

INSIDE&OUT



INSIDE STORY You can still enjoy the sulte life while living out of a suitcase » MARNI JAMESON, 40



OUTSIDE GUIDE Colorado's boutique distillers are shaking up the national tippling scene » 127

OUT & ABOUT

WEEKEND LIVE!

Mural, mural on the wall

Feeling mod? Indulge your appetite for modern décor, art and fashion at an informal cocktail party to celebrate "Create Modern Denver," at Mod Livin'. Local artisans including two of Denver's best-known mural artists will demonstrate their crafts. Food and drinks by Deluxe Burger. Sunday, 6-8 p.m. Free. 5327 E. Colfax Ave. Info: modlivin.com or call 720-941-9292.



Eclectic entertainment

3rd Law Dance/Theater presents "In Pieces," an original production emphasizing several dance premieres. Video imagery, vivid costuming and eclectic music infuse the show. 7:30 p.m. today and 4 p.m. Sunday. Tickets: \$17-\$23. The Dairy Center for the Arts, 2550 Walnut St., Boulder. Info: thedairy.org or call 303-444-7328.

AT THE MOVIES

Funny people

Steve Carell and Tina Fey star in "Date Night" as a bored married couple attempting to mix things up. When they intentionally respond to the wrong name to snag a table at a trendy New York restaurant, they get caught in a crazy case of mistaken identity. PG 13. 1 hour, 28 minutes.



They love rock 'n' roll

"The Runaways," based on a book by Cherie Currie, is a biopic about the eponymous '70s all-girl band. Dakota Fanning stars as founding member Currie while Kristen Stewart plays Joan Jett. Put another dime in the jukebox, baby.



Alison Levy uses her therapy dog, Marley, in a program called Pawitive Connection that teaches kids about responsibility. *Reza Mervinchi, The Denver Post*

By John Davidson *The Denver Post*

A battered spouse refuses to enter a shelter without her pet. An ill elderly person declines hospital treatment because it means being away from an animal. A troubled child gains confidence and learns responsibility through learning to train a dog.

All of these applications are part of a groundbreaking program at the University of Denver that's exploring the many ways people and pets are connected. The emerging



Frank R. Ascione is the author of "Children and Animals: Exploring the Roots of Kindness," and the institute's executive director.

results could reshape practices in social work, law enforcement and public policy, according to leaders of DU's Institute for Human-Animal Connection.

"I see almost unlimited possibilities for our (institute) in both teaching and research," says Frank Ascione, the institute's executive director. He speaks about the program while seated in his office in Craig Hall, an older brick building on the western end of the DU campus.

Ascione's team has been looking into such issues as the link between violent behavior to humans and violence to animals. Specifically, Ascione was part of a study that documented cases of violent husbands harming family pets to torment abused wives.

The author of "Children and Animals: Exploring the Roots of Kindness," Ascione also recently testified in the Colorado General Assembly on behalf of a bill to include pets in domestic restraint

DU study ahead by a cold, wet nose

Sit. Learn. Heal.

A unique program at the university is dedicated to exploring the many dimensions of the human-animal bond and how it plays out in our lives.

PETS: Researchers look for trends in abuse of animals

◀◀ FROM 1D

ing orders. His office is cluttered with books and newspaper clippings about animals.

In another application of the people/pet study, students in DU's Graduate School of Social Work, where the Institute for Human-Animal Connection is based, documented the positive impact of using therapy animals to teach responsibility and anger control to at-risk children.

These connections, once uncovered, may seem obvious in retrospect. But the science behind them is new and important, says James Herbert Williams, dean of the Graduate School of Social Work.

"We are one of the few schools doing this," Williams says. "It's taken the school to a different level."

Williams credited the support of two Denver-based organizations, the American Humane Association and the Animal Assistance Foundation, for the institute's success. All three have brought resources to the table, he says.

Institute staffers are working on two new efforts: enlisting experts from



The institute's co-director, Philip Tedeschi, likens its research to the early days of studying spousal abuse. *Reza A. Marvashti, The Denver Post*

around the world as fellows and then posting their studies at Humananimalconnection.com, and conducting a painstaking study of public and social institutions in Colorado to come up with a better understanding of how animal-abuse cases are handled.

Phil Tedeschi, the institute's co-director, is involved in the study of Colorado institutions, which is called the Colorado Link Project. "We're trying to target each system independently — social welfare, law enforcement (and) the judicial system," he explains.

Researchers will look at animal-cruelty cases from the initial report, he says, checking "how they are investigated, what control the investigator has, what does and doesn't get investigated, how they are prosecuted and what penalties are handed down."

The goal is to come up with suggested improvements in practices every step of the way. "It kind of harkens back to the beginnings of the domestic-violence issue," he says.

Students are responding to the new approaches offered by the institute.

"I see it as a more unique and positive way to do things," says Alison Levy, a graduate student who works with kids in a program called Pawsitive Connection, which teaches youngsters how to train dogs and thus learn responsibility.

"The best part is I get to hang out with Marley," she adds of her research partner, a dark-coated, mixed-breed former shelter dog who's now part of the therapy program. Levy also believes that the institute is helping shape what she calls "a new generation of social workers."

John Davidson writes regularly about pet news and care issues: blogs.denverpost.com/fetch.