad loading up his hand-me-down first-generation iPod full of his favorite songs that he wanted to share with me, such as the Beatles’ “Sgt. Pepper” and David Bowie’s “Scary Monsters.” Of course, that iPod also became home to my own budding taste. Ten-year-old me was thrilled at the prospect of scrolling through iTunes’ vast digital library and filling it up with hits of the early 2000s, namely Bruno Mars and the Black Eyed Peas. I owe my love of obsessively making playlists for every occasion to iTunes. I’m glad that I got to develop my music taste one 99 cent purchase at a time.

– Ben Berman, Staff Writer

The burning:

I must have been 8-years-old when my parents bought themselves iPods, and my Dad began burning all of his CDs onto iTunes. He had these cardboard boxes that were nearly falling apart, bursting at the seams with his favorite albums from the ‘80s and ‘90s, all of which slowly made their way onto the family computer and then into my ears. I would sit at the desk, scrolling through the endless album covers, entranced with the enormity of all the music I could choose from. Eventually, he began trading CDs with friends so that each of them could burn all those albums onto their own iTunes. Soon, Beatles albums began to appear alongside my Dad’s Smiths and Cure tracks and the top 100 pop songs that I would buy for myself and play over and over again to my parent’s dismay. Like a lot of people my age, iTunes was my first gateway into music discovery.

– CJ Markuson, Staff Writer

The downloading:

iTunes was a staple on the monitor in my family’s computer room. I can remember getting onto iTunes after one of my three older sisters got new music, excited to discover what they had discovered. I can distinctly remember listening to “Whatever You Like” by T.I., “Memories” by Kid Cudi

and David Guetta and “Sleepyhead” by Passion Pit. Of course at that age, I had no idea how to upload those songs onto anything, so these memories consist of a lot of sitting in front of the monitor and listening whilst playing Zoo Tycoon. It wasn’t until I got my first MP3 player that I learned the wonders of downloading new music. My catalog mostly consisted of Elton John, Kid Cudi and Foster the People. I have vivid memories of laying on the floor listening to my MP3 player. I customized the back with rhinestones.

– Lizzie Weiler, Staff Writer

The introductions:

iTunes was a constant companion throughout my childhood, my blue iPod following me everywhere I went. I listened to Taylor Swift’s “Better Than Revenge” as I waited for my parents to pick me up after school, and I’d not-so-discreetly sing along to Macklemore’s “Same Love” on long car rides. My first introduction to music of Queen and Grand Corp Malade came from iTunes. Although most of my iTunes songs came from my older brother, they still stayed with me. I probably ended up with around a thousand plays of “Killer Queen” by the time I stopped using iTunes and switched to Spotify, although my musical tastes definitely continued to live on that platform. Regardless of current streaming service loyalty, I’ll forever remember and even miss the rush of excitement whenever I purchased a new track of music on iTunes.

– Lou Abecassis, Staff Writer

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CU Boulder’s 2019 drag show far from a drag

by Anna Haynes

The University of Colorado Boulder’s Gender and Sexuality Alliance and Cultural Events Board held its annual drag show, titled “Under the Big Top,” Saturday, Nov. 2, in the Student Recreation Center. While the show stalled in some places, the production managed to captivate and titillate for all of its over two-hour run time.

Host Bella Couture Le Cher was an eccentric character. Le Cher works at Boulder’s Foothills Hospital

by day and performs drag at Denver area bars, such as Tracks Denver, by night. She celebrated Halloween late on Saturday with a painted white face and eyelashes reminiscent of spiders, their legs nearly reaching her hairline.

She sprinkled her commentary with a uniquely intense, almost scary laugh and made ample use of costume changes.

Le Cher found unique ways to fill time in between performances, such as by having a short model runway competition. She called up audience members with birthdays that day for the runway

and had a “twerk-off” between two performers.

However, other moments felt more dull, especially during a couple of technical difficulties where songs stalled. The audience didn’t seem to mind, though, laughing and cheering at the awkwardness of the performers waiting to begin.

Last year’s host, drag queen Jessica L’Whor, made filler time feel natural and comfortable through Q&A sessions with audience members. Questions

ranged from how young people can accept themselves to how she hides her member through her skintight outfit.

Le Cher felt slightly more stilted than L’Whor at times in finding things to say and do, thinking of questions to ask the audience on the spot.

However, she



Bella Couture Le Cher performs to a mix of Adel songs. Oct. 2, 2019. (Anna Haynes/CU Independent)

maintained high energy and humor throughout the show’s long duration and connected with the audience by giving people compliments and flirting with male audience members.

The show was remarkably executed. Performers never appeared to forget their choreography, no matter how intricate. Senior and performer Ivy



Wingfield said rehearsals were “really challenging in the couple weeks leading up to the show but definitely worth it.”

Performers were not afraid to shy away from sex, and the audience was even less afraid to encourage it through cheers and dollar bills. Some people even ran to the stage and threw fistfuls of money at the performers. Others eagerly gave up their cash for brief pecks on the lips from a dapper drag king named Diego D Rose. It often appeared as if they were in a trance, hypnotized to sacrifice their hard-earned cash to the seemingly godlike performers.

For example, performer Sinnamon gave a burlesque performance to “Guy What Takes His Time” by Christina Aguilera, which could barely be heard over the enthusiastic screams of the audience. At first Sinnamon hid her torso with a large white feather. Then, she discarded it, revealing nothing but a nude-colored thong and panties underneath, giving the illusion of complete nudity on first glance. By the end of her performance, the stage was littered in crumpled-up dollar bills.

One can only assume that the performers do not

practice such stark eroticism in their daily lives. The enthusiasm with which they expressed sex appeal felt cathartic, like a lifetime’s worth of pent-up sexual tension was being released before the audience’s eyes.

“I love experiencing how changing your gender presentation can change how you act,” said CU sophomore and performer Theya Wood, suggestively named Daddy Wood on stage.

Between sex appeal and general charisma, all of the performers exuded confidence and kept the audience intrigued. At one point in the show, an audience member frantically scrambled to the front row in an attempt to get attention from drag king Diego D Rose, climbing over one of the chairs.

One of the performers, freshman Nolan Watts (stage name GG von X), was so confident that he had no pre-planned choreography.

His wig flew off mid-performance, but he only danced with more enthusiasm.

The audience’s cheers

intensified. “I’ve never been the type of person to get nervous over-performing,” Watts said.

It is safe to say that despite slight setbacks, CU’s drag show was far from a drag.



Arden De Luca of Arden De Luca and the Bitches dances to “Bitches” by Tove Lo featuring Charli XCX, Icona Pop, Elliphant and ALMA. Oct. 2, 2019. (Isabella Fincher/CU Independent)

# You can thank this CU professor for the ancient Viking language in ‘Frozen’

by Isabella Fincher

In Disney’s “Frozen,” intricate ancient Viking letters called runes appear in a magical book. But what does the ancient script actually say?

University of Colorado Boulder professor Jackson Crawford would know the answer. He created these Old Norse runes for Disney’s 2013 film “Frozen” and its sequel “Frozen 2,” which was released in theaters in the United States on Friday, Nov. 22.

Crawford is a leading international expert in



Jackson Crawford. (Courtesy photo)

Old Norse. He has published three acclaimed books about Norse mythology, including translations of “The Poetic Edda” and “The Saga of the Volsungs.” His latest book “The Wanderer’s Hávamál,” released Nov. 20, features a translation of the poem “Hávamál” about the Norse god Odin.

Crawford

decided to specialize in the centuries-old Northern European language because it is an example of what he calls a “forgotten sister” to English. He added that the literature was just too good to stay away from.

With his translations, Crawford uses what he calls “down-to-earth, unpretentious Rocky-Mountain English,” which is easily understandable for most readers. He credits his success to this simplicity, compared to the “florid, pseudo-Shakespearean language” often used by other translators.

In 2013, Disney reached out to Crawford while he was teaching at UCLA and asked him to be a linguistic consultant for their new movie “Frozen.”

“I got to visit the Walt Disney Animation Studios during that time, which was incredibly fun,” Crawford said. “Although I was just a consultant and not technically part of the crew, I was honored to be listed as the first name under ‘Special Thanks’ in the credits.”

Crawford had significant input in the movie. Using the Younger Futhark, a Viking-age runic alphabet, he created historically accurate text with “real messages” for the book and monuments in the movies. Later, he also coached voice actor Robert Pine, who played the bishop in the coronation scene.

Crawford uses what he calls ‘down-to-earth, unpretentious Rocky-Mountain English.’

With knowledge of Norse mythology, Crawford also suggested several minor plot changes. For example, the “blood-brother ceremony from the Norse sagas” inspired the magical stone troll’s wedding scene.

Before the release of “Frozen 2,” Crawford cannot give specific details about his work on the film. However, he was excited to work with the “same team members as the first movie” thanks to the “tools of the internet,” he said vaguely.

“Strangely enough, with all the movies and TV shows about Vikings these days, ‘Frozen’ has some of the most accurate Old Norse and runes in any major motion picture that’s been released yet,” Crawford said.





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