

The *TIMES* of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Vol. 38 No. 4

Oct. 2008

www.stlouis.missouri.org/skinkerdebaliviere/sd_times

The oldest neighborhood newspaper in St. Louis

FREE

Independent and all volunteer-run since 1970

Program for Skinker-DeBaliviere Neighborhood Centennial

October 11, 2008 • 4:00-9:00 p.m. • Greg Freeman Park at Four Corners • Des Peres at Kingsbury

Children's activities throughout the event, including vintage fire trucks a children's art fair at the Kohn Studio.

4:00 p.m. Live guitar music from Josh Kohn

5:00 p.m. Centennial Presentations and Recognitions

Welcome

MC: Nancy Farmer, former State Treasurer, former State Representative, former SDCC Executive Director

Acknowledgements of Centennial Committee by Co-Chairs Andy Cross and Katie Kurtz. Recognitions of *TIMES* volunteers past and present and all former residents of neighborhood sharing this occasion with us.

Introductions of Bob Mahon, President, and Darcell Braylock, Executive Director, SDCC; present and past SDCC board members and directors

Donor Recognitions: Thanks to all Centennial donors and volunteers

Premier Donors: Washington University, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Housing Corporation, and Joe Edwards

Historian Donors: Vince and Lois Schoemehl, Alderwoman Lyda Krewson, Msgr. Sal Polizzi -- St. Roch's, Comptroller Darlene Green, Tom and Karleen Hoerr, Sandy and Sue Rothschild

Special guests (elected officials):

Congressman Wm. Lacy Clay, Jr.

Mayor Slay

Comptroller Darlene Green

President of the Board of Aldermen Lewis Reed

Alderman Lyda Krewson

Alderman Frank Williamson

6:00-9:00 p.m. Live music from "Cauze 4 Concern"



Lots of good food and drink will be available for sale until 9:00 p.m. Tables and chairs (and name tags!) will be set on the plaza. Special centennial memorabilia also for sale throughout the afternoon and evening.

Hey, Kids! Take part in the Skinker DeBaliviere Centennial Celebration by displaying an artwork in the Centennial Children's Art Show.

Enter in one of two categories:

A. Something I love about the Skinker-DeBaliviere neighborhood.

B. Something historic about the neighborhood.

*Prizes for winning artworks in different grade levels, K-8.

Artworks must be able to be hanged by tacks

Must be 9" by 12" or smaller

Standard 2D art materials: paint, pencils, crayons, markers, etc

Artwork will be displayed at the SD Centennial Celebration on October 11th at the Bill Kohn Studio at 5949 Kingsbury at Des Peres

Drop off entries at 6060 McPherson in the mail slot on or before October 6th.

Keep this part to claim your artwork.

Name _____

Address _____ Phone Number _____

Grade _____ School _____

Materials _____

Title _____

Attach this part to the front of your work after the show.

Name _____

Address _____ Phone Number _____

Grade _____ School _____

Materials _____

Title _____

(where available artwork will be returned to neighborhood schools)

Artwork will be available to take home after the Centennial Celebration at 9 pm or will be returned to your school (neighborhood schools) or at the Bill Kohn Studio on Sunday, October 12th from 3 - 6 pm. Not responsible for damaged or unclaimed artworks. Questions, call Andy Cross 314.721.6060



From the upcoming history of Skinker-DeBaliviere: In her interview, Liz Wright Johnson said, "The neighborhood was a great place to grow up... we saw a lot of things that were hard, racially, but also watching people try to fix those things and trying to bring the community and the neighborhood together, too. So we saw both sides of it.

Coming soon from the Missouri Historical Society and the *TIMES* of SKINKER-DEBALIVIERE:

A brand new 100+ page book and DVD will include the "Neighborhood Chronicles" written by Jo Ann Vatcha; excerpts from *The Neighborhood - A History of Skinker-DeBaliviere* by Gee Stuart, Sue Tepas, and Kathy Harleman (yellow book); other selected articles from the archives of *THE TIMES OF SKINKER-DEBALIVIERE*, quotes and photos from Oral History interviews conducted by Jody Sowell, and dozens of photographs courtesy of Missouri History Museum, *THE TIMES OF SKINKER-DEBALIVIERE*, and private donations from neighborhood residents.

If you'd like to pre-order this new book, contact Jo Ann Vatcha at jvatcha@gmail.com. A book sale event to benefit *THE TIMES* will be scheduled soon!

You'd be surprised by how many people you know or see every day who aren't registered to vote. Think of new residents in condos, or apartments. You may register at the library, downtown at the Board of Election Commissioners, Tucker at Olive, or at the post office. The Obama campaign also offers registration help online at VoteForChange.com. Instead of tracking down the right forms, all you need to do is answer a few basic questions. You can also: confirm your existing registration, apply to vote absentee, and find your polling place. Volunteers are also canvassing to help their neighbors register before the deadline, October 8.

Editor's Notebook

by Lana Stein

Why Skinker DeBaliviere Is Special

As we celebrate our centennial, we can acknowledge the neighborhood's homes, the tree-lined streets, the convenient location, and the presence of many good neighbors. To me, Skinker DeBaliviere is special particularly for its diversity. Before I moved to St. Louis, I believed, along with Massey and Denton's American Apartheid, that once a previously white neighborhood became over 30% black it would tip to all black within a short period. Although majority black since 1970, Skinker DeBaliviere always retained a healthy and active white minority. Unlike neighborhoods to our north and in many U.S. cities, Skinker DeBaliviere has shown that integrated neighborhoods can exist and pertain. Today, there are other integrated neighborhoods in our city that are remaining as such. As a social scientist, I can tell you that this is a major occurrence and is often forgotten in some statistical reports that call St. Louis highly segregated. The overall area is, but we have shown that it doesn't have to be that way.

Why did Skinker DeBaliviere remain diverse? The creation of the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council and the work of its founding institutions played a major role. The presence of Washington University and its students who lived here also was important. But, most of all, it was the work of residents who joined together to fight for the neighborhood. The history soon to be published will highlight those many activities and their cumulative success. People, white and black, made this possible in difficult times. They had to fight redlining, businesses reluctant to deliver to the area, and many other impediments. Today, the neighborhood is not perfect; few are. But, many of the original coterie of volunteers remain here and hope that what has been achieved will continue. Some newcomers may be oblivious to or unconcerned about our history. That is sad because it is an unique legacy that many, even within our area, do not recognize.

Diversity is our hallmark; it is our blessing. It did not happen easily. Our churches and many residents played a role. A few years ago, the Times held a homecoming party to encourage past residents to return and celebrate with current neighbors. As part of the event, residents were asked to fill out sheets about their memories of Skinker DeBaliviere. I leave you with two special quotes from well-known neighbors that capture the essence of my message here:

Question: What do you think was most important to the development of the neighborhood?

Answer: "The decision by many to embrace diversity and in the process not only stabilize, but strengthen the neighborhood." - Joe Edwards

Question: What are the most special features of the neighborhood?

Answer: "Its diversity is its greatest asset. People of every color and every economic class live here, and in relative harmony." - The late Greg Freeman

Calendar

To receive emails with announcements of neighborhood events, send an email to Bethany Everett, Administrative Assistant, at the Council office, beverett@skinker-debaliviere.com. The list will only be used for announcements and invitations and will not be made available to outside companies. Help save paper, get the scoop on your own computer!

October 1 and 15: Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Housing Corporation, 6:00 p.m. 6008 Kingsbury

October 3-4: LA Theatre Works, *War of the Worlds/The Lost World*, Edison Theater, call 935-6543 or edisontheatre.wustl.edu

October 4-5: 2-6 p.m. Bill Christman Presents an Exhibit of Recent Artworks. Open studio and sculpture garden with food, drinks and music, 6014 Kingsbury. For more information, call 862-2541.

October 4: Kingsbury Centennial Party.

October 8: The last day to register to vote for the November 4th Election.

October 10-11: The Trey McIntyre Project, the "hottest dance ticket in town," Edison Theater, call 935-6543, or edisontheatre.wustl.edu

October 11: Centennial Celebration in Greg Freeman Park at Four Corners, Des Peres at Kingsbury. For more information, contact Andy Cross or Katie Kurtz, or SDCC at 862-5122.

October 13: Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Council meeting, 7 p.m., 6008 Kingsbury

October 15: Deadline for November-December issue of THE TIMES. Contact jvatcha@gmail.com or call 629-2505.

October 18: Westminster Centennial Party.

October 18: Dreamgirls, Hamilton School, open to all.

October 31: St. Roch Annual Halloween Party, 5 p.m. Open to all.

Centennial Fundraising Update

During 2008, an extra-special fundraising effort has taken place for the neighborhood Centennial Celebration. Thanks to Lu Green, long-time neighbor and professional fundraiser, we have raised nearly \$19,000, enabling us to publish a new book and DVD about the neighborhood's history, as well as order banners and other memorabilia, produce a house tour, and now have a big party celebrating our great neighborhood. In addition, the digitization of the TIMES -- all 38 years -- has been started, and the 70's and 80's will soon be on-line at our website. With a few dollars more, we can complete the job and add the 90's and early 2000's to our online archive. If you would like to help us do that, send your contribution to *THE TIMES OF SKINKER-DEBALIVIERE*, 6168 Westminster 63112. A huge thank-you to these very special Centennial Sponsors and Donors:

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Rick & Venita Lake
Bill Yonkers & Renee Flanders
Neville & Jo Ann Vatcha
Matt & Rachel Boxdorfer
Gerald & Karen McClure
Herbert & Ruth Johnson

Four Corners Donors (over \$500)

Katie & Paul Kurtz
Peter Lukaszewicz & Shirley Bissen
Dan Schesch
Rick & Joan Bender

Community Donors (over \$250)

Original Cast Lighting—Neal Shapiro

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Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Housing Corporation
empowering strong development and homeownership, with the goal of improving the character, heritage and quality of the Skinker DeBaliviere neighborhood and community



Centennial Tiles for Sale

Centennial Celebration: Century Homes

Please sign below if you would like more information about ordering custom-made tiles which will commemorate a century of Skinker-DeBaliviere. Each will feature the year your house was built and the Centennial logo on a 12x12 white tile with black and maroon lettering. Proposed cost is \$55.00. Contact

Katie Kurtz at 727-6377 or send your name, address, and phone number to her at 6178 Kingsbury.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # (evenings) _____

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Kicking off the second 100 years of a great neighborhood with the



Moonrise Hotel, Eclipse Restaurant, and planning for the Loop Trolley!

News of Neighbors

By Rachel Boxdorfer

With the special edition of the *Times of Skinker DeBaliviere* highlighting all of the events celebrating our neighborhood and its colorful history, came the idea of highlighting some of the Centennial Committee members in the "News of Neighbors" column. Simple enough, it would seem, to share with you who these people are, and how they are involved in our neighborhood, and the many other ways they share their time and talent in the St. Louis community.

When I sat down with my laptop, it quickly became obvious these committee members have spent and do spend a lot of time making things happen in our neighborhood. The special edition does not have enough pages to list all the activities, committees, and events, it won't all fit in the column; so what do I do? Well, being a Cub Scout Den Leader, I know the motto, 'do my best', so here goes!

Our committee has a cumulative total of about 500 years in the neighborhood. Many of the members were raised here, and chose to stay or return (a common occurrence in the neighborhood), raising children here, too (also a common occurrence). Several have lived in more than one house in the neighborhood, moving only a few blocks from one house to the next (although not as common, this too occurs a lot in Skinker DeBaliviere), and none seem the type ever to leave! Perhaps we will start a new committee called the Skinker DeBaliviere Lifers.

Our co-chairs for the Centennial deserve special recognition. **Katie Kurtz**, raised in Parkview, has lived in the neighborhood with

her husband **Paul**, for 30 years and has raised three boys here. She's served on the Housing Corporation and with the Historic Review Committee and is active with Crossroads School. **Andy Cross** grew up on Kingsbury,



and is heavily involved with the West End Arts Council (the folks who bring us Wintermarkt). He's the Beautification Chair for the neighborhood, has been the McPherson Community Garden Leader for eleven years, and has won numerous gardening awards locally and nationally. That only touches on his neighborhood involvement and he's also been a soccer coach, Girl Scout Leader and sings in the St. Roch Choir. Andy and wife **Linda** are raising two girls here, within a block of Andy's childhood home.

Katie and Andy are supported by a committee who all have long individual lists of accomplishments in the neighborhood, and a clear love for the neighborhood is shared by them all. **Arline Webb and I** were both raised in the neighborhood and returned to live here. Arline has been President of Rosedale Neighbors and was an original volunteer at the start-up of the People's Clinic. Arline attended St. Roch School and sent her children

there as well (my husband **Matt** and I are only part way through that). Many of the other committee members also raised children in the neighborhood and some of those children also attended St. Roch. **Mary Powell** and husband **Hitch** have raised two sons here and Mary has done everything from deliver the *TIMES* to help organize the Westminster Block Party and be talked into the revived House Tour. **Karleen Hoerr** and husband **Tom** have been residents since the late 60's, and Karleen has truly done it all, from the old Residential Service to the presidency of SDCC, the Housing Corporation, and much more. **Lana Stein** has been co-editor of the *TIMES* for over a decade, and has served on the SDCC Board and its Residential Committee, among other activities. **Lois Schoemehl** and husband **Vince** have lived on Westminster more than 30 years. Lois has been active in the revivals of the neighborhood branches of the public library and has served as treasurer and business manager of *THE TIMES*. **Marj Weir** and husband **Brad** have lived in the neighborhood since the mid-60's and have been involved in everything from the Dinner Theatre to laying out and delivering the *TIMES*. Marj has been part of the *TIMES* for nearly its entire 38 year history, in between serving on the St. Louis Board of Education, St. Louis Library Board, and the current effort to digitize the *TIMES* and begin a website for historical photos and memorabilia. **Jo Ann Vatcha** and husband **Neville** have lived in the neighborhood since 1965 and have also been involved in many activities. Jo Ann currently serves

as co-editor of the *TIMES* and chair of the Delmar Commercial Committee. **Venita Lake** and husband **Rick** are also long-time residents who have been involved with the Art Fair-House Tour, the Dinner Theatre and the *TIMES*. We seem to cover the bases of just about everything you can volunteer for in the neighborhood.

Some other involvements of our committee members include Cub Scout Leader, Involvement in the Policeman's/Fireman's Appreciation Luncheon, the Neighborhood Food Drive, block parties, Breakfast Garden Tour, Girl Scout Leader, Arts Council, SDCC Board Members, Block Captains, and more. **Tom Urbom** is our Centennial and neighborhood webmaster. He and wife **Karen** have lived in several houses in the neighborhood. Others active volunteers include "lifers" **Rachelle L'Ecuyer, Dan Hudspeth, and Norbert Hart. Loretta Lloyd** kicked off our email campaign. Newer neighbors **Robyn Nagle, Jon Dahl, and Jon Parker** helped, too. Longtime photographer for the *TIMES* **King Schoenfeld** and wife **Dee** have lived in the neighborhood more than 35 years and raised their two sons here.

These are the Centennial leaders, but they did not do all of this alone. So many people are involved in making our celebration special. It is part of what makes this neighborhood so spectacular. We only have one Centennial; it's a unique event, for a very unique and wonderful neighborhood! Enjoy! Do you have some news to share? Please send your items to Rachel Boxdorfer at rboxdorf@cbgundaker.com with the subject line "News of Neighbors". Thank you!

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IN YOUR EAR

by Hawkeye Z. Hoerr

So the neighborhood is celebrating the BIG 100. Or make it the FIRST 100. After all, barring a nuclear holocaust or collapse of a giant sewer, there's no reason that our homes won't be celebrating their one thousandth anniversary in 2908. That's a big deal and it isn't. I mean, you can go to lots of places around the world and they can show you where people lived a mere 1,000 years ago. But I guess it is pretty significant in our throw-away society. Who drives a car more than 20 years old? Who remembers who was president after Gerald Ford or who was the first baseman before Pujols?

OK, enough digressing! Our houses will be here in 1,000 years, and that's cool. None of us will be around then, just like none of the workmen who laid the bricks and sawed the wood in 1908 are alive today. That's OK; we come and we go. (And even if it wasn't OK, we'd still come and go. How's that for an epitaph on a tombstone: Here he is forever. He came and went.

Enough of the cemetery; it's too grave of a subject. Back to us. What will the "hood" look like in 3008? A thousand years, after all, is, like a long time. Try 360,000 days. To look ahead, maybe it makes sense to begin by looking back.

What was life like a thousand years ago, in 1008? Well, it's hard to tell for sure because most of the photos from that time have faded and the 8-track tapes are no longer playable. The Americas were inhabited, we know that. Chris Columbus hadn't ventured here yet but there were millions of native Americans living here. They'd come thousands of years ago across the land bridge which existed between what is now Russia and Alaska. It's a good thing Sarah Palin wasn't governor then, or we'd be pretty sparsely populated today. None of those dudes had a green card, and Sarah wouldn't have let them in, I'm sure. Some would have no doubt come through surreptitiously, they might have sneaked in while she was attending the NCA meeting (the National Club Association meeting, the forerunner to the National Rifle Association meeting), but not many. But she wasn't there so here we are. A thousand years was long enough ago that a Google search for leaders doesn't yield anyone who rings a bell with me. I mean, I'm no history buff, but I don't recall much about any of the head dudes ten centuries ago: Zhenzong, the Emperor of Song China; Ethelred the Unready, King of England; or Fatimid caliph. Google again, here's what is written about 1008: "The Afghan sultan Mahmud of Ghazna defeats Hindu forces at Peshawar as he works to extend his Afghan kingdom from the Tigris to the Ganges. Pope John XVIII retires

to a monastery outside Rome's walls in June after a 6-year reign in which he has been less dependent on the Crescentii family than his predecessor; he is succeeded July 31 by the Lunaborn cleric Pietro Buccaporriti, bishop of Albano, who will reign until 1012 as Sergius IV." Honest! I did not make this up. Do you know any of these people? Big as they were, they came and went. Likewise, a Google search fails to give me the Academy Award winners for 1008 or the top ten books. For that matter, there's no record of the Super Bowl Champs of 1008. Go figure!

To be fair, and I'm big on fair, if not adequate, maybe they didn't play games in 1008. Hard as that is to imagine, maybe there were no hockey rinks, balls, or swimming pools. But you'd think that some knight would have won a tournament and been proclaimed. So the year 1008 is largely vague. We infer but there's not a lot that stands the test of time. Is that what they'll say in 3008?

And what will our homes' future occupants think of us, living here in 2008? Will they be astounded that we turned our backs on the Mississippi River? Will they be amazed that we allowed the quality of a child's education to be dependent upon where her parents reside? Will they wonder why we didn't outlaw Twinkies and cigarettes? Will they wonder how we could be so narrow-minded and bigoted? How will the discovery of life on other planets - a certainty by then - change us? Will we stop noticing skin hues when we are all discriminated against by the advanced species from planet Avarice in the Pugnash Galaxy?

Jared Diamond, author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (a fascinating book) once talked about how foolish we were to send out radio signals and rockets to the reaches of outer space to announce our presence and location. "Here we

are!" we shouted to the unknown stars. After all, Diamond, notes, whenever different species interact, the more advanced species always takes advantage of the lesser one. We eat and enslave every mammal that is less sophisticated than us and think nothing of it; why would it be any different for us when that advanced species encounters us? So in 3008, the brick homes on McPherson and Washington might be distant memories of a species now relegated to working under or being the food for those thought-wave beings. Your great X50 grandson or granddaughter won't muse much on woodwork or downspouts when s/he is bred for toast for the great gremlin from the Bellicose Starship.

Alas, I am off-task, dear reader! My intent was to simply join you in celebrating 100 years of our neighborhood. Founded on the outskirts of the City shortly after the World's Fair, here we are 100 years later. We were and are again one of the premiere neighborhoods of the City, a place with opportunity and access, interesting homes and even more interesting residents. And given our trajectory, the best is yet to come. But enjoy it while you can: Somewhere, even as you read, an empty cargo starship in a distant galaxy is starting, beginning its quest to the distant orb circling that medium-sized star, looking for snacks.



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