

CU INDEPENDENT

INSIDE:

Bufs adjust to hybrid learning and in-person changes

magazine



It's time for the United States to move on from firearms

CU women's basketball brings down no. 1 Stanford
Colorado Asian creatives: representation and visibility

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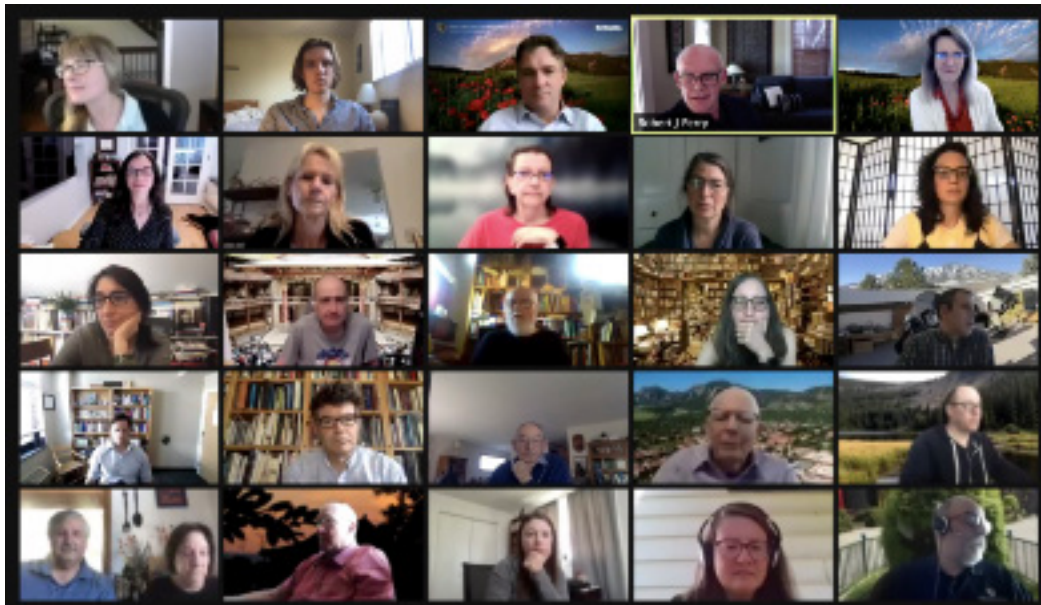
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For comments, corrections, questions, and article submissions, email tips@cuindependent.
The CU Independent reserves the right to moderate any and all submitted content and responses.

Boulder Faculty Assembly passes vote to censure CU President

by Henry Larson



Boulder Faculty Assembly members and members of the media meet to vote and observe, respectively. (Courtesy of the Boulder Faculty Assembly)

On Thursday, April 29, about 60 representatives of the Boulder Faculty Assembly voted on a measure to censure University of Colorado System President Mark Kennedy.

The vote passed, with a voting body of 53 members, 34 voted in favor and 19 voted against the resolution.

“Whereas, diversity, equity, and inclusion are not only paramount moral issues, but also present grave challenges to the University of Colorado,” reads a portion of the proposed measure.

Members debated over the exclusion of a segment including criticism of Kennedy’s handling of the aftermath of the January 6th insurrection and ultimately voted to not include it back into the amendment.

This vote followed similar moves made by the CU Boulder Student Government, as they voted to censure the President a few weeks ago.

The motion cites a number of issues that community activists have taken issue with, including statements that many believe to be harmful to indigenous communities and a memo that asked that public comment on social justice issues be reviewed by the President’s office.

DiversifyCUnow, one of the university system’s most prominent activism organizations, previously authored an open letter that has been signed by more than 600 people. It calls for the termination of Kennedy’s contract for similar reasons.

Bufs adjust to hybrid learning and in-person-changes

by Bailey Diamond

The second semester is underway, and as students prepare to move in at the University of Colorado Boulder, they are left wondering how the university will be adjusting as the pandemic continues to rage across the state.

The first semester was a whirlwind, carrying with it a high number of student and faculty COVID cases, strict pandemic protocols and unexpected responses to conditions at hand. Students and staff were forced to make tough decisions, causing uncertainty for what lies ahead.

"Seeing how everything went last semester with the constant change I feel like nothing is set in stone," commented first-year student Addisyn Ibrahim. "Not having expectations might make it easier to cope with all the change, but that doesn't mean it still won't be a challenge."

CU Boulder initially started the fall semester with a set of precautions and approaches, some of which held their ground and some which quickly dissipated. One such precaution was required weekly COVID tests for students. These tests began successfully but were not heavily enforced, and many students began to skip their appointments or not set them up altogether. Isolation spaces also filled rapidly, forcing students in Williams Village dorms such as Darley North to move out of their rooms.

Students are now wondering about any shifts for spring. With the presence of the virus, current campus life is already very different from a typical year. Classes remain at least partly remote, social gatherings are diminished, and opportunities for involvement and community are lowered.

Despite some students' efforts to make the most of their school years amidst the pandemic, a question lingers — is it worth it to stay at Boulder this school year? Logan Standard, a first-year student at CU Boulder, holds these worries.

"I am super excited to be back, but also am a little apprehensive," Standard said. "I'm nervous that we'll get sent home again or go back online, and with those shifts, it's so hard to justify the cost."

Along with financial worries, Boulder students have concerns about their social lives. During the fall semester, a campus-wide shutdown occurred, with a set of strict rules. One rule regulated social gatherings, and only allowed students to only be with one to two others at a time. Another rule majorly cut down on where students were allowed to go on-campus — dining halls switched to takeout only, the gym closed, and campus buildings other than dorms weren't accessible. These regulations, along with other strict rules, created trends of loneliness and isolation, and many students chose to move back home instead of staying on campus.

This semester, no announcements have come out regarding another shutdown, but students are still apprehensive.

"If another shutdown happened it wouldn't be good for students already deteriorating mental health," said second-year student Kelsey Schuster. "We already have to sit inside all day and do online school. Not being able to leave our houses to even go on a walk would be terrible just like it was last time."

The university did however decide to lengthen



Bus arrives outside of Folsom Field. (Henry Larson/CU Independent)

winter break, giving students and staff an extended amount of time off-campus. Campus members left Boulder in late November and are just now beginning to return. Although this long break was difficult for students, it may help prevent a future shutdown later spring semester. As students begin to return after almost three months at home, the excitement and relief are high.

"Honestly being at home so long was tough, especially when other colleges were going back on campus," first-year student Justin Hoppin said. "I'm just glad to be back. We'll see how this semester ends up going."

The university has continued to provide detailed updates about the spring semester through weekly interactive webinars, which can be found [here](#). Webinar sessions are held each Tuesday at noon and will continue throughout the entire spring semester. These sessions are a newly implemented resource and have been helpful to students and

parents in staying up to date with Boulder's approaches to the virus.

Last Tuesday, staff announced an on-track return to campus and the implementation of hybrid classes.

"We made a point to learn the lessons of the fall semester and apply them to (the) spring semester," said Senior Vice Provost Katherine Eggert. "We are excited to get going with the semester and continue with our teaching and learning on campus."

The university is actively working to approach the spring semester differently than the fall semester. Changes have been made, ranging from early vaccine availabilities for staff, increased encouragement for testing, and other precautions. As the CU Boulder community approaches the spring, their biggest hope is that student spirits remain high and COVID-19 cases remain low.

Buffaloes over bullets: CU student mental health declines after shooting

by Nicole Dorfman

With an ongoing pandemic, riots and mass shootings, 2021 has already been a morbid year for the University of Colorado Boulder. Last Monday, March 22, the mass shooting at the Table Mesa and Broadway King Soopers that took ten people's lives left students and faculty traumatized.

In response, Students Demand Action at CU Boulder held a protest on the steps of Norlin Library Monday, March 29 at 2:30 p.m.

This group is the Boulder Chapter of a national organization called Students Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. Students partnered with Everytown for Gun Safety, a non-profit organization that advocates for gun control and against gun violence.

One of the student representatives for Students Demand Action, Tim Hernández, started out by empathizing with Boulder's loss.

"My heart mourns for you. For our community," Hernández said.

The Norlin Quad was grimly still during the moment of silence for those lost in the mass shooting. The victims' names were then read aloud:

"Denny Stong, Neven Stanisic, Rikki Olds, Tralona Bartkowiak, Suzanne Fountain, Teri Leiker, Officer Eric Talley, Kevin Mahoney, Lynn Murray, Jody Waters."

"What this means for you is that you have to be vigilant and you have to care. And you have to lead with radical empathy. Gun violence is a mental health issue," Hernández said.

According to the Gun Violence Archive, there have already been 113 mass shootings this year in the United States and it's only March.

When the CU Independent surveyed students and faculty to gauge their mental health after the mass shooting, many felt a wide range of emotions — some felt angry, horrified and depressed. Others felt numb.

"Truthfully I was numb for a period of time. I lost a friend, Teri Leiker in the shooting. Then it was anger that I was met with," said Ciera Dykstra, international affairs and political science major, and member of CU Student Government (CUSG).

"At age 9, I learned about the horrors of the Columbine Shooting. At age 14, a person I thought was a friend became the Arapahoe school shooter.

"I was numb for a period of time"

Ciera Dykstra, CU student



CU student holds up sign at Norlin Library Rally. March 29, 2021 (Nicole Dorfman/ CU Independent)

At age 21, my brother was arrested for assault with a deadly weapon. At age 22, I lost a friend to the Boulder mass shooting. It is overwhelming," Dykstra said.

The past CUSG vice president wrote a letter to the University of Colorado titled 'CU Boulder: You Don't Care About Your Students and We Will Not Forget' which denoted how students felt the university's response to the shooting was lackadaisical and erroneous.

"They (the university) failed their students, faculty and staff. We all witnessed a mass shooting on Monday and went to class, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. I finished discussion posts while crying and had office hours where my professors broke down in tears," said Dykstra.

In response to the Boulder mass shooting, the CU Boulder administration sent out a list of resources which included references to Wardenburg's Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) and the Office of Victim Assistance (OVA).

The CU Independent requested an interview with CAPS but could not schedule one due to the overwhelming amount of crisis calls their office has received. But Jessica Ladd-Webert, an OVA representative, explained the services her office provides:

"We support people in situations of intimate partner abuse, discrimination, harassment, mass violence and assault. I will say that we are a small office, and based on the magnitude and the proximity of this tragic event that people can also seek

support from our counseling center," said Ladd-Webert.

The CAPS website states that students may receive brief counseling which is on average 4-6 sessions. However, most students felt that this isn't enough, especially after experiencing a year-long pandemic and witnessing a mass shooting. Based on the CUI survey, the consensus amongst students and faculty is that the university needs to put more money into mental health programs like CAPS and OVA.

"What we're missing is a consistent proactive approach, not a reactive one," said Hernández.

According to students, this means both implementing more mental health resources on campus and crafting scrupulous gun control laws.

‘Pulling trig,’ binge drinking’s best friend

By Chloe Wasserstrom

A new element of binge-drinking is spreading across the University of Colorado Boulder’s campus: pulling trig.

The action consists of individuals deliberately making themselves vomit in an effort to purge the alcohol out of their bodies.

It usually occurs “when you have gotten to the point in the night when you do not have to throw up yet, but you take it upon yourself to make yourself feel better,” an anonymous male sophomore said.

Freshman Tessa Ziegler explained students put their fingers down their throats until they feel better or pass out.

Pulling trig is not always done alone. Senior Rachel Cella notes the multiple times she has been the one to induce someone else to vomit.

“Her eyes were rolled to the back of her head, and we (Cella and friends) knew we had to make her throw up,” Cella recalls. “I had to keep doing it to her. We ended up calling the ambulance, and she got her stomach pumped. That was traumatizing. So ever since, I have been willing to do it to other people.”

In fact, Ziegler explained she would never be the one to do it to herself.

“I feel better when my friends do it to me,” Ziegler said. “When I did it in high school, I was by myself, but now my friends are with me. It is a whole different experience.”

Similarly, Cella said she would always do it to a friend if needed.

The anonymous male source said the male demographic rarely will even discuss the topic among themselves.

“I try to slip away and be sneaky so nobody will know,” he noted. “I do not want people watching me throw up.”

Cella said she has never heard her male-identified friends speak of it; it’s only girls.

Samantha Strife is an instructor in the psychology and neuroscience department and a psychologist who works primarily with individuals who struggle with body dissatisfaction, disordered eating, and eating disorders.

Strife notes that the onset of this behavior might be correlated to the diet and beauty industry.

“People are more engaged in thinking of their worth based on what they look like versus who they are,” she said.

Strife does not condone the behavior.

“It exposes the intersectionality between substance use and eating disorder culture in a way that is unfortunate and problematic because it normalizes a compensatory behavior that is dangerous,” Strife added.

She said that the term normalizes something that could have already existed.

The male sophomore does not think pulling trig was a big deal.

"As long as you are throwing up in the toilet or outside and not on someone then I think it's fine," he continued.

Cella is open about the subject.

"In a group of girls, if someone seems way too drunk, one of us might say 'she needs to pull trig,'" she said.

However, she noted that the tone of the topic has changed now that she is a senior.

"We find it funnier now than when we were younger," Cella said. "I know at the end of the day I will be okay."

Yet, Cella said she finds pulling trig comforting because she can taste the alcohol exiting her mouth.

"At the end of the day, people need to stop drinking as much as they do,"

Rachel Cella, CU Student

Strife emphasizes the true denotation of provoking vomit.

"I think for some people it means trying to reduce a hangover, but for other people, it can be about reducing caloric intake — both of which can have problematic psychological and health consequences," she said. "Purging

in this context does not often work the way people intend, leaving people still hungover. If you engage in this behavior, you should consult your medical provider about the risks"

The health department at Cornell University released information on the consequences of self-induced vomiting. These include electrolyte abnormalities that can lead to immediate, precipitous death, ripping of the esophagus, tooth decay from stomach acid, involuntary vomiting, the acid in the esophagus, enlargement of the parotid gland and more.

Strife hopes there is more awareness of the consequences.

"I wish there was more practice for students and people engaging in this behavior to be able to effectively call each other out instead of contributing to the normalization of it," Strife adds.

Cella noted that pulling trig is increasing in popularity due to CU's drinking culture.

"At the end of the day, people need to stop drinking as much as they do," Cella said.

If you are struggling with disordered eating the following resources are available.

Counseling and Psychiatric Services
Center for Community, Suite N352
2249 Willard Loop Dr.
104 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309
303-492-2277 (24/7 support)

Luna Center
3002 Bluff St #200, Boulder, CO 80301
(720) 470-0010

Eating Recovery Center
7351 E. Lowry Blvd, Ste 200

FALL 2021

THROUGH THE LENS

SPRING 2020 IN PHOTOS



1. Freshman forward Shyra James dribbles the ball down the field as Weber State's sophomore defender Rachel Twede tries to stop her during the second half at the Kittredge Field. Feb. 20, 2021. **By Kara Wagenknecht**

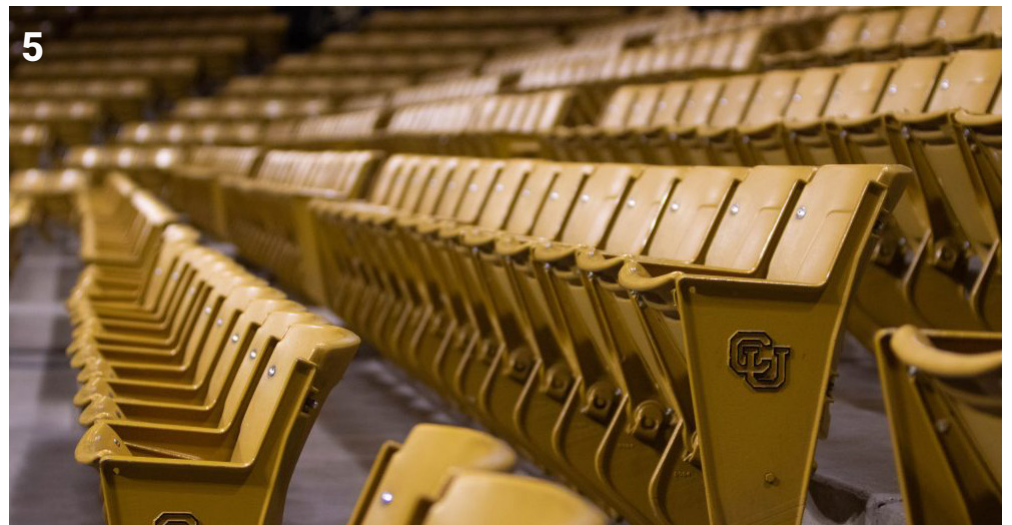
2. Denver organizer Tim Hernandez speaks about gun violence at the Students Demand Action rally at CU Boulder's Norlin Library on March 29th, 2021. **By Io Hartman**

3. Junior guard Eli Parquet elevates the ball towards the hoop in hopes to score for the Buffs during the Pac-12 Tournament Championship game against Oregon State. March 13, 2021. **By Casey Paul**

4. Sophomore middle blocker Sterling Parker celebrates with her teammates after making a score. Feb. 5, 2021. **By Kevin Wu**

5. The stands that once was filled with fans now remains empty due to COVID-19 at the CU Events Center. Feb. 21, 2021. **By Kara Wagenknecht**

6. Car damaged in riot on the hill. **By Io Hartman**





6. Inspirational and encouraging messages line the fence in front of the King Soopers. March 27, 2021.

By Casey Paul

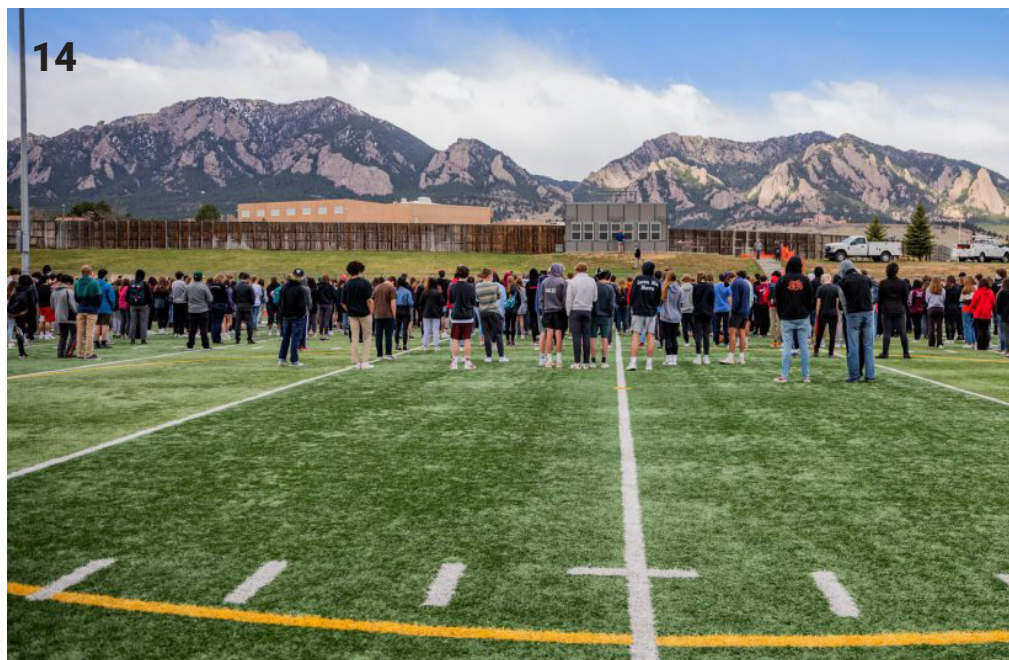
7. King Soopers has put up multiple signs saying #BoulderStrong along the fence in front of the site. March 27, 2021. **By Casey Paul**

9. Hundreds walk the sidewalk admiring the flowers and mourning the 10 lives that were taken. March 27, 2021. **By Casey Paul**

10. A sign commemorating Teri Leiker, a King Soopers employee, rests on the fence outside of the store. March 27, 2021. **By Casey Paul**

11. Poster with the universal no symbol over a firearm asks "WHEN?". March 23, 2021. **By Alec Levy-O'Brien**

12. Freshman forward Shyra James lifts up junior forward Libby Geraghty following her goal in the 24th minute of play at Prentup field. April 16, 2021. **By Nigel Amstock**



13. The players raise their helmets in the air as two of their teammates receive scholarships at the beginning of the spring football showcase starts at Folsom Field on April 30, 2021. **By Kara Wagenknech**

14. hundreds of students attending the walkout at Fairview High School on April 9th, 2021. **By Io Hartman**

Opinion: It's time for the United States to move on from firearms

by Alexander Edwards

Arming civilians has been a part of the American national identity since the first shot was fired in the American Revolution. Since that "shot heard round the world", our country has made it easier to acquire deadlier firearms. The results have been catastrophic.

We've seen current laws around gun access backfire dramatically, especially since the Columbine shooting

The most recent tragedy left 10 dead after a young man opened fire in a local King Soopers in Boulder, Colorado. Ten people who, in any other developed nation, would likely never have had to worry about being gunned down. Ten people are now dead because of our country's obsession with guns.

This nation needs to change its gun laws and the culture surrounding guns. Legislatively, the United States must change its laws to be more in line with those of Australia and the United Kingdom in order to safeguard the lives of the American people. Culturally, Americans must forget this notion that one good guy with a gun can save everyone else.

Word for word, the Second Amendment reads, "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

With that in mind, the earliest example of gun legislation came in 1939, with *United States v. Miller*. The court agreed that possessing a sawed-off, double-barreled shotgun was not in the best interest of the well-regulated militia.

Common sense was reversed nearly 70 years

later when the Supreme Court ruled on *District of Columbia v. Heller* in 2008. In a narrow 5-4 decision, they ruled in favor of an individual arguing that "the operative clause should be read to 'guarantee an individual right to possess and carry weapons in case of confrontation.'"

The Columbine shooting occurred in 1999 and resulted in 15 deaths, including the killers. Following the *District of Columbia v. Heller* decision, 12 people were murdered while attending a premiere of *The Dark Knight Rises* in 2012. Fifty-eight were gunned down in the Las Vegas shooting of 2017 and 17 more were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018.

Nothing has changed, and shootings have become more frequent.

The United States is the only developed Western nation to be dealing with an epidemic of gun violence. In 2018, just over 14,000 people were killed by homicide involving a firearm according to the Centers for Disease Control. This translates to 4.4 per 100,000 people killed.

Across the Pacific, Australia has a different relationship with guns. In 1996, a gunman in Port Arthur murdered 35 people and injured 23 more. It was the worst mass shooting in Australian history. Australians took action by turning in over 640,000 weapons of all types by the next year under a government-sponsored buy-back.

Americans may look upon this with envious eyes: only three mass shootings have occurred in Australia since 1996. In 2018, the same year as the CDC data, 209 Australians were killed by gun violence. Looking at homicide alone, that number drops to 30, or 0.12 deaths per 100,000 people.



Protesters hold up signs during the CU Boulder Student Walkout Against Gun Violence. March 14, 2018 (Bri Barnum/CU Independent)

In the United Kingdom, in 1996, a gunman entered an elementary school. Armed with handguns and 700 rounds of ammunition, he opened fire and murdered 16 children and a teacher. Parliament quickly passed a law that banned private ownership of handguns that had a caliber above .22; a provision later expanded to include all handguns.

Again, the results speak for themselves: in 2015, 32 people were killed by gun violence in the U.K. (homicide only). This is 0.02 people per 100,000 which is far fewer than the United States' numbers.

Every year we go through the same debate after 10, 20, 30 or more of our fellow Americans die at the hands of a gunman yet nothing changes. How many more of us have to die before action is taken?

Thoughts and prayers won't bring back the nine bystanders and one police officer that were

killed at King Soopers in Boulder, nor will they prevent the next mass shooting.

Only legislative action, like the two gun control bills that gained House approval, can prevent more senseless deaths in our country.

Australia and the United Kingdom offer crystal clear examples of the benefits that gun regulation can have for a community. Those countries report far lower gun-related homicides per year and per 100,000 people than the United States.

How can "the greatest nation" in the world allow 14,000 people per year to die senselessly? The latest tragedy in Boulder has proven that the old laws don't work.

Change has to come, and it has to come now. Americans deserve to be safe from firearms.

Opinion: Replacing Spring Break with 'Wellness Days' is not enough

by Lauren De Leon

The snow has finally melted, the sun is finally shining. You're ready to enjoy the spring and the warmth and new life it brings, until you have to hop on Zoom (or maybe if you're 'lucky,' go to campus) for the majority of the day.

"I understand, because of COVID, they [University of Colorado Admin] don't want people traveling but, you guys also have frat parties being thrown off campus," said first-year student Sarah Ensign.

With the Provost's announcement on Oct. 22 regarding spring break, many students' hope for a brighter second semester has vanished. Instead of having our traditional five-day break, CU Boulder students will start the Spring semester on Jan. 14, three days later than the original start date, and will be granted two 'wellness days' throughout the semester as a break from studies. Although this decision was made as part of COVID-19 preventative actions, it poses complications for the mental health of CU's student body.

Despite the constant messaging from the university about mental health and stress relief techniques, a 2013 study of CU Boulder students found that 43% of the students surveyed indicated they felt 'more than average stress' in college. With the pandemic, the messages have only been more frequent as if there is the acknowledgment that students are feeling the effects of isolation and online schooling.

Although mental health should be talked about considering suicide rates have "skyrocketed by over 60 percent over the past 20 years with almost every suicide indicator and student population showing increasing trends," what does it mean

to constantly be bringing it up but never fully addressing the implications of mental health?

In a Strada Student Viewpoint survey released in October, over 4,000 undergraduate college students submitted responses about school and the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the survey, 44% of students responded that stress, anxiety and loneliness would be their biggest challenge this fall. School breaks allow for students to handle this stress without the added thought of upcoming assignments. Throughout the semester, full-time students are asked to focus on a minimum of four subjects at once (12 credit hours). These breaks are the only genuine time that student's minds are allowed to be somewhat at ease. Especially during a pandemic, there are enough life stresses without having to worry about one of fifteen weekly assignments due.

"I rely on the few breaks we have during the semester to recuperate and rest"

Maisa Nammari, a CU Boulder senior

Just because the pandemic is ongoing, does not mean that the regular struggles of college life have stopped affecting students. There is still pressure to keep up with social circles, find a job, and maintain a decent GPA. Students have to keep up with the social drama, staying in touch with their parents, and just surviving on their own in general. Breaks allow students to put the stresses of life on pause.

Although movies like *Spring Breakers* (2012) highlight the freedom and fun that some college students experience for spring break, for many spring break is not synonymous with partying. A survey conducted last spring found that those 18-24 had the highest percentage (95%) of canceled plans, and travel due to the pandemic. Maisa Nammari, a CU Boulder senior studying Linguistics, has chronic illness making it difficult for her to sustain energy over long periods of time.

"I rely on the few breaks we have during the semester to recuperate and rest so that I can finish

the semester. I'm seriously worried that without any substantial amount of time off during the spring semester, I will deal with even more burnout and exhaustion than I normally do," Nammari said. "It's also very demoralizing to be constantly receiving emails that claim the university cares about us, while also receiving notices that there will be shortened or no breaks, no pass/fail extensions, no tuition deductions, and so on."

Nammari's sentiment is shared with Sophia Volk, a second-year MBA student and head of the initiative and petition Too Much Tuition, CU. You can check out more information about Too Much Tuition CU [here](#).

"The announcement is just one more piece of evidence that confirms the university just isn't thinking. Their entire message was delivered poorly, it was tone-deaf and leadership is not listening to the concerns that students are



Graphic by Owen Hartmann

FALL 2021

voicing,” expressed Volk.

Since the beginning of the semester, there has been little transparency and genuine communication between CU’s students and the higher-up faculty. In late September, students living in Darley North were given the notice to move out of the dorm in order to make room for more isolation dorms, less than 72 hours before the move-out date listed. To make-up for the inconvenience, CU provided a \$250 credit to the student’s Bursar accounts, as Karen Morfitt of CBSN Denver reported.

“The announcement is just one more piece of evidence that confirms the university just isn’t thinking.”

Sophia Volk, a second-year MBA student

This credit comes as a grain of salt considering the lack of tuition reduction despite restrictions to services and facilities on campus. Volk provided a list of fees on her tuition bill in addition to whether or not students are receiving the services being paid for to Fox 31 Denver in Nov.:

Art and Cultural Enrichment Fee: \$10.00 (Not Receiving)

Bike Program Fee: \$15.00 (Not Receiving)

Mental Health Resource Fee: \$77.40 (Receiving)

Student Activity Fee: \$276.31 (Not Receiving)

Rec Center Expansion Fee: \$106.96 (Not Receiving)

Student Health Fee: \$97.09 (Receiving)

You can learn more about fees charged for services that aren’t being offered during the pandemic here.

In April, CU will actually be proposing a 3% tuition increase. In a recent newsletter sent out by Volk, it was shown that CU’s administrative costs, among other costs, are significantly higher than other public universities, but specifically significantly higher than other PAC-12 schools.

For freshmen, this means an extended period in the dorms. As spring break is our only break during the Spring semester, the experience will differ greatly from the four-month stay in the dorms last fall.

“I think that not having that break is just gonna not help [mental health] because even now, even with starting in August, though now, I’m already like okay, when’s Thanksgiving break? When’s Christmas break? Because I just, I can’t wait to have that break. Because of how long I’ve gone doing work, writing papers, studying, taking tests. I’m just like, I need some type of...I need something. And so I think that’ll definitely affect me since they’re taking a full week from us,” Ensign said.

As the spring semester comes to a close, it is hard to see what there is to look forward to. Months of continuous Zoom, minus the measly two wellness days will put the Buff population to the test. To top it off, the days will be getting longer.

CU Bluffs: A love letter to my zoom professor

by Vayle Lafehr

Dearest Dr. Dreamboat,

It's the season for romance and sparks of love are in the air. Or, are they sparks from fried circuits and exhausted hard-drives? I can't quite tell.

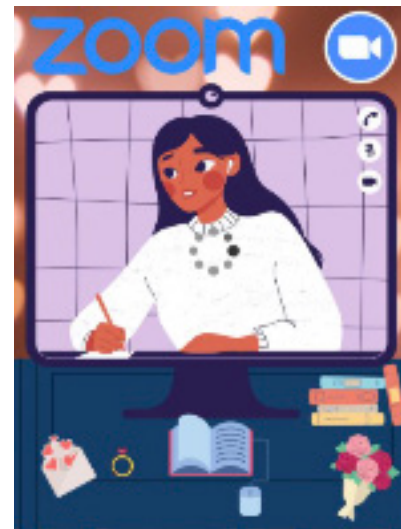
As a student attending Zoom University, I must confess I've found a love deeper than anything I've felt before. Gazing deep into the pixelated eyes of my soulmate scholar, I realize that love has never felt more real online. Valentine's Day will finally be something I look forward to this year, all thanks to Zoom.

You may be wondering, who is my newfound soulmate? Spoiler alert: it's you, Dr. Dreamboat. The way your home screen glitches, and crashes, simply reminds me that true love is rare. Some students may hear a voice cutting out during important exam information, but all I hear is the melodic rasp of an intellectual, desperately conveying wisdom as if it were their last, dying breath.

My angel of academia, light of my learned loins, cerebral de mon coeur, please...tell me you feel the same. Fifty minutes of your blurry bedhead is worth every penny — out of those thousands of dollars I write a tuition check for. When you freeze on-screen, some students say note-taking becomes difficult. But the only note I'm taking is of your sheer, sexy tech confusion. You're always trying to solve complex problems, you ruminating rascal.

We're so electronically in-sync. I'm always first to the zoom room, hooked up and on stream. Have you noticed me expressing my devotion? From turning my camera on to using the "thumbs up" icon, I've shown that I'd do anything...for you.

Am I coming on too strong? Your IP address



Graphic by Vayle Lafehr

is always on my mind. My bandwidth is only increasing, sitting here all day long on the network. Some students complain about eye strain due to blue light exposure. My love, the lustrous glow from my computer screen only reminds me that love really is blind.

When you share your screen, my heart skips a gigabyte. Although your open tabs are but a glimpse into your personal life, I feel like I know you. The real you. You make me go haywire.

I tried to message you privately, but you never answered. Breakout rooms break my heart. I know there's a firewall between us now but soon, my HTML hottie, we will be more than virtual reality. What we have is more than an internet connection.

Brainy beefcake, bookish babe, highbrowed heartthrob...we found love in a digital place.

With electricity,

Your Valentine

Opinion: It's time for the United States to move on from firearms

by Lauren De Leon and Zoe Schacht



Graphic by Owen Hartmann

What feels like eons ago as a first-year student at the University of Colorado Boulder, Saturday nights were synonymous with party-hopping at college houses filled with blaring music and sticky floors. Outdoor parties in the Boulder sun always brought more people, drinking games and louder music. Now in the COVID-19 pandemic, weekend benders look more like hanging out with pets to avoid large crowds and the potential spread of COVID-19.

However, a few weeks ago around 800 students had other plans. They partied in a destructive manner and risked the community's health bringing light to large amounts of racial and socioeconomic privilege held by the university.

A lot has been asked from CU Boulder students during the pandemic. This past year they have had to transform their education completely to learning online with an increased workload, an increase in loneliness and still no spring break for mental health. Students are human and they have their limits. However, gathering by the hundreds in a party-turned-riot is no way to gain empathy.

Students who participated in the event must acknowledge the potential and prevalent damage they caused the Boulder community. No amount of unfairness to students is worth the destruction they caused. In addition, the university needs to recognize the lack of respect tied to their response to the riot and acknowledge how it affects BIPOC and underprivileged communities.

CU Boulder students are notorious for their wealth. Fifty-nine percent are part of the top 20 percent. With few arrests and identifications of those who participated in littering the streets and damaging a car, it is unlikely they will ever pay for the damage they caused, even though, statistically, many can.

The lack of consideration these students have for others' valuables is disturbing. Walking on campus will never be the same with the knowledge that any passerby could be willing to completely destroy your car.

Not only have students been forced to acknowledge what their peers are capable of, but for BIPOC students, staff and faculty, the blatant disregard for how COVID-19 has disproportionately affected their communities was exasperated.

Although the Latinx community makes up 14% of the population in Boulder County, they have made up 34% of COVID-19 cases and 40% of COVID-19 related deaths within the county.

"It's not very often that we get to quantify racism," says Holly Olivarez, organizer for Diversify CU Now in response to the staggering statistic.

BIPOC communities have extra needs for precautions due to the disproportionate effects from COVID-19. This is a reality that most CU Boulder students will never fully understand due to the lack of racial diversity at the university.

According to Olivarez, CU's decision to not shut down campus following the riot was insensitive to the BIPOC community. She believes the university's initial response displayed prejudice itself.

"CU Boulder threatening to expel anyone who had violent interaction with police was immediately problematic," Olivarez said.

Though BLM protests in Boulder this summer were peaceful, looking at police responses to protests in other cities like Denver is disheartening when compared to the engagement with police from the riot. At the riot, students were warned before tear gas was

administered and no rubber bullets were fired even after students attacked and injured police officers.

This follows an incident from May of 2019 when a white Boulder police officer pulled his gun on a black Naropa University student who was picking up trash outside of his dorm. However, after the riot, Boulder Police Chief Maris Harold spoke in a press conference mentioning that it "would not be considered best practices to send officers" into the crowd.

The contradiction of police responses is not a coincidence. When Boulder police made these decisions, they sent a message to BIPOC communities everywhere.

CU's response to the riot also follows a lack of conversation and events regarding Black History Month, minus the #BeTheChange Challenge. The challenge was used to get students to participate in "racial equity habit-building," yet it only lasted for the 28 days of the month and was not widely advertised.

In response to the spark of the Black Lives Matter movement this past summer, CU created CU Engage. CU Engage's commitment statement mentions addressing anti-blackness and racial injustice, yet the university contributes to these when they ignore how their responses affect BIPOC students, staff and instructors.

CU has promised a lot to students from fighting racial injustice to protecting the herd. However, no matter how many emails and statements from the chancellor are sent, those affiliated with the university suffer from the schools' lack of effort.

Students who chose to participate in the riot should be apprehended for their destruction and the university should correct how it addresses issues of race and privilege when they arise.

A look back at the year in CU Athletics

by Logan Standard



Senior guard McKinley Wright IV and junior forward Evan Battey pretend to high five what would be the student section after winning the game. Jan. 27, 2021 (Casey Paul / CU Independent)

From the start of classes in August to the beginning of May, University of Colorado athletic programs had a lot to celebrate during the 2020-21 season.

The CU football team had a short, yet successful season, finishing second in the Pac-12 South behind Southern California. That matchup between the Buffs and Trojans was canceled, however, due to COVID-19 issues with USC. The Buffs finished with a 4-1 regular season record and had the opportunity to compete against Texas in the Alamo Bowl, where they were ultimately

defeated by a strong Longhorns team. Sophomore tailback Jerek Broussard led the Pac-12 with 172.3 yards per game and won Pac-12 Offensive Player of the Year honors. He was also the CU Co-Athlete of the Year on the men's side, an honor shared with senior guard McKinley Wright IV of the men's basketball team and sophomore skier Magnus Boee. After a strong spring season, the Buffs look to compete for a Pac-12 title in the fall.

Head coach Tad Boyle and the CU men's basketball team finished the season with a 23-9 record and competed in the NCAA Tournament.

The Buffs beat Georgetown in the first round before being taken down by the Florida State Seminoles in round two. Wright was named to the Pac-12's First Team and All-Defensive Team, as well as winning CU's Chauncey Billups MVP Award. Following the season, Boyle landed a few top recruits, including 4-star guard Kenneth Simpson Jr., who was previously committed to Arizona. Landing Simpson helped the Buffs form the ninth-best 2021 recruiting class according to 247 Sports.

CU volleyball had a rollercoaster year navigating a difficult conference-only schedule. With an 8-12 overall record that included 10 games against ranked opponents, the Buffs went 8-3 at home, but a dismal 0-9 away from Boulder. Two huge upsets over ranked opponents, No. 12 UCLA on March 7 and No. 11 Utah on March 19, were two bright spots on the season. Colorado will retain most of its team with only one player, graduate middle blocker Rachel Fara, wrapping up her college career.

Both the men's and women's track and cross country teams impressed in 2021. In cross country, Men's senior Eduardo Herrera took home the Pac-12's individual title, while both the men's and women's teams took second place in the Pac-12 Championships. Senior Sage Hurta won the CU Female Athlete of the Year as she was declared the Indoor Mile National Champion. A First Team All-American, Hurta also set the school record in the 800m.

The CU men's golf team placed ninth at the Pac-12 Championships while the women's team took 7th place. Men's senior golfer Daniel O'Loughlin was a finalist for the CU Male Athlete of the Year.

Colorado lacrosse finished 8-6 overall and advanced to the Pac-12 Championship Game for the third time. The Buffs couldn't claim the conference title and were narrowly excluded from the NCAA tournament. Senior goalie Julia Lisella won Pac-12 Defensive Player of the Year honors.

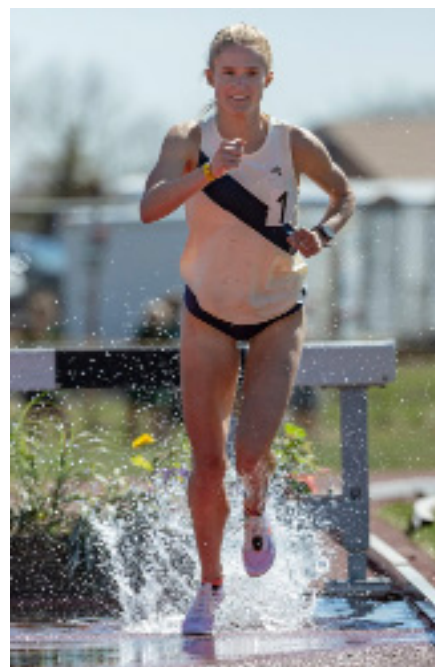
Playing in one of the most talented conferences in the country, the CU women's hoops team fared well with an 8-8 Pac-12 record. The Buffs' top moments included defeating the No. 1 Stanford

Cardinals on Jan. 17 and advancing to the Women's National Invitational Tournament quarterfinals.

In skiing, Colorado took second place in the NCAA Championships. Boee, a Norway native, took home the National Men's Nordic Skier of the Year Award. Freshman nordic skier Weronika Kaleta was a women's Second Team All American.

Finishing 9-6-2 on the season, the Colorado soccer team advanced to the NCAA Tournament but came up short in the first round against South Alabama. However, they took home some big wins against then-No. 10 California on March 5 and then-No. 14 USC on March 15.

Colorado's women's tennis team struggled to find momentum and finished with a 9-12 overall record. The Buffs were swept by Washington State in the Pac-12 Championships but did beat then-No. 12 California earlier in the season.



Senior Valerie Constien competes in the 3000 meter steeplechase at the 2021 CU Invitational at Potts Field. April 10, 2021 (Nigel Amstock/CU Independent)



1. The Buffs lock arms in support of social justice prior to their match vs Oregon State on Jan. 22, 2021. **By Nigel Amstock**

2. Graduate student Fleur Eggink attempts to hit the ball from her opponent. March 7, 2021. **By Kevin Wu**

3. Junior midfielder Kayleigh Webb kicks the ball during the first half of play at Kittredge Field. Feb. 20, 2021. **By Nigel Amstock**

4. Senior guard McKinley Wright IV drives the ball down the court during the last few minutes of play in the Pac-12 Tournament Championship game. March 13, 2021. **By Casey Paul**

Spring Showcase highlighted by fans, special moment for two walk-ons

by Brett Polley

Coaches and players embrace junior safety Curtis Appleton II after Appleton was awarded a scholarship at the beginning of the spring football showcase at Folsom Field on April 30, 2021. (Kara Wagenknecht/CU Independent)

For the final day of spring practice on Friday, the University of Colorado football team completed a Spring Showcase scrimmage. About 1,000 fans at Folsom Field witnessed a high tempo controlled scrimmage and a glimpse of the 2021 Buffs.

Head Coach Karl Dorrell noted how having an audience had the ability to change the environment.

"It was good to see some people in the stands," Dorrell said. "I was telling them before the scrimmage that it was great to have some people watching us for change. Just imagine this place in the fall, this will be packed with 50,000 people cheering us on. We're looking forward to that opportunity when the fall comes and it's ready to kick off and have a great season."

The scrimmage started off with a bang as junior safety Curtis Appleton III and graduate tight end Matt Lynch each received a scholarship. In order to break the news to the two former walk-ons, Dorrell had the two players line up against each other one-on-one. After the drill was over, the team began to erupt with excitement and point to the scoreboard, which displayed a graphic that each had been awarded a scholarship.

"I want our walk-ons to feel like if they are able to walk on to Colorado, and you work hard and can contribute on special teams, you'll have a chance to earn a scholarship," Dorrell said. "That's what these two guys did."



The team celebrates as junior safety Curtis Appleton II and graduate student tight end Matt Lynch are awarded scholarships at the beginning of the spring football showcase on April 30, 2021. (Kara Wagenknecht/CU Independent)

Junior offensive lineman Colby Pursell reflected what the moment was like to experience as a team.

"It's awesome, that's the only way to put it," Pursell said. "It's awesome for a guy to earn a scholarship. Curtis has been here for a while, so for him to earn one it's especially a great feeling."

On the defensive side of the ball, junior inside linebacker Jonathan Van Diest made a handful of great plays. Ripping through blockers throughout the entire morning, the Louisville, Colorado native led the defense in total tackles with five.

"Defensively, I think we played pretty good," Van Diest said. "Most of spring ball the defense has been on top, but today it was good for the fans to see a few touchdowns for the offense. It was a good back and forth day, I felt like I played alright. I could have done better, you have good and bad days but what is important is that the whole team plays well. I felt like I had a good spring, (the) last couple of practices were some of my best."

CU women's basketball brings down No. 1 Stanford

by Jack Carlough

In a program-defining victory, the CU women's basketball team (6-6, 4-5 Pac-12) upset the No. 1 Stanford Cardinal (11-1, 8-1 Pac-12) in overtime at the CU Events Center on Sunday. Senior forward Mya Hollingshed shot for a career-high 32 points to avenge a pair of heartbreaking losses to the Cardinal last season.

The 77-72 win marked just the third time in CU athletics history that a Buffaloes team brought down a No. 1 ranked opponent.

"I have a thousand thoughts running through my head, all of them are positive and excited and I'm just unbelievably proud of our ballclub," head coach JR Payne said. "I told them all that there (are) a thousand reasons I'm proud of them. The way we performed today was the biggest."

CU women's basketball hadn't beaten Stanford since 2002 and early in the game, it appeared that streak would continue. Stanford surged out to an 8-0 lead in just over two minutes of play. Payne said that she doesn't often "light into" her team, but she believed it was necessary when she called a timeout to halt Stanford.

Out of the timeout, Hollingshed nailed a three-point basket to kick off her historic afternoon. She hit another three-pointer soon after and then early in the second quarter, hit one to bring CU all the way back and tie the game at 17.

Stanford's height and physicality caused the Buffs problems early and often. The Cardinal outscored CU 46-30 in the paint and blocked seven CU shots. With little success under the basket, Colorado



The Buffs celebrate their 77-72 OT victory over #1 Stanford at the CU Events Center. Jan. 17, 2021 (Nigel Amstock/CU Independent)



Freshman guard Frida Foreman reacts after nailing a three during OT at the CU Events Center. Jan. 17, 2021 (Nigel Amstock/CU Independent)

was 4-for-7 beyond the arc in the first half to hang around.

"I know we were just trying to be aggressive and Stanford is so big that we couldn't just pop Mya or (junior forward) Peanut (Tuitele) or anybody under the basket and thrown the ball, we had to try to pull them a little bit away from the hoop," Payne said. "I think that helps that Mya is a great face-up shooter."

Halfway through the second quarter, Tuitele received the full wrath of Stanford's physicality when she was slammed to the ground on a Cardinal layup attempt. Tuitele exited the game but returned with vengeance in the third quarter.

"We weren't even sure if Peanut would get to play the second half, she was pretty banged up after that fall that she took," Payne said. "She's just such a tough, resilient kid. Unless she had an arm taken off, she's going to do everything she can to be in the ballgame."

Colorado took control of the paint in the third quarter as Tuitele scored six and CU out-

rebounced Stanford 14-10. Hollingshed grabbed five of her double-double inducing 10 rebounds but despite the hard work, Stanford led 53-51 entering the final quarter.

Hollingshed took over again to score nine of Colorado's first 12 points in the ensuing five minutes. She then nailed a jump shot with 2:40 remaining in regulation to knot things up at 65.

Sophomore guard Jaylyn Sherrod had a fairly quiet first three quarters but was the focus of attention in the final minute of regulation. Still tied at 65, Sherrod missed a pair of free throws but didn't let the disappointment linger long. Now down two points, Sherrod intercepted a Stanford sideline inbound pass and dashed to the rim, tying the game at 67.

"Honestly, I just kind of read it," Sherrod said. "I kind of knew they were going to try to get the ball into the point guard and had it timed defending it."

Stanford missed a layup at the buzzer and Sherrod's missed free throws were soon forgotten heading into overtime.

"Last year (against Stanford) we missed our free throws, and Jaylyn (Sherrod) was a part of that," Payne said. "She could have easily let herself go back into that place of 'oh my gosh, it's happening again,' but she's not built like that."

In overtime, it was freshman guard Frida Formann's time to steal the show. Formann hit from deep to give CU a 72-70 lead and then was fouled after bringing down a defensive rebound. She hit both of her free throws and Colorado led 74-70 with just over a minute remaining. Colorado's defense held firm and the Buffs defeated Stanford for the first time since the 2002 NCAA Tournament.

Bob Odenkirk talks violence, revenge and obsession in his action film debut “Nobody”

by Ben Berman

When trying to picture the star of a Hollywood action movie, Bob Odenkirk would likely not be the first to come to mind. However, the actor known for playing quirky side characters and more recently, lead performances in shows like “Better Call Saul” manages to command a screen presence in the new thriller film “Nobody.” In the Universal Pictures film, he delivers a fairly alternative take on a worn genre. In a virtual roundtable with Universal, The CU Independent joined Odenkirk and had a chance to interview the actor about his starring role.

The film, directed by Ilya Naishuller (“Hardcore Henry”), features Odenkirk as the everyman, Hutch Mansell. Far removed from his military service, patriarch Hutch now spends his days repeating the same mundane, white-collar office work and returning home to his withholding wife (Connie Nielsen) and children. The days blend together until Hutch’s home is victim to an armed robbery, leading him to pursue the invaders in a senseless hunt for blood.

Though that may sound like the recipe for many action movies, “Nobody” deviates in the sense that it subverts familiar action-thriller story beats, where the protagonist is often called to action through tragedy or loss, seeking vengeance. Odenkirk’s character faces the reverse problem: while his wife and child remain unharmed from the break-in, they’re left to wonder why Hutch failed to protect them and let the burglars walk. This leaves his family even more cold and distanced from him, while Hutch has nothing

tangible to avenge. Instead, he’s left as the neighborhood and workplace laughingstock, or “nobody.”

The film is strongest when it explores the vacuum left by the initial robbery and the mad scramble for Hutch to fill that void with retribution. On a mundane bus trip, Hutch witnesses a group of thugs harassing a young woman. Rather than simply protect the girl, Hutch suddenly flips a switch and decides to go full vigilante on the assailants. Odenkirk’s performance is strongest in moments like these, when his character is given the room to explore his shadowy combat-experience past and whether he’s using it to right an actual wrong or simply to fulfill his own narcissistic, darker tendencies.

“The character is an addict. He was addicted to violence, and he quit cold turkey,” Odenkirk said. “That’s not always the best way to quit something. When (Hutch) goes back in, he gets unhinged.”

The film takes advantage of this characterization to depict its action in a refreshing way in the first act. During the bus fight, Hutch doesn’t suddenly transform into a hulking, bad-guy-stomping hero immediately. Instead, we see him curse and clutch his knuckles in pain after landing his first punches in a decade, while he takes a moment to remove a knife planted in his side before resuming the fist fight. Odenkirk credits the more vulnerable depiction of his character to the film’s stunt producers, led by David Leitch (known for work on the “John Wick” and “Jurassic World” franchises).

Alongside the film crew, Odenkirk apparently trained for two years with stunt coordinator Daniel Bernhardt.

“(Bernhardt) is the man who trained me, and he’s maybe the best stunt actor alive in the world right now,” Odenkirk said. “I wanted the full experience and I wanted to push and stretch myself. If I could build off that, it would be a neat trick... crazy magic trick to do action and pull it off,” said Odenkirk, speaking of his journey to portray Hutch in the way the filmmakers intended. “So, I went on a long journey that somehow played out almost the way I dreamed. That never happens.”

The middle portion of the film is a delight to watch for this factor, where Odenkirk manages to give surprising depth to his brooding lead character. Despite his extensive preparation for the role, unlike typical action heroes, Hutch commands a more sinister, brooding presence onscreen. Rather than be outright stoic and perform his actions altruistically, Odenkirk says his character was infused with an almost perverted sense of fascination with conflict, leaving the audience to wonder what exactly drew him towards his tendencies.

That’s not to say that the film leaves a desire for more depictions of violence: instead, whether intentional or not, the glorification of violence in “Nobody” is chillingly laid bare and leaves the audience wondering why American culture has such a fascination with the gritty and gory as of late. Though he says it’s “fortuitous and unplanned,” Odenkirk sees a link between this commentary and the COVID-19 pandemic, which might be the catalyst for repressed emotions in many people around the world.

“Obviously the pandemic is this thing that you can’t hit, you can’t punch, you can’t take it apart physically, you can’t shoot it, you just have to patiently follow the rules and wait and wait and wait,” Odenkirk said. “If there’s something a movie like this can do, it can let you fantasize the feelings inside you and sort of let them go, or play them out and feel cleansed of those feelings. And it’s

one reason we like seeing movies that play out violence.”

The depiction of violence, while presented in a fairly interesting way, eventually loses its own focus. The film doesn’t satisfy itself with Hutch being a small-scale vigilante in the vein of “Dirty Harry” or other gritty revenge films of the 1970s. Instead, the film pulls from worn-out tropes made popular in duller superhero or action flicks. Hutch soon becomes wrapped up in a plot featuring shallow Russian mobsters and FBI agents, where the story quickly devolves into action movie generics.

This mix of elements reduces the bulk of the film to a fairly by-the-numbers shootout, leaving little screen time for character study, interesting set pieces or even cinematography. While Hutch’s arc is solid and the action is excellently choreographed, the overall lack of ambition in the script and characterization will prevent “Nobody” from reaching the highs of everyman action classics like “Die Hard” or exploitative, introspective thrillers like “Taxi Driver.”

“Nobody” might not be an awards magnet of a film, but with well shot action at a tight 91 minutes, the film merits its own existence. At the end of the day, the action leaves little room for reflection, but the general themes of violence, revenge and obsession propel Odenkirk’s action debut into a merely watchable tier of cinema that leaves us wondering how the actor would fare if given a chance to star in another, more transcendent film in the same genre.

Colorado Asian creatives: representation and visibility

by Izzy Fincher

In honor of AAPI heritage month, four female creatives from Colorado reflect on how they identify as Asian-American, their heritage and their creative style. The spotlights include singer-songwriter Grace Clark, interdisciplinary artist Sammy Lee, screenwriter Marin Lepore and sculptor Yumi Roth.

Grace Clark

Korean adoptee with American parents, who grew up in the U.S.

When opera singer Grace Clark heard bluegrass for the first time, she knew she had discovered her true passion.

"I remember hearing (bluegrass) and falling so deeply in love," Clark said. "I remember thinking I need to pursue this – it's what I have been waiting for."

Soon after, Clark began writing her own songs and establishing herself in Denver's bluegrass and acoustic folk scenes. In 2019, she released her self-titled debut EP, which she describes as a heartfelt and intentional exploration of life and love.

While pursuing her passion for bluegrass, Clark often struggled with the genre's lack of diversity. Historically, bluegrass has been a white, male-dominated genre from the heart of the American South. Many white women, including Alison Krauss, Rhona Vincent and Sierra Hull, rose to fame in recent decades, however, there is still a lack of representation for people of color.

Clark focuses on creating inclusive musical spaces for both audiences and musicians. A few years ago, she started the Rambler Music Sessions, a house concert series that showcases local and touring musicians, specifically those from marginalized communities. "I wanted to create a space where I was amplifying and highlighting the BIPOC and queer communities," Clark said. "As an adoptee and a woman of color, I have always tried to be aware of (inclusivity)."

During COVID-19, Clark continued to be a musical activist, despite not being able to perform live. She aims to raise awareness about anti-Asian racism and violence and hopes to empower others to become AAPI allies.

"The AAPI community is finally starting to step into their power and speak out against racism," Clark said. "We have been told to stay quiet for too long."

"If people want to be a better ally to the AAPI community, they need to start asking themselves the hard questions," Clark continued. "Then the next step is (action). If and when you see an Asian person being harassed, remember to use your voice and stick up for those who are being oppressed."

Sammy Lee

Born in Seoul, South Korea to Korean parents

Sammy Lee, a Korean artist based in Denver, feels a powerful connection to hanji as a part of her heritage.

Hanji, hand-made Korean mulberry paper, is said to last a thousand years. The oldest printed



Graphic by Izzy Fincher

material in the world, dating back to 751 A.D., was created on hanji.

In Korea, hanji has been an integral part of daily life for thousands of years. In traditional homes, it is used for household objects, furniture and wallpaper. Other uses include calligraphy paper, books, crafting, art and even disposable clothes.

In her artwork, Lee uses the paper in innovative ways for bookbinding and casting everyday objects like suitcases, rocks and shop signs; a process she describes as intensely creative but also challenging.

"When the paper is wet, it can become anything," Lee said. "It has so much potential. (Working with hanji) is a time-intensive, laborious process, so I have time to think about the significance of the materiality and how it relates to my Korean identity and heritage."

In her interactive project, "Very Proper Table Settings," Lee uses the paper to cast Korean dinnerware and invites community members to arrange imaginary meals for loved ones, leading to

impactful discussions about the intersection of food and culture.

"I try to bring underrepresented narratives into the community and create interest," Lee said. "It takes a lot of time and effort to do that."

During COVID-19, Lee has also raised awareness of racism against the AAPI community. Last August, she launched the community art project "COVID Walls" with Stella Yu to display photos of victims, survivors and frontline workers. Lee particularly wanted to highlight AAPI frontline workers, who have put themselves and their families at risk to serve their local communities.

"There are a lot of Asians in healthcare," Lee said. "I wanted Asian faces to be associated with people who are serving, (instead of) only with the virus."

Lee's AAPI inspirations: Jongku Kim, Nam June Paik and Dinh Q. Lê

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Marin Lepore

Chinese adoptee with American parents, who grew up in Colorado and Beijing, China

Growing up as an LGBTQ, Asian American woman, Marin Lepore seldom saw herself represented on-screen, especially in kid-friendly content. Now, she's a screenwriter and activist taking representation into her own hands.

In 2018, Lepore co-founded Sad Girl Productions, a Denver-based independent film company, while still pursuing her undergraduate degree at the University of Colorado Denver. She wanted to produce inclusive, female-focused comedy films while working with a diverse cast and crew.

"Our goal is to empower women, (especially) women of color and other marginalized communities, by highlighting them on and off camera in an authentic way," Lepore said.

Lepore is particularly passionate about creating inclusive content for kids. In 2018, she began writing and directing "I Put the Bi in Bitter," a light-hearted comedy web series that depicts a bisexual teenager, Sam, and her lesbian best friend, Alex. The series explores how these characters navigate life, love and growing up in high school. The cast features all-female AAPI leads, starring Rhema Srihartiti as Sam and Rhianna DeVries as Alex. To boot, the crew is mostly female, people of color and LGBTQ.

Yumi Roth

Filipino-American born in Oregon, who grew up in the U.S. and Manila, Philippines

Tumbleweeds are always in motion. Rolling across the plains, each plant disperses nearly 250,000 seeds along its journey.

The tumbleweed has become a romantic symbol of the American West, embodying the cowboy spirit of self-reliance, resilience and adventurousness, yet, it is not a native to the U.S. Imported from Russia in the 1870s, the invasive species soon took over the West, spreading as far as California and Canada in a few decades.

Yumi Roth, a University of Colorado Boulder art professor, is fascinated by the symbolism and historical context of tumbleweeds. In 2017, she created "Tumbleweed Kintsugi" to explore how the plant exemplifies the intersection of immigration, displacement and American identity. The work features collected tumbleweeds rebuilt and repaired with sterling silver; a process is similar to kintsugi, the traditional Japanese craft of repairing broken pottery with gold.

Roth explores the ambiguity and complexities of identity in her other works. She often frames her art through the lens of cultural anthropology, examining the expression of identity in material culture, including shipping palettes, signs and barbed wire.

"As an artist, I am interested in liminal and in-between spaces, miscommunication, misunderstandings and the slippages of language," Roth said.

As a mixed-race, Filipino-American woman, Roth is intimately familiar with in-between spaces and cultural misunderstandings. She has often struggled with feelings of invisibility, especially in all-white spaces.

"There's a quality of invisibility built into Asian-American identity," Roth said. "If you aren't East Asian, there's another level of invisibility."

Roth is happy to see increased visibility for the AAPI community in recent years, especially for Southeast Asians. However, she believes more work must be done to highlight the community's diversity of identities, heritages and cultures.

"I hope the presumed monolith of Asian-Americanness can be dismantled," Roth said.

"It will still be a collective identity that (connects us), but other people will understand it's not so simple. We all have complex histories and identities."

Roth's AAPI inspirations: Paul Pfeiffer, On Kawara, 98B COLLABorator and Filipino/American Artist Directory

Trans students find a voice, community at Art and Poetry Showcase

by Marion Walmer



The Pride Office's LGBTQ+ Art and Poetry Showcase
(Courtesy of the Pride Office)

Celebration of one's self is one of the most important parts of happiness. From birthdays to graduation ceremonies to award shows, celebration is simply a part of human nature. After all, celebration is fun. Who wouldn't enjoy a personalized holiday with gift-giving and cake-eating?

The Pride Office at the University of Colorado

Boulder wanted to use Trans Day of Visibility as a way to help trans and LGBTQ+ students at CU Boulder feel celebrated in their community, hosting an LGBTQ+ Art and Poetry Showcase on Wednesday, March 31.

This celebration of self is much easier for some than it is for others. Often overwhelmed by the

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hardship they face in their own communities, along with the exhaustion of simply existing in toxic environments, marginalized individuals generally don't have as many opportunities to celebrate.

One group in particular that struggles with this problem is the transgender community. Trans people deal with transphobia, discrimination and a lack of accepting spaces all while going through the stressful process of transitioning. This gauntlet of uncomfortable situations can be exhausting.

Trans Day of Visibility was created in 2009 to combat this problem. Created by trans activist Rachel Crandall-Crocker, Trans Day of Visibility is about celebrating the community's beauty, resilience and societal contributions — something the Pride Office achieved by focusing on trans student's artistic endeavors.

The event, hosted by CU Boulder, was a space for students to share their art in a small-group format, with the sole purpose of being heard. No competition, awards or prizes — just a place for students to empathize with other members of the LGBTQ+ community through their art.

"When I'm sharing poetry at a Trans Day of Visibility event, it's really about engaging in community," said Christen Malloy, a computer science major and poet who attended the showcase. "It helps me feel like what I'm doing matters."

Malloy's poetry covers a diverse range of topics, from social justice to trans feminism. Like many trans people at CU Boulder, she uses Trans Day of Visibility as a way to take pride in her community without focusing on some of the problems trans folks face every day.

"It's a day where I feel like I don't have to hide myself away," Malloy said. "I don't have to play the game of 'passing.' It's the kind of day that I wish every day could be for trans people."

Maggie Friesen, a musician studying music composition and gender studies at CU Boulder,

sees Trans Day of Visibility as an opportunity for cisgender people to take a step back and learn. Friesen sees Trans Day of Visibility as a day for cisgender people to avoid appropriating and invading trans spaces.

"It's a time for cis people to be quiet and reflect," Friesen said. "It's a time (for cis people) to feel, but not claim any solidarity."

Friesen describes her music as having a "social justice flavor," with much of her work exploring issues with the American judicial system. She's also an avid writer, with her written work diving head-first into the concept of self. Friesen read her piece, "On Being a Heretic: 29 Observations," aloud to the showcase's attendees.

"My med provider asks me how I've been feeling this week in the hopes that my depression medication has improved my mood," Friesen read. "I tell her that it's mostly been yearning this week. Which is not the same as sadness, but close. I love to yearn; I feel it so deeply in my body, it feels so immensely me." The piece is a brilliant look into being trans, with painfully raw descriptions of yearning for a happier life.

The Pride Office's showcase was exactly what trans people need more of — instead of an event preaching about how trans people can fit into the cisgender-centric normality of society, it was a space for trans people to listen to each other. It was an hour of feeling empowered by trans-ness rather than being held back by it. It was about being seen, uplifted and celebrated.

To find information about future events, or if you're interested in becoming more involved with the LGBTQ+ community at CU Boulder, visit the Pride Office's website

'Truth to Power': the power of art for social change

by Altug Karakurt

Most metalheads who were around during the late 2000s have the chorus of System of a Down's B.Y.O.B. carved in their memory, "Everybody's going to the party, have a real good time / Dancing in the desert, blowing up the sunshine." Similar to the punk classic "Beach Party Vietnam" from a decade prior, System's satire of the trivialization of the Iraq War strongly resonated with their audience and ended up winning them a Grammy in 2006. However, despite having produced many other politically-charged tracks, like "Soldier Side," "Prison Song" and "Boom," the band was primarily known for their unique, industrial sound, rather than their politicism.

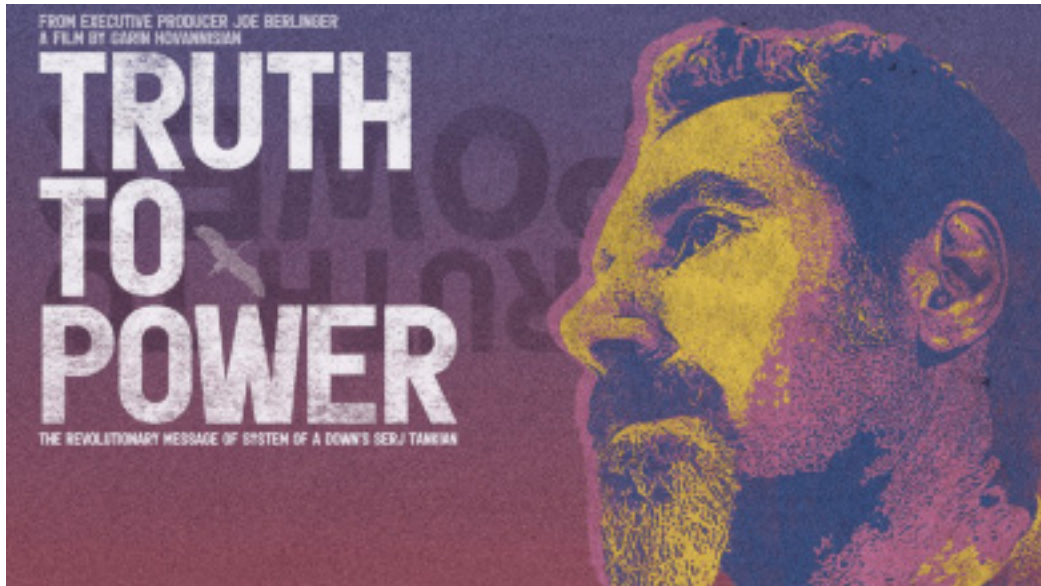
Once the band went on hiatus in 2006, frontman Serj Tankian became a solo act, pivoting toward conceptual albums with political and environmental themes. The documentary "Truth to Power," released Feb. 19, follows Tankian's political activism through the System of a Down years and beyond and explores his role in the 2018 Armenian Revolution. Although the film is about Tankian's activism, it treats the subject matter as a universal theme and pays tribute to the power of art in social change.

Garin Hovannisian, known for his critically-acclaimed debut film "1915" and his writings on the Armenian Genocide, is the director of "Truth to Power" and shares co-producer credit with Serj Tankian. Right before going to Armenia to join the revolution in 2018, Tankian contacted Hovannisian to have his journey documented. The film is mostly made up of this footage, as well as homemade clips from Tankian's earlier career, exclusive interviews and Tankian's own recordings. Despite being a patchwork of various content, the film comes together cohesively and carries an authentic and charming indie aesthetic.

Tankian has been vocal with anti-war messages for over two decades now, which sometimes came at a personal and professional price. Soon after 9/11, Tankian published a controversial essay on the band's website without consulting the other band members. Although he called 9/11 a "horrific act of violence," Tankian also pointed out the invasive US foreign policy as a potential motivator and called for peace in the Middle East, which was interpreted by the media as Tankian justifying the attack. Soon after their album "Toxicity" climbed up to the top of the charts, Tankian's criticism of the country during an unprecedented mass hysteria led to the band being banned from radio station playlists.

A year later, the band once again embraced a political stance with the anti-war anthem "Boom" and its iconic music video. While the band would produce multiple very successful, politically-charged tracks, "Truth to Power" describes how the disagreements about politicism in their lyrics caused internal conflicts between band members, which eventually led to their four-year hiatus from 2006 to 2010.

With the mainstream success of "Toxicity," System of a Down became some of the most prominent Armenian-American figures in the popular culture and became representatives of their community. Starting with Tankian's tour of Los Angeles' Little Armenia, which kicks off the film, Tankian's Armenian heritage is a major theme in his journey. In multiple instances, both the band members and interviewed Armenians emphasize how thrilling it was to see four Armenian kids having such accomplishments. Due to the cultural representation they carry and the memories of their survivor relatives, all band members were passionate about working towards the recognition of the 1915 Armenian Genocide by the United



“Truth to Power” (Courtesy of Oscilloscope Laboratories)

States, which would eventually happen in 2019.

The climax of the film comes with the coverage of System of a Down’s historic performance back in their homeland. In 2015, the band played a free concert in Yerevan to commemorate the centennial of the genocide. This concert ended up becoming a milestone for both Tankian as an activist and also for the nation of Armenia. Tankian would take the stage and speak truth to power, letting his audience know how he felt about the government, which would inspire many Armenian activists. Embracing his role as the voice of the dissent, Tankian began visiting Armenia often and getting involved in the 2018 election cycle. In 2018, election fraud which led to the ruling body’s victory sparked a peaceful protest that would lead to a nationwide uprising. The month-long resistance would later be called the 2018 Velvet Revolution and would eventually take the government down.

The latter half of “Truth to Power” follows the events that lead up to the revolution and explores

Tankian’s direct involvement in-person and on social media. Many impactful scenes come from Tankian’s own camera and are far from professionally framed and directed. Yet, the homemade video feel of the at times shaky footage makes the latter half of the film come off very sincere and unfiltered.

Throughout “Truth to Power,” we watch an ordinary man from an immigrant family following his passion and finding commercial success, as well becoming a role model for an entire nation. Due to the conversational and casual approach of the film and Tankian’s demeanor, his extraordinary story comes off not as the biography of an outlier but as a casual, intimate story the audience can relate to. The film documents how the uniting power of music inspired a political leader to stand up for a better future and make history. It serves as a reminder, as in many ways most art does, how much we have in common as humans and the power of unity.

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