



# HISTORIC MONTCLAIR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.

founded 1907 Denver, CO

4th Quarter 2006

[www.HistoricMontclair.org](http://www.HistoricMontclair.org)

[info@HistoricMontclair.org](mailto:info@HistoricMontclair.org)

## HMCAI Events

### ***Snacks with Santa***

The HMCAI annual Snacks with Santa will be held on Sunday, December 17th from 1-3 pm at the historic Molkery in Montclair Park.

This is a great opportunity for Historic Montclair families to have a pre-holiday get together. Crafts will be available for parents and their children to make together. Kids can talk to Santa in a fun, relaxed environment. Santa will give each child a small gift. Light refreshments will be served. Parents, please bring a small, wrapped gift (approximately \$5.00) for Santa's big gift exchange box - 1 gift per child you bring. Gifts should be appropriate for any age, girl or boy.

Please join us for snacks, Santa, and crafts. We look forward to seeing you!

### ***HMCAI 100th Anniversary in 2007 -- Call for Volunteers***

Historic Montclair Community Association, Inc. will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary year in 2007. HMCAI has set aside the weekend of May 19-20, 2007 for its primary celebration. The Denver Municipal Band is the premier event of Sunday afternoon, but the weekend also includes involvement by the neighborhood's churches and schools, a history walk and, of course, cake and ice cream for all on Sunday afternoon.

HMCAI needs volunteers to help coordinate the numerous events. Please email the organization at [info@historicmontclair.org](mailto:info@historicmontclair.org) or call Nancy Mucker at 303-808-4520 if you would like to volunteer. Please indicate your preferences to help:

- Entertainment
- Coordination with churches and schools
- Saturday events (history walk and cocktail party at the Molkery)
- Speakers for Sunday
- Compilation of remembrance book
- Sunday refreshments
- Clean up crews

Make sure to include your name, the best way to reach you and your preferences. Thank you for your ongoing support of HMCAI and its events.

### ***Decorating the Molkery***

Please join the HMCAI board members on Thursday, December 7th at 5:30 pm to help us decorate the Molkery in Montclair Park. Refreshments will be served. Please email Gail Barry at [gail@landmarkdesigninc.com](mailto:gail@landmarkdesigninc.com) with questions about the event.

# The Montclair Conspiracy - Early Efforts at an Improvement Society

by Bill Hansen (Editor note: this is the second in a series of articles detailing Montclair's colorful history as we approach the 100th anniversary of our association)

Forced annexation into the new City and County of Denver appeared imminent in 1901. Denver had annexed all of the neighboring lands in 1893 and coveted the upscale suburban Township but Montclair had held out. The crash of 1893 had stifled Montclair's development and improvements and Denver promised paved highways, tree-lined boulevards, improved water and sewage systems and other amenities. Nonetheless, a divisive vote for annexation in 1896 failed.

Montclair was proud of its independent school system and was especially boastful of its village form of government whose members refused compensation while dealing with such weighty matters as passing quaint, often handwritten village ordinances that prohibited public quarreling and vulgar language, regulated the construction of "privy vaults," proscribed "indecent dress," declared wandering cattle and barking dogs as nuisances, and also made it against the law to "frighten, molest or injure song-birds." Most importantly, Montclair's ban on alcohol had remained intact and, by 1901, Montclair could proudly declare that there were still no saloons, roadhouses, gaming resorts nor objectionable features of any kind within its family-oriented corporate limits. Besides, virtually all houses had electricity, telephone connections and public water. However, despite seven miles of stone sidewalks, the streets remained unpaved and often impassable quagmires of mud in winter and spring. Absent a sewer system, privies and cesspools were still used for sanitation, and lack of gas lines meant cooking and heating were done by coal.

Despite Montclair's desire for continued autonomy, Denver's quest for expansion and annexation would not be denied. In 1901, the push for the Rush Amendment to the Colorado Constitution would dissolve the former Arapahoe County and merge all of its inhabitants into the newly formed City and County of Denver. Under the guise of "home rule," 59.25 square miles would be forcefully added including Montclair. Angry Montclairions responded with the slogan: "Coerced annexation is not just home rule!"

At a public meeting on February 18, 1901, attended by Senator Rush as well as several hundred cheering citizens of Montclair, Mayor Harlan Thomas made a passionate speech worthy of Patrick Henry: "I would rather walk twenty miles in Hell than go to the City of Denver to pay my taxes!" Montclair sought to be exempt from the "turmoil and strife of a boss-ridden city." Town Trustee T.J. Anders joined the chorus of opposition by proclaiming that citizens did not wish to "go to the officials of Denver as cringing slaves to ask for a pittance." A declaration of continued independence was approved by the citizenry stating that Montclair desired to remain:

*...aloof from the influences, political or otherwise, which control the affairs of the City of Denver. . .[I]t is proposed to take away from us the present government and local conditions so satisfactory to all concerned, to submerge the town and school district into a vast body of municipal concerns. . .of which we would become an insignificant and unimportant element.*

Funds were raised to continue the battle in the courts to challenge the constitutionality of the Rush Amendment and prevent the election scheduled for November, 1902 with its expected results.

Others within the Town saw an opportunity. By late 1902, with annexation now imminent, a number of the local luminaries met in the law offices of ex-Mayor Sylvester G. Williams to formalize plans for a Montclair Improvement Society. It was stated publicly:

*We are forming this society simply to have an organized body to keep Montclair in fine shape. We have no intention of saddling any municipal debts on Denver.*

(Continued on Page 5)

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## HMCAI Archives to be Donated to Denver Public Library

by William J. Hansen

HMCAI's Board has accumulated several boxes of HMCAI records dating back to the 1970s when it was still simply the Montclair Community Association, Inc. Alas, older records appear lost. Former Officers and Board members have also contributed their own personal files. These archives will be donated to the Denver Public Library - Western History Department, which will make them available for public access. DPL-WHD already has records for Mayfair Neighbors and Greater Park Hill. If any of you have your own collections from serving as an Officer or on the Board, DPL would welcome their donation. Please contact Joan Parker Harms, Acquisitions Specialist, (720) 865-1810 or at [jharms@denver.lib.co.us](mailto:jharms@denver.lib.co.us). If you don't want to take them downtown, they can be dropped off at any branch library.

## Contest for New HMCAI Logo

As we approach our 100th anniversary as a community association, we have decided that it is high time for a new logo. As you can see from the masthead of this newsletter, our existing logo is showing its age. So, we are asking for anyone interested in designing a new logo for HMCAI to participate in our contest. Winner will receive a cash prize of \$100 from HMCAI. The only guidelines for the logo is that it should represent our historic neighborhood and, in some way, incorporate the fact that HMCAI is celebrating its 100th birthday in 2007. Please submit your entry via email to: [info@historicmontclair.org](mailto:info@historicmontclair.org). Deadline for submission is January 30, 2007. All entries become property of HMCAI.



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**INTERESTED? PLEASE GIVE US A NO-OBLIGATION CALL.**

## A Sampling of Holiday Events

### **Chriskindl Market**

Denver Pavilions 11/24-12/18

The gaily decorated wooden huts and unusual wares of vendors both European and American capture the holiday spirit in Denver. The celebration is chock-full of holiday cheer with merchandise, carolers, and lighted Christmas trees. The festival features traditional German treats and a variety of gifts. Handcrafted musical instruments, nutcrackers, wooden toys, porcelain, lace and glass-blown ornaments are just some of the stocking stuffers you'll find for sale.

### **A Christmas Carol**

Denver Center for the Performing Arts 11/24-12/3

Based on the 1843 Dickens novella, this holiday favorite is oft presented but still retains its power to both charm and elicit a tear or two. More than a simple morality tale for children, it's also tightly plotted, well-paced and a gripping melodrama at its most effective and affecting. And, despite its Christmas associations, the story's ultimate affirmation of charity and love remains non-denominational.

### **The Nutcracker**

Nellie Caulkins Opera House 11/25-12/4

Set to Tchaikovsky's sprightly score, E.T.A. Hoffman's fable narrates the Christmas adventures of young Clara, the nutcracker doll she adores and the dangerous, magical adventure she must go on to restore it. Kids love the easy-to-follow story with its comedy, drama and visual excitement as well as the chance to see a same-aged heroine cavort with life-size playthings. Adults allow Tchaikovsky's sparkling, intricate melodies and the lovely dance sequences to remind them of "Nutcrackers" past.

### **Winterfest at Larimer Square**

Larimer Square 11/26-12/5

Winterfest, Larimer Square's annual holiday celebration, is the city's premier gathering place for revelers to shop, stroll, sing and sample simple holiday pleasures--all within an intimate, one-block radius steeped in Victorian tradition and history. The celebration begins with the annual flipping of the switch to illuminate Larimer Square, as well as Denver's grandest outdoor Christmas tree (decorated with more than 300,000 lights and 7,500 feet of fresh garland).

### **Parade of Lights**

City and County Building 12/1-12/2

This signature event is the most popular (and crowded) holiday extravaganza in Denver. The parade weaves its way through downtown, featuring 10 of the state's best high school marching bands as well as majestic floats and giant balloons. Among the most popular floats: "The Arrival of Santa" and "The Clock Tower," which rises 32 feet in the sky and depicts Denver's skyline. Grandstand seats are available for a cost; otherwise, the event is free.

### **Blossoms of Lights**

Denver Botanic Gardens 12/2-12/11

Spectacular lights, vibrant topiaries, whimsical displays and nightly musical performances highlight Blossoms of Light. The nightly celebration transforms the gardens into an electrifying winter wonderland of 900,000-plus sparkling lights. Entertainment includes bell choirs, carolers, dancers and holiday Celtic music. Hot chocolate and warm treats brush away the chill as guests wander through the most spirited paths in the city.

For more information, go to

<http://denver.citysearch.com/roundup/39167>

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## The Montclair Conspiracy

(Continued from Page 2)

Despite this innocent public pronouncement, it is clear that the nascent Society had a hidden agenda - a conspiracy to saddle a lot of municipal debts on Denver. Many of the members of this cabal were lawyers and they had hatched a scheme to ensure Montclair's needed improvements were met by Denver after annexation. At the time of annexation, Denver would succeed to the contracts and debts of the towns it absorbed. If, just prior to annexation, Montclair was to enter into a series of contracts for various services, Denver would ultimately be responsible.

Mr. Williams, Warwick M. Downing, Charles Kittredge and other prominent conspirators shot off a petition to the Town of Montclair officers. The Town government was absorbed in the fight against annexation and was paralyzed in its preparations for the inevitable. The petition urged the Town officials to "prepare for the worst" for, lack of proper preparation "would be regarded as culpable blindness." They urged Montclair to enter into the contracts that Denver would inherit and perhaps be bound to honor. These contracts would include improvements and maintenance as to Montclair's streets and sidewalks, electrical street lighting, and water supply.

However, none of these plans had come to fruition by the time Montclair lost its legal fight against annexation. On May 13, 1903, the Town's affairs were turned over to Denver and, absent from its contracts, were the grandiose plans of the first Montclair Improvement Society. At the same time, the vote over the new form of government for Denver's "home rule" prevented all efforts at neighborhood autonomy and continued Prohibition due to ballot boxes "stuffed" with questionable votes from the lower downtown of saloons, gambling halls, houses of prostitution and other sin merchants. As feared, the neighborhoods would have to fend for themselves.

## Montclair School Update

This quarter the Montclair Elementary School update from Principal Shannon Hagerman is available on our website. To read it go to [www.HistoricMontclair.org](http://www.HistoricMontclair.org) and click on *Montclair School Update*.

## Recipe for Pumpkin Spice Cookies

Also on our website, download a recipe for pumpkin spice cookies. To download the recipe in pdf form log on to [www.HistoricMontclair.org](http://www.HistoricMontclair.org) and click on *Pumpkin Cooke Recipe*.

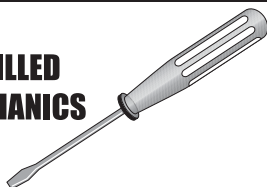
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## Schlessman Library News

The Schlessman Library will have storytime on Tuesdays at 10:30 and Bookbabies on Thursdays at 10:30 through Dec. 14. We'll then take a break over the holidays, starting back up in January.

Upcoming holidays/closures:

Friday/Saturday Nov. 10 & 11 for Veteran's Day

Close early at 4 p.m. Wednesday Nov. 22

Closed for Thanksgiving Thursday Nov. 23

Closed Sunday Dec. 24 and Monday Dec. 25 for Christmas

Closed Sunday Dec. 31 and Monday Jan. 31 for New Years

Becker Parkhurst-Strout

Reference Librarian, Schlessman Family Branch

100 Poplar St

Denver, CO 80220

720-865-0000

## HMCAI Board Officers

Have a question, comment or concern? Feel free to contact one of our board officers:

President	Nancy Mucker	303-399-9006	<a href="mailto:nmucker@msn.com">nmucker@msn.com</a>
1st VP	Katy Saunders	303-333-3954	<a href="mailto:katy@hopkinssaunders.com">katy@hopkinssaunders.com</a>
2nd VP	Carrie O'Shea	303-355-9096	<a href="mailto:caroshea@msn.com">caroshea@msn.com</a>
Secretary	Pat Rozack	303-667-8737	<a href="mailto:rozack@earthnet.net">rozack@earthnet.net</a>
Treasurer	Gail Barry	303-355-8486	<a href="mailto:gaillmd@qwest.net">gaillmd@qwest.net</a>

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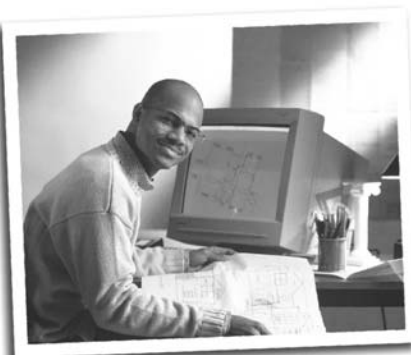
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# Membership Form

## 2007 Membership Year

Please complete form (block letters) and mail with check to:  
HMCAI Treasurer, P.O. Box 200125, Denver, CO 80220-0125.

Annual dues per household	\$ 15.00 (\$10.00 for seniors)
Voluntary donation	\$ _____
Total Amount of Check	\$ _____

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

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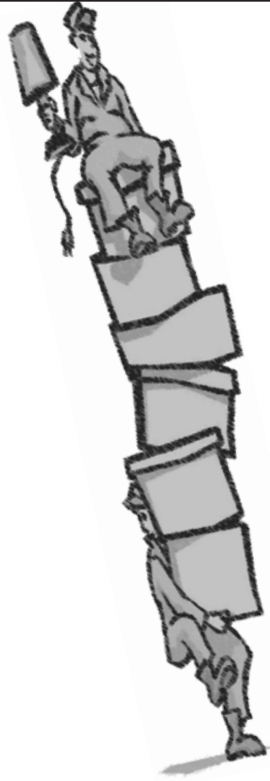
Please circle your area(s) of interest: Family/social activities Future board membership  
Montclair School 100th Birthday Celebration  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_



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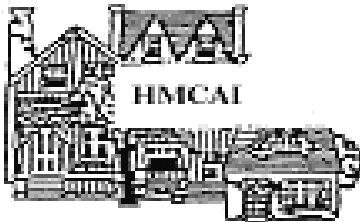
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