New public art, “Aspire,” welcomes and inspires visitors to the new Central Recreation Center.

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New director for Library and Cultural Services

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New exhibit at Aurora History Museum explores historic sites

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New Bollywood-style play premieres in Aurora

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It’s hard to believe that this is the 20th issue of Aurora Creates! And with this milestone come several new beginnings. First of all, we want to welcome Jason O’Hara to the team as our new graphic designer. We are excited about his new design concepts for this issue and look forward to what he has in store for the coming issues.

We also want to welcome Midori Clark, the new director of the Library and Cultural Services Department. Midori started on June 24, but even before that, she showed us her passion for the arts by attending a performance of "Caroline or Change" at the Aurora Fox Arts Center and dressing up as Princess Leia for the library Mini-Con. Be sure to check out the Spotlight feature on page 2 to learn more about her.

The Aurora Fox Arts Center, which by the way received 15 Henry Awards nominations for Excellence in the Theatre for its Season 34, announced its lineup for Season 35. See the back cover for information about all the shows, and get your tickets soon.

The Aurora History Museum — after a terrific run with the moon landing exhibition (which was featured on 9News) — now has a new exhibition about our city’s historic sites. "Hidden in Plain Sight" is an inspiring tribute to Aurora’s agricultural, military and residential history.

One of Aurora’s newest arts organizations, Roshni is Light, will present the world premiere of “Mountains made for Us,” Colorado’s first Bollywood-style romantic comedy, at Vintage Theatre beginning Aug. 9.

While many of us don’t want to think about summer coming to end, our Education and Outreach Program completed another successful Aurora Rhythms Summer Concert Series, and summer camps and classes are also coming to end. Now’s the time to register for your NEW fall classes.

For many of you, however, the most exciting new opportunity we have to offer you is the art at the new Central Recreation Center. We hope you’ll enjoy learning more about this unique addition to Aurora’s public art collection, and we know you’ll enjoy experiencing it.

"Aspire," the integrated art at the recently opened Central Recreation Center, is not only inspiring patrons at the new center but already getting national and international recognition. To Gudmundur Jonsson, senior architect with Populous—the firm that designed the center—this building is "home to one of the most prominent displays of integrated art in a U.S. recreation center." And late in June, "Aspire" was recognized by CODAworx as one of the Top 100 2019 projects in the world. (Award winners to be announced Aug. 30.)

How does one define "Aspire," a piece of public art that looks like four but is actually one spanning throughout the building? "This project is meant to inspire," says one of its artist co-creators, Scott Parsons. "It celebrates exercise and wellness through physicality and emotion, and records the rhythmic beauty of the human body in motion through repetition and movement."

In more detail, "Aspire" is a celebration of human movement in four components. Approaching the building, the atrium art glass welcomes you, invites you to venture inside, and proclaims that you are entering a special place. Passing through the doors, a monumental spiraling aerial sculpture picks up the gesture of the art glass and sweeps you into the building with dynamic physicality. From there, you can see the back wall of the gymnasium where a two-story arrangement of vertical art glass window "boxes" articulates a rhythmic pattern. These windows create beautiful colored reflections on the floor during the day and glow at night, colorfully illuminating the outside world. The final feature is the playfully exuberant natatorium art glass. Visible from the outside, when inside the artwork creates shimmering reflections on the water’s surface. These components work together as a "positive expression of the kinesthetic activities inside the building," said Parsons. "The luminous colors evoke intensity and joyful playfulness."

Scott Parsons and David Griggs were selected by the Art Selection Panel in 2017 based on their portfolios and their approach to design team work for this health/fitness facility, and their extensive experience working in partnership with architects on large scale public art projects nationally. Not all artists and architects are suited to this challenging and time consuming work that involves embarking on a long journey with newly acquainted partners (architects and other key stakeholders). Perhaps the attraction is the magic that can happen when the results are as seamlessly interwoven, inspirational and aspirational as they are at the Central Recreation Center.

The hope is that the artwork will serve as a warm beacon, people will feel welcomed, and this joyous expression will inspire all.

The Central Recreational Center is located at 18150 E. Vassar Place.
Welcome to Aurora, Midori. Can you tell us a little bit about your early experiences with the arts and how they influenced your career?

Growing up in New York, Montana and eventually settling in Greeley, my parents created stability and a sense of home for their two daughters with classical music, piano lessons and ballet classes. I have so many fond memories of a set of records featuring famous classical pieces my mom would play nearly every day. The records were from Japan--where my mom is from--but the music crossed all borders and united us despite the very different cultures we grew up in. There’s no doubt that those early opportunities to exercise my creativity helped me to become a critical thinker because they both involve the processes of choosing and evaluating information. Getting positive attention from performing influenced my decision to become a TV news anchor and reporter, and my desire to continue exercising my creativity took me into public relations, fundraising and ultimately librarianship and public service. They might not seem related on the surface, but in all of these fields, I was expected to “create” a positive impression of the organization I represented.

What do you think of the Aurora Rhythms concert series?

Cultural experiences unite us as humans. I feel so fortunate that I was able to attend the Aurora Rhythms concert featuring the amazing Kutandara marimba experience. What an incredible gift this series is to the community! I was sitting and listening to the music, as hundreds of people were, when I noticed a little girl who was dancing without a care in the world. I was delighted to see how confident she was in her physical expression, but even more moved when she invited another little girl to dance with her. These girls didn’t appear to have very much in common on the surface and were clearly strangers, but it didn’t matter one bit. They danced together and were having an absolute ball. It was such a small gesture, but seeing them dance together really made me feel blessed and gave me hope for the future.

What would you like our readers to know about your hopes going into your new position?

It’s my belief that a library and cultural services department has the opportunity to impact lives like no other department or city service. From helping a woman gain employment via the library’s internet access, to helping a young boy gain confidence by performing at a dance recital, these are the experiences that will change a life forever. I want to continue sharing these stories and invite the believers to be a part of our advocacy team. Let’s keep Aurora a stimulating and vibrant place to be! Thank you in advance for your support!
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<th>Date</th>
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<td><strong>01</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 Million Dollar Band in Concert</strong>&lt;br&gt;6 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Sounds of Soundlands Summer Concerts&lt;br&gt;Southlands Lifestyle Center</td>
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<td><strong>01</strong></td>
<td><strong>ACAD First Thursday Mixer</strong>&lt;br&gt;6 – 8 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Red Delicious Press</td>
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<td><strong>03</strong></td>
<td><strong>Open Day</strong>&lt;br&gt;10 a.m. – 1 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Centennial House</td>
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<td><strong>Phat Daddy in Concert</strong>&lt;br&gt;6 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Sounds of Soundlands Summer Concerts&lt;br&gt;Southlands Lifestyle Center</td>
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<td><strong>09</strong></td>
<td><strong>Opening Night: “Mountains Made for Us”</strong>&lt;br&gt;7:30 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Vintage Theatre&lt;br&gt;Shows: Aug. 8-11, 15-18</td>
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<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Radio Days</strong>&lt;br&gt;11:30 a.m. – noon&lt;br&gt;Aurora History Museum&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Aurora Dance Arts Auditions for “Alice in Wonderland”</strong>&lt;br&gt;$12:30 – 5:30 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Aurora Center for Active Adults, 30 Del Mar Circle&lt;br&gt;<strong>Vintage Theatre Gala</strong>&lt;br&gt;$6 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Celebrate the theatre’s 20th season&lt;br&gt;Vintage Theatre</td>
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<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lecture: Colorado African Organization</strong>&lt;br&gt;Noon – 12:45 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Aurora History Museum</td>
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<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>Radio Days</strong>&lt;br&gt;11:30 a.m. – noon&lt;br&gt;Aurora History Museum</td>
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<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rock da Mic</strong>&lt;br&gt;$&lt;br&gt;6 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Open stage for youth performers. Cash prizes.&lt;br&gt;People’s Building</td>
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SEPTEMBER

05
ACAD First Thursday Mixer
6 – 8 p.m.
The People’s Building

06
Opening Night: “The Best Day of Your Life” $  
7:30 p.m.
Vintage Theatre

10
Dotsero in Concert
6 p.m.
Gardens on Havana Concerts  
Rose Garden Plaza, 1250 S. Ironton St.

13
Opening Night: “The Addams Family” (musical) $  
7:30 p.m.
Vintage Theatre

14
Opening Night: “Khamosh Adalat Jari Hai”  
6 p.m.
Collective Conscious Hindi Play  
ACAD Studio  
Shows: Sept. 14, 15, 22, 28 & 29

18
Lecture: Rhonda Blanford-Green $  
Noon – 12:45 p.m.
Aurora History Museum

20
Opening Night: “Miss You Like Hell” (musical) $  
7:30 p.m.
Aurora Fox Arts Center

21
Open Day
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Centennial House

28
Antique Appraisal Fair
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Aurora Central Library

ImmiFest Multicultural Celebration $  
Noon – 4 p.m.
ACAD

ONGOING PROGRAMS

CLASSES
Mushin Martian Arts Taekwondo $  
Saturdays, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
ACAD  
Aug. 3 – Sep. 28

Rene Farkass Figure Drawing Class $  
Mondays, 7 – 10 p.m.
ACAD  
Aug. 5 – Sep. 30

Folklórico Dance Class $  
Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 6 – 9 p.m.
Academia de Ballet Folklórico Nezahualcoyotl at ACAD  
Aug. 6 – Sept. 25

For classes on Dance, Drawing, Music, Painting, Pottery, Theatre and Zentangle, visit AuroraGov.org/Arts

EXHIBITS
“Museo Sin Fronteras - Museum Without Borders”  
Aurora Municipal Center, Mezzanine Gallery  
Aug. 7 – Sept. 30

“Hidden in Plain Sight: Aurora’s Historic Preservation Program”  
Aurora History Museum  
Through Nov. 3

“Hometown Pride: Student Athletic and Extracurricular History in Aurora”  
Aurora History Museum  
Through April 5, 2020

THEATRE
“Emma” $  
Vintage Theatre  
Through Aug. 18

“The Best Day of Your Life” $  
Vintage Theatre  
Sept. 6 – Oct. 6

“The Addams Family” $  
Vintage Theatre  
Sept. 13 – Oct. 27

“Miss You Like Hell” $  
Aurora Fox Arts Center  
Sept. 20 – Oct. 13

Keep up with the dynamic programming at ThePeoplesBuilding.com or @PeoplesBuilding on social media
Take a trip around Aurora and you’ll see a lot of new development. In spite of its growth, however, there are true historical treasures tucked away within our neighborhoods. These structures serve as reminders of Aurora’s agricultural, military and residential history. The stories of our city’s social, creative and industrial past are within their walls. Since 1985 the city of Aurora’s Historic Preservation Commission has been working to save and highlight the town’s significant buildings and properties.

The Aurora History Museum’s new exhibit chronicles the stories of Aurora’s historic landmarks and districts and the Cultural Heritage Site Program. Explore the exhibit to gain a deeper appreciation for the physical links to our city’s unique history. Learn more about the sites that helped define Aurora’s community. Whether discovering something new about Stanley Aviation, early homesteads, early 20th century architecture or the trolley trailers that once ran along Colfax Avenue, there is something for everyone at the new exhibit, “Hidden in Plain Sight: Aurora’s Historic Preservation Program.”

The exhibit opened July 23 and will close on Nov. 3. The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Admission is always free.

Arapahoe County Cultural Council IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Would you like to help the arts, culture and science landscape in Arapahoe County? Applications are open! The Arapahoe County Cultural Council solicits and screens applications from eligible non-profit and/or governmental entities for Arapahoe County’s portion of the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) sales tax. The council prepares a recommended distribution plan and forwards the recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for review, ratification and submittal to the SCFD Board of Directors for funding approval. If you are an Arapahoe County resident or business owner of real property in Arapahoe County and want more information or want to apply, please go to the following webpage: ArapahoeGov.com/1090/Boards-Committees-and-Commissions

For questions or any additional information, please call 303.860.0588 ext. 114 or email heather@scfd.org.

Arts Education at COMPASS

Over the summer, the city’s Arts Education Office participated in the COMPASS (Community of Many Providing After School Success) at Sable, Kenton and Fulton elementary schools located in Original Aurora. All three schools serve large populations of refugee and immigrant youth for whom the performing arts are a great way to help them develop self-confidence and competency with the English language. In addition, the performing arts provided all students with opportunities to learn about and work together with students from a variety of cultures. The program used many avenues of creativity and self-expression to accomplish these goals including theatre games, songs and dance. A highlight of the program is when the students are confident and trusting enough to start sharing ideas and collaborating with each other. Special thanks to Jaime Lujan, teaching artist, and Laura Deras, an Aurora Central High School student who helped as an intern/assistant during the program.
Following its huge successes producing "Conversations with Refugees" in partnership with Yo-Yo Ma last year and its New American Theatre Festival and New American Fourth of July Celebration this year, Roshni will produce its first full length Bollywood-style play in August: The world premiere of "Mountains Made for Us, from the Himalayas to the Rockies" by Roshni founder and Artistic Director Deepali Lindblom and local playwright Luke Sorge.

Partnering with Vintage Theatre and Control Group Productions, "Mountains Made for Us" is inspired by real life events and pays tribute to Colorado’s growing cultural diversity. "Mountains" is a romantic comedy about Mini, an Indian dancer, and Calvin, a Colorado entrepreneur. Despite differences in culture, they fall in love. Just as they are celebrating their first-date anniversary, Mini’s parents arrive unannounced from India, revealing a secret that results in a break-up. You’ll have to see the play to find out what happens!

"Mountains" is a family friendly play with the dazzle of Bollywood dances and a creative use of sets and lights. At the end of the play, audiences are invited to join the cast for a dance, thus creating a rich participatory experience.

“This play truly celebrates Colorado’s multicultural tapestry with fourteen ethnicities in its cast and crew,” said Lindblom, who directed and choreographed the play. "It's the culmination of our work over the past two years using dance to mentor the refugee youth in the area of Aurora’s arts district, and we are excited to be offering one third of the tickets for free to refugee and low-income immigrant families.”

"Mountains" opens at Vintage Theatre Aug. 9 and runs through Aug. 18. For more information and to buy tickets, visit RoshniIsLight.org.
Last season, the Aurora Fox Arts Center brought in many new faces. Audiences took risks on new plays and musicals and were vocal about how energized they were by getting to take part in talkbacks and post show conversations. And this season the Aurora Fox family keeps growing!

So perhaps it should not be too surprising the Aurora Fox’s 35th Season celebrates the different kinds of families in today’s world. From the tale of an undocumented citizen embarking on a cross-country journey with her daughter before she faces deportation, to the true story of two people who forged a lifelong friendship in spite of social, racial and ideological differences, these shows are about our common need for connection. It is a celebration of who we are and who we can be, if only we would choose to walk a while in another person’s shoes.

The Aurora Fox also made a shift to encourage new audiences to come to the theatre by making it as affordable as possible to become a season subscriber. This year, season pass ticket prices are only $15 per show. That’s the least expensive season ticket price the Aurora Fox has offered this community for many years.

Season 35 at the Aurora Fox Arts Center includes:

“Miss You Like Hell”
Music and lyrics by Erin McKeown
and book by Quiara Alegría Hudes
In this regional premiere, a daughter and her undocumented mother embark on an epic journey across America before deportation.
Sept. 20 – Oct. 13

The Second City’s “Twist Your Dickens”
By Bobby Mort and Peter Gwinn
The Fox brings back Second City’s “improv based, zany send up of Dickens’ A Christmas Carol.
Nov. 29 – Dec. 22

“The Squirrels”
By Robert Askins
No squirrel will go unharmed in this deliciously demented regional premiere about classism, gentrification and racial tensions in America.
Jan. 17 – Feb. 9, 2020

“Secrets of the Universe and Other Songs”
By Marc Acito
The story of a cosmic friendship between Albert Einstein and Marian Anderson comes alive in this newly imagined premiere.
Feb. 21 – March 15, 2020

“For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday”
By Sarah Ruhl
Peter Pan has grown old, and as age comes for us all, we all still keep searching for a second youth. Regional premiere.
March 13 – April 5, 2020

Disney’s “Freaky Friday the Musical”
Music by Tom Kitt and Brian Yorkey
and a book by Bridget Carpenter
In this new hit musical a mother and daughter discover what it is to be a family and to experience each other’s lives first-hand, if only for a day.
April 17 – May 10, 2020

From plays and cabarets, to musicals and exciting immersive theater experiences, the Aurora Fox looks to have something for everyone. To find out about all upcoming events, visit AuroraFox.org.