

Front Porch

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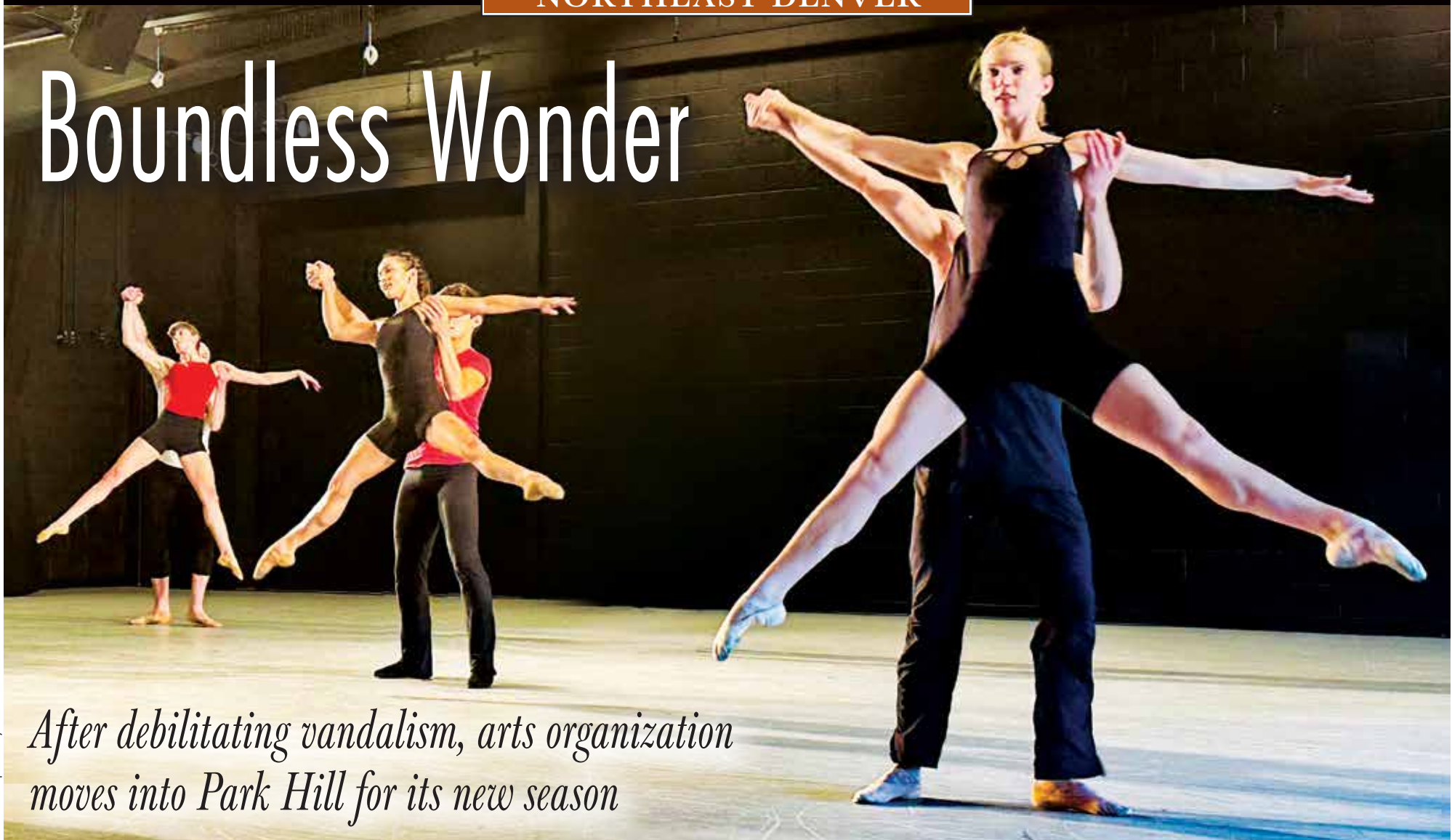
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Boundless Wonder



After debilitating vandalism, arts organization moves into Park Hill for its new season

Wonderbound dance company members rehearse for their first season in their new Park Hill performance hall. An artistic powerhouse celebrating its tenth anniversary this year, Wonderbound is not only a dance company but also a home for original music and choreography, visual art, and spoken word poetry.

Fall Election: Focus is on the Denver School Board



A DPS Board of Education At-Large Candidate forum brought three of the four candidates to Central Park on Sept. 19. Shown left to right are Kwame Spearman, John Youngquist, and Paul Ballenger. Full election coverage by Brian Heuberger on page 8.

Wonderbound, a nationally renowned dance company and hub for performing and visual arts, will unveil its 2023-24 season in October at its new Park Hill location with four performances featuring innovative choreography and original music. After surviving devastating vandalism to a previous facility followed by multiple location moves, Wonderbound has become a true Denver success story. Story by Sarah Huber on page 14.

Homelessness Plan Still on Track Despite Some Community Pushback



Mayor Mike Johnston has held more than 30 town hall meetings across the city to explain his House1000 initiative that is designed to get 1,000 people who are currently living on the streets into temporary shelter by year's end. He has met some angry resistance from people concerned about potential negative impacts to their neighborhoods. Story by Mary Jo Brooks on page 6.

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Bird Sightings

Generously donated by George Ho

Towhee & Northern Pintail

The Green-tailed Towhee is a colorful bird, but the colors are subdued. It is yellowish green on its back, wings, and tail. The head and breast are gray, and it has a white throat and a bright rufous cap on its crown.

Another more colorful towhee is the Spotted Towhee. Its head, back, wings, and tail are black with white spots. Its eyes are red, the breast is white, and the sides rufous.

Towhees are ground feeders. They forage by the hop-and-scratch method to uncover food in the leaves and buried by ground covers. The scratching noise tips off the birder that a towhee may be in the vicinity.

Green-tailed Towhee:
Length 7.25 inches,
Weight 1.0 ounces,
Wingspan 10 inches.



Spotted Towhee:
Length 6.7 to 8.3 inches,
Weight 1.2 to 1.7 ounces,
Wingspan 11 inches.



Northern Pintail: Length 26 inches,
Weight 1.75 pounds,
Wingspan 36 inches.



Bird Walks: Oct. 7 & Nov. 4. 2.5-hour walk at 7:30am or 2-hour walk at 8am. Free but must RSVP at blufflake.org/birdwatching. All are welcome. Bring your own binoculars, or borrow a pair from your guide. 11255 MLK Blvd.

Fall signifies a transition in duck populations as many species return to Denver, their winter habitats.

The Northern Pintail is one of these returning ducks. It is not a colorful bird but it is an elegant, slender duck with a long neck and a long tail. Males have a chocolate brown head with a white slash coming up the neck, and they have a white breast with a mostly gray body. The white slash on the neck and the long tail are field marks that facilitate its identification, especially in flight.

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Front Porch

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DISCIPLINE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS PARENT SAFETY ADVOCACY GROUP (P-SAG)

Violent incidents rocked Denver's East High School last year, leading to tragic deaths, injuries, and shootings. As concerned parents, we came together to form P-SAG (Parent Safety Advocacy Group). Our mission: to address safety issues within Denver Public Schools. We directed our attention to the DPS and its 2021 Discipline Policy that, in our view, contributes to the ongoing violence and creates an unsafe space for students and teachers. Our dedicated P-SAG subcommittee, comprising about 30 members, thoroughly assessed the policy from April to May. We put forth suggestions for changes. Despite conveying our concerns to DPS throughout May and June, the policy remains unchanged. Now, it's time for us to take decisive action. Explore the recommendations below to learn how you can contribute and make a difference.

- Adopt Littleton Public Schools Code of Conduct, simple, straightforward, easy for students, parents, staff and community to understand, in place of current Discipline Policy JK.
- Invest more resources in support of social/emotional and multidisciplinary programming to ensure more robust preventative measures to prevent violence in schools.
- Require mandatory 1-year expulsion for possession of firearms on school property, next to the school and/or during district sponsored events.
- All Type Five offenses must have a mandatory expulsion hearing.
 - Add language to include Type Five offenses for possession and sale/distribution of unauthorized drugs or controlled substances.
- Mandatory referral and citation to DPD and DFD for arson.
- Complete overhaul of training for school staff involved in discipline on discipline policy, matrix, and ladder, including mandatory in person training for all affected school staff.
 - Adopt national standards associated with the process to conduct full threat appraisals.
- Track and report key safety data, monthly, by school and student demographics.
 - Number of full-threat appraisals completed, by violation offense.
 - Number of expulsion hearings held and outcomes.
 - Number of expulsion hearings requested by schools and rejected by the District.
 - Track referrals of expelled students and ensure school completion.
- Complete overhaul of expulsion process that must be transparent and include collaborative decision making by District and school leaders.



- Consider the elimination of the discipline matrix and ladder and fully incorporate key elements into the current Discipline Policy.
 - Fund, create, and implement training on restorative justice practices.
- All Type Five offenses require a mandatory referral to law enforcement and DPS Department of Safety.
- Only trained DPS Department of Safety officers and/or school resource officers may conduct weapon searches of students.
 - Provide in-person training for school staff on how to conduct student searches (all other searches that DO NOT include weapons).
- Invest in an electronic records management system (e.g. QualTrics) to track mental health support (e.g. housing placement, clinical counseling, behavior incidents) and critical incidents (e.g. threat appraisals, suicide risk assessments) by student over the course of their academic career in DPS.
- Identify appropriate pathway schools for students who have been expelled from their home schools. Students involved in the same incident must be sent to separate schools.
 - Ensure appropriate training, staffing, and security measures for these pathway schools.

- Consider combining the DPS Department of Safety with the Department of Social Services (psychology, social work, health, counseling, SPED) as the Department of Safe and Supportive Schools reporting directly to the Deputy Superintendent of Schools.
 - Invest 7-10% of general fund dollars in student mental health and well-being services.
 - Ensure that every DPS school has at least one social service staff member.
 - Develop and implement age appropriate SEL curriculum.
 - Host annual safety and security conference for all school leaders, supervisors, and district administrators on topics related to safety and security, mental health interventions, behavior and academic practices, mental health and behavior support interventions and practices to mitigate escalating behaviors.
- Evaluate whether the current DPS Discipline Matrix and new safety plan are consistent with State Law § 22-33-105: Suspension, expulsion, and denial of admission, especially DPS expulsion policies for students charged with unlawful sexual behavior or violent crime (Type Five offenses). Summarize this evaluation within the Safety Plan section on "Legislation."
- If the discipline matrix and related policies are NOT consistent with State Law, complete a legal liability analysis. The analysis should include, but not be limited to, the Claire Davis School Safety Act (C.R.S. 24-10-106.3) that imposes a limited waiver of sovereign immunity for schools if a school fails to exercise "reasonable care" to protect all students, faculty and staff from "reasonably foreseeable" acts of violence that occur at school or a school-sponsored activity.



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Photo courtesy of the Eckelkamp family



Local Resident Flies Maui Passengers to Safety

attendants delayed the departure until the following day at noon. “To reset the pilots’ clocks, they needed twelve hours,” says Vince, who joined the hundreds of people spending the night in the airport since there were no hotel rooms available.

On the airport floor, the Eckelkamps spoke with families whose relatives had lost homes to the fire, and one woman shared photos of her burned-out rental car. “The true aloha spirit was really everywhere,” says Kathy. “Everybody was hugging each other. Everybody was in shock.” They slept on the crowded floor and the next morning, Kathy saw a police officer and asked about Lahaina. “It’s gone,” he replied. The officer’s partner had lost his house. Front Street was no more. “It could have very easily been us, swimming in the water or worse,” says Vince.

Like the officer and other first responders, airport staff worked hard to help passengers even as they worried how their own family members and homes were faring.

The next day, the flight experienced further delays and Vince learned it would not be able to depart unless he was still willing to step up. The other pilot had approximately 20 minutes left on his duty clock, and so Vince was asked if he could fly the plane. Happy to be in a position to help, Vince enabled 300 people leave Maui by flying the 777 to San Francisco while dressed in shorts, sneakers, and a polo shirt.

A month after the fire that ravaged Lahaina, the death toll is 115 people, 47 of whom have yet to be identified. DNA testing and forensic analysis continues on the unidentified human remains. Though the Lahaina fire is 100 percent contained, the Kula fire is 96 percent contained and the Olinda fire is 90 percent contained, according to Maui Recovers. The cost to rebuild West Maui is projected to exceed \$5 billion. Many locals as well as state officials share concerns that outsiders will buy up damaged properties.

Should tourists return to Maui? This question surfaces repeatedly in the media, and celebrities with ties to the island have weighed in with different opinions. “I think people need to go back to Maui to support the economy,” says Vince. Much of Maui was not impacted by the fires, and tourism is the foundation of the island’s economy. Lahaina remains off-limits, but effective Oct. 8, travel to West Maui will be allowed.

To support Maui communities in need, consider donating to the Maui Strong Fund at the Hawai’i Community Foundation: <https://www.hawaiicomunityfoundation.org/maui-strong>

Capt. Vince, Kallie, and Kathy Eckelkamp prepare to leave Maui in the wake of the August fires that decimated Lahaina. The fires started while the Eckelkamps were on vacation and Vince was called upon to fly passengers to the mainland when the on-duty pilot couldn’t.

By Martina Will, PhD

United Airlines 777 Line Training Manager Capt. Vince Eckelkamp did not have his captain’s hat on when he arrived at Kahului Airport in Maui after a harrowing drive through Lahaina just hours before the historic town burned to the ground. Vince, his wife Kathy, and their daughter Kallie were vacationing on Maui, but as the fire spread, they hoped to join other desperate passengers for a flight to Denver.

Kathy recalls waking up in the middle of the night. The hotel’s power had gone out around 4am, and it sounded like “the surf was right outside our window,” Kathy says. In fact, the source of the noise was Hurricane Dora’s high winds. Rather than stay in a hotel with no power, the Central Park family decided to go to the other side of the island, optimistic that they would find power. It was only when they began driving to Kahului Airport that they realized they had no GPS and no cell phone service.

As they moved along the road through Lahaina, it was clear that they were facing more than a power outage. It was, Kathy says, “like driving through a snow globe or a

vortex.” Downed trees lined the road. Broken branches, roof shingles, sand, and debris were everywhere. As the electric company worked on downed power lines, police directed traffic along Front Street in historic Lahaina. It took the family almost two hours to traverse Lahaina, a distance of 2.5 miles.

Just five hours later, Lahaina burned to the ground. About 2,200 structures were damaged or destroyed due to fires believed to have been ignited by downed electric lines and propelled by powerful hurricane winds. As of mid-September, more than 7,000 residents were still displaced.

Arriving at the airport, the Eckelkamp family was optimistic. Their plane’s pilots were there, and it appeared that their 8pm departure would be on time. As evening neared, however, it became clear that the flight would be delayed or canceled because the rest of the flight crew had been unable to reach the airport. Vince offered to augment the crew, but at this point they did not need a 777 pilot.

Pilots and flight crews must follow regulations that mandate precise duty and rest times, and a lack of flight

“Everybody was hugging each other. Everybody was in shock.”

—Kathy Eckelkamp



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Homelessness Plan Still on Track Despite Some Comm



Front Porch photos by Christie Gosch

Many people who attended meetings about the Mayor's plan to establish micro-communities for the homeless said they were concerned about negative impacts on neighborhoods.

By Mary Jo Brooks

Despite some pushback at public meetings, Mayor Mike Johnston's ambitious plan to move 1,000 people currently living on the streets into temporary housing by the end of the year is still on track, according to Cole Chandler, the mayor's lead advisor on homelessness. "We're very much pushing forward and think it's an achievable goal."

In late August, the city released a map of 11 potential micro-community sites located across the city in an initiative called House1000. Most of the micro-communities will be built on vacant land using tiny homes or pallet shelters, but in Northeast Denver, the micro-communities will be placed in two hotel buildings. They are the former Best Western Hotel located at 4595 N. Quebec Street and the former Stay Inn located at 12033 E. 38th Avenue. These buildings offer 194 units and 96 units, respectively.

The hotel conversions are budgeted at \$24 million in the mayor's 2023 budget and will be paid with federal dollars that the city received as part of the COVID-19 American Rescue Plan Act. Adding together the purchase price of the buildings plus the expected renovations, the cost per unit

will be between \$100,000 and \$150,000, a price that Chandler calls "astronomically low" if you compare it to the market price of condos in Denver.

Since he took office in mid-July, Mayor Johnston has held more than 30 town hall meetings, with at least five more narrowly focused meetings slated for October. At several of the meetings, angry residents spoke out in opposition to the plan citing the high costs, fears that Denver would become a magnet for unhoused people in other parts of the country, and concerns that certain sites are located too close to schools or will cause too much disturbance to residential areas. Johnston has said that he wants feedback and is open to new ideas for locations, but insists that the micro-communities must be spread out across city council districts so that one area of the city isn't overburdened. "The way you solve this is to deconcentrate poverty. You want to spread people out to get services so no one neighborhood has to carry a disproportionate share. That's the most successful way to do it and the most fair way," Johnston explained at a particularly contentious town hall.

Chandler says the city is pushing forward with permitting and doing its due-diligence with site design, although he concedes that some sites could still be changed. Each of the mi-

"What's so valuable about Mike's approach is that it's grounded in relationships."

—Rev. Ian Cummins, Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church

cro-communities will include wrap-around services that include mental health and addiction services, employment counseling, and housing navigation. There will not be a sobriety requirement to move in, Johnston explained at a town hall, since other successful housing programs around the country have found that sobriety requirements don't work. "What they found was you have to get people in and stabilized and get them services to get out of addiction," Johnston added that doesn't mean there won't be rules or accountability in the micro-communities. "City laws still apply. You cannot deal drugs. You cannot commit acts of violence. You cannot assault people."

Ana Gloom is an activist with Housekeys Action Network Denver, a non-profit that elevates the voices of the unhoused to help shape policy for the city. Gloom, who was homeless on and off for about 10 years, says she has been shocked by the vitriol expressed by some citizens at the town hall meetings. "It's vile. Suggesting



Mayor Mike Johnston has fielded numerous questions about the site selection process for the micro-communities that will shelter people currently living on the streets. Johnston says it is important that the communities are located throughout the city.

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unity Pushback

that everyone is a drug addict or that the people in encampments want to live on the streets.” Gloom is disappointed in the Johnston plan because she wishes more attention was being given to long-term housing solutions rather than these temporary micro-communities. “I wish he would stop saying he will house 1,000 people. He’s going to shelter 1,000 people. Pallet houses are not houses,” says Gloom.

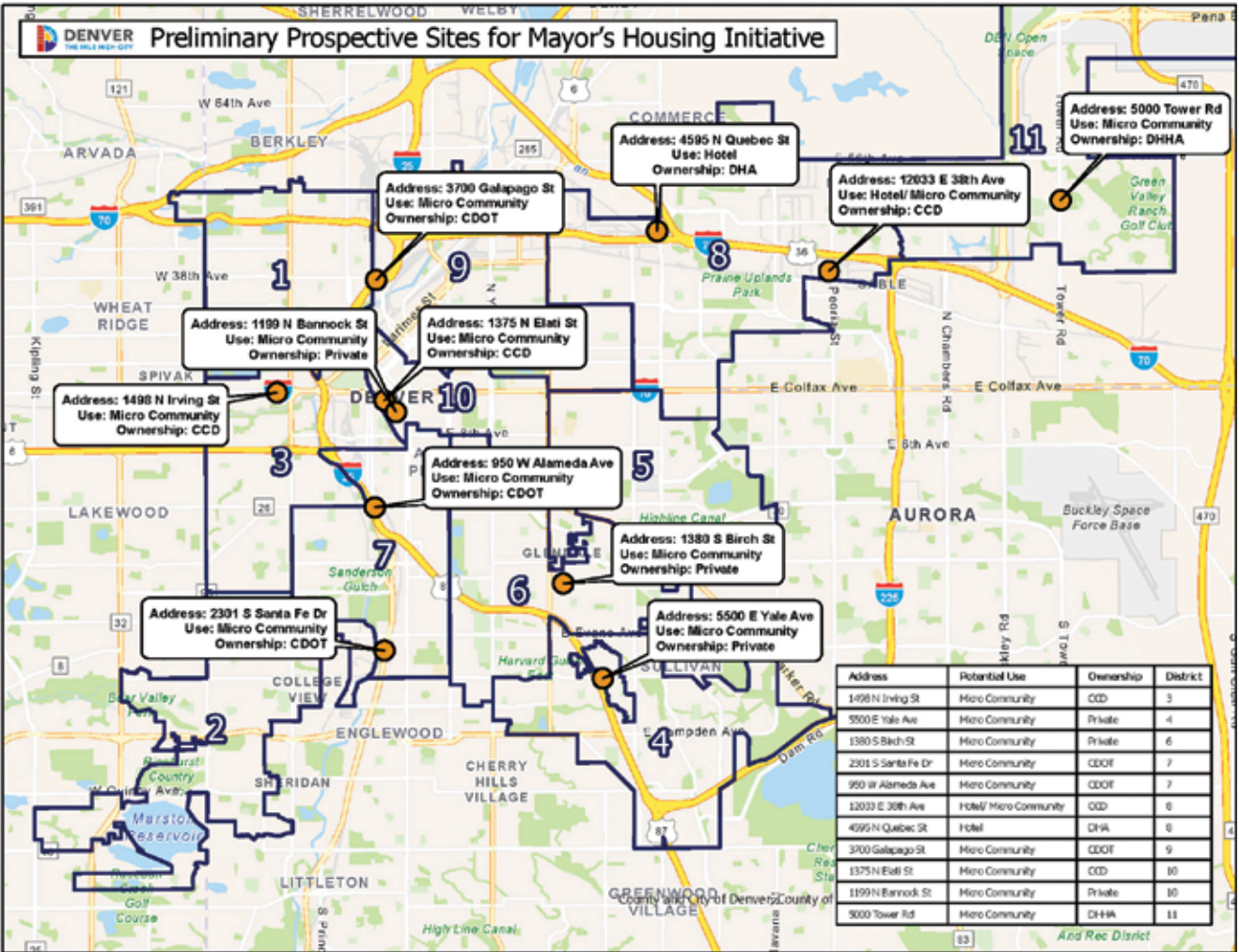


Cole Chandler leads the Mayor’s homelessness initiative called House1000.

Chandler says the first priority is getting people off the streets, but the next step is to get people into permanent housing. “But we also know that we’re facing a housing shortage, so part of the long-term plan that you see reflected in the mayor’s 2024 budget is building 3,000 new units of affordable housing per year.” Chandler envisions that it will take most people 6-12 months to transition from the micro-communities into permanent housing.

Many Denver businesses and members of the faith community have offered to help people make that initial transition from the streets to temporary housing. Rev. Ian Cummins of Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church has been working with other religious leaders and the City to collect items for a welcome kit, which will include bedding, towels, socks, toiletries, and other small necessities. Montview, where Johnston is a member, has raised \$13,000 to buy blankets, towels, and laundry bags for the first 500 people that are expected to move into the micro-communities in November.

Cummins says that he understands why some people might at first resist the notion of having the micro-communities located in their neighborhoods. “I feel some of those concerns myself, as a father of two and wanting them to have a safe city to grow up in. At the same time, this [housing initiative] is part of the answer of how we change Denver and make it feel safe.” Cummins hopes that as Denver residents learn more about the plan, they will embrace it. “What’s so valuable about Mike’s approach is that it’s grounded in relationships,” says Cummins. “Instead of seeing the unhoused as a threat or something that we just wish would go away, can we find the compassion to make a turn ourselves and say, ‘How can I help?’”



The city has unveiled 11 potential sites for micro-communities to house 1,000 people who are currently living on the streets. The sites in North-east Denver would involve converting two former hotels: one located on North Quebec Street and one located on East 38th Avenue.

That’s exactly what Chandler hopes will happen too. The next round of community meetings will be focused on creating “Good Neighbor Agreements” to facilitate clear communication about goals, responsibilities, and accountability for both the micro-communities and the neighborhood. The next communi-

ty meetings about the hotel conversions in Northeast Denver will be held on Oct. 5 from 5:30–6:30pm at the Martin Luther King Jr. Rec Center and Oct. 17 from 5:30–6:30pm at the McGlone Academy. For more information about the Mayor’s House1000 plan, visit denvergov.org.

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Kwame Spearman, John Youngquist, and Paul Ballenger (L to R) expressed their views during a town hall forum at the Cube in Central Park. Although odd-year elections don't feature many races, controversies surrounding the Denver school board have made this race for the at-large seat an especially competitive contest.

By Brian Heuberger

This fall, Denver voters will decide the new makeup of the Denver School Board and the outcome of two ballot measures. Election Day is Nov. 7, with ballots mailed out on Oct. 16.

School Board Election: At-Large Candidates

Three of the seven school board seats are up for grabs in this election cycle, with two of those seats being for districts in the south and northwest regions of the city. But all Denver residents will cast votes for the at-large seat that was vacated by outgoing school board Vice President Auon'tai (Tay) Anderson, who dropped out of the race for re-election to instead run for a seat in the statehouse in 2024. Four candidates are now vying for that open seat, and many issues will need to be addressed by the at-large winner.

The infighting among current board members has garnered consistent complaints from Denver residents. Many

critics have lamented what they see as constant disputes on the board, frequent insults on social media, and inadequate responses to the issues. As a result, the Colorado Polling Institute released a poll showing that only 30 percent of Denver voters approve of the current school board. School safety is another issue that board members will need to tackle, following shootings and other incidents of violence last spring that raised questions regarding the lack of an effective safety plan and the use of school resource officers. Additionally, the board must address declining enrollment at schools and the academic performance of students.

Front Porch spoke to the candidates for the at-large position to obtain their perspectives on these pressing issues. The interview questions are listed below, the bios were written by Front Porch, and the responses were provided by the candidates. The names are listed according to the

order of the candidates on the ballot, and the participants have been granted equal word counts for each question.

Reasons for Running: What were the main reasons that motivated you to run for the at-large school board seat?

School Safety: What are your strategies to increase the safety of our students, and what is your opinion on the use of school resource officers?

Declining Enrollment: What are your thoughts on closing or combining small schools with low enrollment numbers?

Academic Achievement: What strategies would you implement or what modifications would you make to maximize the academic performance of our students?

Brittni Johnson

Bio: Johnson graduated from George Washington High School, has three children in the DPS system, and is currently a community organizer and doctoral student. She has been endorsed by many progres-

Fall Election: Focus is on t

sive leaders, including outgoing board member Auon'tai Anderson, current City Councilmember Sarah Parady, and former City Councilmember Candi CdeBaca.

Interview: Johnson entered the race in September and did not respond to an interview request by press time.



John Youngquist

Bio: Youngquist served as principal of two DPS elementary schools and did two stints at East High School. He led East from 2007-2012, left to become the DPS Director of Principal Talent Management, and then returned to East High to serve as principal again from 2017-2022.

Reasons for Running: I'm frustrated with the distractions that our board is experiencing and the difficulty they've had gaining traction on the important issues we're facing around teaching, learning, safety, and mental health.

School Safety: We need a system to form strong partnerships with the police department and Denver Health, to prevent behavioral issues from occurring, and to respond effectively if they do. As principal, I was against removing SROs and I'm glad they're back, but we also need comprehensive solutions for student safety and mental health.

Declining Enrollment: We don't have a transparent view into our financial status, and we can't discuss budget reduction and school closures without first understanding our finances, costs, and investments across the district.

Academic Achievement: I start with relationship and culture. We need a high-trust organization to identify the challenges students face and the opportunities we offer. We can then design creative learning experiences where kids are engaged, and we'll see progress from that framework.

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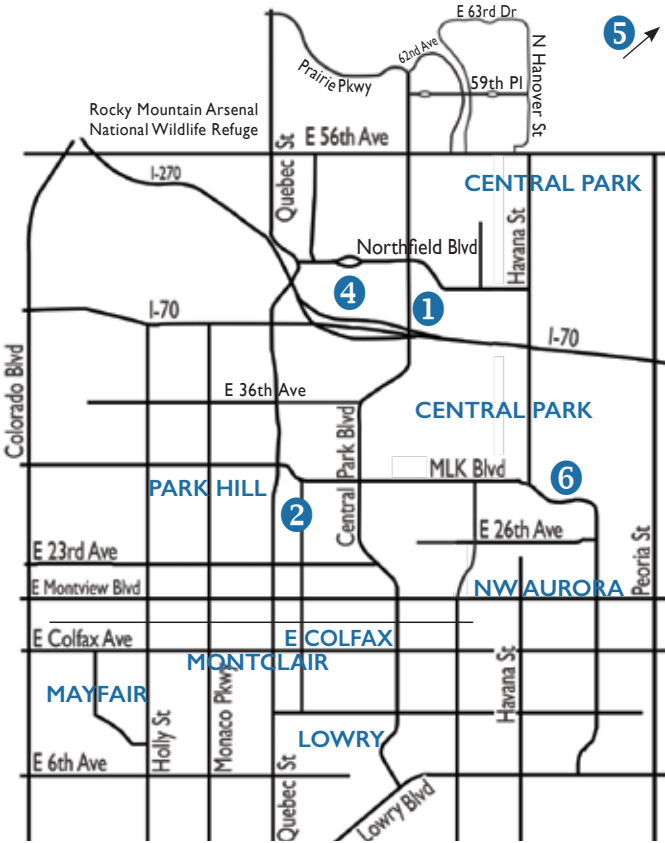
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...NE News Updates

Although the mission is the same as the downtown spot, this new store has expanded sections for childrens' toys and home products. TAG is owned by Sarah Smith, who has lived in Central Park for 12 years. Smith is happy to display the work of local residents. Since it opened in August, she has already met four Central Park women who are first-time entrepreneurs and are now selling their art in TAG.



3 Kurt Dennis Sues Denver Public Schools

Kurt Dennis has filed a lawsuit against Denver Public Schools (DPS) for what he believes was an unlawful termination from his position as principal at McAuliffe International School. The lawsuit was filed against DPS and the six board members who voted to uphold the termination in August. The lawsuit claims that DPS violated his First Amendment right to speak publicly about safety concerns, and that board members damaged his reputation with misleading statements regarding the de-escalation room. Dennis is seeking financial restitution, claiming that the unlawful firing cost him significant wages and that the damaged reputation impaired his ability to get another job. The lawsuit is also seeking his reinstatement as McAuliffe's Principal. If the courts rule that the termination was unconstitutional, Dennis could be reinstated to his former position. The process is expected to take several months to be resolved.

4 New Businesses at The Shops at Northfield

Several new businesses are opening at the Shops at Northfield. **Sephora:** The new location for Sephora is opening in November. The store will be selling its many beauty and skincare products on Main Street near the Bath & Body Works.

P.F. Chang's: Positioned across from the Improv on 47th and Uinta, the new P.F. Chang's is also slated to open its doors to customers and begin serving its Asian cuisine in November.

Lululemon: Known for its wide variety of athletic clothes and loungewear, Lululemon is preparing to open in November at the corner of 47th and Main Street.

Lucky Strike: The bowling alley will be located between Target and Bass Pro. Although the bowling alley has locations throughout the country, its only current spot in Denver is downtown on the 16th Street Mall. It has become a common gathering place for bowling enthusiasts who play in official leagues, for friends looking to have a fun night out, or for families hosting special events. It's expected to open in early 2024.

5 National Wildlife Property Repository

The National Wildlife Property Repository, located at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, has re-opened for public tours following a brief closure for renovation. The Repository, which is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, houses approximately 1.5 million wildlife items confiscated at U.S. ports of entry or in connection with criminal investigations, and includes



Taliah Farnsworth, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, poses with a taxidermied tiger at the National Wildlife Property Repository.

elephant tusks, crocodile skin boots, taxidermy mounts, among other things. Many of the items are loaned to museums or universities to aid in education or law enforcement training. The building was remodeled to install new shelving, new temperature and humidity controls, and to modernize the facility's education space. The Repository's mission is to educate the public about impacts that the illegal wildlife trade has on species and ecosystems, and to let the public know how they can be part of the solution.

Free tours are operated on the first Friday of each month at 10am and 2pm, lasting approximately 60 minutes. Tours are open to anyone 13 years and older and group size is limited to 20 total guests. Reservations for the tour can be made by emailing NEWPR_education@fws.gov or by calling 303-729-2265. Registration closes 24 hours before each tour. For more information, read this 2019 Front Porch story: <https://frontporchne.com/article/wildlife-contraband-becomes-conservation-library/>



The proposed site plan for Bluff Lake Nature Center. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2024.



Proposed plan for the new gateway/entry from the parking lot into the Bluff Lake Nature Center.

6 New Plans for Bluff Lake Nature Center

The Bluff Lake Nature Center unveiled its design plans for new facilities at its 123-acre wildlife refuge and environmental education area in Central Park.

Two new buildings will be constructed with sustainable materials. One will feature programming space with indoor/outdoor classrooms, a welcome desk, small exhibit space, and a large room that can be used to host community events. The other will house administrative offices. Additionally, the outdoor plans include multiple shade areas, new overlook structures, and a "gateway" area enabling visitors to more easily access the wildlife areas. The \$7 million project is designed to enhance the many camps, classes, field trips, and research projects at the Center. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2024 and be completed by the end of 2025. To make a donation, visit coloradogives.org/BluffLakeCampaign.



The new MAA Milepost 35 luxury apartment complex is located at 46th and Beeler Ct. Units will be available starting in late November 2023.

By Brian Heuberger and Mary Jo Brooks

1 New Luxury Apartment Complex

A new apartment complex is preparing to open in Central Park and offer a luxury apartment community for residents. MAA Milepost 35 is located at 46th and Beeler Court, and derives its name from the close proximity to Runway 35. The complex will feature 352 units that are scattered throughout four 5-story apartment buildings and five 3-story townhome sections. The complex is offering rental options for studio, one-, two-, and three-bedroom floor plans that will be available in late November.

2 Three Arrows Gallery Opens in Central Park

Three Arrows Gallery (TAG) has opened at Roslyn and 29th Street in Central Park. This is the second location for the store, with its first being in RiNo. TAG sells items made by women-owned businesses, local entrepreneurs, and aspiring artists that include clothes, jewelry, art, food, pet accessories, bath products, and home decor.

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A group of children are sitting at a table, engaged in an activity. They are looking at something on the table, possibly a book or a project.

A rainbow is visible in the sky over a building. The building has a red roof and is surrounded by greenery.



Invisible Beauty

“She moved our glamour and good looks into the level of activism.” This quote from this fascinating documentary sums up the theme of the film about the life of Bethann Hardison. Hardison is the “godmother” of fashion,

as Naomi Campbell states, and her life is indeed worthy of the praise. Hardison was a pioneering model, then agent, and always activist. She has promoted Black women in this cutthroat industry, one, that like many others, is particularly hard for Black women to even crack. Hence the title.

Hardison co-directs the film along with Frédéric Tcheng, and we get to see the process of making the film along with the story of Hardison’s life. The glimpse into process adds another layer, since the world



of film is no different than the world of fashion for Black women. We see Hardison breaking down yet even more walls with the film itself. Overall, this is an illuminating, invigorating, and at times frustrating look at yet more racism and marginalization. Yet, Hardison fights on. We owe it to her to fight along with her. Starts Sept. 29 at the Sie Film Center.

Dark Winds

This wonderful television series is based on the *Leaphorn and Chee* novel series by Tony Hillerman, created by Graham Roland, and produced by Roland, Zahn McClarnon, George R.R. Martin, and Robert Redford, among others. Set in the early 1970s on a Navajo reservation in New Mexico, it follows Lt. Joe Leaphorn (McClarnon) of the Navajo Tribal Police over two seasons as he investigates a bank robbery in season one, and then a series of grisly murders in season two. It is much more than a simple police procedural, however, as it brings us into

life on the reservation and tackles the larger political context as well. It is entertaining, thrilling, fascinating, engaging, and not to mention, educational, throughout.

McClarnon is a fantastic and talented actor, known for supporting parts in Western dramas such as *Longmire* and *Reservation Dogs*. In *Dark Winds* he takes the lead, and in my opinion, he will never relinquish it. He has an immense range as an actor, navigating from hard to tender to fiery while never missing a beat. He also deconstructs the stereotypical Native Americans we too often see on screen. It is refreshing, and so too is the supporting cast of Deanna Taushi as his wife, Jessica Matten as a brilliant and fearless deputy, and Kiowa Gordon as Chee, who plays prominently in both seasons.

The allure of the show doesn’t end with the acting and the characters, however. The writing is very good, the cinematography is dazzling while highlighting the beauty of nature (even if some of us Westerners can clearly see that certain locations are *not* New Mexico!), and the settings and props are wonderfully detailed and time-period accurate. It is quite fun to giggle at how certain things from my own childhood still have a life in period shows.

Finally, the show isn’t afraid to tackle political and social issues that go beyond the superficial and the stereotypical. It is here where you find the depth and contemplative nature of the show. With two seasons in the can, I eagerly look forward to season three—and that is not a usual occurrence for this critic.

Seasons one and two are available now on AMC+.

Spider Woman’s Granddaughters

Edited with an introduction by Paula Gunn Allen.



This month’s literary review comes to us with the help of the wonderful coffee/book/record shop The Good Stuff in Santa Fe, NM. The proprietor recommended the book *Spider Woman’s Granddaughters*, a collection of “Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women.” It is a wonderful book to sit with as you relax, read a story, and then come back to it for another one. The stories range from traditional tales to biographical writings to contemporary short stories. There is some dark content, some esoteric writing, and some poetic storytelling. All of it is gripping.

Oh yeah, food. People ask me all the time about where to find good Italian food. My favorite is Pomodoro on 6th and Dayton. It is small, family-owned and run, and most importantly, the food is excellent. It is a great taste of New York Italian American food in Denver. *Mangia bene!*

Vincent Piturro, PhD, is a Professor of Film and Media Studies at MSU Denver. Contact him directly at vpiturro@msudenver.com or follow him on Twitter. For more reviews, search The Indie Prof at FrontPorchNE.com.

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LOCAL EVENTS

October thru Early November

View and add local events FREE at FrontPorchNE.com/events. Submissions by the 17th will be considered for printing in the upcoming month's issue.

Please double check event dates and times using contact info provided.

SEASONAL/HOLIDAY EVENTS

10/5 to 11/3—Victorian Death Experiences. Step into a death experience of the past with this immersive tour. The Center for Colorado Women's History, 1310 Bannock St. historycolorado.org

10/6 Sunday—Pumpkin Festival at Chatfield Farms. 9am–4pm. Purchase tickets online at botanicgardens.org

10/8 Sunday—Candy Crawl. Wear your costume, trick-or-treat, crafts, entertainment, and more. 11am–1pm. The Shops at Northfield, 8340 Northfield Blvd. shopsatnorthfield.com

10/13 thru 10/28—Victorian Horrors. Ages 12 and up. 6–9pm, timed entries. 1340 Pennsylvania St. mollybrown.org

10/14 Saturday—Fall Into Fun Festival. 10am–3pm. Aurora Municipal Center, 15151 E. Alameda Pkwy. auroragov.org

10/14 & 10/15—Pumpkin Harvest Festival. Music, food, activities and more. Four Mile Historic Park, 715 S. Forest St. fourmilepark.org

10/15 Sunday—Halloween Costume Creation Jam. Bring your own costume to work on or use the provided materials. Teens 13–17. 2:30–4:30pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

10/17 to 10/22—Glow at the Gardens. A luminous, nighttime celebration. 6–9pm. 1007 York St. Tickets at botanicgardens.org

10/27 to 10/29—Harvest Hoot. Wear your favorite costume, eat fang-tastic bites, games, boo-tiful crafts and more. Reservations required. 2121 Children's Museum Dr. mychildsmuseum.org

10/28 Saturday—Goats & Ghouls. 9am–12pm, SCFD Free Day. Come in costume to visit with our farm animal friends. 10200 Smith Rd. theurbanfarm.org

10/28 Saturday—District 5 Harvest Festival Trunk or Treat. Haunted house and more. Free event. 1–4pm at Lincoln Tech, 11194 E. 45th Ave.

10/28 Saturday—Trick Out Your Jack-o-lantern. Bring your own pumpkin or small plastic pumpkins available. This is a non-carving event. 10–11:30am, Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

10/28 Saturday—Haunted Escape Room. Teams of 6 have 30min to play. All ages. 10am–4:30pm. Call or visit to reserve your start time. 720-865-0325 x4. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

10/28 Saturday—Halloween Haunt. Enchanting crafts and activities. 4:30–8:30pm. Four Mile Historic Park, 715 S. Forest St. fourmilepark.org

10/29 Sunday—Dia de los Muertos. Beer garden, food trucks, face painting, and more. 1–5pm. Northfield Plaza. shopsatnorthfield.com

10/29 Sunday—Halloween Spooktacular! A family-favorite concert features music from films, television, and more. 2:30pm, tickets start at \$10. Boettcher Hall. coloradosymphony.org

NE DENVER/NW AURORA EVENTS

Saturdays—City Park Farmers Market. 100+ local producers, live music, and more. 2551 E. Colfax Ave. cityparkfarmersmarket.com

10/4 Saturday—The Art of Powwow. Starts at 3:15pm, performance at 5pm. The Cube, 8371 Northfield Blvd. mca80238.com

10/6 & 10/13—Earth's Reel Resistance, a Climate Change Film Series. 10/6: *Nuoc 2030* (NR); 10/13: *Don't Look Up* (R). The Cube, 8371 Northfield Blvd. 6pm. Free, accepting non-perishable food donations. mca80238.com

10/7 Saturday—Sand Creek Volunteer Workday. 10am–12pm. All ages welcome. Info and registration at sandcreekgreenway.org

10/7 & 11/4—Bluff Lake Bird Walks. Sat: 2.5-hour walk at 7:30am or 2-hour walk at 8am. Free but must RSVP at blufflake.org/birdwatching

10/8 Sunday—Final Farmer's Market & Pumpkin Patch. Colorado-grown produce, baked goods, meats, and more. South Green (29th Ave & Roslyn St.) 8:30am–12:30pm. mca80238.com

10/8 Sunday—FORTISSIMO: Fall Festival. A scholarship fund-raising event for DYAO. Stanley Marketplace, West Patio. dyao.org

10/12 Thursday—Active Minds Presents The Year 1963. Learn about this key year. 1–2pm, Free. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. activeminds.com



10/14 Sunday—Eclipse Extravaganza. Observe the Annular Solar Eclipse with maximum coverage at 10:36am. Denver Museum of Nature and Science, 2001 Colorado Blvd. dmns.org

10/20 Friday—AARP Smart DriverTek Workshop. Learn the latest high-tech safety features in your current or future car. 1–2:30pm. Schlessman Family Library, 100 Poplar St. denverlibrary.org

10/21 Saturday—Forest Bathing. Open your senses and engage with nature. Bluff Lake Nature Center. 9–11am. 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. blufflake.org

10/21 Saturday—Cockpit Demo Day. Get an up close look inside select aircraft. 10am–2pm. 7711 East Academy Blvd. wingsmuseum.org

10/29 Sunday—Qigong and Mindfulness Walk. Gentle mind/body practice followed by a contemplative walk. 7:30–9am. Bluff Lake Nature Center, 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. Free. Space is limited, register at blufflake.org

11/3 Friday—Shadow Puppets with Danielle SeeWalker. Watch a traditional Lakota tale told with shadow puppets plus an interactive workshop. All ages. 4–5pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

11/4 Saturday—Friends of Chamber Music: Lirios Quartet. Free family concert. 11:30am–12:30pm. No tickets or reservations required. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. stanleymarketplace.com

11/9 Thursday—Holiday Wine Tasting. 70+ wines for you to try before you buy. 5:30–8:30pm, The Cube, 8371 Northfield Blvd. mca80238.com

METRO EVENTS

10/6 & 11/3—First Friday Art Walks. Art District on Santa Fe. 5:30–9:30pm. denver.org/things-to-do/denver-arts-culture/denver-art-districts

10/12 Thursday—Art & About Tours. For visitors with early-stage Alzheimer's or dementia and their care partners. 1–2:45pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

10/18 Wednesday—John Taylor & Black Identity in the Ute Borderlands. Explore the story of a freed black man who enlisted as a Buffalo Soldier. 1–2pm & 7–8pm. 1200 North Broadway. Tickets at historycolorado.org

10/26 Thursday—Womanifesto Presentation. Get your questions answered about this year's ballot. 4:30–6:30pm. The Women's Foundation of Colorado, 1901 E. Asbury Ave. wfc.org

KIDS AND FAMILIES

Tuesday–Friday—Local Library Storytime. Different age groupings and locations. Info at denverlibrary.org

Wednesdays—Mornings at the Museum. Ages 3–6, 10:30–11:15am. Free. New programs every week. Aurora History Museum, 15051 East Alameda Pkwy. Register at auroragov.org

10/5 to 12/23—Little Red. A charming, song-infused retelling of *Little Red Riding Hood*. Randy Weeks Conservatory Theatre. denvercenter.org

10/8 Sunday—Foxy and Shmoxy: Art Detectives. Foxy and Shmoxy help young children access and experience artworks in unique ways. 10:30am–12pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

10/12 Thursday—Create Playdate. An early-childhood program for families with children ages 3–5 (siblings welcome). 10am–12pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

10/12 & 10/23—Cinderella. The Panto Company USA brings this tale to life. Aurora Fox Arts Center, 9900 E. Colfax Ave, Aurora. aurorafoxartscenter.org

10/13 Friday—Hispanic Heritage Month Papel Picado Craft. Learn about Latin-America with a themed craft. Ages 4 and up. 2–3pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

10/14 Saturday—Tiny Tots Inside the Orchestra. A musical journey into outer space. 9:45am and 10:45am. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. Tickets at insidetheorchestra.org

10/14 Saturday—CSU Spur 2nd Saturdays. Free. Lots of family-friendly programming. 10am–3pm. 4817 National Western Dr. csuspur.org

10/14 Saturday—Maker Mornings: Fall Fun. Make art-inspired by beautiful fall colors that you can take home. 10:30am–12:30pm. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org

10/15 Sunday—Spanish Storytime at Tattered Cover Kids. 5pm. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. stanleymarketplace.com

10/22 Sunday—Teen Jam. Learn to better express yourself through music while forming relationships with peers. Youth-led. Free. 11am–1pm. Tuft Theatre, 71 East Yale Ave. swallowhillmusic.org

10/22, 10/25 & 10/28—Art Crawl: Fall Colors. 10:30–11:15am. For caregivers with infants–14 months. Registration required. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org

10/25 Wednesday—Sensory Friendly Hours. Experience our museum in a lower sensory environment. 4:30–6pm. 7711 East Academy Blvd. Admission is free for qualifying families, register at wingsmuseum.org

10/25 Wednesday—Youth Gaming Night. Play Xbox and Wii Games with friends! Snacks will be provided. Ages 5–17. 5:30–7:30pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

MUSEUMS, ETC.

American Museum of Western Art. Open M, W & F from 10am–4:30pm. Admission is \$5. 1727 Tremont Pl. anschutzcollection.org

Aurora History Museum. Admission is free. Closed Mondays/holidays. 15051 East Alameda Pkwy. auroragov.org

The Byers-Evans House Museum. Operated by History Colorado as the Center for Colorado Women's History. History Colorado members are free. 1310 Bannock St. historycolorado.org



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Boundless Wonder

By Sarah Huber

Tucked between drab warehouses in an obscure corner of North Park Hill is the new home of one of Denver’s most innovative artistic powerhouses. The creative hub, painted in dramatic hues of red and black, is the brainchild of Garrett Ammon and Dawn Fay, who are globally celebrated ballet dancers and the married couple behind the performing arts organization Wonderbound.

Primarily a contemporary ballet company, Wonderbound also curates and displays visual works, collaborates with local songwriters, stages productions with live bands, and has incorporated spoken word poetry into performances. Wonderbound exists “to foster bounding curiosity and thoughtful storytelling,” Fay says. “Everything is created for Wonderbound and choreographed by Garrett.”

The non-profit arts organization was born out of Ammon and Fay’s work with a dance school in Broomfield. They moved as an independent dance company to downtown Denver in 2013, which was Wonderbound’s first year as an official non-profit arts organization, before relocating to an industrial warehouse at the edge of the city. “Unfortunately, in November of 2020, at the same time we were in the pandemic, the warehouse was vandalized irreparably,” recalls Fay, who herself was confronted by a woman brandishing a wrench. While no one was hurt and Wonderbound’s costumes and set materials remained intact, the company had less than a month to find a performance site for its next scheduled show. “We immediately got on the internet and started looking for places,” she says. A few weeks later, even as Wonderbound was forced to delay its production schedule due to the pandemic, “the planets aligned,” Fay says, “and we found our home.”

Following months of renovation, Wonderbound’s new home in Park Hill opened this spring, and its first season at the site will debut Oct. 19. “This was the impossible

dream,” Fay says. The heart of the new space is a former airplane hangar, which turned out to be an ideal performance hall. After renting the building for seven months, Wonderbound purchased the space in February of 2021, and Ammon “got to work with a measuring tape and writing plans,” Fay says. He and Fay partnered with a Denver architectural firm and a general contractor from Park Hill, with the final project totaling approximately \$8 million. Fay says walking through the front door and seeing the completed remodel in its bold and beautiful glory “is thrilling each morning.” She muses, “Who gets this lucky? Out of terrible things can come amazing opportunity.”

Wonderbound’s company of dancers kept performing through the renovation process, just as they persevered through the Covid pandemic. “We made it work every time,” Fay says. “During the pandemic, we were a bubble together, and we didn’t conduct any furloughs, layoffs, or salary or staff cuts.”

Although Wonderbound’s 2023-24 season also marks the company’s tenth anniversary, Ammon refers to the opportunities presented by the new facility as “chapter one.” The season opener, *Wicked Bayou*, features songs by Denver musician Clay Rose, whose band The Widow’s Bane will play live with the performances. Other productions this season include *Icy Haught*, an eclectic collection of music and vibrant moves; *Awakening Beauty*, a reworking of the tale of Sleeping Beauty that will be accompanied by an orchestral ensemble; and *Sam and Delilah*, which traces Sam as a sheriff and Delilah as a beautician in 1970s Texas. “This is not the Nutcracker,” Fay says with a laugh.

Fay began her career at Ballet Oklahoma and went on to dance with the Royal Ballet of Flanders, where she performed as principal at age 19. She then performed for Ballet Memphis, where she met Ammon. Today she is president of Wonderbound. Ammon was drawn to dance



Wonderbound dance company members rehearse for their winter show, *Icy Haught*, at their new location in North Park Hill. *Icy Haught* is a fast-paced, edgy production featuring eclectic music hits.

as a teenager and later became a member of Houston Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, and Ballet Memphis. Under his tenure as artistic director, Wonderbound has become “an open laboratory for cross-disciplinary exploration and creation,” Fay says. Ammon describes their art as living “at the convergence of tradition and innovation, vulnerability and courage, and intimacy and openness.”

Fay admits, “When people started seeing Garrett’s work, they’d ask, ‘How are we going to keep you in Denver?’” She has always had a quick reply: “We really wanted to be something for this community, and we resonated with the sense of possibility in Denver. Call it the ‘Go West, young man’ vibe.”

Fay believes their Park Hill home is “magnificently placed to allow Wonderbound to do just that, serving the community.” She says, “Our mission is to use dance to deepen humankind’s common bond through uncommon endeavors of discovery and creation.” Since part of that mission

includes welcoming people of various ages and backgrounds into the artistic process, the public is invited to attend weekly rehearsals at the new center (visitors must email beforehand to confirm the timing). Fay says, “We want the audience to lean in, to be part of the narrative, and to come away a little different, having experienced the story through the dancers’ souls.”

Visit Wonderbound.org for performance information.



Wonderbound’s Logan Velasquez and Azelle Chang in Clay Rose and Garrett Ammon’s *Wicked Bayou* with The Widow’s Bane band.



Garrett Ammon and Dawn Fay founded Wonderbound in 2013. Today Ammon serves as artistic director, and Fay is president. Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

Photo by Garrett Ammon, 2023.

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NEWS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

MASTER COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OCTOBER 2023

2023 CENTRAL PARK KIDS TRIATHLON WINNERS

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Mila - Age 13



Shayan - Age 13



Luis - Age 12



Una - Age 12



Jakob - Age 11



Olive - Age 11



Mauricio - Age 10



Olivia - Age 10



Aiden - Age 9



Maeve - Age 9



Finley - Age 8



Hayley - Age 8



Claire - Age 7



Eamon - Age 7



Joaquin - Age 7



Juniper - Age 6



Kellen - Age 6

FINAL FARMERS MARKET AND PUMPKIN PATCH

Sunday, October 8th, 8:30am–12:30pm, South Green

The 2023 Pumpkin Patch will be held on Sunday, October 8th. Shoppers will receive a coupon for every \$5 they spend at the vendors' booths. Coupons can be redeemed at the pumpkin patch for a free pumpkin. There will be a variety of pumpkin sizes ranging from small to large. Pumpkin quantities are very limited, and coupons are only valid while supplies last.

Coupon details:

- 1 Ticket = 1 small pumpkin
- 3 Tickets = 1 medium pumpkin
- 5 Tickets = 1 large pumpkin

Pumpkins will be separated by sizes and located on the stage on the east side of The Green. Pumpkins are very limited and are not guaranteed. This market will be the final Farmers Market of the season.

HOLIDAY WINE TASTING

Thursday, November 9th, 5:30–8:30pm, The Cube, 8371 Northfield Blvd. Ticket information coming soon!

Pearl Wine Company, The Women's Wine Guild, and the MCA are teaming up for a special Holiday Wine Tasting.

This event will feature over 70 wines available for you to try before you buy for the holidays! The event will feature a walk around tasting hosted at the MCA Cube. Tickets will go on sale October 1st and will be limited to 150 people. Proceeds to benefit the Women's Wine Guild and orders will be fulfilled and delivered by Pearl Wine Company.

About WWG: The Women's Wine Guild is a non-profit dedicated to creating an inclusive, education-based environment where women in the Food, Wine and Hospitality industries can flourish and grow in Colorado.

About Pearl Wine: Pearl Wine Company is a boutique bottle shop that opened in 2015 in Platt Park. They will be opening a location in North Central Park, combined with a European Style Grocer called Pearl Market.

EARTH'S REEL RESILIENCE: A CLIMATE CHANGE FILM SERIES

Hosted by Vincent Piturro, Ph.D. The Indie Prof.

All screenings are free and open to the public. Donations of non-perishable food items will be accepted by the MSU Film Club for the MSU Denver Food Pantry.

A variety of concession items will be available for purchase.

Earth's Reel Resilience is a captivating and thought-provoking film series being hosted at The Cube (8371 Northfield Blvd.) that takes viewers on an emotional journey through a collection of gripping narratives, exploring the urgent issues and profound consequences of climate change.

Nuoc 2030 (NR) - October 6, 6pm

Don't Look Up (R) - October 13, 6pm

There will be a discussion on each film led by Vincent Piturro following the screenings.

Vincent Piturro, Ph.D., is a professor of film and media studies in the Department of English at Metropolitan State University of Denver.

THE ART OF THE POWWOW WITH RED FEATHER WOMAN FEATURING ART MARKET & TOCABE FOOD

Saturday, November 4th, The Cube, 8371 Northfield Blvd.

3:15pm Art Vendors Open

4pm Tocabé Food-Free for the first 70 orders

4:45pm Doors open for the performance

5:00-6:45pm performance

Jennifer Olsen
Communications Manager
Jolsen@mca80238.com



Visit our website!

Is your garden overflowing? DONATE FOOD AT THE CENTRAL PARK HARVEST FEST

Saturday, October 7th 11-2 PM

Conservatory Green Park and Plaza(8304 E. 49th Pl. 80238)

& grab lunch for you supported by Denver Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency CPUN, MCA, CPBA, Denver Urban Farm, Fresh Food Connect, Consumption Literacy Project

Donations to Denver Food Rescue

Food from the neighborhood

- Tree fruit (fruit with worms goes to animals)
- Berries
- Tree nuts
- Squash
- Grapes
- All garden produce



Donations to Food Bank of the Rockies

- Nonperishable foods
- Canned fruit, vegetable, beans
- Pasta, pasta sauce
- Tuna, salmon, chicken
- Soups, broth
- Packaged seeds, nuts, granola, rice



Email: Sustainability@CentralParkUnitedNeighbors.com with questions or to volunteer

mca
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