

DENVER

02-09-2015 by Harry Zirkelbach



Denver is my adopted city. I was born in a small town in western Pennsylvania, Freedom, (I'm taunted by its meaning every day), raised in Erie Pa, college in Detroit, that small town left behind, never forgotten.

My first view of Denver was in the summer of 1948; I have aged; it has grown on me ever since. Today it is the 22nd largest US city. It In 1948, the 24th largest.

Denver had a square shape, surrounded on those four sides by other municipal entities, who long ago enacted ordinances prohibiting any annexation to the central core City. This remains an oddity. All fifty-five Colorado surrounding Counties consider the Metro area their enemy in the distribution of largess from the State and Federal Tax bounties; vote accordingly, against metro Denver.

Denver has a strong mayor, weak Council government. The Mayor, Auditor, all 13 Council member are elected every four year, mid May, seventeen months before the Presidential election. This election is non-partisan; there is no primary election where each party chooses their candidate. The winner must receive one-half the vote plus one; if not achieved the two highest face one another in a June run-off. No woman had ever been Mayor, though the Council is presently female, 8-5.

Few Council persons have been elected to any higher office. Only one Denver Mayor, has been elected to a higher office, State or Federal. He is Governor John Hickenlooper, who was

reelected in November. Denver City Government has not been an incubator for higher political office for either party.

An unusual , almost exclusive Denver National highlight is our Parks and Recreation. They maintains 34 Parks within the city. Here's the unique feature. They also maintain seventeen outside the city Limits. (Recall the surrounding communities prohibit Denver from annexation of any property without jumping through hoops). Yes, these were established years ago, and like all Denver Parks are open to all without charge. All but one, Daniels Park, are west of the city, and nestle in the foothills to the Rocky Mountains. Two stand out: Echo Lake Park and Summit Lake Park, both on Highway 5, thirty miles west on that no-other-exit Road to Mount Evans. This is the highest paved road in North America, closed to motor vehicles winters, has ten switch-backs those last few miles to the summit. Take you Ocean based friends, remind them they may likely faint from the fantastic view of Colorado in all directions and, 'cause their body ain't used to 14,000 foot oxygen starvation.



Denver was, remains, predominantly Democrat in registration. It was not uncommon to have young men and women moving to Denver, look at the statistics when choosing Politics as a vocation, then register as Democrat since all elected officials and a large majority of voters were Registered Democrat. Of course it remains the opposite in the South US where Republicans dominate.

An earlier Mayor, Fredrico Pena, 1983-1991, held National Administrative Offices, as Bill Clinton's Secretary of Transportation, later Secretary of Energy. Pena Boulevard, leading to DIA, bears his name, for in his Administration the Denver International Airport was conceived and built, as replacement for Stapleton Airfield.

Denver holds city elections every four years, in May, seventeen months before the National Presidential election. That will be this 2015 May. All elected offices excepting District Attorney (a State Office) will be voted on. This election is non-Partisan; there is no Primary election, where each party choose their candidate. In Denver city elections, the winner for each office must receive half, plus one vote. If not, there's a July run-off for the two with the most votes.

In the 1948 election, twenty-two of the 65 Colorado House of Representatives elected were from Denver, without Districts. One-Third. Denver, a power House politically. In that year there were probably forty Denver Democrat Colorado House Candidates; those from the first letters of the alphabet were

elected. Those years there would be no young George Washington, Woodrow Wilson, Roosevelt elected, ever.

Denver had many distinctive features. There is no other city of stature within 500 miles, in any direction. It is the Capital of its State; few largest cities are. It houses one of three U.S. Mints.

P.S.

There is one very significant political change coming with the May election. For the first time in some fifty years there will be an election without Dennis Gallagher as Candidate, or already holding Office. The 'Old Horse' is being stabled.

Dennis has been a figure in the Colorado House or Senate, in Denver as City Councilman or Auditor almost continuously since return from Catholic University with an Advance degree in Literature. For my part this regret; Dennis did not become Denver Mayor when he ran against Bill McNichols; that office could have used the management, wit, talent, humor and smile Dennis exhibited throughout his political world as he sought, brought honor, across five decades.

While in the Colorado Senate, 30 years ago, Dennis wrote and helped passed the Gallagher Amendment now Constitutional Law. This places a greater tax burden on Business Property than on Residential, saving all Colorado home owner thousands in Property Tax. Everyone in Windsor Gardens owes Dennis a Thank You for his half Century of servitude.

