



THE MONTCLARION

Our Neighborhood

Annexed by the City of Denver in 1902, Montclair incorporated in 1888 as a Denver suburb. One of Denver's 78 statistical neighborhoods, its borders include Colfax Ave. to the north, 6th Ave. to the south, Quebec St. to the east and Holly St. to the west.

Formed in 1907 as a not-for-profit corporation, the Historic Montclair Community Association, Inc. (HMCAI), is the oldest neighborhood association in Denver. Officers and at-large board members serve without pay. HMCAI is a Registered Neighborhood Organization and is a member of Denver's Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation. West of Monaco, we overlap with Mayfair Neighbors, Inc.

Dedicated to innovative educational, civic and social activities, we offer our members quarterly newsletters, flyers and public announcements. We inform members of important zoning issues, historic preservation, construction and planning activities, elections and other activities impacting the neighborhood. HMCAI frequently collaborates with schools, churches and other local organizations for the common good. Interested in being a part of the community? Join today.

HISTORIC
MONTCLAIR
COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION

2023
3rd Quarter

HistoricMontclair.org
HistoricMontclair@gmail.com



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President's Note

By Judy Baxter

By Judy Baxter

Here's to you Montclair neighbors and friends of neighbors who made this year's July 4th BBQ and Celebration a great event. We approached or went over 500 in attendance. Caryle Faust and I met nearly all of you at the check-in desk and many of you thanked HMCAI for doing this event. We want to say "BACK AT YOU", as your attendance and appreciation are the energy making Montclair the special community that it is. We gave out some 480 wristbands for food, so I bet there were at least another 20 enjoying the festivities sans food. Once again, our very own grill master **Jim LeDuc** and his merry band of grillers made it happen. Though they had help from several on the board to get the all the food that goes into it. And what about those brats? Pre-cooked in beer and special secret spicing by **Toni Kuper** and **Caryle Faust**, were especially good this year. **Valerie Alford**, who is the energy and spirit of the event, with her band of volunteers from the board and neighborhood, made it all run like clockwork. It takes a village for sure—and I want to thank the entire board – everyone, even if they are out-of-town for the actual day, played a vital part in making this event so special, so classically small town America. Thanks also to Fire Station 14, the Fat City Mardi Gras Band, all the kids with their gussied up bikes, and the District 2 police officers. You all create a great community spirit and a special welcome to our new Montclair neighbors.



On a personal note, I am calling this my year of resilience training. Let's just say I had a challenging spring and early summer where I found myself almost, emphasis on almost, wiped out of a huge chunk of my retirement in a fraud scheme. Two weeks later I came down with my first bout of COVID while on vacation in Italy. However, it is what happened on July 21 is what I thought worth sharing in this column. A neighbor's dying; mostly dead tree fell on my house. The tree had been in bad shape for over a year. Two of us neighbors had talked with the owner about our concern back then and I had a similar tree removed. I am learning from this most recent experience that there are a few nuances about our responsibilities as property owners and likely tree owners important to know. After all, we live in a 137-year-old neighborhood, with very mature landscaping and no doubt old trees. It is our responsibility as tree owners to be attentive to required maintenance—be it pruning unhealthy branches or removal of whole trees when they are on our property. If your healthy tree falls on your neighbor's house because of a strong wind (remember the microburst of 2015), then the damage would be covered by the neighbor's insurance. If your unhealthy tree, that you have failed to maintain or remove, falls on the neighbor's house, then the responsibility at least in part, lands on you and your insurance.



Continued on page 5

HMCAI 2023 Board

President: Judy Baxter
1st Vice President: Carrie O'Shea
2nd Vice President: Meg Goos
Secretary: Caryle Faust
Treasurer: Gail Barry

At Large Board Members:

Valerie Alford	Gail Wallace
Jim LeDuc	Toni Kuper
Brian Narber	Gretchen Armijo
Rachel Stanfield	Jennifer Bolda
Lynn VanderWielen	Bill Keesom

HMCAI Events Calendar 2023

September 22	Beer & Wine Reception	6:30 p.m.
September 23	Montclair Garage Sale	
October 21	General Meeting	7:00 p.m.
October 29	Halloween Party	3:30 p.m.
December 9	Treats with Santa	10:00 a.m.

All events take place at the Molkey except for the Garage Sale. (Montclair Civic Building) and Montclair Park

HMCAI Membership Form

Two ways to join: 1- Please print legibly on form and mail with check to:
HMCAI Treasurer, PO Box 200125, Denver, CO 80220

Annual dues per household: \$40 (\$20 seniors, ages 65 and older)

Voluntary donation: \$ _____ Total amount of check: \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

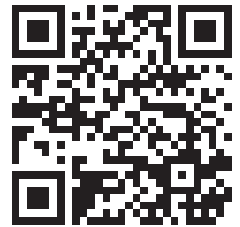
Phone(s) _____

Email _____

What would you like to help with? _____

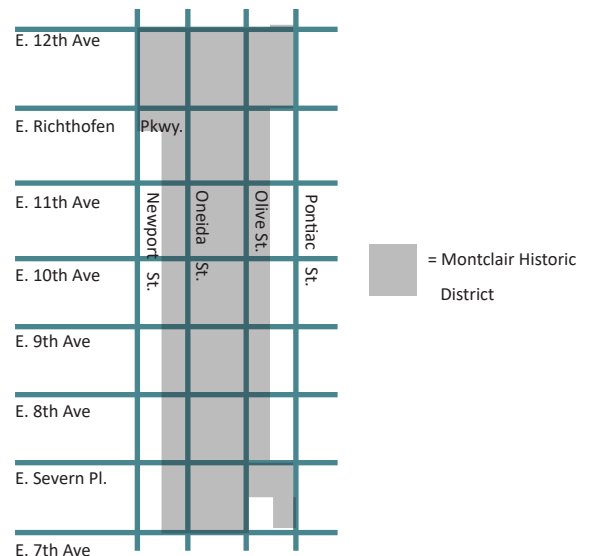
Possibilities include: Treats with Santa, July 4th, Easter Egg Hunt, Cocktail Party, Halloween Party, Board Member, Other (please specify)

- Or, pay securely online with Square:



Important Information

If you live in the designated Historic District (see map to the right) within the Montclair neighborhood and you'd like to build an addition, garage, second story, porch, add solar panels, replace windows, roof, sidewalks, or demolish the house and build new, you must first contact Denver's Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC), submit an application and receive approval before any work may be begun. Your proposal must meet the design guidelines for historic districts. This is mandatory for residents of all historic districts in the City of Denver. To schedule an appointment for a pre-application meeting, discuss your building project, or ask questions contact the LPC at 720-865-2709 or landmark@denvergov.org



City Council District 5 Updates

by Councilwoman Amanda Sawyer, District 5



As summer winds down, we're excited to bring you updates on all the great things happening in Montclair and our beautiful city. Most importantly, we have a new Mayoral administration! This transition will take some time, but the work of the City, and the District 5 office, continues

nevertheless. Read on for information on all the latest things happening in Montclair!

Renovations at Montclair Park

In 2022 the Montclair Park playground was damaged when a storm blew down large tree branches. Due to supply chain issues, Parks & Rec (DPR) was delayed almost a year in replacing the equipment for 2024. Stay tuned as more information becomes available. And don't forget to join us for our Fall Parks Cleanup Day on October 1st. You can sign up by visiting <https://Bit.ly/2023FallCleanup>. The playground has been prioritized for replacement under the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) funding

ADU's in Montclair

Due to the lack of community support, we will not be moving forward with this rezoning. You can see the survey results and all information at bit.ly/MontclairADUs. Thank you to everyone who participated in this discussion!

Design Overlay on the Colfax Corridor

During the East Area Plan process, we heard from residents that you want to see more local businesses and a safer pedestrian environment along East Colfax. To respond to these concerns, our office has filed a rezoning application to implement the Active Centers & Corridors Use Overlay on parcels along East Colfax from Broadway to Yosemite. For more information, please visit <https://bit.ly/DO8-Overlay>.

Updates on 13th & 14th Avenues

The Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) has recently completed one-way signage inventory along both 13th and 14th Avenues and will be delivering missing signs to the identified streets soon. Denver has also recently recommitted to the Vision Zero project. As part of this commitment, DOTI has installed traffic calming measures at 21 intersections

along 13th and 14th Avenues, spanning from Broadway to Yosemite Street. By adding paint and posts, they hope to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, making it safer for all of us to navigate these busy areas.

Visit <https://bit.ly/VSNZERO> for additional information.

Updates on Monaco & Quebec

Denver's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) is rolling out its annual street paving program. Monaco Pkwy. from Alameda to 23rd Ave. will be repaved in 2023. Quebec will also be repaved heading north from Alameda to 23rd Ave. DOTI will install ADA compliant ramps at all intersections within the project scope. The city will upgrade the traffic signal at Quebec St and E. 17th Ave, as well. These enhancements will not only make crossing the street safer but also improve overall traffic operations in the area. Please be patient as construction continues on these streets.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to our office with any questions! You can reach the Council District 5 Team at:



QR Code to access D5 website

Gratefully,
Councilwoman Amanda Sawyer
Phone 720-337-5555
Email denvercouncil5@denvergov.org
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twitter.com/denvercouncil5
Facebook.com/DenverCouncil5

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From the Desk of Chris Hansen, State Senator

District 31



I hope everyone has been staying cool through this extra hot summer.

We are over halfway through 2023 and I have many exciting updates to share with you:

First and foremost, Senator Simpson and I are thrilled

to have successfully hosted the Colorado Science and Engineering Policy Fellowship. For the past seven weeks our 16 fellows have heard from experts about the policy making process at the Capitol in Denver and have visited sites around Colorado where technology and policy intersect. Overall, the fellowship is designed to give policy-making experience to Colorado undergraduate and graduate students with backgrounds in STEM, with the goal of increasing the presence of individuals in public policy that come from a science and engineering background. Throughout the seven-week program all the fellows researched policy proposals and then presented them last week!

On July 21st I was happy to come together with Denver City Council member Chris Hinds, Moms Clean Air Force and Mountain Mamas to voice my support for the new standards for clean cars. The EPA proposed clean car standards that will accelerate the adoption of zero-emissions vehicles, which is necessary for Colorado and especially for Denver to improve air quality. I encourage the Biden Administration and the EPA to set the strongest clean car standards to ensure future generations get to breathe clean air. Thank you to the many CSEPF fellows who stood with me on the front steps of the Capitol.

I was proud to be a co-sponsor of SB23-303 this session and as a result, Proposition HH will be on the ballot this fall. If approved by voters, Prop HH will reduce the

assessment (the portion of the value that is taxed) and also cap the growth in property tax collections at the local level. These two policies – statewide reductions in assessment rates and local reductions in mill levy rates – will cut the expected increase in the average homeowner's tax bill by nearly half and maintain these savings for at least a decade. If Prop HH is approved by voters, it would save the average homeowner in Colorado \$1,078 over the next two years and \$3,417 over the next five years. Vote YES on Proposition HH!

I am so proud of my incredible wife for stepping up for Denver kids at this critical moment! Ulcca is running for Denver Public School Board. For more information visit her website: <https://www.ulccafordenverkids.com/>

As legislation is introduced at the state level, I am committed to supporting policies that will keep our friends, family, and neighbors safe while ensuring we consider all ramifications of each policy. Your feedback and comments throughout the year are appreciated and influential in the policy making process. You can reach me at chris@hansenforcolorado.com or 303-866-4861. Also, feel free to subscribe to my newsletter on my website www.hansenforcolorado.com for regular updates.

Thank you for letting me serve you and our community in



the State Senate.

Continued President's Note

This has me thinking about what it means to be a good, responsible neighbor. First, be connected enough to work together when needed. Second, be attentive to the maintenance issues that may affect the property and lives of others as well as your own. Trees need pruning and sometimes removal. It is expensive and not everyone can afford it. Changing weather patterns and big events affect our

landscape. These are the challenges where being connected and responsible comes together. Together you can figure out solutions that individually you might not.

Be well, Be safe, Be in Touch with us: historicmontclair@gmail.com

HMCAI Beer & Wine Reception

Friday, September 22, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. at the Molkery

Let's close out another wonderful summer in Montclair, reconnect with friends and toast to the changing of the seasons at the Annual HMCAI Beer and Wine Reception.

Beer, wine, and appetizers will be provided. This is a great opportunity to visit with friends and neighbors while enjoying libations, food, and conversation. Join us for a relaxing evening on the Molkery porch as we say goodbye to summer and welcome to fall.

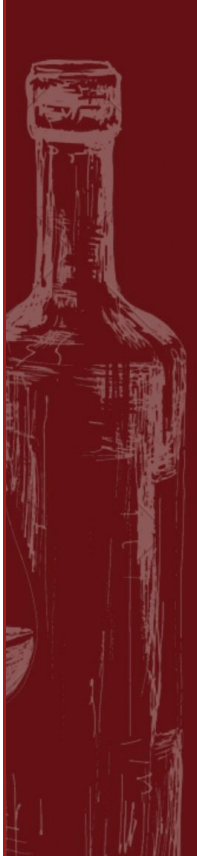
This is an adults-only event. No charge for HMCAI members. Non-members can join HMCAI at the door with credit card, cash or check. If you would like to bring an appetizer to share please contact Carrie O'Shea at historicmontclair@gmail.com by September 17th.

Got Junk?

MONTCLAIR GARAGE SALE

SATURDAY September 23 8:30-3:00 PM Rain or Shine

Contact Valerie Alford with your name, address, e-mail address, and a list of items you're selling. Valerie@valeriealford.com or 303-641-6823.



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Montclair School of Academics and Enrichment

By Merritt Pullam



Hello Montclair! The Fall term at Montclair School of Academics and Enrichment is set to begin Monday, August 21st at 8 am. Welcome to all our new and returning students, families, and staff. We also look forward to welcoming our new Principal Mr. Daniel Barks. Here is a statement from our new Principal:

Hello Montclair Community!

My name is Daniel Barks and I am proud to be the next principal at Montclair School of Academics and Enrichment. I am excited for this opportunity to serve our community and to come home to where I started my career in Denver Public Schools (DPS) over a decade ago. Since I was last at Montclair School of Academics and Enrichment I've earned two Master's Degrees, in Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Leadership and I have worked in various roles within DPS.

Montclair School of Academics and Enrichment is truly a wonderful place where every learner belongs, grows, and thrives. We are a community that honors, values, and lifts up all of our learners. This happens through rigorous academics, an inclusive environment, and embedded enrichment, students reach their greatest potential.

Montclair School of Academics and Enrichment is a place where ALL PEOPLE BELONG and we would love for you to come check us out!

For more information about our school: <https://montclair.dpsk12.org/>

The best method to stay connected to the latest news within the DPS community and at Montclair is to visit www.montclair.dpsk12.org and www.dpsk12.org. Additional Information on the Montclair website includes:

- Information about the school community, the staff, the school calendar, PEAK (Parents, Educators, and Kids)
- how to stay connected with Facebook and Instagram
- find support for you and your student(s)
- ways to volunteer at the school.

You can reach the main Montclair school office at 720-424-5380 with any questions you may have.

HistoricMontclair.org | HistoricMontclair@gmail.com

New and existing students will continue to utilize <https://myportal.dpsk12.org/> to register and track other important information and progress. On the school's website you will read the following about how the school is serving students from around the world and just around the corner!

Montclair is a neighborhood school with a global perspective. Our students learn through exciting, interesting and enriching experiences! The Montclair community strives together for a common cause — the academic growth and social-emotional health of our students. We are driven by our values, which were co-created with Montclair staff, students and community: Equity, Achievement, Diversity, Responsibility, Community, and Kindness

- Average class size is 23 students
- Enrichments include guest speakers, field trips, hands-on simulations, assemblies and independent study projects
- Montclair staff prioritizes a personal connection with our families, through home visits, small-group instruction and 1:1 meetings
- We provide personalized learning and individualized support for all children; our student-to-adult ratio is 7:1
- Montclair is home to rigorous academics, including a dedicated STEAM program, plus performing arts with music, dance and theater
- We have experienced and dedicated school leaders and teachers, most of which have been with the school 5+ years
- Montclair is home to more than 17 languages and is one of the most diverse schools in the city. Your student will feel at home at Montclair!

Schedule Alerts:

- August 21st: 1st day of school for ECE and 1st - 5th grade students 2023-2024
- School hours: 8am-3:05pm.
- Early release day is the first Thursday of each month with dismissal at 1:10 pm

PEAK (Parents, Educators, and Kids) is always looking for volunteers, sponsors, and donations. If you or someone you know would be a good fit to help support our school community via PEAK, please reach out to Devin Lopez at 720-424-5385 or devin_lopez@dpsk12.net or myself at 303-419-2622 or merrittpkw@gmail.com. You can help make a difference with the kids, staff, and other parents.

Thank you to all our community members who donate their time and resources to help our students and staff thrive.

Thank you! Go Cougars! Montclair Rocks Woohah!

News from the Fax Partnership

By Monica Martinez, Executive Director

The Fax Partnership acquired the Westerner and Sand & Sage motels, located at 8415 E. Colfax Ave. and 8405 E. Colfax Ave, in September, 2022, for the purpose of creating more affordable housing spaces along East Colfax. The project received significant funding support from the City and County of Denver and the State of Colorado which made the acquisition possible. In addition, this past summer, the Lowes Foundation awarded \$67,000 towards the rehabilitation of the motels. This work is currently underway and is making the properties ready for Volunteers of America, who will be converting the motels to shelter on October 1, and providing desperately needed housing to families in need. The Fax will eventually redevelop the Westerner and Sand & Sage motels into new construction affordable housing and looks forward to working with businesses and residents along the East Colfax corridor on the redevelopment vision in the coming years.



On Saturday, June 3rd, The Fax Partnership hosted a community mural painting event at Tiger Kim's Academy of Taekwondo, located in Montclair at 7000 E. Colfax Avenue. Sam Hutch-Ouranos, the graphic designer who designed the East Colfax Cultural District logo, led the community painting event. The success of bringing the mural to life was made possible by the City of Denver's Neighborhood Activation Grant and a generous donation from GreenSheen Paint. Some of our youngest community members had a chance to help paint the mural on a rainy Saturday. The Fax's work to designate East Colfax a cultural district is not done yet! The next

stage will be led by the community through a Steering Community. Recruitment of the Steering Committee will launch later this summer. Visit our website at <https://thefaxdenver.com/our-work/c-district/> to join the East Colfax Cultural District steering committee and contribute your ideas that will shape the future of the District!



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The Denver Zoo in Montclair

By Thomas J. Noel

Baron Walter von Richthofen had high hopes for his suburban oasis, Montclair. At various times, he envisioned a model town complete with a town hall and fire station (site of current fire station), two colleges (Colorado Women's College and Jarvis Hall), Stanley School (predecessor of Montclair Public Elementary School), the Dudley Dennison Memorial Kindergarten, St. Luke's Episcopal church, a country club, casino and art gallery (all now gone at the northwest corner of 8th Ave. and Monaco Parkway) a hotel (the Molkey), a health spa (Carlsbad Caverns) three streetcar lines and the Montclair Mirror newspaper. Even a zoo.

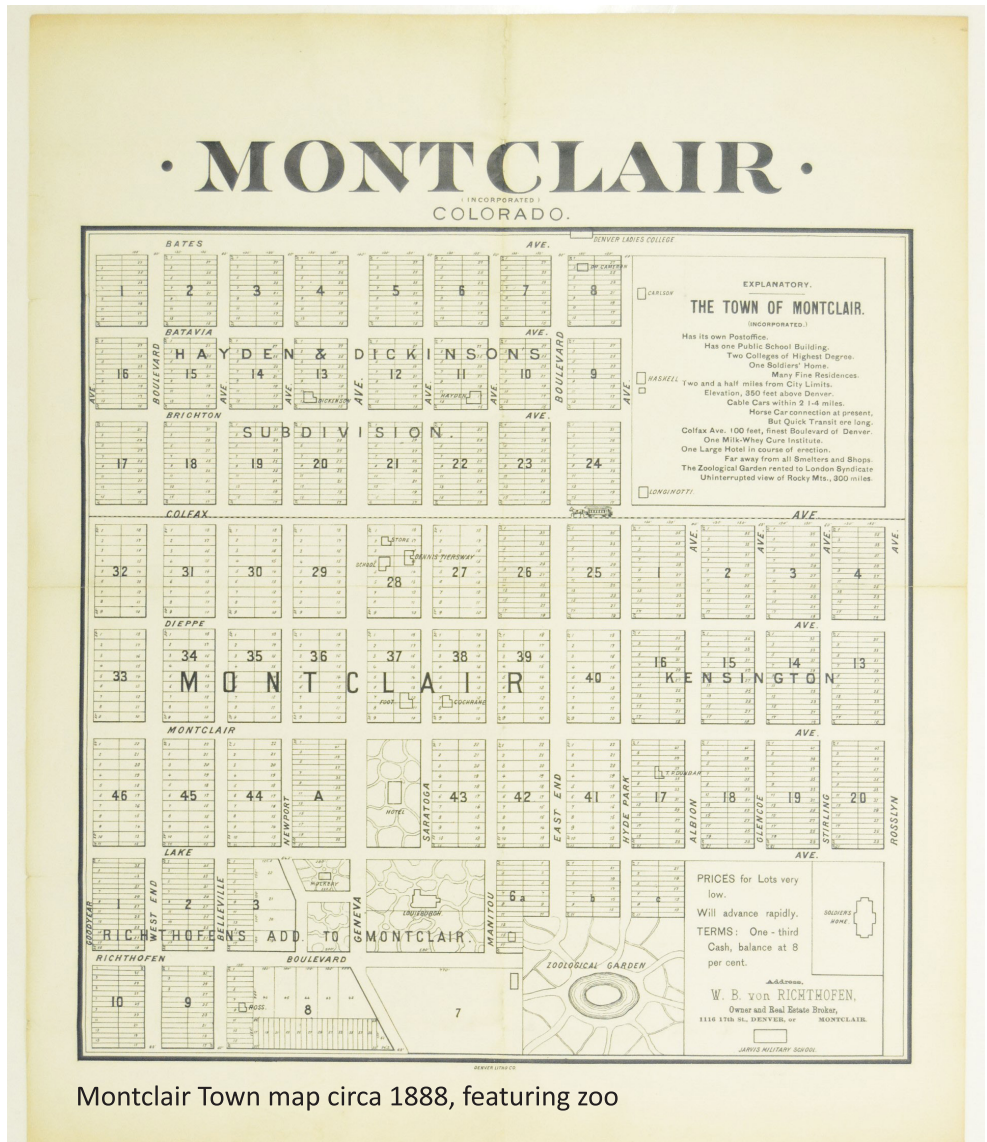
"Zoological Garden" shows up on 1880s and 1890s Montclair planning and real estate maps then disappears from their projected site between roughly East 11th and 12th Avenues and Pontiac and Quince Streets. The Baron had reportedly stocked the area with deer, antelope, a flock of canaries and bears. The bruins were later given to Mary Elich's Zoological Gardens and some supposedly wound up in the Denver Zoo.

Meanwhile the Denver Zoo started in 1896 and slowly began growing at its current City Park site. A pet bear, named Billy after U.S. three-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan, was the first resident. Billy, a cute black bear cub, had been given to Mayor Thomas S. McMurray. As Billy grew into a problem child, the mayor gave the troublesome beast to Alexander J. Graham, the keeper of City Park. After the bear gobbled up Graham's chickens and turkeys, he built the first zoo cages. The bears later graduated to the zoo's first fine naturalistic environment, Bear Mountain.

Besides the frisky bear, other zoo animals were under appreciated. Folklore has fox tree squirrels (*Sciurus niger*) introduced to the Denver Zoo in 1905. The cute, furry acrobats quickly escaped the zoo. They reproduced quickly and reduced the population of native

and imported birds. Egged on by the Audubon Society, the city prepared to shoot the squirrels. Animal lovers loudly protested the public executions. So the city spared the squirrels, banishing the ones that could be caught to the Denver Mountain Parks. Descendants of the surviving zoo squirrels thrive in Montclair to this day.

Thomas J. Noel, co-author with Bill Hansen of *The Montclair Neighborhood*, has been a Montclair resident since 1966. He is the co-author or author of more than 60 books.



Montclair Town map circa 1888, featuring zoo

Late Summer and Fall Gardening 2023

By Gail Barry

This season started off very wet and it continues to rain somewhat regularly. Both desirable and undesirable plants are flourishing. I have found that I am doing more pruning, weeding, and deadheading than usual. Perhaps as a result of the late rains and earlier hail, most plants are producing later than usual. Despite some setbacks, I think most plants look good. I am looking forward to the bounty that will show up as the season continues. Even though it is getting late in the season, you can still plant seeds for a second crop. Fast maturing plants such as arugula, bush beans, beets, carrots, lettuce, radishes, & spinach can be replanted, in a different spot. If your lettuce has gone to seed, or you have dug up your garlic, you now have a spot for a different vegetable. A number of plants are tolerant of light frosts. These include the brassicas (broccoli, cabbage, kohlrabi, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts and kale), most root vegetables such as; carrots, beets, scallions, and turnips, as well as arugula, lettuce, spinach, and most herbs, except basil. If you are more into flowers, you can also seed many flowering plants. Seeds will either emerge in the fall or stay dormant and come up in the spring. Wild flower mixes, marigolds, nasturtiums, cosmos, larkspur, and fever few are some easily grown flowers you could choose to try.

As fall approaches many plants may become overgrown and need some pruning or removal. Look around and determine what has flourished and what is not doing well. Make note of areas that may need improvement. Remember October and sometimes November are prime times to plant all kinds of spring and summer blooming bulbs. Don't forget to compost anything you prune or pull rather than throwing into the trash. (Get a free compost bin, if you have not already, and use it.) Remember to water deeply in the fall in preparation for the dry winters we often get. New plants are particularly vulnerable and may need winter water as well. Harvest what you can and plan to can, dry or freeze extras or turn them into jellies, jams, pickles, dried flowers or whatever and package nicely for possible winter gifts. Dried herbs, leaves, and flowers, pressed flat, can be laminated into book marks or other such items and can make a nice addition to stationary. Be adventurous.



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Crime Stoppers Hotline
720-913-7867 (STOP)

Gang Hotline
720-913-1339

Report Graffiti
720-913-1311 or 311

Report Trash and weedy yards
311

Sex Offenders Hotline
720-913-6511

Hate Crimes Hotline
720-913-6458

Report Animal Abuse
Denver Animal Protection at 720-913-2080. For emergencies in progress, call 911. Denver Dumb Friends League animal neglect or cruelty hotline: 303-923-0022.

Report Street Racing
9-1-1 and reportstreetracing.com

Report Broken Street Lights
XcelEnergy.com

DPD District 2 Community Resource Officer
Simeon Codo,
Simeon.Codo@denvergov.org

Councilwoman Amanda Sawyer,
City Council District 5
DenverCouncil5@denvergov.org
720-337-5555

Halloween Party

October 29th, 3:30 - 5:00 pm, The Molkery
Goblins, ghosts, witches, fairies, firemen and all manner of costumes for ages 2-14. Enjoy our witches brew and scary treats, costume contest, parade, crafts, piñata.

WE ARE IN NEED OF FEW EVIL ASSISTANTS TO CARRY OUT THIS SCARY AFFAIR

Please call (303-641-6823) or email Valerie Alford at Valerie@valeriealford.com to volunteer.

INTERIOR PLASTER AND DRYWALL REPAIR

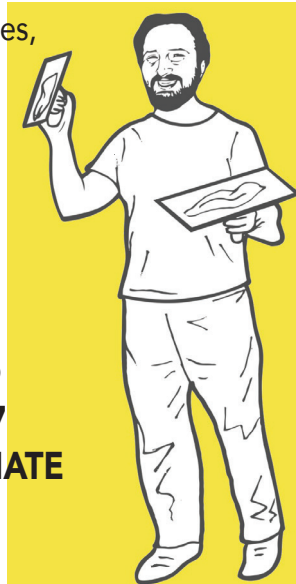
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Montclair Real Estate Snapshot June 8th- August 8th 2023

by Valerie Alford

Actives 21, Pending 8, Closed 16, Average List \$1,010,163. Average sold \$1,056,239. Average list to sell 94%, Average days on market 16, Price above ground per foot \$561, Price per sq foot total \$398.

Address	Baths/ Beds	List Price	Close Price
771 Jasmine St	7/6	\$2,849,000	\$2,849,000
1125 Leyden St.	5/5	\$1,899,000	\$1,736,500
1065 Locust St.	4/5	\$1,650,000	\$1,665,000
741 Kearney St.	4/3	\$1,400,000	\$1,200,000
1090 Jersey St.	3/4	\$1,100,000	\$1,152,750
900 Niagara St.	2/3	\$1,039,000	\$1,029,000
791 Poplar St.	3/5	\$998,000	\$985,000
955 Niagara St.	3/5	\$970,000	\$963,275
1250 Niagara St.	3/3	\$925,000	\$950,000
815 Hudson St.	3/4	\$840,000	\$866,000
769 Hudson St.	2/3	\$785,000	\$804,000
7015 11th Ave.	2/4	\$800,000	\$790,000
1405 Hudson St.	2/4	\$725,000	\$718,000
1008 Locust St.	2/3	\$635,000	\$705,000
853 PoplarSt.	2/3	\$650,000	\$650,000
1305 HollySt.	2/4	\$649,900	\$648,000
1330 Olive St.	2/3	\$625,000	\$585,000
1012 LocustSt.	1/3	\$499,950	\$499,900



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From the Archives

By Bill Hansen

Treat Hall, ca. 1909

From its inception, Montclair aspired to become a center of higher education. Jarvis Hall Military Academy for Boys opened in 1888 on a 33-acre hilltop campus near today's 11th and Roslyn and prospered until burning to the ground in 1901. It is survived by its 1890 chapel, St Luke's Episcopal Church. In 1888, Colorado Women's College was organized with a 20-acre campus donated southwest of today's Montview and Quebec in what was then also Montclair. It was hoped that the Baptist-supported college would become the "Vassar of the West". The exterior stone shell of Treat Hall (pictured) was constructed in 1890 but financial difficulties delayed its completion and opening until 1909. It was greatly expanded in 1916 and more recently renamed Centennial Hall. It has remained the centerpiece of a number of educational institutions and was fully restored in 2016. It is a Registered Denver Landmark, listed on the National Register for Historic Places, and received Historic Denver's Community Preservation Award for restoration.



Photo from History Colorado: Colorado Encyclopedia



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Baseball in Denver

By Erick Stragand, Montclair Resident and Baseball Nerd

30 years ago, a 5 foot 9 infielder named Eric Young was the first hero of the Colorado Rockies franchise. Selected in the November 1992 expansion draft from the Los Angeles Dodgers, Young was a fairly unknown player out of Rutgers, who had played a total of 49 games at the big league level. With the Rockies, he was given a full-time job as their everyday second baseman. He quickly secured the job and his speedy base-stealing potential made him the ideal candidate for the Rockies' lead-off man (traditionally, the lead-off man is/was a fast guy with a penchant for getting on base and setting the table for the ensuing batters). That status as a lead-off man made him into Denver's first official big league hero on April 9, 1993.

The Rockies held their first-ever home game at Mile High Stadium and Young was the first Rockie to bat. After 5 pitches, he hit a home run over the center field fence and the town went wild. While it was actually the second home run in franchise history (the Rockies played their first two games in New York and Dante Bichette notched their first-ever homer), it was a much more dramatic setting and occasion. Despite it being home run #2, it still remains as one of the biggest --and most popular and most memorable-- home runs in Rockies history. I remember watching Young's home run, at work, and my manager enthusiastically and sarcastically exclaiming: "Oh wow! If little Smurfs like this guy can hit home runs, we're going to be in for some FUN!" Indeed.

Yet the remainder of the 1993 season wasn't exactly rosy for the new hero. In the summer, the Rockies were trying to find a spark and called up second baseman Roberto Mejia, giving him the starting job. The Rockies believed that Mejia was their long-term solution at second base and Young was told to play the outfield. It seemed like Young might soon be forgotten and that he might end up as flash-in-the-pan. Young took the re-assignment in stride. Yet despite a crazy highlight reel catch, late in the season, Young didn't exactly stand out.

The next season was similar for Young. He seemed to be an option for the Rockies, but not a solution. When the Rockies signed outfielder Larry Walker before the 1995 season, it seemed like Young would be lost in the outfield shuffle and was destined to be a trivia question. However, what happened next was when Young really blossomed. Mejia wasn't lighting the world on fire and, after about 6 weeks into the 1995 season, the Rockies decided to give Young another chance at second base. Initially, Young platooned with rookie Jason Bates but, by season's end

and the Rockies' first trip to the playoffs, Young had once again established himself as the team's second baseman. The "forgotten" hero had returned.

The following year, 1996, was Young's best. He put up career-high numbers, was an All-Star, won the 2B Silver Slugger award, and even led the National League in stolen bases. As 1996 concluded, Young seemed to be set as the Rockies' second baseman, but in a surprising move he was traded back to the Dodgers in July, 1997 for pitcher Pedro Astacio. Sure, the Rockies always need pitching and Astacio had some decent years in Denver... but it was a gut-punch to a lot of Rockies fans to see their buddy "EY" traded away.

While Young never again achieved the popularity he had in Denver, he bounced around MLB until 2006, always jumping in head-first, and playing above expectations. His tour took him to the Cubs, Brewers, Giants, Rangers and Padres, not to mention Minor League stops in Portland, Oklahoma City and a few others. When he officially retired in 2008, the Rockies' all-time stolen base leader signed a ceremonial contract to officially retire "as a Rockie". The hero was back home.

In his final seasons, Young's drive was to get to play side-by-side in the Majors with his son, Eric, Jr. He came surprisingly close, as Eric Young, Jr. officially debuted for the Rockies in 2009. Meanwhile, Eric, Sr. had begun a career as a big league coach: first with the Arizona Diamondbacks, then the Rockies from 2014-2016. The hero came back home for a second time.

Young is still coaching, today, as the first base coach of the Atlanta Braves. In this role, he helped the Braves win the World Series in 2021. Despite his travels and other accomplishments, Young will always be tied to the team and city he ignited in 1993.

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