

## Welcome to Denver's Narrow and One-way Streets

*By Liz Gibbons*

When our sons used to visit us in Atlanta they had a difficult time knowing where we were when we were traveling around the city because Atlanta's topography is not suited to a street grid system. So when I moved to Denver a year ago my son, who lives here, reminded me that Denver streets are laid out on a grid.

My car, which I shipped, was delivered a few days after I arrived. Since the transport company requests that you ship your car with little gas in the gas tank, my first order of business was to buy some gas. I had not seen many gas stations around Denver, as I did not realize that most people purchase their gas at supermarkets. I remembered seeing a gas station on Speer Boulevard so that was my destination. My son and his wife live on W. 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a thoroughfare. My car was facing west and I wanted to travel east. The sensible solution was to circle the block and turn on 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the direction I wanted to go. When I turned into the street paralleling W. 29<sup>th</sup> I saw that cars were parked on both sides of the narrow street, and a car was heading my way down the street. I decided I'd better stop and wait. That was my introduction to Denver's narrow streets lined with parked cars.

My next significant foray into unknown streets was on Saturday when I ventured by myself to the Farmer's Market at Union Station. I assumed there would be a parking lot at the station. There was not. Parking was on the street, and all spaces were filled. I figured I would just circle around the block until I found an empty space. That was my introduction to one-way streets and a grid in that part of Denver laid out at a different angle. I finally maneuvered my way back to Union Station and was lucky enough to spot a car just ahead pulling out of a parking space. I called upon my rusty parallel parking skills and fed the meter four quarters for an hour's time. I only returned once to that market. Subsequently, I have given up on Farmer's Markets in Denver as parking is a hassle.

I shop at Trader Joe's about every week to ten days. Since their parking lot is somewhat small I like to arrive there early in the morning. My route is usually along 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue with its lovely boulevard. I turn right on Ash Street and zig and zag down three streets to access Trader Joe's parking lot from the back. I enter the parking lot from N. Albion Street, a busy street, where cars are parked on both sides of that narrow street. So I always have to deal with one lane traffic there.

Denver has much to offer, and I assumed it would be easy to get around with its grid system of streets. What struck me the most about Denver is how many streets are narrow and lined all day with parked cars making traveling on those streets slow and deliberate. The one-way streets often upset my planned route to a destination. In some respects Atlanta's wide meandering streets seemed easier to navigate.