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New method rescues C.R. mural project



Ben Volta and Taqiy Muhammad (both obscured), of Mural Provisions in Philadelphia, work on installing the final panels of a mural Aug. 21 at the Fulton Lofts building in Cedar Rapids. The mural is designed by Colombian artist Nathalia Gallego Sanchez, also known as Gleo. The artist was denied entry into the United States this summer and opted to ship her mural and have it installed using a "Polytab" method. (Savannah Blake photos/The Gazette)

Colombian artist's work installed despite denied entry to U.S.

By Elijah Decious, The Gazette

CEAR RAPIDS — New murals are just starting to blossom in New Bohemia and the Czech Village as summer draws to a close.

But their artists never set foot in Cedar Rapids.

Thanks to unprecedented challenges for murals in the city, three new pieces of art are breaking ground with new installation methods that allowed them to be created from afar.

Artist Nathalia Gallego Sanchez, the painter from Colombia known as Gleo, wasn't going to let a denial of entry at the airport stop her.

"Although boundaries are drawn, I've learned that they blur through the creative acts that unite us," she said. "It was about understanding that, in creation, there are infinite possibilities for materializing an idea,

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Taqiy Muhammad (left) and Ben Volta (right) are reflected in the windows of the Fulton Lofts building as they work on installing the final panels of a mural Aug. 21 in Cedar Rapids.

Talk weighs restructuring of local Early Childhood Iowa boards

Iowa Legislature rejected similar plan earlier this year

By Robin Opsahl, Iowa Capital Dispatch

Plans to move forward with consolidating some local boards of Early Childhood Iowa were discussed at the ECI State Board meeting Friday, though some members of the public brought up concerns about the loss of local control.

Consolidating the Early Childhood Iowa system came up earlier this year, when Gov. Kim Reynolds proposed legislation that would have shifted existing ECI funding, and federal Child Care and Development Fund Wrap Around Child Care funds, to create a new \$16 million "continuum of care" competitive grant program for preschool and child care centers that offer full-day care for children.

The legislation ultimately did not pass in the 2025 legislative session, as multiple care providers and child care advocates brought up concerns that the measure would take 42 percent of current ECI funds, and serve a more limited group of child care providers. They also spoke in opposition to the potential regionalization of the ECI system, as Reynolds proposed aligning the boards that govern the program with the state's Behavioral Health Services System regions.

This change would have consolidated the current 34

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Some seniors are struggling to get COVID shots amid spiking cases

Los Angeles Times

Seniors in some parts of the country say they are being denied COVID-19 vaccinations amid an ongoing spike in cases, leading to rising frustration over new Trump administration policies that are making it harder to get the shots.

Matthew D'Amico, 67, of New York City, said a Walgreens declined to administer COVID-19 vaccines to him and his 75-year-old wife on Friday because they didn't have a prescription. They're trying to get vaccinated ahead of a trip.

"I can't believe we can't get" the vaccine, D'Amico said in an interview. "I've been inoculated a number of times and never had to get a prescription. And it's just very frustrating that this is where we are."

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What's the story behind Bever Park Zoo?

How did C.R. zoo get started? When did the exotic animals leave?

By Bailey Cichon, The Gazette

In the early 1900s, Bever Park Zoo was a point of pride in Cedar Rapids. Over the years, it became home to beloved black bears, monkeys, alligators, elk and lions. Today, Bever Park is home to Old MacDonald's Farm, a free petting zoo stocked with animals you'll commonly find around Iowa.

One curious Iowan from Cedar Rapids wrote to Curious Iowa, a Gazette series that answers readers' questions, won-



Jade Burnett, 4, of Cedar Rapids, pets a calf as she visits Old MacDonald's Farm in Bever Park on May 8, 2023, in southeast Cedar Rapids. (Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette)

dering how the Bever Park Zoo got started and why the exotic animals were rehoused.

We spoke with local historians and dug through over a century's

worth of newspaper coverage of the Bever Park Zoo to find the answers.

WHEN WAS ZOO ESTABLISHED?

Bever Park Zoo

opened in 1901, although its first donation — a pair of eagles — was acquired in 1900. When the zoo was established, the Cedar Rapids parks committee's attention was on beautifying Bever and Riverside parks. Bever Park Zoo was heralded locally as a source of family entertainment.

From newspaper archives, we can gather that a black bear named "Gussie," deer, wolves, a fox, a pair of horned owls, and a mountain jay were among the first animals on display. Animal donations were encouraged without discrimination toward the species. The prevailing attitude

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Curious Iowa

What would you like to know?



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