

The Advocate Newsletter

November/December 2025

Vol. 50 No.6

Aurora Historical Society

Aurora, Colorado



Embrace your city and its history

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

November/December 2025

Dear Aurora Historical Society Members,

Our 2025-2026 season of programming is off to a good start. At the September 30 meeting, a captivated audience was delighted by Susan Marie Frontczak's reenactment of "Eleanor Roosevelt at the United Nations: Hammering Out Human Rights." Her monologue in character was inspiring and it provoked many thoughtful questions. We learned a lot about Mrs. Roosevelt and her work on the mid-twentieth century world stage to develop a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, interpreted by Ms. Frontczak in a warm and intimate manner.

The program for the November 25 meeting features Rick Crandall, who will speak on the "Freedom Memorial: Honoring Aurora's Legacy of Service." Mr. Crandall, a founding member of the Colorado Freedom Memorial, will describe its creation, meaning, and the lives it commemorates.

I have been recently pondering the purpose of a local historical society and how the Aurora Historical Society (AHS) fits that definition. According to the SAA Dictionary, "A historical society is a non-profit organization dedicated to collecting, preserving, interpreting, and promoting the history of a particular place, group of people, or topic. It plays a crucial role in promoting historical awareness and understanding

by providing a platform for research, education, and public engagement." A historical society has several functions, including collecting and archiving historical materials, research and education, public programs and exhibits, and community outreach.

What then is the AHS? According to our Constitution, "The purpose of the AHS shall be to bring together those people interested in history and especially in the history of Aurora, Colorado. Understanding the history of our community is basic to our way of life, gives us a better understanding of our city, state, and nation, and promotes a better appreciation of our American heritage." As members, we are invited to help the AHS fulfill this mission and better understand our heritage. Spanish-American philosopher George Santayana rightly phrased it in 1905, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Sincerely,

Gordy Tucker
President

Historical Society Officers

President: **Dr. Gordon Tucker**
Vice President: **Keith Outcalt**
Co-Secretary: **Lynne Evans & Susan Hicks**
Treasurer: **Gregg Chase**
Directors: **Nadine Caldwell, Susan Hicks, Judy Keilman**



Gregg Chase, Treasurer

Historical Society Committees

Education: **Keith Outcalt**
Historian: **Keith Outcalt**
Hospitality: **Judy Keilman**
Membership: **Gregg Chase**
Newsletter: **Michael Lockwood**
Program: **Susan Hicks**
Publicity: Vacant
Website: **Lynne Evans**



Lynne Evans, Co-Secretary



Dr. Gordon Tucker, President
Excavating at Tel Simron, Israel 2024



Keith Outcalt, Vice-President



Nadine Caldwell, Director



Susan Hicks, Co-Secretary (Photo Unavailable)



Judy Keilman, Director

Join or Renew Membership

Our membership dues come due in January each year now so you can send your payment for year 2025 to Gregg Chase, 25762 East Kettle Circle, Aurora, CO 80016.

(Note: The society changed its bylaws at the March 2022 meeting. The membership categories have changed).

Memberships:

Individual	\$15	Contributing	\$30
Family	\$20	Life	\$200
Student	\$10	Business	\$200

If you wish to receive a hardcopy there is an additional \$5 charge

You can now pay your dues online at the AHS website on the join today page using PayPal.

<http://auroracohistoricalsociety.org/join-today/>

**THANK YOU
NEW & RE-NEWING
MEMBERS**

September/October 2025

July – Linda Pelton-Galligen

August – Susan Hicks (LIFETIME)

September – Nancy Lisengibler & Geoffrey Thomas

October – Joanne Littau (NEW), Karen Sear, Karen Schwieder & Bob LeGare (LIFETIME)



Got Questions?

**Ask a
Historian**

E-mail your question to koutcelt@gmail.com

Member Discounts

FOX discount

We have a discount for 20% off tickets for just this sort of thing. The discount code is CULTURAL. Anyone can use that for our Season shows online or over the phone (not valid for special events, cabarets, or rentals).

Remember AHS members also get in free to the “Lunchtime Lectures” at the Aurora History Museum.



Aurora, Colorado Historic Landmarks

There are 34 Historic Landmarks in Aurora, Colorado. Each newsletter we'll show them to you one by one

William Smith house – Landmark #2 Article written by Keith Outcelt



- William Smith house early 1930's
- 412 Oswego Court (current location)
 - Landmarked: 1986

WILLIAM SMITH HOUSE IN ARAPAHOE COUNTY, COLORADO



William Smith house today

The brick, foursquare home known as the William Smith House is in Aurora's Highland Park neighborhood along the High Line Canal. It is the only remaining house of this style in Aurora. The home stands out from its neighbors thanks to its square floor plan, hipped roof, broad overhanging eaves with brackets and wrap-around porch. The house also features a built-in buffet with leaded-glass doors and stained-glass windows. The home has connections to the early history of the city, the founding of Aurora Public Schools and the creation of the High Line Canal. The city of Aurora and the National Register of Historic Places recognized the building's historic significance in 1986.

William Smith was born in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1860. As a young man he immigrated to the United States, sponsored by Lord James W. Barclay. Barclay was a member of the English Parliament and a director of the Colorado Mortgage and Investment Company of London, Ltd. The Colorado Mortgage and Investment Company, sometimes known as "the English Company," was involved in irrigation projects throughout the region, but is best known for its development of the High Line Canal. The High Line was constructed between 1881 and 1883 to bring water to the dry land farmers south and east of Denver. After he completed his contract with the High Line and Lord Barkley, Smith hoped to try his hand at farming. In 1882, he purchased farmland along a section of the High Line Canal in the vicinity

of what is now Sixth Avenue and Peoria Street. On his small farm, Smith raised sheep, alfalfa, barley, corn, wheat and sugar beets in addition to running a small dairy operation. In 1910, Smith commissioned architect Joseph Wilson to build a home for his growing family.

William Smith donated land for Aurora's first school and worked to create a school district that would connect the many one-room schoolhouses that dotted the plains near Denver. He rode up and down the High Line collecting signatures from residents and petitioned Arapahoe County to create a new school district. In 1885, his request was granted, and School District No. 28 was formed. Its original borders stretched from City Park in Denver far into the eastern plains. This school district eventually became Aurora Public Schools, which is still known as District 28J. Smith was appointed to the school board, a position he held for fifty years, the longest term for any school board member in state history. He retired from the school board in 1935 and passed away on April 20, 1946. Various Aurora schools have borne his name.

The Smith house has remained remarkably intact for over a century. Members of the Smith family continued to live in the house until 1983, when William Smith's oldest daughter, Margaret, passed away. Much of the interior woodwork that Smith contracted remains in excellent condition thanks to preservation minded owners of the house.



William Smith, official portrait for APS school board.



**Aurora Historical Society 25 November meeting
Colorado Freedom Memorial
6:00pm at the Aurora History Museum**

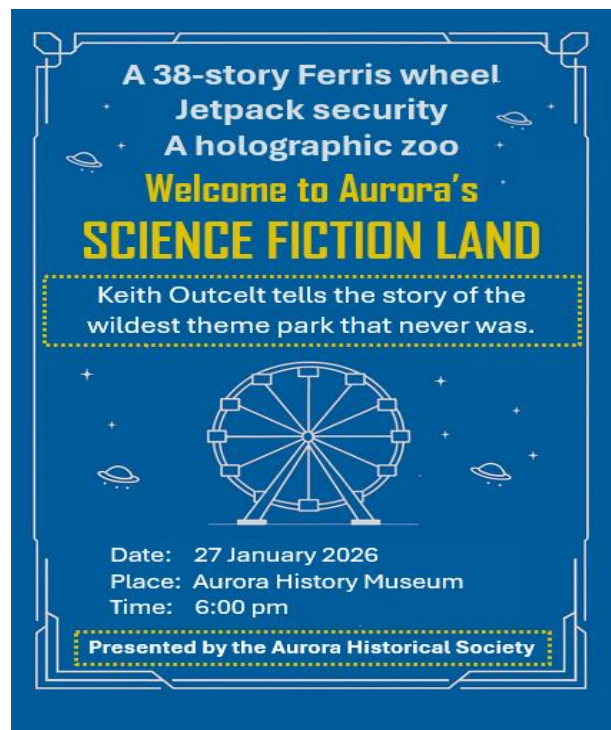
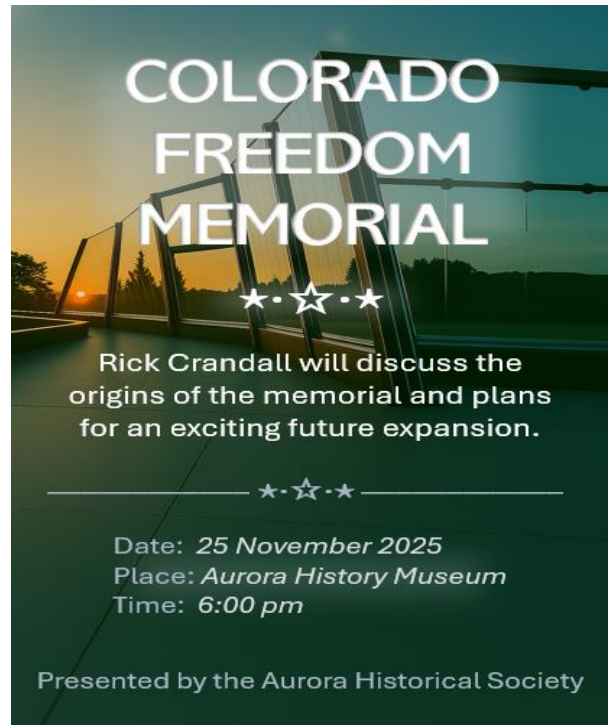
Our speaker for the evening is



Rick Crandall

Rick Crandall's topic for the evening is titled "The Colorado Freedom Memorial." The Colorado Freedom Memorial is located in Aurora, Colorado near Buckley Air Force Base. Constructed of glass panels that reflect Colorado's mountains and blue skies the Memorial holds the names of over 6,000 Coloradans killed or missing in action. They are grouped by war, but names will not be alphabetically listed. Much of the Colorado Freedom Memorial is meant to reflect the chaos of war, including the shuffling of names.

Air Force Veteran & long time local radio fixture Rick Crandall is the founder of The Colorado Freedom Memorial, the first memorial of its kind in the US. Through perseverance & a strong connection to the community, Rick has created a Memorial that honors the fallen from Colorado while enriching future generations with a forthcoming education center.



At Our Last Meeting

Eleanor Roosevelt – A Walk in History

We are excited to present
Susan Frontczak
performing a
Living History event.

Join the former First Lady and U.N. ambassador as she helps shape the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – a landmark global charter advancing dignity, freedom, and justice.

Date: 30 September 2025
Place: Aurora History Museum
Time: 6.00 pm

Presented by the Aurora Historical Society
Note: Photograph is of Eleanor Roosevelt



🎭 Program Spotlight

Susan Frontczak brought Eleanor Roosevelt to life in a powerful performance that explored the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Frontczak captivated the audience and stayed for a lively Q&A—both in character and out!

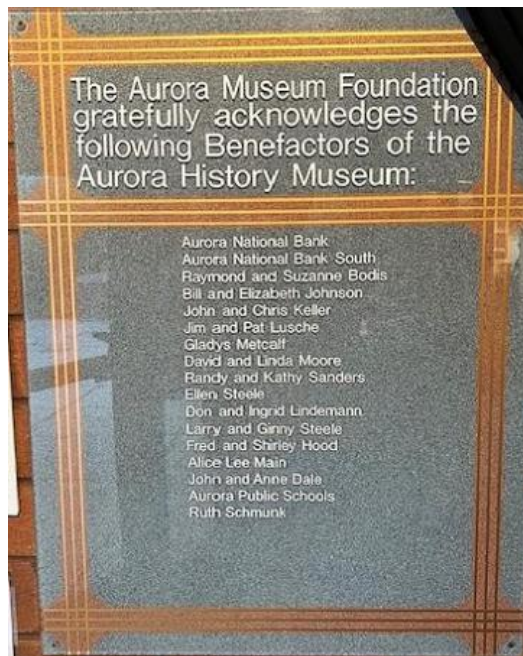
📷 Historic Preservation Intern Report

Chris Geddes introduced summer intern Callie Lyn-Kew, a junior at Grandview High. Funded by the Aurora Historical Society, Callie documented the Paul S. Beck Recreation Center before demolition and created a “Colfax: Then and Now” photo series. Both projects will be featured at the museum soon!



🎉 Honoring Ruth Schmunk

Ruth Schmunk was celebrated for her years of volunteer service and generous donations to AHS and AMF. Her name has been added to the museum’s supporter plaque, and a bench plaque will honor her in the patio entry. Cake was served, and Ruth made an additional gift to the Newspaper Digitization Project—thank you, Ruth!





Remembering Aurora

Michael Lockwood, Aurora Historical Society

An Aurora native, a graduate of the Aurora Public Schools (Vaughn Elementary, North Middle School & Aurora Central High School), Aurora has been a big part of my life ever since I was born. Having grown up here, I have several memories that I'd love to provide for your reading pleasure via The Advocate newsletter. For those of you who have Aurora connections that go back as far as the 1950's the recollections presented may bring back waves of nostalgia. And while I have 60 years of memories to relate, if you have some stories you'd like to share, please feel free to contact us at the Aurora Historical web site: www.auroracohistoricalsociety.org

REMEMBERING: Halloween Decorating



Today it seems that decorating for Halloween has become a serious competition. The huge skeletons, the elaborate lighting and music, the animated witches and zombies. But back when I was a kid it so much simpler. We started with a pumpkin, maybe two if you were lucky. If we weren't old enough to use a knife to carve it we could use some paint to put

a face on it. Not quite a jack-o-lantern but better than nothing.

Next came the interior of the house. We were not big decorating people at my house but when visiting friends I was in awe of what they did. Those wax jack-o-lantern candles were so cool.



Then there was the outside of the house. Mostly in my neighborhood the decorating was limited to the front porch with an occasional house having the fake cob webs in the trees or bushes. Maybe a bat hanging from a tree.



Nothing like what goes on today, although, back then, there was always that ONE house that went all in on decorating. And it was the scariest house to have to go up to and ring the doorbell. My heart still beats extra fast just thinking about working up the nerve to go up to the front door.

Time waits for no man and our history will eventually become shared memories of people and places. Preservation can help keep those memories a little more tangible so that it, too, can be shared with future generations.



City of Aurora Trivia Questions From Aurora Advocate

1. Nov 1959 – Where was a burglary ring operating out of? [Vol 13 No 2]
 - a. Texaco Service Station
 - b. Arapahoe Co. Sheriff's office
 - c. The Aurora Pool Hall



2. Dec 1961 – What was the new building trend in Aurora? [Vol 15 No 6]
 - a. Office buildings
 - b. Shopping plazas
 - c. Apartments



3. Nov 1964 – Where was Peoria Plaza located (built in April 1964)? [Vol 17 No 1]
 - a. South of Fitzsimons on Colfax & Peoria
 - b. West of Fitzsimons on Peoria
 - c. Southwest of Fitzsimons on Peoria



4. Dec 1967 – Aurora voters defeated a \$2.185 million bond to build what? [Vol 20 No 3]
 - a. A hospital
 - b. A new high school
 - c. A new library



5. Nov 1970 – Aurora city offices moved from 1591 Fulton to where? [Vol 23 No 51]
 - a. 1450 S. Havana
 - b. 15151 E. Alameda
 - c. 1470 Emporia



November and December Events at Aurora History Museum



for tickets, registration and more information visit
AuroraMuseum.org.

Morning at the Museum Every Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.

Spend the morning with your preschooler at the Aurora History Museum for stories, crafts and hands-on activities. A new program is offered every week. Please note, children must be supervised by an adult; no registration required.

Native American Storytelling and Contemporary Music with Red Feather Woman and Eric Many Winds Herrera Saturday, Nov. 1, Noon

Join us for an afternoon with award winning recording artist and member of the Assiniboin/Sioux Tribes, Red Feather Woman. Accompanied by Eric Many Winds Herrera on the flute, Red Feather Woman will blend song and oral storytelling together for a unique and engaging event. Ages 8 and older.

Nov. Homeschool Day: Prehistoric Plants and Animals Monday, Nov. 10, 9:30 a.m.

Travel back millions of years and discover the secrets of Aurora's ancient past. Explore the Prehistoric Aurora exhibit and take part in hands-on activities that show how scientists uncover what life was like long ago.
\$8 per participating child.

Prehistoric Eras Tour: Speaker Series: Nov. 5 to 12

Join us for a series of deep dives on all things prehistoric. We will bring in local experts to talk about their specialties in paleontology and more.

Trilobites and Treats: Life in the Paleozoic Era, cookie decorating with Samantha Sands
Wednesday, Nov. 5, 6 p.m.

Geologic History of Denver, with Dr. Mossbrucker, Morrison Natural History Museum
Thursday, Nov. 6, 6 p.m.

Unearthing Ancient Colorado: How Fossils Reveal Colorado's Wild Past, with Dr. Gussie Maccracken, Denver Museum of Nature & Science,
Saturday Nov. 8, 4 p.m.

Breaking Bones: Chemical Clues to Jurassic Diets with Kieran McBride
Saturday, Nov. 8, 6 p.m.

Lamb Spring and the Pleistocene with Cameron Randolph, Lamb Spring Archeological Preserve
Wednesday, Nov. 12, 6 p.m.

Santa on the Trolley! Thursday, Nov. 13, 4 to 6 p.m.

Visit the museum after hours to talk to Santa and take a unique holiday photo on Historic Landmark Trolley Trailer #610. Make sure your Santa knows what you want in your stocking while supporting the Aurora History Museum and the Aurora Museum Foundation.

Suggested Donation: \$5

Festival of Wreaths Event Thursday, Nov. 13, 6 to 8 p.m.

Join us to see the Festival of Wreaths exhibit and celebrate with festive treats and holiday fun. Bid on wreaths and help us raise money for museum internships while enjoying this annual Aurora tradition.

Dec. Homeschool Day: Celebrate Aurora
Mon., Dec. 1, 9:30 a.m.

Join us for our annual “Celebrate Aurora” Homeschool Day! Community members will join us with food and crafts to demonstrate how they celebrate special holidays in their culture. Explore traditions from Nepal, the Philippines, Granada and more!

\$8 per participating student.

Centennial House Open Days
Saturday, Dec. 6, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 14, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Centennial House is a Queen Anne style home. It is the oldest of the nine remaining houses Donald Fletcher built for his speculative community east of Denver. Tour the house while it’s decorated for the holidays and enjoy a festive snack while learning about Aurora’s past.

Location: Centennial House, 1671 Galena St.

DeLaney Historic District Open Days
Sunday, Dec. 7, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 13, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Tour the DeLaney Historic District to learn about early Aurora’s farming history and get in the holiday spirit. Join us for crafts, scavenger hunts, holiday treats and visit the historic buildings.

Location: DeLaney Historic District, 170 S. Chambers Road

It’s a Wonderful Life Radio Play
Saturday, Dec. 13, 5:30 p.m.

Join us for this special rendition of a holiday favorite about sacrifice, community and the difference one person can make in the world. Four actors take on all the roles, create sound effects and perform musical interludes, just as if you were watching a live radio broadcast.

Tickets: \$4

Visit Us

Aurora History Museum Hours

Tues.-Fri: 9a.m. - 4p.m.

Sat. & Sun.: 11a.m. - 4p.m.

Mon.: CLOSED

Location

15051 E. Alameda Parkway
Aurora, Colorado 80012

Contact Us

303.739.6660

**Donate to the Aurora Museum
Foundation**

Admission
is
Free!

Aurora Museum Exhibits

Aurora's Short Track: Century 21 Speedway



Community Gallery: Jun 17 – Nov 2, 2025

From 1971 to 1974, the grasslands just south of present-day Denver International Airport rumbled with the noise of dragsters, stock cars and thousands of cheering fans. The Century 21 International Speedway once promised to place Aurora at the heart of the regional motorsports' scene. With a quarter-mile drag strip, a paved oval and figure-eight circuit, Century 21 was a bold and ambitious venue. Visitors to the exhibition will learn about other iconic Front Range tracks and prominent local drivers of the early 1970's.



Prehistoric Aurora

April 22, 2025 to April 5, 2026

Aurorans know the picturesque view of the snowcapped Rocky Mountains or the golden plains with the pronghorn roaming. But what did Aurora look like one million years ago with mammoths and giant sloths. "Prehistoric Aurora" is a journey through geologic time that will take you on a ride through the story of earth's ancient past to the present; showing some of the fossilized plants and animals discovered in Colorado and literally, right here in Aurora's backyard", said T. Scott Williams, Director of the Aurora History Museum "we hope that this immersive exhibit excites and educates visitors of all ages to explore the earth's past and to imagine what life would have been like, when dinosaurs roamed the planet".

On Display in the East Hallway

Aurora's Historic Photos

Photos have a way of connecting the current generation with their past. This exhibit showcases a small sample of the over 30,000 images archived at the Aurora History Museum.

On Display in the Theater Room Trolley Trailer #610

This exhibit takes a deep dive into the history of electric streetcars in the Denver metro area and explores the story of Aurora's Landmark, Trolley Trailer #610 before it was an exhibit at the Aurora History Museum. This exhibit was chosen to return to our museum by visitors in June and July 2023.

Growing Home & Trolley Trailer No. 610

Growing Home is a permanent exhibit about Aurora's history featuring Trolley Trailer No. 610, a fully-restored 1913 historic trolley trailer. The exhibit highlights people, places, and events from Aurora's history. It features over 100 historic photographs and objects, and the fully restored 1913 historic Trolley Trailer No. 610 in the new Ruth Fountain gallery. Go inside the trolley and experience 100 years of history first-hand. The exhibit was designed by Dennis Meyer of Filament Design/Build with support from museum staff.

In October 2012, the Aurora City Council approved funding for the construction of a new gallery and addition at the Aurora History Museum. Council resolved to name it in honor of Ruth Fountain, a former city councilwoman, community activist and museum supporter.

The Aurora Museum Foundation was instrumental in raising funds and in-kind donations through grants and support from local businesses, organizations, and individuals. The 1,630 square foot gallery was completed in November 2014. The addition was designed by Humphries Poli Architects and built by Palace Construction



Baker, Susan
Barnes, Mildred
Bartholomew, Randy & Barbara
Beach, Mr. & Mrs. Robert L.
Beach, Robert
Benedict, Sally & Van I.
Bennett, Mr. & Mrs. Don
Bottoms, Jack & Ruth
Brown, Dick & Kay
Caldwell, Nadine
Caron, Dean & Theresa
Chase, Gregg & Mary
Crawford, Judi & Jessica
Daniels, Kimberly & William
Drollinger, Don & Carol
Elwell, Tom & Dottie
Essex, Joyce Brown
Evans, Lynne
Fanning, James
Fletcher, Robert & Cindy
Fugler, Carl & Gloria
Gehler, Robert & Terri
Gigikos, John & Lila
Heckman, Dorothy
Heflin, David & Mary
Hensler, Bill & Sue
Hicks, Susan
Hogan, Becky

Jordan, Ralph & Sharon
Keller, Chris & John
LeGare, Bob
Letofsky, Jane Anne
Lindemann, Ingrid
Lockwood, Michael & Kathryn
Lord, Pat
Lusche, Jim & Pat
McClure, Kirby & Roberta
McFadden, Joyce
McGrath, Jane & Isaacson, Thomas
Metcalf Jr., Traver
Monroe, Vernon & Helen
Morey, Bill & Teresa
Murray, June
Nicholls, Edwin
O'Brien, Joe & Betsy
Perkins, Steve & Jan
Peters, Charlie
Reynolds, Mr. & Mrs. Walter
Sala, John & Elizabeth
Sanders, Dr. & Mrs. Randall
Scherling, Richard & Beverly
Schmunk, Ruth
Severson, Carl
Sherfick, Donald & Charline
Spencer, Vernon
Steele, Laurence & Virginia
Ulmer, Keith & Mary
Vickers, Mary
Wiggins, William & Lori
Wilterdink, Larry & Carol

In Memoriam

In remembrance of Society members who are no longer with us.

Armstrong, William
Beach Sr., Robert
Creager, Jo (past president)
Dunning, Annabelle (past president)
Fountain, Ruth (past president)
Haag, Col. (Ret) George
Harding, Dexter
Harding, Julie
Hogan, Stephen
Hood, Shirley (past president)
Kerns, Peggy
Lincoln, Joseph & Jeannine
Lindemann, Donald
McClure, Janice
Moore, David
Murray, Bev
Murray, William Jr
O'Brien, Mr. & Mrs. John
Penn, Ruth
Preston, Mary
Sparks, Juanita
Stadt, Florence (past president)
Travis, E.A.
Tupps, Edythe
Watson, Elizabeth
Weddig, Frank & Pat
Whitmore, Ruth
Wiley, Robert
Woodbury, Ruth



Dunning, Anabelle (1976-1979)
Metcalf, Gladys (1980-1981)
Stadt, Florence (1982)
Elwell, Dottie (1983-1984)
Johnson, Elizabeth (1985-1986)
Pierce, Mary (1987-1988)

Creager, Jo (1989-1990)
Sanders, Kathy (1991-1992)
Creager, Jo (1993)
Hood, Shirley (1994-1995)
Brown, Connie (1996-1998)
Betka, Charyn (1999-2000)

Fountain, Ruth (2001-2009)
Sweeney, Sandy (2010-2018)
Evans, Lynne (2019-2025)
Tucker, Dr. Gordon (2025-present)

AURORA
ADVOCATE
 "YOUR HOME TOWN NEWSPAPER"

1441 Elmira Street Empire 6-2626
 Adams County Office: 2356 Lima
 A Photo-Offset Newspaper Published Every Thursday
 In Aurora, Colorado

Legal Newspaper for Adams and Arapahoe Counties
 Circulation Figure or Advertising Rates on Request

Advertisements in the Aurora Advocate
 November, 1970 – Vol. 24 No. 2
 November 1965 – Vol. 18 No. 1
 November 1960 - Vol. 14 No. 3

THANKSGIVING ADVERTISEMENTS

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 at Chester**

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 Dinner
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 TOM
 TURKEY**
 ... with all
 the trimmings **2²⁵**

CHILDREN \$1.00
 UNDER 12

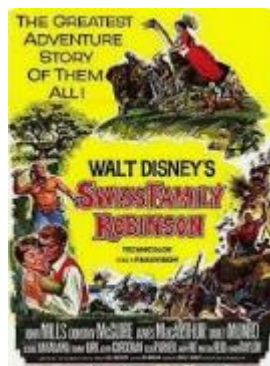
**CARRY OUT
 364-7421**

10305 E. COLFAX at GENEVA

Skychef Restaurant: Stapleton Airport
 White Spot: 9405 E. Colfax
 Coachlight Restaurant: 10305 E. Colfax



From 1960

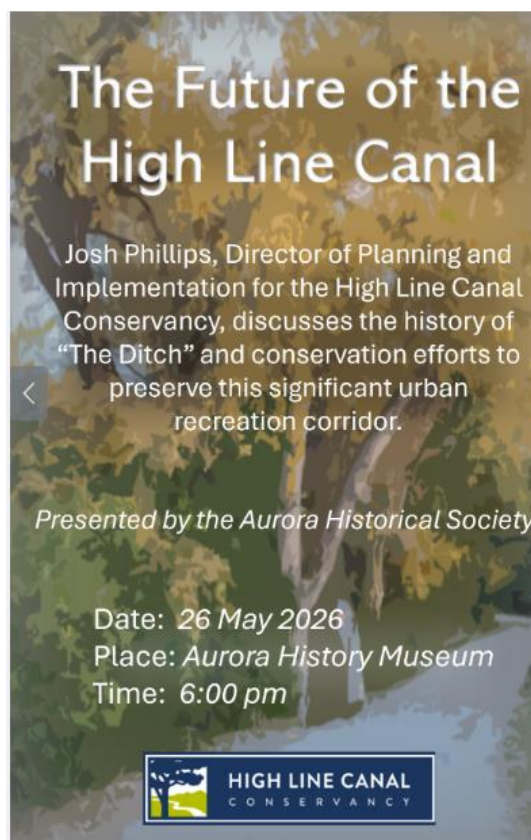
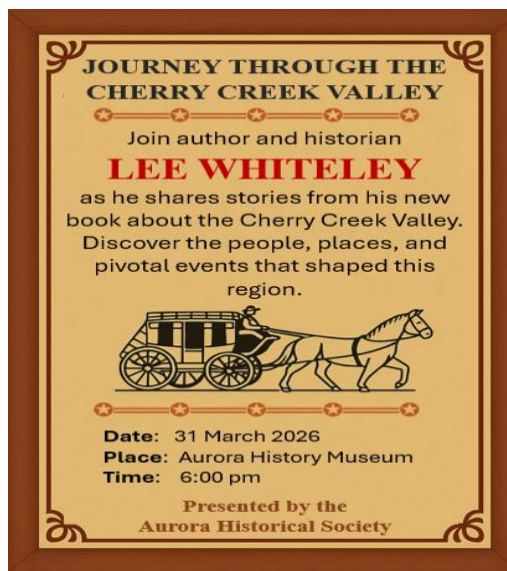


Movie: Swiss Family Robinson
TV show: The Beverly Hillbillies
Music Album: G.I. Blues – Elvis Presley

Trivia Question Answers:

1) b 2) c 3) b 4) a 5) c

COMING IN MARCH & MAY 2026





We need your Help to preserve Aurora's History!

For just \$1 a page, you can help digitize Aurora's Historic Newspapers. Aurora's old newspapers were stored on Microfiche and now need to be digitized so they are accessible for all.

Digitizing the microfiche film creates an online, searchable database to access photos, articles, and other interesting content. Previously digitized newspapers can be found at Colorado's Historic Newspapers. Write a check and mail it in or donate online

Help Aurora! We hope you will participate in this project sponsored by the Aurora Historical Society & the Aurora History Museum & Historic Sites.

Write a check and
mail it to Gregg
Chase, 25762 E
Kettle Circle,
Aurora, CO, 80016-
2011

Send Money with Zelle®
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Aurora Historical Society



zelle®

Alternatively, you can pay online by scanning the QR code here or visit our website to make a donation.

<https://auroracohistoricalsociety.org/>

Visit the Colorado Historical Newspaper site

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/>

Historic Aurora Newspapers – Digitization Project

Yes! I want to give my support with my tax-deductible gift.

_____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ Other

Please make checks payable to the Aurora Historical Society

Name _____

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