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On a sunny, blue sky day in June, I attended the grand opening for the 2nd year of the 40 West Farmers Market, held in the parking lot of the transformed Lamar Station Plaza (home of Casa Bonita). The plaza owners, Broad Street, graciously provided the space while Gene Kalesti of Gene’s Pure Colorado Pro Kitchen and Event Center managed the entire event. Two Creeks Neighborhood Association was set up in one corner of the lot while Container Collective Yoga & Bikes held an outdoor yoga class on a nearby pocket of freshly landscaped grass. Banjo pickers played in the background and kids and families sipped watermelon water and marveled at the week-old mural painted by 40 West artist Yulia Avgustinovich.

This intersection of government, business, community and the arts has never been stronger. Organizations and individuals continue to come together to connect the dots in a movement that has been taking shape for many years, but is now manifesting exponentially faster than ever. We survive and thrive not as individuals, but as a district made up of the economic and creative components that work together to form a cohesive whole. You can’t miss the transformation at this point in the form of events and festivals, monuments and markers, new local businesses and murals and other artistic happenings that are bright, bold and transformative. It feels wonderful to be in the position where the West Colfax renaissance is now beyond question, but it feels even better that we’re doing it together.

- Liz Black, Executive Director, 40 West Arts
  Managing Editor, West Colfax Lately magazine

In my first year as Mayor, I’ve had the pleasure of seeing the arts and culture ventures along West Colfax take shape and receive recognition that reflects the progress and authenticity of this historic corridor.

One such accolade comes from a powerhouse arts organization, the National Endowment for the Arts. The NEA recently awarded a $100,000 grant to Lakewood in partnership with 40 West Arts District to create an arts loop—the largest award given by this program. This loop will be a distinctive way to provide a visual walking and bicycling experience through the burgeoning creative district, and will help attract new businesses and enhance the area’s recreational and cultural assets. Now that’s some genuine recognition!

West Colfax also has caught the attention of 5280 Magazine with a profile in a recent edition, and The EDGE Theater and other 40 West fixtures continuing to garner “Best of” wins in Westword. It’s clear that West Colfax is on the move. From business to arts, from culture to creativity, I invite you to check out all the things happening lately along West Colfax Avenue.

- Mayor Adam Paul, City of Lakewood

Comments, suggestions? Email us at: editors@westcolfaxlately.org

- Bill Marino, Publisher / Editor-in-Chief

Our 3rd Issue continues our tradition of showcasing the promise and progress of Lakewood’s historic West Colfax Corridor. These pages couldn’t possibly capture all that’s happening here—so consider this a sampling of the people and the places that gives our community the character that is uniquely West Colfax.

Thank you to West Colfax Community Association, 40 West Arts, and the Lakewood-W. Colfax BID, along with all the partners, volunteers, and patrons who support the programs and activities here. Thank you to our little team, Liz, along with Miranda Samon and Melanie Stover, who through their talents and passion have made significant contributions—not just to this magazine, but to our community at large. A special message to Melanie, who is moving to Seattle to chase her dreams: Despite all the teasing to the contrary—we’ll miss you! Always remember—you’ve made a difference here. And to our friends at the City of Lakewood—amazing people and amazing partners: You make this magazine possible! Your ongoing support is a key driver for the remarkable renaissance taking place here. Thank you!

- Bill Marino, Publisher / Editor-in-Chief
SAT AUG 12TH
11AM - 6PM
MURAL FEST
At Lamar Station Plaza (Home to Casa Bonita) in Lakewood, CO
NEW MURALS!
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ART BOOTHs
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www.WestColfaxMuralFest.org
Thanks to RMCAD’s adaptable academic calendar and multi-platform learning options, you can complete your degree on your terms. Our curriculum is developed by subject matter experts and taught by industry professionals, so you can be sure that your degree will directly prepare you for a creative career. Best of all, RMCAD’s prestigious regional and national accreditation sets us apart and ensures that your degree is of the highest quality.

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40WestArts.org/WCLately
When you’re thinking of date night options, you don’t have to go far to have a terrific night—or day—on the town with your special someone. Avoid the crush of Denver and invite a little Lakewood West Colfax romance into your life instead.

Below, we present four date night ideas to spend a different kind of day with your chosen one, no matter if your sweetie is a romantic partner, your favorite grandchild, or it’s a treat yo’self kind of day. (Heck yeah, you can take yourself on a date! Why not?)

By Leah M. Charney

Colfax has global cuisine covered so you can eat your way across continents without ever leaving the corridor. Let your taste buds do the shopping for an “Around the World” dessert party, where you can wow the gourmand in your life by sharing a little something sweet with your sweetheart.

The Foodie

Works by 40W artist Mia Pryce are a vibrant backdrop for a great date night at Pho 2 Love restaurant. Photo by Will Strathmann.
Kolache House Bakery | 9998 W. Colfax Ave.
Picture eating a bun loaded up with fruit, preserves, or even meat, and you’re on your way to understanding the draw of Kolache, pastries made famous by Czech immigrants. Czech out (sorry, not sorry) Kolache House Bakery, which just celebrated their one-year anniversary in April, to select the sweet treats that look best to you!

Tacos Extravaganza | 11190 W. Colfax Ave.
Sure, the word “tacos” is the first word in the name of this mom-and-pop shop, but Tacos Extravaganza is also a panaderia (Mexican bakery). The bakery case features all kinds of pan dulce, literally, “sweet bread,” including an assortment of polvorones, sugar and shortbread cookies of varying types. Their beautiful colors and differing shapes are sure to impress.

Chicago Market | 1477 Carr St.
This market specializes in Polish goodies and the kinds of items prevalent in Midwestern grocery stores—think sausages, sauerkraut, pickles. Pick up a square of Polish apple cake, which is a bit like if an apple pie were swallowed by a coffee cake.

The Individualist

Working on wooing someone who isn’t afraid to be themselves? Do you and your better half embrace ideas outside of the mainstream? You two appreciate the eclectic and, lucky for you, Colfax and rebels go hand in hand! These alternative spots offer a unique date that’s anything but status quo.

All Its Own | 9703 W. Colfax Ave.
Kick things off by seeing just how compatible your shopping tastes are. Learn to make your own terrarium or moss plant aquarium or select a new potted succulent or air plant for your window at home (there’s always room for one more!).

Pho2Love | 6593 W. Colfax Ave.
The way people are going crazy for pho, a traditional Vietnamese noodle soup, it might as well be pizza. Order pho if you like, or be ahead of the curve, hepcat, and order the Banh Trang: grilled meat, veggies, pickled things, and sensual seasoning, all wrapped in rice paper.
Fallen Owl Tattoo | 8789 W. Colfax Ave.
If the date went really well and you’re ready to make a bigger commitment, you can snag some new ink at this artist-owned tattoo parlor. While we don’t recommend you and your date get matching tattoos, the Fallen Owl team can make tattoo dreams come true for you (and your boo).

The Retired & Loving It
Sure crafting and hobby stores, garden centers, and antique shops are spread all along West Colfax, but we know retirees can’t be pigeon-holed. Get out of the house and into the neighborhood on a date made just with you in mind. It’s entirely up to you if you want to share it with anyone else.

Ortiz Custom Cycles | 5535 W Colfax Ave
If you love to feel the wind in your hair and some power underfoot, the custom motorcycle work at Ortiz Cycles might be just what you need. Whether you travel alone, in tandem, or with a certain someone’s arms wrapped tight around you, it’ll be love at first sight when you gaze upon your gorgeous updated ride. Specializing in custom work and restorations since 1997, visit this shop to trick out a new paint job, powder coating or motor for your bike.

Hi Little One | 1528 Teller St.
Need to snag something for the grandkids while you’re out and about? Go online or pop in to see things that are “cute, but not too cute” and purchase a customized gift for the kiddo in your life. If you happen to have your favorite grandbaby in tow, there’s even a little spot up front with chalkboard walls and teeny tiny chairs made for teeny tiny butts.

NEXT Gallery | 6851 W. Colfax Ave. and Pirate: Contemporary Art | 1520 Teller St.
When in Rome, and by Rome we mean 40 West Arts District, step into the newest galleries in the area to take in some visual art. After years on the Navajo Street Art District in Denver’s Lower Highland neighborhood, both NEXT and Pirate resettled on West Colfax in spring 2017. One is in a funky former pawn shop and the other is just around the corner next to 40 West Arts Gallery. Shows change monthly and both co-ops accept new artist members, so you’ll find something novel just about every time you stop in.

Yianni’s Gyros | 10450 W. Colfax Ave.
If all that shopping (and salivating over one-of-a-kind items) has made you hungry, this gem can help! Stuff yourself with delicious gyros, salads, Greek lemon soup, and falafel. Filling empty bellies since 2010, Yianni’s is terrific for both grab n’ go, or a leisurely lunch in a casual cafe setting.
The New Parents

After sleepless nights, countless loads of laundry, and the two of you talking about poop more than you ever thought possible, you deserve a break! It’s time to step out in style and spend some time talking to one another in something resembling your “grown up voice.”

Habitual Salon | 11504 W. Colfax Ave.
Get pampered (you both definitely deserve it!) at this swanky spot that opened last year. In addition to salon services like hair-cuts and color, you can also get skin care services like facials and make-up. Bonus: Mint & Serif coffee is next door.

Bangkok Thai | 2099 Wadsworth Blvd.
Once you’re dolled up in something other than spit up, head over to this unassuming strip mall location that packs a mighty menu of Thai food. Chow down on American favorites like pad Thai and curries as well as traditional Thai recipes like Tom Kha Soup (lemongrass soup with coconut).

The Edge Theater | 1560 Teller St.
Bestowed with Westword’s 2017 Best of Denver® award as the “Best Reason to Buy Season Tickets,” is there a better excuse to get a babysitter than taking in live theater? With five shows remaining in the 2017 season, many of them comedies, even the most sleep-deprived couple can get a few laughs in before returning home to their tiny dictator, er, precious baby.

When your date night includes your little ones, look no further than Deli Italia. This Lakewood business specializes in dine-in or take-out sandwiches and pizza and has a beautifully curated shop of authentic olive oils, pasta sauces, meats and cheeses to make the perfect meal at home. And, because your toddler refuses any food that isn’t carbs, it’s a win-win for everyone.

40 West Arts District
You’ll never fail to impress a first date or long-time love by attending any of 40 West Art’s First Friday receptions or quarterly Art Walks. These events have it all including tons of artwork to analyze (a perfect conversation starter). If you’re feeling romantic about our little arts district, get your art and your date on along historic West Colfax.
A Dream Realized:

The ‘Little Arts District That Could’ Comes of Age with the Arrival of Two Top-notch Galleries

By M. Perry Williams

Photos on this page by Miranda Samon.
It started as a dream . . . a collective dream by a community—and they did what is most often forgotten when we have a remarkable dream—they wrote it down!

Its essence was first recorded in the 2006 West Colfax Avenue Action Plan—a document created by a blue ribbon committee appointed by Mayor Steve Burkholder (Lakewood Mayor, 1999-2007) and led by then City Councillor Bob Murphy (who’d be the next Mayor, 2007-2015). The committee’s charge was to explore how to re-energize Lakewood’s historic West Colfax Avenue and ways to make it once again a vibrant commercial and entertainment destination that would rival its mid-century glory days when it was recognized as the Gateway to the Rockies, with its neon-bedazzled eateries, shops, supper clubs, and motor inns.

Among the plan’s many recommendations, it encouraged the formation of special districts and the use of art and art-related activities to ignite and catalyze change. And by 2011, both a business improvement district (BID) and a non-profit arts district were born.

“West Colfax had been in decline for decades, but it had such a rich and storied history,” recalls Bill Marino, then a local entrepreneur who served on the committee and now is board chair for 40 West Arts and the chief executive for the BID. “The committee and the 200+ contributors weren’t afraid to dream big, planting the seeds for change and shaping a vision that would resonate with businesses and residents alike. The notion of an arts district generated excitement.”

Five years from the adoption of the plan, with sustained efforts from local business owners, residents, a passionate Champions Group, a newly formed BID, and an ever-supportive City, the dream became a reality as 250 community members gathered to celebrate the official opening of the 40 West Arts and Culture District.
members gathered at a garden party on the historic campus of Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design to celebrate the launch of 40 West Arts. Now, in a bit more than a half-decade hence, the dream continues to grow as two of metro Denver’s most popular, most innovative, and most critically acclaimed artist-led galleries have made the move to 40 West Arts District.

Pirate Contemporary Art, an independent, artist co-op gallery with roots back to 1982, has been at the cutting-edge of innovative art exhibitions for more than three decades and was long a popular destination on Navajo Street. Pirate and its 30+ artist members describe itself as “an audacious and eclectic alternative, artist-run cooperative art space . . . many member artists have come and gone, but Pirate persists. It’s an institution that remains flexible and edgy.”

With the latest real estate boom in Denver, Pirate set sail for Lakewood. Pirate has settled in the heart of 40 West Arts, one block north of West Colfax at 7130 West 16th Avenue, the street that boasts seven murals from the district’s first West Colfax MuralFest in 2015. It’s also neighbor to The EDGE Theater, 40 West Gallery, and C2 Gallery located in the adjacent building and a short two-minute walk along a painted footpath to 40 West Studios, a workspace for more than a dozen district artists and creatives.

“Pirate has always had a repertoire of high achieving contemporary artists,” says artist Laura Phelps Rogers, a member of both 40 West Arts and Pirate. “The regional and national acclaim [associated with Pirate artists] will help extend energy beyond the district. 40 West can harness this to attract and build a greater base of artists, art patrons, and art collectors.”

NEXT Gallery, also an acclaimed, independent co-op gallery, had been a neighbor to Pirate for more than a decade, and now is just a block away in its new West Colfax digs. According to its website, the NEXT Gallery “is driven by all its artists . . . that continually push the co-op to move in new directions.” This group of more
than 20 artists was the first to make the move, opening in April 2017 in the old Metz Lumber building at 6851 W. Colfax. Now NEXT Gallery is centrally located near Pirate’s new location and a two-minute walk to Lamar Station Plaza, home to Lakewood Arts Gallery, Gallery of Everything, WestFax Brewing Company, and iconic Casa Bonita of pop culture fame. NEXT’s new space is just a block from all of these creative destinations as well as only two blocks from RTD’s W Line light rail station.

“As a gallery that’s been around 10+ years, our co-op members felt that we could move in and hit the ground running. And having local support was a major factor,” explains Artist Charlie Walter, who was among the first NEXT members to exhibit in the new space.

“We believe our move will help the district. Our fan base will visit and explore this growing art community. That was certainly the case during our opening on April 28th. We had more than 200 visitors that evening and that was during a snow storm! Our hope is that more and more artists will see the value and commit to this creative community.

- Charlie Walter, NEXT Gallery Artist
These two accomplished galleries help to anchor the other creative assets here. The fact that they chose us says a lot about us as a district.

- Liz Black, 40 West Arts Executive Director
“The arrival of Pirate and Next helps solidify our transition from being 40 West Gallery and 40 West Studios centric to a broader district-wide focus—that’s been an important goal all along,” shares Liz Black, 40 West Arts’ executive director. “These two accomplished galleries help to anchor the other creative assets here. The fact that they chose us says a lot about us as a district.”

The three integrated local organizations—40 West Arts, West Colfax Community Association, and the BID—worked hand-in-hand to welcome and support the arrival of both galleries, providing local contacts, promotional support, a modest pool of incentive dollars . . . and rumor has it—a case or two of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer during renovations!

“No doubt that Denver’s loss is Lakewood’s gain. These two remarkable groups of creatives will bring a whole new crowd to West Colfax, broadening the momentum already here and further inspiring our local community!” asserts Kevin Yoshida, architect, urban designer, and BID Board President. “And there’s more on the horizon—new retailers and restaurants are coming—it’s just a matter of time. And the Artspace project in the works here, a 30-40 unit live/work development, will add even more energy with its community galleries and gathering spaces, helping insure that our creative workforce has the opportunity to stay here in an affordable environment.”

Distinguished artist, designer, and West Colfax resident Lonnie Hanzon, a blue ribbon committee contributor, called 40 West Arts in its early days “the Little Arts District That Could” in recognition of the dedicated champions, artists and art patrons, who breathed life into the grassroots creative movement. “These weren’t just dreamers,” he adds. “They were doers, too!”

40 West Arts has come a long way, and the arrival of Pirate and NEXT is a bonanza for the district. But there’s plenty more to do—more infrastructure improvements, more place-making and way-finding to make the district more pedestrian friendly, and the first phase of the NEA “Our Town” Grant-funded ARTLINE, a four-mile route connecting three district parks with an interactive walking and biking art experience. All this is a tribute to those who put it in motion—and every person who advocated, invested, and volunteered.

So many have contributed to the momentum that is 40 West Arts. With all the outpouring of energy, effort and emotion—maybe . . . sometimes, dreams do come true.
Expert Advice

Learning from the Best Along 40 West

By Leah M. Charney

We know you’ve thought of Colfax Avenue when you’re looking to lose a few brain cells, but the street offers tons of opportunities for brain building, too. With almost 170 years of history as a commercial and trade route, the West corridor is home to organizations full of local goods and services, and always willing to dish out a bit of advice as well. Check out their tips, below.

Sprout City Farms on How to Access Healthy Food Close to Home

The local food movement is taking off all over the country, kale yeah! So how can you ensure that you’ll be wiping a bit of Lakewood dirt and morning dew off of your freshly picked tomato? That’s where Sprout City Farms comes in. As a nonprofit entity dedicated to food access, one of their three Metro-area farms is located right here in the corridor at Mountair Park. Chew on the tips below for more information (yep, we went there).

Community Supported Agriculture
Buy a ‘share’ in the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and then head to the farm each week to pick up locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables from June through October. Also, according to Executive Director Laura Lavid, “To ensure food access for all members of the community, Sprout City Farms makes approximately 20% of our CSA shares available as sponsored (free), work trade, and SNAP/EBT (supplemental nutrition assistance) shares.”

Farmers’ Markets
Sprout City Farms sells produce grown at Mountair Park at two neighborhood farmers’ markets. The 40W Farmers Market is held Saturdays from 9am-2pm (July-October) and the Edgewater Farmers Market is Thursdays from 5-8pm (June-September).

Mountair Park Community Farm Stand
Visit one of Sprout City Farms’ multiple community farm stands for out of the ground goodness and to take part in activities throughout the year. In 2017 stands are open on Wednesday’s from August through October.

There’s more to know about Sprout City Farms at Mountair Park and our local food system at http://sproutcityfarms.org.
Dino’s Italian Food Tells Us How to Feed a Crowd

If there’s one lesson that’s tough to master, it’s how much food to order to ensure the right amount for your group size. Some people live for leftovers, while others don’t want anything lingering in the fridge. And no one wants to run short! Amy Rioux, Dining Room and Bar Manager at Dino’s Italian Food, a Colfax institution since 1961, tips us off on how to feed the masses.

When it doubt, order pizza
“Pizza goes further for cheaper. You can feed more, especially a crowd of 30-40, which we do all the time,” explains Rioux. Plus, pizza lets you order something for everyone, from vegetarians to carnivores and even folks who are gluten-free or have other dietary requirements.

Mind your p’s and q’s
This tip is specific to Dino’s, which offers their classic entrées to-go in pints and quarts. Typically a pint feeds one person and a quart feeds two. Rioux recommends ordering items like half-and-half (half spaghetti, half ravioli), lasagna, and manicotti by the quart because of their bulky nature.

Consistency creates credibility
If you’re ordering from or dining out at a restaurant with a group, select a spot that’s been in business for awhile. Established restaurants (and kitchens) tend to have an easier time managing larger groups. “Our consistency is a claim to fame,” says Rioux. “We see four or five generations of families come in because they are loyal to us.”

Call ahead
If you want to make sure to get the best service for groups of six or more, call ahead or make a reservation. While spots like Dino’s have areas designed with groups in mind, not every restaurant has the space (or staff) to accommodate larger parties.

Thanks to the expert advice from these local gems, it seems it’s never too late to learn something new!
Above: Owner Aurora Hendrix adds milk to an iced coffee. Below: Two shots of espresso are the first steps to a perfect lavender cortado.

The Best Beverages for Each Season, According to Mint & Serif

At coffee shops, discovery abounds in the form of beverages to try, friends and neighbors to meet, and things happening around town. And we all know what caffeine can do for alertness! At Mint & Serif, open on Colfax near Simms since December 2016, try out new flavors to find your next favorite drink.

“Ask me questions about the menu. Don’t be afraid of the names.”

“Ask me questions about the menu. Don’t be afraid of the names,” says founder and co-owner Aurora Hendrix. Ever the experts at being approachable, this family-owned and operated shop doles out some wisdom on how to wet your whistle in tandem with the ever-changing Colorado weather.

Though we advocate embracing adventure by trying a different drink each season, if one of the four strikes your fancy now, Mint & Serif offers all these beverages all year long.

All photography on this spread is by Will Strathmann.
Spring: Iced Turmeric Ginger Chai
Turmeric, an Asian spice that is best known as the main spice in yellow curry, is a warming, anti-inflammatory that (just like its pal ginger) is good for arthritis and the digestive system, among other uses. Get this customer favorite as a spritzer or iced latté for an enlivening warm-weather drink.

Summer: The Minty Serif
A pineapple, lime, ginger, and mint-flavored spritzer, this signature drink is a staff favorite. Don’t those fruity flavors sound like summer? “It’s refreshing green deliciousness in a cup,” says Hendrix.

Fall: Lavender Cortado
“The lavender flavor is subtle,” notes Hendrix, “but it transforms it into a smooth, and lovely drink.” While a cortado is equal parts espresso and milk, these flavors also work well as a latte (where the milk is a 2-to-1 ratio of milk to espresso).

Winter: Spicy Chai
Both tasty and warming, Mint & Serif’s spicy chai is bottled locally, using freshly ground spices and fresh ginger instead of powdered products. To boost the immune system, try the “flu shot,” a shot glass full of chai concentrate.
5 Tips to Maximize Your Workout,  
From Planet Fitness Colfax Ave.

Beyond the benefits for your body, the endorphins released by exercise can boost the mood and even help combat the effects of depression. Tyler Connely, a fitness instructor at Planet Fitness in Lamar Station Plaza, tells us, “The key to reaping all of the rewards lies in utilizing your time as best as possible.” If getting to the gym feels like one more thing to work into your already busy life, take the list below to heart.

Commit
Once you’ve made it through the gym doors, select a specific schedule to reach your fitness goals faster. Connely suggests deciding to use walking/running machines on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and using resistance machines on Tuesday and Thursday.

Write It Out
Take your action plan and put it to paper to make the goal real in your mind. It also saves time, as you won’t be aimlessly wandering the gym wondering what to do next. Connely’s idea: “Post a copy of your exercise plan on your refrigerator and keep a copy either in your car, purse, or wallet so that you can bring it with you for your workout.”

30 Days
Aim to stick to your new commitment for 30 days. After that, give yourself a new timeline. Before long, you’ll have formed a healthy habit and will feel like your workout is “a non-negotiable part of your day.”

Set S.M.A.R.T. Goals
Connely gives the following examples:

- **Specific**: Instead of “I will exercise this week,” say, “I will exercise on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 7PM this week.”
- **Measurable**: Instead of “I will walk or run this week,” say, “I will walk or run one mile on Monday, Wednesday and Friday this week.”
- **Attainable**: Your goal should be reasonably accomplished. Connelly reminds, “If you have never exercised regularly, then attempting to exercise seven days a week may be too drastic of a change.”
- **Realistic**: “Make sure whatever you are starting is appropriate for your readiness and fitness level,” says Connelly.
- **Timely**: Tie your goals to a specific (but again, reasonable) deadline.

Get Help
If you’re not sure where to start or what exercises are right for your age, body type, fitness goals, and fitness level, seek help. Gyms, including Planet Fitness, often offer free fitness instruction with your membership.

Now that you’re armed with advice, go out and show those fitness goals who’s boss!

We know you were hoping to learn how to cliff dive from the experts over at Casa Bonita, but thanks to the advice from these other local gems, you’ll walk away with knowledge you can use!
$10 A MONTH.

SAVE TODAY WITH THIS SPECIAL COUPON!

With this special coupon only:
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West Colfax Lately

THE BEST OF THE WEST

Corridor Heavyweights Show Us How They Do What They Do

By Susan Beardsley Blosten

Every creative movement relies on its entrepreneurs and visionaries, you know the ones. Some are quiet and introspective, others are boisterous with a bit of swagger, all of them are hard-working, forward-thinking and willing to do whatever it takes to succeed.

Al Orahood works in his studio. Photo by Dave Dunda

Al Orahood
Professional Artist
www.Orahoodart.com

You’ve seen the neon signs advertising motels along West Colfax. Most artists wouldn’t gravitate toward these iconic, but sometimes forgotten billboards as subjects but Al Orahood challenged himself to depict them in paintings. The paintings provide a slice of history from the 1950’s when Colfax, billed as the longest commercial street in the United States, was the route into the Rocky Mountains west of Denver and teemed with colorful signage. “I like to set challenges for myself,” Al clarifies. First I wanted to make sculpture by a quicker means than the lost wax technique so I concocted a pulp and epoxy combination, which turned out to be very successful commercially. Then, I wanted to see if I could paint in a photorealist style.”

Visiting his home studio, the precise organization of thousands of items is striking. Every horizontal surface and shelf is covered with artist tools, paint, brushes and more. The fourth generation Coloradan who has lived and worked near West Colfax for several decades was trained as an architect and it shows in his current work. His interest in the history of the West Colfax corridor prompted him to widen his lens from neon signs to include local buildings and their surroundings. Recently, he painted some 22 pieces he calls West Colfax Remnants. His wife Kirsten took photographs of many of the surviving 1950s buildings and their surrounding environments. Al says, “Kirsten has a great eye for point of view, she doesn’t shoot photographs straight on.” In turn, Kirsten points out, “Al has the architectural perspective.”

The works represent an exacting process. According to Al, “Each painting took 40 hours to complete, I timed one for the fun of it. But I don’t work on it for 40 hours straight.” Al prints out Kirsten’s photographs and then draws a grid over the color print. He then uses the grid to create his paintings. On smooth tempered board he uses colored pencils, acrylics and is particularly proud of his representation of asphalt which is achieved with spray paint. “The tempered board is as smooth as a baby’s butt,” Al laughs. He enlarges each detail on a nearby computer screen. “I want to see exactly how the chain link fence fits together, so I enlarge it and draw it until each link is perfectly represented in the painting.” Al looks at the screen and then turns around to where his painting rests on the back of his sofa. Over and over he checks the magnified image and then draws each link individually until the photorealistic result is accomplished.

Serendipity has proved a successful marketing tool. A show at Lakewood Civic Center of the 22 West Colfax Remnants paintings prompted a request for a book of the works. Al and Kirsten’s daughter produced the book. “I don’t want to break up the collection,” says Al. “It is possible that a luxury office or other company will lease all of the show” to adorn their walls. In the meantime, Al sells prints of his paintings. Al lives his life with wit and will to challenge himself artistically. “I want to see if I can paint night scenes,” Al smiles as he defines his next challenge.
It’s considered bad form to wish an actor good luck before a performance. So before making an entrance an actor is told to “Break a leg!” Theories abound as to the phrase’s origins. When Rick recently acted in Misery the command was especially apt. Acting as though he had sustained a broken bone or two was part of the role. He’s an intense actor who wears many hats. He works on three components throughout the year. He plans the season which lasts from January to December. He assembles the right teams to direct and design each play. A series of three auditions determines the cast for the next season. Rick is also working on succession planning as the EDGE Theater transitions to co-sharing the space with Benchmark Theater Company in 2018 and beyond. Add masterfully acting and directing several plays and you have a very busy man.

The Edge has produced challenging and sometimes provocative theatrical arts for the past seven years at its intimate theater. This year the Edge won Westword’s “Best Reason to Buy Season Tickets.” The intimate theater delivers classic favorites, regional premieres and new work that stimulates, educates and entertains. Whittling down a list of 40 shows, Rick says, “We choose what is relevant, entertaining, and has high dramatic or comedic value. I am looking for women as leads as there is not as much opportunity for them as there is for male leads,” Rick explains.

“Actress Emma Messenger stands over Rick Yaconis during a rehearsal of Misery. Photo by Dave Dunda.”

“I am looking for women as leads as there is not as much opportunity for them as there is for male leads.” - Rick Yaconis

“This year features large and small casts. More than 50 actors will have appeared in shows this season. We want to keep the audience guessing what’s next,” he continues. “We want to get all the right people involved, the best directors in the area.”

House and production management cover day to day operations. “They have to work properly and in time for each show.” He creates design teams to get the set, lighting and costumes just right. Rick and his staff of five also handle marketing of the season. Rick Yaconis is truly an original who is able to apply superb organizational skills and vision while exercising his undisputed creative talent. “Break a leg,” Rick.
Christopher Spohn
President, RMCAD
www.rmcad.edu

Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design is a private art college in the heart of 40 West Arts District that offers undergraduate and graduate degrees both on campus and online. Founded in 1963 and located on the 23-acre former campus of the Jewish Consumptives’ Relief Society, the setting includes many historic buildings. Chris Spohn assumed the presidency in Spring of 2017. His office window frames a perfect view of the quad with its expansive green lawns moderated by pockets of colorful flowers and freshly trimmed trees, all of it framed by 100-year-old red brick buildings that have been converted into modern classrooms and meeting spaces. Students amble about between classes. Inside Spohn’s office sheets of newsprint pages marked with enigmatic notes paper the walls. Chris is looking into all things RMCAD as he assesses what will need to happen to achieve his goal. “I want to foster direction and vision for one of the best kept secrets in Denver,” he emphasizes. “I am in assessment mode, vetting and due diligence.” He’s mapping the work flows of RMCAD from faculty to security, and everything in-between.

Every day Chris brings a laser focus to what is working, versus what needs to change on the RMCAD campus. He’s a serial multitasker with an 18-year track record for taking postsecondary education experiences in new directions. As he concentrates on student needs he plans to remap the student life cycle. This includes inquiry, engagement with administration, application, registration, orientation, campus visits, meeting with faculty, and housing. Chris intends to expand marketing to prospective students in both California and Colorado. He also holds small (5 students at a time) meetings “so students feel free to talk,” Chris explains.

In addition to the needs of its student population, Chris wants to expand RMCAD’s focus, “I want to build a sense of community by using RMCAD as a focal point for community and art events.” He plans to utilize a visiting artist program to further engage the Lakewood community. He also wants to use the facility more in showcasing both professors’ and students’ work. “The campus can comfortably hold 1,200 students so there is room to grow,” Chris observes, noting that the campus could even support new building if necessary.

“There is so much untapped here,” Chris shares, stating that he’d like to see RMCAD through to reaching its full potential. One comes away feeling that Chris will shine a spotlight on the hidden gem that is Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design.

“I want to foster direction and vision for one of the best kept secrets in Denver.” - Chris Spohn
WENDY SCHECK  
President, Liquid Metal Coatings  
www.Liquidmetalcoatings.com

Liquid Metal’s location could be a warehouse but for the artistic “LM” sign and “GALLERY” painted on the glass of the front door. Step inside however and you’re treated to an expansive display of burnished metal objects, metal artwork, sculptures, furniture, and other knickknacks in varying shades of silver and gold. An attractive blond sits behind her spacious brushed aluminum topped desk eating lunch. Between bites Wendy Scheck, Liquid Metal’s president, prints out business papers and specifications for a current email inquiry about a handsome range hood a customer in Seattle saw on the popular interior design website, Houzz.

Wendy uses mornings to handle the paperwork of the business. Afternoons find her in the back production area donning coveralls and a mask, gloves and an apron. She flips on the fan, mixes the precise formula of powdered alloys, and cold sprays any variety of objects that she magically turns into metal. Liquid Metal can apply a real metal finish to almost anything. “If it doesn’t breathe or melt, we can coat it,” Wendy Scheck says. Every ingredient in her background led her to open the business in 2001. “I am a maker,” Wendy states. “In high school I enjoyed creating jewelry, later I made sculptures and ceramics, and studied drafting, architecture and fine arts in college. I studied environmental design at the University of Colorado, Boulder and visual communications at the Colorado Institute of Art. She also previously worked in the film industry where she handled financials, taxes, props, set design and art direction. “I was trained to be a perfectionist,” Wendy muses.

Wendy concentrated on marketing early in Liquid Metal’s history. “I am booked well in advance now, so I don’t need to market nearly as much at this point,” she shares. “I also used to manage several workers but I became frustrated with having to communicate all the specifics and nuances of each project. Every piece requires color, texture, patina and polishing – they’re different tasks.” Wendy explains, “we use at least seven grades of sanding to polish the metal, for example. Labor-intensive steps using sandblasting or acetone can be wiped out in an instant if the maker is careless.”

“Each step must be perfect before going on to the next one,” she stresses. “You can’t define it to the end product because there are infinite possibilities as each step is evaluated. Even temperature can make a difference.” Wendy reflects, “It got to the point where it all funneled down to me. I have complete contact with the process and I like it that way. I can control it and I love doing it.”

Most projects are installed in clients’ houses. However, Wendy enjoys utilizing her front gallery showroom to display the almost limitless ways that Liquid Metals can transform objects. With a thriving business in the heart of 40 West Arts District, Wendy is in a great position to reap the rewards of her hard work and commitment to even the smallest of details. It’s a pretty safe bet to say that anything Wendy Scheck touches, turns to gold.
Imagine a walkable, bikeable route that ties in iconic pieces of art, temporary installations and exhibits, and three City parks for an experience that is simultaneously artistic and outdoorsy. It’s called the 40 West ARTLINE and this vision is closing in on reality. Alexis Moore, Lakewood’s Principal Planner, played an integral role in leading and implementing the major grant initiative from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for the four-mile bike and walking trail which will feature art installations along the way as well as interactive art experiences. The ARTLINE goes through three parks: Walker-Branch (part of which is in Edgewood), Aviation, and Mountair. It is located in northeast Lakewood between Sheridan and Wadsworth. The grant of $100,000 is matched by the City of Lakewood.

The first time Lakewood applied for an NEA grant to fund the ARTline it was not approved but the NEA was impressed by the effort and personally asked the City to resubmit for another round. “The second time we added artists and emphasized art even more and our proposal was granted.” The planning and execution of the ARTLINE has been a time consuming, yet rewarding effort as Alexis developed survey touchpoints and analyzed results. She worked with a 30-person steering committee that oversaw the logistics of the project, an art selection panel, a public art consultant and a project work group to fine tune where to place the art. “There has been substantial public input,” Alexis shares.

Three iconic art installations at each park are followed by working on the connective tissue of the ARTLINE, “the smaller art treasures a visitor finds along the way,” Alexis clarifies. She and her teams are also working on creative route delineation, the visual indicators that tell you where you are. A landscape architect will see that the ARTLINE fits into the built environment. “It’s incredible to see this all coming together around 40 West Arts District and the northeast Lakewood community” Alexis notes. “The thought of having these spaces transformed through art and installations, and then you add on top of that the walking and biking access to three beautiful Lakewood parks.” She pauses and muses, “It feels really special.”

There are a lot of moving parts. “I hadn’t anticipated so many inquiries about the project, but the community is really excited” Alexis says. “I’ve had a lot of interaction with the public, getting to educate people,” she continues. The ARTLINE first phases are set for completion in the summer of 2018, and after that the steering committee will determine next steps to include possible rotating installations, temporary exhibits, and festivals and events. Alexis hopes that the 40 West ARTLINE will grow and evolve in future years, an expanding effort that will only continue to blossom. “I feel as though ARTLINE is reclaiming the space for people,” she says with a smile.

These movers and shakers have set personal challenges for themselves that enhance the West Colfax neighborhood. From drawing the exact shape and articulation of a chain link to coordinating art along a four-mile route, from choosing, directing and acting in a provocative play, producing a metallic object or guiding the future of Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design – they play vital roles along the West Colfax corridor.
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DIVE INTO A WEST COLFAX BAR CRAWL

By Allison Cohn

Colfax and dive bars go hand in hand like a shot of Jameson with a PBR back. The twenty-six mile stretch of Colfax is lousy with neighborhood dives, from Montclair to Lakewood. These sometimes seedy, often dark, occasionally smokey and always welcoming watering holes are notorious for cheap drinks, questionable company and undeniable character(s). And while East Colfax is perhaps more established as dive bar central, here on West Colfax we’ve got our fair share of undiscovered dives to write home about — or at least to Sharpie their numbers on the bathroom wall.

Follow me as I guide you along our West Colfax dive bar crawl, starting in the west and migrating eastward. Whether you’re a crappy beer enthusiast, pool shark, day drinker, weekend warrior or you’re just dive-curious, you won’t be disappointed.

Swig Tavern - 11810 West Colfax
Swig’s rustic Viking door sharply contrasts its retro signage, which are the only street clues that there’s anything worth going inside. At first glance, this place looks like a hole, but — surprise! — it’s been recently remodeled within the last year. Swig’s fresh wooden bar top and polished hardwood floor don’t even reek of beer soak yet. Next up for Swig are those trendy garage doors that all the Denver breweries are so fond of, so stay tuned. And there’s free pool for customers, which the bartender with the impeccable manicure repeatedly told us about, going so far as to reimburse us for the quarters we’d already put in. (She also gave me a lemon wedge with my water… what kind of dive bar is this…??!). One adorable old regular in an ancient Broncos jersey — the bar’s only patron on a weekday afternoon— watched us play, offering running commentary on the game and adding a couple of friendly winks for good measure.

Misfits - 11475 West Colfax
Despite a name that invokes imagery of the popular horror punk band from the late ’70s, Misfits is totally pleasant. It’s not scary, smelly oricky. This dive actually gave off a family-friendly vibe as a grandpa wearing an “Eat Sleep Fish” t-shirt sipped a beer and shot pool with his grandson in the middle of the day. The capacity of this place is overwhelming, with tons of chairs and tables and even a fireplace in one corner. Too loud tunes alternated from unbearable Top 40 hits to cringeworthy country jams. Your classic Fireball and Jagermeister dispensers (you know the ones) beckon boozehounds from behind the diamond plate bar (#bikerchic), which gleamed in the natural light (see: dive bar kryptonite) from an overhead skylight. Misfit’s front patio overlooks the snarling traffic of West Colfax, providing a scenic escape to suck down some beloved nicotine.

Guidos Nickel - 9500 West Colfax
So much yes. A proper dive: tiny, no windows, smells like beer, full of regulars in the middle of a sunny afternoon. It’s so small, in fact, that you can’t really avoid catching the attention of everyone in the bar upon entering. And, while folks were friendly and welcoming enough, there’s certainly an air of exclusivity at Guido’s (which makes sense, the place has been on West Colfax since 1948). They know you’re not familiar, but that’s okay.

And not to rag on hipsters (because that’s a tired topic), but it’s true that you’ll run into exponentially less of them at Guido’s. Instead of chained up fixed gear bicycles out front, you’ll find actual motorcycles. The old men perched at the bar have mustaches they’ve been cultivating for decades, unironically. Oh, and there’s a popcorn machine. And a Cheeto buffet! The ceiling at Guido’s is wallpapered with vintage license plates. A “No Sniveling” sign is posted...
behind the bar. But perhaps the most unrivalled bit of decor: a decrepit corpse bride mannequin perched atop a taxidermied fish. This place is amazing. I rest my case.

**Red Coach Inn - 6560 West Colfax**

Full disclosure: the Red Coach Inn’s whopping two-star rating on Yelp excited me from the start. Then a friend told me she once met a woman at this bar who claimed she’d never been east of Sheridan Boulevard in her entire life, despite living just a few blocks away.

The walls display a menagerie of handwritten signs and notes exclaiming specials and “Do Not Touch” commands. “Sing for Shots Karaoke” is my favorite, but the bumper stickers that read “Foxy Grandma,” “No Spurs in Bed” and “Mental Ward” were close contenders. There is an actual meat mallet behind the bar next to an antique cash register, between shelves made of thick glass block. The place is full of cracked red leather booths, chairs and even an old piano that’s been creatively repurposed into a table. The air is perfumed heavily with smoke, although I have to assume no one has smoked inside in years. Everything about this place is old school, especially the giant dog named Lulu, who’s awkward gait and lumpy backside gave away her age.

**Cordial Lounge - 1521 Pierce Street**

Located just off of Colfax on Pierce Street, in a location you’d never think to check, is the Cordial Lounge. It originally opened in 1965 as Eddie’s Cordial, and I imagine not much has changed inside this establishment since then. (Where’s Eddie now?) You enter through what looks like a backdoor from the adjacent parking lot into an unpretentious time warp. Outside, you get the sense you might get jumped (you probably won’t). But inside, it feels like somebody’s parent’s basement from the 1960’s. Like, maybe you had your first makeout session here, celebrating afterwards with a stolen Pall Mall from mom’s purse and a shot of Canadian Club courtesy of dad’s liquor cabinet. And the Cordial Lounge is an endangered species: it’s a rare carpeted bar. The musical selection ranges pleasantly from Metallica to Bowie. A random picture of a crow hangs on the wall, aptly named “Gary” according to the adjacent hand scrawled sign. The bar itself is retro, emanating that classic-meets-tacky kind of style that the ’60s did so well: deep reds and arched shelving with mirrored backs, displaying an assortment of flavored vodkas and well liquors. Drinks during happy hour were virtually free and the bartender (who could’ve been 22 or 42) couldn’t have been nicer.

**Honorable mentions: Lakewood Grill, Riley’s Inn & Shenanigans**

Lakewood Colfax dive bars are the real deal. Head West of Sheridan and keep an eye out for any weathered double doors blocking all sunlight and fresh air, or a hand-scrawled sign on neon poster board advertising impossibly cheap shot specials and karaoke nights. Head on in. I’m sure there’s an ice cold PBR waiting for you.
The Ballad of Aviation Park
By Lecia Papadopoulos ©2017

Let’s build a park
What do you say?
Where the theme is flight
And children can play

In view of the peaks
Toward the western way
Where once wagons rolled
And now skiers stray

Into the steeps of the Utes
And Comanche, Ouray
Thousands have come
And keep coming still

To this cow-town-now-sprawled
Silver city near the hills
That pull down our water
That help pay our bills

And stand like a beacon
To beckon us still
From this rocky old pasture
Where there once grew hay

And now children totter
Cry, run, and play
With dogs on their leashes
And cars cruising past

This little oasis—
With an air sock and benches,
Acres covered with grass,
A kite caught in the branches—

Think of the footprints!
Wherever you step
Is a path tread by strangers
Who ate, drank and slept

On this very same prairie
We now call home,
before any cement,
swings or footballs were thrown

Under cottonwood, near creeks
That have long run away,
Like our time will fly too
Though the ground will remain

Free or foisted with structure
And furnace, penury or fee
As our ancestors came
and left, so will we
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