

July 4th Kids' Parade, First Sundays Return to Cheesman
by DeAnne Minner

Although mid-May snow sprinkled some Denver neighborhoods, a soaking rain quenched the thirsty Cheesman Park turf ensuring a beautiful, green backdrop for 2011 summer activities.

First Sundays in the Park kicked off May 1. Thanks to Councilwoman Jeanne Robb, Denver Parks and Recreation, and the Cheesman Park Advocacy Group (CPAG), park roads are closed to vehicular traffic from 5 am to 6 pm on the first Sundays of May - September. These days grew out of the Cheesman Park Master Plan and are intended to enhance pedestrian and biking experiences. Remaining dates are June 5, July 3, August 7, and September 4. So dust off those bikes, baby strollers and little red wagons, pull out the kites, volleyball nets, and picnic baskets, and get ready for some old-fashioned, fun-day Sundays in the park!

A new kids-oriented program will debut in the park to coincide with Cheesman's June 5 auto-free day – **Kidical Mass**. Sponsored by Bike Denver, Kidical Mass is a safe and fun bike ride for kids, kids at heart, and their families. Bikes, trikes or whatever rolls and their operators are welcome. The event begins at 12:30 pm and concludes with free admission to the Mordecai Children's Gardens at the Denver Botanic Gardens. Registration, helmets and adult supervision are required. Go to www.bikedenver.org for more information and to register.

The Cheesman Park Pavilion may be undergoing restoration, but that won't get in the way of the fifth annual, CPAG-sponsored **Cheesman Park Fourth of July Kids' Parade**. A popular event that has grown each year, the parade is open to all children, with or without bikes, trikes or wagons. Adult supervision is required. Bike decorating materials are provided beginning at 9 am in the parking lot south of the pavilion; the parade starts at 10 and activities continue until 11. East-side park roads will be closed until 1 pm.

A bagpiper, the Denver Police Mounted Patrol, a Denver Fire truck, the Mile High Freedom Marching Band, and Uncle Sam will join in the parade. Face painting, a balloon artist and a caricaturist will also be available. All activities are free of charge. So get your parade-game on, line up your "floats," and kick off the holiday celebration with your kids at the park!

If interested in volunteering for this event, please contact Leslie Beltrami at 303-331-1033 or leslie1033@aol.com. Tax-deductible donations in support of the event will be gratefully accepted. Make checks payable to CPAG and send to Marilyn Kal-Hagan, 1133 Race Street #15N, Denver, CO 80206.

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DeAnne Minner serves as secretary of CPAG's Board of Directors. To learn more about CPAG, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, visit its website at www.cheesmanpark.org.