



**GETTING THEIR IRISH UP**  
From hurling to Celtic punk, this festival is no blarney

LOCAL | PG 9



**VISIBLY SUPPORTIVE**  
Invisible Disabilities Association set for October gala

FLAIR! | PG 16



**OUTSTANDING STUDENTS**  
Local teens earn Congressional Medals

LOCAL | PG 22

# SOUTH METRO The VILLAGER

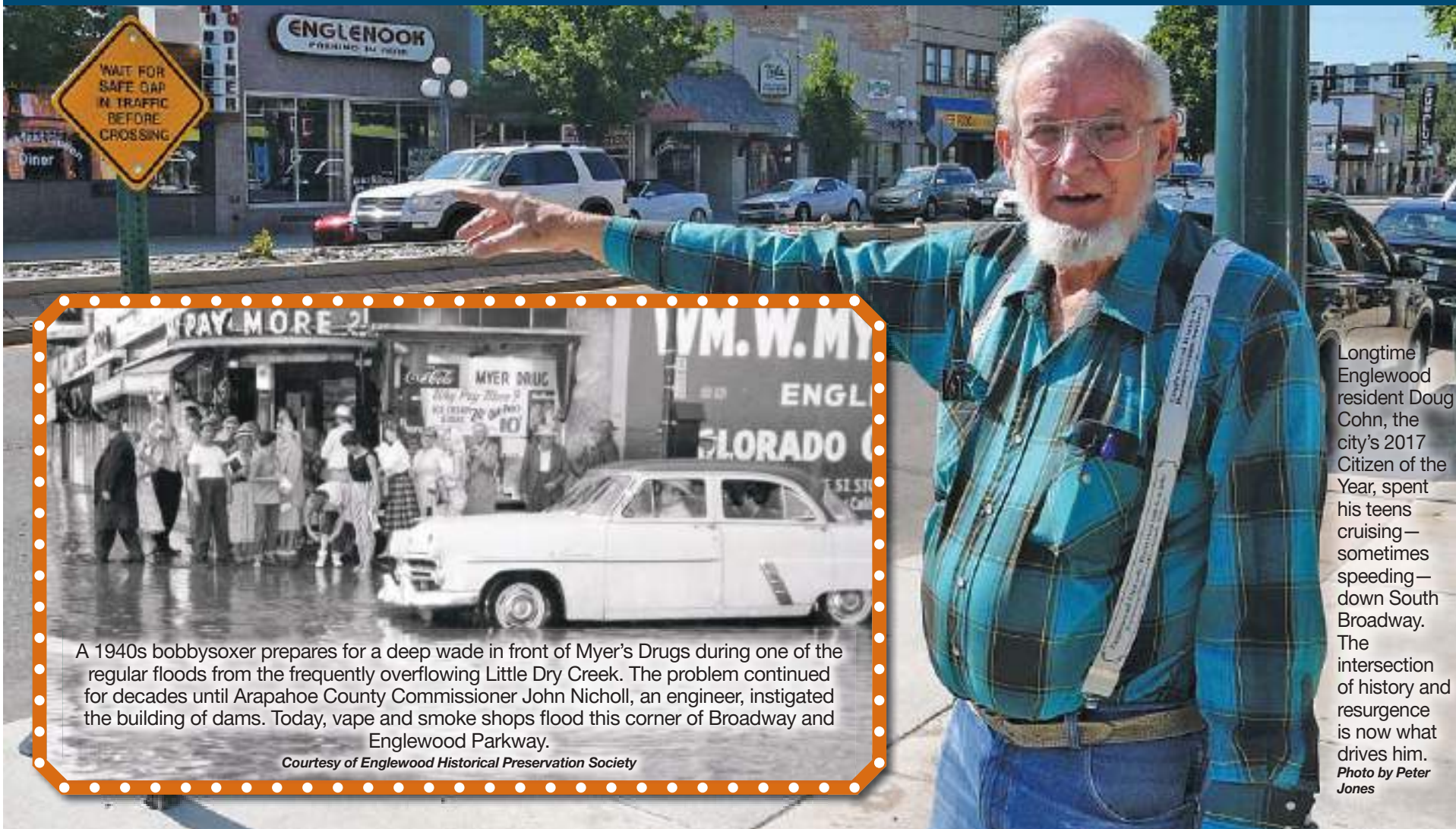
Since 1982

www.villagerpublishing.com   TheVillagerNewspaper   @VillagerDenver

VOLUME 35 • NUMBER 35 • JULY 20, 2017

## THE LIGHTS ON BROADWAY

*Resurgence of Englewood's 'Main Street' evokes colorful history*



Longtime Englewood resident Doug Cohn, the city's 2017 Citizen of the Year, spent his teens cruising—sometimes speeding—down South Broadway. The intersection of history and resurgence is now what drives him.  
*Photo by Peter Jones*

A 1940s bobbysoxer prepares for a deep wade in front of Myer's Drugs during one of the regular floods from the frequently overflowing Little Dry Creek. The problem continued for decades until Arapahoe County Commissioner John Nicholl, an engineer, instigated the building of dams. Today, vape and smoke shops flood this corner of Broadway and Englewood Parkway.

*Courtesy of Englewood Historical Preservation Society*

**BY PETER JONES**  
NEWS EDITOR

For Doug Cohn, Englewood's South Broadway doubles as Memory Lane.

"For a dollar, you'd get two movies, two cartoons, a bunch of newsreels in the middle, and candy and a drink," he said of his long-ago trips to the Gothic Theater, then a movie house.

Walk two blocks, and across the street stands the current home of Lighting Outlet.

"That's the old JC Penney store. When I was in high school, I got my first credit card there. They weren't sure they wanted to give me one," Cohn said with a laugh.

Much has changed since the 1950s and early '60s—the price of popcorn, the least of it—when this stretch of Broadway between the Gothic and Hampden Avenue was Cohn's teenage haunt. Although now in resurgence with younger-skewing bars and retailers, and the Gothic's pricier era as a concert venue, change has come with ebbs and flows, bouts with the wrecking ball, damaging fires

and the controversial death of a business-improvement district.

"In the 1950s, this was called the richest retail mile in the country," Cohn said. "There was a Walgreens, Woolworths and May D&F before they opened Cinderella City."

The nearby shopping mall, once the largest west of the Mississippi, would benefit the area, but eventually marked the decline of Broadway, with the mall's newfangled singalong ice cream store and Cinder Alley streetlamps replacing Broadway's old-school malt shops and matinees.

In turnabout, the mall's demise—Englewood Civic Center now sits on Cinderella's grave—would ironically signal the birth of new urbanism, the reinvention of South Broadway's "old urbanism," and its new role as a now-burgeoning mixed-use neighborhood.

With new apartments adjacent new bars and restaurants, a short walk from light rail, trend watchers believe Englewood is well poised to attract millennials, the ostensibly lifestyle-conscious generation that will soon constitute half the nation's workforce.

Oddly enough, it was this slow revitalization that in 2015 unseated Cohn from his half-century-old family-owned hobby shop, which spent its last 16 years in the historic Oddfellows lodge building at the corner of Broadway and Englewood

Parkway.

"The landlord said I'm going to fix the building all up and you won't be able to afford to live here anymore," recalled Cohn, 70. "The hobby store was kind of like the Cheers store without the whiskey. There was one group of guys that started playing Dungeons and Dragons at our store in 1978 and they played every single Saturday until we closed. I still miss it."

### A human pin setter

Eighty-five-year-old Englewood native Don Reinke spent his formative years—as well as most of his money as a teenager—in the 3200 block of South Broadway.

At the corner of Floyd Avenue now sits the Whiskey Biscuit, a new restaurant known for its LoDo-ish vibe on Gothic concert nights. But 70 years ago, this was home to Miller's grocery store, where 12-year-old Reinke learned life's lessons while hauling bags of meat and vegetables to the parking lot.

He was fired one day for accepting a quarter tip from a customer.

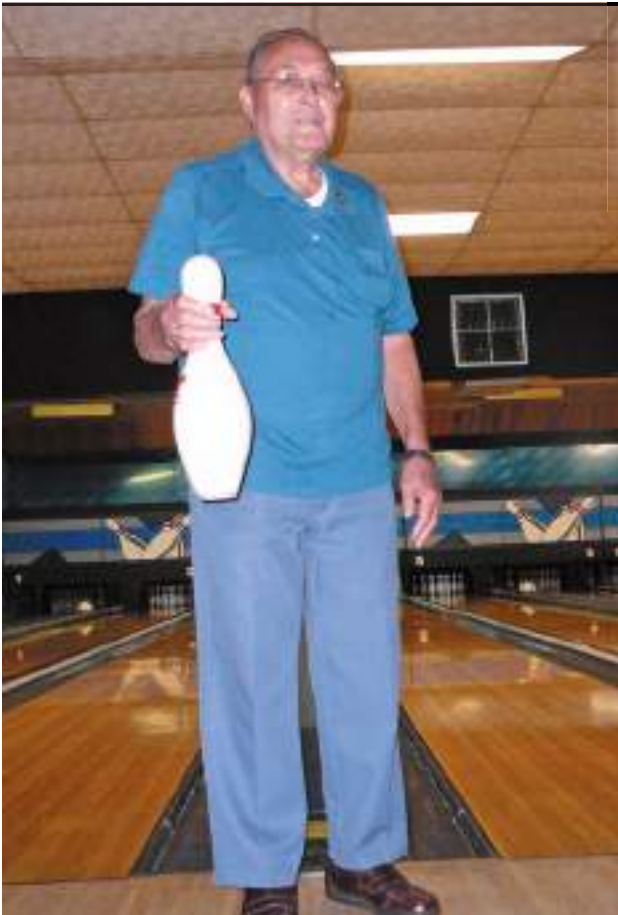
"It was good times, but everybody was poor," Reinke said. "My mother had a charge account, and once every week she would pay the bill and it would total maybe a buck and a half. For a kid—or anybody—25 cents was a lot of money."

Sometimes Reinke would spend whatever he had in one place—the Gothic for a movie or three, before struggling with a tough choice: A hamburger or a bus ride home.

When the burger won out, Reinke would make the mile-plus walk home in the dark. At the time,

Continued on Page 11





LEFT: Back to work: 85-year-old Don Reinke got a job as a human pin setter on South Broadway's Sports Bowl in the 1940s. The alleys are still open at Moe's Original Bar B Que, but today it's more Jetsons than Flintstones.  
Photo by Peter Jones



In the 1930s, Englewood's South Broadway was a bustling center of life and retail.  
Courtesy of Englewood Historical Preservation Society

# BROADWAY

Continued from Page 1

there were few streetlights and little but desolation between Broadway's epicenter and the Reinkes' home on South Sherman Street.

"I was scared all the way," he said. "Once you got past the 4500 block on South Broadway, there wasn't much out there. From Belleview on south, it was a dirt road."

With an appetite for burgers and Tom Mix Westerns, Reinke was soon working again, this time as a human pin setter at Sports Bowl, next door to Miller's.

Although the place is, amazingly, still a bowling alley—now part of Moe's Original Bar B Que—the wonders of technology have made working there a lot less hazardous.

"You had to be careful and look up the alley to make sure whoever was up there wasn't going to throw another ball at you. Sometimes they did," Reinke said.

The teenager would quit that job in favor of being captain of the football and basketball teams at Englewood High School. [The school's

then-location on Broadway is now apartments.]

Reinke walked three doors down to the Gothic and landed his next job as an usher.

"My girlfriend got good seats all the time," he said. "I would sit through all the movies, and then when it was out and people were leaving, I would sit and watch the next round of cartoons."

*Englewood was described as five bars, two 'sporting houses' and a grocery store.*

- Doug Cohn, Englewood Historical Preservation Society

## Cruising Broadway

Although Doug Cohn spent his teen years racing down Broadway in his '52 Dodge, the present-day lecture director of the Englewood Historic Preservation Society is happy these

days to slowly saunter the three-block center of Downtown Englewood on foot.

In walking southward from the Oddfellows, he passes Palango! fitness, home to the *Englewood Herald* in the 1930s and '40s. Next up, a building that has gone from ice cream sodas to mixed drinks—the "cool" Puritan Creamery is now the "hip" Englewood Grand.

The smokes of longstanding Edward's Tobacco are chased by Brews on Broadway at the former site of Wilson's, another of the neighborhood's onetime grocers.

One must squint in the open area next door—which now constitutes BOB's patio and that of a soon-to-open Asian bistro—to imagine the site of a since-burned-down Woolworths. Decades before that, it was the grand entrance to the turn-of-the-century Tuileries amusement park.

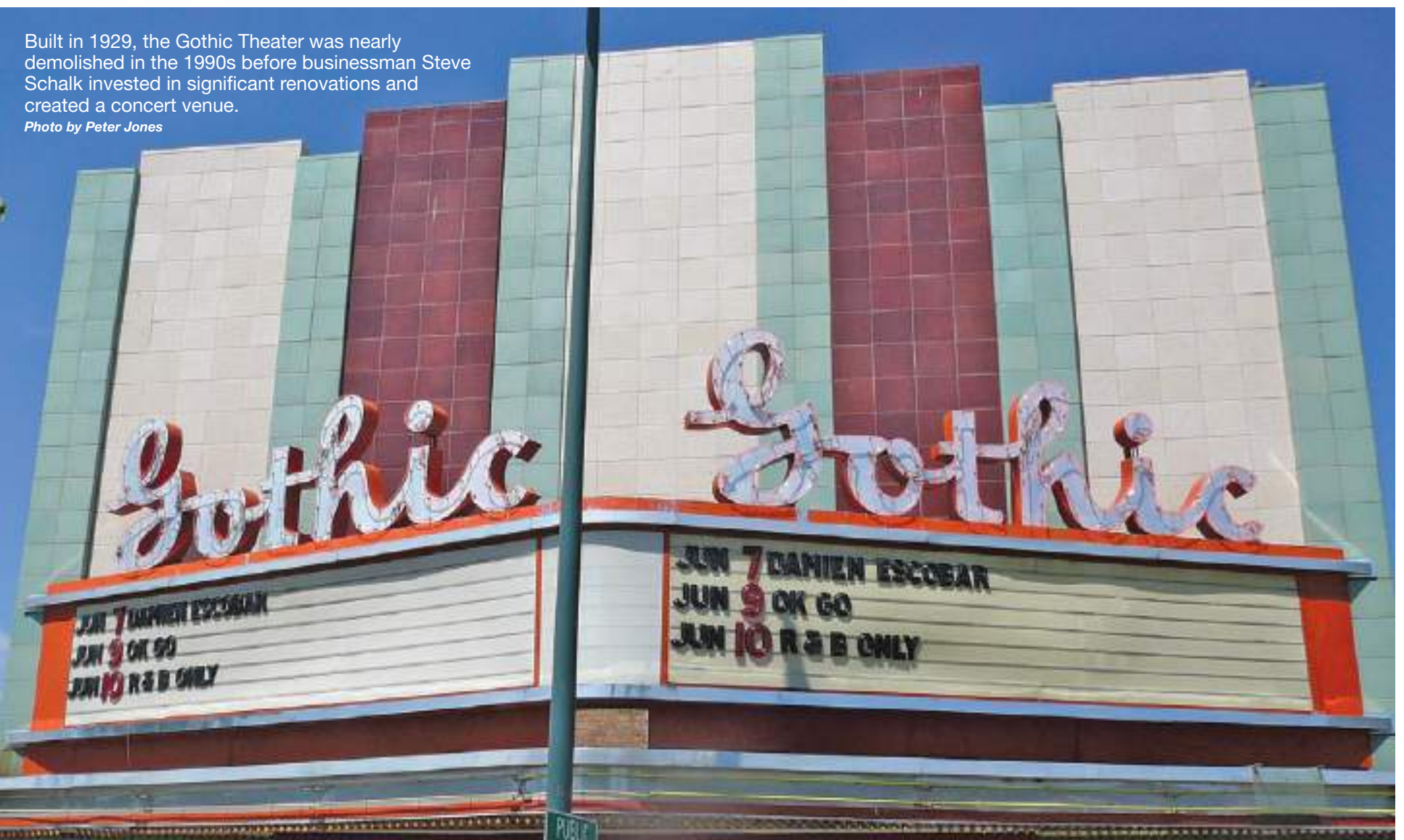
"They did vaudeville things and had ice skating, canoes on the river and hot-air balloons. They had motorcycle races, until one killed a few audience members," Cohn says.

A few doors down is a reminder of why the family-friendly Tuileries came to town in the first place: The Paradox Lounge, a no-frills bar that was reportedly the site of one of the brothels that once marked this stretch of historic Broadway.

"Englewood was described as five bars, two

Continued from Page 12

Built in 1929, the Gothic Theater was nearly demolished in the 1990s before businessman Steve Schalk invested in significant renovations and created a concert venue.  
Photo by Peter Jones





Gothic was believed to have been the first movie theater in the Denver area to show “talkies.” Note the prices—and free parking.  
*Courtesy of Englewood Historical Preservation Society*



Once you got past the 4500 block on South Broadway, there wasn't much out there. From Bellevue on south, it was a dirt road.  
-Don Reinke, longtime resident



Englewood City Councilmember Steve Yates gets clipped by Rich Lozano, the fourth owner of the 108-year-old Sam Hill's, the longest continuously-operating business in the city.

Photo by Peter Jones

# BROADWAY

old Sam's earliest incarnation, which opened in 1909 as the OK Barber-

Continued from Page 11

‘sporting houses’ and a grocery store,” Cohn says of the city’s then reputation. “The main people who were interested in shopping down here were soldiers from Fort Carson.”  
Down the street is the famous spaceship—or onion—bank as designed by Charles Deaton, the same architect who created Genesee Mountain’s “futuristic” *Sleeper* house, famous for its prominence in a 1973 Woody Allen comedy.  
Across Broadway is where decades earlier the horse-drawn Cherrelyn street car would meet the electric trolley for a transfer in Englewood’s first “mass-transit” system. Up the street, the Breakfast Queen sits atop the stretch’s other onetime movie house, the Pioneer.  
“When they tore the floor out, they discovered the floor of the Pioneer,” Cohn says.  
Up next, Sam’s Barbershop, the oldest continuously-operating business in Englewood.  
“Besides a haircut, there were all kinds of other services you could get,” Cohn says of the 108-year-

shop and Bathhouse. That nearby location that now serves as a Christian bookstore.  
“You’re not going to get more traditional than this. This is old school,” said Rich Lozano, the fourth owner in Sam’s history.  
Outside, the barber pole—buried in four inches of concrete—dates to the 1920s. Open the door and see a working cash register from the ‘30s, a lathering machine and hair vacuum from the ‘50s, and a still-working antique hair dryer from the ‘30s.  
A stone’s throw away is the former Catholic Store, a onetime drugstore-malt shop that is now a pipe and vape retailer. It was also yet another of the neighborhood’s rumored brothels. Up the street, a post office with a historically recognized wall mural inside.  
Across the street from there is King Soopers. But in the 1920s, the large lot was home to Alexander



Newer bars like Englewood Grand and Brews on Broadway have helped to revitalize Englewood’s South Broadway. Photo by Peter Jones

Film Company, which doubled as an aeronautics firm. Alexander produced countless short films for movie theaters, like the Gothic and Pioneer, before a deadly nitrate fire sent the company packing for larger quarters in Colorado Springs.  
“That changed a whole bunch of the fire codes,”



# BROADWAY

All aboard: As the lighted sign might indicate, the “spaceship” bank at Broadway and Hampden Avenue is still a stop for history buffs and kitsch tourists.

*Photo by Peter Jones*

*It's the emerging cool. I think we're turning that corner.*

- Englewood Mayor Joe Jefferson



Cohn says. “They had bars on all the windows and the bars were not removable, so the guys were stuck inside.”

## The emerging ‘cool’

Englewood Mayor Joe Jefferson, 35, grew up on South Broadway, as the son of immigrant-turned-entrepreneur Shiou Jefferson, the longtime owner of the neighborhood’s popular Twin Dragon Chinese restaurant.

“This area was happening,” he said of his childhood as a sometime waiter or dishwasher. “My mom had the most exotic food in town. I think she was the first person in the state of Colorado to make crab-cheese wontons. We had a line out the door in the ‘80s.”

Jefferson watched the neighborhood itself grow up—and down—thriving during the heights of Cinderella City and meandering in the lows of the recession. Even the ‘20s-era Gothic Theater survived a close call with the wrecking ball in the late 1990s.

As a mayor on the upper end of the millennial generation, Jefferson is a cheerleader for South Broadway’s re-emergence as a commercial hub. [His law offices and residence are just a few doors from his mother’s venerable eatery.]

With a slate of new restaurants on the horizon, Jefferson is excited about his neighborhood’s walkability and economic boon. Before the summer is over, just the west side of the 3400 block is expected to welcome Asian fusion, vegetarian, a destination pub, and the long-awaited return of the popular El Tepehuan Mexican restaurant.

Even Cherry Creek North’s Scented Studio has made the move.

“We’re seeing just a huge influx of cool places,” Jefferson said.

The mayor has also been front and center on the new Final Friday, which sees local bars, restaurants and retailers offer special promotions and entertainment on the last Friday of each month—including next week’s July 28. Jefferson gives credit to the Community Service Apparel and

Positive Vibes stores for kicking off the idea.

“If we can encourage local buying and playing, I think that’ll have a substantial impact on our local economy,” he said. “If they show the Broadway corridor is happening, that’s going to go a long way toward changing perceptions of the city.”

Even the Paradox Lounge, which has worn the “dive” mantle proudly for years, is upping the ante and participating under new ownership, the mayor added.

He expects an art element and live music to be recurring during the Friday celebrations.

“It’s the emerging cool,” Jefferson said. “I think we’re turning that corner.”



ABOVE: When the Breakfast Queen was recently renovated, workers discovered old flooring for the long-ago demolished Pioneer movie theater.

*Courtesy of Englewood Historical Preservation Society*

LEFT: The turn-of-the-century Tuileries amusement park was the product of Mayor Jacob Jones, narrowly elected in 1903 on a campaign to clean up Englewood’s seamy image.

*Courtesy of Englewood Historical Preservation Society*

