

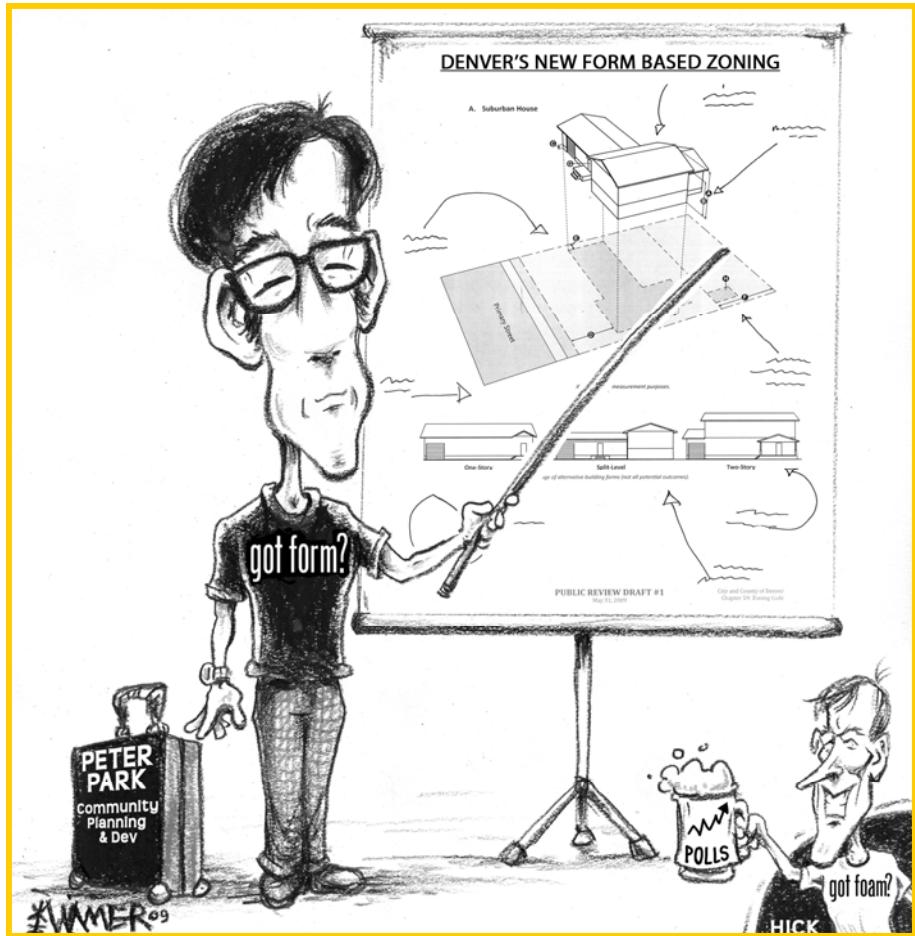
Published by Denver City Councilman Charlie Brown

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# The Email Express



August 2009



## A Lighter Look At The New Zoning Code

Dear Friends,

After nearly four years and with help from a powerful task force, Denver's Community Planning and Development Department has launched a communications campaign to get citywide comment on a proposed overhaul of the city's zoning code.

The initial Council District 6 meeting was held in May at the District 3 police station. A June meeting was the first opportunity for residents to view the proposed new zoning maps. For hours, 80 residents scoured over the maps as if they were planning the Normandy invasion.

"It got a little intense in there," a Denver Community Planning and Development planner told me as we turned off the lights following the four-hour gathering. Her observations were not surprising since zoning and property rights issues often generate strong emotions.

Driving home that night I thought it might be a good idea for all parties to step back, take a deep breath and try to find a little humor in the process. I worked with Karl Wimer, cartoonist for the Denver Business Journal, to come up with some fun ways to depict various groups and their pet issues. Those appear on the following two pages.

You can raise your favorite issue at a meeting scheduled for 6 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 20 at the District 3 police station. I can't attend as Suzanne and I will be taking our youngest son, Nick, to the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. It's "move-in day" which means Brown goes to college and green comes out of our wallets.

I'm sure all "steakholders" will make their voices heard Aug. 20.

*Walie*



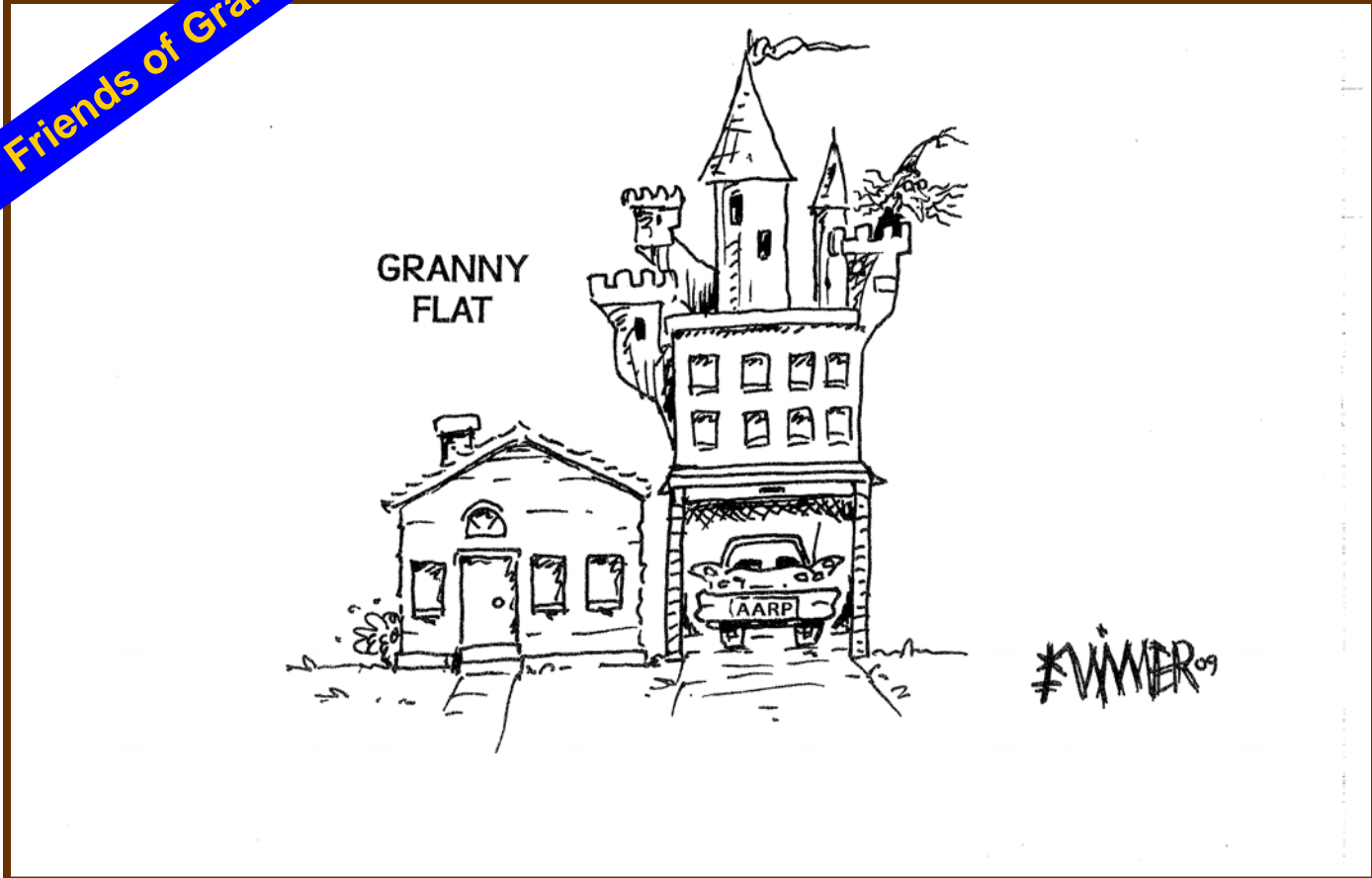
A "Steakholder"

# Hey Coach Park, I want to play, put me in too!

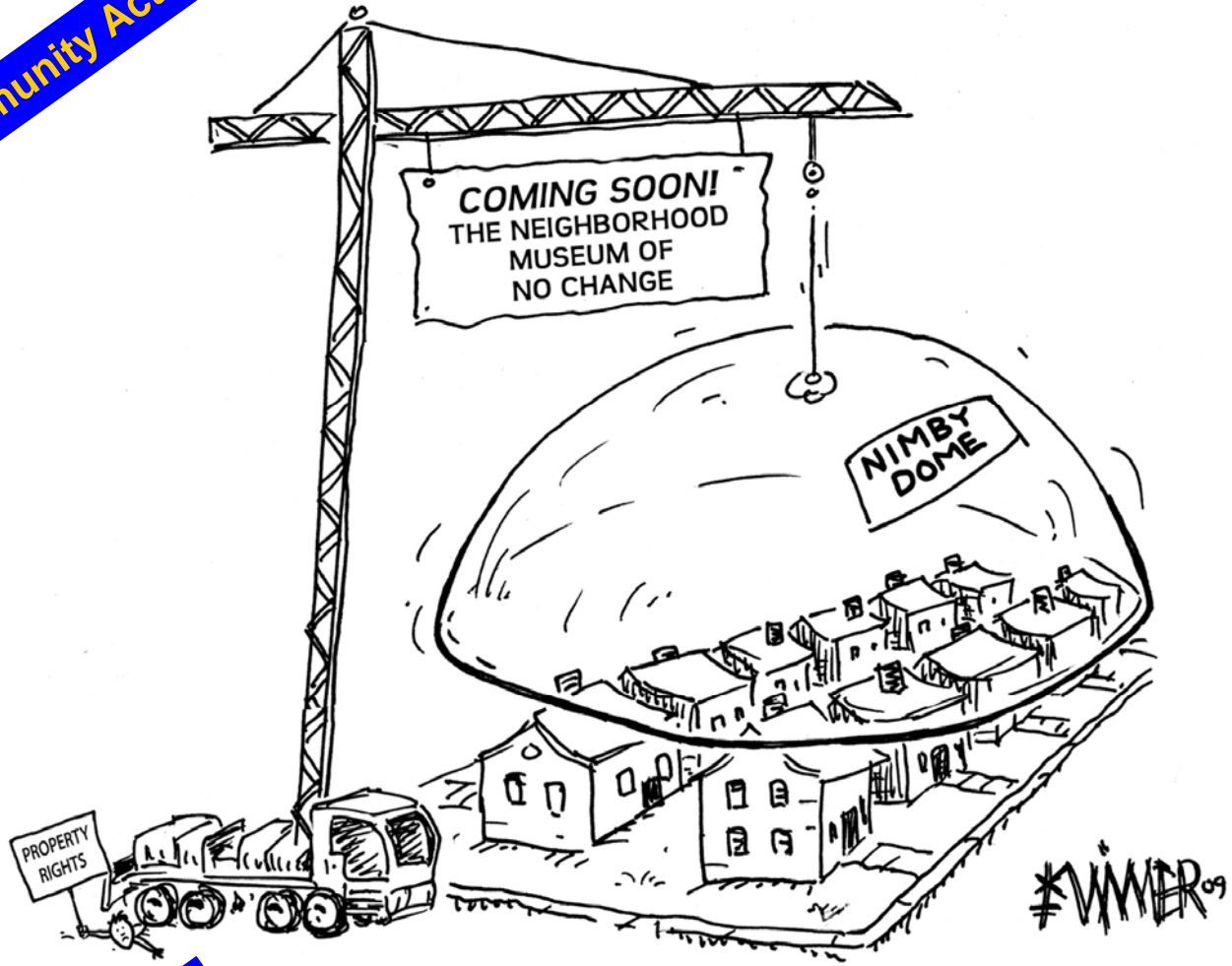
Urban Farmers



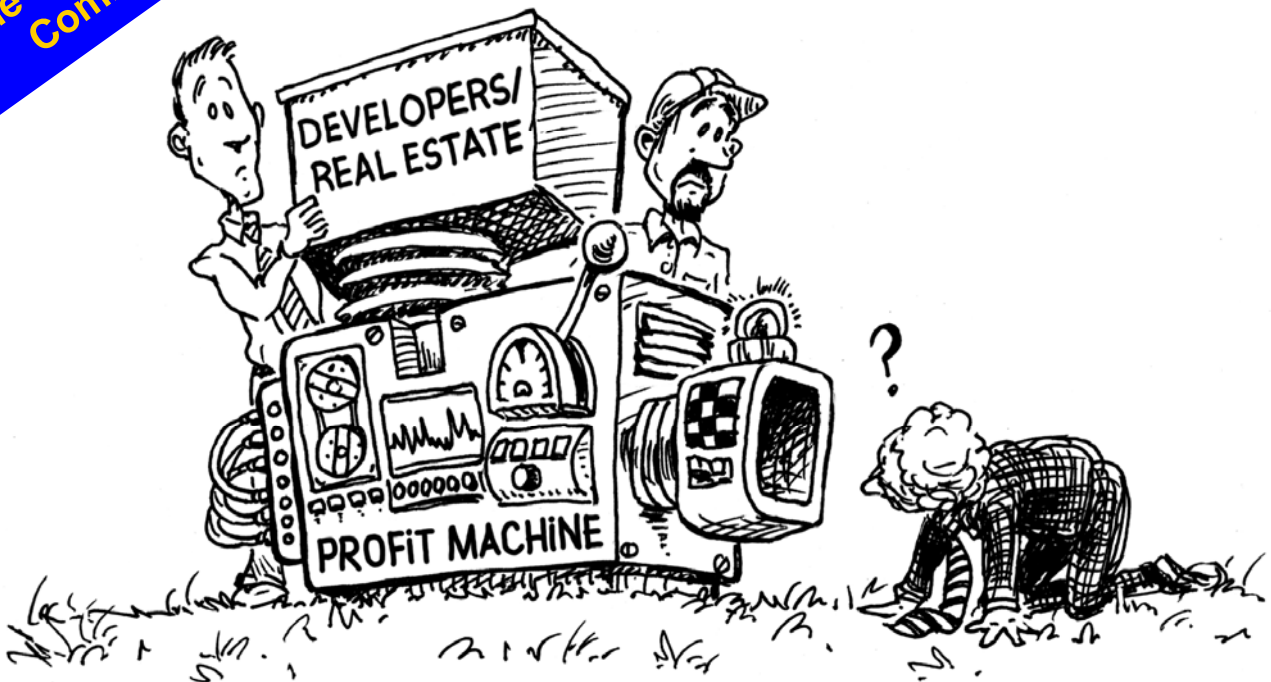
Friends of Granny



**Community Activists**



**The Development Community**



## Renovations Begin at the Washington Park Recreation Center

Renovations to the indoor pool and locker rooms at the Washington Park Recreation Center will partially close the facility Aug. 1 - 11. The fitness center will remain open during this period. Rest assured that this minimal inconvenience will be worth it once everyone enjoys the \$300,000 in updates!



## Denver City Councilman's Wife Releases First CD



Mary Louise Lee, wife of my good friend and colleague Michael Hancock, debuted her first CD, "True Soul," recently at Jazz @ Jack's in the 16th Street Mall Pavilions. The event included a performance by the Mary Louise Lee Band as well. This R&B / Soul CD is produced by Jor-nae Promotions Co. You can purchase the CD at Twist & Shout, Jazz @ Jack's, or online at [www.MaryLouiseLee.net](http://www.MaryLouiseLee.net).

**Congratulations to Mary Louise!**

## Nordstrom Rack Opening at Circuit City Site Reflects New Marketing Concept for Boomers

Seattle-based Nordstrom Inc. is opening a 39,000-square-foot Nordstrom Rack in the Old Circuit City building at Sother Colorado Boulevard. and East Florida Avenue. The new store reflects the company's revised business strategy.

According to a cover story in **Business Week** ("The Inevitable Shrinking Boomer Economy" Aug. 3, 2009) Nordstrom is one of several retail stores, automakers and restaurants that believe the free spending boomer generation "that has long powered the economy" is "tapped out."

Other companies mentioned in the story who are adjusting their marketing strategies include Mercedes-Benz, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, and OSI Restaurant Partners, which operate Outback Steakhouse, Bonefish Grill and Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar.

Boomers were born between 1946 and 1962. These 79 million people, nearly a third of Americans, represent "history's wealthiest generation." Kristi Steinberg, director for Mercedes-Benz's North American market research operation, "has a nagging fear that sales won't recover for a long time" the magazine says. "I don't know if anyone knows

if this is a blip or a defining moment like the Great Depression," Steinberg says.

Even with the decline of boomer real estate holdings and the crash of many retirement funds, boomers "are actually doing what people normally do when

they near retirement; they are living more frugally," the magazine says.

While many retailers counted on boomers to keep spending longer, that doesn't seem to be happening, even for Nordstrom. "The purveyor of affordable fashion believes that its customers—many of them boomers—

will be under pressure for years to come," according to the business magazine.

One of the nation's leading fashion specialty retailers, with 175 stores located in 28 states, Nordstrom is building fewer full-price department stores and has tripled the pace for opening lower-priced Nordstrom Rack stores. It will open 13 in 2009 and nine next year. The new store will open next spring and will be the third Nordstrom Rack in Colorado.



**The old Circuit City building at 1505 South Colorado Blvd. will become a Nordstrom Rack this Spring**

## "Concrete Creatures" Invade Council Offices



Luke Waguespack  
Age 10  
"Micia Cat"



Kimi McBryde  
Age 12  
"Ballerina"



Daina Loewenthal  
Age 8  
"Magical Dolphin"

New creatures have been roaming the neighborhood lately and have landed in Charlie Brown's office! The new window display is featuring "Concrete Creatures" sculpted by art students at the Cook Park Recreation Center. The "Concrete Creatures" on display were sculpted by 8- to 12-year olds. Much thanks to Deborah Grebenar, the art teacher who directed the project, we now have a starfish, dragon, caterpillar, cat, dolphin and two penguins to guard our office!

## Charlie's Newsletter Makes News



KMGH-TV (Ch. 7) reporter Lane Lyon holds up a copy of Councilman Brown's "Email Express" as the source for the DNC-unpaid bills story. The local Convention Host Committee, under the leadership of their president, Elbra Wedgeworth, successfully resolved the outstanding invoice with Excel Energy.

## June's "Mystery Woman" Correctly Identified



A Washington Park resident correctly identified the June newsletter's "mystery woman" as Kerry Kennedy. The winner will receive 10 pounds of heirloom tomatoes from Charlie's garden as her prize. Kerry Kennedy, the seventh of 11 children born to Robert and Ethel Kennedy, and her brother Robert F. Jr. (pictured below), the third child, were introduced by Suzanne Brown at the "Unique Lives" forum that took place at the Buell Theatre in the spring.



## Charlie's Round-Up All the news that's fit to corral

**Looking for revenue in all the right places**—As the city faces an unprecedented \$120 million shortfall, a good source for additional revenue is the backlog of unpaid parking tickets. According to our Public Works Department, the dollar value on unpaid parking fines and fees owed to the city is more than \$20 million. This includes unpaid tickets that are more than a year old. The \$20 million represents more than 425,000 open accounts.

Initially, the fines were small, but if the original fine is not paid quickly, additional fees are added. Forget the statute of limitations excuse, these municipal fines and fees never go away.

To be fair, we will never be able to collect all the unpaid fines and fees. Some are very dated, going back 20 years. Others have incomplete names, incomplete license numbers, or are plates registered to folks in jail or now deceased.

Common sense tells us that the sooner we can notify violators the more likely they are to pay. If the city will make a better effort to find these people in the first two or three months, we can collect more money. Perhaps we should also consider a 30-day amnesty period during which violations would be reduced to the initial fine plus a \$10 processing fee. We really need to reduce that huge number of open accounts.

**Homeward Bound**—According to **The New York Times** (7/29) the city of New York is providing one-way trips home for homeless individuals and families if relatives agree to take them in. "The Bloomberg administration, which has struggled with a seemingly intractable problem of homelessness for years, has paid for more than 550 fami-

lies to leave the city since 2007, as a way of keeping them out of the expensive shelter system, which costs \$36,000 a year per family," the Times reports.

It's time for Denver's administration and city council to consider this policy. In the meantime, thanks to Mayor Bloomberg for insisting that the families are taken in by relatives. Several years ago a large Midwestern city sent some 300 homeless people to Denver on a "free" one-way bus ticket. Just what Denver taxpayers needed.



## News Round-Up

**Does a new Mercedes come with that?**—Vail has finally done it. The price for a prime Vail parking space is now \$500,000. That's

more than New York City! According to the **Vail Daily**, the \$500,000 spot is in Vail's Founders garage, located in the Village across from the Christiana.

"That's what I think the going rate is going to be from now on," said Buzz Schleper, the spot's owner.

According to a local real estate agent, the last parking spot sales in the garage went for nearly \$350,000, another for \$385,000. The going rate for a spot in NYC? A lousy \$250,000.

**Breakfast of Champion Crooks**—Forty-four people, including mayors, rabbis and even one alleged trafficker in human kidneys, were arrested last week in New Jersey and New York after a decade-long investigation into public corruption and international money laundering.

According to court documents, one of the crooks received a box of Apple Jacks cereal stuffed with \$97,000 cash. I don't know about you, but I only found a plastic top in my cereal box! A suggestion for new license plates: "New Jersey—The Sopranos State."

# The "Real Deal" on the Denver Deficit

**Edward Scholtz is budget director for the City and County of Denver. He is a certified public finance officer and a graduate of the Senior Executives in State and Local Government program at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.**



The City and County of Denver is entering the budget planning process for the 2010 budget. The budget runs on a calendar year (January-December) and by City Charter, the mayor must present council with a balanced budget in September. Council then must present any revisions or amendments in October. Additionally, a decrease in revenue for 2009 as a result of the economic downturn has presented challenges for the remainder of the 2009 fiscal year.

## Where does the City and County receive its revenue?

The City and County of Denver's Main Operating Fund (\$914 million in the 2009 appropriation) receives revenue from various sources including:

- Sales and use tax - 50 percent
- Fees, permits and fines - 28 percent
- Property tax - 7 percent

## Which revenue is dropping?

All revenue is suffering as a result of the economic downturn. Sales tax, which is half of the city's General Fund Revenue, has declined significantly over 2008 collections. The most recent sales tax collection data for May show a 10 percent decrease over last year and a year-to-date decrease of nearly 13 percent. Compared to this time last year, we are currently projecting sales tax collections for all

2009 will be -8 percent compared to all of 2008. Additionally, the city has seen a significant decrease in tourism-related revenue, such as lodger's tax, and construction-related revenues, such as permitting and building fees.

## What does the City and County of Denver spend its money on?

Like most governmental entities, more than 70 percent of the budget is personnel. The city relies upon staff to deliver services. Almost 50 percent of all expenditures are for safety services, which include police, fire, sheriff and courts. Then, 24 percent of the budget is allotted to services such as internal infrastructure (finance, technology, human resources), community planning and development, and elections. Less than 10 percent of the budget is for parks, recreation and cultural services. Public Works, which collects trash and maintains city streets, also makes up a little under 10 percent of the General Fund budget.

## If the City has a deficit, why does it continue to build things?

Funds that are designated for construction, such as The Better Denver Bond Program, can only be used for construction. The bond funds were approved by Denver voters and must be used in accordance with those wishes.

## What has the city already done to meet the budget gap?

The city has taken a number of steps already to cut costs and find efficiencies, including :reducing the cost of the city's fleet, con-

solidating the city's payroll functions, delaying the purchase of replacement vehicles or equipment, reducing the number of positions hired, scheduling furlough days, reducing pay increases for city workers and centralizing finance functions. Some of these reductions are one-time savings, and some are savings that will continue to be realized in future years.

## Are stimulus funds helping?

Denver has received more than \$53 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Funds (ARRA) to date. Like with federal dollars Denver receives annually, these dollars are for very specific purposes and are primarily for services that are not supported by the General Fund. The ARRA grants will assist in supporting the city to meet growing demands of service such as food stamps but cannot be used to meet the budget gap. It is anticipated that ARRA funds support Denver citizens finding jobs through workforce training or as a result of a construction project that may not have been fully funded otherwise. Denver will benefit from the economic stimulus either through sales tax or construction permits.

## What's next for the 2010 Budget?

The mayor's office and budget office are meeting with agency representatives in August to develop the draft 2010 budget. Many options are being reviewed to assure a balanced budget is presented to council in September. Like in the past, Denver anticipates a multi-faceted approach and will work to minimize impact on services to the citizens of Denver. A public hearing on the proposed budget will be held Oct. 26.

## Children's Diabetes Foundation kicks off Annual High Hopes Tribute Dinner



Councilman Brown and his wife, Suzanne, attended a reception for the Children's Diabetes Foundation at the Cherry Hills Village home of Sharon Magness Blake and Ernie Blake. The other greeter at the door was Thunder, who was a fill-in for former Bronco quarterback Jay Cutler, rumored to be somewhere in Chicago. The reception was a kick-off for the Foundation's 2009 High Hopes Tribute Dinner, Sept. 26 at the Sheraton Denver Downtown. The dinner will honor Arlene Hirschfield. The event will be chaired by Deidre and Shawn Hunter, Stacy and Jeff Robinson and Julie and Steve Roitman. Honorary co-chairman is Cutler. For more information on the gala and this important charity, please go to:

www.childrensdiabetesfoundation.org  
777 Grant St. #302, Denver, CO 80203  
(303)863-1200

