

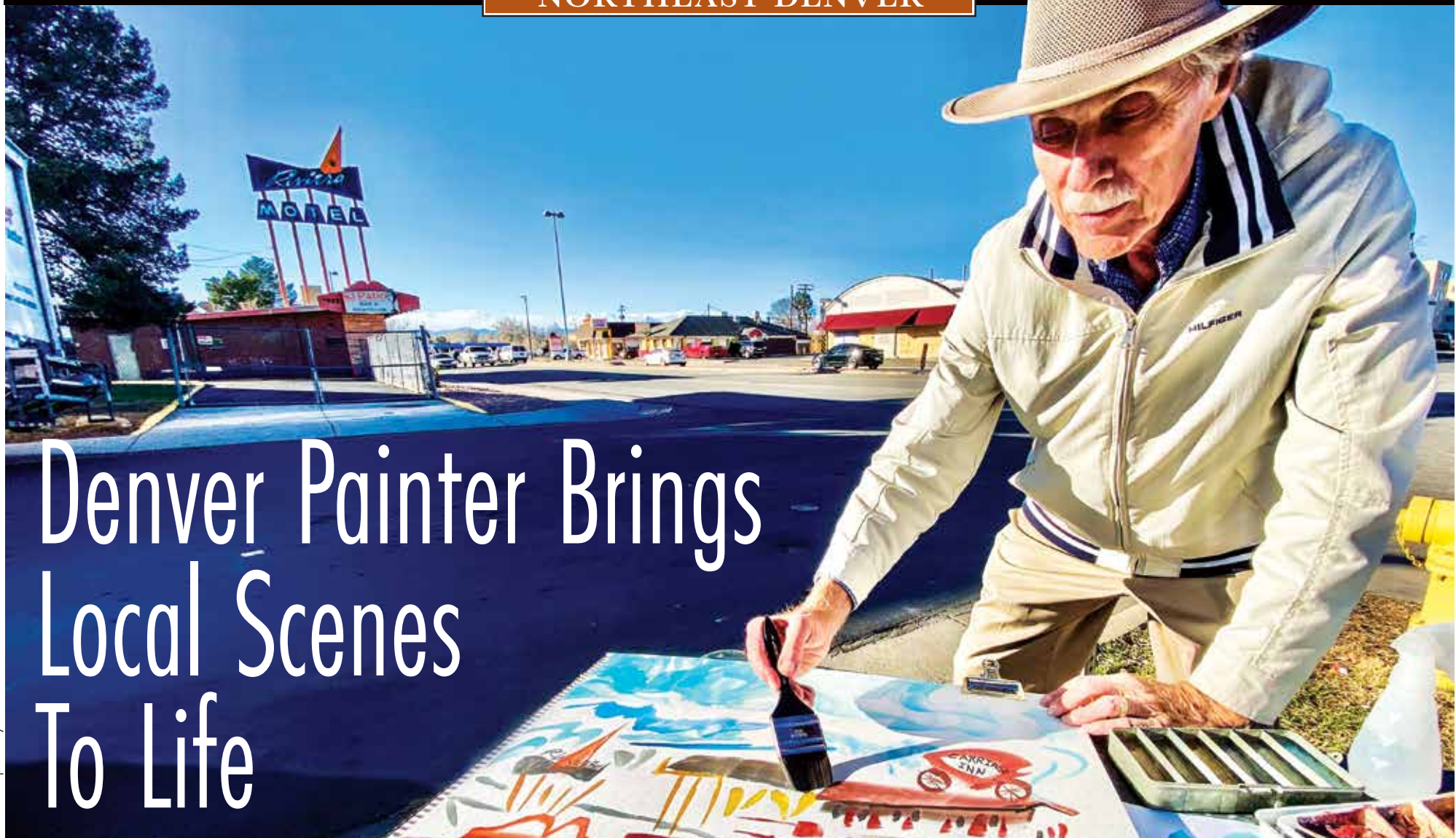
Front Porch

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

DENVER, COLORADO

NORTHEAST DENVER

JANUARY 2024



Denver Painter Brings Local Scenes To Life

Central Park resident Ed Natan is a common sight on Denver streets, with his wide-brimmed hat, watercolor pad, and paint palette. On this unseasonably warm December afternoon, he was painting the iconic signs and buildings at the intersection of Beeler and East Colfax.

Calling it his mission to paint street scenes “where much of Denver’s soul is revealed,” artist Ed Natan has been capturing Denver’s vibrant urban streets in a series of colorful watercolors. His work is now on exhibit as a self-guided tour in nine locations where he created some of these works. *Story by Mary Jo Brooks on page 2.*

Caroline Glover’s Newest Endeavor



Newly opened Traveling Mercies encourages guests’ engagement with food, drink, and each other. *Story by Courtney Drake-McDonough on page 14.*

Denver Struggles to Help Migrants

Story by Martina Will, PhD on page 6.



NE News Updates Community Gathers to Support Homeless

Mayor Mike Johnston helps volunteers write cards to unhoused people who moved into a Northeast Denver hotel in December. Hundreds of people have volunteered to help with the House1000 plan, but the initiative has vocal critics. Also in NE Updates: Brookfield Properties to develop land southwest of I-70 and Central Park Blvd., and a large fire destroys an apartment complex on Colfax. *Story by Mary Jo Brooks and Brian Heuberger on page 10.*

Coming in February The 12th Annual Summer Camp Guide

Post FREE camp listings by Jan. 17 to be printed in next month’s guide at frontporchne.com/submit-event/



Ed Natan's painting called "Sam's" is displayed at Vibe Coffee and Wine in downtown Denver. It's one of the stops on a new self-guided tour of the artist's work where viewers can see exactly where Natan created his paintings.

By Mary Jo Brooks

Supporting a wide-brimmed hat and a large paintbrush, artist Ed Natan can often be found on Colfax Avenue, South Broadway, in the Uptown neighborhood, or in one of Den-



Artist Ed Natan has seen many changes in Denver over the last 60 years.

ver's municipal parks, chatting with locals or tourists as he creates vivid watercolor paintings of some of the city's most iconic street scenes. He calls it his mission to document Denver life by focusing on its diverse streets. "I believe it's at the street level where you get to know the city. There is no barrier. It's a public space," says

Natan. "I feel like when I share with people what I'm seeing and feeling, that maybe other people will start relating to these places in a more enriching way. The streets are where much of Denver's soul is revealed." A new exhibit of his work is now on display in nine different locations throughout downtown Denver. It's called "Iconic Denver: A Self-Guided Tour." The paintings are showcased in restaurants and small businesses near the intersections where the paintings were created. "In some cases, you can look at the painting and then look out the window and see the exact street scene that I've painted," says Natan.

Lindsey Bell is the curator of the exhibit and has featured some of Natan's paintings at her Bell Projects Gallery on 17th Avenue. Last September, she organized a one-night pop-up exhibit of Natan's work at Tom's Starlight restaurant. When many of the attendees mentioned that they would love to see where the paintings originated, Bell got the idea for

a self-guided tour. "It felt natural to do it that way: to encourage the viewer to experience the paintings in the same way they were created," says Bell.

Bell believes that viewers will appreciate the energy and immediacy in his work. "I love Ed's tenacity and that comes through in the paintings. It takes a special kind of person to paint on the street as people walk by. People stop and ask him questions and he has a knack for making that engagement warm and welcome."

Natan, a Central Park resident, says he's met some interesting characters while painting on Denver streets. "Some aren't always easy to deal with. But I've found that painting is a universal language, and even some of the roughest people I meet see me working and we end up getting along marvelously." A longtime

Denverite, Natan has seen many changes to the city over the last 70 years. His father originally had an art gallery at 16th and Glenarm, but when the City announced it was building the 16th Street Mall, sky-rocketing rents prompted Natan and his father to buy a property at 16th and Pennsylvania to set up a new gallery in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. He says there were several strip clubs and rough bars nearby. "It was kind of a no man's land then. It had a stigma as being dangerous, but we got



"Colfax Howdy" captures some of the "snazzy" motor lodges that greeted motorists of a bygone era as they arrived in Denver on Colfax Avenue.

Denver Painter Brings Local Scenes To Life

some property owners together to figure out how we could attract more investment to the area. I came up with the idea to name it Uptown. I did it kind of jokingly, but the name stuck," says Natan.

As he started watching some of the dramatic changes that were happening in Denver during the 1980s and 90s, Natan was inspired to start documenting some of the iconic streets and buildings. "I decided to use watercolors that you can set up quickly, change things quickly, and the medium itself kind of shows how things are always changing and impermanent."

Natan has painted several iconic landmarks that once were filled with life but now have been demolished or are sitting vacant, including the former Royal Crown Hotel at Colfax and Colorado Blvd. Natan also painted a building that had a sign with red arches at Colfax and Valentia that was one of Denver's first discotheques called Fridays and Saturdays. Later it became a strip club called Saturdays before it was demolished. Last year, new affordable housing apartments were built on the site.

He also painted the green building at Hudson and Colfax, which most recently housed the Axum Ethiopian Restaurant. "I remember years ago when it was a Greek restaurant and there was folk dancing. It was fabulous." Now, the property is fenced off and the building is scheduled for demolition.

Natan says Colfax has been of particular interest to him because of its storied history as the longest commercial street in the country. "Before I-70 was built, Colfax was the main entry to the city for anyone traveling from the East. And folks were greeted with these motor lodges that had outdoor pools that were very clean and snazzy." While many people now think of East Colfax as run-down or sleazy, Natan is more philosophical about how neighborhoods change and

grow. "It's all just part of the rhythm of the city." And for Natan, each incarnation becomes a new subject for his paintings.

"Iconic Denver: A Self-Guided Tour" will be on display through the end of March. For more information, visit <https://www.ednatanart.com/iconic-denver-self-guided-tour> or use this QR code:



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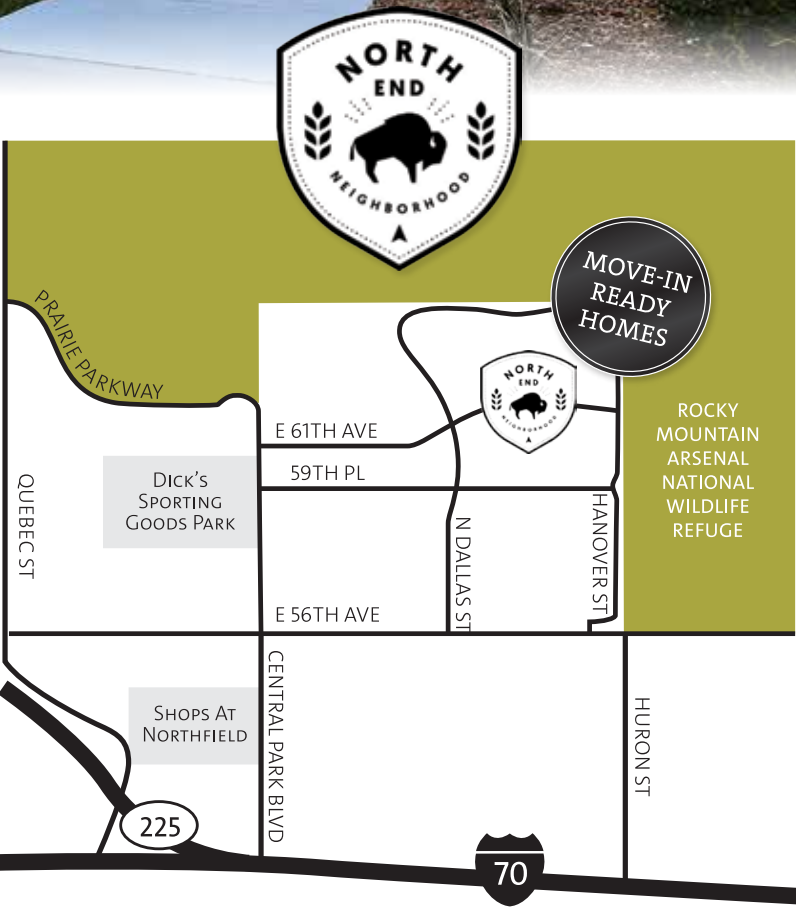
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District 5 Councilwoman Amanda Sawyer is pictured at Colfax and Monaco, where council districts 5, 8, and 9 intersect. Sawyer co-sponsored the zoning bill that aims to turn the areas near BRT stations into vibrant commercial centers.

By Brian Heuberger

Dramatic transformations will begin in 2024 designed to improve the conditions on East Colfax for commuters, pedestrians, businesses, and residents. Three major changes will facilitate the transformation. Denver will install a unique bus transportation system, a rezoning policy was passed to encourage a vibrant business environment, and an

adaptive reuse program was implemented to revitalize old buildings. All of these changes intend to solve different problems, but all are working in conjunction to transform East Colfax.

The Bus Rapid Transit System

East Colfax will be the first road in Denver to offer a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system for residents. The system

East Colfax Prepares for

will provide two lanes for buses in the center of the corridor. Northeast Denver will have nine stops from Colorado to Yosemite, and buses will arrive at each station approximately every four minutes. Single car lanes on each side of East Colfax will still enable cars to drive in both directions along the corridor. The City expects the BRT project to break ground in 2024, for the construction phase to be complete in two years, and for the system to start operating in 2027.

“People want to have additional transportation options besides just single-occupancy vehicles,” says Jon Stewart, the BRT project director. Stewart works for the Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI), which is leading the development of the new system. “Our traffic study showed the time savings that passengers will get with the BRT. For the bus, the trip from Aurora all the way to Civic Center Station will be 30 minutes quicker.”

DOTI also hopes that reducing the number of cars on the road can decrease the levels of pollution in the air. “We keep

hearing that we need to do something about climate change, and so this can give us a way to reduce greenhouse gases and our carbon footprint,” says Stewart.



Jon Stewart, BRT Project Director.

Improved safety was another motivation for the BRT system. “We want to find a way to make transportation safer because Colfax is one of the most dangerous streets in Denver. Transit

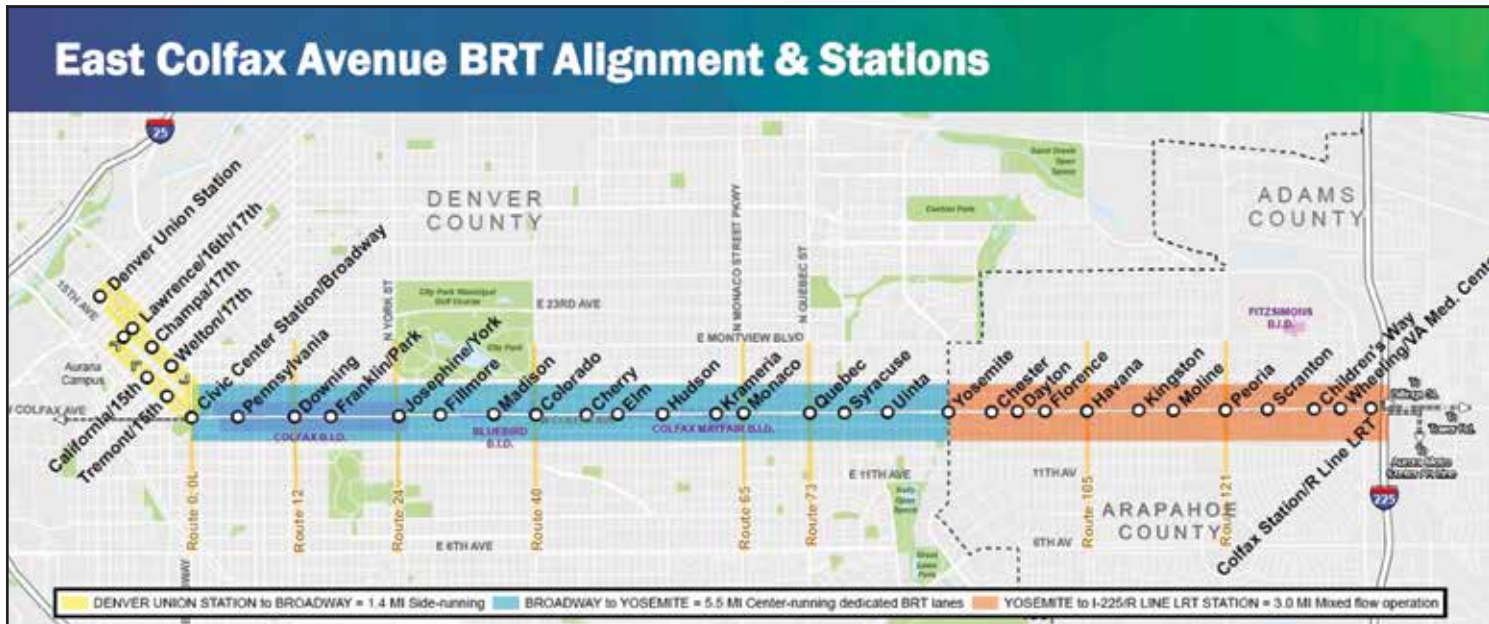
is a much safer way of getting around the city, a lot less people are killed in buses than single-occupancy vehicles, and so the BRT is a tremendous opportunity to increase safety on this corridor.”

Additionally, DOTI believes the transit system can provide economic benefits for local businesses. “We’ve talked to several other transit agencies that have implemented similar projects, and across the board we see an economic stimulus occur,” says Stewart.

The East Colfax Rezoning Bill

City Council recently passed a bill to change the zoning codes for all new developments located within two blocks of BRT stations. Officially named Active Centers and Corridors Design Overlay, the new zoning is being referred to as DO-8. The primary goals of the bill are to convert the areas around the stations into commercial centers for businesses and to transform East Colfax into a walkable corridor for pedestrians. Denver's "overlay zoning" keeps original zoning provisions and "overlays" them with new zoning standards (though the overlay may in some cases require a variance to the original zoning).

“It made sense to put the rezoning standards where the BRT stops are located, so I’m proud that we were able



The new BRT stops along Colfax from downtown Denver to I-225 will speed up commute times, with buses arriving at stations every four minutes. Construction will begin in 2024 at the west end and gradually progress eastward.. Map from www.denvergov.org

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a Major Makeover

to change the shape of this corridor and I'm excited to see how it develops over the years," says City Councilwoman Amanda Sawyer, who represents District 5 and who co-sponsored the bill with Councilman Chris Hinds.

Certain provisions in DO-8 attempt to improve the walkability of the corridor. East Colfax has many car-oriented areas that are sprawling with empty lots, drive-thrus, gas stations, car washes, auto dealerships, and storage facilities. However, the zoning changes prohibit new car-oriented projects from developing near the stations and only allow pedestrian-friendly businesses to open in those areas. Additionally, setback changes require new projects to be placed two feet further from the street to provide more space for pedestrians on the sidewalks.

DO-8 also aims to turn blocks near the stations into bustling commercial centers with activities for residents, jobs for workers, and customers for businesses. Two changes to the design standards can help achieve that goal. The ground levels of all new businesses near the stations must have an active commercial use and be at least 14 feet high. "The design standards can open up the space of the storefronts and help enhance the feel for people walking or riding along the corridor," says Sawyer. "When we have larger ground floors with big windows, it makes it more welcoming as a vibrant space and gives East Colfax a main street environment."

The overlay faced opposition during its development. Some opponents claimed that the bill was too strict, arguing that the new rules would be difficult for developers to accommodate. Other opponents believed the overlay was too lenient, citing

that the bill does not apply to areas that are further away from BRT stations. But supporters contend that the zoning changes served a beneficial purpose for East Colfax.

"We want housing along the corridor,"

says Sawyer. "We want nodes to attract businesses in places where people are getting off at BRT stops, but we didn't have the overlay cover the entire corridor because we also want space to build housing in those other areas. We need the housing

for our residents, businesses need people to come to their stores, and so we needed to strike a balance when building out the density along Colfax."

Although residents expressed concerns about the new zoning, City Council unanimously passed DO-8 on Dec. 13.

The Adaptive Reuse Program

An adaptive reuse program was also recently implemented on East Colfax. This program helps owners of old properties convert their buildings into residential housing units or active commercial businesses. The program is operated by the Denver Department of Community Planning and Development. The first adaptive reuse program was implemented earlier this year to utilize vacant buildings in downtown Denver, and in November the City enacted another adaptive reuse program to convert old buildings on East Colfax.

"A benefit of the East Colfax program is that we're trying to preserve that neighborhood identity by reinvigorating those historic structures," says Jennifer Ramsey, a Central Park resident and the adaptive reuse administrator for Denver. "Construction along East Colfax used methods we don't do anymore, so there was a lot of community interest in



Jennifer Ramsey, Denver Adaptive Reuse Administrator

maintaining the existing neighborhood character, especially with the changes for the BRT and needing to add a higher density of residential housing and small businesses."

The adaptive reuse program applies to buildings on East Colfax that are at least 30 years old and that are located between Broadway and Yosemite. The City offers services to help owners convert their buildings for active residential or commercial uses. "We can assist businesses through the review and permitting process," says Ramsey. "We can guide them through the timeline schedules, regulatory barriers, communication problems, or financial roadblocks. Adaptive reuse can be trickier than traditional development, so it helps to get the information and understand the steps."

Eligible property owners on East Colfax who want to convert their old buildings can visit the website at denvergov.org/AdaptiveReuse or email Ramsey at Jennifer.Ramsey@denvergov.org



Illustration from www.denvergov.org

BRT stations will have raised platforms for easier boarding, ample lighting, covered seating, ticket vending machines, and electronic schedule displays. Buses will have three sets of double doors for quicker boarding and the vehicles will communicate with traffic signals to get priority for green lights to speed up commuting times. Cars will still have opportunities to make left turns.

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“Coming here, it wasn’t the ‘American Dream,’” says Thania, a migrant from Venezuela. “When you arrive, you suffer because you can’t work.” Three months after arriving, she and her spouse are still awaiting work permits.

By Martina Will, PhD

They enter the City of Denver’s official reception center in North Denver carrying their few belongings in plastic grocery bags. Most have arrived from Venezuela, fleeing a 95 percent poverty rate, lured by the hope of a better life. Desperate, more people have left Venezuela than have fled the war in Ukraine. By the time they reach Denver, they have traveled through seven countries.

Denver, a sanctuary city, is among many that are receiving migrants due to the biggest humanitarian crisis in the western hemisphere. Dressed in sweatpants and sweatshirts, even the toddlers at the reception center are remarkably calm. One little boy, in a Spiderman outfit, fidgets on the hard plastic seat. As parents take out their identity cards, the children pass them around, gazing at the photos with curiosity.

“We can’t get around the fact that people are going to be living in tents, unless Denver magically finds more migrant hotels.”

—Candice Marley

billion in aid from the federal government to help with the migrant crisis. So far this year, Denver has spent more than \$33 million to support the immigrants.

A Harrowing Journey

It took Angie and her family four months to get to this reception center. (*Front Porch* is only using first names to protect the identities of the migrants.) They walked, rode buses, and finally, climbed atop “la Bestia,” or “the Beast,” also known as “the Train of Death.” Migrants ride from Mexico City atop this freight train to the border of the U.S. Angie’s husband and two children—third and sixth graders—sit quietly as they receive wristbands that direct them to the next stop on their journey. With luck, they will be assigned a hotel.

But the City has little space to house the newcomers. More than 33,000 migrants—mostly Venezuelans—have arrived in Denver since December 2022. The numbers change so rapidly that the City updates its migrant dashboard three times a day. While some migrants have moved on to other cities, the influx isn’t slowing. Just in the first five days of December, 13 buses arrived from Texas.

The City recently suspended the length-of-stay limits at migrant shelters. While families previously could only stay in shelters for 37 days, now families with children can remain in shelters indefinitely to ensure that their kids are housed in these cold temperatures. In January, the City expects to announce an agreement with a housing subcontractor, says Deputy Chief of Staff Evan Dreyer, who could not share further details before press time.

Dreyer would like to see Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) provide temporary work authorizations at the same time that they are permitting people to enter the U.S., thus allowing people to legally work while they await their court dates. This way, migrants would “gain self-sufficiency and not have to rely on local governments to put them up in a shelter.”

Denver Mayor Mike Johnston’s administration has, along with municipal governments around the country, asked the Biden administration to fast-track and increase the number of work authorizations for migrants. The mayors also requested \$5

Every Venezuelan migrant who spoke to *Front Porch* expressed a powerful desire to be self-sufficient and not burden the system. Thania and her husband had to leave two children in Venezuela because her mother insisted the journey was too dangerous for them. Driven by the need to provide for their family, they walked for four days, hungry, through the jungle in Colombia and Panama. They saw people dead and dying from thirst, hunger, and exertion. They rode the Bestia through Mexico even though by this time Thania had learned she was pregnant. Getting to the U.S. as quickly as possible was the priority.

The couple eventually found an apartment here. A stranger who saw Thania panhandling helped pay their rent, but as December neared, she was understandably concerned. Her spouse had found some work, but the employer refused to pay him.

Denver has a wage theft ordinance that expressly covers workers regardless of their immigration status, though some employers bank on laborers fearing to report it. Any worker in Denver has a right to make a complaint to Denver Labor, which also accepts anonymous and third party complaints.



At the City of Denver’s migrant reception center in NE Denver, newcomers show their identity cards and receive wristbands to get placed into shelters.

“There are plenty of jobs. We have thousands of people who have come here who want to work in multiple industries and economic sectors, but we have federal rules that stand in the way of connecting jobs and job seekers with employers,” says Dreyer. Some non-profits are helping migrants establish LLCs as a temporary workaround.

Northeast Denver Moms Respond to the Crisis

“It’s all organized by moms,” says Carla Lewis, a Central Park mother who hands out hygiene products in the parking



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Sofie (left) and Carla Lewis (right) are among many in the Central Park and Park Hill neighborhoods who have distributed hygiene products, clothes, and suitcases at community-organized distribution events. Most newcomers have traveled for months on foot and need new items after using all of their supplies or being robbed during the journey.

lot of the Motor Vehicle Division on Peoria St. on a blustery afternoon. Area moms are coordinating donations of meals, rides, diapers, second-hand clothing, and even rental assistance. At distribution events, car trunks and minivans sit open so people can “shop” for the items they need.

This grassroots momentum accelerated as the temperatures dropped. The “Central Park & Park Hill—Venezuelan Migrant Support” Facebook group had over 1,400 members within two weeks of its November founding. Members share information about how to enroll in school or access medical care, and an Amazon wish list circulates with ongoing needs, such as socks and underwear.

Volunteers recently delivered used furniture to Kimberly, Adonis, and their three children. The family found an apartment after walking for miles while knocking on doors and asking for vacancies. Adonis secured a one-month construction job, but like Thania’s husband, fell prey to wage theft when he tried to collect his pay after two weeks. Adonis told *Front Porch* his priority is enrolling his children in school. He wants them to have more opportunities and learn English. Kimberly will look for work once the kids have settled in.

For some, being settled remains a dream. Candice Marley’s non-profit, All Souls Mat-

ter, provides tents and propane heaters to migrants who lack housing and are living in camps around Denver. All Souls has proposed safe camping and parking zones in meetings with officials, but as of press day, the City had not sanctioned either. Marley says that the cost of washing stations, mobile showers, and port-a-potties is far less than conducting sweeps and cleaning up sites without these services.

“We can’t get around the fact that people are going to be living in tents unless Denver magically finds more migrant hotels. They want to work as fast as possible,” says Marley, whose accounting firm is helping migrants establish LLCs. “But it’s going to take a few months, either way, to get out of the tents.”

Angie and her family plan to make a life in Denver. They will change their June 2024 New York immigration court date and give Denver a try since this is where they landed. Kimberly and her family, who arrived in August, will go to court in January 2025.

To help families get into permanent housing, consider donating to the Newcomers Fund managed by Rose Community Foundation: <https://rcfdenver.org/nonprofits-and-grants/what-we-fund/newcomers-fund/>

Bird Sightings

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What are Bird Pellets?

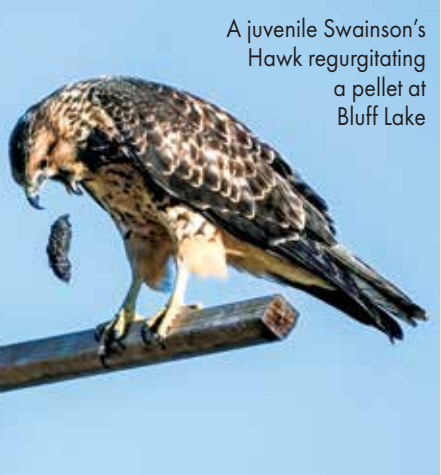
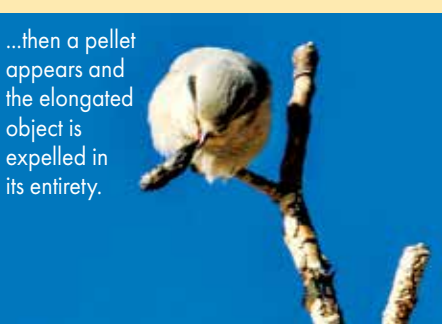
Owl pellets, used in science classes to teach the skill of dissection, provide an abundance of knowledge regarding the digestive system of birds of prey.

Pellets are formed and regurgitated by all birds of prey because, lacking teeth, they cannot chew their food. Their beaks rip and tear their prey into morsels that they swallow whole. The bird’s gizzard grinds the food and separates the digestible from the bones, fur, and feathers. A pellet is formed from the indigestible remains and the bird expels the pellet periodically through regurgitation.

Swainson Hawks are insectivorous birds that feed on grasshoppers, crickets, and locusts. Breeding birds hunt

small mammals such as mice, squirrels, prairie dogs, cottontails, and pocket gophers. Reptiles and amphibians are also on their diet list.

The Northern Shrike is a songbird. Its diet consists of spiders, beetles, bugs and grasshoppers, as well as small birds, mammals, and reptiles. Both Northern Shrikes and Loggerhead Shrikes are known as butcherbirds for their tendency to impale prey on thorns or spikes.



Above are two birds captured in the act of regurgitating pellets. A juvenile Swainson’s Hawk at Bluff Lake Nature Center from summer 2018 (left) and a Northern Shrike at Golden Gate Canyon State Park from winter 2016 (right).

Bird Walks

Jan. 6 and Feb. 3. Two-hour walk starts at 8am. Walks are free but you must RSVP at www.blufflake.org/birdwatching. All are welcome. Bring your own binoculars, or borrow a pair from your guide. 11255 MLK Blvd. Search FrontPorchNE.com for “Bird Sightings” to see all the past bird stories and photos from George Ho.

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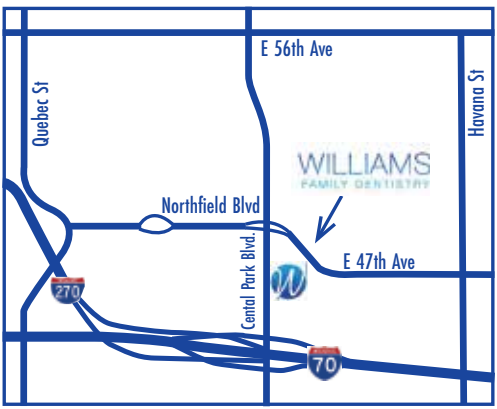
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Rep. Leslie Herod is term-limited after serving two terms for Northeast Denver. Herod created the STAR mental health program and is the chair of the Appropriations Committee and the Joint Budget Committee.

By Todd Engdahl

When Colorado legislators return to the Capitol on Jan. 10 for the 2024 regular session, they’ll probably be thinking, “We’ve been here before.”

That likely will come to mind because legislators left the Capitol less than two months earlier, after finishing a brief special session in November that saw the passage of a stop-gap property tax relief bill. And lawmakers are returning to several issues that they grappled with in 2023 but failed to finish during the last session.

Top issues expected to be addressed in 2024

The Budget—The session will have to pass a budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year. There’s sufficient revenue to fund current programs. But there’s only a modest amount of funds available for any significant new initiatives, and the billions in federal relief money that flowed during the pandemic have already been spent or allo-

cated. As some have put it, we’re back to a “normal” budget for the state government.

Crime and Punishment—Reform of police, prisons, and criminal law have been big issues in recent sessions, often pushed by Democratic progressives such as District 8 Democratic Rep. Leslie Herod, who is term limited after this session. But lawmakers may be forced to devote more money to prisons because of rising prison populations and severe staff shortages. Gov. Jared Polis is also asking for funds for public safety initiatives, including auto theft reduction. The issues pertaining to funding law enforcement agencies and reforming the criminal justice system could spark debates between the progressives and moderates in the Democratic Party.

Education Funding—This could be a landmark year for K-12 schools because lawmakers are eliminating the use of the Budget Stabilization Factor, a legal mechanism that allowed the legislature to reduce school funding to help balance the state budget. But there’s also pressure on

Déjà Vu All Over Again for C

lawmakers to determine how to subsidize the rapidly growing universal preschool program and how to ensure sufficient support for state colleges and universities.

Land Use—Last year, Polis pushed a comprehensive bill that would have taken away land use powers from local governments and imposed statewide guidelines to increase the density of residential areas, the prevalence of accessory dwelling units, and the use of public transit systems. When the bill died in the Senate, Polis promised that he’d bring the issue back in 2024. In early December, he released an aspirational “housing and transportation” plan, the details of which remain unclear. There’s a lot of uncertainty about how this will play out.

Property Taxes—This was the other explosive issue of 2023. Legislators knew they had to do something, given that soaring property market values had teed up big increases in property tax bills. In the final days of last year’s session, after keeping their cards close to the vest, Polis

and majority Democrats unveiled and rammed through a complicated tax relief plan that went to the voters in November as Proposition HH. Voters resoundingly rejected that plan, forcing Polis to call the November special session to pass a bill that will only reduce the increases to 2024 property tax bills. The special session also created a panel of experts to come up with solutions for a longer-term fix and report its ideas to the legislature in March. At that point, with less than two months left in the 2024 session, lawmakers will have to scramble to develop a property tax solution for 2025 and beyond.

Social Services—Colorado is facing a multifaceted crisis in its Medicaid, behavioral health, and welfare systems that boils down to one basic problem: The state doesn’t provide adequate reimbursements to the medical professionals and mental health counselors who care for Medicaid, disabled, and mentally ill patients. Efforts to increase funding



Photo courtesy of Speaker McCluskie

In her second session as Speaker of the House, Rep. Julie McCluskie (D-Dillon) will need to lead Democrats and Republicans through contentious debates relating to crime, education, land use, and property taxes.

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Colorado Lawmakers

for these services will eliminate money for new legislative programs. And lawmakers are being asked to also provide more funding for the state's troubled program of competency evaluation and restoration services for criminal defendants.

Racial Justice—District 33 Sen. James Coleman, District 7 Rep. Jennifer Bacon, and Herod, all Northeast Denver Democrats, will be prime sponsors of a bill that was announced in early December and that is designed to—in the words of a news release—“commission an independent task force to study injustices and disparities faced by Black Coloradans as a result of the impacts of slavery and systematic racism... This study will help the State quantify and qualify inequities in health care, housing, education, the criminal justice system, and our economy.”

Will Civility Improve?

The 2023 session had lots of rocky moments, including floor delays and disruptions caused by hard-right House Republicans, and behind-the-scenes shouting matches between Democratic progressives and moderate party leaders.

One promising Democratic first-term member, Rep. Ruby Dickson of Greenwood Village, announced in early December that she was resigning because of the polarized atmosphere at the Capitol. Later in December, Rep. Said Sharbini, D-Brighton, also announced that he was resigning, citing financial reasons and the Capitol atmosphere. At a December panel discussion, legislative leaders from both parties said improving civility is a top priority. Time will tell.

Todd Engdahl is founder of Capitol Editorial Services, which provides research, reports and news on the state budget and other legislative issues to private clients. He's a former executive city editor of The Denver Post, launched DenverPost.com and was co-founder of the website Education News Colorado.

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has also attracted more than

250 volunteers who have helped unhoused people move into transitional housing.

Johnston pledged to move 1,000 people off the streets and into temporary housing by the end of 2023. The City announced on Dec. 19 that 300 people from three encampments were moved into shelters in the first two weeks of December, bringing the total number of sheltered people to more than 800.

Park Hill resident Ellen Reath was one of the volunteers who went to the Radisson Hotel at 48th and Bannock Street to help people move in. She said it was an amazing experience. “They were so excited to be off the streets. One woman told me that this was the first time she’d ever had hope,” says Reath. “It really opens your eyes and opens your heart.”

3 Brookfield Properties Prepares to Break Ground

Construction of a mixed-use project on one of the largest available lots in Central Park will soon be underway. Located by the Credit Union at 40th Ave. and Central Park Blvd., Brookfield Properties will provide residential and commercial features along with a large park. The northwest portion of the lot will provide approximately 700 units of residential housing, including rowhomes and apartments. One-third of the units will be designated as affordable to rent or own, with the rest priced at standard market rates.

The new development will include a commercial retail center, with storefronts and restaurants positioned on the southeast section next to Central Park Blvd. Brookfield also intends to place a grocery store on this section and is currently talking to major chains that have expressed an interest in the project. Additionally, a public park will be cultivated on the southwest section that stretches to the Sand Creek Greenway Trail, offering views of the mountains.



The new Denver Police District 5 station opened on Dec. 1, 2023 with a ribbon cutting attended by many officials, including Denver Mayor Johnston, Councilwoman Stacie Gilmore, and Denver Police Chief Ron Thomas.

Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

who lamented the dysfunction of the past board hope that this change in leadership can improve the performance of the current members.

6 District 5 Gets a New Police Station

The District 5 police unit that serves Northeast Denver moved into a new station in December after the former station reached 280 percent capacity in recent years. The old station had limited areas for parking, detectives had to share desks for assignments, the officers ran out of lockers in the locker room, and the facility did not have designated areas for an evidence room or crime lab.

The new 34,000 square-foot facility provides a personal desk for every detective, a new gym for all of the officers, and a co-ed locker room that contains 180 lockers and 13 changing rooms. Arraigning criminals will also be more effective, as officers can now bring prisoners in through a closed garage rather than an outdoor parking lot, and the additional cells can now hold eight prisoners at the station instead of just three at a time.

The new station also offers upgraded equipment, an evidence room, a 911 communication center, and a crime lab with a vehicle processing bay. Additionally, a community meeting room in the new station accommodates 224 seats and features multiple projectors that will enable the facility to hold meetings with residents or host events for organizations. The new station is still located in the Montbello neighborhood at 12025 East 45th Avenue, and the \$19 million cost of the project was funded by the Elevate Denver Bond program.

7 Bike Lockers Available at Central Park Station

The Central Park RTD Station has become the first location in Denver to offer “smart lockers” where riders can store their bikes. Rather than using traditional locks that can be strapped to the racks but that can be easily broken by thieves, riders can now store their bikes in secure lockers that can only be opened with an app on their phones. The lockers are free for two days, and the station currently has eight lockers that include two larger ones for cargo bikes.



Avid biker Brad Revare is pleased RTD has installed secure bike lockers at the Central Park train station, including larger units for cargo bikes.

Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

8 Wings Over the Rockies Opens Wright Bros. Exhibit

The Wings Over the Rockies museum opened a new Wright Brothers exhibit on Dec. 17 to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the first flight that was propelled by Wilbur and Orville Wright in 1903. The Wright Flyer simulator has an innovative projector, a massive screen, and wrap-around walls that provide visitors with a realistic experience of flying the first airplane. The exhibit will also provide interactive displays and historical items to convey information about the Wright Brothers and their significant accomplishment.



Marlon (shown) and Jouanna Wells recently opened their retail space The CO Spot in The Shops at Northfield.

Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

By Mary Jo Brooks and Brian Heuberger

1 The CO Spot Opens in Shops at Northfield

A new store offering customized t-shirt and embroidery services has opened in the Shops at Northfield. The CO Spot uses screen printing methods that enable customers to design their own shirts. The CO Spot also offers pre-made shirts that display artwork or written messages, and embroidery services for stitching logos on team jerseys or company uniforms.

2 Homelessness Initiative Attracts Volunteers, Critics

Mayor Mike Johnston’s House1000 plan continues to draw criticism from many residents in Northeast Denver who think their neighborhoods are being asked to house too many people in hotels near I-70. But the initiative



Five-alarm fire on East Colfax. Front Porch photo by Christie Gosch

4 Five-Alarm Fire on East Colfax

A five-alarm fire tore through a five-story apartment building that was under construction at Colfax and Peoria Street on Dec. 16. Fire crews from six agencies battled the flames for three days after the blaze erupted. No one was in the unoccupied building at the time of the fire, according to Aurora Fire Rescue (AFR). A portion of the building collapsed and officials used drones equipped with thermal imaging cameras to look for hot spots because the structure was too unstable for crews to enter. The Colfax and Peoria fire happened just two days after another fire burned an apartment complex under construction on Addison Court in Aurora. AFR public information officer Carlos Oropeza said he had no information about whether the two fires were linked, but the Addison Court fire “is being investigated as a criminal act.” The cause of the Colfax fire was still under investigation at press time.

5 Leadership Positions for New School Board Members

Less than a month after voters elected three new members to the Denver Public School Board, an internal election among the DPS board immediately elevated those new members to significant leadership positions. John Youngquist is now serving as secretary, Kimberlee Sia has taken over as treasurer, and Marlene De La Rosa is leading as vice president. Critics



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Award season is coming and most films have now been released. The March column will preview all of the films nominated for Best Picture at the Oscars, so this month I give brief reviews of several films that may be nominated for other awards. There are many wonderful films out there for you—either in the theater or streaming—and I will continue to review them in the coming months. In my opinion, it was a great year for film and for film-going. The combination of *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*—two films I believe will be nominated for Best Picture—brought people back to the movies in numbers we haven’t seen in years. It proves that great films will bring out huge crowds. We don’t need superheroes and CGI. We just need exceptional art. Here are some examples to watch and discuss: Enjoy them in the company of a good conversant.



The Mission (2023)
This is a fascinating and polemical documentary that tells the story of John Chau, a young missionary who traveled to a remote island off the coast of India. He wished to bring the teachings of Jesus to one of the world’s most isolated indigenous peoples, a society that is essentially closed off from the modern world. Directors Jesse Moss and Amanda McBaine fashion a compelling story and dynamic visual structure around a tale about which we know the ending: Chau was shot and killed by arrows as he made his way onto the island.
Why is it polemical? That is for you to decide, but the film attempts to show

all sides of the story—his father’s take, the views of his supportive friends and fellow church members, and detractors who believe Chau’s mission was foolhardy, narcissistic, and suicidal. The film works on several levels, and for this critic, the visual flourishes—such as animated interludes, dramatic voiceovers, and the inclusion of old footage—elevate the movie to a higher status. It is not just an interesting story, but a brilliantly crafted film. This one should propel a fascinating and wild conversation.
Now streaming on Nat Geo/Disney+/Hulu.

20 Days in Mariupol (2023)
I include this film because, along with *The Mission*, it is important; it is a great work of art on its own; and it should be nominated for an Oscar. February marks the (unfortunate) two-

year anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The documentary gives us a slice of the war from 2022 as the invasion of Mariupol began. Warning: It is difficult to watch.
Still, the documentary is pure humanity. The images are horrifying and the story is heartbreaking, but we can neither look away nor sweep it under the

rug. It is still happening there now, and people are still dying there every day. We owe it to Ukrainians to keep looking at the war and keep voicing our opinions about the genocide (among other conflicts in our current world). This film highlights some of these atrocities and brings them into our living rooms. The images won’t go away any time soon, and we have to keep discussing the issues and pressuring lawmakers to do the right thing. Watch, talk, and act.
In February, I will preview a Ukrainian Film Series we are hosting at The Cube in Northfield (8371 Northfield Blvd.)
Now Streaming on PBS.

May December (2023)
Creepy. That is exactly how this film makes you feel throughout. A take on the true-life Mary Kay Letourneau story, this Todd Haynes-directed Netflix production is bizarre and uncomfortable, to say the least. Haynes said that he did not intend it to be so camp, but this might be a case where we should trust our eyes and ears. What do we make of all this?

The plot: 20 years after their scandalous affair, a Hollywood actress (Natalie Portman) drops into the lives of Gracie (Julianne Moore), husband Joe (Charles Melton) and their kids, to study Gracie for a film adaptation of their past. The visit soon forces the family to revisit their trauma in many different ways, and of course, those ways are not necessarily good.

The acting is the allure here: Moore is phenomenal and convincing, and Portman has been receiving Oscar buzz (although count this critic as a skeptic) for their performances. Moore is flat brilliant, and we will certainly see her in the Oscar lineup. Beyond the acting, the film raises a bevy of pop culture issues that are worth a good chat afterwards.

Now streaming on Netflix.

All of Us Strangers (2023)

This is a small and interesting film that I highly recommend. It is very much Hitchcock with a dash of Fellini, and the story keeps you guessing until the end. That story centers on Adam (Andrew Scott), a screenwriter living in a mostly empty apartment building in London. He meets and has an affair with a mysterious man (Paul Mescal) from the building while also visiting his par-



ents in his childhood home. The catch is that his parents died when Adam was young, but yet he still carries on conversations with them in the present day. We think.
Is it all a dream? A hallucination? A screenplay that Andrew is writing? Or is it a purgatorial stop where Adam has much to reconcile before moving on? Writer/Director Andrew Haigh fashions a taut, contemplative thriller, so watch this gem with someone else and then converse about it after. It is well-written, wonderfully acted, and studiously directed. The film begs to be discussed, and that is a beautiful thing. Have at it!
Opens Dec. 17 at the Sie Film Center.



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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January thru early February

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.

NE DENVER/NW AURORA EVENTS

1/5 & 2/2—Nature Wonder Walks. Enter the wonder by slowing down, breathing, and reconnecting. Bluff Lake Nature Center. 1pm. 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. Free but must RSVP at blufflake.org

1/6 & 2/3—Bluff Lake Bird Walks. 2-hour walk at 8am. 11255 E. MLK Jr Blvd. Free but must RSVP at blufflake.org/birdwatching

1/11 Thursday—Active Minds Presents Albert Einstein. Trace the life and impact of this great thinker. 1–2pm, Free. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. activeminds.com

1/12 & 2/9—Goatflix and Chill. 6pm. 8246 Northfield Blvd. The Shops at Northfield. Pre-register at shopsatnorthfield.com

1/13 Saturday—Cockpit Demo Day. Get an up close look inside select aircraft. 10am–2pm. Wings Over the Rockies Museum, 7711 East Academy Blvd. wingsmuseum.org

1/13 & 2/10—Indoor Goat Yoga. 10am, 12pm, and 2pm. 8246 Northfield Blvd. The Shops at Northfield. shopsatnorthfield.com

1/17 Wednesday—Feed Your Mind: Hope for Racial Equity. Building Racially Just Workplaces. 3–4pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

1/17 Wednesday—The Green Knight Screening and Discussion. A free screening and stay for discussion after. Adults 17+. 5–7:30pm. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

1/18 Thursday—Corks & Conversation. An Introduction to the World of Wine. 6–8pm. Must be 21. The Cube, 8371 Northfield Blvd. Tickets at mca80238.com

1/18 Thursday—Adult Night Out: Connecting With The Cosmos. Sip, stargaze and learn about space. 7–9pm. Wings Over the Rockies Museum, 7711 East Academy Blvd. wingsmuseum.org

1/20 Saturday—Prokofiev's Romeo & Juliet Ballet, OP. 64. Conducted by Dr. Enrique Lasansky, DSA Director of Orchestras. 2pm. Montview Presbyterian Church, 1980 Dahlia St. givebutter.com/hplUvI

1/22 Monday—Death Café. Gather and normalize conversations around death to make the most of life. 2–3:30pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

1/25 Thursday—Active Minds Presents the History of Movies. We will roll out the red carpet and tell the story of movies. 1–2pm, Free. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. activeminds.com

2/2 Friday—Visions of Love Wine Tasting Event. A benefit for the Anchor Center for Blind Children. Anchor Center, 2550 Roslyn St. anchorcenter.org

2/3 Saturday—African Drumming with Bob Hall. Performing for over 45 years with renowned artists across the globe. 10:30–11:30am. Sam Gary Library, 2961 Roslyn St. denverlibrary.org

METRO EVENTS

1/5 & 2/2—First Friday Art Walks. On Santa Fe. 5:30– 9:30pm. denver.org/things-to-do/denver-arts-culture/denver-art-districts

Through 1/7/24—Blossoms of Light. A display of light and color. Denver Botanic Gardens, 1007 York St. botanicgardens.org

Through 1/7/24—Zoo Lights. 60 acres of lights, entertainment, and treats. Denver Zoo, 2300 Steele St. denverzoo.org

1/11 Thursday—Blaxplanation. Askkanwii: Diasporic Community of Colorado Series #1. 6–8pm. Free, tickets at historycolorado.org. History Colorado Center, 1200 North Broadway.

1/11 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

1/17 Wednesday—Rosenberry Lecture: Changing of the Guard. Colorado's Toppled Civil War Monument. 1pm & 7pm. historycolorado.org. History Colorado Center, 1200 North Broadway.

1/18 Thursday—Conservation Conversation and Cocktails: A Pecha Kucha Talk. 7pm. Denver Museum of Nature and Science, 2001 Colorado Blvd. Tickets at dmns.org



African Drumming with Bob Hall at Sam Gary Library

1/25 to 1/27—The Ultimate RV Show. One of the region's largest RV shows. Colorado Convention Center, 700 14th St. corvshow.com

1/25 & 2/1—Bold Women. Change History. Postcolonial Love Poem and People: a Reading Circle and Conversation. 1–3pm. Center for Colorado Women's History, 1310 Bannock St. historycolorado.org

Through 2/11/24—Downtown Denver Rink. Free admission, rentals available. Check out hours at downtowndenver.com

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

1/10 Wednesday—Sensory-Friendly Family Movie Night. Secrets of the Sea. 5:30pm. 2001 Colorado Blvd. Tickets at dmns.org

1/11 Thursday—Create Playdate. An early-childhood program for families with children ages 3-5 and their siblings. 10am–12pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

1/13 Saturday—CSU Spur 2nd Saturdays. Free. Lots of family- friendly programming. 10am–3pm. 4817 National Western Dr. csuspur.org

1/13 Saturday—Maker Mornings: Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Make art based on our own "big dreams." 10:30am–12:30pm. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org

1/13 Saturday—History Buff Day. 11am–2pm. History Colorado Center, 1200 North Broadway. RSVP required at historycolorado.org

1/14 Sunday—Sensory-Friendly Morning. For kids with neurodiversity or sensory processing disorders. 9am–12pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. Free with registration at denverartmuseum.org

1/14 Sunday—Foxy and Shmoxy: Art Detectives. Foxy and Shmoxy help young children access and experience art in unique ways. 10:30am–12pm. 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

1/18 Thursday—Book Celebration (Kids Book Club). Explore the book *How Birds Sleep*. K–5th grade. 4–5pm. Park Hill Library, 4705 Montview Blvd. denverlibrary.org

1/20 Saturday—9th Annual Denver Preschool Showcase. Learn about early childhood resources including tuition support through DPP. 2300 Steele St. dpp.org/showcase

1/21 Sunday—Spanish Storytime at Tattered Cover Kids. 5pm. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. stanley-marketplace.com

1/21, 1/24 & 1/27—Art Crawl: New Year Celebration. 10:30–11:15am. For caregivers with infants–14 months. Registration required. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org

1/27 & 1/28—Children and Family Make and Take: Build a Fairy Garden. Connect and create together. Ages 5 and up. 10am & 1pm both days. 1007 York St. Register at botanicgardens.org

1/28 Sunday—Xochitl and The Flowers. Free performance of the children's opera sung in English and Spanish. Boulder Public Library, 1001 Arapahoe Ave, Boulder. boulderoperacompany.com

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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.. 1310 Bannock St. historycolorado.org

The Children’s Museum. Bloom early learning space (newborn–age 3) now open. Reservations recommended at mychildsmuseum.org

Clyfford Still Museum. Children 17 and under are free. 1250 Bannock St. clyffordstillmuseum.org

Denver Art Museum. SCFD Free Days Jan. 9 and 27. Youth 18 & under always free. 100 W 14th Ave. Pkwy. denverartmuseum.org

Denver Botanic Gardens. SCFD Free Day Jan. 15. 1007 York St. botanicgardens.org

Denver Firefighters Museum. Hours: Tues–Sat, 10am–4pm. 1326 Tremont Pl. denverfirefighters-museum.org

Denver Museum of Nature and Science. SCFD Free Days Jan. 8 & 28. 2001 Colorado Blvd. dmns.org



Denver Zoo. SCFD Free Days Jan. 5 & 21. Lottery for free events at denverzoo.org. 2900 E 23rd Ave.

The Forney Museum of Transportation. 4303 Brighton Blvd. forneymuseum.org

Four Mile Historic Park. Open Wed–Sun, 10am–4pm. 715 S. Forest St. fourmilepark.org

History Colorado. Free general admission for kids every day. 1200 Broadway. historycolorado.org

Kirkland Museum of Fine and Decorative Art. Tue–Sat, 11am–5pm; Sun 12–5pm. Ages 13+ welcome. 1201 Bannock St. kirklandmuseum.org

Molly Brown House Museum. SCFD Voter Free Evening Feb. 6, 5–7pm. Tue–Sun, 10am–5pm. 1340 Pennsylvania St. mollybrown.org

Museo de las Americas. Free 1st Fridays and always free for under 13. Tue–Fri, noon–6pm. Sat, noon–5pm. Closed Mon/Sun. 861 Santa Fe Dr. museo.org

Museum for Black Girls. Hours: Wed. 11am–6pm (half price), Th–Sun, 11am–7pm. 500 16th Street Mall. Tickets at themuseumforblackgirls.com

Museum of Contemporary Art Denver. Free for under 18 and healthcare workers. 1¢ admission 1st Sat. of the month. 1485 Delgany St. mcadenver.org

Museum of Illusions Denver. 951 16th St Mall. moidenver.com

National Ballpark Museum. 1940 Blake St. Check for days/hours at ballparkmuseum.com

The Urban Farm. Open to the public Saturdays only from 9am–1pm. 10200 Smith Rd. theurbanfarm.org

Wings Over the Rockies Museum. Now open, the updated Wright Brothers Exhibit. 7711 East Academy Blvd. wingsmuseum.org

PERFORMANCE/THEATRE

1/3 to 1/28—The Secret Comedy of Women. Laugh with the women in your life until you cry...or pee. Galleria Theatre. denvercenter.org

1/5 to 1/7—Harry Potter and The Chambers of Secrets™ In Concert. Watch the movie while the Colorado Symphony performs John Williams’ score. Boettcher Hall. coloradosymphony.org

1/9 Tuesday—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute and Humanitarian Awards. Special guest performances. 7:30pm. Boettcher Hall. coloradosymphony.org

1/13 to 2/10—Truth Be Told. A mother’s unwavering belief in her son’s innocence becomes a powerful force. Curious Theatre Company, 1080 Acoma St. curioustheatre.org

1/13 to 2/18—Fun Home. Based on The Graphic Novel by Alison Bechdel. Vintage Theatre, 1468 Dayton St, Aurora. vintagetheatre.org

1/20 & 1/21—A Tribute to John Williams. Enjoy selections of scores from films such as Star Wars, Harry Potter, Jurassic Park, and more. Boettcher Hall. coloradosymphony.org

1/23 Tuesday—Compagnie Herve Koubi. 14 virtuoso street performers showcase a diverse array of dance feats and stunts. Newman Center, 2344 E. Iliff Ave. newmancenterpresents.com

1/23 to 1/28—Jesus Christ Superstar. The iconic musical phenomenon returns to the stage. Buell Theatre. denvercenter.org

1/26 to 3/10—Cebollas. Three Latinas are forced to take an unexpected road trip. denvercenter.org

1/30 to 2/4—Chicago. Still the one musical with everything that makes Broadway shimmy-shake. Buell Theatre. denvercenter.org

2/2 to 2/11—Colorado Ballet Presents Jekyll & Hyde. The terrifying dance between the good and evil that lies within. Ellie Caulkins Opera House, 1385 Curtis St. coloradoballet.org

2/3 to 2/25—ART. A quick-witted comedy by Yasmina Reza. Aurora Fox Arts Center, 9900 E. Colfax Ave. aurorafoxartscenter.org

2/3 to 3/7—The Nacirema Society. About six elegant African American debutantes. The John Hand Theater, 7653 E. 1st Pl. firehousetheatercompany.com

2/3 to 5/5—Space Explorers: THE INFINITE. Immersive experience inspired by NASA missions. Stanley Marketplace, 2501 N. Dallas St, Aurora. denvercenter.org

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

For a more extensive list, go to www.FrontPorchNE.com and search for Charitable Opportunities.

College Access Mentor with Minds Matter Colorado. 2 hours a week during the school year. Info at mindsmatterco.org/volunteers

Denver Public Schools. Numerous volunteer opportunities with students and schools. equity.dpsk12.org/get-involved/volunteer-services

Denver Rescue Mission. To find volunteer opportunities, go to: denverrescuemission.org/volunteer/#opportunities

Food For Thought Denver. Providing food for students and their families. Sign up to volunteer or donate at foodforthoughtdenver.org

Project Worthmore. Help bag and deliver fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, and household necessities to refugees. projectworthmore.org

Reach Out and Read Colorado. Help sort and pack children’s books for underserved families. Email info@reachoutandreadco.org for details.

Reading Volunteers Needed One hour a week. No experience necessary. Email contact: Pil, 2011@partnersinliteracy.org.

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) For volunteer opportunities, email Cathy Law at claw@voacolorado.org

Ronald McDonald House Charities Volunteer. Info at ronaldhouse.org under “How You Can Help”.

Sand Creek Greenway Volunteer Opportunities. Nov. 4 workday, 10am–12pm. Info or to register to volunteer at sandcreekgreenway.org

Single Volunteers of Greater Denver. Meet others and assist nonprofit organizations for events/activities. Info at svgd.org

Spark the Change Colorado. Direct service programs that leverage the expertise of skilled volunteers in fields like mental health and empowering aging. sparkthechangecolorado.org

Village Exchange Center A non-profit formed to serve immigrants and refugees in Aurora & Denver. villageexchangecenter.org

Volunteers of America Colorado Branch For volunteer opportunities go to voacolorado.org/volunteer-opportunities/

GREEN AND SUSTAINABILITY EVENTS

1/6 Saturday—Knowing Your Car Automotive Class. Learn what’s under the hood of your car and never again be nervous about that weird light on your dash or that not so inconspicuous fluid stain in the driveway. Denver Tool Library. 555 Santa Fe Dr. Register at denvertoolibrary.org

1/23 Tuesday—Power Tools 101. Learn how to safely and effectively use Denver Tool Library’s most common power tools. 555 Santa Fe Dr. Register at denvertoolibrary.org

1/30 to 2/1—ProGreen Expo 2024. More than 5,000 green industry professionals gather every year in Denver to gain vital knowledge and skills to improve business, educate employees, and discover the latest information for the upcoming season. Colorado Convention Center, 700 14th St. progreenexpo.com

Through 1/6/24—Electronics Recycling Drop-off Event. \$5 car/individual for small load (one standard grocery bag) or \$10 for anything larger. Additional charges for some items. Facility open M–F, 8am–4:30pm, Sat. 10am–2pm. Not collecting on 1/1/24. Techno Rescue, 3251 Lewiston St, Suite 10. More info at auroragov.org/recycle

1/15 Thursday—Why Do We Have So Much Stuff? Join archaeologist Chip Colwell and journalist Helen Thorpe for a dialogue on Colwell’s latest book: the story of how we began a love affair with things that, with landfills brimming and oceans drowning in trash, could now lead to our downfall. Book signing to follow. 7pm. Denver Museum of Nature and Science, 2001 Colorado Blvd. Tickets at dmns.org

Through 1/31—Recycle Your Holiday Lights. Remove all decorations/lights and drop your tree off to be recycled at several Denver sites open weekdays and weekends. For hours and more locations, go to denvergov.org/treecycle

2/8 Thursday—2024 Clean & Green Sustainability Conference & Expo. Learn about geosynthetics, erosion & sediment control, stormwater management products and more solutions. 8am–3:30pm. Denver PPA Event Center, 2105 Decatur St. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-clean-green-sustainability-conference-expo-denver-co-tickets-748682428297>

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January 2024

Caroline Glover's Newest Endeavor is a Team Effort

By Courtney Drake-McDonough

Traditionally, “Traveling Mercies” is a prayer for safe, smooth travels said for someone embarking on a journey. It’s a phrase that Caroline Glover’s mother always said when anyone in the family was traveling, and that’s one of the reasons Glover decided to call her newest venture, an oyster and cocktail bar in Stanley Marketplace, by that name.

“The phrase Traveling Mercies is a little bit ambiguous. For me, it embodies well-wishes on a journey, but for someone else it can mean something totally different, so I appreciate that about the name,” says Glover, the chef and owner of the restaurant, Annette, which is also in Stanley Marketplace. Glover has won many local accolades and national awards, including from *Bon Appétit*, *Food & Wine*, and the 2022 James Beard Foundation Award in the “Best Chef: Mountain” category.

Traveling Mercies, which opened in late December on the third floor, serves bar snacks and small plates of oysters, mussels, shrimp cocktail, a wedge salad, and a seasonal, layered rice pudding. Cocktails (such as rum drinks from various regions) are also a focus, plus wine and non-alcoholic options that

are intended to pair well with the food menu. The concept is inspired by the hole-in-the-wall oyster bars that Glover and her husband Nelson Harvey have ducked into when they travel. The menu is brief, but the idea is that people can start or end their evening at Traveling Mercies or combine items to create a complete meal.

As part of the couple’s goal to make the restaurant industry a career path for their staff, checks include a 20 percent service fee with all proceeds going towards providing employees with higher wages and work benefits, such as health insurance and paid time off.

Glover and Harvey specifically developed the new business for two team

members. Annette’s general manager Daniel Seibel and bar manager Matt Baczor are the core of Traveling Mercies. The project draws on the mutual loyalty between the foursome, and the new restaurant made sense to all of them.

“Daniel opened Annette with us almost seven years ago, and Matt came on before the pandemic and was one of our key players during that crazy time,” says Glover. “They were creative, they have things they want to do, and we really want to be part of it.”

“It’s beautiful when you all work well together. We understand each other, our



Traveling Mercies’ menu includes seafood, bar snacks and salads, along with wine, cocktails, and many types of rum. Photo courtesy of Traveling Mercies



From left to right: Daniel Seibel, Caroline Glover, Nelson Harvey, and Matt Baczor helm Traveling Mercies. The team works together at Annette, and now at this new oyster bar on the top level of Stanley Marketplace.

shared vision and our communication style, so it felt like a natural progression to give them this opportunity to be creative in a different way.”

Along with running Annette and creating Traveling Mercies, Glover and Harvey had a baby in 2023. Adding Franny to the mix has been more challenging than the couple expected.

“It was a long journey to get here and then I had this really picturesque vision that she would just be with me all day, in the carrier, and I would just pick up where I left off and keep working,” says Glover.

“Being a working mom is really hard and it’s not as easy as I thought it was going to be, but I think we’re getting a good system in place. And I kind of feel like, in the restaurant, every day is a new day and it feels very much like that in parenting. So, why not just throw another thing in there?”

Traveling Mercies is accessible by stairs or elevator and, despite its small square footage, has expansive western views of the Rocky Mountains and Colorado sunsets. Formerly occupied by the aviation-themed Sky Bar, Glover and her team revamped the look with blue and terracotta colors and a variety of art by her late grandfather, who was a professional artist in Houston.

Glover says her grandfather’s artwork reminds her of home and fits perfectly in the space. One piece shows the hands of well-known artists such as Andy Warhol, which Glover connects to the intention of Travel-

ing Mercies and the operation of this oyster bar.

“I love the idea of makers and that’s what a restaurant is—it’s working with traditional farms, the oyster farm, and different vendors. Everybody’s hands are involved,” she says.

Other artworks feature seagulls, which evoke the ocean settings where they get their oysters. Between the art pieces, color schemes and food offerings, Glover says that she is especially excited by the beautiful combination they have incorporated into the restaurant.

Leading up to the opening of Traveling Mercies, Glover frequently stopped in to check on the space. When she imagined it completed, the vision she saw was people in the restaurant with food on their tables and drinks in their hands. But mostly, she saw people engaging with each other.



The walls of Traveling Mercies feature art by Glover’s late grandfather, who was an artist in Houston and whose paintings remind her of home.

“It’s my very idealistic hope that people will put their phones down and really enjoy the place” says Glover. “There’s something really beautiful about people being engaged, whether it’s with their food, drinks, or other people.”

Visit Dirt Coffee: a non-profit social enterprise and full-service coffee bar on a mission to train neuro-divergent employees in the art of service. This is just one of the growing food businesses at Kitchen Network, Mosaic Campus.

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Vail (Jun. 17-Jul. 12, 4 weeks only)
Location to be announced

www.EveryChildReading.net

camp@everychildreading.net

NEWS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

MASTER COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION JANUARY 2024

SNOW REMOVAL

There are several entities that take on snow removal responsibilities on a regular basis from the City & County of Denver down to individual property owners. The system works when everyone does their part. Snow should be addressed within 24 hours

of the completion of the snow event under normal circumstances. Major blizzards can extend the time it takes to address snow community-wide for all involved. For a full description of the snow responsibilities please visit mca80238.com.

ASSESSMENTS

Haven given written notice of the MCA Annual Members meeting in accordance with the organization's by-laws, the 2024 community budget was presented and adopted by the elected Community

Delegates of the Master Community Association at the Annual Delegates Meeting held November 15th, 2023. For a full copy of the 2024 budget please refer to the MCA website at www.mca80238.com.

Assessment are as follows: Effective January 1, 2024		
TYPE OF UNIT	DESCRIPTION	ASSESSMENT
Residential For Sale Regular	Individually owned dwelling units sold at market rate prices.	\$48.00 / Month (+\$2)
Residential For Rent Regular	Apartments/multi-family rental units.	\$29.00 / Month (+\$2)
Residential For Sale Affordable	Individually owned dwelling units subject to restrictions under the Workforce Housing Program.	\$26.00 / Month (+\$1)
Residential For Rent Affordable	Apartments/multi-family rental units.	\$13.00 / Month (+\$1)
Commercial , Office, Retail Town Centers	Units used for commercial, retail, light industrial, office, or public or private recreation use.	\$16.00 per 2,000 s.f./ Month (+\$1)
Commercial Large Industrial	Units used for commercial, retail, light industrial, office, or public or private recreation use.	\$5.00 per 2,000 s.f./ Month (+\$0.15)
Commercial All other Office, Other	Units used for commercial, retail, light industrial, office, or public or private recreation use.	\$11.00 per 2,000 s.f./ Month (+\$1)
Commercial Montevue & Central Park Mixed-Use	Commercial units located to adjacent private storm sewer system owned by Park Creek Metro District (PCMD)	\$11.00 per 2,000 s.f./ month PLUS \$15/ parcel /month (+\$1)



THE CUBE

Nestled within The Shops at Conservatory Green at 8371 Northfield Blvd, The Cube stands as a dynamic event venue managed by the MCA. Boasting convenient accessibility from both I-70 and 270, The Cube is meticulously crafted to cater to all corners of the community. Our commitment to inclusivity is reflected in our pricing structure, extending favorable rates to individuals, corporations, and non-profit groups.

Rental Fees

Non-Profit/Private Events:
Mon–Thur (7am–11pm): \$200/hour
Fri–Sun (7am–3pm): \$250/hour
Fri–Sun (3pm–11pm): \$300/hour

Corporate Events

Mon–Thur (7am–11pm): \$250/hour
Fri–Sun (7am–3pm): \$300/hour
Fri–Sun (3pm–11pm): \$350/hour

A minimum of 2 hours is required for all rentals.

Visit mca80238.com for more info.

SPONSORSHIPS

Provide your business with exposure within the Central Park community by partnering with the MCA! We offer different levels of sponsorships, and we can work with each business to choose an opportunity that matches its budgeting and marketing needs. The MCA offers visibility in a variety of places: online, outdoor events, and within our aquatic facilities. For more information, contact Jenna McDevitt at jmcdevitt@mca80238.com

CORKS & CONVERSATIONS: An Introduction to the World of Wine

Join Pearl Wine Company and the MCA Jan. 18 from 6–8pm for an unforgettable evening celebrating the artistry of family winemaking. Immerse yourself in a curated selection of 6 exquisite wines, each bearing the rich traditions of passionate winemakers from around the globe. Pearl Wine Company will guide you through the basics of tasting, empowering you to navigate wine lists with confidence and discover hidden gems when traveling to wine regions. Don't miss this exclusive opportunity. Limited seats available, so secure your spot now for a night of sophistication, education, and the joy of family-crafted wines!

Tickets are \$40 per person and can be purchased at www.mca80238.com.

ACTIVE MINDS: Albert Einstein

Thursday, January 11th, 1–2pm. Sam Gary Library

Albert Einstein famously started his career as a patent clerk but would rise to prominence, winning the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921. Einstein fled Nazi Germany in the 1930's and became a U.S. citizen in 1940. He warned the U.S. of the Nazi's efforts to develop a nuclear weapon which led to the Manhattan Project and the advent of the nuclear era, a role that troubled him deeply until his death in Princeton, New Jersey in 1955 at the age of 76. Join Active Minds as we trace the life and impact of this great thinker.

ACTIVE MINDS: History of Movies

Thursday, January 25th, 1–2pm. Sam Gary Library

At the turn of the 20th century, inventions by Thomas Edison and others introduced a new art form to the world: motion pictures. From the early era of Nickelodeons and silent films to the era of "talkies" and the growth of Hollywood, movies went from a mere fad to an industry. Now, with the introduction of streaming services like Netflix, films are evolving once again. Join Active Minds as we roll out the red carpet and tell the story of movies.



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Wrapping up the year always calls for reflection and a little forward looking into the year to come.

We're almost finished with our annual real estate reviews and have begun our strategy meetings with clients for the new year.

We're happy to help you plan your next move. Just give us a call and we'll get data pulled down and share what we're hearing

Give us a shout to book a consultation with one of our savvy team members. Our website: npresco.com

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