

The *TIMES* of.... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Vol. 45, No. 1

The oldest neighborhood newspaper in St. Louis

April - May, 2015

FREE

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

Independent and all volunteer-run since 1970

Save the Date! Loop Trolley Breaks Ground



Mark your calendar for the 2015 Breakfast Garden Tour, on Saturday, June 6th. What a wonderful way to enjoy a morning in June; with a fine breakfast, beautiful yards, and great neighbors who you will love to meet! This is the Meara family, whose Pershing backyard chicken coop won the 2014 state fair.

WU SPRING EVENTS

Neighborhood Block Party - Saturday April 11

Join Washington University's Neighborhood C.A.R.E team for a Spring Block Party. Food, ice-cream, games and other family friend fun. This year's block party will be held at Greg Freeman Four Corners Park on Saturday, April 11 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Thurtene Carnival - April 17-19

Be a part of this annual tradition. Thurtene Carnival will be held in the parking lot and green space in front of Brookings Drive and Skinker Boulevard. The Fair will be open on Friday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. More information available at www.thurtene.org.

Breaking ground with a model of the trolley on Limit, where the City of St. Louis and University City meet, were dignitaries and folks from throughout the region. Pictured are: Susan Trautman, Great Rivers Greenway; Mayor Francis Slay, City of St. Louis; Mokhtee Ahmad, Region 7 Director of the Federal Transit Authority which is providing \$32 million in funding for the project; Joe Edwards; University City Mayor Shelley Welsch; John Nations, president and CEO of Bi-State Development Agency. Also participating was Les Serman, President of the Loop Trolley Co.

"Without a doubt, the Loop Trolley will be a real economic and tourism boon to the St. Louis region," said Edwards. "The Loop Trolley will connect communities east and west, and also north and south, with clean, electric transportation and encourage pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and development."

Construction of the Loop Trolley system is set to begin in March 2015 according to Chris Poehler, administrator of the Loop Trolley Transportation Development District (TDD). Construction will start in March with the installation of a permanent roundabout near the Lion Gates in University City (Trinity and Delmar Blvd.) to increase safety, improve traffic flow and create an attractive, landscaped entrance to the Delmar Loop.

The trolley track construction is expected to begin in late May 2015, starting on Delmar Blvd. near Kingsland. Traffic will continue to flow through The Loop business district during construction.

Contractors include KCI Construction Company for track and civil infrastructure; Wissehr Electrical Contractors for the trolley overhead contact system and lighting; and KCI Construction Company for rehab of the maintenance/storage facility. Kwame Building Group is the construction manager



Trolley groundbreaking.

for the project.

The 2.2-mile fixed-track electrical trolley system will run along Delmar Blvd. and DeBaliviere Ave. connecting The Loop restaurant, shopping, and arts & entertainment district to Forest Park, with a stop at the Missouri History Museum. The Loop derived its nickname from the streetcar system that serviced the area until 1966.

The project includes construction of the roundabout, the trolley tracks, an overhead contact system, 10 station stops, a maintenance/storage facility, and rehab of vintage trolley vehicles.

On the eastern end of the trolley route, the Loop Trolley TDD is working with Great Rivers Greenway to extend the St. Vincent Greenway from Delmar along DeBaliviere Ave. south to Forest Park Blvd., with new landscaping and multi-use paths. The trolley will run adjacent to the greenway.

The Loop Trolley construction is scheduled for completion in mid-2016 and is expected to begin service in late 2016 to allow for testing and training.

For more information and construction updates, join the email list at www.looptrolley.cm, email info@looptrolley.com and follow facebook.com/looptrolley and twitter.com/looptrolley.

April 13 Deadline for Volunteers: SDCC Forms New Funding Committee

by Mary Pat O'Gorman, SDCC President

The Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council met on Monday, March 10. One agenda item was the creation of a neighborhood engagement process to discuss future funding for the neighborhood including funds for the Council, the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Housing Corporation, as well as potential neighborhood projects. The Council created a Steering Committee to establish the neighborhood engagement process. The Steering Committee will be charged with:

- Developing a neighborhood engagement plan to discuss neighborhood funding including the creation of a special business district;
- Engaging the Skinker DeBaliviere neighborhood in discussion of the potential projects which could be funded by a special business district;

- Making a recommendation to SDCC about whether the neighborhood would support the creation of a special business district.

Initial members of the steering committee are made up of SDCHC and SDCC board and staff members. This initial 5-person group was tasked with identifying and selecting 6-10 additional residents of the proposed district to serve as steering committee members with consideration given to geographic representation to broadly represent the proposed district. It is hoped that this initial group will make their selections by the middle of April. We recommend that any residents interested in serving on the steering committee express their interest in being considered by April 13 by contacting the SDCC Office.

There will be much more information from this steering committee and opportunities for

public input in the coming months.

SDCC welcomed Karen Kelsey as its new Administrative Assistant in February. Many will already be acquainted with Karen as she is a long-time resident of the Skinker-DeBaliviere neighborhood, having originally moved here in 1977. She lived in the 6000 block of Kingsbury Ave before moving to Kingsbury Square in 1986, where she currently resides in her third home on the 5700 block of Westminster Pl with her partner, Tom Urbom. You can catch Karen at the SDCC office generally from 10am to 4pm on Mondays through Thursdays. Drop by or call and she will gladly bring you up to date on the rest of her family!

SDCC's annual meeting will be held on Monday, April 27 at 7pm at the SDCC Office. All are invited to attend and learn about Council activities. Light refreshments will be served.

Editor's Notebook

by Lana Stein

At its meeting on March 9, the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council voted to establish a steering committee to explore the creation of a Special Business District (SBD). The boundaries of this district would be the core of the neighborhood and not include businesses on Delmar or DeBaliviere, i.e., homes south of the alley between Delmar and Washington, and west of DeBaliviere, north of Forest Park Parkway and on the east side of Skinker and eastward.

A special business district is created by a vote of the residents of the above area. It would create a board of 7 whose members would be appointed by the mayor of the City of St. Louis. The board would decide what to fund with revenues collected from an add-on to the property taxes of residents. The maximum that could be collected is \$0.85 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

The proposed steering committee would "create a list of potential items to be funded and engage the Skinker DeBaliviere neighborhood in discussion of the funding items and assessment rate" and "make a recommendation to SDCC about whether to go forward with a petition for an SBD."

Talk of an SBD arose when the SDCC lost the majority of its block grant funding from the Community Development Administration. The Skinker DeBaliviere Housing Corporation also was affected adversely by funding changes. The SBD was seen as a funding source for the council and its activities.

The steering committee is to consist of two SDCC board members, one SDCC staff member, one staff member from the Housing Corporation and six to ten additional neighborhood residents and/or property owners to be chosen by the first five members on this list. The committee composition was amended by stipulating that only those within the taxing district would serve.

Staffing and staff salaries could be affected. There would be costs to homeowners and renters from the additional property tax. Churches will not be affected. Washington University, as a nonprofit entity, pays no property tax on the buildings it owns outright. As an accompanying article shows, it has now turned over 6188 McPherson and its 112 units undergoing extensive rehab to a private for profit entity. This was done to receive historic tax credits to help fund the renovation. Because of receipt of the tax credits, the for profit entity must remain in existence for 5 years and rentals are to be available to the general public as well as Washington U. students.

As such, the entity, Parallel Properties, will pay property tax as long as it maintains its status. At the end of five years, the properties could be returned to WU ownership, which would mean that, as a non-profit engaging in university activity, i.e. student housing, there would no longer be real estate taxes.

If the buildings were retained by Parallel or sold to a for-profit real estate owner, the tax would still be in place.

Establishment of an SBD affects us all. Renters will be affected through increases in rents, as the building owners pay more in tax. Each of these owners would pay an increased real estate tax.

The tax at this time for a home appraised at \$ 268,000, and therefore assessed at \$ 51,000, is approximately \$ 3,600. Adding \$ 0.85 per \$ 100 assessed valuation will add about \$ 400 per year to the tax bill.

We urge any who are interested in this matter and would like to serve on the committee to call SDCC Director Liz Pund at 862-5122.

Letter to the Editor

I have neighbors who have no access to a computer. This concerns me regarding getting information out. I wonder when it was decided that everyone has a computer?

My neighbor asked me just yesterday why she hasn't gotten a paper. She's elderly and really looks forward to it. Let's not forget her.

I know it is so much more efficient and easier and cheaper to put it out via email.

I am working on Aging in Place issues with the Neighborhood Services Committee so this is a particular concern of mine.

That being said, I so enjoy the paper and thank you so much for the work you do.

Marilyn Olson

Note to Marilyn and others: We agree! The TIMES is now available online, but our intention is to continue paper publication long-term. We thank Marilyn and all our great block deliverers for their dedication to communication to everyone in the community!

WU Construction

by Lana Stein

No doubt most readers have noticed the extensive renovation taking place at multifamily buildings on 61xx Waterman. These properties have been owned by Washington University for almost 2 decades. Because of archaic systems, the need for renovation has been clear here and at buildings on Pershing. The University, as a nonprofit organization, did not pay taxes on these buildings that they rented out to students. For the substantial renovations now occurring (and at 6198 McPherson), the university became partner in a for-profit group (Parallel Properties) and applied for historic tax credits. To receive these tax credits, the units must be open to rental by everyone for 5 years and the for-profit ownership must pertain for that same period.

One hundred fourteen units in 11 buildings are now under redevelopment. These are gut rehabs and some involve massive redos amount to more than \$ 20 Million Dollars in investment. The university is trying to preserve the historic features in the structures. The university is concentrating on multifamily dwellings not geared to family occupancy. It intends to market them to graduate students, then the general public. This is part of a 7 year rehab program.

Quadrangle Properties administers the units Washington University owns as a nonprofit. There are 935 units in this group in both Skinker DeBaliviere and University City. Parallel Properties, the for-profit entity, has 260 units currently in both locales.

Washington University, ranked among the top in the country, currently has between 13,500 and 14,000 students. A best estimate shows that 897 students live within the boundaries of Skinker DeBaliviere: 418 undergraduates and 479 graduate students. This figure includes those who rent homes or apartments from private owners.

That amounts to 22% of the neighborhood's population, using the 2010 census as a base.

Times Website

by Jo Ann Vatcha

With this issue, we mark the beginning of our 45th year of continuous publication of the TIMES, originally called THE PAPER. We are happy to say that we are solvent, and we will continue to print and distribute the TIMES to every home in the neighborhood and to our business community as well.

Did you know you can view all the pictures, even ones that appear small on paper, from all the past issues of the TIMES by going to our website? Did you know you can search for a specific names and locate past articles about them?

Marj Weir, our website guru, has also included links to other neighborhood resources, and, if you look at the External Links tab, then the Centennial link, you'll see such items as the Landmarks Survey of our Historic District, as well as an index to the book Celebrating Skinker DeBaliviere, written by Vatcha and Weir, and information about how to order it. There are also photos of events in the neighborhood through the years. We plan soon to add a "History" component, which will enable others to add their own stories and photos to complement those we publish in the TIMES. Have a look!

The TIMES of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

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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.

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, 2015. Please send copy by e-mail to jvatcha@gmail.com or by disc to 6117 Westminster, St. Louis, MO 63112.

News of Neighbors

By Rachel Boxdorfer

Greetings and happy spring! As I am writing this column we are enjoying beautiful spring weather and I really hope it continues and you are reading this enjoying the same weather. It brings hope of budding blooms, more neighbors outside, and the sounds of children playing in their yards! Oh spring - we await you!

As spring was finally making an appearance in St. Louis, the Knese family from the 6100 block of Kingsbury was enjoying a little more



winter fun in Breckenridge, Colorado! They spent a week taking advantage of the sunny days on the slopes and enjoyed a day of dog sledding in which twins Chloe and Isabella said they "highly recommend".

Peggy Hermes of the 6100 block of Kingsbury is a proud mama and reports that daughter Sarah Griesbach is an executive editor



of the new magazine "All The Art". Think "Sauce Magazine" but for art. The first run will be in April with 500 copies but the plan is for a distribution of 10,000 by the September 1st issue.

Angie Meara of the 5900 block of Pershing recently spoke to the Parkview Horticultural Society about using our gardens and local markets for making effervescent beverages and wonderful fermented vegetables for our palate and our health. Angie believes in sourcing her food locally and supplementing it with homegrown vegetables, herbs and eggs from their backyard chickens. Angie's efforts have become more popular and she hopes to convert this home business in the coming years to selling her fares at coffee shops, restaurants and other local outlets.

Not to be outdone by her mother, Olive Meara, age 8, will have two parts in "Beauty and the Beast" at the Stray Pup Youth Theatre beginning April 30. With this production, Olive will have trod the boards four times.

Dr. Elizabeth Bender, Principal of Gateway STEM High School, aka Beth Bender, of the



6000 block of Kingsbury and also my sister (what can I say, I'm proud), was recently named an honoree for the Peabody Energy Leaders in Education Award. In being named it was said that she is not only an effective educator but a true leader within her school and district. Beth is in her seventh year at Gateway where she and the staff have taken a school which had drifted from its purpose and recreated a dynamic and sought after school. Congratulations Beth and please, keep up the good work you and your staff are doing!

Many of you in the neighborhood certainly know our former Executive Director David Whiteman who lives in Parkview. And if you were lucky, you also met his beautiful wife, Jamie Ryan. It is with the most sincere regret that I inform you that cancer claimed Jamie's life in January. I did not know Jamie well, but I had the pleasure of meeting her a few times at Skinker DeBaliviere events. Our condolences go to David and the entire family.

Sadly, word also came that Dan Nerviani, one of the seven Nerviani children who grew up on the 6100 block of Kingsbury passed away on January 27th. Dan had left the neighborhood years ago, raising his own children and even enjoying some grandchildren too.

Further sad news came on February 27th from Kurt Lutjens of the 6000 block of McPherson, that his wife Susan Lutjens had passed away. While Susan's final days were spent fighting the terrible effects ALS had taken on her body, Susan will be remembered for so much more. In addition to being a wonderful neighbor, and the wife of the senior pastor at Grace and Peace Fellowship, Susan was an incredible mother to her three children; Heidi, Jeffrey, and Carrie. She was also a health advocate for her patients, and a strong spiritual guide offering prayers for so many. Susan had worked at both St. Mary's as an RN and at Barnes as a Nurse Practitioner. Most recently she worked in the East St. Louis area for Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation. Susan was remembered at a beautiful service at Grace and Peace Fellowship on Tuesday, March 3.

Not wanting to make this column all about death, let's take the attitude that we are remembering many incredible people; neighbors that we will truly miss. This is the case of Jim Hatch who shared news of the passing of two of his neighbors on the 5700 block of DeGiverville. Two of Jim's neighbors passed away in February, both having lived on the 5700 block of DeGiverville for over 40 years:

Ephram Weddington passed away on February 5th. Ephram had worked for many years as a Teamster Truck Driver and later was a trainer for a bus company. He was also an entrepreneur as a taxi owner for over 30 years.



He retired to commit to caring for his wife's health. We extend our sympathies to his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Roy Tagger passed away on February 16. Roy had worked many jobs over a 33 year period for the Federal Reserve Bank. He also served

in a volunteer capacity for voter registration, a poll worker, and he served the Washington Heights Neighborhood Association. Our condolences go out to his wife Eva, their children and grandchildren.



How blessed we truly are to live in a neighborhood with so many dedicated people. And as much as their passing is sad, as I remind my children often, we need to remember how lucky we were to have had them here. If it didn't hurt so much when we lose people, it might be more sad, for we would not have had such wonderful relationships with them and the world might not be as wonderful. Still, our hearts go out to all these families at this time while they grieve their losses.

A reunion of sorts took place as old friends, many of whom were old Skinker DeBaliviere neighbors, and all of whom attended St. Roch School at some point, gathered for mass and a reception on Saturday, March 7th for the St. Roch Alumni Mass and Mingle. Approximately 100 graduates gathered spanning decades and sharing many laughs. Many of the graduates who had been away for a long time enjoyed the opportunity to tour both of the school buildings and look at class photos through the years. Fabulous food was provided by two very popular local restaurants: Three Kings Public House and the Kitchen Sink. Three Kings is owned by St. Roch alum Ryan Pinkston and the Kitchen Sink is owned by Anthony Ellerson, Jr who grew up in the neighborhood! The event was headed up by Cristina McGroarty who hopes to see this become an annual event! If you graduated from St. Roch and don't receive alumni news, be sure to contact the rectory and give them your mailing address and your email address.

Speaking of St. Roch, Monsignor Polizzi is gearing up for his Building the Future Dinner on Sunday, April 26th. This event is the sole fundraiser for the school and enables students to continue to receive a premier Catholic education. For more information, to purchase tickets, or to make a donation, please contact the parish house at 314-721-6340.

Do you have news to share? Please send your submissions via email with the subject line News of Neighbors to 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". We love to hear about neighbors accomplishments, awards, travels, weddings, anniversaries, births, and more!

Three Prominent SD Residents Retire This Year

by Lana Stein

Around the country, early members of the baby boom generation are ending their careers. So it is here in our neighborhood.

Tom Hoerr, Jill McGuire, and Vince Schoemehl have announced their retirements. By the time summer is upon us, they will have embarked on a new phase of life in which they can do whatever they like whenever they like. Their contributions to our neighborhood, city and region are legion and will be noted in part below.

TOM HOERR - Tom and his wife Karleen have lived in Skinker DeBaliviere since 1976. For over 30 years now Tom has been a board member of the *Times* and has provided a column, *In Your Ear*, for every issue. He helped to set up the Skinker DeBaliviere prom and Rags to Riches - not to raise money principally but to bring the community together.



In his professional life, Tom has been a leading educator in St. Louis and points domestic and foreign. In 1981, he became the director of New City School. He was previously the principal at Pershing Elementary School in University City. Tom holds a doctorate from Washington University, a masters from UMSL, and a bachelors degree from then Harris Teachers College.

New City School had been founded in 1969 by neighborhood activists who wanted a diverse, progressive school. When Tom arrived, he found a joyful environment but with academic needs. He has been fortunate to work with a very good team. Enrollment has increased by 50%, the concept of multiple intelligence is utilized, and there is a performance pay plan. The building on Lake at Waterman has been renovated and three more acres have been added to the campus. Several faculty have written articles and the school houses the nation's first multiple intelligence library. Tom himself is the author of 4 books and numerous articles.

Tom feels strongly that to be successful you have to have lots of good people to work with and he has. New City School now has 345 students from age 3 to grade 6. They come from 50 different zip codes. The school had been conceptualized as a way to stabilize the Central West End and the city remains its nadir. New City wants to be seen as an inclusive private school. It now wants to raise \$4 million to aid students. The tuition is high. Thirty-five percent of students receive need-based scholarships and students of color comprise 39% of the student body.

Tom has served on the board of



Vince, Jill and Tom were photographed by King Schoenfeld at the recent *TIMES* fundraiser. King also took one of each of them at their signature workplaces: New City School, Regional Arts Commission, and Grand Center

directors of Independent Schools and a national association for curriculum development. He has given presentations in South America, Europe, Oceania, and New Zealand.

His work at New City ends with this semester. There is a nationwide search for his successor. His impact goes beyond our area and the graduates of New City. He has played a large role in understanding how children learn. What does the future hold? Continuing to write his column hopefully and being able to read *The New York Times* in the morning.

JILL MCGUIRE - Jill and her husband Dan have lived in Skinker DeBaliviere for over 45 years and raised 2 sons here. Jill worked at UMSL and at Mosby



after graduating from Mizzou. She joined the mayoral campaign of neighbor Vince Schoemehl and joined his administrative staff. She worked with the arts and helped to create the Regional Arts Commission (RAC) in 1985 and was selected to be director. It is a job she has held for 30 years. She has brought great enthusiasm and skill to a wide variety of endeavors. With a dedicated hotel/restaurant tax, RAC funds artistic groups throughout the city and county. Those institutions in the zoo-museum district cannot receive funds; all others compete annually for stipends. This funding has stabilized the arts environment. Major players such as the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Opera Theatre and the Repertory Theatre have fared well. In addition, RAC has assisted smaller groups including arts councils in neighborhoods. In the past year, RAC has provided some stipends directly to artists who can then devote more time and energy to their creativity.

In company with Americans for the Arts, Jill and RAC have compiled extensive data to demonstrate the economic impact of the arts. Her work has helped to show the multiplier effect of concerts, theater, galleries on jobs and municipal income. For her, the arts are a broad tent and impact us

directly or indirectly.

Currently RAC is touting its new App which allows smart phone and pad owners to access information about what's happening artwise in the metro area. RAC has also redesigned its web site. Several years ago, RAC built its own building on Delmar in the East Loop and encourages neighborhood and community groups to use its facility. It has been the site of an SDCC board retreat and two Homecomings.

The neighborhood arts are a critical component of RAC's activity. Its predecessor organization, the city Arts and Humanities Commission, funded neighborhood arts activity in eligible neighborhoods under the CETA program. RAC was created by a vote of the people in 1984. Many who helped with the campaign were artists who had participated in CETA-funded activity. Jill felt that RAC certainly had a responsibility to continue neighborhood-based arts activity. RAC has encouraged that activity in the city of St. Louis and in St. Louis County.

RAC created innovation grants, a large one time infusion, to allow nonprofits to take the kind of risks innovation demands. In the wake of Ferguson, RAC instituted Community Social Income Grants quickly and committed \$200,000 to this purpose.

Close to home, the West End Arts Council and SDCC have received small grants to bring art-based activity to our community-building. There was the art fair and then Art Exposed. Four Corners has been an art center. There were programs for school-age kids, dinner theatre, outdoor films, and the concert series that continues.

Jill's tireless work and consummate skill and enthusiasm have made St. Louis a cultural center. A recent survey ranked it 4th in the country.

Jill will be honored on March 30 and a nationwide search is taking place for her successor. She will be a hard act to follow.

VINCE SCHOEMEHL - Vince and his wife Lois have also lived in the neighborhood for over 45 years and raised 2 sons here. His resume is extensive. He began his career of public service as 28th Ward Alderman and was then elected to 3



terms as the city's mayor. He created numerous programs to help neighborhoods such as Brightside, SafeStreet, and Operation Impact. He brought considerable energy to the mayor's office. Of course, there were critics but there were many supporters as well. He ran for Governor of Missouri in a much

heralded campaign. After leaving the mayor's office, he served on the school board, chaired the Metro Board, and the board at the language immersion charter schools.

His most visible post-mayoral contribution lies in his 14 year presidency of Grand Center. This midtown arts district has undergone tremendous change during his tenure and more significant activity is on the horizon. From signage to lighting, the physical appearance is different. Powell Hall, the Fox, and the Sheldon have been joined by the Contemporary Art Museum, the Pulitzer Collection, the Channel 9 building, UMSL's KWMU location, and the newly revitalized KDHX building. A residential facility geared to artists has taken shape in a historic building. Jazz at the Bistro has renovated and expanded. More apartments are being created in a former office structure. There is a boutique hotel. Several schools now call Grand Center home and in addition many of these facilities have education components built in and have space for community gatherings. The University of Missouri School of Journalism is now doing classes in the Nine Network Building.

Grand Center development has not been a clear, straightforward path. The Great Recession delayed plans for 4-5 years. The area has 38 acres of parking lots and vacant land. Vince said there are plans to build 2 new parking garages this year which will open 5-6 acres for further development. Remediation is now occurring in the building next to Third Baptist Church. The first two floors will be commercial and there will be 10 stories of residential (108 units). Federal historic tax credits are being used. The apartments will be 800-1100 square feet and have one or two bedrooms. Young professionals are the target audience. He feels that if you like the arts, this will be the place to live.

Housing brings about greater foot traffic and a greater comfort level. In addition to those units under construction, Vince foresees 1500 additional units of housing can be absorbed within the next 5 years.

Vince acknowledged that he was not chosen as Grand Center director for his arts background. Rather, he knew the mechanics associated with urban redevelopment, was familiar with tax credits, and knew some reliable developers. Hence he was able to put the Grand Center redevelopment together. His successor will be charged with the further creation of an arts and cultural district and will need a deep appreciation of the arts and what they bring to a community.

On a personal note, I have been a symphony subscriber since 1987. At least 6 times a year and often more, I have come to Grand Center. The change is phenomenal outside and inside and I encourage everyone to check out the venues there.

It will be very hard to replace our three retirees. Their contributions are significant and, hopefully, there will be worthy successors.

Kids Corner

by Susanne Knese

After playing in the snow and ice these past few months, who is ready for Spring and all it has to bring?

St. Louis Zoo's Penguin and Puffin Coast has re-opened! Closed since September 2013, the 100 oceanic birds are very excited to see visitors again. Come watch the Humboldt, Rockhopper, King, Gentoo penguins and the Horned and Tufted puffins swim and waddle in their walk-through exhibit. FREE!

Missouri Botanical Garden's Children's Garden opening weekend is March 28th - 29th! Slides, caves, rope bridges, boat canals, jungle monkey-vines, tree houses and much more await your discovery. FREE ages 2 & under and ages 13 & up; \$3 Garden members (3 - 12 yrs), \$5 Non-members (3-12 yrs)

Geocaching anyone? If you don't know what this is, you need to check it out! It's like a treasure hunt in your own neighborhood and city. Fun way to get out and explore with plenty of items to find in Forest Park alone!

Library Summer Reading Programs

University City Library - May 22nd through July 31st
St. Louis Public Library - May 12th through August 2nd

April 22nd is Earth Day

Did you know that the Monarch butterfly population has declined 90 percent over the last two years? A plant they greatly rely on has been diminishing. Female monarchs depend on milkweed to lay their eggs and feed their caterpillar larvae. Help the monarch's annual migration by planting milkweed in your neighborhood.

Question for June Kids Corner: What is your favorite vacation destination? Share your favorite summer activities here in St. Louis? You may just inspire other families to try out your favorite places. Draw or write your answers to kidscorner@sdtimes.org by May 10th! Kids share with us activities your school, club, scouts and sports teams doing. This is YOUR corner, so make it what you want!

Endless Electronics

Endless Electronics, a locally owned computer, tablet and smartphone repair business, has been selected to fill the final retail space at The Lofts of Washington University on the Delmar Loop, an \$80 million residential and retail project. Henry S. Webber, executive vice chancellor for administration at Washington University in St. Louis, said Endless Electronics is a great addition to the Loop.



Endless Electronics is operated by cousins Benjamin Auton and Tom Nowlin. The business provides a full range of services, from replacing cracked iPhone and iPad screens to fixing broken PCs and PlayStation game consoles. Technicians complete most jobs within hours. Business hours will be 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

"We have been a mail-in business, but to talk to the customer and build a level of trust in the community is something we've always wanted," Nowlin said. "To tell someone you can save their wedding photos or their term paper is really satisfying."

Founded in 2010, Endless Electronics operated in the south St. Louis County incubator of STLventureWorks, which provides below-market rent, support and mentorship to St. Louis startups. Nowlin is proud to graduate from incubator to retail storefront.

The Lofts debuted in August 2014 and feature 167 fully furnished apartments for Washington University undergraduate students. The project has earned LEED Platinum certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Other tenants are:

United Provisions, a 15,000 square-foot, full-service grocery store and restaurant. United Provisions is operated by the Prapaisip family, owners of Jays International Food on South Grand and Global Foods in Kirkwood as well as three restaurants.

Peacock Loop Diner, a 5,000-square-foot, 24-hour diner. Peacock Loop Diner is owned by Loop entrepreneur Joe Edwards, operator of Blueberry Hill, Moonrise Hotel, the Pageant and other Loop attractions.



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The Johnson girls, Nyla and Cienna, are the newest TIMES deliverers. They live with parents Cardina and Nate Johnson on the 5900 block of Waterman.

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Redevelopment of 57xx McPherson Nears Completion

by Lana Stein

Twenty years ago the 57xx block of McPherson was one of the most challenging in our neighborhood. Directly south of new construction at Kingsbury Square, it stood apart.



Half the properties were vacant and blighted and there were empty lots as well. The MJaffee Group, which had completed Kingsbury Square, moved forward with a plan to remake McPherson and make it a desirable living destination. The goal was to provide infill housing that shared the same set-asides as the existing dwellings. The housing would be market-rate and enjoy contemporary amenities. With the support of 26th Ward Alderman Irving Clay, work began. The new homes drew buyers and others rebuilt existing 2 family units and turned them into condos.

The Great Recession of 2008

put a stop to the building and buying. The Jaffees (Mark and Martin) were able to outwait the downturn. Today the last four new homes are under construction.

Two are already pre-sold. Mark Jaffee showed me 5798, a corner unit with special features. Because it is on a corner, it is 2 feet wider than its counterparts on the street. It will also have geothermal heat. Pylons have been

extended 200 feet down. The house has an open floor plan on the 1st level and 3 bedrooms upstairs. The purchasers, two physicians, are building a basement bedroom suite for visitors. Other buyers have done this as well: these new homes have an entrance/egress window in the basement.

The base price of these new homes is \$320,000. The block now has distinctive entry markers, thanks to Alderman Frank Williamson. Jaffee told me that his company would like to build several houses on Laurel, across from this redeveloped street.

Kingsbury Ensemble

By Elizabeth Krasnoff Holzer

In the stillness of a recent Sunday afternoon, Kingsbury Place, as every other block in Skinker-DeBaliviere, dozes, hypnotized by the first gossamer rays of the spring. Indeed, yellow-green buds along the jumbled slabs of sidewalk seem to be the only sign of awakening until the brightly play of notes dance through an open window midway up the block.

That flutter gives way to flourish, then pauses like a child in a game of tag to see if anyone is following as she skips along. Another flourish of notes dances out into the empty street. These are not the scales of a naive beginner. No indeed, they signal what the stone facades obstruct – that within our swath of St. Louis, there exists the core members of one of the finest early music ensembles in the Midwest, if not United States and arguably the world.

The Kingsbury Ensemble, which was formed in 1999, performs the music commission and enjoyed by European counts and kings – music of Franz Shubert, Georg Philipp Telemann, George Frideric Handel, Henry Purcell, J.S. Bach, and others. In the forms of concertos and sonatas and more, the Ensemble musically transports their audiences through time and space to France, Germany, Belgium, Italy and all of Europe.

The Carlins, who met while training in Paris, moved from Boston to their home on Kingsbury Street in the 1990s. Initially, they chose to form a trio and named it for the street on which they live.



“We wanted something that would reference Europe where the music we play originated,” Maryse Carlin said. “We chose Kingsbury Ensemble because the street sounded a little bit vintage, a little bit English – it sounded a bit like early music.”

When the trio dissolved and reformed as an ensemble, they decided to keep the name. At

present, along with the Carlins, the Ensemble also includes Elizabeth Ramos (viola), Marc Thayer (violin), Ken Kulosa (cello) Leonora Anop (violin), Margaret Humphrey (baroque violin), Clea Galhano (recorder) Brandon Christensen (violin) and (Douglas Worthen (traversa flute).

The Ensemble will wrap up its season with its next concert, which will begin at 7:30 p.m. April 11 at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 6800 Washington Avenue. The Ensemble will perform the Cantatas and Sonatas of Handel and Telemann and will feature Galhano, Margaret Humphrey, Ken Kulosa, and Maryse Carlin.

In addition, the Ensemble’s annual fundraiser concert/reception will be from 7 to 9 p.m. May 15 at the LINK Auction Gallery, located at 5000 Washington Place. The event will offer a special opportunity to experience a performance and enjoy an assortment of refreshments as well.

Each concert the Kingsbury Ensemble performs varies from the next and features various member musicians. The performances vary from solo concerts to productions that feature dancers and singers, as well.

Along with its own local concerts, the Ensemble has participated in a number of music series around the city, including the Missouri Botanical Garden’s “From the Garden Live,” the St. Louis Art Museum’s series that connected with art exhibitions of the Baroque period, as well as Ovations! presented by Washington University.

In the summer, the Kingsbury Ensemble jumps the pond to perform in a festival created and lead by Maryse Carlin in France. Since 2008, Maryse has served as the festival director for The Early Music Festival of Sain-Savin, which offers the opportunity to hear chamber music in the shadowy beauty of the Pyrenees Mountains each summer.

The Kingsbury’s intention is as ambitious as it is enchanting: “To stage authentic performances of music from the renaissance to the early romantic period so that listeners may experience this timeless music as its original audiences did.”

With each note, the Kingbury Ensemble brings back Bach and Shubert, Beethoven and Boccherini, in such rich and vibrant terms that one almost expects the composers themselves to enter the room, or linger in the back, or as Doerr would say, “rise again in the grass. In the flowers. In songs.” In this case, in chamber music.

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Ten Visions of St. Louis at International Photography Hall of Fame

Story and photo by King Schoenfeld

If you love St. Louis' architectural heritage or just love photography as art, head for the International Photography Hall of Fame, 3415 Olive. Through April 26th, the IPHF is displaying a new show, St. Louis Architecture: A Proud Heritage. You will see the work of ten contemporary photographers celebrating the "fabric and spaces St. Louisans inhabit" as well as visual essays by John Nagel, IPHF Executive Director, which illustrate the antecedents of notable buildings and architectural heritage both lost and preserved.

Works shown provide something for every taste. I discovered sensitive explorations of our city from



"postcard" beauty to documentary, from architectural detail to graphic forms. The work of Mark Appling Fisher stood out with masterful images that combined technical

excellence with whimsy in truly iconic, memorable works of art.

Other artists include local photographer Alise O'Brien of University City, Debbie Franke,

Gary Tetley, Richard Springeler, David Hanlon, Greg Barth, Don McKenna, Ken Konchel, and Christine Huhn.

In connection with the exhibit, IPHF you might take advantage of "A Photographic History of the University of Missouri-St. Louis" by Blanche Touhill, April 4, 6-7:30 pm. All lectures are presented at the Hall of Fame and Museum in Grand Center. For details, call 535-1999 or go to iphf.org.

The IPHF and Museum moved to St. Louis only recently. It is a regional non-profit organization whose purpose is "to celebrate the achievements of the inventors, pioneers, and pivotal artists throughout the history of photography." Its museum houses over 6,000 historical cameras and 30,000 images. Admission is free on first Fridays of each month.

From Feral to Friendly: A Cat Tale

By Glorianna L'Ecuyer

Sometime last fall a young feral cat appeared in my yard and stole my heart. He was probably the product of a feral cat colony living down my street. Around fifteen of them are being fed by a very kind-hearted neighbor.

The feral cat in my yard visited consistently. I took these occasions to offer him food, coaxing him closer and closer to earn it. A friend helped me create a warm shelter with bales of straw that the cat took to right away. Soon he was waiting by my door every day for meals. My indoor cat Bingo was making friends with him too though the screen door, but they couldn't be together until the feral cat had a clean bill of health.

I was lucky to find support from many friends and two generous feral cat pros who became my email mentors and cheerleaders through the process. They helped me avoid some mistakes and also led me to Carol House: Fix Feral Cats Quick on S. Jefferson. I took Buster, as I decided to call him, to their clinic to be fixed, have his various wounds patched up, be checked for Feline Leukemia, and vaccinated: all for a reasonable price. He is now the rambunctious pal of Bingo, thoroughly content with indoor living. I'm happy with him too.

Many neighborhoods have feral cats. Even if someone is feeding them, they face a hard, dangerous life. They are subject to disease and to injury from encounters with other animals, cars, and even people. A skimpy diet of mice and birds, with inadequate drinking water, makes for unhealthy cats. Feral cats live one to five years on average. House cats may live eighteen years or longer unless they too, are allowed outdoors. By going outside, not only will their lives be shortened, but also their owners may be ticketed for \$50 by the City of St. Louis. According to The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, free-roaming cats are also bad for birds, especially during migration and nesting seasons. People who enjoy the hoot of an owl and the call of the Cardinal can make a difference by keeping pet cats indoors.

It's apparent that there is more work to do with the growing feral colony on our block. With the promised help from my mentors and the cooperation of some neighbors, I hope we will be able to manage the cats who are still out there. If you, too, are interested in resources to help strays and feral animals, Tenth Life Shelter, a not-for-profit, no-kill shelter has a great list of resources for helping both cats and dogs. Contact them at <http://www.tenthlifecats.org/resources>.

From Senator Joe Keaveny

Parents as Teachers, with support from the Gateway Center for Giving, held a Community Action Forum on Investing in Early Childhood on Thursday, March 12. As a longtime advocate of the benefits of providing early childhood education, I was honored to be invited as a roundtable speaker at the event.

This forum focuses on action steps for investing in quality early childhood development for all children, including a roundtable discussion with early childhood leaders, the release of a Discussion Guide and Action Toolkit to help participants implement policies and programs in their own communities, and breakout group discussions to continue and deepen the conversation. For more information on Parents As Teachers, go to www.parentsasteachers.org or contact me on my website: www.senate.mo.gov/Keaveny.



Halbert Sullivan from the Father's Support Center and Senator Joe Keaveny



Photo by Miliann Usher for St. Louis Magazine

The Peacock Diner won the design award for best commercial space - restaurant in the St. Louis At Home Architect and Designer Awards. Owner Joe Edwards had a concept and knew exactly how he wanted the space to turn out, from the colorful U-shaped counters to the rotating Peacock Carousel of Love. "It was a thrill to see my vision turned into a reality," said Joe. "It was gratifying to have the work recognized by an independent jury of four prominent New York City designers and architects." From left, Joe Edwards, Hope Edwards, construction project manager Mark Kreikemeier of Paric, and architect and designer Kevin Flynn of Kiku Obata & Co.



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"I love how intimate this little gem is. The dining room is simple yet still very nice. Our server was very attentive & sweet. My husband had the swordfish with a lemon risotto & fried zucchini. I had the seared duck breast with rice pilaf & spinach. The flavor in each dish was phenomenal!"

We Three Kings

by Cristina and Sean McGroarty

You might have noticed the recent article in the Post-Dispatch listing the top 100 restaurants in St. Louis. You might also have recalled that we recommended Fork+Stix, number 12 on their list, long before their writers ever thought to look to that establishment. So, you see, we do know what we are writing about. Well, not really, but the quality of the dining experience at Fork+Stix easily outshone our culinary ignorance. You would do well to pay attention, at the off-chance our luck holds.

Just as you would have no need to rely on luck at Fork+Stix, neither would you have to do so if your venture farther west on Delmar to Three Kings Public House. We walked that way on Thursday of WashU's spring break for the umpteenth time. Why we have not yet written about Three Kings Public House, we have no idea.

Full disclosure, one the three kings who own, manage and work their tails off for the Public House is Ryan Pinkston. Ryan is a native son, having graduated from St. Roch in the late 1980's. Very late 1980's. Ryan was two years behind me (Cristina) at St. Roch and one of the nicest guys you will ever meet. Ryan was kind hearted and in my mind always smiling back then and he remains so today. You will be hard pressed to meet a kinder man.

On to the food! Three Kings took over the space of long time Loop favorite Riddles. Huge shoes to fill, and Three Kings fills it completely. The space is completely reworked and it works. Make no mistake Three Kings is a Public House and the first thing you notice when you walk in hoping that one of

their cozy circle booths are open is the bar. It is magnificent as is the array of beers they have on tap. "Like" their Facebook Page to find out what brewery is staging a Tap Takeover or any other the other events they have to highlight different brews. You can still find your old favorites but frequenting Three Kings will encourage you to broaden your beer repertoire.

The food at Three Kings is bar food, but really GOOD bar food. Sliders in various flavors, depending on the night. Burgers that are out of this world, pulled pork and appetizers galore. Pretzel bites, salads, amazing chicken wings with an array of sauces and their house-made hummus with a kick appeal to every eater. Everyone can find something they love on this menu but it is not so large as to overwhelm. Vegetarian? Got you covered. Three Kings has such a variety in flavor and price there is truly something for everyone.

My niece Mary, my sister Molly's eldest daughter, Sean's Goddaughter all around cutie (Hi Mary!!) and the PICKIEST eater you will ever hope to meet, ate so many of the Three Kings toasted ravioli (original and spicy chicken) that Molly asked if I could transport some on my next trip to Chicago. For my niece and sister? Of course. This food critic is nothing if not dedicated.

On this particular visit to Three Kings, I tried the special - a half roasted chicken with Irish potatoes (of course) and butternut squash. The chicken was perfection. Juicy, delicious and with a flavorful rub Ryan told me was one of his favorites. The potatoes were grilled and flavorful not overly buttered and perfectly salted. Delicious. Which brings me to the butternut squash. I mistakenly offered Sean a taste of the sweet and smoky squash. It



was so delicious I thought I would share. Bad idea. Our Georgetown Hoyas were playing on the screen above me. Knowing my love for college basketball, Sean distracted me and polished off my squash. I'm still angry. And to make it worse, the Hoyas lost.

Sean ordered the Vegetarian Stuffed Roasted Poblano, which was stuffed with black beans, corn, tomatoes, scallions, rice and pepper jack cheese. Fantastic. It really does well when followed by sweet and smoky squash, which was miraculously available at exactly the right time. (says Sean)

About the only negative we can write about Three Kings involves the mural behind the bar. It features King Kong, King Henry VIII, and Elvis. Fair enough. But they might have overlooked Louis IX, King of France, for whom our wonderful city is named.

There is a great private party room in the back of the restaurant where we have attended birthday

parties and large get-togethers. The food is always good and the room is a really nice venue. Book your party now. Whether it's a party or just dinner out-go visit Three Kings Public House. Introduce yourself as a neighbor and tell Ryan we sent you.

The McGroarty's review mentions that they have also reviewed some of Ian Froeb's "100 Best Restaurants in St. Louis" in the Post Dispatch. To read all of McGroarty's reviews, go to <http://sdtimes.org/archives> for all their previous articles:

- Tavolo: Summer, 2013**
- Fork and Stix: September-October 2013**
- Water Street Field Trip: November-December 2013**
- Piccione: February 2014**
- Chubbies: April, 2014**
- Salt and Smoke: September-October, 2014**
- Bobo's: February, 2015**

Diversity Watch

The Presumption of Guilt is a Two-edged Sword

Cecilia Nadal

Race and class and the presumption of guilt often influence the nature of relationships between the community and the Police. The Department of Justice report regarding the behavior of the Ferguson municipal courts and the Police Department demonstrates how egregious systems can become when there is a culture where vulnerability is perceived guilt is assumed. On the other hand, when one wears a Police uniform there are those who presume that the individual behind the uniform is likely to be trigger happy when it comes to people of color and especially Black men.

This piercing two-edged sword of presuming guilt presents an interesting irony - African American people and Police face the same ill effects of being judged as guilty!

Not long ago, Henry Louis Gates, the well-known professor from Harvard University was arrested for attempted burglary as he tried to get into his own house. According to Charles Ogletree author of Presumption of Guilt

what is very interesting is that Lucia Whalen, the person calling 911 was very careful in saying, "I see two gentlemen on the porch. They might have left their key. They might work there or live there." She never said that the men on the porch were black. Nonetheless when the particular Sergeant arrived he presumed guilt and arrested Professor Gates in spite of showing his Harvard identification and drivers license with pictures on both documents. The story went viral resulting in the now famous "beer summit" at the White House with President Obama, Joe Biden, Henry Louis Gates and Sergeant James Crowley, the policeman who presumed Dr. Gates guilt. A call to Harvard would have cleared up the matter.

Recently, we have observed an accelerated anti-cop sentimentality ascribed to men and women in blue with the same vengeance as the racial slurs that marked the crowds in Selma years ago. On the southside. Policemen were called derogatory names, spat at and it is alleged someone threw urine on

them. Once again the presumption of guilt harms the very people that are there to protect us all. Fortunately these kinds of incidents have been the exception rather than the rule but they demonstrate how harmful bias can be for all involved.

This tendency to presume guilt occurs in our everyday lives and often reflects our own unconscious bias. A young black man was shot and killed by Police who was holding a toy gun at a Wal-Mart in a suburb of Dayton, Ohio. The young black father was profiled by a suspicious couple and told police that, "a black man had a gun and was walking around in the store with that gun."

These stories reflect the importance of being careful both in our language and judgment. Lucia Whalen did her part in not characterizing Professor Gates and the person with him as "black people attempting to burglarize a house." Instead she described what she saw and qualified her statement. Though Professor Gates was arrested in spite of her efforts her comments

may have diffused a more fatal outcome. Gates then did the right thing to show his badge and drivers license and he is alive today based on thoughtful framing by Lucia.

This theme of the "presumption of guilt" will be addressed at the Missouri History Museum on May 22-May 24 with the original play, BLACK AND BLUE written by Lee Patton Chiles and produced by Gitana Productions. You are invited to come as we peel away the presumptions and let the healing begin! Admission is free.

SDCC Aging in Place Program for Seniors

By Kerri Rawson



Carl Hatcher of the St. Louis Area Agency on Aging, discussing the agency's home repair services for seniors.

Through a grant from the Community Development Administration, Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Council is hosting "Aging in Place," a series of 10 community workshops and events specific to our aging populations. The purpose of the program is to provide knowledge and resources on local services and programs available to our aging neighbors and friends. We invite you to join us as we navigate through the ins and outs of aging in place. The program will provide information on a variety of topics, including health, transportation, and housing options.

Our first workshop was held on Saturday, March 7 at the SDCC office and was well attended. Attendees learned about home repair services that are available at low or no cost to seniors living in the city, some of which are income-based. Video of the workshop presentations are available on the SDCC website.

Upcoming events in April, May and June include an emergency preparedness workshop by the American Red Cross; a workshop on nutrition for seniors; and an ice cream social event. More details can be found on the flyer that came with this edition of the newspaper.

We will keep you up-to-date on the program through our email list, website, Facebook page, and on Nextdoor. We would also be happy to contact you by mail or phone. To sign up for updates or request details about upcoming events, call Karen at (314) 862-5122 and leave your contact information.

We hope that many of our neighbors will come out and join us for our Aging in Place program. We encourage you to contact us with your ideas for topics for upcoming workshops or events. Spread the word and make sure your neighbor and friends are joining us too!

This activity is financed in part through an allocation of Community Development Block Grant funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the City of St. Louis' Community Development Administration.

Skinker DeBaliviere Community Conversations

Liz Pund, SDCC Executive Director

In the aftermath of the events in Ferguson, Shaw and around the St. Louis region during last summer and fall, SDCC hosted two community conversations on December 17 and February 26. The underlying issues are very real for the entire region, including our neighborhood, so neighbors were invited to come together, share their thoughts and feelings, discuss the challenges they've experienced, and brainstorm action steps that can be taken. Many participants expressed the desire to continue to work together on an ongoing basis and are considering forming a new committee under the Council. Anyone who is interested in being involved may sign up for updates by contacting the SDCC office at (314) 862-5122 or sdcc@skinker-debaliviere.com.



On Feb. 13, the SDCC held its annual luncheon for police and firefighters. A diverse group of neighbors provided food and hosted. The event was very well attended by fire fighters and police from the city, Wash U and Metro. It was a happy coming together after difficult times in our region. Thanks to Ruth Johnson and volunteers, especially Gwen Lazard, Arline Webb, Rogerene Kinds, and Gail Evans, shown here with some of the many police and firefighters who attended.

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Citizens for Modern Transit is teaming up with AARP St. Louis to host the spring session of the Ten Toe Express Walk Program. Online registration is now open and will be followed by a series of registration events throughout the community in coming weeks. The program encourages active older adults to integrate walking and public transit to get to cultural and entertainment hot spots throughout the region. In addition to gaining access to a host of tools (like detailed walk maps and nutrition, stretching and walking information), individuals can join weekly guided Ten Toe Walking Tours lead led by trained volunteer walk leaders, allowing walkers to be part of a group as they become familiar with the transit system and how to utilize it to get to destinations.

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photos by King Scheinfeld

Dennis Northcott discussing Missouri History Museum Archives.

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IN YOUR EAR

by Hawkeye Z. Hoerr, Commentary in the TIMES for more than 33 years.

Did you see the flashing lights on the highway when you were coming from Lambert Airport? There they were, on the top of a police car that was sitting on the side of the road. That police car, of course, was behind another car whose occupant was seated while the uniformed officer stood aside writing in his ticket book. Of course.

You were relieved. Naturally, you were glad that you weren't getting the ticket! Your nickname isn't "lead foot" for nothing. You also felt a little safer, knowing that the police were protecting you from a rapid roadster. That's a natural reaction - I don't want to be around crazy drivers either -- but then it gets a bit more complex. Just like the bearded lady at the circus, it ain't what it appears.

There's been a lot of talk about speed traps and municipalities lately. Hardly a day goes by without some information about how some local towns can survive financially only because of the revenue that they receive from issuing traffic tickets and fines.

Forget sales taxes and property taxes. Don't worry about balancing the budget. Nope, just give your local gendarme a squad car and a flashing red light, and the bucks start rolling in. It seems ludicrous to be talking about this in 2015, but it's true!

The "city" (note those quotes) of Moline Acres get 34% of its operating revenue from court fines, while Normandy receives more than 38% percent. Then there's that thriving metropolis of Venita Terrace - how many people do you know who call it their home town??? - which gets more than HALF of its budget from issuing traffic tickets according to Consumer Affairs. Holy Cow! (If that cow ain't holy, she's getting a ticket.)

The now infamous Ferguson, MO gets \$2,000,000 annually from fines and fees of all kinds, mostly traffic tickets. This information comes from Better Together, an organization that

has seen the light of day and recognizes the benefits of having fewer municipalities, school and police and fire protection districts, and hot dog stands. (No, I was kidding about the hot dog stands. I just put it there to see if you were paying attention.)

While I didn't realize the depth of the problem, I've known about it for years. Anytime I am driving near Lambert Airport or UMSL, I drive extra s-l-o-w-l-y. It's the same when coming east on I-170, the inner-belt, when passing through Clayton. This is one of the prices we pay for living in a metropolitan area with 90 municipalities and ten unincorporated areas in St. Louis County, alone. It's why our crime statistics are so high and why our school districts are so disparate and sometimes desperate.

The natural reaction is to eliminate these small municipalities, get rid of the kangaroo courts, and reduce the overlap and redundancies of governments. Better Together is trying to do that, and I hope they succeed. Their approach is cost-efficient and logical. That almost guarantees that it won't happen.

Instead, Hawkeye has a better solution. I think we should increase the number of government units. Why stop at 86 municipalities and 26 school districts? Think about it: We all could use extra revenue (cigars aren't getting cheaper), so why not join the action? Think how great it would be if each of our homes was a taxing district.

Besides the additional revenue we could get (wine isn't getting cheaper), someone in each house would get to be mayor! Truthfully, doesn't Mayor Hawkeye have a nice ring to it? Once we established our three branches of government in each home, we could go to work. (Cynical readers may be thinking that some households don't have enough people to have someone in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, but that's OK. Many of our county kangaroo courts have prosecutors who are judges next door and vice-versa. Wearing more than

one hat, getting to pass a law and then enforce it is part of the fun.)

Fun aside, let's not forget that we're in this for the revenue. My old car won't go very fast, and I'm not likely to catch a speedster. Instead, I'm going to set a speed limit of .01 miles per hour on the sidewalk in front of my house. Anyone walking in front of my house who takes more than a step a minute will be subject to a \$61 fine and \$10 in court costs. And if they protest, I'll add a \$25 assessment for a bad attitude. I'm liking this already!

Tomorrow, I'll propose to the legislature (that's Onyx, my standard poodle) that we also fine neighbors who don't pick up litter, allow their dogs to bark, or have a Bush/Cheney bumper sticker. Onyx is a good dog, so I know he'll pass these laws. The first two laws will garner even more revenue (gin isn't getting cheaper) and the third one will simply make me feel better. Anyone who voted for Bush/Cheney deserves to be fined!

I have more ideas but need to stop writing now. I'm going to go to the store and start selecting all of the items that I will buy with the bags of bucks that my municipality will earn. What are you waiting for? You, too, can turn your house into a city and fleece unsuspecting citizens as they head to Kayak's. Set your laws, catch your neighbors, then cash their checks. Is this a great country, or what?



Lyda Krewson
28th Ward Alderman
Experience | Innovation | Constituent Service

Thank You!

Paid for by Krewson for Alderman, Harvey Citerman, Treasurer

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