

Front Porch

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

DENVER, COLORADO

DECEMBER 2020

NORTHEAST DENVER

The Long Good-bye

As President Trump questions the vote counts, the Biden/Harris team ushers in an era that puts a woman of color at second in command and plans for a government that “looks like America.”



Above: Colorado was recognized nationally for our mail-in ballots and numerous ballot drop boxes.
Right: Moments after Biden's win was announced, a spontaneous mini-parade showed up on Martin Luther King Blvd.



While the election and presidential transition continued to dominate the news well into November, the *Front Porch* asked a group of NE Denver residents for their thoughts on bridging the great political

divide in our country. We also asked a longtime political analyst to reflect on the political climate in Colorado—and the role our NE Denver neighbor Senator-elect John Hickenlooper may play in Congress.

Stories on page 5 by Mary Jo Brooks and page 7 by Fred Brown.



Four days after election day, the Pennsylvania vote count was completed and President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris held an evening car rally with celebratory fireworks.

DMNS Space Odyssey Relaunches



Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

Future astronauts can explore space at the new *Space Odyssey* at the Museum of Nature and Science. Above, the entrance to a fantasy spaceship where visitors will find secret codes to command the ship. *Story on page 14 by Laurie Dunklee.*

Remembering Sam Gary



Former mayors John Hickenlooper (left) and Wellington Webb (right) hold the *Stapleton Development Plan* with Sam Gary in a photo taken for an April 2010 *Front Porch* article on Central Park's 10th Anniversary. Many think of Sam Gary as “the father of Central Park (Stapleton),” but his impact extends far beyond Northeast Denver. He died on Nov. 16. *Story on page 9 by Carol Roberts.*

2021 Summer Camp Guide will be in the February issue.

Instructions for adding camps to the guide are at <https://frontporchne.com/submit-event/>

The deadline for uploading camps is January 12, 2021.



This year's Christmas tree at the U.S. Capitol will be a 55-foot tall, 25-foot wide Engelmann Spruce from Colorado's Uncompahgre National Forest. It stopped for local viewing at Bass Pro in The Shops at Northfield on Nov. 14 and was delivered to the Capitol on Nov. 20.

Outdoor & Virtual Events

—All follow Public Health Dept. guidance for Covid-19—



Christkindl Market — Denver's 20th annual Christkindl Market will feature a canopy of lights in Civic Center Park. The authentic German holiday market replicates a European village of charming wooden huts. The event will offer food and drink options from across Europe and entertainment on the Greek Amphitheater stage. Nov. 20 – Dec. 23. Visit ChristkindlMarketDenver.com. 2019's Market pictured at left.

Cherry Creek North Winter Wanderland — Explore 16 blocks with more than a half million lights and eight twinkling displays choreographed to music. Nov. 19 – Jan. 3, lights turn on at dusk. Visit CherryCreekNorth.com

Cherry Creek Holiday Market — Eat, drink, and shop local! This year, furloughed set-builders created European chalet-style booths out of shipping containers. Live entertainment included. Fillmore Plaza, Nov 19 – Dec. 23.



The Shops at Northfield — Holiday lights and strolling entertainment Dec. 19 – 20. Ice Skating by reservation, visit ShopsAtNorthfield.com

Central Park Artists Open Windows Project — Storefront windows in Unit #1410 at Northfield will display an eclectic collection of local artists' works that are for sale (paintings, jewelry, sculpture, etc.) They are on display now – Dec. 31. Painting at left is by Kathy Skarvan.

Virtual Camp Christmas — This web-based app allows campers to earn badges and track their progress while exploring a fictional land. The holiday experience delivers curated crafts, activities, and adventures directly to your home. In December, the app features a daily countdown to Christmas. Visit CampChristmas.com. Photo at right shows Camp Christmas at Stanley Marketplace last year.



Virtual YouthBiz Marketplace — Young Americans Bank hosts this event annually to provide young people with real-life experience in entrepreneurship and business ownership. This year's online version gives entrepreneurs e-commerce experience. Thru Dec. 6. Visit YouthBizMarketplace.sharetribe.com

Left: Central Park 6th grader Katie Whiteley designs and sews colorful bags through her business Lily Grey. She is donating some of her earnings to animal shelters.

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Events & Announcements

LIGHT UP THE COMMUNITY

Starting Wednesday, December 9, Central Park Community

This year has been a challenging one for all of us. As we bring 2020 to a close, the MCA's top priority remains the health and safety of our wonderful community members. With this in mind, we will not be hosting our Annual Winter Welcome at the 29th Avenue Town Center. Our lighting display can still be enjoyed starting November 20, and with a sense of solidarity, we would like to launch a community wide tour of holiday lights throughout the month of December. If you have a tradition and/or talent for decorating the outside of your home, submit your address to the MCA to be included on the "Light Up the Community Tour" map. The map will be released to the community on December 9, with consistent updates so that all can drive through the neighborhood and enjoy the holiday lights, decorations, and good cheer! Submissions are accepted by emailing your home address to events@mca80238.com.

HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE

Monday–Friday, December 1–15, 10am–4pm, The Cube

Join us in distributing good cheer throughout our community by donating a gift to a child in need. This year, the MCA will be collecting toys for the Marine Toys for Tots! You can safely drop off toys in the vestibule of The Cube (8371 E Northfield Blvd.) Monday–Friday, December 1–15 from 10am–4pm. Thank you for helping us spread a little more optimism, this year especially.

ACTIVE MINDS: PAKISTAN

Thursday, December 10, 1–2pm, Zoom Webinar

Formed in 1947, out of the partition of British Colonial territories in South Asia, Pakistan has experienced decades of conflict with India. More recently, Pakistan has undergone internal conflict between its secular government and the rising tide of Taliban-led Islamic Fundamentalism. Pakistan's status as a key strategic partner in the United States' War on Terror has been reexamined in recent years, and the country's new economic relationship with China could represent a realignment of South Asian power dynamics. Join Active Minds as they examine the future of this crucial player on the world's stage.

Join in the Active Minds Webinars by visiting https://www.activeminds.com/events_denver.html

ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING (AMM) AND DELEGATE ELECTION

Wednesday, December 16, 6:30pm, Zoom Webinar

The 2020 Annual Members' Meeting and Delegate Election for the Master Community Association, Inc. (the "MCA") will be held on Wednesday, December 16 at 6:30pm via an online web seminar which members can join and observe at www.mca80238.com.

A complete meeting packet will be available for print from the MCA website 48 hours prior to the meeting at www.mca80238.com. Meeting packets will contain the meeting agenda, previous Executive Board minutes, 2020 year-end projection, 2021 Assessment Schedule and Operating Budget, as well as any additional pertinent meeting information. If you do not have internet access, please contact us at 303.388.0724 to request a copy of the above information be sent by mail. Consistent with MCA by-laws, members are required to elect ELEVEN (11) members of the community to serve as District Delegates for the consecutive year. Delegate responsibilities include ratifying the MCA's 2022 annual budget and electing all open Executive Board seats. A current list of delegates and 2021 candidates can be found online at www.mca80238.com.

ACTIVE MINDS SEMINAR: WOMEN SUFFRAGE IN THE UNITED STATES

Thursday, December 17, 6:30–7:30pm, Zoom Webinar

It took activists and reformers many decades to win the right to vote for women in the United States, and on August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was finally ratified. Join Active Minds as they tell the story of women's right to vote in the United States 100 years later. They will highlight the role of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others as well as discuss current issues around gender equality in our political process and leadership.

Join in the Active Minds Webinars by visiting https://www.activeminds.com/events_denver.html

Carry on bravely,
Lawrence Uhling
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Master Community Association

Front Porch

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The Front Porch is printed with soy-based ink and the paper contains 30% post-consumer waste. We contribute monthly to replant trees equivalent to the amount of paper used in each issue.



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Can We Bridge the Divide?

By Mary Jo Brooks

One clear conclusion from the 2020 Presidential election is that the American electorate seems more divided than it has been since the Civil War. “One Small Step” is an initiative that tries to bridge that divide. Formed two years ago as an outgrowth of StoryCorps, which records and shares conversations with Americans from all walks of life, “One Small Step” brings together people with different political views to break down boundaries created by politics. The goal is to remind people they have more in common with each other than they may think.

North-east Denver residents who participated in the “One Small Step” project shared their experiences in our October 2018 article, “We’re All Americans—Finding Common Ground” (<https://frontporchne.com/article/americans-finding-common-ground/>)



Jen Anderson urges making connections beyond politics. “I can 100% support my neighbor even if I can’t support the man that he supports politically.”

This month we asked those same participants if they had continued their efforts to reach across the divide in the ensuing years.

Jen Anderson, who lives in the East Colfax neighborhood, says she has made a conscious effort to keep up friendships with people who have political beliefs that are very different than hers. “It’s important



In 2018, East Denver residents Alix Shaer, Andrew Peters, and Jen Anderson participated in a StoryCorps project bringing together people of differing political persuasions. The goal of the facilitated, two-person discussions was to gain a better understanding of the other person’s views.

that we don’t just stay in our separate silos thinking ‘we’re good and they are bad.’” She worries that with the increased popularity of Parler, a right-wing alternative to Twitter and Facebook, that Americans will become even more polarized. “It’s easy to get upset on social media and get into a spiral. I think we all need to find ways to connect more in person. It’s much less toxic.” Anderson, who has battled cancer over the past year, says she received an outpouring of



“I wish as a country we could all try to have the kinds of conversations that ‘One Small Step’ is encouraging,” says Alix Shaer.

help from both her liberal and conservative friends. “Having those kinds of connections can help you move beyond political divisions.”

That’s exactly what Central Park resident Alix Shaer believes. “We’re all human beings, and we all have the same emotions, regardless of what politics we have.” That’s one reason she has been mystified that the pandemic has become a divisive issue. “We’re all in this together, so you would think that we would rally and unite,

but instead it has devolved into conflicts between pro-maskers and anti-maskers.” A self-described liberal Democrat, she believes President-elect Joe Biden when he says he wants to unify the country. She says the current occupant of the White House never wanted that. “President Trump’s messaging was divisive and vitriolic from the start, and I think that caused people on both sides to be angrier and more amped up.”

Libertarian Andrew Peters agrees that President Trump has been a polarizing figure, but he also thinks the country is grappling with its own identity, especially because



“If we could focus more on state and local issues, that might lower the political temperature a lot,” says Andrew Peters.

of demographic changes. “I think a lot of people think they have lost things lately—lost authority or lost status — so they fight against that.” Another thing that causes the division, according to Peters, a North Park Hill resident, is that Americans look to the federal government for moral authority, so all rhetoric becomes super-charged. “Both liberals and conservatives are asking the government to answer moral questions and that plays into the good-versus-

(continued on page 6)

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Where: Throughout Cherry Creek North

Cherry Creek Holiday Market
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When: Thursday, Nov. 19 – Wednesday, Dec. 23
Where: Fillmore Plaza (between 1st & 2nd Ave.)

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When: Friday, Nov. 27 – Sunday, Nov. 29
Where: Participating Cherry Creek North businesses

*Conception and Execution: RAW Design in collaboration with ATOMIC3; Production: Quartier des Spectacles Partnership, Montreal, Canada

CherryCreekNorth.com/Holidays
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Bridging the Divide *(continued)*



"Until we get away from emotional arguments and instead look at outcomes, the divisions aren't going away," says John Laukkanen.

evil conflicts which create such division." He thinks the best way to lower the political temperature is to put more emphasis on state and local issues. "Those don't line up as polarizing culture war the way national politics do. I think there are a lot of local issues

where conservatives and liberals could find themselves on the same side."

John Laukkanen is a social worker who lives in the East Colfax neighborhood. As a conservative, he says he is in the minority at most places he has worked, but he doesn't try to engage his liberal colleagues in political dialogue. "I try to avoid political conversations altogether. They're just not helpful," he says. He did enjoy his "One Small Step" conversation in 2018 but says that conversation concentrated on life experiences, not politics. Laukkanen wishes that people didn't get so wrapped up with emotion when they talk politics, and he is nostalgic for the kinds of conversations he had in college several decades ago. "We could have impassioned debates, but there wasn't this moral virtue to the debates. Now it's



"I'm very worried. I don't see how we're going to be able to bridge the political divide in this country," says Judy Lazar.

a zero sum game where I'm evil if I don't agree with you."

As a Democrat, Judy Lazar also finds it difficult to discuss politics with people on the opposite side of the political spectrum. Lazar, who lives in Green Valley Ranch, says she has been especially unsuccessful talking with Trump supporters. "It's hard for me to understand how they can so blindly follow him." She says she's very pessimistic about the future, even under a Biden administration. She is especially worried for her seven grandchildren. "I've never seen so much hatred in this country. I feel like it's civil war time, and I don't think things are going to get better any time soon."

Ellen Miller-Brown still holds out hope for civil discourse. She is always eager to talk to people with differing perspectives about what their aspirations are for the nation. Her advice for a successful conversation? "It's important to really listen to them and not be preoccupied about what your comeback is going to be. I'll be 70 next year, and I don't worry about being right anymore. I worry about learning and finding out what makes other people tick." Miller-Brown, who lives in Central Park, thinks the only way to overcome the political divide is for more people to practice real empathy. "A lot of people feel they have been left behind, and we can't dismiss those feelings. We need to try to see the world from their viewpoint."



"If people are willing to listen and learn from others, we can be the country we aspire to be," says Ellen Miller-Brown.

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Commentary

Compromise Is Not a Dirty Word

By Fred Brown

Fifty years ago, Colorado was quite “red,” politically. The governor, John Love, was a Republican. So were three of the four other statewide elected officials and both U.S. senators. The U.S. House was an anomaly; three of the four—yes, just four—were Democrats. Boulder’s district was represented by a Republican; Colorado Springs by a Democrat.

Fifty years was so long ago “red” still was identified with left-leaning politics: Mao Tse Tung’s little red book; the Red Army; “pinkos,” in Sen. Joseph McCarthy’s crusade against Communist infiltration.

Somehow, “red states” became those United States that tended to vote Republican. The liberal, Democratic-leaning states turned blue, at least in the cartography of network television. Colorado evolved from mostly red to purplish and then to sort of a robin’s egg blue and finally, this year, to a deeper blue hue.

We entered 2020—a leap year, an election year, a year when we had anything but 20/20 vision—with the pundits predicting a “blue tsunami.” After four years of President Trump’s bluster and bullying, his refusal to give an inch to his political adversaries, there was supposed to be a total repudiation—not just of him—but of his Republican apologists, too.

It didn’t happen.

Yes, former Vice President Joseph Biden won as many electoral votes as President Trump won in 2016 and is almost certain to be sworn in on January 20, 2021, unless the Trump regime somehow manages to find enough dubious legalisms to resuscitate itself.

But if the national results were muddled, Colorado’s were clear. The president lost Colorado by some 13 percentage points, after Hillary Clinton had won the state by 5 points in 2016. And former Gov. John Hickenlooper defeated incumbent Republican U.S. Sen. Cory Gardner by 9 points.

Colorado has gotten more solidly Democratic as the Republicans kept going further right. In fact, both parties nationally seem to be drifting further apart, toward the fringes instead of the center.

That leftward drift probably led to the Democrats’ underperformance nationally. Although they gained seats in the Senate; there’s no path to a majority (except with

the vice president’s vote), even with the double runoff happening in Georgia. And the “blue” party even lost a few seats in the U.S. House. It seems the anti-racism demonstrations against police killings went



John Hickenlooper, now U.S. senator-elect, is pictured here on the day he gave his last state-of-the-state address to state legislators and other dignitaries. As a U.S. Senate candidate, Hickenlooper emphasized his strength as a coalition builder.

too far for some voters’ tastes, and while a majority agreed with the objectives, they rejected the sometimes-violent tactics in that a minority indulged in.

There’s ample evidence of the wish to return to a milder form of

politics. In Colorado and nationally, voter registrations for the major political parties aren’t growing as fast as registrations of independent voters.

In 2012, the year Barack Obama was re-elected in Colorado and nationally, Colorado’s voter registration was 34% Republican, 33% Democrat, and 32% unaffiliated (third parties make up the rest). By the time this year’s election rolled around, Democrats had added 292,000 voters and 2.6 percentage points to their share of the state’s electorate; Republicans

added 65,000, a 6.7-point loss in their share; and unaffiliated voters had grown by 679,000 voters, an amazing 8.7% spike in their share. Today the breakdown is roughly 30% Democrats, 28% Republicans and 40% unaffiliated, with third-party registrations accounting for the rest.

In Colorado and elsewhere, those independents are the ones who swing elections. And they aren’t wing nuts. It may be that they have grown tired of candidates who promise to “fight” for their pet proposals. Enough with the fighting, they say; get something done.

In that respect, Senator-elect Hickenlooper and President-elect Joe Biden appear to be soul brothers. They emphasize their strength at coalition-building and recognize that compromise is not a dirty word. Compromise is how progress is made—incrementally, not explosively.

That may be the lesson to take away from the voting in Colorado and nationally. Given the mixed results, and the most-likely-mixed control of Congress, Democrats would be wise to avoid the mirror image of what the Republicans have done over the past several election cycles: moving further to the fringe in an effort to gain strength. It eventually stops working—and always exacerbates division.

Fred Brown covered politics for almost 50 years as a reporter, editor and columnist for The Denver Post. He now teaches media ethics at the University of Denver.

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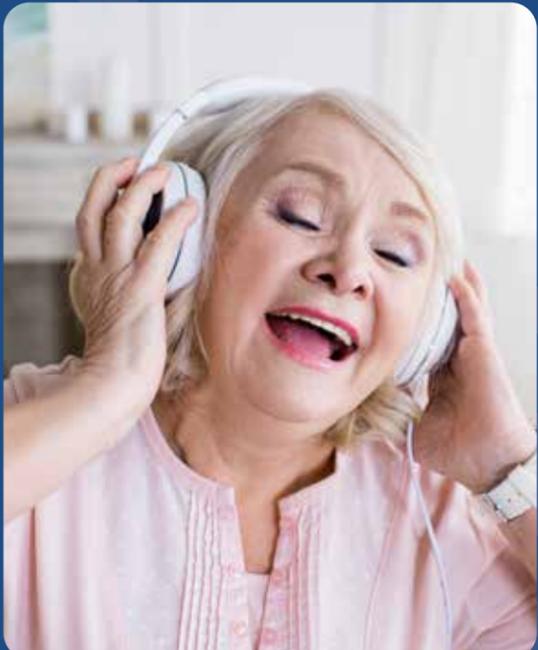

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By Mary Jo Brooks

The challenges of parenting during the pandemic are daunting: trying to keep everyone safe and healthy, managing online schooling, curtailing children's social activities, and keeping harmony as everyone's patience is being tested. And it's going to get harder before it gets easier: the weather has gotten colder, new restrictions have been imposed, and the holiday season is approaching. The *Front Porch* asked two experts for advice on coping.

Helping young children

Stick to a routine, says Rachel Averch, who has more than 30 years of experience working with young children and is currently CEO of Montessori Children's House of Denver. "Having as little change as possible with things that we can control helps the rest feel more manageable." That includes getting enough sleep and exercise and eating healthy foods.

If children talk frequently about their fears of the pandemic, parents should be honest about its seriousness, but reassure them there are things they can do to stay safe. Watch for signs of anxiety, such as a regression in bed wetting, nail biting, or crying. "Young children don't always have the words to articulate how they are feeling, so those can be clues that they're having a tough time." Averch suggests making a list and hanging it on a wall to remind children of fun activities that make them feel better, whether it's coloring, making crafts, doing puzzles, or reading.

When it comes to planning for the holidays, it's critical to bring children into the conversation early says Averch. "Let them know that it will be different this year but that it doesn't mean we can't have fun." Perhaps it means baking cookies and

dropping them off on friends' porches or using an online tool such as Elfster.com that facilitates Secret Santa gift exchanges. And make sure to involve them in your traditions of cooking special foods or decorating the house. "Kids are resilient. They will think of new possibilities. Sometimes they're better at that than we adults are," says Averch.

Helping tweens and teens

For older children, it's important to validate their feelings about how unfair this whole situation is says Amy Lopez, a licensed clinical social worker at the Johnson Depression Center at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. "The pandemic has brought a lot of loss for teenagers. They maybe missed out on prom or football games—parents should treat those as losses and let their children grieve a bit."

Lopez says what teenagers miss the most is hanging out with their friends, so this is not the time to put strict limits on gaming or screen time since that may be the only way they can connect. Teens should be encouraged to find new ways to use technology such as Zoom trivia games or watching online movies live together.

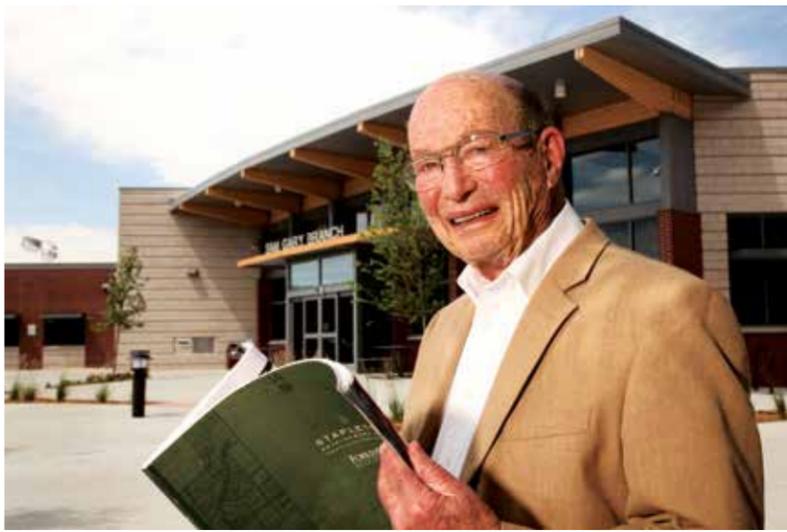
"Having fun is really important. Fun is where we build resiliency. It gives us a break from the stress of the pandemic." She encourages parents to get their teens to play board games with them, take an online Zumba class together, or go to the Dairy Queen drive-through. Things that perhaps no teen would be caught dead doing with their parents before the pandemic

Reducing Kids' Stress During the Pandemic

now can be an appealing diversion.

Parents should lower expectations about the holidays but involve their teens in deciding how they can still make the season meaningful. Families can still undertake volunteer activities together as long as Covid-19 precautions are observed. She suggests adopting a family in need, making gift bags for residents in nursing homes, or assembling care packages for healthcare workers or teachers.

Both Lopez and Averch say parents can find additional online resources at websites for the Colorado Depression Center, the Mayo Clinic, and the CDC. If a child is experiencing severe anxiety, contact mental health experts.



Sam Gary says he didn't spend much time in libraries as a child because he was always being told "Shhh" and thrown out for being too loud. But after seeing children and parents in Green Valley Ranch's new library, he said, "...that's no library. It's the key to literacy for children, the most incredible thing I've ever seen." He is pictured holding the *Green Book (The Stapleton Development Plan)* at the Sam Gary Library in Central Park when it opened in August, 2012.

By Carol Roberts

When people talk about Sam Gary, humility looms large in the conversation. All who worked with him knew his philosophy: "Lead from the back of the conga line." For Sam, that meant, "As long as the idea you believe in is getting done, you don't care who gets credit," says Mike Johnston, the CEO of Sam's philanthropic organization, Gary Community Investments. (*Editor's note: We're breaking with journalistic style and using Sam's first name, the way everyone knew him.*)

"A lot of people with a vision like to go it alone, and a lot of people who are very intent on including everyone don't always have the urgency to push one big idea forward. Sam was an amazing combination of both. The creation of the Denver Preschool Program, the Colorado Children's Campaign, the Urban Land Conservancy—these are all big ideas that Sam had. He helped bring people together to start them and then launch and carry them out into the world," says Johnston. "He's been the big idea

and the center of gravity behind a coalition to accomplish big things, but always from the back of the conga line."

Forty years ago when Dave Younggren was in his 20s, he interviewed with Sam for a job on the financial side of Sam's oil business—and the job interview turned into a very long conversation about Sam's business philosophy. "He believed that philanthropy and business go hand in hand, and you can't have a successful vibrant economy without a successful vibrant society." Forty years of collaboration as friends and colleagues followed that interview. Younggren says of Sam, "I don't know anyone with a bigger heart. I know he always felt lucky and he was really driven about other people having opportunities—and that's true of business as well as in the community. I think there was one thing that always stood out—that he really cared about people. He also had a great sense of humor and he was very humble and self-deprecating."

Younggren points out another of Sam's character traits. "You can take a risk and you know somebody will second guess you and say you made

Remembering Sam Gary

some huge mistake. That's not the way he looked at it. He went into things knowing there were risks involved. We did our homework and made an informed decision and sometimes, you know, the outcome doesn't work out when you take those kinds of risks."

"We took anywhere from 10 to 50 percent of the [oil] company profits every year and that's what supported the foundation," says Younggren. He says Sam and his wife Nancy were "joined at the hip" in their commitment to the children of Colorado and the work of the foundation.

With the discovery of the very large Bell Creek oil field in Montana (after 22 dry holes), Sam said in a 2012 interview with the *Front Porch*, "Suddenly this plethora of wealth descended on me. It became very clear to me that it was more money than I needed or could use... So I started giving money away and ended up with a fairly large staff of people—and I really kind of got hooked on that."

After discovering the oil field, Sam hired an architect to create a land use plan and built Bell Creek Town with homes, a school and a store for the people who operated the 400 wells—and he restored the environment. "If you were to go there today, you'd never know there was an oil field there. It's beautiful," he says.

When Sam saw that Denver was going to build a new airport, Tom Gougeon, now President of the Gates Family Foundation

says "The opportunity just sort of resonated with him. He had this gut instinct like you can't just leave this to chance. You have to care what happens [to the old airport land]. He got all the people to come to the table and then that group collectively figured it out.

"He didn't show up and say, I have the money, I'll make the plan. He was sort of the piper that got people coming to hear about what's possible. He was convinced that it could be a model, it could also lift those around it... the quality of the schools... how it would create value and benefits for those people in addition to whatever happened on the site. That's where it began.

"It was too important to not care about—eventually it'll work. He was always in that mode. What he did was facilitate the opportunity for people to go figure that out," says Gougeon, who was the primary author of the *Green Book, The Stapleton Development Plan* that passed City Council unanimously in 1995. Johnston says, "Sam still had a copy next to his desk every single time I saw him."

"He was a huge believer in people," says Gougeon, "so in every one of his efforts, there was some person or a group of people that he just trusted to figure it out—and he would be super supportive of them. He did that over and over and over, and as a result, there's an amazing alumni of people who have worked on all kinds of things that Sam was behind and made possible."

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NHS: Big Campus, Big Goals

By Tracy Wolfer Osborne

Five years ago, Northfield High School (NHS) was just a vision. The idea was to create an inclusive, diverse, International Baccalaureate-for-all school that would close the achievement gap.

It was a lofty goal, and the challenges were many beginning with recruiting kids to a campus that had yet to break ground. There were also competing ideas of what the school would look like, financial woes, and changes in leadership. It was a rocky start, and so much of their success seemed to hinge on their ability to create community. Ezekiel Ocansey, a dean and head basketball coach, stresses that community is built on relationships. He remembers when the school first opened, and he started each day by shaking hands

or high-fiving each and every student. “I want the kids to see me as a normal person who’s there to support them. So I have to be transparent about who I am from a professional and relatable perspective. I may or may not look like you, but if we share our experiences, we can learn from each other.”

Gone are the days of handshakes and high-fives. Still, Principal Amy Bringedahl, says, “Northfield is a true community.” And by any standards, they’ve come a long way. They’re up to 1,225 students, up 300 from last year, with an eventual goal capacity of 2,500. They’ve also completed their sprawling five-building, college-like campus including a brand new performing arts center and expansive athletic facilities. They currently offer

20 CHSAA certified sports and plan to add field hockey and wrestling in the near future.

On the academic front, IB Coordinator, Peter Wright, who, like Ocansey, has been around since the school’s conception, talks with ease about how they approach student success. “We understand that the gap isn’t usually a product of will; it’s a product of social forces that are shaping opportunities that kids have access to, but we have a lot of data to show that when we get students of color and other marginalized students into the program, they’re finding a lot of success. In our first two cohorts—the classes of 2019 and 2020—the kids who did the full IB diploma more or less represented the larger demographics of those classes...

half were students of color.” They also boast an 84 percent pass rate in IB Lang. and Lit. which means all NHS graduates can go to college with some credit.

Still, with growth comes new goals and new challenges. Bringdahl says she eventually wants 100 percent of students in the full IB Diploma Program. “I would like us to get to the point of asking students, ‘Why would you not take the full IB Diploma Program?’” She also aims to see 100 percent on-time graduation rates and stresses that she’s there for the long haul. “I am not ready to leave; we have more work to do to serve our community.” One of Wright’s main concerns is with gentrification; the DPS Board’s policy of recruiting 35 percent of the student body

Left: Front to back, Principal Amy Bringdahl, Dean and Basketball Coach Ezekiel Ocansey, and IB Coordinator Peter Wright are pictured in the newly completed building #5.

Above: Building #5 brought new science and technology labs and lab equipment, along with small group work rooms and gathering areas for students.



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The campus, which was completed this year, includes: five buildings, a quad for outdoor gatherings, eight tennis courts, pickleball courts, two large soccer/football/lacrosse fields, three full-size basketball courts, a softball field, and a baseball field. The Performing Arts Center includes a theatre with a music classroom, rehearsal spaces, and a stagecraft workshop for building sets.

NHS students performed *The Canterbury Tales* or *Geoffrey Chaucer's Flying Circus* in November 2018.



from the Far Northeast no longer guarantees a diverse population. “If you look at the demographics of the classes, our IB diploma cohorts are somewhat less representative [than they used to be], which I am definitely concerned about. One way you can measure [success] is whether students get the diploma or not. By that metric, the current junior and seniors are less diverse. But another metric is a lot of students don’t do the full IB diploma but go beyond the required two courses. If you look at the average number of IB classes that students are taking, including students of color, the average has gone up for the last three years.”

When Wright’s done rattling data points off the top of his head, he’s quick to tell you that’s not really how he measures success anyway. When asked about

a big win, he talked about a student who failed to earn her diploma.

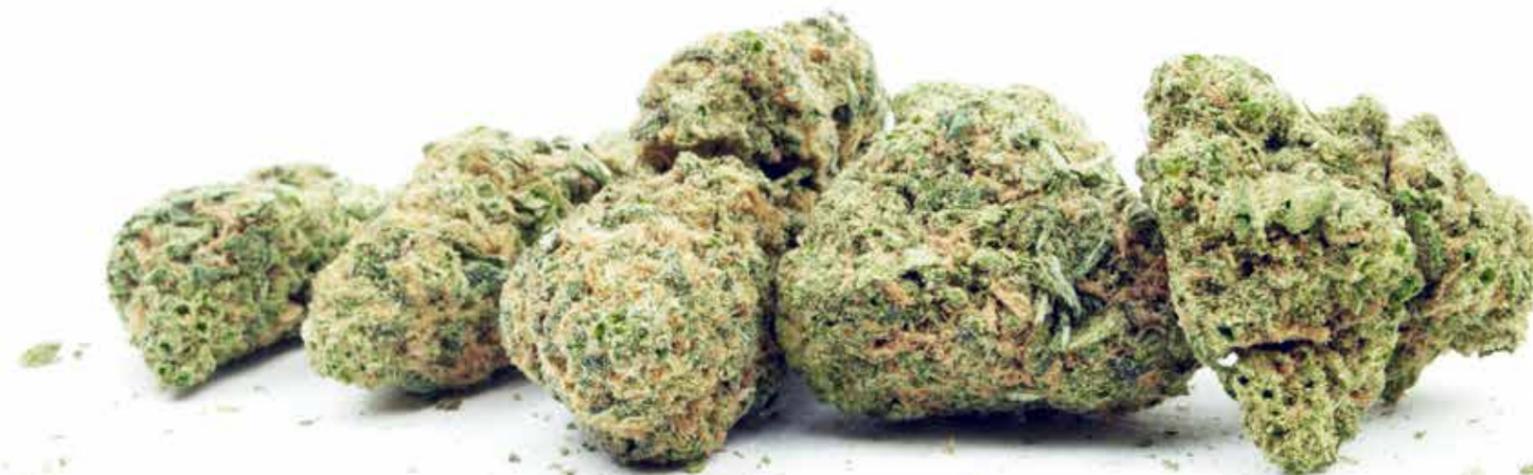
“Her mother was deported, and she went back over the holidays to see her mom, so she missed two months of school during her senior year. In May, she took all her IB exams and missed earning her diploma by one point, and I remember reaching out to her and dreading the conversation because here was a kid who worked so hard, and faced so much adversity, and did everything right, and she said, ‘It’s okay; it was still worth it.’ That would have crushed some kids, so to hear her say ‘even though I didn’t get this credential, the experience made me a better person and made me more prepared.’ And then to see this student go off to Boulder and thrive [and understand that] yes the credential is important but [it’s really about] the preparedness for college, career, all aspects of life, that’s what we’re in it for as educators.”

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Luck Club) and starring Justin Chon as a young man (Chang-rae) who leaves his writing job in NYC to care for his dying mother in San Francisco, the film hits a plethora of personal

notes and topics with which most of us can empathize. The care for a dying parent is among the most challenging acts we encounter in our adult lives. As Chang-rae states at one point: "My

As most theaters are still closed, virtual cinema is still alive. Please support the local theaters and enjoy a film from home! The Sie Film Center Virtual Cinema page can be found at www.denverfilm.org. This month, I review one film from the Center as well as a streaming show.

Coming Home Again (2019—Sie Virtual Cinema)

This solemn, contemplative, austere, and quiet film (the kind of movie my students call "slow") is a wonderful meditation on family, illness, and how we tend to see our lives holistically when faced with the prolonged death of a loved one. Life slows down, and we have time to think it all through. This film allows us to do the same thing—slow down and think it all through.

Directed by Wayne Wang (The Joy



Coming Home Again

job is to be your son." The statement implicitly notes the dialectical nature of the relationship—a relationship that never really changes. We can have our own children and care for them, but it

bears no resemblance to how we care for our parents.

This may not be for everyone, but for those of you who understand these words, it is definitely for you. And if you haven't been there yet, you will be. This film poetically, and realistically, captures that terrible and unshakeable sinking feeling. Like the experience it visualizes, the film will stick with you.

Now playing at the Sie Virtual Cinema: www.denverfilm.org. You will enjoy this film if you liked The Sweet Hereafter, Three Colors: Blue, and/or Ms. Purple.

The Queen's Gambit (Netflix)

The Queen's Gambit is a risky chess strategy, yet this show of the same name, based on a novel by Walter Tevis, is not risky in the least. It is fantastic. Anya Taylor-Joy stars as chess prodigy Beth Harmon, a young woman who fights her way from an orphanage to the world stage. We meet her in the first episode

in what turns out to be a flashforward to a later episode: she is late for a world championship match, she is hungover, she drinks a tiny bottle of booze to wash down pills, and she races downstairs to face the best player



in the world. The show freezes us there, and we go back to the beginning, where a young Beth (Isla Johnston) is taken to the orphanage after her mother is killed in a car crash. In a strange sequence of events, she is taught to play chess by the school janitor, in the basement. She then begins a journey that includes fighting multiple addictions, inner demons, and a repressive patriarchal world.

Taylor-Joy eats every scene, and the camera knows this—it is trained on her like a mother to her cub. In what is sure to be an Emmy nomination, Taylor-Joy plays Beth from a 13-year-old who finally gets adopted to a self-assured 20-year-old we see by the end of the season. Playing that range is no small feat, and Taylor-Joy handles it expertly. The supporting cast is solid, including a wonderful turn by adoptive mother, Marielle Heller. It is the cinematography, editing, sound, and the mise-en-scène (settings, costumes, compositions) that rival Taylor-Joy for our affections, however. Set in the 60s, the music is at turns inspiring and fun (if too on-the-nose at points), the period costumes are dazzling, the editing is quite expressive, and the cinematography brings Beth's interior world wonderfully, vividly alive. The production values are outstanding, which is not always the case for a Netflix original series. This is a great binge.

Now playing on Netflix.

You will enjoy this series if you liked The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, The Crown, and/or Girl, Interrupted.

Vincent Piturro, PhD, is a Professor of Film and Media Studies at Metropolitan State University of Denver. He can be reached at vpiturro@msudenver.edu. And you can follow "Indie Prof" on Facebook and @VincentPiturro on Twitter.

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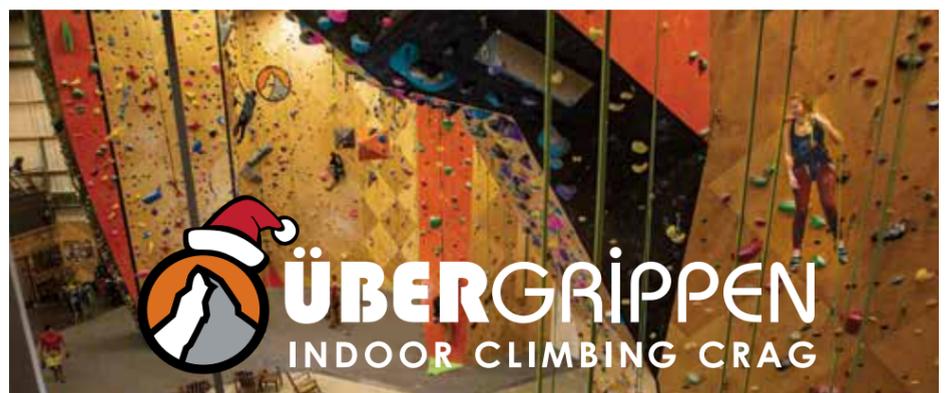
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...NE News Updates

Denver City Council approved the East Area Neighborhood Plan on Nov. 16. In creating the plan, wide agreement was found in many areas: more parks

and community gathering spaces, better sidewalks, keeping small businesses along Colfax, improved drainage to prevent flooding, more transportation options. But ideas for how to create more affordable housing were controversial and polarizing, particularly how and whether single-family zoned areas should change to increase the number of housing units and what the maximum building height in areas of highest density should be.

East Area residents on the committee worked with City planners for three years to solicit input from a broad spectrum of residents and incorporate the feedback with the City's previously established urban planning goals. When the recommendations went to the Planning Board, the Board deleted a sentence before sending it to City Council for approval: "Single unit areas should remain primarily single unit." City Council put the sentence back in and approved the plan in a 12 to 1 vote. Representatives of East Colfax say they believe single family zoning perpetuates economic injustice.

3 Land at Northfield and Central Park Blvds. Sold for Apartments

A 26.92-acre vacant lot at the southeast corner of Central Park and Northfield Blvds. in Central Park (formerly Stapleton) has been sold to Mid-America Apartment Communities, a publicly traded real estate investment trust based in Memphis, TN, according to an article in MileHighCRE.com. Up to 1,000 units could be built on the property, according to a representative of the seller.

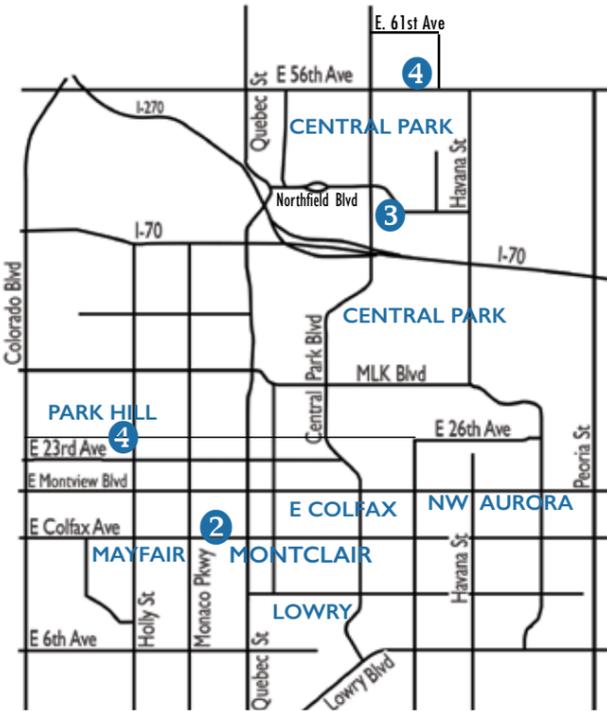


After three years of community input through numerous meetings, outreach and online submissions, City Council approved the East Area Plan. The community meeting shown above was held in Lowry's Eisenhower Chapel in Sept. 2019.

4 McAuliffe International School and Inspire Ele. Teacher Rachel Lamb Recognized for Excellence

McAuliffe International school was one of four Colorado schools to receive the National Blue Ribbon School award in 2020. The program honors public and private K-12 schools that are either academically superior in their state or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

Rachel Lamb, a second grade teacher at Inspire Elementary was one of two finalists in the 2021 Colorado Teacher of the Year competition. Lamb is known for lessons with real-world applications, technology, design thinking and project-based subjects, according to a DPS statement about her and quoting her: "It is an honor to my Navajo ancestors and the many innovators in my life. However, I don't believe that it was necessarily I who has been selected, but my students and their tireless work. I am merely a vessel for their voices, creativity, and vision."



By Carol Roberts

1 DPS Superintendent Cordova Resigns

At a suddenly-announced Zoom press conference called by the DPS Board on October 13, Superintendent Susana Cordova announced she has taken the job of Deputy Superintendent for Leading and Learning in Dallas. She wasn't looking for a new job, she says, but Supt. Hinojosa in Dallas, who has been a mentor to her in the past few years, offered the job. "Never before

have I felt I was in a position to step away from Denver, but now felt like the right time."

Cordova said she's proud of the work that supported more students graduating on

time and taking more rigorous courses. She's proud of the focus on equity and bringing courses like ethnic studies so students can see themselves in their reading. And she said, "I'm proud of the change in the tenor of the relationship that we have with our teachers and with our school leaders... [having] collaborative structures for multiple voices to have a place at the table in important decision making."

In a follow-up press conference on Nov. 19, DPS Board members Olson and Bacon said Cordova's departure date hasn't been set and they have not yet selected an interim superintendent.

2 East Area Plan Approved Amidst Controversy

After three years of effort to create a vision for maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in four East Denver neighborhoods (East Colfax, Hale, Montclair, and South Park Hill), the



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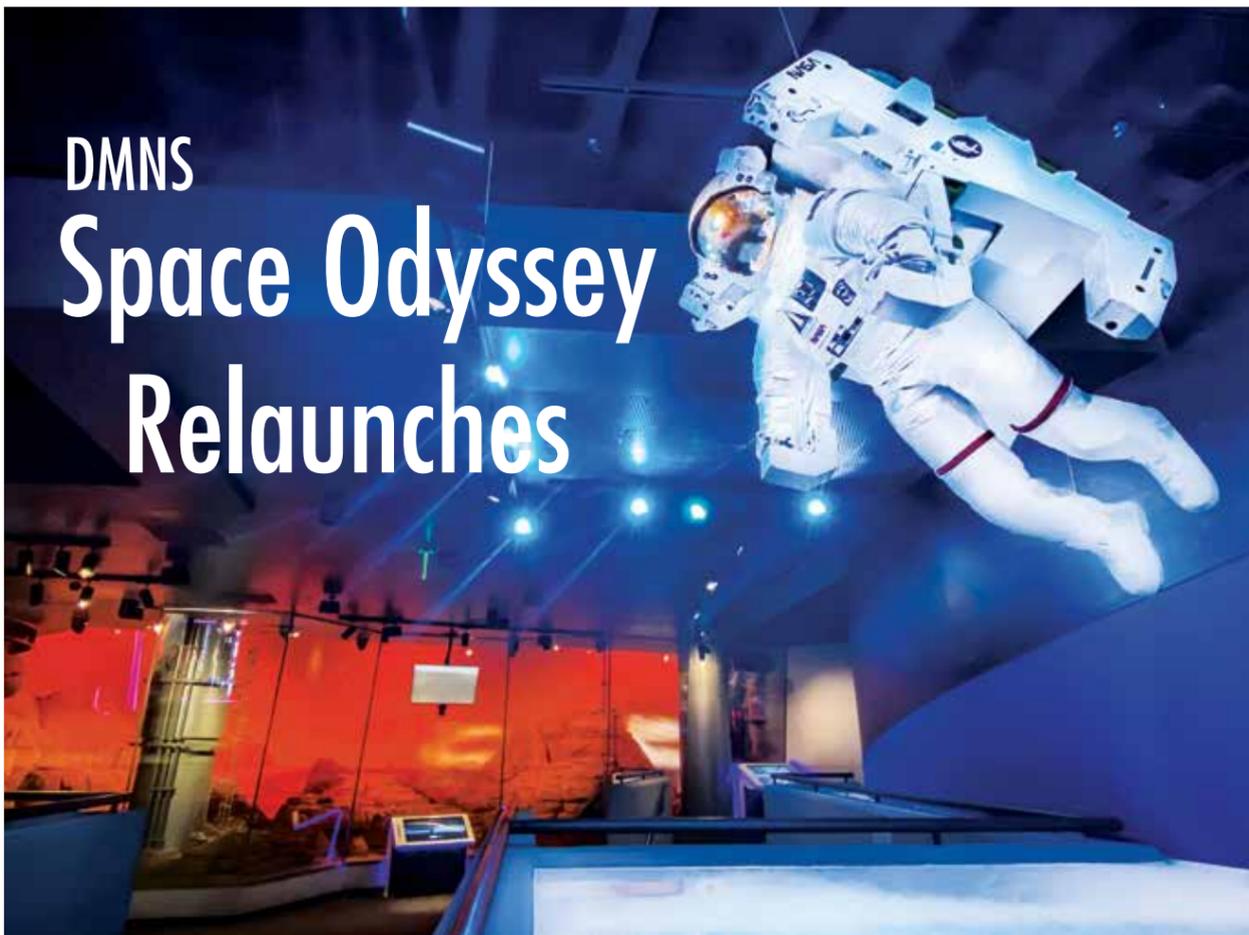
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DMNS Space Odyssey Relaunches



Left: The Manned Maneuvering Unit that Colorado astronaut Bruce McCandless II wore for the first untethered space walk in 1984. Using jet thrusters to move around in space, he traveled more than 300 feet away from the space shuttle Challenger.

Above: Visitors can control a fantasy spaceship from the captain's chair, including launching into hyperdrive and blasting asteroids with a laser cannon. Other interactives include a 20 questions game to try to outsmart the ship's computer.

View a video of Space Odyssey at FrontPorchNE.com

By Laurie Dunklee

“This era of big data is an incredible time to be studying about space,” says Naomi Pequette, an astrophysicist and co-designer of the renovated *Space Odyssey* exhibit at Denver’s Museum of Nature and Science. Noting the advances in robotic missions and high-resolution images of far-away objects, she adds, “We can see a black hole in detail now.”

The original *Space Odyssey*, opened in 2003, has been expanded and updated to include the new tools used by science and aerospace professionals. “The world is a different place than it was 17 years ago,” says Pequette. “The folks in 2003 would be blown away.”

Community Input Drove Content

The new *Space Odyssey* is big on interactive and sensory experiences for visitors, with activities like programming a Mars rover and taking a (super quiet!) spacewalk among the stars. Much of the content was driven by input from various groups. “We surveyed adults, families with kids, and our aerospace and science partners. We also got input from communities that don’t typically visit,” Pequette says. “People said they want to be the scientists, to learn and discover on their own. Making your own discovery gives it more meaning. So, we put guests in the role of scientists and engineers.”

“Also, people wanted to know what it feels like to be in space: full-body experiences to engage both their brains and bodies.”

“How do we know what we know about space?” is the theme of the renovated exhibit. Visitors explore “knowledge orbits,” beginning with Human Wonder: We Learn by Imagining What’s Out There. Here, guests gather around a campfire to hear Indigenous stories about the origins of the night sky. The four stories come from the Skidi



Ancient connections with the skies: The Pyramid of Kukulcán at Chichén Itzá in Mexico marks the equinoxes with a pattern of light resembling the Mayan serpent god Kukulcán.

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Guests control Science on a Sphere, showing real satellite images of Earth provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Images show weather patterns, water movement, temperature and climate change over time. NOAA provides thousands of datasets that also include other planets in our solar system and beyond.

Pawnee and the Cochiti Pueblo traditions, as well as Chinese and Aztec cultural knowledge.

Observing space from Earth led scientists to use light as a measurement tool. By measuring brightness, we know how big bodies are and how far away. “Everything we know about space is grounded in light,” says Pequette. “We observe the universe in multiple wavelengths of light.”

Guests can get an infrared “tattoo” from a camera that detects heat levels. “The interactive illustrates how we piece together information from different parts of the spectrum of light,” Pequette says.

The Edge of the Known Universe

The Scale of the Universe interactive is a brain-stretching activity that shows

the vastness of the universe. “You get an idea of scale,” Pequette says. “How big is thousands of light-years? Zooming in and out from Earth gives you a better context

of huge numbers. It zooms out to the edge of the universe, as far as we can see. The universe is observable to 13 billion light-years away—that’s a lot of light-years!”

Strapping into the Virtual Reality

Transporter is a visceral, full-body experience for would-be space travelers. “Guests get 360-degree visuals and can feel the movement of the ship. It feels like you’re



An interactive allows visitors to bend and warp space time with their bodies. Like a trampoline, more weight causes more of an effect.

in a spaceship,” says Pequette. The virtual reality transporter requires a separate ticket.

The multisensory rocket launch pad puts visitors underneath the nozzle of a rocket as it launches from Earth. “You experience the sound and feel the rumble, while watching a rocket take off on a screen. You’re closer than you’d ever get at a launch.”

The redesigned Astrotots section for visitors age 5 and under, now closed for Covid-19 safety, will allow youngsters to explore and play as astronauts.

“We hope visitors walk away having had a ‘Wow!’ moment and realizing that science is fun for everyone,” says Pequette.



Welcome Back! At Williams Family Dentistry, We are Here for You in These Challenging Times!

We have always put the health and safety of our patients and staff first, and will continue to do so as we keep our patients informed and supported every step of the way. We want you to know:

- We continue to implement the evolving CDC guidelines and will continue to make our practice safe.
- Our team is working diligently to make sure that all social distancing requirements are in place to ensure patient confidence.
- Your dental health impacts your overall health—we remain committed to you as we return to full services.
- Our hygienists have streamlined their protocols so patients can return to their continuing care intervals.
- We will continue to post updates as well as tips to keep you healthy during these unprecedented times.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU SOON. OUR GREATEST REWARD
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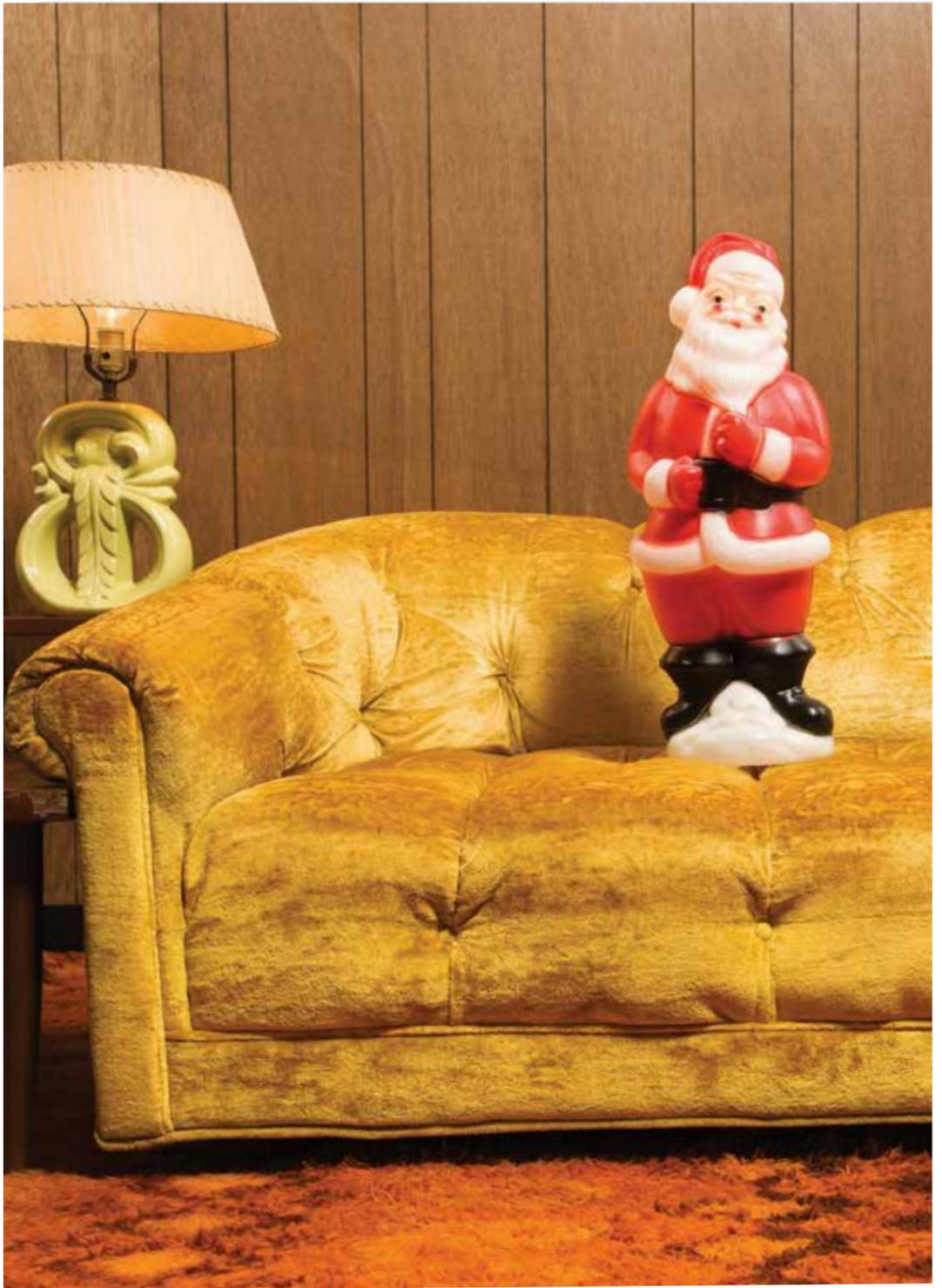
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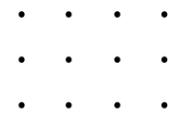
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