



SCPNA NEWSLETTER - JULY 2007

Thanks in abundance to Propaganda Labs and their Bluebird Beat for their converting our articles into a beautiful Newsletter!

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Next General Meeting:

Sat. 7/21 @ 10:00 AM
Montview Manor Penthouse
1663 Steele Street

July 21st Meeting Agenda:

- Denver Police CRO Report
- Discussion & Vote-to determine the Association's general stance on the issue of patios along East Colfax
- Brief Reports-Officers, Delegates, Committees
- New Business

Summertime, and the Living is Easy--Easier!

Well, no snowstorms and less construction. City Park is opening up once again, City Park Jazz is tooting along, and the ball team is doing okay.

You'll see that a large portion of this issue is devoted to a presentation about an historical study of "Denver Squares" buildings in South City Park. Resident Gregory Williams presented at our May Meeting, and all in attendance decided he should be heard by a larger local audience; thus the article. I hope you each find it to be both interesting and informative.

The SCPNA Social Committee's popular Home Garden Tour will be repeated in the upcoming months. Potential hosts for this year's Tour are being approached. It is not too late to make it known if your household would like to be one of the host sites. If so, please inform an officer. Advertising of the tour schedule will be by leaflets, by lawn signs, and by any other means of communication at our disposal. Plan to join the fun.

Our next General Meeting is Saturday, July 21st. Come meet one another amidst the summer celebration.

-Jim Slotta

P.S. William Bowman (see ad below) has printed our newsletters for some time. Whenever considering a home purchase or refinance, please support your local Countrywide Home Loans and William Bowman!

Thank you Countrywide Home Loans and William Bowman for providing the printing services for our newsletter.



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FOURSQUARES IN SOUTH CITY PARK

Introduction

If you own a home in South City Park the chances are pretty good (perhaps one in three if you are on the west side of the neighborhood) that it is architecturally a Foursquare, otherwise known as a “Denver Square”. I have owned and enjoyed one on Saint Paul Street since 1991. This architectural style seems to dominate the western portion of the neighborhood and in some blocks it accounts for the near majority of home styles. As one moves to the east the Foursquare gives way to the Bungalow as the dominant form.

As part of a graduate course in historic preservation taught by Dr. Tom Noel (author of *Denver The City Beautiful* and several dozen other Colorado history books) at the University of Colorado at Denver I recently surveyed the neighborhood and conducted some research into the architectural form of the Foursquare. In March and April of this year when I was walking block by block through the neighborhood with my clipboard many residents stopped me and asked about the project. Everyone was very interested in learning more and I promised many of you to follow up as best I could.

In May I presented the results of my project at the neighborhood association meeting and agreed to prepare this newsletter article as a supplement. In conducting my research I worked extensively with the Colorado Historical Society and the Denver Public Library as well

as the University of Colorado at Denver. My thanks to the professionals who assisted me, however, it is important to note that any errors or omissions are mine and mine alone. If you are interested in conducting your own research I provide a few tips at the end of this article.

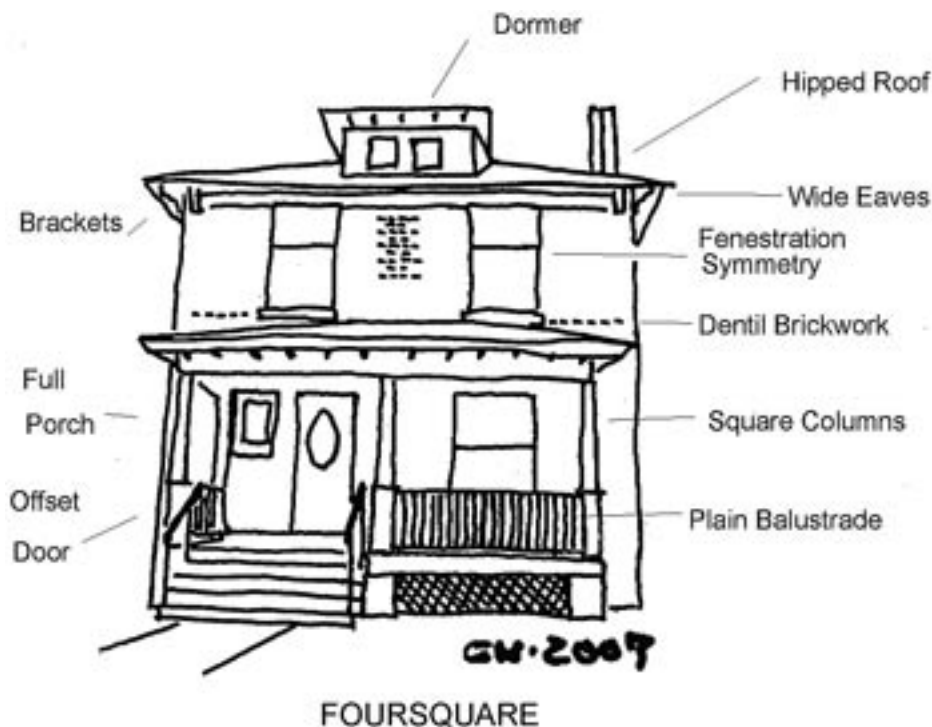
What is a Foursquare?

Otherwise known as the “American Foursquare” the term did not come into popular use until the 1980s – one hundred years after most were built. Architecturally the Foursquare is a “form” or a “type” not a “style” and shares its design as well as its roots with Homesteads, Cottages, and Bungalows. This is illustrated locally by the fact that Bungalows and Foursquares can be found comfortably nestled together in the South City Park Neighborhood.

As the prolific Foursquare author James C. Massey put it in the *Old-House Journal*, “You can’t miss the solid, two story fronts, no-nonsense truncated pyramidal roofs, blunt dormers, overhanging eaves, and deep, plain front porches.” One thing was certain; they were not Queen Anne or anything “fancy” like the homes of the older generation. Victorian gingerbread on the façade of a Foursquare is as rare as a turned post on the front porch balustrade (more on this later).

Most Denver Foursquares were built in the late 1800s and early 1900s. They were generally but not al-

(Cont.)



(Foursquares-Cont.)

ways working-class homes that had newer amenities like indoor plumbing and often sported fancy “push button” electric lights. They are ideally suited to Denver’s narrow lots (with long north-south blocks and short east-west blocks) and were very economical because a cube generates the most interior space for each construction dollar spent. They were very modern at the time and just right for the upwardly mobile middle class residents of the pre 1930 “streetcar suburbs” of Denver 100 years ago. Remember, streetcars ran along 17th Avenue and on Colfax then and some homes had hitching posts on the parking strip for their horses.

In 1890 there were likely no Foursquares and by 1910 there were thousands in the city. Many were sold as kits or designs by Sears and Roebuck, Montgomery Ward and others. Some were assembled on-site by the owners or local contractors. A few of the more elaborate examples were designed by an architect. While generally plain, geometric and rectilinear, various imaginative and creative influences from the English, Moorish Craftsman, Mission, Prairie, Arts & Crafts, and Colonial Revival Schools worked their way into many Foursquare designs. The Foursquares in South City Park have an extremely wide variety of architectural influences and some are quite elaborate and decorative.

The main characteristic of the foursquare can be inferred from its name; it is blockish and usually has four rooms on the main floor and four rooms (plus a bath) on the second floor. Most are two and a half stories high. Ornamentation on the Foursquare is minimal or non-existent.

The porch is a significant feature of the Foursquare; it is often two or three bays wide extending across most of the front of the house. Sometimes the porch has brick shelves edging either side of the staircase which are suitable for decoration, for plants, or for sculptures, but most often the stairs to the porch are freestanding, sometimes without a railing. Often the front porches have been converted into sunrooms.

The porches usually have square or round Doric columns although many are square brick, with full brick banisters. The porch balusters (the vertical wood columns between the porch top and bottom rail) are typically very plain; they are usually square cut and evenly spaced between the rails although some are grouped in threes or fours.

In the eastern United States it is common to see

Foursquares as a frame or stuccoed structure but these are rare in Denver, and non-existent in South City Park where the Foursquares are all of brick construction. Limited decoration in the brickwork can sometimes be seen, including dentils. The foundations are often of cut stone.

The roof on a Denver Square is hipped (truncated pyramid in shape) with wide, deep eaves and almost always with the large front porch discussed earlier. Roof dormers are quite common in Denver. The dormer window arrangement can have one, two, or more window frames and they may appear on more than one side of the house but very seldom on the rear. Very wide and deep roof eaves are another Foursquare characteristic and although brackets are not entirely rare they are usually plain. Dentils may or may not be present in the woodwork under the eaves. Scrolled rafter ends are somewhat common for the porches and the roof eaves. The roof itself was usually covered in the new invention of the period – asphalt or asbestos shingles.

Fenestration (windows) is more vertical than horizontal and the windows are usually of one over one sash design. Two windows of similar size on the upper story in the front are the most common in South City Park, and a wider window on the main floor with an offset front door separating a smaller single paned window high to the side is relatively common. Stained, leaded, beveled, diamond, or etched glass can often be seen in the upper sash or elsewhere. This glasswork was often available from local sources.

Because the Foursquare usually has no hallway or central staircase, the off center front door most often enters directly into one of the four rooms on the main floor; with a “U” shaped staircase on the opposite end of this room that leads to the second floor. This staircase can reveal its location to the outside observer by the presence of a side window on the middle landing of the stairs that is not in alignment with the first or second story windows. This is often of stained or leaded glass. The off-center front doorway immediately distinguishes the Foursquare from its cousins the center-hall Georgian or Georgian Revival homes.

The basement was usually unfinished and accommodated only the furnace (gas or coal) in a separate brick-enclosed room. Access to the basement was often through an outside stairwell, but frequently indoor access was available and some Foursquares have a side entrance that goes to the basement and to the upstairs.

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(Foursquares-Cont.)

Foursquares also usually have a rear external wood porch, often two stories. The upper porch is commonly called a “sleeping porch” and can be cooler in the summer months than the interior of the house. The lower back porch area was often used for the ice chest and other daily accoutrements. A review of the early 1900 Sanborn maps of the South City Park area shows quite definitively that the wooden back porches to most of the Foursquares of the time were original construction, just as the large front porches were. This is worth mentioning because many local residents think that the back porches were “Sears and Roebuck” additions to their properties. Actually, very few – if any – Foursquares in South City Park seem to be recent enough (c.a. 1905 – 1925) to qualify as potential Sears and Roebuck homes and the Sanborn maps confirm the porches were generally original. When garages are present they are detached, brick, and usually have pitched (upside down “V”) roofs.

South City Park Foursquares

The project area extended from Detroit Street to Colorado Boulevard and from Colfax (15th Avenue) to 17th Avenue. Initially 126 properties were identified as Foursquares but after a discussion with the Colorado Historical Society the count was lowered to 98. Many properties share some but not most of the foursquare design elements; most important is the hipped roof. Fish scale shingles on a dominant front gable and an elaborate cornice around a front porch with turned balusters is an indicator that the property is probably not a Foursquare. A central (not offset) front door is another hint that other architectural forces are at play.

Steele Street takes the prize for the most foursquares per block, followed by Adams and Madison (tie), then Fillmore, then Saint Paul, then Cook, and lastly Detroit Street. A few Foursquares can be found scattered east of Madison.

Here are some other unique statistics that characterize some of the architectural characteristics of the 98 Foursquares in the neighborhood:

- 85% have full front porches and the rest were smaller porches or had no porches
- 53% have two windows in the dormer
- 34% are of red brick construction and 22% are of tan brick
- 46% have brick porch columns, 16% have round wood columns, and 19% have square wood col-

umns (almost 2/3 of the wood columns are tapered). Some “double” columns are seen and a combination of wood columns with brick porch fronts is not uncommon.

- 61% have no wooden porch balusters instead the lower porch front is made of brick, 17% are plain wood balusters
- 25% have alterations to the front fenestration
- 40% have stained or leaded glass in one or more of the front windows
- 60% have trim painted in cream or white – either as the only trim color or in a combination with another color or colors
- 30% have no architectural trim details (such as brackets or dentils) and 52% have minimal trim details. The remaining 18% have enhanced or elaborate trim details.

While I have mentioned several times that the Foursquares are noted for their plain appearance there are some notable exceptions in the neighborhood. The next time you are out for a walk take a look at the elaborate orange brick property at 1602 Adams, on the northeast corner of 16th Avenue and Adams. A photograph of this home was featured in the November/December 1995 issue of Old-House Journal. Other properties with unique design elements include 1557 and 1668 Saint Paul (with a Moorish influence perhaps?), 1651 Madison (with a deck on the front porch roof), 1622 Madison (with a unique “eyebrow” dormer), and 1638 Adams (a “gingerbread” Foursquare if there ever was one). This is just a partial listing of properties to view from the public right-of-way. Very few of the Foursquares in the neighborhood are identical, each has its own unique and defining characteristic and most appear to be lovingly cared for by their owners.

Research and Maintenance Tips

There are several great places to start if you are interested in researching the history of your home (including finding the original building permit record and information about previous owners) or for suggestions and guidelines if you are planning an upgrade or remodeling project. It is particularly important to consider issues relating to the architectural integrity of your home if you are planning to make exterior changes, and this includes changes to the windows which can permanently alter your home’s appearance if done improperly.

The 5th floor of the Denver Public Library on Broadway is the ideal place to start a research project.
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(Foursquares-Cont.)

The Western History/Genealogy Department has most of the records you will need and a free Denver Building History Search Guide is available there. Historic Denver publishes a Guide for Older Homes and also sponsors a Certified Historic Home Plaque Program. Go to www.historicdenver.org. The Colorado Historical Society is at www.coloradohistory.org, Colorado Preservation Inc. (sponsor of an amazing annual conference with all kinds of useful sessions and workshops) is at www.coloradopreservation.org, and the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission is at www.denvergov.org/historic_perservation. These are excellent local sources but there are many, many other sources and resources available. If you don't have time to research your home and want to find someone who can do it for you there are local experts who are available as consultants.

For more reading here are a few suggestions: James C. Massey has published several articles over the years on Foursquares in the magazine *Old-House Journal*; Tom Noel's *Buildings of Colorado*; and Pearce and Merrill's *A Guide to Colorado Architecture* are also highly recommended sources. In order to fully understand and appreciate the significance of the architecture of the time it is important to know something about the overall history of the area (including City Park and the City Ditch). Several historic landmarks are nearby and the *Denver The City Beautiful* by Tom Noel is an excellent overall resource to learn more about the area. It is also very well illustrated. Of course an online search turns up something new every time, but be careful about the credibility of the sources. Finally, I will be more than happy to offer any suggestions or assistance if you contact me at GEWilliamsOne@aol.com.

— Submitted by Greg Williams, Homeowner
1566 Saint Paul Street

UPDATE: ROCKBAR PATIO NEGOTIATIONS HIT IMPASSE

Jesse Morreale, owner of the All Inn and its Rock-Bar at Colfax and Milwaukee, let us know in February that he was applying for a patio application, which he eventually filed. In the time that has transpired, we have been unable to achieve association support for his application. In fact, negotiations for a legal agreement between the RockBar and three neighborhood associations--SCPNA, CHUN, and Congress Park Neighbors--failed just before the end of June 29th, the extended

deadline for objections. On that day, SCPNA filed an objection to the patio application. Denver's Department of Excise and Licenses subsequently denied the application, and set a public hearing for Wednesday, August 29 at 9 AM.

In a June 29th email, lead negotiator Gabriel Kaplan expressed the following assessment: (Some comments were deleted (...) to reduce the length of this article.)

"As many of you know, I have been trying to work out a neighborhood agreement with Jesse Morreale and M Inc, owner of the Rockbar, for the last 5 weeks or so. The last offer we presented was essentially identical to the agreement offered to David Senger for Sengers on the Fax. We asked that the music cease on the patio at 11 on weekdays and 12 on weekends and that he take appropriate efforts to control noise. We included provisions for mediation and arbitration to settle any disputes."

..."Jesse had asked originally to waive the provisions regarding music on the patio and we had countered by bumping the times to 11 on weekdays and 12 on weekends. He had also requested that arbitration costs be shared, but we asked that the failing party be asked to bear those costs since this provided an incentive for parties to agree in mediation rather than to allow matters to get to arbitration. That said, we did learn, thanks to Mike Henry's gentle prodding, that the city provides free mediation and arbitration services through a nonprofit called Denver Mediation. And we pointed this out to Jesse."

"Our third issue of contention regarded the penalties for repeated noise violations. We had asked for either a three month cessation of patio music or a one month closure to the patio and Jesse had wanted only a one month music halt on the patio. We were still trying to work these issues out when communication with Jesse ceased. In the interim between our counter-offer of Thursday June 21 and yesterday evening (June 28th), there were several instances of disturbance at the Rockbar which prompted neighborhood complaints."

(Editor's note: Negative perceptions regarding the disturbances, voiced by the neighborhood and by the business owner, seemingly resulted in the break-off of negotiations.)

"I had hoped it would not come to this, but an agreement on noise provisions remains unreached and I think it is in the best interests of the neighborhoods that we object to a patio unless provisions to protect the communities' quality of life are agreed

(Cont.)

(Rockbar-Cont.)

to..."As we move forward we will have to prepare for a hearing and I imagine we will have to ask the three affected groups -- SCPNA, CHUN and CPN to take a position on this matter and prepare for representation at the hearing."

(Editor's note: This matter will be discussed at SCPNA's July 21st General Meeting, and a vote may be taken to determine the association's general stance on the issue of patios along Colfax. The Executive Officers of SCPNA believe that the neighborhood would be best served by a uniform policy governing all patios along Colfax and would like to solicit resident members for their views on the parameters of future agreements governing closing times, volume control, grievance procedures, and penalties.)

— Submitted by Jim Slotta

CITY PARK UPDATE

Montclair Stormwater Project

Ferril Lake is full! Denver Water began filling the lake on May 21 and reached its new capacity on June 7. The beautiful new pavilion plaza is complete! New concrete and crusher fine paths around the lake have been placed! Sod is growing and green at the pavilion site! We are planning to open the pavilion and lake to public use on Sunday, June 24 in time for the City Park Jazz concert at the bandstand. The contractors, in cooperation with park staff, continue to work on repairing the irrigation system which has many more breaks and leaks than normal due to the construction and deterioration of the old system. The irrigation issues are straining the ability to irrigate the whole park due to the frequent need to shut down the pump system, consequently, some browning of the grass may occur as the weather warms. Park and forestry crews are watering critical areas with water trucks. Completion of repairs is anticipated by the end of June. Contractors will keep the southeast area of the construction zone closed to complete the 30' x 11' primary stormwater inlet box conduit. This major component of the construction project will be under construction until November. Other projects that will continue through the summer are planting wetlands, establishing new grass seeding at disturbed areas of the park, lining and repairing the DeBoer Waterway and completing the irrigation upgrades.

Starbucks Project

More than 500 volunteers turned out on May 19 to

restore the Sopris and Burns Gardens west of the pavilion. Starbucks hosted the event in addition to donating \$100,000 for the improvements. Volunteers and park crews planted 60 trees, 100 shrubs and almost 7000 annual and perennial flowers in the restored flower beds. The volunteers provided as much as 2 weeks worth of park crew labor during the one day event, providing much needed support to the park. Park crews will continue through the month of June to complete the new garden design at the Burns Garden.

City Park Fountains and Water Features

Despite several vandal incidents at the H2Odysey interactive water feature, the water jets are up and running during the normal schedule: Tues – Sun, 11 AM – 7 PM. Some repairs are still needed for its full range of displays which will be underway later this summer. Every effort will be made to make repairs without closing the fountain during its normal operating schedule. The Thatcher Fountain is in its glory. However, the fountain at the Sullivan Gateway on Colfax is still down for repairs. Plans are underway to fix the feature this summer.

Park Projects

Thanks to the generous donations of Patricia Cordova, new landscape rocks and other improvements were donated to the grass bed west of the museum. We are exploring new landscaping treatments around Duck Lake to discourage the geese. Plantings such as native grasses, shrubs and heavily planted buffers have been successfully used around lakes in other areas to reduce geese populations. Replacing the existing damaged bluegrass turf with native grasses adjacent to the concrete walkway is being considered. Also, park staff is identifying bluegrass turf areas in the park that would be maintained as meadow landscapes. Bluegrass meadows grow about 12" tall and don't require as much watering.

Mile High Loop

The project was not selected for the State Trails grant program this year. However another grant application will be submitted to the Great Outdoors Colorado program in August, 2007 for another try at obtaining the funding need to construct the trail.

City Park Jazz Gang Issues

Gang related activity at the first two City Park Jazz concerts caused jazz organizers and city officials to coordinate stepped up patrols, enforcement and early

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(City Park-Cont.)

intervention efforts to prevent further disturbances. Denver Police and community activists are instituting greater presence in City Park to ensure the concerts are safe and enjoyable by the public. The concert on June 17 went on without any gang related disturbances.

Road Closures

Sunday park road closures will continue through the summer. Park entrances and exits at 17th & Thatcher Fountain, 22nd St. and near 23rd and York will be closed from 5 am to 11 pm. These gates are also closed for major Saturday events too.

— *Submitted by Helen Kuykendall*
Denver Parks and Recreation

SUMMARY OF MAY 19, 2007 GENERAL MEETING

The meeting was 10 AM to 12:15 PM in the Penthouse of Montview Manor, 1663 Steele Street. Attending were 13 members and 5 presenters. Membership is 128 households; checking is \$2,300 after \$250 donation to City Park Jazz and paid memberships in INC and CHUN. As requested at our March Meeting, a budget will be voted on today.

• Denver Police Presentation: Reyes Trujillo, SCP Community Resource Officer

The police want to re-energize crime fighting at the grassroots level. Neighborhood Watch seems to be working, seeing results. We hope to re-energize both Neighborhood Watch and Business Watch. In SCP there has been a rash of garage burglaries. Also, homeless camp behind the old car dealership. Do lock your garages and put your valuables inside; don't allow crimes of opportunity. How Neighborhood Watch works: Talk to your neighbors; learn who lives beside and behind you; call them if a problem; call police if you see something strange--small stuff is usually larger. We need 1 person as point person for that block, to facilitate. When a block joins, a sign will be put up at both ends. Other ideas: You can do block parties; call if drug activities; if there are problem neighbors, they will do mediations. Reyes' number is 720-913-1094. District 2 office is 720-913-1000. "Lock it, stop it": They will stop any car after midnight to make sure it is not stolen—if you have a decal. Call them and they will come register your car.

• Dept. of Environmental Health Presentation: Ellen Dumm--Director of Communications, and Diane

Milholin--Coordinator of Animal Care and Control

Animal Plague is always present, starting in April; this year there has been more activity. As long as you're not touching or coming in close contact, not likely we will see any human plague. In 2004 there was a death from the plague. He was a trapper with no medical help. Cats are most at risk; they chase squirrels and rodents. Contact number: 1-877-462-2911. Take down feeders. This congregates rodents. Stop feeding them anyway. OK to feed songbirds, but clean up spillage. Call the toll-free number if concerned. Animal control goes through 311. If there is a dead animal, put gloves on and put into a bag. They will come the following day to test the animal. If they don't come, put it into a dumpster at once. It will die down and then pick back up—sort of a pattern. Zoo vets are on high alert. Rabbits and squirrels are there, which is scary, but no danger to visitors. One other thing—Infrastructure issue—Need a new animal shelter. Denver's is not the same as Dumb Friends or other agencies—"shameless plug."

• City Council District 8 Runoff Candidates: Sharon Bailey and Carla Madison

Each candidate spoke for five minutes, answered questions, and the two shook hands.

• Vote on SCPNA Budget for 2007

Each candidate spoke for five minutes, answered questions, and the two shook hands.

• Vote on Donations to Other Organizations

A motion was approved 13-0 to donate \$50 each to 5 groups: Teller School; Project Angel Pride; City Park Alliance; CHUN Building Restoration Project; and INC Dollar Dictionary Drive.

• Vote on Support of Patio Agreement with Senger's Bar

Following a report and discussion led by Gabe Kaplan, a motion was approved 11-1-1 abstention to add SCPNA's name to an agreement already approved by CHUN and by Congress Park Neighbors.

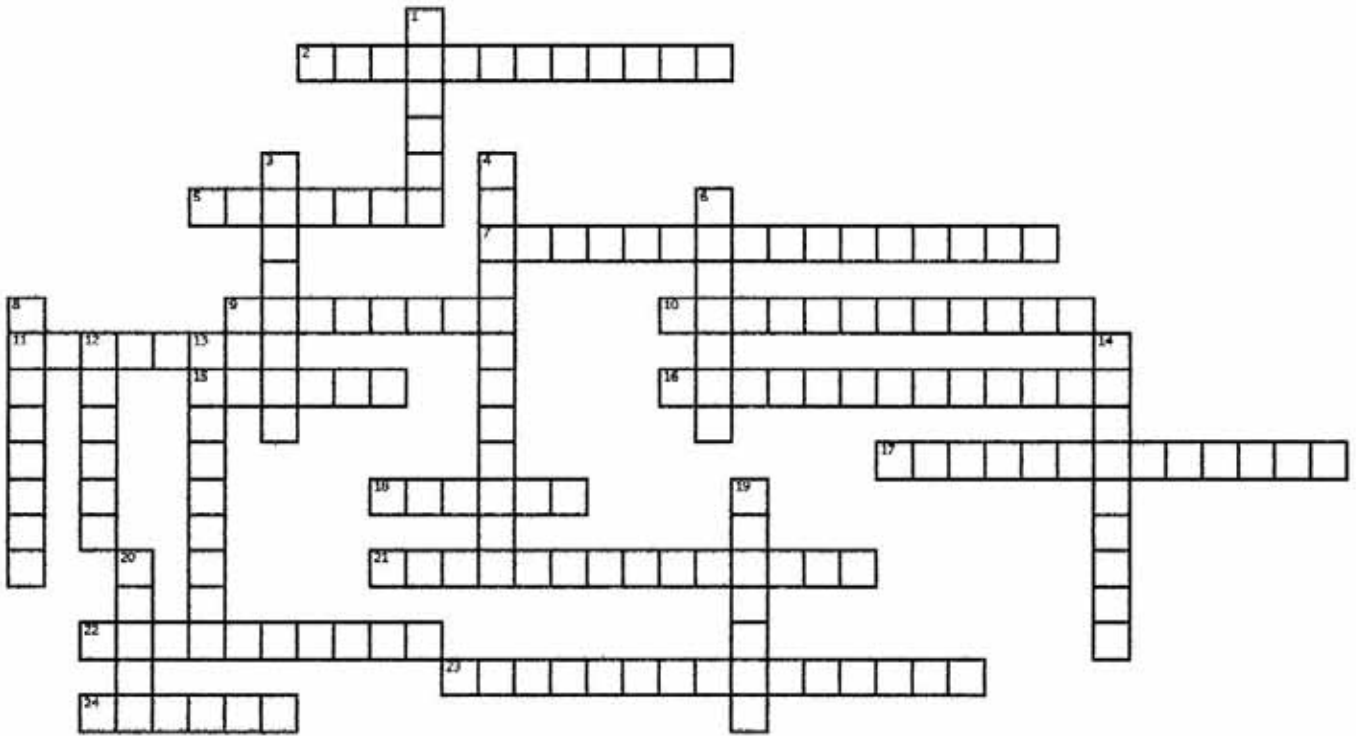
• "Denver Squares" Presentation: Resident Historian Gregory Williams

(Note: Rather than summarize Mr. Williams' presentation here, we point out that an expanded version of his outstanding presentation appears throughout this newsletter.)

— *Summarized by J. Slotta from Minutes taken by O. Slotta and notes by P. Rempel.*

South City Park Trivia

Test your knowledge of local details! (Answers below)



Across

2. New exercise path proposed for City Park (3 words)
5. 1600 Adams Block Captain-former SCPNA Treasurer
7. Denver Museum of _____ (3 words)
9. New Steele Street restaurant (2 words)
10. Sunday nights summer entertainment in South City Park (3 words)
11. Mascot of Denver East High School
15. Our neighborhood elementary school
16. Current meeting place for SCPNA (2 words)
17. Our newly relocated bookstore on East Colfax (2 words)
18. Name of new affordable housing development on St. Paul Street
21. One of our East Colfax coffee shops (3 words)
22. Delivered to every South City Park household, every other month
23. Developer of Mercy site south of 16th Avenue (2 words)
24. Monroe Street gas station in '80's-now Steve's Snappin' Dogs

Down

1. Large lake in City Park
3. South City Park Twin Towers-to-be (1 word)
4. Neighborhood across East Colfax from South City Park (2 words)
6. South City Park's new City Council Representative
8. South City Park street name shared by president and comic strip cat
12. Our Social Committee's first project in 2006: _____ Tours
13. Another one of our East Colfax coffee shops
14. Where to get souvlaki on East Colfax (2 words)
19. Long time East Colfax bike shop
20. City Park grass-eaters

1. FERRIL 2. MILE HIGH LOOP 3. PINNACLE 4. CONGRESS PARK 5. HEIMERT 6. MADISON 7. NATURE AND SCIENCE 8. GARFIELD 9. CAFE STAR 10. CITY PARK JAZZ 11. ANGELS 12. GARDEN 13. STARBUCKS 14. GREEK TOWN 15. TELLER 16. MONTVIEW MANOR 17. TATTERED COVER 18. LEGACY 19. COLLINS 20. GEESE 21. HOOKED ON COLFAX 22. NEWSLETTER 23. WONDERLAND HOMES 24. PESTER

ANSWERS TO SOUTH CITY PARK TRIVIA PUZZLE

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You get automatically entered to win great My Colfax Card prizes!

You get emails with Merchant deals and upcoming events!

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See you on Colfax!

**HERE ARE JUST A FEW
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CAFFE SANORA
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GOOSETOWN TAVERN
HOOKED ON COLFAX
MEGGITT MOTORS
QI KINESIS ATHLETIC CLUB
TIGER KIM'S ACADEMY
TWIST & SHOUT
...AND MORE!**



See you on Colfax!