



# Disney FILES MAGAZINE

WINTER 2018 • VOLUME 27 • NUMBER 4

Disney Vacation Club®

# WELCOME HOME

THERE'S A  
GREAT BIG  
BEAUTIFUL  
TOMORROW

There's been an interesting change during the two decades I've spent with this company, and I'm not talking about my hair (which now has more gray area than Robin Hood's respect for Nottingham law). I'm talking about my broadened perception of The Walt Disney Company as a whole – a world I once saw purely as a creator of fantasy for those looking to escape reality. That's a big part of it, of course. When you fly with Peter Pan or sit in a room where the birds sing words and the flowers croon, it's easy to forget about whatever has people talking over each other that day on cable news. But there's more to it.

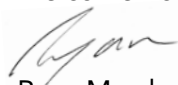
The late Disney Legend Marty Sklar, whose perspectives and friendship I miss daily, once told me that his fellow Disney Legend John Hench bristled at the notion of Disney Parks being purely an "escape," insisting that their ultimate purpose is not merely to *distract*, but to *reassure*. Walt Disney was the ultimate optimist, and the company that bears his name continues to thrive in the optimism-delivery business.

Whether presented on a screen, in a park or through one of the countless products that fill my home (parenthood has turned my living room into a Disney Store), the Disney experience is all about believing in a great big beautiful tomorrow.

It's a purpose that shines through seemingly every interview I conduct for *Disney Files Magazine*, from *Mary Poppins Returns* director Rob Marshall (who on pages 3-6 speaks of his team's desire to be part of something positive and optimistic) to *Ralph Breaks the Internet* producer Clark Spencer (who on pages 7-8 reflects on the optimistic leap of faith he took in his career from Wall Street to Hollywood) to the dozens of filmed interviews available for viewing anytime through the now-easier-to-access *Disney Files On Demand* (visit [disneyvacationclub.com/disneyfiles](http://disneyvacationclub.com/disneyfiles) with no log-in required). And it's a purpose that has me looking eagerly forward to my next two decades with Disney.

The year ahead will be my busiest yet, with a fresh slate of printed magazines, the continued evolution of our digital content, a Member Cruise voyage on each coast and a new resort in the neighborhood. Will 2019 be the best year yet? It's hard to say...but I'm optimistic.

Welcome home,



Ryan March  
Disney Files Editor

Inspired by the optimism of Walt Disney's Carousel of Progress, Ryan channels his inner Orville. (No privacy at all around this place!)



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Disney Vacation Club

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Please recycle this publication (or cherish it forever)

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**#DVCMEMBER**





## We're all ears

By Terri Schultz, Senior Vice President and General Manager,  
Disney Vacation Club, Adventures by Disney and Golden Oak



Earlier this year, after visiting with Members at a Disney Vacation Club Moonlight Magic event at Epcot, I enjoyed a moonlit ride through an attraction near and dear to my heart – Living with the Land. More than just a fascinating look at high-tech horticulture, the attraction represents a return to my childhood in Michigan,

where I grew up on a farm that remains in my family today. The lessons I learned in those fields have followed me throughout my career, including the idea that getting the most from the land begins with *listening* to the land. (Perhaps that's why I tend to mistakenly reference the Epcot attraction by its original name – Listen to the Land.)

Whether you're working a family farm or leading a magical community, good living begins with good *listening*. My predecessors here at Disney Vacation Club established a strong culture of listening to Members and Cast alike, turning open feedback into effective action plans while building on an enduring tradition established by Walt Disney himself. It's an approach I've been proud to continue, as it's the approach you truly deserve.

When you told us, for example, that you wanted the ability to modify vacation reservations online, we re-imagined our online booking tool ([disneyvacationclub.com](http://disneyvacationclub.com), Plan Vacations tab) to allow Members who book entirely with vacation points to modify the resort, accommodations, travel

party and travel dates of existing reservations. (See page 17 for more details about the tool's latest enhancements.) The enhancements also made the tool compatible with mobile devices, allowing you to more easily make and modify reservations on the go.

When you told us that you wanted more flexible access to the private-lounge services at Reunion Station at Disney's Wilderness Lodge, we took it to heart. We've now removed the full-travel-party, full-length-of-stay requirement (see page 18), allowing you to add the individual access that best suits your vacation plans. Even if you aren't staying at Disney's Wilderness Lodge, eligible Members\* may now add Reunion Station private-lounge access to part or all of their vacation.

You told us that you want more Membership Magic at Aulani, and that continues to be an area of focus, with new, made-for-Members experiences rolling into paradise in the New Year. (See one such example on page 11.)

A Greek philosopher whose name I admittedly had to look up as I wrote this column (Diogenes – thanks, Google!) once suggested that we were created with two ears and only one tongue so that we would listen more and talk less. It's something I think about, not just in those greenhouses at Epcot, but every time I see our company's trademark ears in everything from art to architecture and on everything from Mickey's head to Members' heads.

Whether you engage us in a park, at a resort or around the neighborhood, please know that all of us at Disney Vacation Club treasure your feedback. Because delivering Disney magic starts with being all ears.

\*See page 1 for important eligibility information.

A movie poster for "Mary Poppins Returns". The background is a deep blue with a painterly texture. In the foreground, Mary Poppins (Emily Blunt) is depicted from the chest up, wearing her iconic red and blue striped hat with a black feather, a red and white polka-dot bow tie, and a red and white polka-dot dress. She has a small brown parrot perched on her left shoulder. Behind her, a man in a blue suit and hat (Lin-Manuel Miranda) is smiling and looking upwards. To the left, a woman in a blue dress (Lily Collins) is visible. In the background, there are faint illustrations of a London street scene, including a double-decker bus, a man in a suit, and a woman in a blue dress. The title "Disney MARY POPPINS RETURNS" is written in a large, white, serif font. Below the title, the subtitle "A New Story Begins" is written in a large, white, cursive font. At the bottom, there are small illustrations of a man in a blue suit and hat, a woman in a blue dress, and a man in a blue suit and hat.

# Disney MARY POPPINS RETURNS

## A New Story Begins

### Inside the making of "Mary Poppins Returns"

Creating a sequel to "Mary Poppins," a film that is to many filmmakers what the Statue of David is to sculptors, is an undeniably tall order. The hit that made Julie Andrews a star and taught moviegoers to take their medicine with a spoonful of sugar is regarded by many as Walt Disney's greatest cinematic triumph, a timeless classic as beloved today as it was when it first floated into theaters more than a half-century ago. So how does a studio approach the challenge of delivering a worthy follow-up to a seemingly flawless film? You start by passing the umbrella to a filmmaker who loves "Mary Poppins" as much as anyone.

"It was the first film I saw as a child," "Mary Poppins Returns" director and producer Rob Marshall told *Disney Files Magazine* of the 1964 film. "It opened my mind up to what movies could be. It was life-changing."

Marshall, who reinvigorated the movie musical with 2002's "Chicago" (for which he was nominated for an Academy Award), is joined on the project by producers John DeLuca and Marc Platt, with whom he most recently collaborated on the Disney hit "Into the Woods."

"We were always very interested in the possibility of a 'Mary Poppins' sequel, but we didn't think it was a possibility," Marshall continued. "We just didn't believe the opportunity was real until Disney approached us and said, 'The door's been opened.' And honestly, we felt that, if anybody's going to do it, it really should be filmmakers like us, who absolutely love the first film. We wanted to make sure that, if we were to do a sequel, it would be done with a lot of care, attention and respect. We didn't want to change the 'Mary Poppins' DNA, and I used myself as a barometer. I wouldn't want





to see a contemporary version of 'Mary Poppins.' It has to live in the same world as the first film. Our task wasn't to reinvent and start again. It was to take what was there, that beautiful film and the world it created, and to continue that legacy with a whole new story."

### Embracing tradition

To deepen their understanding of the world in which their new story would be set, filmmakers spent invaluable time in one of the *Disney Files* staff's favorite workspaces, the Walt Disney Archives.

"It was very important for everyone working on this film to understand the first film in as much detail as we could, studying not only *what* was done but also *how* it was done," Marshall explained. "We reviewed, for example, many of the early concept drawings from Peter Ellenshaw, who did all those beautiful matte paintings in the 1964 film. The concept paintings were gorgeous – very simple and impressionistic and abstract. That led us to develop our film's main title sequence, using some of his original concept drawings and then creating original drawings that told our story but in his style."

Equally rooted in Disney tradition is a 15-minute sequence that, like the 1964 film, combines live action and hand-drawn animation.

"That was so thrilling for everybody," Marshall

said of a sequence that called on the talents of artists from both Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios. "While a lot of the artists came out of retirement to work with us, the majority were young artists who wanted to learn this style. Every animated frame is drawn by hand, and it's absolutely beautiful."

### Shooting stars

Of course, all of that attention to detail and care for tradition would fail to capture that "Mary Poppins" DNA if filmmakers couldn't find a practically perfect star for the title role. Just how difficult was that search?

"It actually was the easiest part of all," Marshall explained. "I had just worked with Emily Blunt on 'Into the Woods.' I love her personally, but I also knew that she had what it takes to play this role. Mary Poppins may be this proper nanny, but there's also an inner child who loves these adventures even more than the Banks children do but then denies ever having them. It's a wonderfully complex character, and Emily has all of the ingredients. Plus, she can sing and dance. There was never anyone else for the role in my mind."

Joining Blunt (whose recent credits include such hits as "A Quiet Place" and "The Girl on the Train") in a starring role is Pulitzer Prize-, Tony







Award- and Grammy-winner Lin-Manuel Miranda as Jack, a charming and upbeat lamplighter. Known to Broadway fans as the composer and visionary behind the smash-hit "Hamilton" and to Disney fans as one of the musical forces behind "Moana," Miranda leaped at the opportunity to join "Mary Poppins Returns" purely as an actor.

"When John and I met with him about this role, it was at the height of 'Hamilton,' and he was still starring in the show," Marshall shared. "He chose to do this as his first project coming off of 'Hamilton,' which was a real honor for us. He was excited to just be an actor. This character is kind of a kindred spirit to Mary Poppins. He has to have that same magical sense of joy, and that's what Lin has. His performances are so genuine and pure. That's really who he is."

Among the film's legendary stars in supporting roles, meanwhile, is the ageless Dick Van Dyke, who plays retired bank chairman Mr. Dawes, Jr.

"He's one of my great heroes," Marshall said of the Disney Legend. "He was a huge part of my childhood. So to have

him in the film was sort of overwhelming for me. I remember when he walked onto the set for the first time. We were all so excited and scared and thrilled and honored. At one point he said, 'I feel the exact same spirit here that I did on the first film.' It was such a beautiful moment."

Marshall recalled being moved to tears by Van Dyke's performance of a key scene toward the end of the film.

"He has this wonderful monologue, a story he tells the kids," Marshall explained. "I was so moved by his performance of that scene on set that I couldn't even say, 'Cut.' I was so emotional that I couldn't even see."

### Creating an original

While Marshall is known for having directed some of Hollywood's most successful adaptations of stage musicals, "Mary Poppins Returns" represented a long-coveted opportunity for the filmmaker to create an original musical for the screen.

"That was a big part of this for me, because I'd never done it before," Marshall said. "My favorite movie musicals are the ones that were created specifically for film, everything from 'Meet Me in St. Louis' to 'Singin' in the Rain' to 'Gigi' to 'The Band Wagon.' I've always taken a Broadway show and had to figure out how to make it work for film. 'Mary Poppins Returns' was so freeing. We could look at it only as a film from the start of development. It's something I've always wanted to do."







## Notes from the set

"Mary Poppins Returns" filmed on-location at some of London's most iconic landmarks, including St. Paul's Cathedral, Buckingham Palace, the Tower of London, Cowley St., Queen Anne's Gate, the Royal Exchange, Cornhill and King Charles Street.

Studio filming took place at London's Shepperton Studios, which counts 2017's "Beauty and the Beast" and 2015's "Cinderella" among its recent Disney credits. Eight soundstages housed the film's elaborate sets, the largest being the Cherry Tree Lane set, which took 18 weeks to create. The abandoned-park set, meanwhile, built for the show-stopping musical number "Trip a Little Light Fantastic" (an homage to large-scale production numbers from the golden age of movie musicals) took 26 weeks to complete.

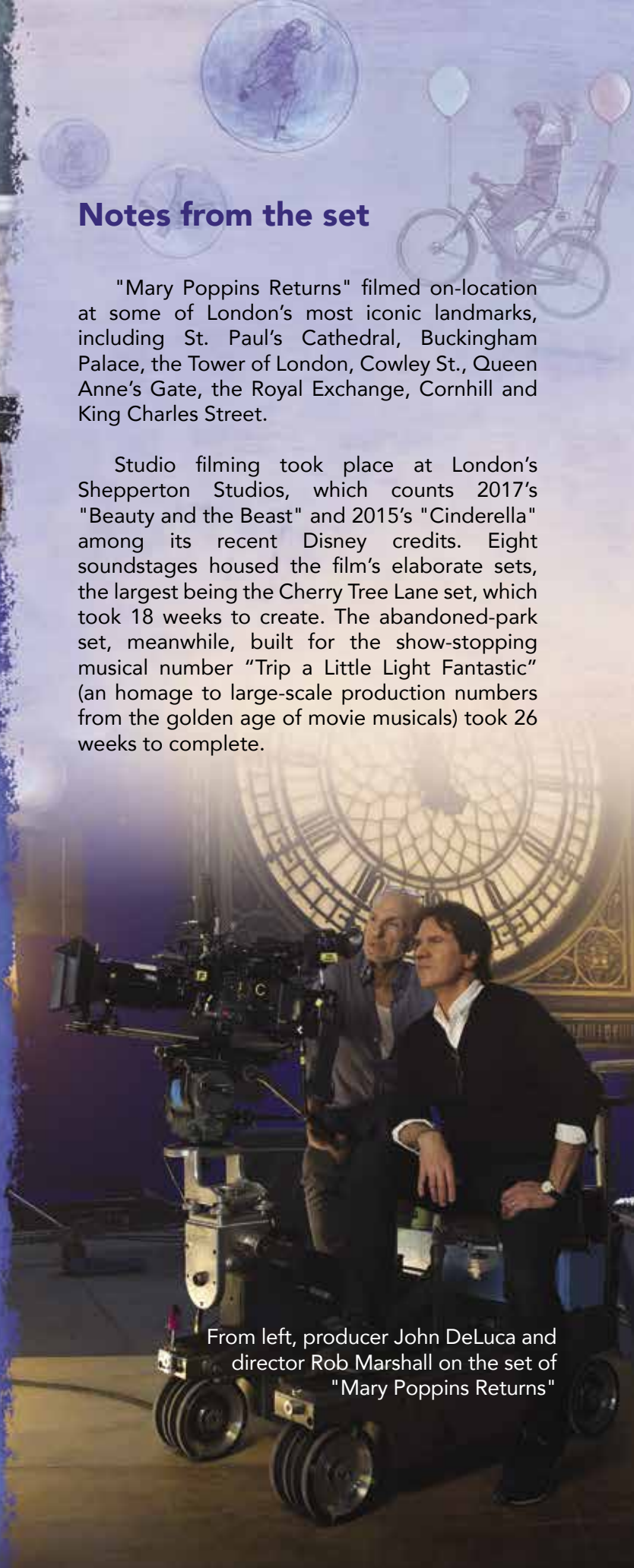
### Delivering joy

Just as Mary Poppins arrives in the film to return joy and wonder to the Banks family in Depression-era London, "Mary Poppins Returns" aims to deliver a similar gift to moviegoers in need of a brighter perspective.

"While we may not be in an economic depression, it's a very delicate time for the world, with an awful lot of conflict and division," Marshall concluded. "Meryl Streep (who plays Topsy in the film) called this film 'a gift to the world.' We all wanted to be part of something positive and optimistic. This feels like the perfect time for Mary Poppins to return joy and wonder, not just to the Banks family, but to the child in all of us."

Directed by Rob Marshall from a screenplay by David Magee and a screen story by Magee, Marshall and John DeLuca based upon the "Mary Poppins Stories" by PL Travers, the film stars Emily Blunt, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Ben Whishaw, Emily Mortimer, Julie Walters, Pixie Davies, Nathanael Saleh and introduces Joel Dawson, with Colin Firth and Meryl Streep. The film is produced by DeLuca, Marshall and Marc Platt, with Callum McDougall serving as executive producer, and features original music by Marc Shaiman and all-new songs by Scott Wittman and Shaiman.

**"Mary Poppins Returns" opens in U.S. theaters on Dec. 19.**




From left, producer John DeLuca and director Rob Marshall on the set of "Mary Poppins Returns"

# one on one



## WITH CLARK SPENCER - PART 2

Just as the unlikely friendship of Ralph and Vanellope was too compelling to contain in just one film, our one-on-one interview with "Ralph Breaks the Internet" producer Clark Spencer (whose credits also include "Lilo & Stitch," "Bolt," "Winnie the Pooh," "Wreck-It Ralph" and "Zootopia") was too compelling to contain in just one magazine. Please enjoy part two of *Disney Files Magazine* Editor Ryan March's visit with the Oscar-winning producer, in which Clark shares the thinking behind his remarkable career pivot from Wall Street to Hollywood and fondly recalls his years of filmmaking in Florida. To enjoy his team's latest work, see Walt Disney Animation Studios' "Ralph Breaks the Internet," in theaters now.



**Ryan:** The first time you and I sat down for a conversation like this was in Florida. I was the editor of the internal Walt Disney World newspaper at the time, and you were producing "Lilo & Stitch." What do you recall most fondly about, not just living in Florida, but producing films in a studio that sat right in the middle of Walt Disney World? (Editor's note: "Mulan" and "Brother Bear" also benefited from the talents at the Disney Feature Animation Florida studio, which occupied the Disney's Hollywood Studios building that currently houses the Star Wars Launch Bay attraction.)

**Clark:** Well for me, two things. That studio in Florida was an incredible studio of artists, and a real family. It was about 350 people who had come from all different parts of the country to try to build this brand-new studio for Disney animation. And the people themselves were phenomenal. It felt like we really were one big family, which was awesome.

But the most important thing for me was we would go out for lunch into the park itself, and it was always a reminder of what you're a part of. Because it can become "work" at a certain point, where you're just going in and doing work. But once you go into that park and you see families and you see kids experiencing these characters ... and realize that it's transformative for them and that they may one day decide to come work at the Disney company, you go back to your job and it feels very different. It feels like what you're doing is something that can actually have an impact, and that I loved.

**Ryan:** I'm fascinated by your career path. You studied at Harvard, you worked on Wall Street and then you pivoted to become a filmmaker, which is a transition few people can imagine. What advice do you have for people who may have the desire for a shift in gears for their career but maybe not the courage?



Look for video versions of this and other insider interviews online now at [disneyvacationclub.com/disneyfiles](https://disneyvacationclub.com/disneyfiles) (now with no log-in required)



**Clark:** I think you have to go for it, honestly. My experience on Wall Street was amazing. I had come out of college, I really had no practical work experience, and I did what everyone was doing – I went into banking. It was an incredible experience, and I learned so much from it.

But about four years into it, I thought to myself, "In 20 or 30 years, am I still going to be passionate about this?" And for me, it felt like, no, I wouldn't be. I'd be having a good career, hopefully. I'd be getting up every day and going to work, but I wouldn't be passionate about it. I think you're going to be infinitely better at your job if you love what you do.

So entertainment had always been something in the back of my mind. My grandparents owned a movie theater when I was a kid, so we saw movies all the time, and I loved them.

I thought, "You know what, I've got to go for it." So I quit Wall Street and moved out to L.A. I didn't have a job. I interviewed with all the studios here and landed a job at Disney in the Finance department, and I was eventually able to get myself into this creative position of actually producing animated films.

But had I not had the guts to make that choice to do it, I wouldn't be where I am today. And I think the key is, I always felt like, "I can go back to banking. That's not shutting a door that can't be reopened. But if I don't try to open a door to something I really want or believe in, I don't want to wake up in 40 years and regret that I never tried."

# RALPH BREAKS VR

A HYPER-REALITY EXPERIENCE



If the winter 2017 debut of the groundbreaking "Star Wars: Secrets of the Empire" experience at Disneyland and Walt Disney World Resort stretched the limit of virtual reality, Ralph is going to break it.

That's the promise of "Ralph Breaks VR," a new hyper-reality experience scheduled to have joined "Star Wars: Secrets of the Empire" in the Downtown Disney District at Disneyland Resort and Disney Springs at Walt Disney World Resort by the time this magazine arrives in your mailbox.

The original, multi-sensory adventure marks the latest collaboration between The Walt Disney Company, ILMxLAB (Lucasfilm's immersive entertainment division) and The VOID (creator of immersive experiences that blend physical sets with real-time, interactive effects).

ILMxLAB Executive in Charge Vicki Dobbs Beck teased future executions of the technology, saying, "We will soon invite guests into other beloved Disney franchises, where they can explore rich worlds, engage with compelling characters, embark upon heart-pounding adventures and indulge the senses — experiencing the magic as never before."

For more details about "Star Wars: Secrets of the Empire" and "Ralph Breaks VR," including ticket information, visit [thevoid.com](http://thevoid.com).

WALT DISNEY  
ANIMATION STUDIOS

X  
ILMxLAB

VB  
THE VOID

## Aspire higher

### Disney Institute courses, summits offer Member discounts

For more than 30 years, individuals and organizations alike have turned to Disney Institute for inspired insights, and today, eligible Disney Vacation Club Members\* enjoy a **20 percent discount** off select Disney Institute professional-development courses and summits as part of Membership Magic.

Available at both Disneyland Resort and Walt Disney World Resort in single- and multi-day formats, these engaging learning experiences reveal the proven methods behind the Disney magic, going beyond textbook theory to share Disney's approach to leadership, Cast/employee engagement, guest service or varying combinations of these topics.

Among the most popular offerings is the Disney Institute Customer Experience Summit, a multi-day, conference-style event immersing participants in Disney's time-tested business insights and unique approach to the customer experience. Keynote presentations by Disney executives join exclusive behind-the-scenes field experiences in theme park and resort operating areas, professional-networking opportunities and more, with plenty of Disney surprises along the way.

Learn more about Disney Institute programming online at [DisneyInstitute.com](http://DisneyInstitute.com), and to take advantage of your Member discount, visit [disneyvacationclub.com/institute](http://disneyvacationclub.com/institute).

\*See important eligibility information at the bottom of page 1.







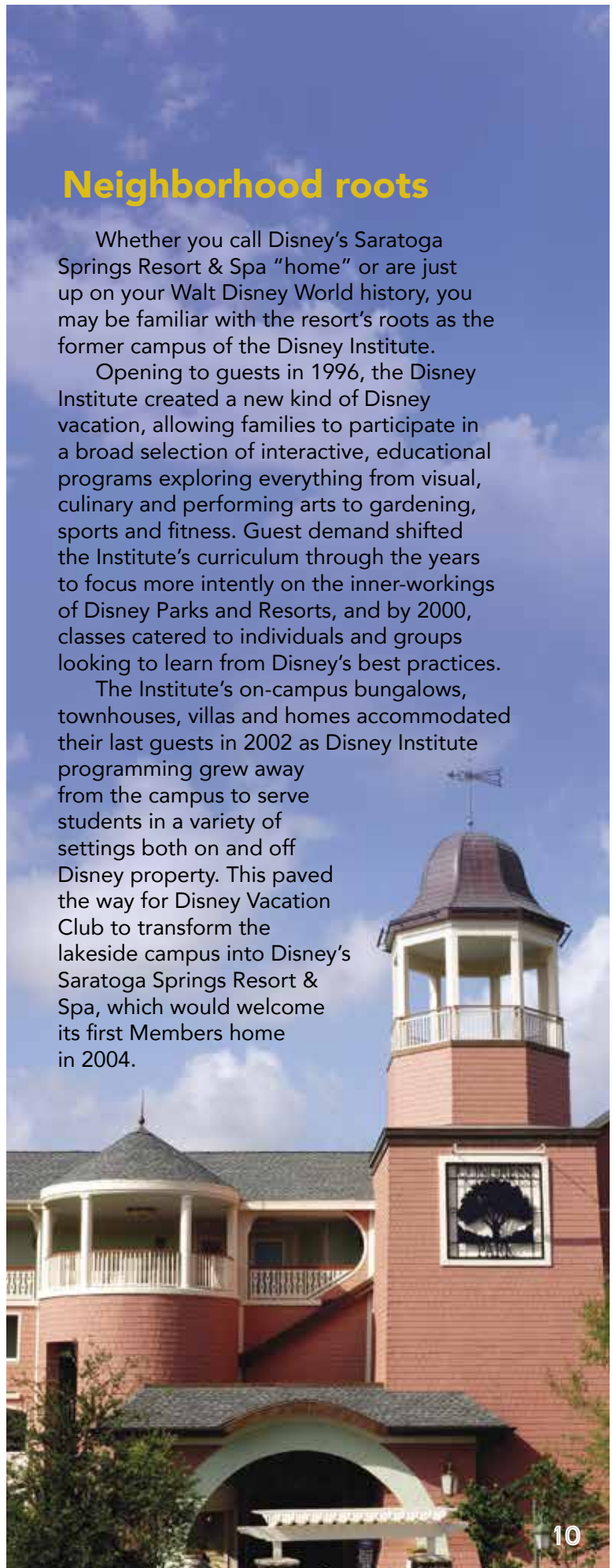
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## Neighborhood roots

Whether you call Disney's Saratoga Springs Resort & Spa "home" or are just up on your Walt Disney World history, you may be familiar with the resort's roots as the former campus of the Disney Institute.

Opening to guests in 1996, the Disney Institute created a new kind of Disney vacation, allowing families to participate in a broad selection of interactive, educational programs exploring everything from visual, culinary and performing arts to gardening, sports and fitness. Guest demand shifted the Institute's curriculum through the years to focus more intently on the inner-workings of Disney Parks and Resorts, and by 2000, classes catered to individuals and groups looking to learn from Disney's best practices.

The Institute's on-campus bungalows, townhouses, villas and homes accommodated their last guests in 2002 as Disney Institute programming grew away from the campus to serve students in a variety of settings both on and off Disney property. This paved the way for Disney Vacation Club to transform the lakeside campus into Disney's Saratoga Springs Resort & Spa, which would welcome its first Members home in 2004.





# MEMBERSHIP EXTRAS *part of*



Disney Files Magazine is pleased to highlight select Membership Extras\* available as part of Membership Magic. For a more comprehensive look at available extras, visit [disneyvacationclub.com](http://disneyvacationclub.com) (My DVC Membership, Member Benefits & More).

## Mix it up

**Mixology experience to bring more Membership Magic to paradise**

**Aulani, A Disney Resort & Spa, Ko Olina, Hawai'i:** One of the *Disney Files* staff's favorite spots in paradise will soon be home to the kind of class we could've only dreamed of taking in college, the kind that replaces pen and paper with a glass and fork.

Scheduled to debut on Jan. 5, 2019, "Mixology at the 'Ōlelo Room" is a made-for-Members\* workshop that pairs Aulani insights with handcrafted cocktails and Hawaiian bites. As its name would imply, this new Membership Magic experience will be presented in the resort's visually engaging 'Ōlelo Room, a linguistic lounge that celebrates Hawaiian language by labeling shadowbox displays of carved objects with their Hawaiian names.

Workshop participants will learn more about the 'Ōlelo Room before exploring the history of spirits (the kind you drink – not the kind that hitch a ride in your Doom Buggy), gaining insights into the distilling process, discovering the keys to setting up the perfect home bar and more.

Over the course of the hour, participants

will enjoy – and in some cases help prepare – three unique cocktails, each perfectly paired with a sweet or savory Hawaiian bite. While individual offerings are subject to change, pairings at press time include a "Lilikoilada" (think piña colada with passion fruit) with Kalua pork dip on Naan bread, a "True Blue Hawai'i" (a sweet-and-sour blend of rum, vodka, pineapple juice and blue Curacao) with firecracker spiced calamari and a "Tropical Mai Tai" (Aulani's take on the multi-rum classic) with roasted pineapple crème brulee.

Again, if this kind of class had been available at our universities, the *Disney Files* staff might still be in school.

The cost of \$55 a person includes tax and gratuity. Call Member Services for reservations.

\*See important eligibility information at the bottom of page 1

## *Proud honor*

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority recently recognized Aulani with its highest honor – the Tourism Legacy Award – for helping to normalize Hawaiian language in everyday life.





# Toast the Seven Seas

New Membership Magic experience sails the Seven Seas Lagoon

**Walt Disney World Resort:** Life can look a little different when you're a Disney Vacation Club Member. The morning commute can involve a monorail. A midday flight can involve an elephant. And pulling up to a neighborhood bar can involve a boat.

The latter of these experiences unfolds through the Disney Vacation Club Member Seven Seas Tasting Cruise, a weekly Membership Magic event on the Seven Seas Lagoon at Walt Disney World Resort.

Visiting the three jewels of our neighborhood's "monorail crown," this made-for-Members\* voyage on a premium pontoon boat departs most Mondays at 3 p.m. from the marina at Disney's Contemporary Resort. The three-hour tour (raise your hand if you just started singing the "Gilligan's Island" theme song) includes visits to Beaches Pool Bar at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa and Trader Sam's Tiki Terrace at Disney's Polynesian Village Resort before returning to Disney's Contemporary Resort for a cruise-capping visit to Top of the World Lounge, with Members and their guests (maximum party size is four, including the Member) enjoying pairings of cocktails (for those ages 21 or older) and bites at each stop.

Call Member Services for pricing details and reservations.

\*See important eligibility information at the bottom of page 1

*Do it for the 'gram*

Sharing your Seven Seas adventure through social media? Remember to tag your posts with **#DVCMEMBER**



# my DISNEY HOME

*Where Members Live*



Disney Files Magazine proudly presents photos and stories from Members who have made Disney part of their home decorating. This edition's submission comes from Rachel and Matthew of New Jersey, Members since 2017.

Sometimes the best approach to designing a room in which a child will grow is to remind its little resident that growing up is relative. That was the approach of proud parents Rachel and Matthew, whose Disney fandom inspired the Peter Pan theme they tastefully executed for baby Landon's nursery. Delicately balancing whimsy and tranquility, the serene space's finer details range from framed Peter Pan quotes to a crocodile with a ticking clock to directional signage pointing the way to London, Never Land and beyond. It's the kind of room that reaffirms our decision to never truly grow up.



**Do you have a Disney home?** Whether it's an expansive collection of Disney memorabilia or your own Disney-inspired space, we'd like to see it. Send your photos (keeping copies for yourself as we won't return ours), along with a letter containing your Member Since year and describing your unique Disney style, to Disney Files Magazine's "My Disney Home," Disney Vacation Club, 1390 Celebration Blvd., Celebration, FL 34747. Remember to include a signed release form, available for download and printing online at [disneyvacationclub.com/releaseform](http://disneyvacationclub.com/releaseform).



# PICTURE THIS

Founded as a Spanish mission in 1718, San Antonio, Texas has grown to become the seventh most populated city in the U.S. And with attractions ranging from the historic Alamo to the famed River Walk to one of the nation's largest rodeos, the city named for Saint Anthony has become one of the hottest vacation destinations in the Lone Star State. See if you can spot the seven things we've altered in this colorful photo of the city's River Walk, and visit [disneyvacationclub.com](http://disneyvacationclub.com) to learn more about the thousands of World Collection exchange options at your fingertips. And while you're remembering the Alamo, also remember that, **as part of Membership Magic, the \$95 transaction fee continues to be waived for World Collection exchange reservations.\***

\*Transaction fees are currently being waived for reservations confirmed by December 31, 2019. These fees may be reinstated and/or modified at any time without notice. Destinations offered through RCI are subject to change without notice. All accommodations are subject to availability.



original



altered

ANSWERS: From left to right, (1) an umbrella has changed color, (2) the river has risen along that row of umbrellas, (3) a tree near the center of the photo has grown taller, (4) a window to the right of that tree has disappeared, (5) the tile bench near the bottom-right of the photo has become a solid surface, (6) the artful sculpture near the top-right of the photo has added another layer and (7) the pedestrian bridge near the bottom-right of the photo has lost a step.

### Disney's Wilderness Lodge, Walt Disney World

**Resort:** Storybook Dining at Artist Point with Snow White is scheduled to debut soon at Disney's Wilderness Lodge. Plans call for the recently closed Signature Dining restaurant to reopen by the end of December as a re-imagined dinner experience that welcomes Members and guests into an enchanted forest with Snow White, Dopey and Grumpy. Families feast on a fixed-price menu of shared starters, individually plated entrees and "sweet spell" desserts while also enjoying music, activities and even a rare meeting with that wicked, mirror-consulting queen. Eligible Disney Vacation Club Members\* enjoy a 10 percent discount (excluding alcohol, tax and gratuity) as part of Membership Magic, and the experience is eligible for the Disney Dining Plan. Call Member Services for pricing and reservations. (Trip tip: Keep an eye out for select favorites from the former Artist Point menu at other dining locations at Disney's Wilderness Lodge.)

**Disney Springs, Walt Disney World Resort:** City Works Eatery & Pour House is scheduled to open in the West Side neighborhood of Disney Springs in summer 2019. Located in a new building adjacent to the still-in-development NBA Experience, the restaurant and bar will feature classic American food (from bar bites to burgers) and more than 80 beers on tap, with selections from breweries in the local community and around the world. The space's numerous high-definition TVs will include a 165-inch screen ideal for live sporting events. For the latest updates, follow @DisneySprings on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

**Disneyland Resort:** A new pool bar is scheduled to open in spring 2019 at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa, where Members and guests will enjoy appetizers and beverages in a trellis-shaded space artfully detailed with brick, stone and a custom tile mural. At the nearby Disneyland Hotel, meanwhile, a re-imagined Tangaroa Terrace Tropical Bar and

Grill is scheduled to open in early 2019 with a new outdoor bar and refreshed patio. The midcentury, Tiki-inspired eatery will offer breakfast, lunch and dinner options, quick bites in an open-air marketplace, and a dedicated window for coffee and Dole Whip.



▲ **Disneyland Park:** The Tropical Hideaway, an exotic marketplace featuring extraordinary eats from across the globe, is scheduled to have opened in Adventureland at Disneyland Park by the time this magazine mails. Positioned on an open-air dock near the world-famous Jungle Cruise attraction, the new market tempts taste buds with a variety of bao buns, chilled ramen salads, sweet pineapple spring rolls and more. (Trip tip: The Tropical Hideaway is particularly enchanting after dark, when flickering torches illuminate the area.)

### Disneyland and Walt Disney World Resort:

Oga's Cantina, opening in 2019 with Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge lands at Disneyland Park in California and Disney's Hollywood Studios in Florida, will welcome guests into a notorious watering hole to enjoy concoctions created with exotic ingredients in unique vessels, with otherworldly options for kids and adults. Musical entertainment will come courtesy of RX-24, the former StarSpeeder 3000 pilot droid who famously took his "first flight" at Star Tours.

\*See page 1 for important eligibility information.





## Soft Gingerbread

*Disney Files* Magazine concludes its yearlong salute to Disney Editions' deliciously insightful new book "Eat Like Walt: The Wonderful World of Disney Food" by Marcy Carriker Smothers with this 1934 recipe for soft gingerbread. Known as "spice bread" in France, "pepper cake" in Germany and a favorite holiday treat in the home of Walt Disney, it's a dish that dates back to years with three digits. All of us at *Disney Files* Magazine wish you the sweetest and happiest of holidays, and we encourage you to look for "Eat Like Walt: The Wonderful World of Disney Food" wherever books are sold.

### SERVES: 9

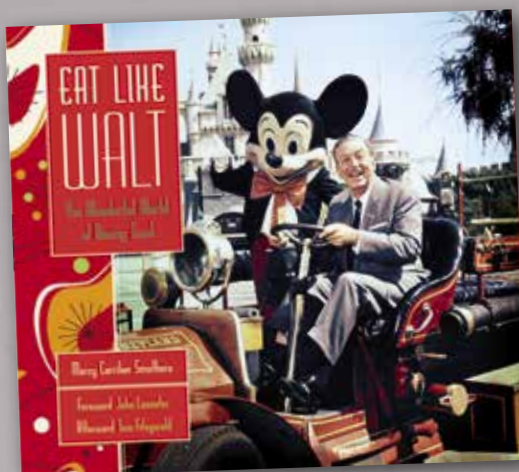
#### Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 cup hot water
- 1/4 cup butter, room temperature
- 1/4 cup vegetable shortening
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 egg, well beaten
- 1 cup molasses
- 2 cups flour, sifted
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

#### Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Dissolve baking soda in hot water. Set aside.
3. Using an electric mixer, cream the butter, shortening and sugar for about 3 minutes.
4. Scrape the mixing bowl before adding egg, molasses, flour, ginger and cinnamon. Blend until combined.
5. Add baking soda water to mixture and beat until smooth (about 1 minute).
6. Grease and flour an 8-inch-by-8-inch pan. Pour in batter.
7. Bake for 20-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean.
8. Allow to cool before cutting into nine even pieces and serving.

**TIP:** lightly coating your measuring cup with cooking spray before measuring out your molasses will help the molasses pour easily and completely.



# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

new or noteworthy in our magical community



**Meet your new neighbor:** Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge recently welcomed a new okapi calf to its animal family. The calf's parents were chosen to breed through the Species Survival Plan, overseen by the

Association of Zoos and Aquariums to ensure the responsible breeding of threatened and endangered species. Okapis are an endangered species found in rainforests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The reclusive animals, known in some circles as "ghosts of the forest," evaded human discovery until 1901. Poaching, coupled with habitat loss from commercial logging and mining, have reduced the wild population to approximately 20,000 okapi. The Walt Disney Company, through the Disney Conservation Fund and its involvement with the Species Survival Plan, has been at the forefront of okapi conservation for many years, including a long-standing relationship with the Okapi Conservation Project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Weighing a healthy 54 pounds at birth in October, the new calf at Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge settled in backstage for several months of bonding with its mother. In the months ahead, the calf will begin exploring the resort's savanna, which is home to more than 30 species of African wildlife.

**More online-booking enhancements:** The Disney Vacation Club Resort online booking tool ([disneyvacationclub.com](http://disneyvacationclub.com), Plan Vacations tab) continues to evolve based on Member feedback. Beyond the reservation-modification options referenced on page 2 of this magazine, recent enhancements to the tool allow Members to bank points during the online-reservations process, modify a Disney Dining Plan and update resort-search criteria directly from the search-results page.

**Accessible rooms:** While Disney's Hilton Head Island Resort makes heavy use of stairways, select rooms are accessible without stairs. As a limited number of these accommodations are available, be sure to reserve an ADA accessible room when making your reservation if you or someone in your party isn't able to navigate stairs. To see which accessible-room options are available at this and other Disney Vacation Club Resorts before booking your vacation, log into [disneyvacationclub.com](http://disneyvacationclub.com), select your desired resort on the "Find Destinations" tab, click "Rooms & Points," enter your desired check-in and check-out dates (along with the number of people in your party and your desired room type), and be sure to check the "Accessible Rooms" box before clicking "Check Availability." You'll then see detailed descriptions of available accommodations, complete with notes about each room type's accessible features.



**Limited Member Cruise staterooms remain available:** At press time, a limited number of staterooms remain available for the next Disney Vacation Club Member Cruise, sailing May 15-20, 2019 from San Diego, California to Vancouver, B.C., with stops in San Francisco, California and Victoria, B.C. Elevating the already spectacular Disney Cruise Line experience with in-room gifts, special entertainment and more, this "California to Canada" voyage will celebrate the past, present and future of Disney in memorable fashion. Call Member Services for reservations.\*

\*See important eligibility information at the bottom of page 1





**A more flexible Reunion Station:** Disney Vacation Club has added a new level of flexibility to Reunion Station, the re-imagined railroad depot at the edge of Bay Lake at Disney's Wilderness Lodge. The made-for-Members venue is home to a variety of paid workshops and experiences in the afternoon, and a food-and-beverage-inclusive private lounge in the morning and evening. Private-lounge access (available to Members\* for \$50 a day for adults and \$33 a day for kids ages 3-9) initially required Members to stay at Disney's Wilderness Lodge, and to add this option for their entire travel party and for their entire length of stay. Based on Member requests for greater flexibility, those requirements no longer apply. Call Member Services to add Reunion Station lounge access for any number of people in your traveling party and for whichever dates best suit the needs of your vacation, with or without a resort stay.



**Painting Around the Neighborhood:** Here's a look at just a few of the painting workshops now available around the neighborhood at Walt Disney World Resort. Note that these two-hour, \$50-per-person (plus tax) experiences are available to participants ages 12 or older, and that pricing and schedules are subject to change. Alcoholic beverages available only to those ages 21 or older. Call Member Services for details or reservations.



**Bay Lake Tower at Disney's Contemporary Resort:** Available exclusively to eligible Members\* and their guests on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons inside the Top of the World Lounge atop Bay Lake Tower at Disney's Contemporary Resort as part of Membership Magic, the "Painting with a View" experience teaches participants to paint a classic Disney image and includes a light breakfast (morning class) or snacks (afternoon class) with a non-alcoholic beverage, or a glass of beer or wine.

**Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge:** Available to both Members and guests most Sundays and Wednesdays (midday), the "Wild About Painting" experience (pictured above) teaches Members and guests to paint an animal-inspired masterpiece on the Kuba Terrace (just outside the Jambo House lobby, overlooking Arusha Rock) and includes a cocktail or non-alcoholic beverage.

**Disney's BoardWalk entertainment district:** Members and guests may choose from two workshops in the Disney's BoardWalk entertainment district: "Canvas Painting on the Boards" at the Trattoria al Forno restaurant on Tuesday afternoons and "Wine Glass Painting on the Boards" next door at Abracadabar on Thursday afternoons. Both classes include snacks, as well as a cocktail or non-alcoholic beverage.

\*See page 1 for important eligibility information.

## 2019 A big year to be here

New Walt Disney World experiences begin in January at all four parks

**Walt Disney World Resort:** While Disney Vacation Club Members know that every year is the year to be here, Walt Disney World Resort is pulling out all the stops in 2019, making now, more than ever, the perfect time to plan a trip “home.” From street parties honoring Disney’s first couple and an “Incredible” transformation of Pixar Place to a milestone celebration of *The Lion King* and an epic expansion of concerts under the stars, new and limited-time experiences will debut in all four Walt Disney World Theme Parks. Here’s a quick look at just some of what’s in store for the New Year.

### Magic Kingdom®

Mickey & Minnie’s Surprise Celebration kicks off on Jan. 18, honoring Disney’s first couple with new entertainment, merchandise, specialty foods and more. Highlighting the celebration will be the new “Move It! Shake It! MouskeDance It! Street Party,” an ongoing processional performed multiple times daily with singing hosts joining Mickey, Minnie and friends on Main Street, U.S.A. While on Main Street, U.S.A., keep an ear out for the Dapper Dans, the Casey’s Corner pianist and other surprise performers, each of whom will have some new Mickey and Minnie magic in their repertoire from Jan. 18-Sept. 30.



### Epcot®

During the Epcot International Festival of the Arts, celebrating culinary, visual and performance arts from Jan. 18-Feb. 25, the hit Disney on Broadway Concert Series will expand to seven days a week. Each week will pair different duos of Disney on Broadway stars for live performances at the America Gardens Theatre.

Also expanding its presence in that theatre is the Garden Rocks Concert Series as part of the Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival, blooming with outdoor kitchens, Disney-themed topiary sculptures, elaborate gardens and more from March 6-June 3. Like the Disney on Broadway Concert Series, the Garden Rocks Concert Series expands to seven days a week in 2019, performing an unprecedented 270 concerts during the spring festival!

And be sure to stick around for the end of the park’s operating day to bid a fond farewell to IllumiNations: Reflections of Earth, which will end its nearly 20-year run in the second half of 2019 to make way for a new nighttime spectacular now in development.





©Disney/Pixar

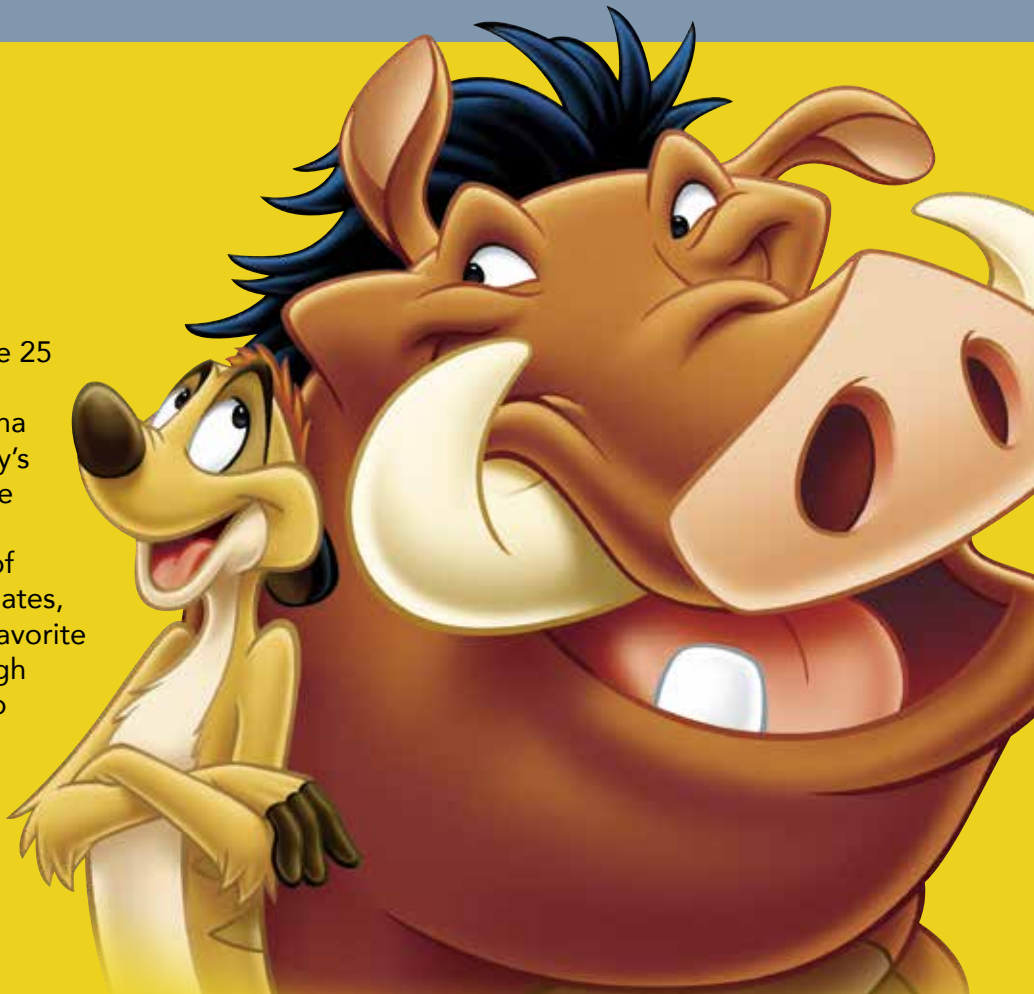
At Disney's Hollywood Studios, which marks its milestone 30th anniversary on May 1, Pixar Pals will find new ways to engage guests in 2019. Beginning Jan. 18, for example, the park's Pixar Place will transform into a Metroville city block from "The Incredibles" films, where guests will meet super suit designer Edna Mode and see some of her greatest creations. Keep an eye out for clues to the whereabouts of the mischievous and multi-powered Jack-Jack, and look for a lively party at the end of the block celebrating the heroic deeds of Mr. Incredible, Mrs. Incredible and Frozone, who will make appearances throughout the day.

Jan. 18 also opens a door to the monster world for photo opportunities with Mike and Sulley (of "Monsters, Inc." and "Monsters University" fame) inside the Walt Disney Presents attraction.

And later in the spring, look for Lightning McQueen's Racing Academy to speed into the park, bringing guests face to face with the racing legend as the next generation of rookies learn from Lightning's years of experience on the track. It's a new show experience spotlighting the untold story of Lightning McQueen – as told by Lightning McQueen!

## Disney's ANIMAL KINGDOM

From Jan. 18-Sept. 30, celebrate 25 years of *The Lion King* and unleash your inner animal during the "Hakuna Matata Time Dance Party" at Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park, where Timon and Rafiki will dance with revelers to the World Beat sounds of live musicians. During those same dates, "picture" yourself in some of your favorite moments from *The Lion King* through immersive, three-dimensional photo locations, and stay tuned for news about additional celebrations of *The Lion King* in the works for Disney's wildest park.



# BUZZWORTHY

7 STORIES • 2 PAGES • 1 SPACE RANGER



**Disney Cruise Line:** The Southern city that inspired everything from New Orleans Square at Disneyland Park to Disney's Port Orleans Resort at Walt Disney World Resort to "The Princess and the Frog" on the silver screen will become a port of debarkation for Disney Cruise Line guests in 2020 as Disney Wonder sailings embark for the first time from New Orleans, with departure dates from Feb. 7 through March 6, 2020. Itinerary options from "the Big Easy" include four-, six- and seven-night Western Caribbean sailings, a seven-night Bahamian voyage and a 14-night Panama Canal cruise. Other Disney Wonder sailings in 2020 include a return to Hawai'i after a five-year hiatus (a nine-night voyage from Vancouver to Honolulu departing April 29, 2020 and a 10-night cruise back to Vancouver departing May 8, 2020) and returns to popular home ports on both coasts, from January 2020 sailings to the Southern Caribbean out of San Juan, Puerto Rico to spring sailings to the Mexican Riviera from San Diego, California. Learn more about these and other 2020 Disney Cruise Line options (including a variety of Bahamian and Caribbean sailings from Florida aboard the Disney Magic, Disney Dream and Disney Fantasy) online at [disneycruise.com](http://disneycruise.com) (Ports and Itineraries for 2020 page) before calling Member Services to book your voyage.\*

## Disneyland and Walt Disney World Resort:

The World of Disney stores in the Downtown Disney District at Disneyland Resort and Disney Springs at Walt Disney World Resort recently revealed their enchanting new look. Inspired by Disney animation and rooted in the art form's storied history, the re-imagined stores feature ink and paint jars that periodically erupt with color to bring nearby artwork to life, movie posters that animate with a sprinkling of pixie dust, blank canvases that magically become animation pencil tests and more. Beyond the visual spectacle, the stores continue to offer the resorts' largest collection of Disney merchandise, including limited-time items and new-product releases for all ages.

**Walt Disney World Resort:** From the team that brought you closer to elephants with the "Caring for Giants" experience comes "Up Close with Rhinos," an hour-long Disney's Animal Kingdom tour launched this fall. Participants go backstage and learn about challenges facing wild rhino populations before meeting some of the white rhinos who call the park home, gaining an even greater appreciation for these gentle giants. As part of Membership Magic, eligible Disney Vacation Club Members\* enjoy a 15 percent discount off the tour price of \$40 a person ages four or older (note that net profits from this experience benefit the Disney Conservation Fund). Call Member Services for reservations. (Tip: to enjoy Disney animal insights between vacations, check out the short-format animal videos now streaming on the DisneyNOW app, available for a variety of devices and platforms.)

**Disney Parks:** Disney Legend Richard Sherman, who with his brother Robert wrote some of the most memorable music in Disney theme park and cinematic history (from "it's a small world," Walt Disney's Carousel of Progress and Walt Disney's Enchanted Tiki Room in the parks to "Mary Poppins" and "The Jungle Book" on the silver screen) is

\*See important eligibility information at the bottom of page 1





sharing some of his favorite Disney Parks tunes through Apple Music and the new Play Disney Parks app. Look – and listen – for Richard’s selections as part of the “Disney Parks Hits” playlist. Visit [apple.co/DisneyParksHits](https://apple.co/DisneyParksHits) to listen anytime through Apple Music, or look for the “Disney Parks Hits” playlist within the Play Disney Parks app.

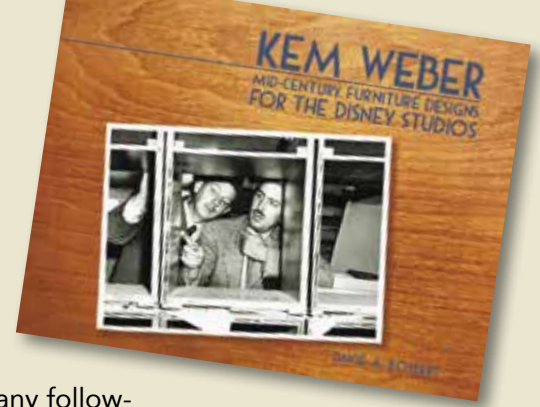
**The Walt Disney Company:** By mid-2019, The Walt Disney Company will eliminate single-use plastic straws and stirrers at all Disney-owned-and-operated locations across the globe, amounting to a reduction of more than 175 million straws and 13 million stirrers annually. Over the next few years at Disney resort hotels and aboard Disney Cruise Line ships, in-room amenities (shampoo, conditioner, etc.) will transition to refillable dispensers as part of an effort to reduce plastics in guest rooms by 80 percent. Merchandise shops, meanwhile, will reduce the number of plastic shopping bags distributed by offering guests the option of purchasing reusable bags at a nominal price. Finally, the company will complete its work to eliminate polystyrene cups across its businesses. These latest steps in the company’s longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship join ongoing efforts to reduce emissions (the company reduced its net emissions by 41 percent in 2017 and aims to reduce emissions by 50 percent by 2020), conserve water (current potable water consumption is maintained at 2013 levels) and divert waste (the company diverted 46 percent of its waste from landfills and incineration in 2017 and aims to divert 50 percent of its waste by 2020).

**Walt Disney World Resort:** A new, interactive calendar online at [disneyworld.com](https://disneyworld.com) displays Walt Disney World Theme Park ticket prices that now vary by date. The calendar is particularly useful for Members and guests who prefer to visit during off-peak times, allowing one to easily identify the lowest-priced dates. (Tickets also remain available for purchase by phone through Member Services, and in person at Walt Disney World ticket and Guest Relations windows, and other authorized ticket-seller locations.) The move to date-based pricing aims to better distribute attendance throughout the year as part of a broader effort to continue improving the in-park experience. For more details, visit [disneyworld.com](https://disneyworld.com) or log into the My Disney Experience mobile app, where you can purchase tickets and customize your vacation plans.



**Walt Disney World Resort:** Keep an eye out for some new additions to the Disney’s Animal Kingdom family during your next Kilimanjaro Safaris expedition, including a baby Masai giraffe born at the park on June 29 and a baby mandrill born at the park on Aug. 8. The births are part of the park’s participation in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ Species Survival Plans, designed to facilitate the responsible breeding of threatened and endangered species as part of a broader effort to maintain healthy and genetically diverse populations. Poaching and habitat loss in Africa continue to threaten vulnerable Masai giraffe and mandrill populations in the wild. The Disney Conservation Fund supports conservation efforts in Africa to protect the animals’ natural habitats. Learn more about these and other animals, as well as animal experiences at Walt Disney World Resort, online at [DisneyAnimals.com](https://DisneyAnimals.com).

**Editor's note:** Disney's magical mid-century continues to be a time of tremendous fascination for Disney Vacation Club Members. Whether we explore this pivotal period of Disney history through Member Cruise presentations or the pages of *Disney Files Magazine*, Members consistently ask for more. Many follow-up questions involve architect and industrial designer Kem Weber, whose sleek, mid-century furnishings aided animators and established the visual identity of the Disney Studios. To learn more about Weber's most influential creations, we turned to our friend and multi-Member Cruise presenter Dave Bossert, who happens to have written a book on the topic. Look for "Kem Weber: Mid-Century Furniture Designs for the Disney Studios" wherever books are sold.



## *The Desk That Changed Everything*

Kem Weber and the iconic furnishings of the Disney Studios

By Dave Bossert

The Kem Weber Disney animation desk may be the most influential piece of furniture in Hollywood history.

The vision of legendary architect and industrial designer Kem Weber, who in 1939 served as chief designer for the Burbank, Calif., campus known today as the Walt Disney Studios, the desk was the product of a collaboration with animator and Disney Legend Frank Thomas.

Frank, one of Walt Disney's legendary "Nine Old Men," worked closely with Weber to perfect the desk's design, refining the prototype during production of *Pinocchio* at Disney's Hyperion Studio. The resulting desk was built in sections

featuring interlocking channels that allowed artists to mix and match components to best suit their unique discipline and individual needs.

The customizable desk was a revolution, freeing animators from the hodgepodge of desks and drawing boards that once

cluttered their workspaces and making Disney the first studio to create custom furniture specifically designed for the animation process.

"I started out in a room next to Eric Larson [Disney Legend and another of Walt's "Nine Old Men"] ... working at those desks," recalled John Musker, who with his directing partner Ron Clements brought you such modern classics as "The Little Mermaid," "Aladdin," "Hercules," "The Princess and the Frog" and "Moana." "Right away, you got a feeling of the Disney tradition. It was really like we were stepping up from a VW to a Cadillac in terms of the bells and whistles of the desk—the different drawers, the shelves, the way it could tilt and move and the features, the whole thing."

The modified animator's desk, UNIT No. 19, was a more compact desk that featured drawers or cabinet space to the right of the drawing surface. The desk's left side featured a three-inch-wide wood support structure with a rounded face. Several of Walt's "Nine Old Men" even had these desks, which took up less space than traditional models, in their homes.

Another variant of the animators desk was UNIT No. 22, the assistant animator's and in-betweener's desk. Similar to the animator's desk but with more shelf space, this model was ideal for artists who



*The Kem Weber-designed assistant animator's/in-betweener's desk, with additional shelf space and removable inserts (©TheOldMillPress)*





needed to spread out their drawings. An additional flex unit could sit atop the upper-most shelf to provide additional layout space or stand vertically to serve as an end table.

Each desk was equipped with a mechanism beneath the drawing board to allow the animator to adjust the angle of the drawing surface with the pull of a lever (likely simplified from a previously considered foot-pedal mechanism).

Even the drawer handles were thoughtfully designed. Flush mounted above recessed channels, the metal handles doubled as bottle openers. More than a gimmick, that attention to detail and comfort created a sense of permanency for a studio that had occupied multiple spaces in its infancy.

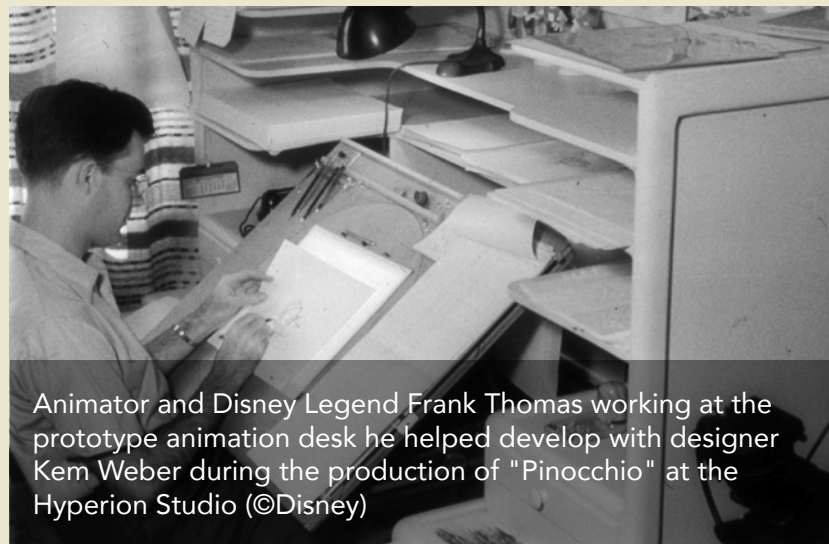
"You knew what you were doing," Musker added. "It was an art form, and it was a craft. And the desks emphasized that as much as anything in that they were so solidly built. They weren't gonna crack or break or give way, and they withstood years and years of filmmaking. But, you definitely got a feeling that you were one in a line of artists. You were part of the Knights of the Roundtable ... you just were part of a tradition, and that was cool."

### *About the author:*

David A. Bossert is an award-winning artist, filmmaker and author. He is a veteran of The Walt Disney Company and is an independent producer, creative director and writer. Bossert is considered an authority and expert on Disney animation history. He is a member of the CalArts Board of Trustees and is a visiting scholar at Carnegie Mellon University's Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) in Pittsburgh. Bossert co-authored *Disney Animated*, which was named iPad App of 2013 by Apple and won a prestigious British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) award. He is also the author of several books, including "Oswald the Lucky Rabbit: The Search for the Lost Disney Cartoons," published by Disney Editions, and "Kem Weber: Mid-Century Furniture Designs for the Disney Studios," published by The Old Mill Press. Learn more online at [davidbossert.com](http://davidbossert.com).



An early concept painting of an animation/layout desk by Kem Weber, including the once-considered foot-pedal mechanism to adjust the drawing board. (©UCSB)



Animator and Disney Legend Frank Thomas working at the prototype animation desk he helped develop with designer Kem Weber during the production of "Pinocchio" at the Hyperion Studio (©Disney)

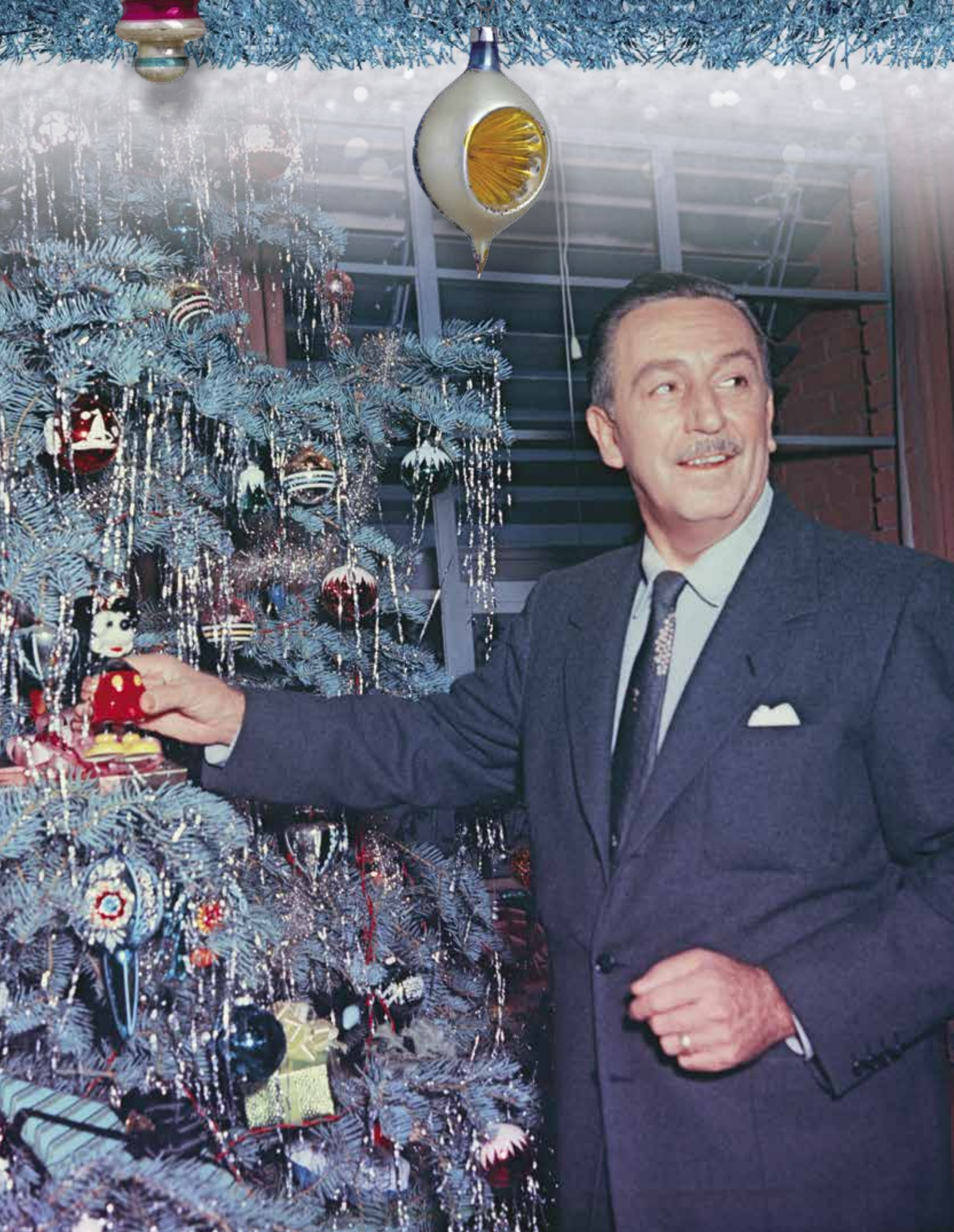


Animator and Disney Legend Andreas Deja at his Kem Weber-designed animation desk, which once belonged to animator and Disney Legend Milt Kahl (photo by Dave Bossert ©2018)



Kem Weber, Walt Disney and Howard Petersen, owner of Peterson Show Case and Fixture Co., inspecting the furniture construction in process, circa October 1939 (©UCSB)









# WALT DISNEY and the Magic of Christmas



By Jim Korkis

Disney and the holidays seem to go together like peanut butter and chocolate. Whatever traditions you renew during this most wonderful time of the year, chances are they involve family, optimism and joy – each a cornerstone of the Disney experience.

One of my favorite Walt Disney stories, in fact, involves the seemingly inseparable link between Uncle Walt and Christmas – a story you may have read in a letter displayed in the Walt Disney Presents attraction at Disney's Hollywood Studios.

Written by Joyce C. Hall, a good friend of Walt's and the founder of Hallmark (producer of countless Disney greeting cards), the letter recalls an interaction with kids aboard a flight to Southern California. Upon hearing three children excitedly talking about visiting Disneyland, Hall asked the oldest girl whether she thought Walt was a real man or somebody more like Santa Claus. The girl pondered the question for a moment before answering in thoughtful seriousness, "Both."

It's with that enduring connection in mind that I share a few of my other favorite Walt Disney stories of the season, each featured in my new book "Vault of Walt Volume 7: Christmas Edition."

## **A break from business as usual**

"One reason the Christmas season appeals to me is that it makes us suspend the business-as-usual routine and lets our minds soar for a while," Walt Disney wrote in December 1941. "Christmas seems to release even the most solemn of us from the Scrooge realism that occasionally besets all of us."

Walt first experienced that sense of wonder as a small boy growing up on a farm in Marceline, Mo., a place he recalled feeling particularly magical when blanketed in glistening snow that hid unsightly flaws. Routine chores around the farm gave way to holiday preparations that felt much less like "chores," whether Walt was trudging through the snow with his older brothers in search of a perfect Christmas tree or spending time with his mother around a potbellied stove, stringing popcorn and cranberries to decorate the selected tree. Ever the resourceful artist, Walt cut stars and angels from scraps of paper and foil to enhance the decor.

"There were few extra dollars for such frivolities in those days," Walt recalled.

## **The gift of giving**

Accustomed to the modest Christmas gifts he received as a child (he had particularly fond memories of a gyroscopic spinning top he once received from his brother Roy), Walt maintained an appreciation for simple pleasures even after he achieved fortune and fame.

Disney Studio nurse Hazel George, for example, once gave Walt a dime store kaleidoscope for Christmas. He loved it so much that he insisted visitors to his office take a moment to enjoy its changing patterns of light and color.

Believing that every child should share in that joy, Walt in 1947 became one of the founding sponsors of the national Toys for Tots initiative, even designing the organization's red train logo using the skills he had learned as a young man doing logo



design for the Pesmin-Rubin Commercial Art Studio in Kansas City.

"Your local Marine Corps Reserve is doing everything possible to see that no unfortunate child is denied the pleasure of having a present to open this Christmas morning," Walt said during one of his many public service announcements for the charity.

Disney Cast Members continue to support Toys for Tots each holiday season, donating toys, volunteering at collection and distribution centers, and more.

### Sunnee days

Walt loved dogs and welcomed several into his home through the years, the first joining him and his wife, Lillian, at their Lyric Avenue home in the late 1920s.

Lilly wasn't so keen on the idea of getting a dog, what with their smelly and shedding fur. Subsequent research led Walt to the non-shedding, reasonably pleasant smelling Chow that would soon join the Disney family.




About a month before Christmas, Walt bought the six-week-old puppy and hid it at his brother Roy's house next door. As the gift giving got underway, Walt snuck out, placed the puppy in a hat box and slid it under the tree with a tag reading, "To Lilly from Santa Claus."

When Walt's niece picked up the box to hand to Lilly, Walt saw his wife's face begin to sour. She greatly disliked Walt's taste in hats and certainly didn't want him buying her one.

Lilly screamed when the box moved on her lap, and out peeked the adorable little Chow. Lilly







instantly fell in love with little "Sunnee," who would end up sleeping in Walt and Lilly's bedroom every night.

That memorable moment inspired a scene in "Lady and the Tramp" (the only Disney-animated feature that both begins and ends at Christmas) in which a husband gives his wife a cocker spaniel puppy named Lady as a Christmas gift in a hat box. And decades later, the hat box from that scene would appear in the Chapeau hat shop sign in Town Square at Magic Kingdom Park in Florida, where it continues to visually link the shop to the nearby Tony's Town Square Restaurant, also inspired by the film.

### A parting gift

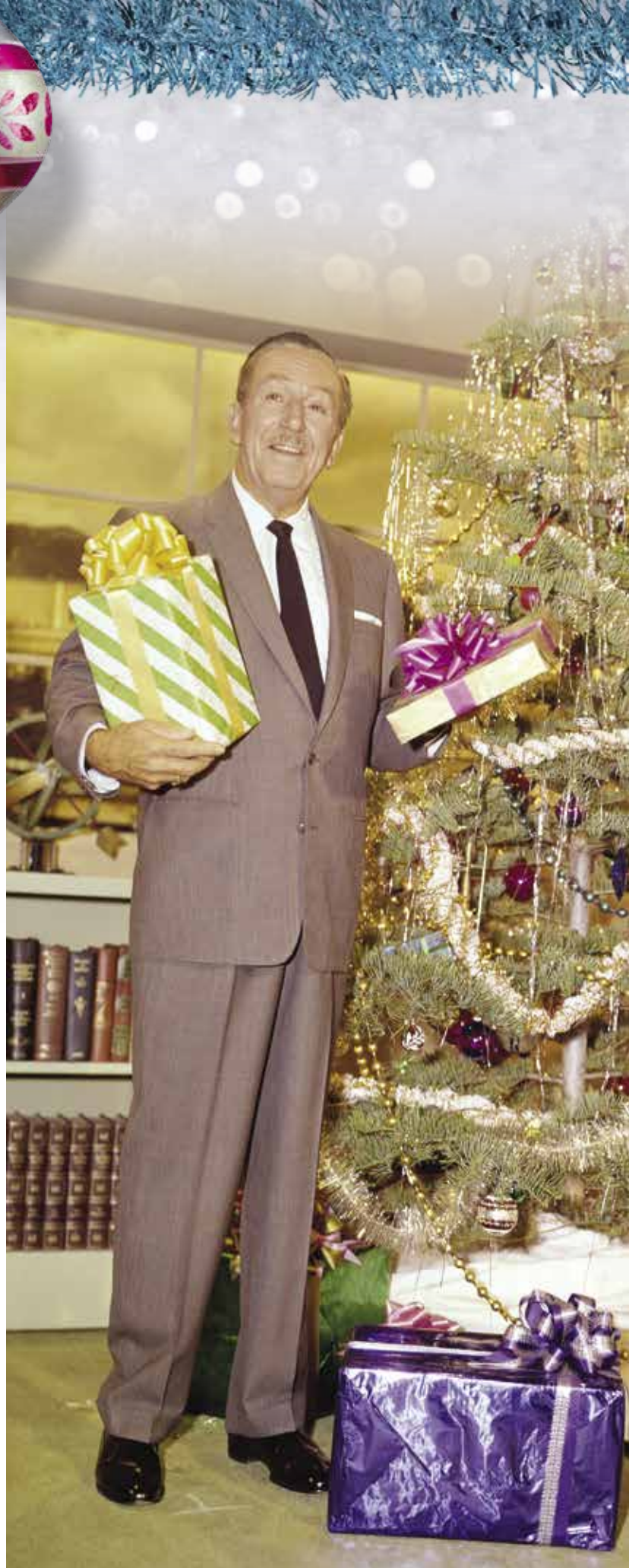
While Walt Disney passed away 10 days shy of Christmas Day in 1966, his last full day of life found him gleefully dreaming of one last gift to the world...and his wife.

Visiting from his bed with Roy on the evening of Dec. 14, 1966, Walt reportedly outlined his vision for EPCOT by pointing to the ceiling, using the hospital's acoustical tiles as a makeshift grid. Roy later recalled Walt pointing to a particular spot on the ceiling and saying, "And that's where we will put a bench so that Lilly and I can sit there and watch all the happy people enjoying the place."

When Roy left, he phoned Lilly and told her that he had never seen Walt happier in his life. Admiral Joe Fowler, who oversaw construction of both Disneyland Park and Walt Disney World Resort, visited Walt earlier that day and had a similar experience.

"Early in the visit, Walt pointed up to the ceiling and verbally started sketching how the place should be laid out, pointing this way and that way, improvising all the time," he recalled. "As ill as he was, he acted like a boy just let out of school."

**Look for more holiday stories from Walt Disney, Disney Parks, Disney films and more in Jim's new book "Vault of Walt Volume 7: Christmas Edition," available wherever books are sold.**

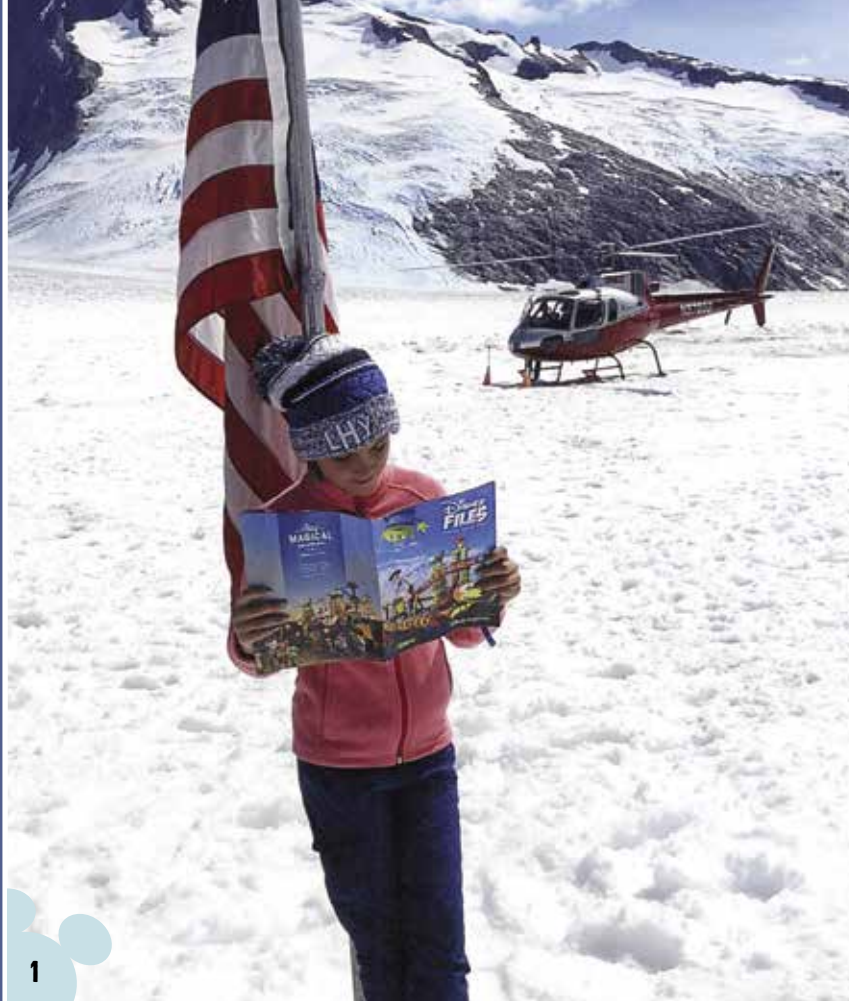






1. Annabelle of New Jersey, part of a Member family since 2013, waits for her flight on Alaska's Mendenhall Glacier.
2. Inspired by our spring issue's celebration of a Disney's Animal Kingdom anniversary, Mary and Fred of New York, Members since 1992, celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with a donkey on the Greek Island of Crete.
3. The T-shirts of Mike, Jillian, Maryann and Arthur of New Jersey, Members since 2003, are fashionable "signs" of Disney fandom.
4. With frozen fractals all around, friends Grace and Michela star in this stunning photo submitted by Shauna and Torrey of Connecticut, Members since 2011.
5. Dozens of Members have submitted fun photos of their families "playing big" in Toy Story Land with our summer issue in hand. Our favorite is this shot of Emily, Kaitlyn and Megan of Illinois (part of a Member family since 2007), with Slinky Dog appearing to read over their shoulders.
6. Adriana of California, whose parents have been Members since 2007, "forces" her way through the *Disney Fantasy* during a Star Wars Day at Sea.
7. Eliza, Lisa and Thomas of Texas, Members since 2014, warm up with some good reading after sleeping in an ice hotel on Hoth. Wait, that's Canada.
8. Like many Members, Concettina, Bernard, Marisa, Anthony, Jamie and Joseph, part of a Member family since 2008, spend the holidays dreaming of Disney vacations in the New Year.
9. Young Eloise of Pennsylvania, whose grandparents have been Members since 1999, rounds up a new friend during her first Walt Disney World vacation.

**Send your photos** (keeping copies for yourself as we won't return ours) to Disney Files Magazine, Disney Vacation Club, 1390 Celebration Blvd., Celebration, FL 34747. Remember to include your name, hometown and "Member Since" year, along with a signed release form for each person pictured. The form is available online at [disneyvacationclub.com/releaseform](http://disneyvacationclub.com/releaseform).



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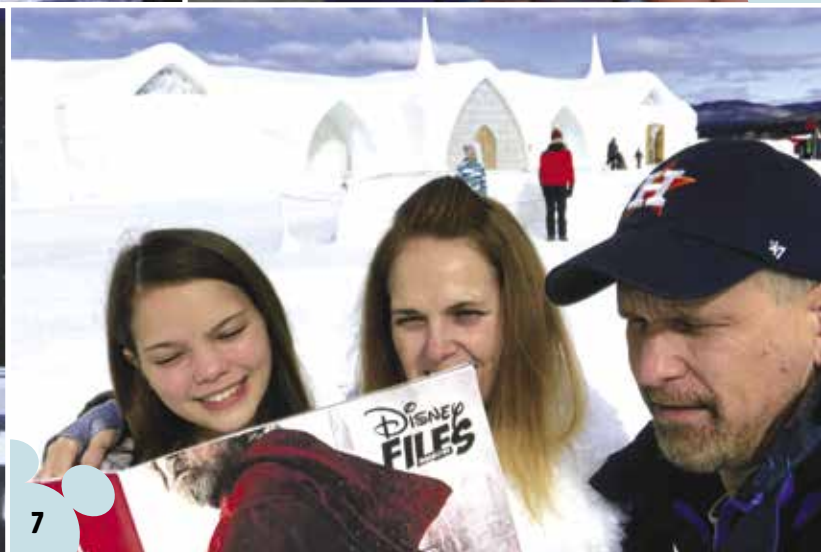
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— Stay —  
**MAGICAL**  
*year after year*



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"One reason the Christmas season  
appeals to me is that it makes us  
suspend the business-as-usual  
routine and lets our minds soar."

— Walt Disney

