

# The TIMES of.... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Vol. 43, No. 1

April - May, 2013

<http://SDTimes.org/index.html>

The oldest neighborhood newspaper in St. Louis

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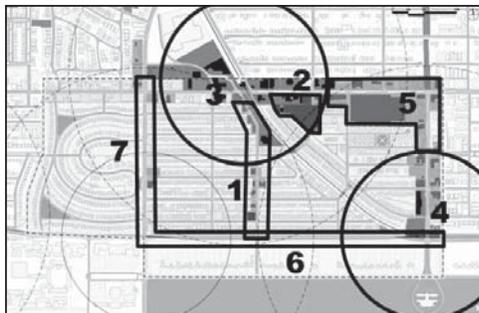
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## Skinker DeBaliviere Master Planning Update

by David Whiteman, Executive Director, SDCC

The Urban Design and Development Plan for the Skinker DeBaliviere community continues to progress as revealed at the Public Planning Workshops held at Hamilton School on February 13 and Grace Methodist Church on March 26. Seven Development Plan Components for the neighborhood are emerging – and the consultants provided multiple development options for each of the following study areas:

1. Des Peres Avenue – How do we build from Four Corners and connect to Forest Park and the Delmar Loop?
2. Lucier Park – Do we want Lucier Park to be an enclosed neighborhood park or a multi-use community park?
3. Delmar Metro Station Area – Which Transit Oriented Development (TOD) options best serve our community?
4. DeBaliviere Metro Station Area – Which (TOD) options best



- serve our community?
5. Metro Garage Site at Delmar and DeBaliviere – If, in the long-term, the Metro Garage relocates, what are the development options for the site?
6. Forest

Park Parkway – How do we want to create a new image for the neighborhood and improve safe access to Forest Park?

7. Skinker Boulevard – How do we want to improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and provide a new “front door” to the neighborhood?

At both Public Workshops, participants worked in groups – marking-up large drawings - to provide new ideas and feedback to options presented by the H3 Studios consulting team. Complete presentations from Public Workshops 1, 2 & 3 can be found on the Council’s website at [www.skinker-debaliviere.com](http://www.skinker-debaliviere.com).

As part of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, H3 Studios, Skinker DeBaliviere’s planning consultant, has been hired by the St. Louis Development Corporation to conduct comprehensive Transit Oriented Development (TOD) studies for the Delmar and DeBaliviere stations. The Skinker DeBaliviere, West End, and DeBaliviere Place neighborhoods and the Loop will all benefit greatly from this additional development planning effort. Two public meetings will be held for these TOD studies, although the dates are not known at this writing. In the meantime, Skinker DeBaliviere will slow its planning process so that we can take advantage of, and incorporate, portions of the TOD studies in our Urban Design and Development Plan. The Public Workshop #4 scheduled for May 14 will be rescheduled.

Community volunteers are needed to participate in a Walkability and Bikability Audit and a Building Conditions Survey that SDCC will be conducting in conjunction with the planning effort.

The Walkability and Bikability Audit is a community-based volunteer event. The purpose is to identify opportunities in the neighborhood to increase connections and access to transit, improve perceptions of safety, and enhance the overall beauty and quality of public space throughout the Skinker DeBaliviere community. The outcomes of the Walkability and Bikability Audit will be used to guide proposed public realm improvements in the Skinker DeBaliviere Urban Design and Development Plan. This event is scheduled for the morning of Saturday, May 20.

The Building Survey will create a block-by-block inventory of all buildings in the Skinker DeBaliviere community. Volunteer teams will photograph and document the type, height, materiality, occupancy and condition of each residential, commercial and institutional building. This survey data will identify opportunities for rehab and revitalization of existing built fabric as well as redevelopment of vacant or underutilized areas that do not positively contribute to the quality of the neighborhood. The Building Survey will be conducted mid-May through mid-July.

If you are interested in volunteering for either of these efforts, please contact the SDCC office at 862-5122 or [sdcc@skinker-debaliviere.com](mailto:sdcc@skinker-debaliviere.com).

## “NEW MOON ROOM” ROOFTOP

A canopy of solar cells provides the power for St. Louis’ newest special event space on the rooftop of the Moonrise Hotel, opening in April 2013.



In an unusual twist, the roof’s 107 glass solar panels also act as a 2,100-square-foot ceiling for the New Moon Room. The frameless modules allow sunlight to filter through to guests in the special event space while providing enough energy – 33,000 kWh – to power all the needs of the new facility.

The glass-walled New Moon Room is designed to host up to 200 people for a reception or 150 for a seated meal. Wedding parties will enjoy the room’s flexible options for all of their needs. Meeting room-style setups can accommodate from 50 to 150 attendees.

Guests will have a view of the Gateway Arch to the east, Forest

Park to the south and the streets of the vibrant Loop and Skinker-DeBaliviere neighborhood below. A giant moon sculpture revolves over the top of the hotel roof adding a fun touch to out-of-this world events.

Sixty feet of sliding glass doors, which lead to a spacious terrace, give the room an indoor-outdoor feel. The soaring ceiling slopes in height from 18 feet to 10 feet and comes to life at night with a fiber optic star field that follows the Moonrise Hotel’s space themes. Lighted planet-style globes will hang from the ceiling to add to the atmosphere.

When not in use for special events, the New Moon Room will offer food and beverages in the evenings, featuring small plates and bottle service. Guests can move between the New Moon Room and the hotel’s popular outdoor Rooftop Terrace Bar. Sunday brunch will be served in the venue from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. beginning in May 2013.

## Darlene Green Enters Fifth Term

Congratulations to Darlene Green on her election to a fifth term as St. Louis City Comptroller. Among her many accomplishments, she is especially proud of raising the city’s credit rating. In May 2008, the City was upgraded to an A+ rating for the first time in 35 years. During her tenure in City government, first as Budget Director and now as Comptroller, St. Louis recorded nine consecutive years of multi-million dollar budget surpluses and seven credit rating upgrades.



Darlene lived on DeGiverville for about three decades and was active in her block unit; she is now enjoying marriage and a new home in the nearby West End Neighborhood, just a few blocks away.

## TIMES MEETING NOTICE

The Times will be hosting an informational, relaxing, recruiting party at the home of Matt and Rachel Boxdorfer at 6150 Kingsbury, on Thursday, May 9th at 7:00 p.m. Please plan to attend if you are involved in The Times or looking to get involved.

The Times has been an all-volunteer effort for 43 years, and welcomes new writers, deliverers, fund-raisers, advertisers, photographers, and more! If you would like to be an active part of the TIMES, do join us on May 9.

**APRIL FOOL! Somewhere on pages 1-7 there is an April Fool's joke. Can you find it? Its identity is on page 8, below Hawkeye's In Your Ear column.**

## Editor's Notebook

by Lana Stein

A structured planning process seems to be characteristic of our time. There are city plans, industry plans, nonprofit plans, and neighborhood plans. Skinker DeBaliviere launched a planning process in 1989. It's most lasting benefit is probably the creation of the Commercial/Delmar Committee, which developed a redevelopment plan and saw it become law. The Housing Corporation has also followed a plan that set out its mission and priorities.

There have been other planning efforts but the one underway today is the first to have consultants as guides and facilitators. A multitude of ideas are now being debated at a series of neighborhood meetings. Nothing is yet writ in stone and there is ample opportunity for residents to make their voices heard.

Debate is already beginning and lines of demarcation are developing. Some reflect length of stay in the neighborhood. Old-timers know the original reason for certain things and may be reluctant to change. Newer residents operate without the historical background. Some ideas might receive universal agreement, such as bringing viable businesses to DeBaliviere. My favorite idea, which has been kicked around for a number of years, is development of a dog park. It would be fun for the dogs and owners as well (spoken by an owner of course).

I look forward to seeing where sentiment on these and many other issues lie. My caveat is that we remember that things don't always have to be the way they have been nor does something new and bold have to be appropriate always for this built environment. Of course, implementing any plan requires money and where will that money come from? A grant is governing the cost of our planning team. In moving forward toward any implementation, we need to figure out how with dollar signs.

Above all, participate in this process.

## Letters to the Editor:

Last month's notebook on guns stimulated a strong response from Gary Carr. Quoting in part, Carr said:

Lana Stein devoted her Editor's Notebook column, Vol 42, #5, to her reasons for banning assault weapons. My friend Lana's piece leads with her heart and not her head. The column is loaded with factual inaccuracies and misperceptions. As I read it, implicit in Lana's column is her real desire that all firearms capable of firing multiple rounds rapidly without reloading should be banned. If so, she should just say so. The prime purpose of all firearms is to disable or kill a living thing. Yet, such a ban would eliminate virtually all firearms short of a single-shot, Kentucky long rifle, musket, or pistol. Apart from the fact that implementation of her views would destroy what James Madison in Federalist 46 called the "advantage of being armed, which the Americans possess over the people of almost every other nation," her views, according to the U.S. Supreme Court, are inconsistent with the Second Amendment to the Constitution. The real reason for the arms portion of the Second Amendment has little if anything to do directly with hunting or target shooting; it has to do with guarantees of the natural right to be free. There is now and always has been a price to pay for that right.

**Lana replies:** The Bill of Rights gave us freedom of speech but you can't yell fire in a crowded theatre. Sometimes the price of a right can be too expensive for the people to bare.

## The TIMES of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

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## New Stars on the St. Louis Walk of Fame

Induction of Gerald Early (Literature) is scheduled for Thursday, April 11, 11:30 am in front of Moonrise Hotel.



Dr. Early is Director of the Center for the Humanities at Washington University, specializing in American literature, African-American culture from 1940 to 1960, Afro-American autobiography, nonfiction prose, and popular culture. He has authored several books, including the award-winning *The Culture of Bruising: Essays on Prizefighting, Literature, and Modern American Culture* (1994). He has edited numerous anthologies and

was a consultant on Ken Burns's documentary films on baseball and jazz. Dr. Early's star will be located at 6263 Delmar.

On April 29 at 11:30, there will be another star dedicated for St. Louisan Judy Rankin (Sports-Golf). The ceremony will be held at her star, which will be located at 6146 Delmar.



## Eclipse Restaurant at the Moonrise Hotel

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### Guidelines for Submitting Copy

The Times welcomes unsolicited articles and letters. Because of the small size and volunteer nature of the writing staff, the quality and range of the Times has always depended in large part on submissions from non-staff area residents. Calendar listings should be phoned in to the editor at 721-7532, or mailed to 5953 Pershing Ave., 63112.

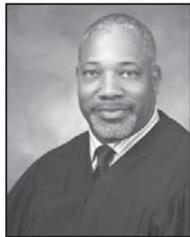
The writer is responsible for the accuracy of the data, including times, dates, location, and particularly the spelling of names. The editor retains the right to omit or alter any material. Opinions expressed in Commentaries are the opinion of the author.

**Deadline for next issue: May 15, 2013. Please send copy by e-mail to [jvatcha@gmail.com](mailto:jvatcha@gmail.com) or by disc to 6008 Kingsbury, St. Louis, MO 63112.**

# News of Neighbors

By Rachel Boxdorfer

Our last column of News of Neighbors included news about the appointment of Elizabeth (Beth) Byrne Hogan of the 6100 block of Kingsbury, to serve as a Circuit Judge on the Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit, which covers the City of St. Louis. Happily, we now get to report that her vacancy as Associate Circuit Judge has been filled by Governor Nixon with the announcement in March of the appointment of Commissioner Michael W. Noble to serve as Associate Circuit Judge on the Twenty Second Judicial Circuit, covering the City of St. Louis. Michael Noble is a resident of the 5700 block of McPherson and was raised in St. Louis, graduating from St. Louis University High School and West Point, and Saint Louis University Law School. Congratulations Michael!



The world was captivated with recent news from Rome about the conclave to elect a new Pope. Jim Hitchcock, of the 6100 block of Kingsbury, was in Rome for a week serving as a regular panelist for EWTN Vatican Daily with Colleen Carroll Campbell and was able to witness history when Pope Frances was elected. Jim is a professor of history at St. Louis University and also an author and lecturer who frequently writes on current events in the Catholic Church.

Peter and Mary Schmit, formerly of the 6100 block of McPherson, and now residents of Kirkwood, checked in recently to say they are happy and healthy! They will be traveling at the end of September for Mary's 50th Peace Corps Senegal/Niger RPCV reunion. Both Mary and Peter are now active in St. Peter's Church in Kirkwood, Mary as a Eucharistic Minister and Peter as a lector.

I don't think anyone can argue that one of the most important jobs out there is that of a teacher and our neighborhood has many teachers calling Skinker DeBaliviere home.



Among those wonderful teachers is Julie Schoemehl of the 6100 block of McPherson. Julie recently received recognition at the 2013 Chesterfield Teacher of the Year! Julie teaches kindergarten at Chesterfield Elementary School. Congrats Julie – your students are so lucky!

Other exciting career news in the neighborhood is that Wanda Evans of the 5900 block of DeGiverville recently started in the brand new position of Sustainability Coordinator for the Saint Louis Zoo. She will be seeking strategies to reduce energy, water, and material consumption and waste reduction throughout the zoo's operations. Congrats Wanda and it's nice that you have a short commute to work!

Lynn Tiede of the 6100 block of McPherson is heading up the fifth annual Skinker DeBaliviere Homecoming which will be on Saturday, October 19th at RAC. The event serves as a fundraiser for SDCC and is a celebration of our wonderful neighbors for friends and neighbors, both past and present. The theme this year pays tribute to Skinker

DeBaliviere with the theme "Hats Off to Skinker DeBaliviere". Mark your calendars now and save the date for this fun filled evening of food and drinks, dancing, bidding, and visiting with fun neighbors!

Peggy Hermes of the 6100 block of Kingsbury is very proud to share news that she is a grandma (again)! The



beautiful Naomi Rose was born in February to parents Lucy and Matt. Proud big sister is Annabelle Bluebird!

Any wine lovers are foodies in the neighborhood are no doubt familiar with Jon Parker (of the 6000 block of Kingsbury) and his wonderful shop, Parker's Table. But in case you are not, add it to your bucket list of places you must visit! Congratulations go out to Jon and his staff on their recent celebration of one year in their new location "Behind the



Tip Top", at Oakland and Yale. Each visit to the store brings more excitement with new selections for shopping and more beautiful renovations and additions to the property and décor!

Sad news came our way with the passing of Robert "Bob" Kelly on March 2. Bob was a longtime resident of Skinker DeBaliviere and member of St. Roch Church. Bob split his time in the neighborhood with time on his family farm. His family and friends celebrated his life with a mass on March 9th at St. Roch followed by a reception in the church hall serving up Bob's favorite, home-made chocolate chip cookies for all! Our condolences go out to the entire Kelly family.

And in February we lost another long time Skinker DeBaliviere family member. Gee Stuart. Gee lived for years on the 6100 block of McPherson and then Kingsbury with husband Cal and children, Sarah, CT, and Allison. Gee's list of accomplishments is endless. See the TIMES website (<http://SDTimes.org/index>) for the full text of the many memorials that have come to us, and see page 6 for excerpts from these tributes.



The 7th Grade St. Roch Basketball team won the CYC Tom Elder Tournament against St. Peter's (in Kirkwood) at St Gerard Magella's gym. Players, from left, Henry Matus, Anton Gudiswitz, Nick Schoemehl, Nolan Lodholz, Nigel Stoff, John Pullman, Teddy Washington, Spencer Harvey, Gavin McEvoy, Karl Lodholz, Charlie McGroarty, Donovan Hill and Ian Intagliata(not shown). Coaches Rick Matus, Shawn Intagliata, Jim Schoemehl.

Last but not least for this issue; is a call out to any interested writers, photographers, organizers, etc.! Do you have a talent for writing and need a way to share? Always thought about writing but were afraid to give it a try? Looking for another way to become involved in the best neighborhood in St. Louis? Why not join the staff of The Times of Skinker DeBaliviere? The Times will be hosting an informational, relaxing, recruiting party at the home of Matt and Rachel Boxdorfer (hey that's me!), at 6150 Kingsbury, on Thursday, May 9th at 7:00 p.m. Please plan to attend if you are involved in The Times or looking to get involved.

Do you have news to share? Please send your submissions via email with the subject line News of Neighbors to [rachelb@sdtimes.org](mailto:rachelb@sdtimes.org) or drop off a note to the attention of Rachel Boxdorfer at the Skinker DeBaliviere office. Be sure to mark it "News of Neighbors".



Six SDCC Webelos advanced to Boy Scouts. Brendan McGroarty, James Maguire, Augie Lodholz, Jake Minana and Jamie Hogan.

In other Boy Scout news our own Anton Gudiswitz had a joke published in this month's Boy Scout Magazine-Boys Life a national publication. Just like his momma!

# Garden News

by Andy Cross

Gardeners love to share their knowledge, often gained by classes, books and hands-on experience. In Skinker-DeBaliviere, we have some outstanding gardeners who are willing to share their wealth of gardening experience, and we are pleased to have them as a part of our 2013 Garden Workshop series at the McPherson Community Garden.

Our first workshop this year, "How to start seedlings indoors", was taught in tag-team style by Hitch Powell and Richard Lake. They offered various ways to get an early start on the growing season and make successful transfer of

plants from a window or growlight environment to the outdoors.

Ligaya Figeuras taught some easy approaches in the vegetable garden for less work and more yield with her class, "Stress-Free Vegetable Gardening with Maximum Return."

Native-plant afficiando Leah Nguyen has a unique harvest in store for us with her class, "Wild and Weedy Springtime Edibles." Discover many natural treats that go unnoticed and are waiting to be harvested, including some flowers and blossoms. Leah's class will be on Saturday, April 13, at 11:30 a.m.

On May 11, at 12:30, in conjunction with the Electronics Recycling Day and the SD plant exchange, we will have a class

taught by a team of WU biologists and geneticists. Arranged by Eric Hamilton, the speakers will explore where and how our present-day crops came to be.

All classes are free and open to all gardeners, neighbors and anyone who wishes to attend. They take place at the McPherson Community Garden, 5943 McPherson (parking on DesPeres), with a rain location in the Art Studio at 5949 Kingsbury at Des Peres. The classes are offered in conjunction with the Skinker-DeBaliviere workshop series and are a part of the Gateway Greening "Hub" garden project. Look for more information on the SD event calendar at [www.skinker-DeBaliviere.com](http://www.skinker-DeBaliviere.com).



Hitch Powell.

.....  
**- 28th Ward Regular Democrats -**  
 Meetings for 2013: April 18, June 20  
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 For up-to-date information on programs and other news of politics, go to the 28th Ward website:  
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[lyda.krewson@pgav.com](mailto:lyda.krewson@pgav.com)  
 .....

# Gloria Openlander to Leave St. Roch School after 22 Years

by Lana Stein

For 22 years, Gloria Openlander has been the principal of St. Roch School. She has decided to retire, perhaps do a little consulting and spend more time with her grandchildren. She also plans to visit Italy. She told me that, "To finish a career in education is a blessing."



She began teaching in the St. Louis public schools in 1972 and then taught in archdiocesan schools. She is a lifelong resident of St. Louis and was born and raised on the Hill.

She feels very positive about her years at St. Roch. "To administer a school is almost the best educational experience to have." She enjoyed meeting people from all walks of life. Children from 22 zip codes attend St. Roch. She has met people from all city neighborhoods and enjoys the diversity. A lot of different needs must be met. She calls it a privilege to serve everyone at St. Roch. As a city principal in a faith-based school, she has had to support the mission of the church as well as the stability of the neighborhood. She is really proud of the school that administers to children regardless of faith or ethnicity and prepares the students for their first choice high school. "The faculty have been wonderful."

during her tenure has been brain research in addressing learning styles. And of course technology. St. Roch has been one of the first to use smart boards and give workshops for other teachers. Now it is innovating with a mental math project, making sense of math at the primary level. Currently, St. Roch is adapting the new common core state standards.

Openlander also said she was blessed to be principal of children who appreciate learning and are excited to come to school.

Enrollment increased at the beginning of her tenure and has been healthy and stable ever since.

They are now enrolling for kindergarten and preschool.

Openlander said she would be forever grateful to Msgr. Polizzi for giving her this great opportunity. She also thanked the parents for being so supportive and spreading the good news of St. Roch. She also liked being involved with our neighborhood and mentioned enjoying Wintermarkt.

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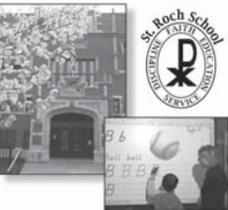
*This warm, welcoming home with spacious, light-filled rooms and a flexible floor plan is located in a sought-after block in historic Skinker-DeBaliviere with Washington U's Hilltop campus, The Loop and MetroLink all within an easy commute. Original stained glass windows, 9' ceilings, special millwork, hardwood floors and a true master suite on the second floor with full bath and sitting room are some of the highlights. Nice flow throughout with dining room opening to a breakfast room and large kitchen. Third floor holds two of the five bedrooms, and a large deck overlooks a verdant garden with mature plantings. You'll love this wonderful family home in a vibrant community!*

Accredited by the Missouri Chapter of the National Federation of Nonpublic Schools

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# Skinker-DeBaliviere Business Spotlight

## A Delmar Update

What follows is a brief compendium of new commercial ventures on Delmar:

1. Pita Pit—It will be located next to Tavolo V and will feature healthy food—wraps and salads. It will open soon.
2. El Paisano—59xx Delmar. A Mexican restaurant with full bar. See review.
3. Mission Taco—Delmar by Eastgate. Casual with tacos a la carte including braised duck, pork belly and fish. See review.
4. Piccione—Northeast corner of Delmar and Skinker. Will open after Easter. This is a pastry shop also serving Italian coffee, nonalcoholic soda and gelato. It will be open from 11am-11pm.
5. Blueprint Coffee—Will open on Delmar by Eastgate. Run by experienced roasters and baristas.

## El Paisano Mexican Restaurant

by Richard Bose

El Paisano has been serving authentic Mexican cuisine in St Louis for more than a decade. Building upon the Rios family's success of their flagship location at 3315 Watson Road, they have opened their new location in our neighborhood at 5916 Delmar just west of Hamilton. The location has turned over several times in the last few years. Along with the new building going up across the street this intersection is experiencing new life. There is plenty of street parking, and it is within walking distance of parts of the Skinker-Debaliviere and West End neighborhoods. The Delmar Metrolink station is nearby and the 16 City Limits and 97 Delmar buses stop on the block. While many would consider it "too far east" in the less developed part of Delmar, it is well worth a visit to this great addition to the neighborhood.

The façade could use new windows. The current ones are a bit foreboding. Perhaps with widened sidewalks and more foot traffic new windows would make sense. Inside, the décor is bright and roomy. The seats are comfy. Don't miss the murals. The restrooms are clean. The service is friendly and attentive. They plan to have Mexican music indoors periodically.

They list themselves as \$\$ (10-30). You can have a meal for less than \$10, but you will regret not getting a margarita. The prices include the sales tax. A pick three combo is \$8.95 and they have a la

Will roast their own coffee.

6. Wizard's Wagon will open next to the Tivoli. It is a game store and also sells collectibles.

In addition, the Moonrise Hotel's rooftop open garden will be joined by an enclosed room heated by solar panels. For meetings and special events and open to the public. Small plates and full bar. Starting in May, there will be brunch every Sunday.

The Loop Trolley—Joe Edwards hopes to break ground this summer and have it running next summer.

Finally, Cycle Showcase St. Louis will beheld August 24-26 in the Loop. Motorcycles are featured and the Regional Arts Commission will host a week of motorcycle-related artwork. Thirty to forty cycles will be exhibited on Delmar. In addition, the Tivoli will run motorcycle movie classics such as Easy Rider.

carte items. The most expensive entree is the Parrillada el Paisano, a meat-lover's dream, at \$16.95 (Spanish sausage links, grilled steak, and chicken, and two jumbo bacon-wrapped shrimp). See the extensive menu on their website.



The food is great with a wide variety of Mexican standards and entrees. Chips and salsa are served while you ponder the menu. Don't miss the specials of the house menu for more entrees. One friend from the central valley of California said his was one of the most authentic Mexican meals he has had in St Louis. He had a pick three combo of a cheese, beef, and chicken enchilada. My 100% authentic Mexican friend said she thought it was 80% authentic Mexican food, which is a high compliment for the area. Another friend ordered the Carmen Special, which is basically one of everything, said, "wow, this is awesome!" The only complaint I have heard was that the steaks while great were not cooked as ordered. They offer a full bar. The margaritas are potent and excellent.

I have eaten there five times and enjoyed every meal. You should check it out. Let's hope El Paisano will be a part of the neighborhood for many years to come!

**El Paisano Mexican Restaurant**  
 elpaisanomexicanrestaurant.org  
 (314) 725-2203 • 5916 Delmar  
 Hours: Sunday-Thursday: 11:00-9:30  
 Friday and Saturday: 11:00-10:30  
 Price: \$\$ (10-30)

## Mission Taco Joint

By Cristina & Sean McGroarty

You should know a couple of things about us before you trust us to review a restaurant for you. First, we are not foodies. Sure, we like food, but that probably doesn't qualify us. If you need to know if the foie gras was properly prepared or if the saki was served at the correct temperature, check with anybody named Lodholz.

Second, we usually hesitate before we try new restaurants.

That's a flaw in our character, sure, but it's not one we're going to fight. Too many disappointments come down that path. Imagine, for instance, going to a place named "Margarita's" and finding out that they do not serve margaritas. That actually happened to us. We still get chills thinking about it.

But, when our neighborhood calls, we respond. So, when we learned that the Times needed someone to check out Mission Taco Joint on Delmar, we decided to risk it. Our friends Beth Bender and Shauna Cunningham on Kingsbury had good things to say, which gave us some comfort. After verifying that Mission Taco Joint had its liquor license (see the margarita fiasco, above), we set out to explore.

Practical matters first. This being St. Louis, parking is key, and here it is plentiful. Or at least it is now until Wash U. builds whatever is going up across the street. Mission Taco Joint is in the space previously occupied by the Delmar Lounge, and the owner has done a fantastic job making it look inviting. The bartender, the waiters, and all of the staff you see smile when you enter, and in our case, invited us to sit wherever we pleased. The bar area is filled with four-top and six-top high tables, and hardwood floors lead you back to more of a family area in the back. The aluminum chairs and bar stools give a clean edge to the warm décor.

The cocktail selection is unlike anything we have seen in quite a while. Sean ordered a drink called "The Bourbon Reforms," much like a Manhattan, with "Missouri Moonshine" added and served straight up. Outstanding, although next time I might ask if they can serve it on the rocks with a dry instead of a sweet vermouth. Cristina ordered a "Dove of Spain," a drink made with tequila, lime juice, grapefruit juice, and soda. It tasted as good as it sounds.

The drinks were easy to choose. The food took a little more time. No matter: our waiter said that if we were okay with sharing, he would just bring us out dishes as we ordered them. We started with crab taquitos and guacamole with chips. We could have eaten the taquitos all night; they were a perfect combination of textures and taste. The guacamole was delightful as well, although we usually prefer it to be somewhat saltier. That didn't stop Sean from trying to lick the bowl.

No matter—on to the next dish. Cristina settled on fish tacos. She takes her fish tacos seriously, and not just on Fridays during Lent. She immediately proclaimed these to be the **Best Fish Tacos Cristina Has Ever Eaten!** The corn tortillas made on site are delicious, the fish is crispy, and the chipotle baja sauce adds a perfect tang to the sweet cabbage crunch. The tacos are served individually on small plates, so you can try a few varieties for a reasonable price.

There is nothing small, on the other hand, about the hamburguesa that Sean ordered. The beef brisket patty was grilled to perfection, and topped with chipotle bacon, avocado, Chihuahua cheese, pickled jalapeno, and garlic mayo. All of that was served on a bed of chile crusted fries. Very few things in life can beat a good burger, and this one was fantastic.

The menu told us to leave room for the churros for dessert, so we obliged. If you have never had a churro, you really need to. The housemade, cinnamon-coated fried dough would have been enough on its own, but it was served with Mexican chocolate sauce. Really, it was everything that doughnut wishes it could be.

So, come by Mission Taco Joint. You will not be disappointed. Families with children are welcome. Take a look at their Facebook page for more information.



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## Kudos and New Directions for Jill McGuire and RAC

by Lana Stein

The Regional Arts Commission (RAC) is located on the northern border of this neighborhood. It has enabled the West End Arts Council to carry out many activities that bring us together through music, theatre, and workshops for youth. RAC's director, Jill McGuire, has lived in Skinker DeBaliviere for four decades. Her energy and enthusiasm have served St. Louisans well. RAC funds arts institutions large and small that make exposure and enjoyment more feasible. She is a fan of innovation and has been recognized for her accomplishments by Americans for the Arts and the Missouri Arts Council. Fittingly, she has also received a Visionary Award. Most recently, she was named a "St. Louis Game Changer." This award was presented at a performance of "Jackie and Me" by the SMetro Theater Company at the Edison at Wash U.

This is a time of innovation at RAC. Thanks to funding from the Kellogg Foundation, artists in St. Louis took part in survey, Artists Count.. One of the important findings is that many artists do not have a great deal of capital and work at one or more jobs to make ends meet. In fact, counting all income sources, 46% earn less than \$25,000 per year. These artists are perhaps somewhat better off than those inhabiting the garrett in "La Boheme" but still are unable to apply themselves to their craft as they would wish. By assisting artists on the individual level, more paintings could be painted, more music composed, and more plays written and staged.

RAC is inaugurating a two-pronged approach to enabling artists. First, there will be small grants of \$500-\$3000 to help with materials, studio space, etc. The competition should open in

mid-April. Guidelines are being developed now and awards may be made more than once a year.

There will also be 10 fellowships awarded of \$20,000 apiece for individuals. Nancy Kranzberg and Freida Wheaton are the co-chairs. They will soon name the full committee that will make the awards. The application process will be on-line and it is hoped that it will begin in mid-June. The committee will develop the selection criteria.

Artists interested in either of these awards may go to [www.artistscount.com](http://www.artistscount.com). They can then register for the mailing list and



receive all award information.

RAC also intends to fund innovation in the form of special project grants. Possible recipients include a "blues museum" and a major gathering to celebrate sculpture at Laumeier.

Aptly, in describing Jill McGuire for her most recent award, St. Louis Game Changers said "Jill McGuire keeps St. Louis on the cutting edge of arts, culture and arts-integrated community development. Amen for our area and our neighborhood.

## SDCC Update

### Annual Meeting

Monday, April 8, 7pm, SDCC Office, 6008 Kingsbury Ave. at Des Peres Ave.

All Skinker DeBaliviere residents are invited to attend the Annual SDCC Meeting. The Council will review the activities and achievements from 2012 and briefly outline the 2013 goals. All SDCC Board Meetings are open and all residents are welcome to attend. These meetings take place every 2nd Monday of the month at 7pm in the SDCC Office.

### St. Louis Area Agency on Aging (SLAAA) Workshop on STL City Senior Services

Saturday, April 27, 10am-11am  
SDCC Office, 6008 Kingsbury Ave

The Skinker DeBaliviere Neighborhood Services Committee (NSC) is hosting a community workshop in partnership with the St. Louis Area Agency on Aging (SLAAA). A representative from SLAAA will give an overview of the services that are available to St. Louis' older adults and persons

with disabilities (18-59 yrs), who reside within the City of St. Louis. Community members will also have a chance to ask any questions that they have about SLAAA's services. Free copies of the 2013 St. Louis Times Senior Resource guide will also be given to all attendees. This workshop is open to all residents, particularly seniors and caregivers. RSVP to [sdcc@skinker-debaliviere.com](mailto:sdcc@skinker-debaliviere.com) or 314-862-5122 by April 23rd.

### About SLAAA

SLAAA provides a comprehensive and coordinated system of community-based services for older adults in the City of St. Louis and their caregivers. The Agency's objectives are to secure and maintain maximum independence and dignity in a home environment and encourage economic, social and personal independence of older persons by providing opportunities for employment, socialization, and volunteer activities in the community. To learn more about SLAAA, please visit [www.slaaa.org](http://www.slaaa.org)

### Go Fly a Kite!... Kite Flying Day in Lucier Park

**Tentative Date: April 13th, 3pm, Visit [www.skinker-debaliviere.com](http://www.skinker-debaliviere.com) to see if date changes occur due to weather. [Lucier Park, Entrance on 5800 Block of Westminster next to Hamilton School]**

Skinker DeBaliviere's Lucier Park Committee is planning a Kite Flying Day in Lucier Park! If you love to fly and/or make kites and want to get involved, please get in touch with Committee member Molly Rater at [Rater5@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Rater5@sbcglobal.net).

Begin collecting your old electronics, appliances and spent batteries for **Skinker DeBaliviere's 2nd Annual Electronics Recycling Fair**. We will again be partnering with WITS - a non-profit that hires and trains at risk individuals, puts 78% of the products that they collect back in service, and utilizes zero landfill practices for the

remaining 22%. Visit [www.witsinc.org](http://www.witsinc.org) for more information.

**Plant Exchange Day** will also be in the park at the same time - Brightside flowers, wood chips, seed packets will be available for tree lawns & block leaders. Drop off your plants and/or pick up free plants.

Suggested items for recycling include: computers, monitors, other computer hardware including cables, office/business equipment and machinery, telecommunications equipment including phones and clocks, televisions, VCR's, stereos, cameras, other audio/video equipment, data storage devices including CD's, VHS tapes and computer software, home electronics, blenders, toasters, irons, washing machines and dryers, dishwashers, furnaces, hot water heaters, home medical equipment, industrial machinery, lawn mowers, tillers, tools, air conditioners, refrigerators, humidifiers, old motors, transformers, electrical equipment, power supplies, car batteries, household batteries and printer cartridges.

Unacceptable items for recycling include: tires, wood furniture, other wood products, paint and paint cans, household and industrial chemicals.

WITS appreciates donations for: computer monitors, laptops and televisions. Large appliances and all Freon-containing devices have a \$5 required fee.

WITS is a not-for-profit, community agency in the greater St. Louis region, all donations of reusable items are tax-deductible and will be refurbished when possible and given to a charitable program such as Kids for Kancer, Free Computer Program or Veteran Technology.

**Shakespeare Festival Performance by Crossroads Youth Monday, May 20th, 6:30pm-7:30pm. [Greg Freeman Park next to 6008 Kingsbury Ave. at Des Peres Ave.]**

Shake-38 is a city-wide celebration of the complete works

of William Shakespeare sponsored by the Shakespeare Festival of St. Louis. Crossroads College Prep is participating by staging a reading of Shakespeare's comedy, "Love's Labor's Lost". This event will be a free festival celebrating the arts of Crossroads School with live music, dancing, art exhibits and of course, William Shakespeare. All are welcome and encouraged to bring picnics and lawn chairs!



Co-chairs Ruth Johnson, Arlene Webb, and Gwen Lazard at the Officers' Appreciation Day.



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## Operation Brightside Blitz Day 2013

Saturday, May 4th, 9am-1pm

The Skinker DeBaliviere Beautification Committee and the City of St. Louis need YOU to join your neighbors for this BIG street and alley clean-up day. This means working with your block to pick up trash, rake leaves, clear debris, and bundle branches. The City will collect the trash. Please stop by the SDCC Office before Blitz Day or from 9 am-12 pm on Blitz Day pick up a free roll of garbage bags for your block.



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## Gee Stuart Memories

by Roy Bell, Marj Weir, Kathy Harleman, Sue Tepas, Karleen Hoerr, and Jo Ann Vatcha

**Editor's Note:** These are some of the memories received by the TIMES, edited for space. To read the complete texts of these, or to add your own memories, go to our website, <http://SDTIMES.org>.

### from Roy Bell:

With the passing of Gee Stuart we lost a friend and supporter who was important and dear to us collectively and individually. Husband Cal Stuart, long-time Executive Director of SDCC, would agree that he was a better leader because of Gee. With their experience in the neighborhood and their business managing rental property, she was the perfect candidate for Mayor Schoemehl to appoint as the director of Operation Impact. She understood that to have good, vibrant neighborhoods you need good homeowners, landlords, and tenants. At Operation Impact she used Federal block grant funds to deal with problem properties, a position she successfully held under four different mayors.

Cal and Gee were fiercely loyal to the neighborhood and to the city. I don't know that they ever purchased anything in the County. They bought their groceries at the Schnucks on Arsenal. When we drove them home from poker at the Lawrenz' in DeSoto, they would point out the restaurants and meat markets they frequented, not to mention the places on the Hill where they now lived. And that loyalty showed in whatever gathering they attended. I don't know how many people they introduced me to with "this is so&so, they live on the XXXX block of \*\*\*\* and they are doing such and such there". It was a subtle form of community building. Like the prototypical St. Louis question of "Where did you go to High School?", she was saying "This is what they are doing to make Skinker-DeBaliviere a better place to live."

We all miss Gee. I am especially going to miss her at our monthly poker games, not the least of which was her appetite. You would think that four Amighetti sized sandwiches would be enough to feed eight people but I would always figure on five sandwiches. After the night was over Pat and I would ask the same question: where does this tiny little woman put all that food? Truth be told, Gee wasn't a good poker player. Well, she was good when the card gods smiled on her but so are we all. She was, however, a very good gambler. In the early days of the poker club, when Gee's drink of choice was bourbon, as opposed to the latter days when her drink of choice was diet root beer, she would curl up on the couch once she lost her initial stake of \$5 and nap till the game was finished. In the root beer period she would sit with us and watch as the less savvy gamblers continued to lose money. There is a lesson in there somewhere.

I always considered Cal and Gee, along with so many others, as founders of the neighborhood. Now Gee has gone to join too many others and I hope we continue to honor their legacy.

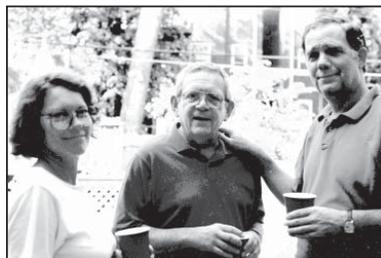
### from Kathy Harleman:

When I remember Gee, the first thing that comes to mind is her smile, that smile that seemed to stretch from one high cheekbone to the other and made her eyes dance.

My children remember a different side of Gee—very strict and demanding good manners. That directness made her easy to work with. I never had to wonder what she was really thinking; she told me. Gee was fierce in the love of her family. Cal, Sarah, C.T. and Allison were her first priorities. She was dedicated to doing excellent work. When she was a nurse, she would forego alcohol and go home early to get enough sleep if she had to work the next day. I have a kaleidoscope of Gee images: Gee, the crossing guard; Gee, sneaking up to the Sinclair station to buy cigarettes before she "kicked the habit;" Gee in her high school formal at the neighborhood prom held at St. Roch's; Gee with her beagles. Oh, and did I mention—Gee smiling.

### from Marjorie Weir:

We all knew her as "Gee," but she was Georgiana inside – dignified, independent, reliable, determined, versatile, and lovely. She and I worked together as co-chairs of one of the House Tours that were part of the annual Mother's Day Art Fair. She really knew what she was doing, whereas I was the newbie. When, on the morning of Mother's Day, she found out that the residents of one of the featured homes had taken a notion to paint the walls the previous night, she didn't lose her cool. The mess was addressed and the tour went right on. She started, built and ran her own property management business for a number of years. It was named McPherson Management for the street on which she and Cal had



one of their homes. I worked for her for a few years as she built the business. No one could ask for a more attentive or conscientious manager. She and Cal have been an essential part of our personal lives and certainly of the growth and success of the neighborhood. We are grateful.

### from Karleen Hoerr:

I think Gee was a great community leader and urban pioneer, a friend to all, what a pleasure to know her. I remember when we had the first prom. We collected pennies to see who would be queen. It is possible she opened her kids piggy banks, she was going to win and she did. She was competitive in the best way. She was a great racquet ball player and has the trophies to prove it. Both she and Cal made the difference in making our neighborhood what it is today. When Tom and I moved into the neighborhood she invited us in with open arms, we knew we were welcomed and it made a difference, I always wanted to be the woman she was.

### from Sue Tepas:

I first met Gee in 1968, when my husband, Don, and I moved to McPherson Avenue. I'd been married for 9 years, had held a job, been to graduate school, and was now a faculty wife and political activist. In the next few years, we were adopting a baby boy and then a baby girl, and I was a doting mother. I thought



I was a grown-up, sure as anything. But Gee taught me that there was a lot more to being a grown-up. Not that she sat me down and lectured me, but she SHOWED me what I could possibly be. Organized, planning ahead, thinking of others and how to help them, knowing what she could do well, NOT trying to do anything else unless she could give it her all, enjoying all the little things that so often pass us by without our knowing, and, most of all, having fun doing what she did. I remember now what a great

neighborhood that was, how we all tried to work together to make it better, and how hard we worked at it. And at the center were Cal and Gee Stuart, always doing just a little bit more, a little bit better, than most anybody could imagine. My family and I remember Gee fondly.

### from Jo Ann Vatcha:

Cal and Gee Stuart have been such an important part of our neighborhood life. We bought our house due to the strong urgings of Cal as neighborhood director. I learned of all the smart women in the neighborhood, and, before I knew it, I was volunteering for the Art Fair (Gee asked me to order the porta-potties). A decade later, our work lives again intersected, and I was thrilled to have Gee as "boss" at Operation Impact. What a team we had! As our longtime financial manager Lorna wrote in a fun piece called the "Flood of '93," "...Operation Impact was a small group of development experts sometimes compared to a MASH unit. And, yes, if you thought about it, you could liken it to a medical emergency unit. The director of the unit was a registered nurse and the rest of the staff was SICK!" Gee was that rare manager who was both very particular and still fun, a stickler for rules and the time clock, but more than once we got in trouble because we were "laughing too much". If you can lead a team in putting millions of dollars into rebuilding neighborhoods and still be accused of having too much fun, you must be doing something right. She retired as the City's Director of Real Estate.

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# IN YOUR EAR

by Hawkeye Z. Hoerr, Commentary in the TIMES for more than 32 years.

I've been amazed at the number of folks who've responded to the idea that I floated in my last column. No, I'm not referring to reducing global warming by having the air-conditioners in our cars turned to high and driving around with the windows open. No, it wasn't about my recommendation that the City and County merge.

What tickled people's fancies was my suggestion that we move to a monarchy as a form of governance. In case your short-term memory is gone as a result of too many M&Ms or fried baloney (or, better still, due to too many M&Ms mixed with fried baloney), here was my thinking. While anointing Queen Oprah was my suggestion, my motivation was less about her, eminently qualified as she might be, and more about the effectiveness of a monarchy. Yep, effectiveness is what I'm seeking, a way to solve the problems that continue to smack us in the face. Everything is relative here folks - if we go back far enough in the family tree, after all, you and I are likely cousins - so "effectiveness" is based on comparing the problem-solving capacities of a monarchy to our current form of democracy.

Don't get me wrong. I like to vote as much as the next person. I regularly trek to the corner of Washington and Skinker to cast my ballot, even when the actual decision is a done-deal before Election Day (as was recently the case). Further, I appreciate what democracy has to offer. The idea that we all have an equal say (not just those white, male, property-owners) is cool beans.

Thousands have died for our right to vote, going back the Battle of Lexington in 1775. And millions upon millions have envied our democracy, not only that people decide who will be their leaders, but that we have the ability to purge ourselves of miscreants and fools. Think Richard Nixon, Spiro Agnew, and George W. Bush (oh well, purging two out of three isn't bad).

But there's a time and place for everything, and I question whether this is still the time and place for democracy. "Why?" you no doubt wonder!

Hey, look at congress and ask "Is this working?" Helloooo? The answer is a resounding no, it's not working. Think sequester, buster. The recent tap dance - make that dances - on the edge of the fiscal cliff made this very obvious, but this

is only the last act of a long-running play. For too many years congress has lived outside its budget (which, of course, is really our budget) and too many congress-people lack the ability to play well with others. Problems aren't solved; they're debated and avoided.

It wasn't always this way. The give and take, back and forth, ying and yang which escape us now have actually served us reasonably well in the past. As Evita Peron said, "politics is the art of compromise" (or was it Juan?). As illustrated by James Surowiecki in his book, *The Wisdom of Crowds*, groups often arrive at wiser decisions than any of us do when working alone. There's a lot to be said for disparate voices coming together in the dome to discuss and decide. Our country's diversity should cause us to make better decisions when our representatives come together. But that's only when they come together, when it works. And it hasn't been working lately.

Author of the political column, *Fivethirtyeight*, Nate Silver pointed out that the number of our congressional representatives who come from safe seats - "landslide districts" he calls them - has doubled since 1992. That is, their territories lean heavily either to the left or right; they're strongly red or blue. Deep blue Skinker-DeBaliviere is an example of this. It means that the people we elect simply need to only play to the priorities of their constituency, deep red or deep blue, in order to be re-elected. There's no motivation for them to reach across the aisle and work with folks who view the world through a slightly different hue. Indeed, since the first priority of an elected official is to be re-elected, there's every incentive for a blue or red rep to play just to their constituent base whether or not problems are solved.

Most of our politicians don't have the courage to do the right thing if it will cost them a vote, and the Internet has exacerbated that tendency. But kings and queens don't have that problem!

Yep, I think it's time for us to return to a monarchy. With no elections facing them, our kings and queens could simply make the right decision. They wouldn't have to worry about voters or being

recalled, so could do what's right regardless of the political cost. I have no doubt that within the first 30 days of putting on the i-Pad crown, a king would tax the wealthy more heavily, decree a surcharge on carbon emissions, and combine St. Louis City and County. A queen would raise age eligibility for social security (we are living longer, you know), bar the American League from using a designated hitter, and withdraw our armed forces from combat zones. Plus, imagine how cool it would be to have coronations and Golden Jubilees to celebrate! Think of all the cool t-shirts featuring our royal family.

I realize that the idea of being led by a king or queen will strike some traditionalists as not very American. OK, then, what if we compromise? How about electing the king or queen, and simply doing away with congress? Think of the money we'd save by not having all of those representatives and senators! I'm sure that Disney could convert Capitol Building to become a theme-park. The Supreme Court building could be turned into a B&B.

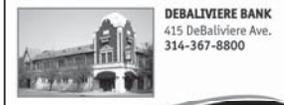
To be fair, my highly logical plan has a flaw. Who becomes king or queen is the key to effectiveness. Would you want Newt Gingrich as king or Nancy Pelosi as queen? Nah, me neither. I think we need to step outside of the box and be creative. Who's a problem-solver? What background would be good preparation for leading the country? My three candidates for royalty would be Walt Disney, Rosa Parks, and Steve Jobs. Sure, the fact that they're all dead makes it a bit harder for them to rule, so view these people as paradigms, examples of the kind of thinking we need.

OK, what do you think? Who would you suggest? Any volunteers for the royal robes?

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