



The Email Express



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Published by Denver City Councilman Charlie Brown

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Brown defends DIA 'Mustang' in the News and Wall Street Journal



Luis Jimenez's sculpture "Mustang" dedicated at DIA a year ago, has generated a great deal of local and national media attention. *The Wall Street Journal* ran a front page story ("A horse of a different color divides Denver," 2/7/09) and radio talk show host Mike Rosen also ran a column ("Keep 'Mustang' at DIA? Neigh," 2/13/09). The following are comments from Councilman Charlie Brown that appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Rocky Mountain News*:

Letter to the editor by Councilman Brown: "This is a horse of a different color," *The Wall Street Journal*, 2/11/09:

A range war seems to be breaking out in Denver. Not of the historic sheepmen-versus-cattlemen variety, but a war over a big, bold, blue mustang sculpture that proudly greets visitors to Denver International Airport.

I am puzzled by members of Bye Bye Blue

Mustang who seek to get the statue moved. What don't they like? It's clear to everyone that it's a horse, and people only glance at it from their vehicles when they are driving to and from the airport. Denver International Airport is 53 square miles and the statue is next to the terminal, miles away from the view of any homeowner.

Are folks offended by the 1950s Western sky blue sheen, the luminous red eyes, or the anatomical correctness?

The mighty, muscular mustang has found a fitting spiritual home. Over time, I believe a majority of residents and visitors to the airport will appreciate "Mustang" for what it is: a powerful and engaging symbol for the captivating West, with its majestic mountains, sweeping vistas, brilliant sunshine and spirit of independence and romance. It's the lure of Denver.

Contact Us

District Office
2324 East Exposition Ave.
Denver, CO 80209
(303) 871-0601
FAX (303) 698-4908

Council Aides

Carol Singer
Carol.Singer@denvergov.org

** For the most recent information please visit us online at

www.denvergov.org/CouncilDistrict6

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What others are saying about "Mustang"



"My Daddy read me the article in the Wall Street Journal about the Blue Mustang statue at DIA. I just wanted to write you a letter to let you know that I like the statue. I really like the red eyes. I like it that it is leaping up and that it looks powerful. It makes me feel welcome to the airport.

- Leo Sundstrom 6 1/2 yrs old , Boulder Feb. 08

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"Get rid of this disturbing thing. DIA is the gateway to Colorado—I can't imagine what people think when they fly in to our state. Not to mention it scares the kids right before they have to get on a plane.

- Andy Fritch, Colorado Springs Feb. 9

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"How good to read a sensible article by Charlie Brown on Saturday regarding the blue Mustang statue at DIA.

I love the blue Mustang. It's big, strong and powerful. I look forward to seeing it when I go to the airport.

- Nancy Carter, Longmont Feb 26

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"Denver, the legendary Mile High City, perhaps miffed that it's still lower in elevation than the flatland metropolis of Albuquerque, is making waves—tiny, insipid waves—about a deceased New Mexico sculptor.

"It's a post-kitsch masterwork that pulls with equal vigor from classic sculpture, Western mythology, gift-shop charm, Japanese toy culture and sci-fi fantasy."

- Zane Fischer column in the Santa Fe Reporter, Feb. 25

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"Brown: Perplexed by hatred of 'Mustang'," Speakout Column, Rocky Mountain News, 2/14/09:

Radio talk-show host and *Rocky Mountain News* columnist Mike Rosen has done us a favor by not writing about the actual world in which we find ourselves. (We need all the distractions we can get.) His most recent column is an attack on a horse — the big, blue fiberglass sculpture that proudly greets visitors to Denver International Airport ("Keep 'Mustang' at DIA? Neigh," Feb. 13).

"Neigh"? Whoa, pardner! It's just a horse, after all, not a Boulder liberal or the silly dictates of political correctness that he usually (and quite correctly) attacks. It's *the Mustang*, a powerful and colorful sculpture that serves as an artistic welcome, reminding visitors that they are in the West.

"It's a powerful and engaging symbol of where we live, the West, with its majestic mountains, sweeping vistas, blazing sunsets and spirit of independence and romance."

- Councilman Charlie Brown

It's not timid. It's big — some 9,000 pounds and 32 feet tall. It's also, fortunately, not an overtly abstract piece. It's a horse — and everyone knows it.

Yes, the sculpture has generated admirers and critics. "Demonic" to some, "fabulous" to others. Not surprising, because that's what riveting public art is supposed to do: make a statement, grab the public's attention and generate debate with no shortage of opinion.

I am perplexed, however, by the passionate hatred of the "Bye Bye Blue Mustang" group. Rosen writes about *Mustang's* "menacing red lights from the scary steed's beady eye sockets ... glaring at me through the darkness." I've known Rosen for years, and I can't believe that he is afraid of anything, much less a horse statue with glowing red eyes.

The irony is Denver already has a popular (albeit smaller) horse adorning the top of the scoreboard at Invesco Field at Mile High. That bronco is also rearing up, but

has never generated a whimper of protest. (Perhaps it's because the snorting steed's head serves as a logo on the home team's football helmet.)

New Mexico artist Luis Jimenez sculpted *Mustang*. It was an important symbol to his personal history and ancestry, a reminder that the Spanish explorer Hernando Cortes introduced the mustang to our continent in 1519. Like the white buffalo to Native Americans, the blue mustang is revered in Southwest culture.

Initially, *Mustang* was supposed to be located on a pull-out off Peña Boulevard so people could walk up a path to the sculpture and gaze at it on foot. The landscaping was to include a series of signs talking about the horse's role in the westward expansion, furthering our communications and progress as a nation. Sadly, the landscaping idea was

scrapped for safety reasons following 9/11.

Rosen wrote, "Listen, there's nothing new about this argument between enlightened artists and the rest of us uncultured cretins." He is incorrect to assume that the selection of *Mustang* was made exclusively by those who consider themselves "enlightened artists." Certainly, artists and art professionals had a say, but other community members were involved as well. This was not, as he has implied, an elite group inflicting their wishes on a city.

Mike is lobbying to replace *Mustang* and supports *Pegasus*, a sculpture from Deane Knox's gallery. While I believe it would be an excellent addition to the DIA collection, the airport is also a fitting spiritual home for the mighty muscular *Mustang*. It's a powerful and engaging symbol of where we live, the West, with its majestic mountains, sweeping vistas, blazing sunsets and spirit of independence and romance. The lure of Denver, Colorado, USA.

Observatory Park murder case resurrected

The Cold Case Unit of the Denver Police Department has a long and sad list of crimes it's still trying to solve, even though the crimes were committed long ago, evidence may be sketchy and possible witnesses hard to find.

A brutal murder that still chills District 6 residents was the July 6, 1999, killing of Observatory Park resident Cynthia Stewart.

Here are the details as related in the cold crime's section of the DPD's web-site"

Cynthia Louise "Cindy" Stewart, 44, hadn't missed a Bronco's home game in the past 25 years. A lifelong dog lover, she had two dogs, Wickham and Francis. Cindy enjoyed skiing, hiking and going to the mountains.

Following graduation from Abraham Lincoln High School, Cindy attended Colorado State Teachers College in Greeley. At the time of her death she was working for Kelly Temporary Services and for six months had been assigned to Best

Foods Baking where she did clerical work in the bakery's fleet maintenance shop.

"She never met a stranger," said her father, Jim Stewart, of Denver. "She was a nice person, very" added Chuck Monninger of Texas, her ex-husband.

Cindy was walking her chocolate Labrador a few blocks from her home near Observatory Park on the evening of July 6, 1999 when she was assaulted and stabbed several times. Her screams were heard; the attacker fled. Somehow she managed to stagger to the porch of a home about a block from the park and ring the doorbell. It was the home of an emergency physician and nurse who gave immediate aid. Before she died, Cindy described her attacker and his car. But this case remains unsolved.



Cynthia Louise "Cindy" Stewart pictured with one of her dogs.

The Denver Police Department's Cold Case Unit is seeking information that will lead to the arrest and prosecution of the suspect(s) responsible. If you have information, you can help investigators by calling the Denver Police Department at 720-913-2000 (24 hours a day - seven days a week) or by calling the Crime Stoppers Tip Line at 720-913-STOP (7867). Detective Martin Vigil is handling the case.

High Profile Conventions Coming to Denver in 2009

2009 will be a good year for Denver Conventions with several high profile groups. **Sportaccord** on March 23-27 will attract 1,500 influential delegates from 60 countries. These are people who decide where literally hundreds of international sporting events will be held and the meeting provides an unprecedented opportunity to showcase Denver as a sports hub. **Sportaccord** has never been held in North or South America. In addition, hundreds of international sports journalists will be here to cover the event as well as heads of state, royal families, celebrities and other sporting dignitaries.

Christian Booksellers Association, the first group to ever use the Colorado Convention Center, returns on July 13-16 with 9,000 attendees. In September, the **U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce** also returns with a high

profile meeting that will attract many of our nation's leaders.

The first meeting of the **National Cable & Telecommunications Association** will be staged October 15-30.

In April, the **International Association of Culinary Professionals** will bring 1,200 people to town for what is called the "Academy Awards for cookbook writers."

Here are the top ten 2009 conventions. Together they represent \$172 million in direct spending for our city:

- **Christian Booksellers Association**, 8,000 attendees, July 13-16
- **American Society for Bone and Mineral Research**, 3,500 attendees, Sept. 10-16
- **U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**, 2,000 attendees, Sept. 17-20
- **International Association of Chiefs of Police**, 17,000 attendees, Oct. 3-7
- **Medical Group Management Association**, 5,800 attendees, Oct. 11-13
- **American Dietetic Association**, 10,000 attendees, Oct. 17-20
- **National Cable & Telecommunications Association**, 12,000 attendees, Oct. 25-30
- **Educause**, 7,500 attendees, Nov. 3-5
- **American Association for Cancer Research**, 16,000 attendees, April 18-22
- **International Fuel Ethanol Workshop and Trade Show**, 4,000 attendees, June 15-18

Work starts on Wash Park pumping and filtration upgrades

If you notice work going on in Washington Park this spring, it's for replacement of the pump and filtration system at Smith Lake.

Funded through the Better Denver bond program, work was scheduled to begin Feb. 23 on what's formally called the Washington Park (Smith Lake) irrigation pump replacement.

The nearly \$1,000,000 project is expected to continue through the winter and spring, with completion slated sometime in June, just in time for summer.

Much of the water used to irrigate the landscape in Washington Park is drawn from Smith Lake. The project will replace the existing pumping system, which is undersized and outdated, with a new pump and filtration system that will meet the needs for all irrigation water in the park. The purpose of the project is to reduce watering hours, cut down on irrigation equipment maintenance time and to conserve water.

Smith Lake will not be drained during the project. But, the installation of a new intake pipe will require creation of a corridor into the middle of the lake and water to be drained from that corridor. This is not expected to significantly affect paddleboat or rental activities.

In addition, about half of the nearby parking lot and a section of the west side of the lake shore walk will be closed during construction.



Photo illustration from the Department of Parks and Recreation shows what the new pump shelter will look like in Washington Park. (View is looking to the east.)

Denver Parks and Recreation has made arrangements for a temporary pumping system to ensure continued park watering while the work is being done with the intention of minimizing impact on plants and grasses.

The Washington Park Irrigation System improvements are part of the Better Denver Bond Program that will fund improvement, preservation, renovation and creation of the many city facilities, including new roads, libraries, parks, hospitals, public safety and cultural facilities. These improvements are being made over a five-year period through 2012, and are funded by a \$550 million voter-approved bond. please visit www.Denvergov.org.

Another Council District 6 resident selected for Denver's "150 Unsung Heroes"

Oops! In our "150 Unsung Heroes" story last month we left out our good friend Sid Wilson. Our apologies to Sid and here is some background.

Sid is president of **A Private Guide**, a group tour and event transportation service company based in Denver since 1991. The company specializes in cultural and heritage tours, city and mountain sightseeing, skiing, hiking, horseback riding, river rafting, narrow-gauge railroads, high country festivals and more. Wilson is past board chairman and one of the founding members of the Beckwourth Mountain Club. He is a Denver Public Library commissioner, is on the board of the Denver Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Mayor's African American Commission, and is involved in other volunteer efforts.



"Open That Bottle Night" February 28, 2009

Congratulations to Lauri Dannemiller for being the first to correctly identify "OTBN" in the February Email Express.

Open that bottle night has become a national celebration and an excuse to dust off that bottle of wine you have been saving and enjoy it with friends while savoring the memories.

Lauri is the Staff Director for City Council Legislative Services, and responded within 30 minutes after receiving the newsletter.

The good news is Lauri didn't have to "Google" OTBN! She knew it and wins a bottle of 2007 Magness Pinot Noir from Napa Valley.

Surgery Update

A special thumbs up to my friends and colleagues for their personal phone calls, emails and flowers following my recent surgery. My physician said this was the worst case of plantar fasciitis he has ever seen and believes that recovery will take three months.

A famous Union Army general was nicknamed "Old Slow Trot" and that's about how I feel. I'm unable to walk without crutches and a steady diet of pain pills.

One thing for sure, I will avoid our city parks. If you have observed coyotes hunting you know they always seek the weak and sick. Even if I attached retractable bayonets on the end of my crutches, in my current condition I'm nothing but easy coyote bait!

