

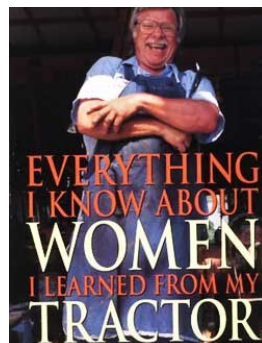
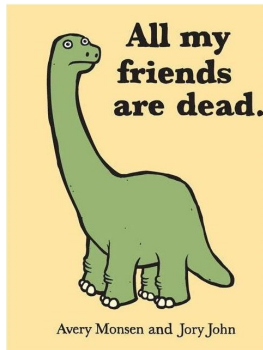
The benefits of reading! I have never been a big reader. I find it to be slightly boring and with the need to be able to do several things at once, it has gotten even harder to focus for extended periods. When I am on a trip, my

goal will be to lounge by the pool and read a book. It's here that I will be able to complete a text. As you know reading has great benefits... however, those benefits are not always known to the reader. Here are the top five benefits of reading:

Memory – Engaging in frequent cognitive activities later in life reduced the rate of decline by 32%. People who engage in reading or other mentally stimulating activities can slow the rate of memory decline. This was determined after studying 294 seniors.

Decision-Making Skills – A study of Americans aged 25-74 found that, regardless of age, individuals who regularly challenged their brains through activities such as reading do better at fluid intelligence tests when compared to individuals who don't.

Anxiety and stress reduction – A good book can reduce one's heart rate and improve their quality of life. According to research conducted at Mindlab International,
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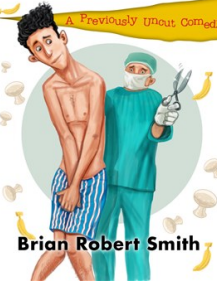
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Circumcised at Seventeen

A Previously Unread Comedy



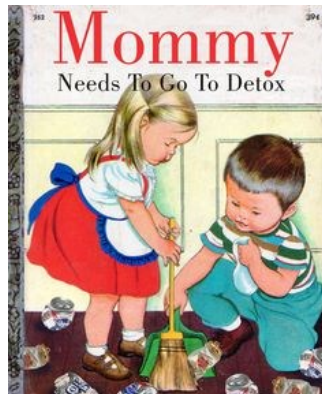
Brian Robert Smith

it only takes 6 seconds of reading to get a person to start to relax. Additionally, the University of Toronto determined that frequent readers are better suited to process information and be prepared for life's uncertainties.

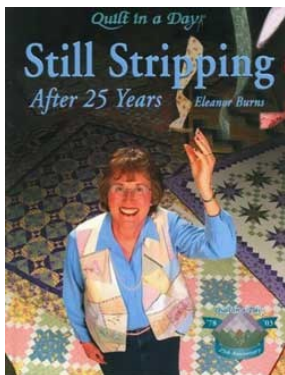
Zzzzzz's improvement – The Mayo Clinic found that if a person creates a bedtime ritual, such as reading before bed, it signals the body that it's time to sleep. On the flip side, it has been found that individuals who use electronics before sleep do not sleep as well.

Prevents Memory Loss

– My Grandmother believed this... and would read as well as do the crosswords found in the daily paper. It has been determined that individuals ages 20 -60 who engage in mentally stimulating tasks, such as



reading, are less likely to develop Alzheimer's. Reading has also shown that it helps preserve parts of the brain's structure that are important to cognition, later in life.



Needless to say, I need to read more or this guy will be brainless.... We hope you enjoy this issue of the West of 50 Newsletter. In

this issue, you will find great stories, and events all geared to help you keep your brain functioning well into your later years.

Source; Lifeline.

—Jason



Interns & ICE Cream!

WOF LOVES their interns! Please join us as we welcome Lindsey and Helena. Come and meet these two awesome individuals. Learning about

their educational goals and why they chose social work as their area of study.

When: Thursday, September 12th.

Time: 12:30p –1:30p

Ice Cream Provided—



Lunch Bunch— Walters 303 Pizzeria & Publik House!

Built on years of experience learning the pizza game this Always Funkey Never Dull pizza joint is a Denver must have. This pizzeria pumps out appetizers like oven-baked wings and toasted ravioli. Their killer salads are also available as wraps, it's killer lasagna is **MEATY** and **DELICIOUS**, and their desserts range from cheesecake to cookies. As for their pies... they don't disappoint with signature bites such as the Big Fizz and Pop-eye's special.

Date: Sep. 19th

Time: 12:30p

Address: Walter's 303 1906 Pearl St. Denver, CO 80203. As always attendees are responsible for covering the price of their own meal.

The Center on Colfax's

Holiday Party & Art Show.

The show is just a few months away...

Have you been working on your art?

THE TEA DANCE

FRIDAY THE THIRTEENTH OF SEPTEMBER
4:00 – 8:00 PM | Rooftop of The Center

The Tea Dance returns...from the grave! Celebrate the changing of the seasons with your host and a cast of ghoulish talent and delight.

Enjoy music, food, drag, burlesque, prizes, and more. Come dressed to kill in your best occult, Friday the 13th garb!
Scan the QR code to RSVP.

THE CENTER
OF GOLF PARK
www.thecenter.org

Must be 21+ to attend this event caters to the 50+ crowd.

The YELLOW
By Avis Blankenship
15 May 2022



Paula Sue St. Francis
Avis Leah Blankenship
20 years and 100 pounds
ago.

I cannot say exactly when the YELLOW started. I will always remember what happened my first day back to MileHi Church after COVID. It was Memorial Day 2021. Half way through the service in which our nation's fallen service men and women were honored, the church leaders switched gears. The service became a Memorial Service for all of the Church members who had died in the last year and a half since the shut down. On the big screens, they scrolled through all of the many names. Paula's name wasn't there because they didn't know. I had tried to reach Rev. Patty (my adopted God Mother) before Paula's death, but we got our wires crossed.

I saw Rev. Patty after the service and she told me, "Be sure to get a stone to place in the hole for the tree planting." I remember being in awe of the comfort and love permeating the air as I kept thinking, "Paula is getting her Memorial Service."

About 50 of us gathered in the rain for the tree planting. Rev. Patty said some words, beat her drum, and sang a song. Then she took a stone, walked to the hole, paused, then dropped it in. Rev. Patty offered the basket of stones to us.

I stepped up right away. When I reached for a stone, my hand gravitated towards the YELLOW one. A voice in my head said, "I don't want yellow." Then another voice said, "Quit fucking around in front of all these people!" So I took the YELLOW stone, approached the hole, said a little prayer, and tossed it in.

Yellow was never a favorite color of mine or of Paula's. She did like the neon yellow that construction workers wear. I don't know when I recognized the YELLOW as a sign from Paula.

Once I was at Washington Park getting ready to play horseshoes. I decided to get something from my car and I cut across the grass, which I never do in that area. I always stay on the paths. On the way back from my car, lying in the grass was a small, wooden children's toy - YELLOW.

Not long after that, I was walking the dogs in a park by the river. There in the grass was a rubber dog bone - YELLOW.

Found a YELLOW marble in the backyard - I'll take it!

Now it's July 4th, 2021. I went to my back foyer to get a portable chair to take for the party after church. I absentmindedly pushed the YELLOW chair aside, "Too bright." Turns out the only other chair is teal green, and I'm wearing a teal green shirt. So that's out! Then I realize the YELLOW!

Continued on the next page.

This is how the YELLOW has worked half the time. It has to come up and say, "Yoo Hoo." Then I'm like, "Oh! Hey!" Which, by the way, is what I think a coincidence is - the Universe saying, "Yoo Hoo."

There are times that I stretch it, when maybe it's not the YELLOW, just a little yellow that I'm trying to make into a big YELLOW. On June 21, 2021, Paula and I had our last date on what would have been our 33rd Anniversary. We went to Summit Lake where I released Paula's ashes. There were nothing but YELLOW flowers everywhere, (and a couple of purple ones.)

The first and only flowers for a while this spring were YELLOW. A stretch, but why not?

On September 1st, 2021, I made it to my first therapy session with Marcia. One week prior to this, I decided it was time to surrender to the professionals.

I got lost on the way, started getting upset, called Marcia upset, she helped, found my way, embarrassed, not too late, pulling myself together to explain my situation, then, BAM, "You're wearing a YELLOW dress!!" As I explained, Marcia quickly took notes, glancing at me curiously.

For a while now it seems, I've celebrated the YELLOW with family and friends. We send yellow cards back and forth in yellow envelopes.

On January 30, 2022, I was talking with my former co-worker, Lisa. I was telling her how happy I was to have seen one of my favorite Deputy Sheriffs at the MLK walk on the 17th. I started reminiscing about how on my last day of work, November 16, 2018, D/S Jordan walked in with a huge bouquet of yellow roses. Lisa was exasperated, "What's with the YELLOW?!?" Once again, I had not put it together, but what's to put together? This was 2 years (to the day) before Paula left. That would have to be RETRO-YELLOW?

A few months ago, I was watching Trevor Noah when Tan dee way Newton was on, (she played Maeve, the Madam of Sweetwater in the series Westworld). Both Paula and I enjoyed her work.

We never did the jealousy thing. We enjoyed women together. Back in 1992, we were on our way to pick up our wedding invitations, going westbound on Colfax at Colorado Blvd. Paula let out a, "Woo Hoo! Did you see that?!" I said, "Paula, you realize, we're on our way..." We had a good laugh.

Back to the lovely Ms. Newton and Trevor Noah. They are chatting away, and I am feasting my eyes for me and for Paula, when I finally see her dress - YELLOW.

On April 26, 2022, I was on the homestretch of my walk at Washington Park. I was on the west side where there will be a large flower garden. Just east of the garden area tied to a bench was a bouquet of 2 dozen balloons - you guessed it - YELLOW. They were all by themselves just blowin' in the wind. I had to stop exerting myself and go lie down on the grass and goose poop to take a picture.

Continued on the next page.

On May 11, 2022, my sister Felicia and I were on our way to play Queer Jeopardy at The Center. I spotted a very fine Mustang, whatever year, I don't remember. I exclaimed, "That right there is Paula's Mustang, exactly, not almost, except for this or that. That's it exactly!" Then to myself, I said, "Except for that bright yellow." "YELLOW!" I said out loud as I smiled at my sister.

Now, you have to know that I have googled this and found:

YELLOW = vitality + joy

{not the sadness}

I will close with a limerick:

there once was a color called yella'
that few consider to be mella'
but this YELLOW was
much better because
it was a sign from my Dear Bella

Between Us -

Join AARP Colorado & Jason on **Wednesday, September 18, 2024** at the **AARP Colorado State Office located at 303 E 17th Ave, Suite 510, Denver, CO 80203** for "**Between US**", a presentation by Jason Lynch of The Center on Colfax. **Time 11a -1p**

Relationships are never easy and in a community that seems to have a revolving door of connections we will take the time to slow down and discuss the importance of creating healthy networks. The goal of this conversation is to provide attendees with new skills that could help one manage their relationships. In this conversation we will discuss the following:

- Understanding what you want from a relationship.
- Ten ways to think about feelings.
- Conflict styles
- Ways to approach conflict.

This is an **in-person** event and **space is limited. If the registration button is grayed out, it means we have reached max capacity and registration has been closed.**

Parking fee waived for garage on Logan Street between 17th and 18th Ave. Bring parking ticket with you to event to be validated.

A light lunch will be provided.

Register at: <https://events.aarp.org/O4Kr3x>



Lunch & Learn: Did you know that Colorado was the first state to legalize marijuana? Now 12 years into legalization, Coloradans are still curious about cannabis. Come join Truman Bradley and Stephanie Turner from the Marijuana Industry Group for an “Ask Me Anything” lunch and learn about legal cannabis.

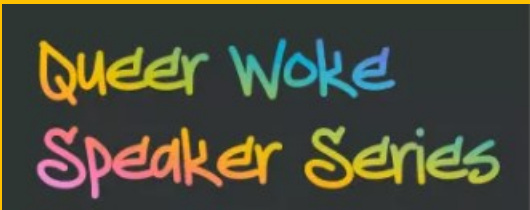
Presentation -

- The state of Colorado Cannabis after 12 years
- Overview of State and local marijuana laws
- How is marijuana grown, sold, and regulated?
- What’s on a marijuana label?
- Where does all that marijuana tax money go?
- “Ask us anything” Q&A

About the speakers:

The Marijuana Industry Group (MIG) is the trade association for licensed cannabis businesses. MIG was founded in 2010 by cannabis small business owners and supporters to help craft Colorado’s earliest medical marijuana regulatory framework. Executive Director Truman Bradley and Operations Coordinator Stephanie Turner work with lawmakers, regulators, stakeholders and marijuana businesses on sensible business regulations. **Date:** 9/25/24.

Time: 12:00pm. **RSVP required to attend and must be 21+.**



Pageants, Contests, & Competitions (Oh My!)

Pageant Systems, Contest, and Competitions are all different; but do you know how? Across Colorado there are multiple historic and up-and-coming systems that center and celebrate queer talent & excellence. From the Leather community honoring their history to weekly drag competitions that challenge local artists, there are opportunities everywhere for people to engage, compete, and reign. This Queer Woke will be a special panel of representatives from multiple different systems across Colorado. Join us to learn more about their history, fundamental values & goals, how you can get involved, and their vision for the future. This presentation will feature a panel discussion as well as an open Q&A with the audience.

Date: Friday, September 27th. **Pizza will be served at 5:30** and the **presentation will begin at 6:00p.** RSVP in advance to secure your space.





Save The Date!

Join us for West of 50's

Thankful 4U

Thanksgiving Celebration

November 1, 2024 11:00am

Registration opens in October.

ReCreative Denver x Stitch & Bitch:

Artist and designer Angie Rao will be joining The Center on Colfax and ReCreative Denver for a DIY patch making workshop! Using recycled fabrics, appliques, and other upcycled materials, Angie will lead the group in designing and creating a one of a kind patch for garment repair. Materials for this project will be provided, but feel free to bring in any fabrics you'd like to use for your patch.



MEMORIES OF AN OLD MAN

KEN FELTS

V - THE NAVY YEARS

After junior college graduation in May 1950, I worked full-time for my brother at his service station. The Korean War started on June 25, 1950, and the military draft was reestablished. Former student friends were being enrolled and the rest of us knew our turn would come soon. Two friends and I visited the Navy recruiter's office in mid-December, and we completed our application to serve, lying about the question of homosexuality. We were sent to Kansas City for induction, which included a physical examination. From there we went by train to boot camp located in San Diego, California. It was still winter back home in Kansas, but here we were in beautiful summer-like weather. We were housed in open barracks with about fifty other inductees, mostly from Kansas and Missouri. Uniforms were provided, and everyone got a crew cut followed by a dental exam. I had all four wisdom teeth removed in just a few weeks.



Navy haircut - 1951

New recruits quickly learned that they were in for a tough time. We began with learning how to handle our rifles and march as a squad. If you were at sea and had to save yourself, it was necessary for you to be able to swim. Most of us farm boys could barely cross a watering tank for cattle. We were taken to the base pool and immersed and quickly developed some kills. We were considered to be proficient when we could make it to the other side of the pool. Six weeks later we graduated most were assigned immediately to duty stations. Because of our test scores, some of us were sent to special schools for specialized training. I found myself in Corpsman classes, watching movies on battlefield movies on treatment of fallen soldiers. I had joined the Nave because I did not wish to be in the infantry, and my job, if I finished training, would have been assignment to a platoon of soldiers. No thank you. I asked for a transfer.



USS Swallow, AMS 36 – My home (1951-1952) during the Korean War.

Considered one of the most disagreeable duties for Naval personnel was assignment to the minesweeping fleet during the Korean War. The only ships sank with loss of personnel during that conflict were six minesweepers. My new home port was Sasebo, Japan. My ship, the U.S.S. Swallow was made of wood so as not to activate magnetic mines, 136 feet long and 36 feet wide. There were 4 officers and a crew of 26. The enlisted were all housed in one large room below decks, next to the engine room and food storage locker, and we all shared one toilet-shower area. The dining area was above decks. We usually spent three to four weeks at sea and then several days at home port for provisioning and refuel.

September 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Labor Day Center Closed	3 10 Men's Coffee 2p Sex	4 10:30 SS Yoga 1:30 AARP	5 10 Art	6 10:30 Move 1:30 DPSG	7
8	9 10 Lesbian 1:30 Story 6:15 Stitch	10 10 Men's Coffee 2p Sex	11 10:30 SS Yoga 1:30 AARP	12 10 Art ICE Cream & Interns	13 No Programming 4p Tea Dance	14
15 Bisexual Awareness Week 16th-23rd	16 10 Lesbian 1:30 Story 6:15 Stitch	17 10 Men's Coffee 2p Sex	18 10:30 SS Yoga 11a AARP Program	19 10 Art 12:30 Lunch Bunch	20 10:30 Move 11:45 Meditation 1:30 DPSG	21
22	23 10 Lesbian 1:30 Story 6:15 Stitch Bi Visibility Day	24 10 Men's Coffee 2p Sex	25 10:30 SS Yoga Lunch & Learn 1:30 AARP	26 10 Art	27 10:30 Move 1:30 DPSG Queer Woke	28
29	30 10 Lesbian 1:30 Story 6:15 Stitch	Key Lesbian: Lesbian Lounge Story: Telling Your Story Stitch: Stitch & Bitch Sex: Older Wiser Sexually Smarter AARP: Community Group Art: Open Art Move: Movement DPSG: Disability Peer Support Group				