

The Advocate Newsletter

January/February 2026

Vol. 51 No.1

Aurora Historical Society

Aurora, Colorado



Embrace your city and its history

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

January/February 2026

Dear Aurora Historical Society Members,

We have scheduled an outstanding program for our regular meeting on January 27. Our own Keith Outcelt, the AHS Vice President, will regale us with a hard-to-believe story about Aurora's Science Fiction Land, the wildest theme park that never was. Had this project come to fruition, it supposedly would have rivalled Disneyland in its glamour and glitter, in an area of the city now dominated by fulfillment centers and large residential developments. One wonders how different Aurora might be with its Science Fiction Land. Residents of Anaheim, California might also wonder how different their community would have been if Disneyland had never been built. See below for more details about the January program and later programs.

I wrote in the last newsletter about the purpose of a local historical society. It is an organization that is devoted to collecting, preserving, interpreting, and promoting the history of a particular place, in this case, Aurora, Colorado. It is founded and it survives because of people like you, who cherish the place in which they live and work and who want to know more about its history and the people who were responsible for making the place that it is today. We are titillated by the stories of grand plans that were never fulfilled

(like Science Fiction Land) and want to know more about these misadventures – and the successes!

My sincere and humble thanks to those of you who support the Aurora Historical Society. I look forward to meeting and talking with you at any of our upcoming meetings or on one of the tours of local historic sites, which we are planning to kick off in 2026. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time with questions, comments, or suggestions.

Sincerely,
Gordy Tucker
President

Historical Society Officers

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

Historical Society Committees

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

meet your **OFFICERS**



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



Lynne Evans, Co-Secretary



Keith Outcelt, Vice-President



Nadine Caldwell, Director



Gregg Chase, Treasurer



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 2026 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/>



November/December 2025

November – Mary Jones

December – Norman & Christina Breth (NEW)



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).



**Aurora, Colorado
Historic Landmarks & Cultural
Heritage Sites**

There are 34 Historic Landmarks and 6 Cultural Heritage Sites in Aurora, Colorado. Each newsletter we'll show them to you one by one

**Victory Grange – Cultural Heritage Site
Article written by Susan Hicks**



- Built in 1951
- 2025 Tower Road
- Designated: 2011

Victory Grange: A Community's Heartbeat on the High Plains

The story of Aurora's Victory Grange begins long before its doors opened on Tower Road. In 1867, the National Grange movement was founded to bring farm families together for education, cooperation, fellowship, and civic action to combat steep railroad freight rates, high interest bank loans, and the isolation of farm families. The movement spread quickly across the country, and by 1874—two years before statehood—Colorado farmers had already organized the Colorado State Grange.



NATIONAL GRANGE MASTER Newsom (left) of Washington, D.C. was among the several hundred persons that grangized the Victory Grange Hall dedication last Saturday night. Mr. Newsom delivered the main address of the evening. Others shown with Mr. Newsome include Mayor C. E. Tupp, mayor of Aurora and member of the executive board of the Victory Grange; Max Maul, Victory Grange master; and Lee R. Prichard, state master. *Advocate* Photo

Aurora's Victory Grange, established in 1939, grew directly from the grange movement. The families who founded it lived on the open plains east of Denver, where

wartime pressures and geographic distance made community life difficult. They began raising funds during World War II, determined to build a gathering place that would strengthen local ties. Their efforts culminated in 1951 with the opening of the Victory Grange Hall.

From the start, Victory Grange became a major part of the civic infrastructure for rural Arapahoe County. The hall hosted meetings, celebrations, agricultural programs, and lively social events that brought together farm families and residents from the growing town of Aurora. In 1951, the Grange's popular Dinner Dances—just \$2.00 per person for an evening of food and music—filled the hall with laughter and helped knit together a community in transition.

That same year, Victory Grange hosted one of its most memorable events: the Aurora Fireman's Annual Banquet. The City Council, city employees, and their spouses gathered for a meal prepared by the ladies of the Grange, who served two hundred guests a dinner featuring Black Angus beef donated by the mayor. After the speeches, Ernie Strine's Orchestra struck up its first notes, and the dance floor stayed busy well into the night.

Victory Grange also contributed to the cultural life of the region. In 1943, it won the annual Elitch Gardens trophy for the best play presented by a Colorado Grange, performing a spirited one-act comedy titled



The Gallopin' Ghost.

As Aurora expanded eastward, Victory Grange remained a steady

presence—a living link between the area's agricultural roots and its suburban future. From dinner dances to banquets, from wartime plays to planning the future of local farming, Victory Grange has provided a focus for our community. Victory Grange is a Cultural Heritage site.

- **Further reading:** "Home on the Grange", the Aurora Sentinel, 11 May 2012, <https://sentinelcolorado.com/uncategorized/home-on-the-grange/>

Photo credits: *Grange hall dedication (left):* The Aurora Advocate, Volume 4, Number 42, September 6, 1951 | *The Grange today (above):* Visit Aurora.com

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=AUA19510927-01.2.30&srpos=31&e=----en-20-AUA-21-byDA-img-txIN%7CtxCO%7CtxTA-%22Victory+Grange%22----2---->



Aurora Historical Society 27 January meeting Aurora's Science Fiction Land 6:00pm at the Aurora History Museum

Our speaker for the evening is

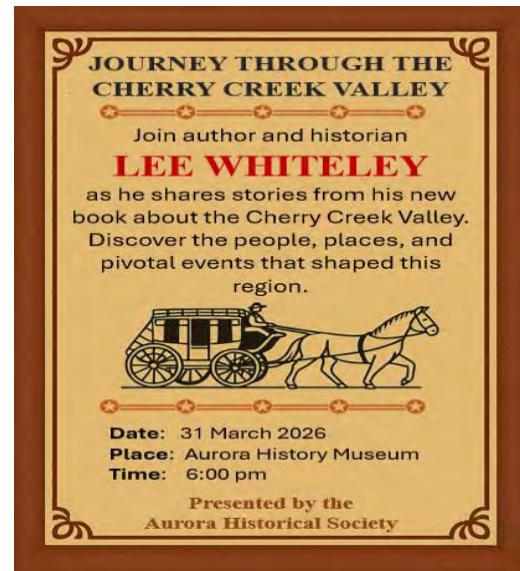
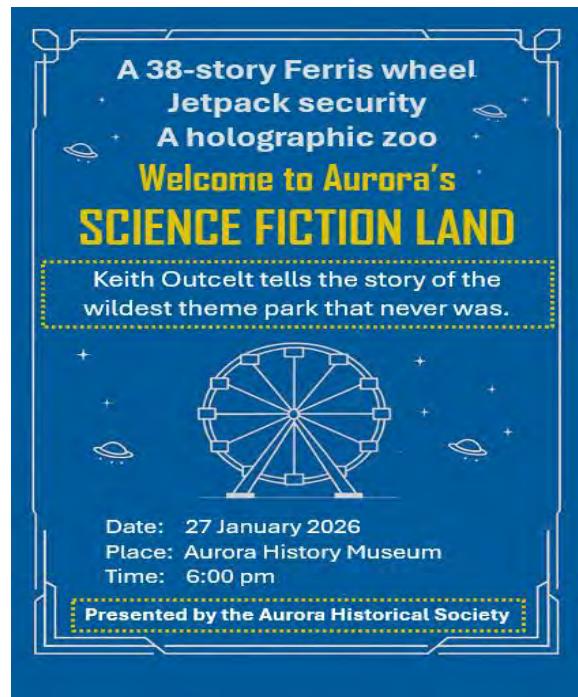


Keith Outcelt

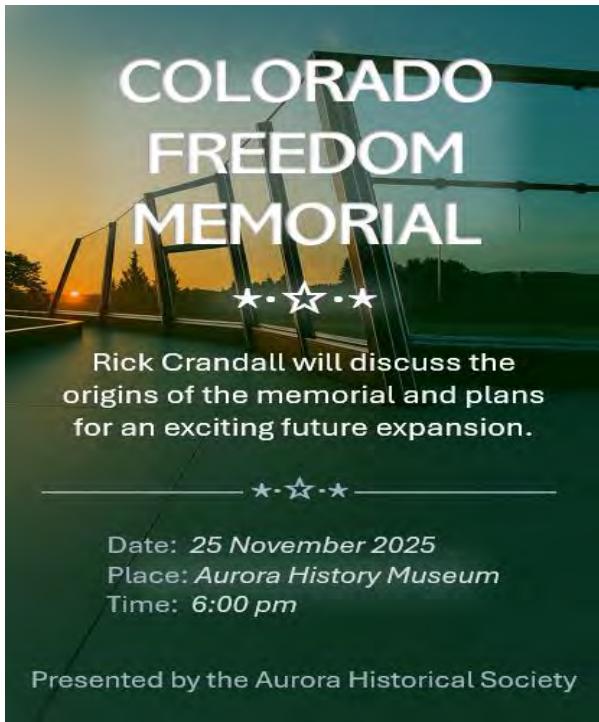
Keith Outcelt's topic for the evening is titled "Welcome To Aurora's Science Fiction Land." Science Fiction Land was a massive, ambitious but ultimately failed 1979 plan for a huge, Disney-like sci-fi theme park in Aurora, Colorado located on Land south of I-70, conceived by producer Barry Ira Geller, featuring art by comic legend Jack Kirby, which collapsed due to fraud and scandal, but ironically became the basis for the CIA's fake movie operation in Iran, as depicted in the movie *Argo*.

Keith Outcelt is the education curator with the Aurora History Museum and Historic Sites. You may recognize Keith as the one who facilitates many of the events at the museum and historic sites. Keith's favorite part about working at the Aurora History Museum is "the moment when a visitor to the museum or historic site realizes that they actually do like history. But, the people I work with are pretty great, too." When asked what his favorite piece

of Aurora trivia is, Keith answered, "Before the army owned Fitzsimmons, that land was Gulithiel Gardens, a nursery for trees that still grow all around the Denver area. In fact, General's Park on the Southwest side of Anschutz Medical Campus and the nearby gates seem to be a nod to the entryway for the gardens." Having lived in Colorado since 4th grade, Keith loves showing the historic sites of the Denver area.



At Our Last Meeting



❖ Program Spotlight

Rick Crandall's topic for the evening was 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 the names will not be alphabetized. Much of the Colorado Freedom Memorial is meant to reflect the chaos of war, including the shuffling of names.





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: Transitioning from North Junior High to Aurora Central High School



Moving from Vaughn Elementary to North Junior High seemed like the most exciting thing that could happen to a 12 year-old boy. You got to move between classrooms and there were many different teachers not just the one you had for an entire school year.

But the transition from North to Aurora Central was more of a terrifying ordeal. The high school kids seemed much older and more like adults. Some of the friends that had been at the Junior High level were going to another high school and making new friends at 15 can be difficult for a shy kid. There was a slight realization that the school years were drawing to a close and play time was over.



Expectations suddenly seemed high. Fitting in somehow seemed very, very important. The high school classes also seemed to be much harder (they actually were) and a little intimidating.

The funny thing is, that transition time actually prepared me for the transitions that were waiting for me for my entire life. Changing jobs, going from being single to being married, moving to a new home, from being a teenager to becoming an adult.

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.

TRIVIA

City of Aurora Trivia Questions From Aurora Advocate

1. Jan 1960 – What was the new police feature? [Vol 13 No 9]
 - a. Closed circuit TV
 - b. 2-way radios
 - c. V-8 engines in the patrol cars



2. Feb 1962 – Who met at Aurora H.S. to discuss the latest teaching methods? [Vol 15 No 14]
 - a. Denver Area Social Studies Council
 - b. Denver Area Mathematics Council
 - c. Denver Area English Council



3. Jan 1965 – What was being extended? [Vol 17 No 9]
 - a. Havana Street
 - b. Stapleton Runway
 - c. Aurora Central High School



4. Feb 1967 – Mayor Norma Walker called for the resignation of whom? [Vol 19 No 14]
 - a. City Manager
 - b. Police Chief
 - c. Councilman Paul Beck

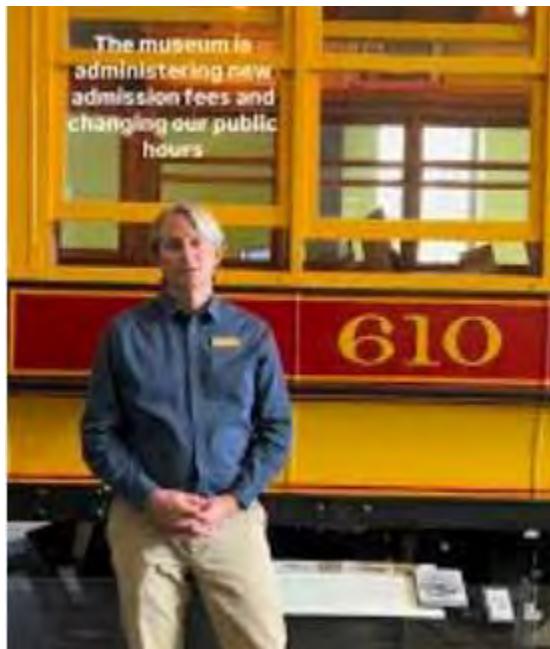


5. Jan 1969 – Glenda Lunsford of Hinkley H.S. advanced to the State level in what competition? [Vol 21 No 11]
 - a. High School Chess Championships
 - b. National Spelling Bee
 - c. Betty Crocker Homemaker of Tomorrow



Changes at Aurora History Museum in 2026

by: T. Scott Williams, Director, Aurora History Museum & Historic Sites



This past year, the AHMHS Team has served and engaged the entire community by interpreting and fostering pride in Aurora's story every day through exhibits, events, and educational programming for all ages. We have strived to find new ways for museum and historic site supporters like you to participate in our programs and increase your knowledge about Aurora's people, places, and things!

The primary purpose of this message is to inform you of changes to AHMHS operations beginning next year. The Museum is introducing modest admission fees (\$5 for adults and \$1 for children) and adjusting public hours (Open Days: Tuesday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m.

to 4 p.m.) in 2026, in response to the city of Aurora's budget shortfall.

The updates will allow the museum to continue delivering the exceptional experiences, community events, and innovative storytelling that have made it a cultural cornerstone in Aurora, while maintaining accessibility through affordable pricing, annual memberships, and multiple free community days each year.

The AHMHS will offer three tiers of Annual Museum Memberships, including: Individual - \$25, Family - \$50, and Organizational Membership - \$100. For more specific information about admissions and annual membership benefits, please visit our website at AuroraMuseum.org. The new admissions, hours, and annual memberships will begin on Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026.

On behalf of the entire Museum & Historic Sites team, I thank you for your past support, and I humbly ask for your continued support as we change our business model in 2026. I hope to see you at the museum. Please join us in preserving Aurora's history!



Upcoming Events at Aurora History Museum



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

Homeschool Day: Old Fashioned Crafts

Monday, Jan. 5, 9:30 a.m.

To start off the new year, we will be making old-fashioned crafts. Make your own candles, butter, and weaving! Crafts like these were important to survive in the past but today they're art! Have fun crafting at the museum then take your work home. \$8 per student.

The Local Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

Wednesday Jan. 14, 6 p.m.

Discover the history of Dr. King's visits to the Denver area and engage with a panel of community members to explore his legacy. This free event is a part of the City of Aurora's celebration of King's birthday. Free.

Community Roundtable Discussion for "Proclaiming Aurora's Black History"

Wednesday Jan. 21, 6 p.m.

We need your input to guide our next exhibit! Join the Aurora History Museum team, and award-winning author Adrian Miller to help identify significant stories, families and traditions. Help us ensure that the exhibit reflects the voices and experiences of Aurora's Black community. Free.

Homeschool Day: Black History

Monday, Feb. 2, 9:30 a.m.

Dearfield, CO was a Black settlement founded in the early 1900s that became ghost town. Where was it? Why was it built? Who lived there? What happened to it? We will use primary sources to answer these questions and explore Colorado's Black history. \$8 per student.

Black Chefs in the White House with Adrian

Miller

Thursday, Feb. 12, 6 p.m.

Adrian Miller is an award-winning culinary author, professional speaker, certified barbecue judge, and recovering attorney. Join the "Soul Food Scholar" as he discusses his book "The President's Kitchen Cabinet: The Story of African Americans who have Fed First Families." Free.

Power Couples Presentation with Chocolate Tasting

Saturday, Feb 14, Noon

This Valentine's Day presentation highlights several local power couples who shaped the city. Discover the Mosleys, Prestons, Cowans, and other dynamic duos who accomplished great things, both individually and as married couples. After the talk, join us for a tasting of local chocolates. \$6, includes chocolate tasting.

Visit us:

Tues. – Thurs: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sat.: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Closed: Mon., Fri. and Sun.

Admission

Adults - \$5, Children - \$1

Location

15051 E. Alameda Parkway
Aurora, Colorado 80012

Contact us

303.739.6660

[Click here to Donate to
the Colorado Historic
Newspaper Digitization
Project to preserve](#)

Aurora Museum Exhibits



Reservas Nacionales del Perú

Through March 7

In celebration of 200 years of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Peru, this travelling exhibition transports visitors to the vibrant, ecologically rich Natural Reserves of Peru. Experience breathtaking landscapes, encounter unique South American wildlife, and discover the cultural communities that explore and call these places home.



Prehistoric Aurora

Through April 18

What did Aurora look like one million years ago with mammoths and giant ground sloths? Or 65 million years ago when Triceratops and Tyrannosaurs roamed this landscape? Discover the changing landscape of Aurora through time and see the kinds of creatures that would have been found in our area.

Unsung Heroes of WWII

Through October

This exhibition highlights individuals and groups whose vital contributions to World War II were recognized years after the conflict. Explore the histories of the Women Airforce Service Pilots

(WASPs), the Navajo Code Talkers, the Tuskegee Airmen, and other local heroes.

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
 Staadt, Florence (past president)
 Travis, E.A.
 Tupps, Edythe
 Watson, Elizabeth
 Weddig, Frank & Pat
 Whitmore, Ruth
 Wiley, Robert
 Woodbury, Ruth

PRESIDENT'S CLUB

Dunning, Anabelle (1976-1979)
 Metcalf, Gladys (1980-1981)
 Staadt, 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)

Thank You for Your Membership

VALENTINE'S DAY ADVERTISEMENTS

IT'S GAY
IT'S GALA

Magnificent polka dot no iron plisse.....super soft, shrink proof.....and color fast.....Shorty short with matching brief panty. Self material ruffles.
S.M.L..... 3.50

Other
Intimate-ables
For Valentines
Popularly Priced

...Duster to match with
self material ruffles encircling bodice collar and
elastized puff sleeves.
S.M.L..... 4.50

gay carter

EM. 6-5560 LADIES APPAREL
9704 EAST COLFAX

Lehrer's Flowers: 10115 E. Colfax
Kay Carter Ladies Apparel: 9704 E. Colfax
Aurora National Bank: E. Colfax & Ironton

COMING IN MARCH & MAY 2026



From 1961



Movie: Breakfast At Tiffany's
 TV show: Hazel
 Music Album: Judy At Carnegie Hall – Judy Garland

Trivia Question Answers:
 1) b 2) c 3) b 4) a 5) c

