



Harris Center

Three Stages at Folsom Lake College

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NOT THE WORLD'S GREATEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, ADAM STELTZNER LED THE NASA TEAM THAT LANDED THE CURIOSITY ON MARS

His lecture is entitled "How Curiosity Changed My Life"

(August 13, 2019, Folsom, CA) With a rock star's presence, a storyteller's gift and a PhD in physics, award-winning rocket scientist Adam Steltzner is simultaneously recognized as one of NASA's most brilliant engineers and most unique individuals. He was an aspiring rock star on his way home from a gig when he noticed that the constellation of Orion had shifted — an observation that sparked his desire to know the laws that govern the universe. He enrolled in a community college in Northern California; by 35 he was an engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratories. There he led a team of engineers in inventing the system that successfully placed the Mars rover Curiosity on Mars.

The first lecturer in the Folsom Lake College Speaker Series, Adam Steltzner will deliver his lecture "How Curiosity Changed My Life" on Thursday, September 5 at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$28-\$48; Premium \$52. Children and Students with ID \$12. Tickets are available online at www.harriscenter.net or from the Harris Center Ticket Office at 916-608-6888 from 12 noon to 6 pm, Monday through Saturday, and two hours before show time. Parking is included in the price of the ticket. The Harris Center is located on the west side of Folsom Lake College campus in Folsom, CA, facing East Bidwell Street.

At 20, he was an aspiring rock star who hadn't done well in high school. As reported in the *Rapid City Journal*, " 'In high school, I had done a really good job of convincing myself that I was not an academic.' He failed geometry and passed the second time with an F plus. 'Miss Hunter just didn't want to see me in the classroom anymore.' After high school he studied music for a year and eventually ended up playing bass in a band called Stick Figures."

But on his way home from a gig, he noticed that the constellation of Orion had shifted from where it was hours before. " 'Orion had been in the east when I went to play a show, and it was in the west when I came home," Steltzner said. He wanted to know why Orion had moved across the sky, so he enrolled in a College of Marin astronomy class and took a physics course. The spark was struck. He went on to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering at University of California, Davis; a Master of Science degree in applied mechanics at California Institute of Technology, and a Ph.D. in engineering mechanics at University of Wisconsin–Madison. By 35, he was an engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratories

For 10 years, Steltzner led a team of engineers inventing, designing, testing and retesting the revolutionary "sky crane" landing system that successfully placed the Mars rover, Curiosity on the Martian surface in 2012. Five times heavier than its predecessors, Curiosity required an entirely new landing system for the perilous seven minute phase when the one-ton rover—entering Martian atmosphere at 13,000 mph—must stop fully on the surface.

(Those seven minutes are called "the seven minutes of terror"; a video description of that ordeal, featuring Adam and others, is available here: <https://go.nasa.gov/2yUlbeA>)

Since then, he's been awarded honors ranging from the Smithsonian's American Ingenuity Award in technology, to GQ magazine's Spaceman of the Year.

"In the past, according to Steltzner, space exploration had always been rationalized by the spinoff technology it created. He joked that Teflon, a space race byproduct, made 'many pans very slippery. And Tang came out of that,' he added with a laugh. But now, Steltzner says space exploration is different. 'I vastly prefer to say that we do it for no good reason'" (*Rapid City Journal*).

With a unique, exciting and inspiring narrative, Steltzner discusses the power of human curiosity, the importance of fostering a culture of collaborative innovation and proves that with the *Right Kind of Crazy*, we can significantly expand boundaries and achieve the impossible. His insight and journey are captured in his book, *The Right Kind of Crazy: A True Story of Teamwork, Leadership and High Stakes Innovation*.

Next month at the Harris Center

The Harris Center presents the romantic lyrics and lush harmonies of Latin America in Ánimo Production's **Boleros de Noche** on September 20, featuring **Los Panchos** and the all-female **Trio Ellas**, a recent Latin Grammy nominee. Elite circus artists and acrobats from the Hebei province, China, **Cirque Mei** dazzles for three shows September 21-22. **The Greatest Love Of All**, a tribute to **Whitney Houston** starring **Belinda Davids**, returns by popular demand with two performances of "vocal power and precision that are a perfect match for

Whitney's power ballads" (*Herald Sun*; September 24-25). The poignant Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning musical ***RENT*** takes the stage for five performances September 27-29. And **The Simon & Garfunkel Story** uses state-of-the-art video projection and a crack live band to tell the tale of the two young boys from Queens (September 30).

This Year Marks Nine Seasons of Great Shows. Up Close. In Folsom!

The Harris Center for the Arts at Folsom Lake College brings the community together to share in cultural experiences, presenting the work of artists from throughout the region and around the world. Built and operated by the Los Rios Community College District, the \$50 million, state-of-the-art regional performing arts center boasts three intimate venues with outstanding acoustics, an art gallery, a recording studio, elegant teaching spaces, plenty of safe parking and all the other amenities of a world-class performing arts venue. Each year the Center hosts over 400 events attracting 150,000 annually.

Event Summary

What: **Adam Steltzner, "How Curiosity Changed My Life"**
When: Thursday, September 5 at 7:30 pm
Where: Harris Center for the Arts at Folsom Lake College
10 College Parkway
Folsom, CA 95630
Ticket Price: \$28-\$48; Premium \$52. Children and Students with ID \$12
Tickets: www.HarrisCenter.net

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