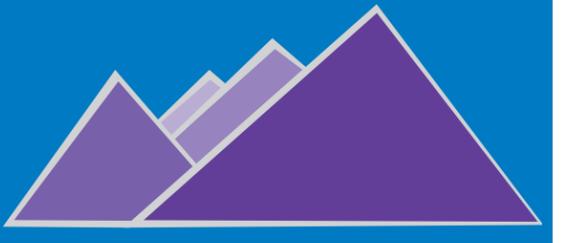


GLENDALE CHERRY CREEK CHRONICLE



From LoDo to the Dam

THE VOICE OF THE CHERRY CREEK VALLEY —

MAILED TO 82,381 HOMES AND BUSINESSES IN THE CHERRY CREEK VALLEY

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Cherry Street Becomes An Inferno Again One Decade Later

by Mark Smiley

Only 3,636 days separate the fire that burned *Spanish Gate Apartments* to the ground on December 28, 2003, and the raging fire at the *Apartments at Cherry Creek Corporate Center* on December 14, 2013. The eerie part of these devastations is that the two complexes are situated 200 feet from one another on South Cherry Street, north of Kentucky Avenue. The recent fire started at approximately 11:40 p.m. at South Cherry near Kentucky Ave. and was contained by 1:30 a.m. The Denver Fire Department sent 23 trucks to the scene while the Glendale and Denver Police departments, along with the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office, assisted with

evacuating nearby neighbors. Residents to the east and south of the fire — as many as 100 — were evacuated as a precaution. Glendale Sports Center at *Infinity Park* was used as an evacuation center. The flames could be seen as far away as Castle Rock — about 28 miles away from the fire site.

Residents highly praised the prompt response of the Denver Fire Department and the Glendale Police for largely limiting the damage to the apartments under construction.

The previous fire, across the street, was started on December 28, 2003, and destroyed one of two five-story buildings at the *Spanish Gate Apartments* in Glendale. *Continued on page 4*



Above photo by David Peterson, Bull and Bush Pub and Brewery

Up in Smoke: Above, on December 14, 2013 the *Apartments at Cherry Creek Corporate Center* burns to the ground as nearby residents flee to the Glendale Sports Center for safety and shelter. At left, on December 28, 2003 *Spanish Gate* went up in flames as a result of the actions of Blake Fieber who was sentenced to six years in jail in a plea bargain.



Lowry Parents Upset Concerning Overcrowded Schools

Denver Public Schools' Minor Boundary Adjustments Deemed Inadequate By Many

by Glen Richardson

Numerous parents in the Lowry area believe that *Lowry Elementary School* is overcrowded and the problem will only be exacerbated by the future high

density development at *Buckley Annex*. The elementary school is located at 8001 East Cedar Avenue and has grades PK-5. The school already has 522 kids and a 22 to 1 student teacher ratio. The *Buckley Annex* (also now known as *Boulevard One*) would add approximately 150 more students to the school system.

Parents hoped that an additional school could be built at *Buckley Annex*, but were denied by *Denver Public Schools* (DPS) claiming another school was not needed and the *Lowry Redevelopment Authority* (LRA) refused to provide any land for the school. Parents had countered that a new school could be housed at *Whiteman Elementary School* which is currently home to the *Denver Language School*.

DPS also refused that suggestion and in- *Continued on page 7*

Grade Schoolers At Good Shepherd Send Banner Of Thanks To Troops

by Charles C. Bonniwell

Young grade school kids at the *Good Shepherd School* at 6th Avenue and Elizabeth Street wanted to show their appreciation to American troops in Afghanistan over the holidays. Jan Greer, who helps with the enrichment program at the school, came up with the idea of a banner with medals and stars and words of encouragement from the kids.

The idea took off with 1st grade teacher Katie Armatas and her assistant Jennifer Fisher helping the kids who are in kinder-

garten, 1st and 2nd grades at the school come up with ideas and concepts. The kids got to work and the banner began to take shape under the title "Thank You For All You Have Done." The 1st and 2nd graders wrote personal messages to the troops contained in stars on the banner while the kindergartners did the coloring for the medals.

Grace Farrell a 2nd grader wrote: "Dear Veteran: Thank you for giving the United

States freedom. And thank you for protecting the community. You guys are so amazing."

First grader Gavin Scarth in turn told the veterans: "Thank you for protecting us. Thank you for protecting our country [and] flag."

After finishing up their work the kids hung their banner up in the hallway for all *Continued on page 15*



Banner For Troops: Colonel Ken Chavez and school reading volunteer Connie Thomas admire the thank you banner the children made for the troops in Afghanistan. Colonel Chavez will personally transport the banner to Afghanistan.

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Cherry Street Becomes An Inferno Again One Decade Later

Continued from page 1

idents say Blake Fieber, who admitted to setting the fire that torched 58 apartment units, engaged in a fight with his roommate. One resident, Nancy Weaver, perished in the fire, in what was described as a slow and agonizing death. Blake Fieber pleaded guilty to a negligent homicide charge, and a lesser count of arson, as part of a plea agreement that called for the original 41 charges to be dropped. Fieber was to stand trial for first-degree murder and arson, among other charges.

Neighboring apartments in this December 2013 fire may have had exterior damage due to extreme heat. One of those belongs to *Kentucky Ridge* homeowner and City Councilman Dario Katardzic. His blinds

are completely scorched and the frame-work around the window is charred. "I lost my first home in the war in Bosnia," said Katardzic. I was 90 percent sure I was going to lose this home as well."

Jamie Brady lives in the 4550 *Cherry Creek* apartment homes adjacent to the fire. Brady tells the *Chronicle*, "I didn't hear any explosions that some people reported hearing. I could hear the sounds you would expect from a building fire: wood popping from the heat or collapsing as their supports gave way or were knocked down by the hose."

A ladder engine was already set up on Cherry Street and beginning to engage the fire from above. "I then noticed that two additional engines were hosing down the roofs of the *The Crescent at Cherry Creek*



Photo by Dario Katardzic

Burned Embers: The spectacular fire burned the four story apartment complex under construction to the ground causing \$12 million in damage. The fire melted cars, window siding and outdoor furniture in neighboring buildings.

apartments, across Cherry Street from the fire. The westerly wind was blowing the smoke directly at those apartment units. You could see steam rising from the roofs as a result. My fellow 4550 neighbors agreed we were very lucky that the wind was not coming from the south, or we would have been in trouble."

Jamie added, "Hearing about the melted cars from *The Crescent* the next day drove that point home. The edge of our parking garage was probably the same distance from the flames. Fortunately the luck of the wind direction kept us out of danger."

She did not realize there was a fire at first. When she did, she decided to walk out (approximately midnight) to the roof deck of her parking garage to investigate (and move her car if necessary). Approaching the railing she observed "flames were

above the 5th floor deck." She said it became evident that the fire was engulfing the adjacent apartment building which was still under construction.

She concluded by saying, "In my short time in Colorado, I've learned how quickly wind can affect a fire." She also notes that in the future she "will certainly pay a little more attention to those random fire alarms in our building."

The *Greater Glendale Chamber of Commerce* has issued a statement: "All of our residents and members of our business community can be assured that their businesses are safe and that with the exception of a street closure during the investigation, that business in Glendale is as usual."

The ATF's National Response Team composed of experts from across the country has taken over the third floor of the Glendale fire house indicating that arson was not originally ruled out as a possible cause of the fire.

MKS Residential, a California based real estate company, acquired the 5.4 acre site a year ago in order to build a 341-unit high end apartment complex featuring apartment layouts ranging from 572 to 1,335 square feet.

As part of the transaction the seller of the land demolished what remained of *Spanish Gate Apartments* which had stood empty for the decade since the 2003 fire. The property was then conveyed to the *City of Glendale* to be used as a parking lot for *Infinity Park*.

It is anticipated that *MKS Residential* will take insurance proceeds from the fire and begin building the apartment complex anew.



Photo by Jamie Brady, resident of 4550 Cherry Creek apartment homes

Four Alarm Fire: Amazingly firefighters were able to contain the inferno to the Apartments at Cherry Creek Corporate Center which were under construction.



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