

# The TIMES of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

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FREE

The oldest neighborhood newspaper in St. Louis

Independent and all volunteer-run since 1970

## NEW COTE BRILLIANTE CHURCH OF GOD FLOURISHES IN SKINKER DE BALIVIERE

by Lana Stein

On June 30, 1991, the New Cote Brillante Church of God became one of Skinker DeBaliviere's important institutional neighbors. The congregation, led by Pastor Miki Merritt, occupied the sanctuary at Washington and Skinker, formerly home to the Delmar Baptist Church. Rev. Merritt and his congregation have been very pleased with their new home. The church had about 120 families as members when it came to the neighborhood. There are now 300. The church is affiliated with the Church of God which is headquartered in Anderson, Indiana. Some neighborhood families have joined the church and Merritt hopes that will continue. He finds the neighborhood a perfect home for his congregation and enjoys its ethnic and racial diversity.

Shortly after his congregation's relocation, Merritt became active in neighborhood activities and opened the church's facilities to neighborhood activities. The pastor represents his church on the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council. Many meetings sponsored by the Council and its committees have occurred there. Merritt certainly wants this to continue because he wants to "increase the quality of life for families in our community." He sees



Reverend Miki Merritt

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The late Virgil "Jack" Wright, Gregory Freeman of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and the Reverend Miki Merritt of New Cote Brillante Church of God.

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## Bonita Cornute To Speak at King Commemoration

Celebrating the 1963 March on Washington and  
Jack Wright's Legacy

The annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration will be held on January 17 at Grace and Peace Church, Delmar at Clara. Parking will be available in the ConnectCare lot across the street. The program begins at 3:00 p.m. and will last approximately two hours. The choir of New Cote Brillante Church of God will offer several selections. Students from Hamilton, St. Roch, Crossroads, New City, and Bethel schools will provide songs and skits about the famous Washington March. Bonita Cornute, of Channel 2, will speak. She is a long-time resident of Skinker DeBaliviere. Ms. Cornute joined Channel 2 in 1982. She is a General Assignment Reporter. She has often covered the complex issues and events that affect women and minorities in the St. Louis Community. Ms. Cornute has served as president of the St. Louis Association of Black Journalists. She has won four local Emmys and has also received the NAACP's Crisis Magazine Role Model of the Year Award, the Shero Award for Outstanding Achievement from the Coalition



Bonita Cornute

of 100 Black Women and community service awards from the Walbridge Caring Communities Program and Matthew Dickey Boys Club. Cornute is also active in community organizations, including the St. Louis Black Repertory Company and the St. Louis Public Schools. She serves on the Board of Directors for the People's Health Center and the Community Outreach Committee of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Cornute will discuss the meaning of the March in her remarks.

The Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council coordinates the Commemoration. The committee this year has been led by Greg Freeman. Members include Ruth Johnson, Shirley Polk, Gwen Lazard, Ronie Halburton, Ann Smith Carr, Lana Stein, and Rev. Lutjens of Grace and Peace. This is the first commemoration to take place without the stewardship of Virgil "Jack" Wright. Wright helped to found the event and served as its chairman for many years. At the upcoming commemoration, Wright will be honored by the SDCC and friends and family. His daughters have participated in the planning. Everyone hopes that many in our neighborhood—young and old—will attend. Let's keep the legacy of Dr. King foremost in our minds and also honor Jack Wright, who worked so hard to see that that legacy would continually be passed on to our young.

## Curbside Recycling Expanded to All Skinker-DeBaliviere

by June Vaughn

An existing pilot program for the curbside recycling of household refuse in parts of St. Louis was expanded recently to include ZIP codes 63112, 63113, and 63108 in the Central West End along with two other areas elsewhere. Under this program the curbside recycling service, which formerly cost \$72 per year for a household, is now available for only \$24.

Funding to pay the difference in the two rates has been obtained by the City of St. Louis Refuse Division as a \$250,000 grant from the St. Louis-Jefferson Solid Waste Management District. Since the city must reapply for the grant every year, the low-cost service is guaranteed to the affected neighborhoods only for twelve months. According to Linda Horn, recycling manager for St. Louis, the city could extend the service area to the entire city by making an annual budget allocation of \$500,000.

Continued on page 7

# Editor's Notebook

by Lana Stein

For a long time now, I have frequently wondered about what it takes to make a city thrive. Many central cities, including of course St. Louis, have experienced a severe loss of residents, businesses, and jobs. Bucking the trend takes tremendous energy. The best written account of an attempt to do so is Buzz Bissinger's *A Prayer for the City*, the story of Mayor Ed Rendell and Philadelphia. It seems that even if round-the-clock efforts are maintained by city officials, the outlook can still be bleak.

Yet, there are several developments that can encourage hope. A number of cities—including Detroit and Newark—have met with huge success on the opening of performing arts facilities in their downtowns. These facilities have helped to encourage dining venues and most importantly, housing for artists and friends, particularly in offices and warehouses converted to loft living. This effort is beginning in downtown St. Louis, particularly along Washington Ave. Not only are loft apartments appearing but also clubs and eateries geared to younger adults. A critical mass living downtown can spur further commercial development and conversely commerce can generate further conversions to residential space. At least part of the credit for downtown's new possibilities has to go to Metropolis, a group of under 35s who actively encourage a rebirth of downtown and who continually promote city living. I applaud their energy and their collective positive attitude. Perhaps their example can wake up the town elders whose support and capital are vital if St. Louis is to really be a renaissance city.

## "Host Family Program" Volunteers Needed

The International Office at Washington University needs volunteers to participate in community—connections programs with international students. Volunteers invite students to share in family celebrations, as well as sports and cultural events, at least once a month. Call 935-5293 if you are interested.

## Long Term Care Ombudsman Program Assists Elderly

The Long Term Ombudsman Program provides resources to residents of nursing homes and their families. They have directories, up-to-date information regarding vacancies, and can answer questions about Medicaid and Medicare. Their volunteers make routine visits to over 200 long-term care facilities to advocate for quality of life. Readers are encouraged to contact Colleen Blair at 918-8222 for information regarding long-term care.

## The TIMES of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Editor: Lana Stein  
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The Times of Skinker DeBaliviere is published by the West End Publishing Co., a not-for-profit, independent, community organization. Members of the Board of Directors are:

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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. All material—articles, letters, notices, classified ads—must be typewritten on opaque paper, double-spaced, and signed. Copy may be submitted on computer diskette if the diskette is in DOS format or on high density Macintosh diskettes. Submissions on diskette should be accompanied by a printout of the article, the name of the word processing software in which it is written, and the full name and address of the party to whom the diskette should be returned. The signature on correspondence to the editor may be omitted by request. Calendar listings should be phoned in to the editor at 721-7532, or mailed to 5855 Nina Place, 63112.

The deadline for all copy is the 18th of the month.

The writer is responsible for the accuracy of the data, including times, dates, locations, and particularly the spelling of names.

Pictures or illustrations should be in black and white. Color photographs often do not reproduce well.

The editor retains the right to omit or alter any material.

# Calendar



## Neighborhood Events and Meetings

- 11/30 Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Transportation Committee, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 7:30 p.m.
- 12/3 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 7:00 p.m.
- 12/7 Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Board Meeting, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 7:00 p.m.
- 12/16 Skinker DeBaliviere Community Housing Corporation Board Meeting, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 12:00 noon.
- 12/17 Holiday Appreciation Luncheon for Police and Firefighters, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council, 6008 Kingsbury, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- 1/11 Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Board Meeting, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 7:00 p.m.
- 1/17 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Commemoration Celebration, Grace and Peace Fellowship, 5574 Delmar, 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

## Other Events of Interest

- Now open Frontier Gallery at the Saint Louis Art Museum highlighting paintings of George Caleb Bingham.
- Now-12/9 Exhibit of art work of 30 faculty at the Gallery of Art, Steinberg Hall, Washington University.
- 12/1 Holiday Tree Lighting at Saint Louis Art Museum, 6pm. Free.
- 12/4-13 The Nutcracker performed by The Ballet Conservatory Company in the auditorium of the Saint Louis Art Museum. Call 721-2275 for times and ticket information.
- 12/11 Don Byron and Mini Big Band have St. Louis premiere at Edison Theatre at Washington University. For tickets call 935-6543.
- 12/19 Mother Goose Stories at the Phawcett Theatre for Children at the Saint Louis Art Museum. For information, call 963-8800.
- 1/22/99 Livingston Taylor, guitarist, at the Sheldon, 8pm. Call 553-9900 for information.
- 2/6/99 Exhibit Beckmann and Paris opens at Saint Louis Art Museum and highlights Beckmann in the context of his contemporaries including Matisse, Braque, Picasso, and Rouault.



Citizens for Modern Transit Honors Delmar Plan  
The SDCC Commercial Committee, the SDCC, University City, and Arts in Transit received an award at the recent annual meeting of Citizens for Modern Transit. They were honored for the creation of the Delmar Plan. (In photo, JoAnn Vatcha, chair of the SDCC Commercial Committee and Joe Adams, mayor of University City, receive the award from Robert Archibald, chair of Citizens for Modern Transit.)

# Hello Neighbors!

by Jill Montgomery

We're new! My husband, Derek, and I moved into a house on the 6100 block of McPherson Avenue last summer; it's our first real house, and in retrospect, our first real neighborhood.

We came to St. Louis from Washington, DC nearly three years ago. Derek and I met in graduate school there, and after our wedding moved into a tiny basement apartment in the very urban Washington neighborhood of DuPont Circle. Living there was great for access to places, but not so great for access to people. We were within easy walking distance to work, and the grocery store was just blocks away as were public transportation, restaurants, dry cleaners and drug stores. We had a car, but rarely used it because we rarely needed it. And although DuPont Circle is a fairly dense and certainly diverse neighborhood, it is not a particularly neighborly one. The building where we lived had the Moroccan Embassy on one side and an art gallery on the other, yet after two years I didn't know the names of anyone on the block.

In 1996, we decided to move because we weren't sure we wanted to put down permanent roots inside the Capital Beltway, and expanding professional opportunities led us to the St. Louis area.

We first settled in a rented historic home in Alton, Illinois. The rent was a bargain by Washington standards, and we were glad to have family living close-by. Having both grown up in larger cities, Derek and I enjoyed the community Halloween parade and other elements of small town life. We got to know our next-door neighbors, and a few others in the community.

But we didn't enjoy the commute to Creve Coeur and back every day. The transition from a twenty-minute walk to work in DC to 45 minutes in the car each way to St. Louis did not exactly seem like progress. Someone told us we needed to live in the place we wanted to be on the weekends, and more often than not we found ourselves traversing the Clark Bridge to Missouri at least once a weekend for shopping, restaurants and friends. We began to think about moving again.

A friend of mine at work, Linda Nodiff, had been singing the praises of Skinker-DeBaliviere from the moment we began working together. It's a stable, close-knit neighborhood with beautiful old houses, she said, within walking distance of the U-City Loop, Forest Park and MetroLink.

Not completely taking her word for it, we randomly attended open houses in neighborhoods all around the city for months before we even spoke with a realtor. We found the same situation everywhere; compared with Skinker-DeBaliviere, we could get less house for the money, less diverse communities, and plenty of places where we'd have to get in a car to go anywhere beyond the end of the block. A conversation over dinner in the U-City Loop with Linda and her husband, Marv, ultimately sealed our fate. When we finally did contact an agent (Karleen Hoerr), we were able to identify in no uncertain terms the few square blocks in the City of St. Louis we wanted to call home.

The day we moved in, before our boxes had even arrived, people from up and down the block dropped by to welcome us. Since then, we've been showered with fresh-baked bread, homemade brownies and fresh-picked basil and been invited to several get-togethers on the block and around the neighborhood. We've borrowed tools, helped carry in groceries, and shared house keys and alarm codes with our neighbors. We've walked to the Park, to the Loop and to the MetroLink.

Living here is everything I ever thought a neighborhood should be and my appreciation of Skinker-DeBaliviere continues to grow. Earlier this fall, the Coro Women in Leadership class held a field day focusing on community assets. Half of our group went on "windshield surveys" and interviews with community leaders in one neighborhood; half went to another. My group was sent to Skinker-DeBaliviere.

It was an opportunity for me to see again the place I live from the perspective of people unfamiliar with it. From our cars, we counted businesses, places of worship, parks, social services, educational institutions, community newspapers and gardens. We noted evidence of neighborhood identity, political activism, and the diversity of residential populations. We spoke with people who have been instrumental in the long course of decisions, beginning almost thirty years ago, that have made this neighborhood the place it is now. At the end of that day, I was even happier than I was at the beginning of it to call this neighborhood home.

Even when we were unfamiliar with it, Derek and I quickly saw the assets that led us to choose this particular neighborhood among all others in the St. Louis region. As we grow to appreciate these assets more by the day, we are also becoming aware of the hard work it takes to keep a community like this alive. It's a new house, a new neighborhood, and a new way of living for us. And we look forward to doing our part in facing the challenges and opportunities of being good neighbors.

# Vicissitudes



It is painful to report the loss of John Rice, son of Richard and Nancy Rice, and brother of Robert Rice, all of the 6100 block of Westminster. A tragic accident ended John's life on November 3. John was 16 and a sophomore at Christian Brothers College.

St. Roch's Church overflowed with family, friends, and John's CBC high school classmates at the funeral mass celebrated by Monsignor Saf E. Polizzi, with the participation of teachers and administrators from St. Roch as well as CBC. Those wishing to send a memorial gift are asked to make such a donation to St. Roch Church, 6052 Waterman. We at the Times express our heartfelt sympathy to the Rices.

Neville and JoAnn Vatcha of the 6100 block of Westminster have a reason to be glowing these days. Their first grandchild, William Ingram Jacobs, was born to their daughter, Chanaya, and her husband, Mark Jacobs on October 29. At 7 pounds and measuring 20 inches, he fit the perfect ideal. A full head of black hair makes him quite the handsome prince. Chanaya and Mark moved to Washington Avenue in Parkview earlier this year, another source of gratification for Neville and JoAnn. Here's another example of the appeal of the neighborhood to generations of families.

George Storey, 57xx Waterman, has always loved to golf. He's very happy that he has been able to pursue this sport in his retirement and to enjoy a good bit of success. Any day he can be seen in Forest Park with a group of gentlemen like himself, one of whom is 85 years of age. In early 1998, George hit his 4th hole in one! He has hit two on #6 and 2 on #9. He and his son, Jim, have played at the Dogwood Country Club Tournament at Lake of the Ozarks the past couple years. They placed 2nd and 4th. George is particularly proud of being invited to play at the National Seniors Tournament in Orlando. He qualified in Columbia this summer.

## Christmas Caroling in the Neighborhood

St. Louis Christmas Carols Association once again invites the Skinker-DeBaliviere community to help celebrate its 87<sup>th</sup> year of bringing carol singing to our neighborhood, block by block.

Each block in our neighborhood is encouraged to call St. Louis Christmas Carols Association at 863-1225 to receive a territory and song sheets and collection cans. The contributions re-

ceived help young people through 74 local agencies.

Caroling will take place between Thanksgiving and January 6. Long-time caroler David Schmidt of 61xx McPherson will share his experience organizing caroling if you call 863-4512. Laure Porterfield at the SDCC will also help if you call her at 862-5122.

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# Where did those big blocks come from?

The giant letter blocks which are on the location of the new playground were positioned by the West End Arts Council of Skinker DeBaliviere as part of a sculpture project funded by the Regional Arts Commission. They are made entirely of reclaimed lumber. Andy Cross designed the blocks and brought them to Crossroads School last spring, where students turned them into works of art. The moveable sculpture serves as an announcement of and logo for the playground.



Above left and right: Students at Crossroads School create big playground blocks.

Below: Clown/magician entertains at Playground Party at the Four Corners.



National Night Out on 5800 DeGuerreille.

# Views of the City

by Billy Handmaker

*Libraries are reservoirs of strength, grace and wit, reminders of order, calm and continuity, lakes of mental energy, neither warm nor cold, light nor dark. The pleasure they give is steady, unorgastic, reliable, deep and long lasting. In any library in the world, I am at home, unselfconscious, still and absorbed.* Germaine Greer (b. 1939)

*On libraries, "You will come here and get books that open your eyes, and your ears, and your curiosity, and turn you inside out or outside in."* Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82)

*I've been drunk for about a week now, and I thought it might sober me up to sit in a library."* F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940)

Let me begin with an introduction. My name is Billy Handmaker, I am the Head of Crossroads School, and I have been a resident of the Skinker-DeBaliviere neighborhood since 1994. As someone relatively new to living in the City of St. Louis, I hope I represent a growing body of somewhat young (do I flatter myself here) people deciding to locate in the City for all of the things that it offers while realizing that there may be some things I must forego. I have lived in cities all over

the world, and as a traveler and as a historian I believe in the necessity of cities for the preservation and improvement of culture; however, I also realize that like any other area, cities have their costs as well as their benefits. In this column, I will discuss what I love about city living but also what I find disconcerting.

When we moved into the City, one of the first pleasant surprises that greeted us was the Charing Cross Branch of the St. Louis Public Library. A book buyer since I was young enough to read, I had prided myself on the size of my personal library. Every time we moved, my first priority was getting the books up on the shelves. The appliances could wait (so what if we ate out of Styrofoam for weeks), the clothes could sit in boxes, my books, representing a huge outlay of money, were arranged and our new house had become our home. One day while walking down Skinker, I stopped into the library branch where I was greeted by the ever-friendly Charles Lamkin. I saw someone in the New York Times Bestseller List right there on the wall, and ran home to tell my wife that I had attained nirvana. Since that initial discovery, our visits to the library have become a part of our weekly ritual, much to the chagrin of the Left Bank

Books, Library Lids, and Barnes and Nobles.

As important as the library has become to our budget, more crucial for me may be the way that it has become reacquainted with the whole notion of libraries as oases. Like an oasis, they provide nourishment, offer a gathering place, and make everyone better who frequents them. We enter the library, and we are affected in a multitude of ways. We greet the librarian who welcomes us and helps us find our way. We browse through the books in the same way that we check out the wares at a market, eventually making our "purchases", and while there, we visit with the other members of our "tribe" and make connections that provide a sense of belonging. Although none of these interactions may be profound, they afford important personal benefits. In a world where we all spend inordinate amounts of time focusing on imposed tasks and jobs we do for others, at the library we concentrate on feeding our own intellect for no other reason than this is what we desire and need. In our visits to the bank, nowadays characterized by driving through an ATM machine, or to the grocery store we choose the fastest check out line (efficiency is priority) and who the teller or the check out person may be is of little or no importance. However, as the saying goes "out of the mouths of babes", so my almost two year old son's reaction to anyone besides Charles behind the circulation desk makes for a discontinuous experience. We expect the same friendly librarian to be there and reassure us that some things are constant and that we can have a personal connection with someone. In his wonderful book, *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg, discusses our need in this day and age to have a place where "everyone knows our name" and we feel at home.

If the sole purpose of libraries were to give us facts, we could get the information online; if they were just for getting books, we could email Amazon.com; if they were just for socializing, we could go to Kaldi's or Blueberry Hill. The fact is that libraries, and especially the Charing Cross Branch with Charles, meets all of these needs.

Although our library provides all of these functions, it also enables us to realize some of the main goals that drove our choosing to live in this part of the city. The Charing Cross branch reflects Skinker-DeBaliviere's diversity and egalitarianism; consequently, we move into this area and we go to the library for many of the same reasons. We desire to live in a neighborhood characterized by ethnic and socio-economic variety, and our library is one of the only places where social boundaries disappear and we come together. At the library, we are all equal. However, libraries, and our patronage of the Charing Cross branch also represent an egalitarian impulse towards information; as the sheer volume of information proliferates, the threat that it will be produced or controlled by a certain sector becomes greater. Visiting the library demonstrates a belief that information belongs in a public realm where it is owned by and available to all of us. The Charing Cross branch also stands out because it is a place to which we can all walk, health permitting, and in that way, it is someplace we "own." Like the other errands we do on foot, our stroll to the library enables us to connect to it as an extension of our home and our street.

As important as a library is, though, without the proper personnel, it is merely a storage place for books. Our library plays the vital role it does because of Charles. He is the guide on our intellectual journey, and he helps us find our way. Not only does he seek out what we need, but he points us in directions we may not see and provides new sources of nourishment for us. Reflecting our aspirations, he treats everyone with respect and supports all of us.

As my son and I walk hand in hand to the library, we engage in a journey that has occurred again and again over the ages. We are passing knowledge from generation to generation, and we are ensuring that there remains a place where people from all walks of life can go and let their imaginations roam. In addition, we are guaranteeing that a neighborhood remains more than a collection of houses; in Skinker-DeBaliviere, we can live and learn from the greatest authors the world has known, but we can also meet and learn from each other.

Rosedale Neighborhood Association and the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council sponsored the 31st Halloween Party for the children of the neighborhood. They were entertained by "Vaudeville in A Rucksack." The team of a man and women did juggling, comedy & children participation, to keep the 80 children entranced for almost an hour.

The ten first place costume winners were: Dayo Banks, Face Paint; John Tighe Costa, Astronaut; Emily Cross, Butterfly; Elise Heltwig, Witch; Dane Intagliata, Turban; Pertia Lewis, Bride; Carolyn Littlefield, Dolmation; Sarah Pan, Woodstock; Erin Sanders, Vampire; Emily Yonker, Mary Poppins; Committee: Laure Porterfield, Peter Schmit, Scott Santen, Art Santen, Amy Gill.

# CAT'S PAUSE -

In Memoriam Joe Cat by Pinky Geiler

Joe Cat has gone. You may recall that I was to be only a fill-in writer when Joe Cat felt not up to the task of writing his would-be Times column, "Cat's Pause." That was my "Cat's Clause." But Joe Cat has gone. I'm taking over as the Alpha Cat in the mousehold, so you can look forward to hearing from me whenever I feel like it. I'm not letting on that I've even noticed that Joe Cat is gone because I think they had something to do with it. I pretended not to be interested in the freshly dug hole with purrfect rectangular dimensions that the Mister placed between the azalea and the rhododendrum. I saw them leave with Joe Cat and return with something like a body in a towel and they were crying and they put flowers on the new mound that they filled up where the freshly dug hole was and they put that little cat statue sitting right there over-looking the spot and I just really think that Joe Cat is there. After they did that, She came in and opened a can of tuna, PEOPLE tuna, for Itty and Me. We just walked away from that I assure you. Might be poison, might be a consolation prize. Who knows. Today I rejected the food in a bag the Mister brought home too. You just can't tell what more they might be up to. I've been coming when called and getting petted as usual, but I'm off the food, at least until the danger passes.

I've got to admit that Joe Cat had gone round the bend. He was a really old guy. He told me he couldn't even remember when he arrived here, but it was about sixteen years ago. She always said he was one of the best cats She ever shared her life with. She called him the Ambassador of Cats and really he was. He never met a cat he didn't like...or any other creature for that matter. She used to say She thought Joe Cat was a prince who'd messed up and had to spend another life on earth before he reached Nirvana. His "call" to Her the day she rescued

him from the Humane Society seemed so strong a signal, his rescue so fortuitous, his call so close. I don't know about that. I do know that when I came here as a hand-sized kitten, Joe Cat didn't even hiss. And as I was growing up in the backyard two summers ago, he protected me from a marauding cat by just going right up to it and lying down between it and me, as if we were all old friends instead of my being a kitten about to get my whiskers curled by Farryl. Joe Cat was like that. A peace keeper cat. He never even killed a bug. Couldn't stand an argument, cat or human.

Now the last night we saw him, he got a bath. He just hated that, but they insisted and I had to agree because he had raided the trash and covered himself inadvertently in bacon grease, a sure sign that he had gone round the bend. Itty and I were right there when he dumped over the can, and we both made a swipe at things and didn't get a drop of evidence on our purrfect coats, but Joe Cat looked like he'd jumped into a swimming pool when it was over. Then he went upstairs and took a nap on Their bed. I knew that was trouble, even though, in mitigation, he'd chosen something washable and not the blue sofa on which to slather the grease. Joe Cat had gotten pretty disoriented of late and he had not taken any kind of care of his coat for over two years and that's the truth. He had arthritis and thyroid troubles and all, so Itty used to help him out with a little bathing, but this was beyond the pale and called for a pail. Itty and I could both see that. He sure did yowl though. Set our teeth on edge. He was always so good at other indignities. He had had to take thyroid pills for years and he just swallowed them without a fight everyday. Drop them in, zip zap. But of late, he had had taken to crying in place a lot and She had to call him to remind him of who and where he was. Itty and I sure noticed that. And he

wouldn't play anymore. He'd just complain if we tried to entice him with a run and a roll. He said he just ached too much, just needed as much sun as possible with no hassling after they turned the radiators off for the season. So, I don't know. I'm lying here looking nonchalant (asleep) while She types this up for me, but I do say things are weird around here without Joe Cat. I hear that Dr. Steve up at the Kingsbury Animal Hospital is a merciful man to the super elderly in cats and that he takes care of everyone when the time has come. He did as good a job as can be expected with taking out my claws. I guess if a cat is going to have no choice in things, Dr. Steve is the best guy around for that situation. I really do suspect that that's where Joe Cat went before the Mister placed that little cat statue in the garden by the new mound.

## Washington University Update

The purchase of numerous of residential buildings in Skinker DeBaliviere by Washington University has raised a number of concerns, to property owners in the immediate area, and to various neighbors generally. In late September, the SDCC sent the following letter to Washington University's chancellor to indicate the desire for continuing years of cooperation but also allowing the university to understand residents' concerns and fears, especially in light of rumors regarding an extension of campus buildings to our neighborhood. The Chancellor recently responded, expressing hope for continued cooperation, on going discussion of concerns, and his desire to learn more about our neighborhood. The Council's letter follows:

Chancellor Mark Wrighton  
Washington University  
One Brookings Drive  
St. Louis MO 63105

Dear Chancellor Wrighton:

For almost one hundred years, Washington University and the Skinker DeBaliviere neighborhood have existed in close proximity and have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship. Our neighborhood experienced considerable adversity in the late 1960s and 1970s. We were redlined by banks and insurance companies. Realtors carried out panic selling and many thought Skinker DeBaliviere might be on a downhill spiral. Many of its beautiful homes and multifamily dwellings suffered from neglect. Crime soared. With considerable foresight, several institutions joined with a strong core of neighborhood leaders to create the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council. These institutions which included Washington University assisted the Council monetarily as well as supporting the programs it sponsored. Thanks to strong leadership Skinker DeBaliviere has accomplished what few neighborhoods under similar circumstances have done. The neighborhood has survived. In fact, it has prospered. Its property values have increased many times over. The neighborhood has come back. It has done this as a diverse neighborhood. It is about 58 percent African American and 42 percent white (as of 1990). It has maintained this ratio for 25 years which is practically unheard of in the United States.

Our partnership with Washington University has been a beneficial one. Today we enter a new phase in our relationship. Washington University has become a significant property holder in our neighborhood. It has acquired a great many 2, 4, and 6 and 8 greater unit buildings. You are now the largest owner in the neighborhood and dominate the 6000 and 6100 blocks of Pershing. You also have acquired considerable property on 6000 and 6100 Waterman.

Many neighbors have remarked on the welcome addition of Washington University students to our community. Some students have participated in our McPherson Community Garden and other beautification work. Their presence, particularly on foot, has added to the safety of our enclaves. In addition, the students increase the diversity of which we are so proud. We might add that their department has been very good and complaints are almost nonexistent.

We hope to explore with the university further ways to enhance our already solid living environment. We anticipate planning to assist development on certain streets which have not prospered as fully from the neighborhood's resurgence. We also look forward to some type of collaboration on the planned redevelopment of Delmar. Delmar is the missing link necessary for the neighborhood's convenience, security, and aesthetics.

Despite our positive tone, we see several areas of possible difficulty in our relationship with Washington University. The university has acquired the Arthur building on Skinker Boulevard in our neighborhood (the former home of Talayna's). Many residents wish to see this building restored. We understand that its condition is poor but some neighbors see it as the entrance to Skinker DeBaliviere and would object if there were any plans to disassemble it. The Council would like to be apprised of your plans for this building as soon as they are more firm.

Of greater importance to most of our community is the future use of the buildings, aside from the Arthur, that the university has acquired in our neighborhood. There have been a variety of rumors, speculating about Washington University's plans. These rumors feed off of stories about difficulties in town-gown relationships in other cities as well as the Missouri Botanical Gardens' ill-fated attempt to raze dwellings in the Southwest neighborhood in St. Louis.

We need to say to you—without any equivocation—that this is a residential neighborhood and a historic district. We wish this neighborhood to remain residential and want to preserve its housing stock in its present form far, far into the future. If this essential point is agreed to, there need never be disharmony.

Because of our historic district status, any residential or commercial edifice within our neighborhood's boundaries that is rehabbed is eligible for state tax credits. That helps to make preservation a more attractive path to follow.

As we indicated earlier, we have thoroughly enjoyed a very beneficial relationship with Washington University and wish that it remains so. We have benefited and continue to benefit from the fact that we are neighbors. Our student residents have added to the neighborhood. We also appreciate your incentive to faculty and staff to acquire homes here although we are aware of the fact that the university has a right of first refusal to purchase such a dwelling as a condition of making its loan funds available.

Skinker DeBaliviere is a very special neighborhood, an exemplar for other neighborhoods in the city. We have proved that there is value in having a strong and creative neighborhood organization, that there is value in working with churches and schools, and most of all that there is value in preserving and protecting an architectural legacy. Our neighborhood is a home for a committed heterogeneous group of people who value city living. We intend to continue to fight to maintain and enhance this very special neighborhood and hope that you remain our partner in this effort.

We would enjoy the opportunity of showing you what we value so deeply. If your schedule allows for a tour, please let us know. Many in the metropolitan area still view our neighborhood as it was 25 years ago. We wish we were more happy to demonstrate how far we have come and the direction in which we are heading.

With best wishes,

Gary Hayes  
President

Lana Stein  
Chair, Residential  
Committee

cc: Alderman Lyda Krewson  
Richard Roloff  
Steve Giveis

## REPORTING ON THE FOREST PARK MASTER PLAN

by Ken Cohen

*Editor's Note: Cohen is a long-time resident of Skinker DeBaliviere and represents environmental groups on the Forest Park Advisory Board.*

Work has begun in earnest on the new water system in Forest Park. This part of the Master Plan is called the Heart of the Park Program. When completed in the year 2001, water will flow from the Cascades (close to Skinker and Forsyth) to Jefferson Lake (close to Kingshighway). Construction is underway on a new stream channel near Steinberg Rink as well as on bridges in front of the Marry where a

new channel will be dug. Features of the Heart of the Park will include wetlands, native plant meadows, a braided stream, rapids, and a spring which has been uncovered. Major goals of the Heart of the Park are a reduction of flooding and the creation of a natural, passive spine that runs through the park.

The Kennedy Woods, located in the southwest part of the park, is the site of two new trails. Both begin off of Wells Dr. just west of the zoo boundary. One is a quarter mile handicapped accessible trail through the woods. The other is a longer trail that crosses both Government and Valley Drives and loops around the field that runs along Skinker north of the golf course. This field is where a savanna (a prairie with a scattering of trees) is being restored. During the winter, native grass and flower seeds will be planted. Over the next few years, you can watch the ecosystem which once dominated our area spring back to life.

Other projects under or near construction are: 1) the restoration of the World's Fair Pavilion; 2) the expansion of the History Museum; 3) the re-routing of Fine Arts Dr. so that it will "T-

into Government Dr. (near the zoo) instead of the current angle intersection.

The redesign of the Municipal Golf Course is a project that is widely anticipated. It will accomplish one of the public's highest priorities—the removal of the holes from Art Hill. Construction may begin as early as late 1999. Residents of Skinker DeBaliviere have voiced their concerns about the distance the new course will be kept from Lindell, and about the deletion from the

Master Plan of a path from DesPeres to Art Hill. Current plans include the creation of a dual path buffer along Lindell with additional space allocated for passive park use near the Lindell/DesPeres intersection. A pond will separate the open space from the golf course.

Detailed plans for the golf course are being developed. They will be presented to the Citizens Advisory Board three times in

increasing levels of detail to make sure they are in compliance with the goals of the Master Plan. Anyone interested in a more direct involvement with the implementation of the Master Plan is welcome to attend the meetings of the Citizens Advisory Board which normally are held on the third Thursday of each month at 4:30 p.m. at the Science Center on Oakland Ave. You may verify the schedule by calling the Parks Dept. at 535-0100.

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## Alley Trash

The condition of our alleys continues to be a major concern for many residents of Skinker DeBaliviere. Some alleys continue to be apparently open targets for "dumpers" who bring trash from the county and construction sites, filling our dumpsters, dumping on vacant lots and littering the alleys.

If you suspect someone of illegal dumping, get the license plate and description of the vehicle and call 911! The Trash Task Force takes these calls seriously and has a tremendous record of successful prosecution and conviction.

Sadly, the dumpers aren't the only source of improperly disposed materials. Our own residents have been disposing of the debris from home remodeling projects, jamming dumpsters to overflowing, piling lumber against a neighbor's garage door, placing old toilets and cabinetry in the alleys.

Bulk pick-up guidelines published by the Refuse Division state:

Bulk pick-up for Skinker DeBaliviere will take place sometime during the week of the first Monday of each month. Collection is not necessarily on Monday, just one day during the week.

What will be picked up:

- Up to three items
- Large items, such as household furniture, appliances, etc.
- Yard or building refuse such as shingles, logs, plaster, etc.
- To make sure your bulky items will be picked up:
- Place your items (not more than three) out by 6:00 a.m. on the first Monday of the month. Place bulk waste in the alley behind your home (be sure to keep bulk items away from refuse containers).
- Collectors are not permitted to pick up items on private property.
- REFRIGERATOR DOORS MUST BE REMOVED. Other large items need not be dismantled.
- Place small or loose items in a container or bundle. No container or bundle may weigh over 100 lbs., or be over 5ft. in diameter.
- DO NOT place bulky items in your regular trash container, or place regular refuse with the bulky items.
- DO NOT block the alley with bulky items.
- You can contact the Refuse Division at 353-8877 or when your alley seems to have been missed, the Citizen's Services Bureau at 622-4800.

Continued from page 1

According to Horn, only four per cent of household waste is recycled in the City of St. Louis. She states that if only one half of city households recycled just their newspapers the total weight would be 9,600,000 pounds. This would result in the conservation of 81,000 trees, save the energy equivalent of 2,000,000 gallons of oil, and free up 38,000 cubic feet of landfill space.

Of special interest to Skinker DeBaliviere residents is the background of Earth Circle Recycling, the company contracted by the city to handle the curbside program. In 1992 Jerry Witter, with a background in art, had a studio in the 6000 block of Kingsbury. Concern over environmental pollution motivated him to begin a small recycling business using his Toyota pick-up truck. Among his first and most supportive customers were residents of the Skinker DeBaliviere community.

Shortly after starting his business Witter attended a meeting at the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Center where a spokesperson for the Refuse Division discussed possible recycling plans. Witter asked if a small business such as his might hope to bid on a contract with the city and was discouraged from doing so.

But hard work and determination began to pay off for Witter when he successfully bid his first municipal contract with the City of Maplewood. The long ago replaced the Toyota pickup and recently received a grant to pur-

chase more equipment. In speaking of the contract he now holds with the City of St. Louis, he expressed his appreciation for city policies that allow local businesses to compete with large, out-of-state companies which would tend to funnel money out of the community.

Witter feels that he is serving his community both environmentally and economically through his business practices. He uses local minority sub-contractors whenever possible, and hopes that as his business expands he will be able to benefit the community more in this way.

Persons wishing to participate in the curbside pilot program should send a check for \$24 to Earth Circle Recycling, P. O. Box 952800, St. Louis, MO 63195-2800, by the sixteenth of the month. Service will begin around the first of the following month. The yearly fee may also be paid in two installments of \$12. A letter will be sent to each new participant with details of pick-up dates and materials which may be recycled and a blue recycling bin will be delivered to the household.

Earth Circle Recycling also operates a recycling center for the city where people may take acceptable materials between the hours of 9 A. M. and 5 P. M. Monday through Saturday. It is located just north of the I-44 bridge on Kingshighway.

Through a mass mailing the city recently distributed an excellent, six page recycling guide. If your copy is missing you may obtain one by calling the Refuse Division at 353-8877.

## Skinker DeBaliviere Coloring Contest

The playground coloring contest received so many wonderful entries, the judges had a hard time deciding on the winners. Along with the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes for each grade level, they also wanted to note other colorings of which they were especially fond... (because all of the entries were winners in their eyes). As a result, they selected a number of "honorable mentions" for each grade level. We are delighted with the results of the contest about 150 entries, and we hope the winners enjoy their prizes. The prizes were bike helmet and water bottles and krypton bike locks provided by youth cycles and pumpkins. Winners by grade include:

**Kindergarten**  
1st Nathalie Friesen  
2nd Sean Curran  
3rd Darcy Sanders

**Honorable Mentions**  
Paul Wheeler  
Annie Herr  
Salena Maurer  
Emily Horner

**1st Grade**  
1st Patty Poe  
2nd Jon Culbertson  
3rd Grace Marthanian

**Honorable Mentions**  
Suzanne Hart  
Devon Cartup  
Marissa Miller-Stochie  
Katie Seal  
Jordan Mimmer

**2nd Grade**  
1st Emily Hereford  
2nd Maura Baker  
3rd Antoinette Allen

**Honorable Mentions**  
Zachary Dean  
Nora Farrell  
Jonathan Stokes  
Kystal Atkens

**3rd Grade**  
1st Devin O'Shea  
2nd Jake Barcheck  
3rd Christopher Thomas

**Honorable Mentions**  
Meredith Mildast  
Kiki DeBennecourt  
Charlotte Hellmuth  
Mananne Laury  
Brendan Akos

**4th Grade**  
1st Matt Vick  
2nd Colin Atkinson  
3rd Kelly Short

**Honorable Mentions**  
Mang Lee  
Cameron Vanicelli  
Julie Drexler  
Madeline Emery

**Other prized Pumpkins were awarded to:**  
Wyatt Gill  
Sienna Pike  
Robert Wood  
Leon Moody Jr.

Thanks to all who participated. We hope the playground will be as enjoyable as the coloring we received.



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# In Your Ear

by Hawkeye Q. Hoerr

Dear Uncle Zeke,  
How are you these days? It's been ages since we talked, since they took away your phone privileges. And I've not received any letters from you recently either. I sent you an email a week or so ago, to the address you gave me, Zeke@StatePen.org, but it came back as undeliverable. I even tried spelling Zeke the French way, Zeque, but it was returned too. So I'm sending you this old-fashioned letter, like a hard copy.

Things are pretty much the same in the Hood. WashU is buying multi-family Skinker DeBaliviere properties like mad, there is soon going to be a MetroLink (think "streetcar" and you'll get the picture) running down the Forest Park Expressway, Forest Park is continually under repair and they're putting back a canal that used to connect all of the waterways, Kingshighway has been changed and now there's a great median running down the middle (where else would a median run, anyway?), Talayna's has moved east, Redef's is a meal of the past, and plans are afoot to create a

playground at Kingsbury and Des Peres Avenues. Same old, same old.

Speaking of same old, same old, are you out of solitary confinement yet? I was astounded a year or so ago when I got your letter, to think that they'd put you in the hole just for continually making that terrible sound with your chalk on the blackboard! I've had fifth graders do that. But hey, what were you doing with a blackboard anyway? (Come to think of it, my fifth graders were put in "the hole" too but it was the principal's office. God bless Mr. Maier.)

Things haven't changed much nationally either. Oh sure, President Clinton — remember him, the one you said reminded you of JFK? — may be impeached. It's not likely because the Republican mandate of four years ago was just decertified but stranger things have happened. I can see you now, Zeke, sitting in your cell and reading my words, figuring that Clinton may be booted out of office because of the land deal he had in Arkansas a decade ago. Nope! And no, he's not in hot water for trading guns for money

to fund the Contra rebels in Central America. That was Reagan.

Got this, Clinton is in trouble because, uh, er, I'm not sure how to put this Zeke, given your situation and all. Y'know how they have you separated from the female prisoners? Well, that's not the way it is for the president. Do you sorta see? OK, let's try this, you remember Paula Jones? No, it wasn't that, well, it was that but not with her. No, it wasn't Jennifer Flowers either. Let's say that he had a *cryst* with one of his interns. (They do have dictionaries in the hole, don't they, Zeke?) Remember you said that he was a lot like JFK? Well, there was more truth there than you thought, big guy! It seems that he and this intern were, well compromising one another. Gosh, let's just leave it with that she had this blue dress and well. Zeke, have you ever heard of DNA?

OK, as I said, it ain't gonna happen. People vote with their pocketbook and like it or not, the economy is good and everyone is in. Fat City. Realistically, we'd rather have a trusting president and a good economy than

President Righteous and inflation. (Gosh, I think I've just explained why Jimmy Carter wasn't re-elected! Personally, I could never bring myself to like someone whose name ended in Y. A Jimmy should be playing centerfield or fixing my car, not leading the country.)

So where was I? Oh yeah, the President may be impeached and the Republicans are like the Rams, in sad shape. Speaking of the Rams, the football Cardinals are looking better and better all the time. The brewery no longer owns the Cards, Babe Ruth's home run record wasn't just broken, it was, like, demolished, and Missouri has a good football team.

Like I said, Zeke, nothing much has really changed around here. Look forward to your parole and am very curious to see the tattoos you've described. If flexing muscles can make that drawing of the lady on your stomach do what you say, there's a t.v. contract for you somewhere!

Best,  
Hawkeye



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