

The *TIMES* of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Vol. 46, No. 1

April - May, 2016

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

The oldest neighborhood newspaper in St. Louis

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SDCC Celebrates 50th Anniversary in 2016

By Lana Stein

This year, the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council celebrates its 50th anniversary. (The Times, independent of the SDCC is 46 years young!) Throughout this year, this newspaper will highlight the Council's history and accomplishments and the men and women who contributed so much to the neighborhood.

As a student of urban politics, I was surprised to learn about the neighborhood after moving to the general area. Unlike neighborhoods in so many cities, it did not resegregate after African Americans moved here. It was the first St. Louis City neighborhood to remain diverse and to stabilize. Remarkable men and women contributed despite considerable institutional racism and key neighbor churches and Washington University also made extraordinary contributions. The selection below illustrates this history and



from the TIMES archives

SDCC celebrated its 25th anniversary with many of the stalwarts: Richard Hart, Esther Herron, Jack Wright, Bob Blackburn, and Calvin Stuart

highlights key early actors. It is from a detailed history written for the Times by Brad Weir and is also included in the neighborhood history produced for our Centennial in 2008 by Jo Ann Vatcha and Marjorie Weir.

A Vital Daily Presence: 20 Years of the Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Council

By Brad Weir, March, 1986

Twenty years ago this month, the SDCC was created in the SD neighborhood. Funded by the area institutions—WU and the three largest neighborhood churches, St. Roch's, Grace Methodist, and Delmar Baptist—it was set up to do what neither they nor the Rosedale and Washington Heights groups were prepared to do individually: provide a permanent, paid, full-time staff to work on any and all problems affecting the neighborhood. The staff was to furnish, on behalf of these institutions and groups, a continuing daily presence in the neighborhood, which over the years proved to be a more important contribution than any particular problem it was able to solve.

The idea for the SDCC, like so many ideas and projects in the neighborhood, came out of a series of meetings. Lots of meetings. Often held at Grace Methodist Church, the meetings were attended by

people who represented the local churches and the neighborhood organizations. Usually in attendance were such people as Dr. Hager of Grace Methodist, Father Griesedieck of St. Roch's, Dr. Loughhead of Delmar Baptist, Bob Blackburn from Washington University, Jim L'Ecuyer from Rosedale-Skinker (the forerunner of the present Rosedale Neighbors Assn.), and Joe Botz from Washington Heights. A number of others were present from time to time, but this was the main group. The topic for discussion was the neighborhood itself.

SD in 1965 was beginning to show signs of wear. Some houses which formerly were well-kept were becoming run-down. A growing number were vacant and staying vacant for a longer time. Some apartment buildings were becoming shabby. The 5700 blocks of McPherson, Kingsbury and

A Vital Daily Presence continued on page 6

Delmar Hall

By Richard Bose

At the March 9th meeting of the Delmar Commercial Committee meeting Joe Edwards presented plans for Delmar Hall, an 800 capacity concert venue to be located at 6133 Delmar presently occupied by Big Shark Bicycle Company.



The venue is meant to fill the gap between the 300-seat Duck Room at Blueberry Hill and The Pageant at 2300 seats. This will provide another stepping stone in the Loop for bands on their way up.

Edwards plans to overhaul and expand the Big Shark building, replacing the back half in order to drop the floor and raise the ceiling. This will provide for sloping seating and enough height for stage lights, etc. Also the building will be expanded west covering the parking spaces immediately adjacent. The large windows facing Delmar will remain with the bar

area located there. A closed circuit television will provide live video of the performance to patrons in the bar area.

Edwards assured everyone parking and security will not be a problem. He will maintain the same standard of security at Delmar Hall as he does at The Pageant. He said rarely would there be a sell out at both the Pageant and Delmar Hall on a given night so parking capacity won't be stressed. He will apply for a 1 am liquor license.

Construction begins April 18 with a fall opening.

Grow Your Own Food this Summer!

Our local Block Unit 1035 Community Garden at 5838 Westminster Ave. is taking reservations for garden beds now.

The garden has close to 30 raised beds, a center garden and flower beds around the perimeter, all tended by local residents. We provide the dirt, water and tools, you provide the seeds and the sweat! Reserve a bed for \$20 — funds are used to help pay for water and maintenance. We also ask that gardeners help tend the communal areas of the garden for about 10 hours per year. The garden fills up every year. Sign up today so you don't miss out!

Visit www.facebook.com/block1035 garden to register, "like" our page for updates and photos of the garden.

Email Hannah Foley with questions at bu1035communitygarden@gmail.com

**Be Sure To Save The Date For
The Annual Breakfast Garden Tour,**
June 4 starting at
the McPherson Community Garden.

STLArtWorks Event

The ART-B-Q is a night of Art, Music, Film, Food and Fun! This exciting event includes a catered bar-b-que meal, signature cocktails, live music, Apprentice-made artwork available for purchase, and the premiere of the Apprentice-made documentary, "The Delmar Connection", on the history of Delmar Boulevard.

All proceeds from the ART-B-Q go to direct support of ArtWorks year-round Arts Apprenticeship Programs.

Friday, April 29 (5pm - 9pm)
St. Louis ArtWorks, 5959 Delmar Blvd.,
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stlartworks.org.

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Editor's Notebook

By Lana Stein

In November, residents of our neighborhood and DeBaliviere Place met with John Nations, the CEO of METRO, and members of his staff at the Italian Restaurant on DeBaliviere. Residents in attendance had concerns about the safety of the DeBaliviere Metrolink station. They were concerned about drug deals taking place there on a regular basis. A petition signed by hundreds of Skinker DeBaliviere residents called for turnstiles to plug an escape hatch for those engaging in criminal activity. It was proposed at the meeting that a design committee be created to study the station entrance to increase security. Nations noted that Metro attends our security meetings, sharing information with residents, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police and Washington University police. We were told turnstiles were not possible.

To date, little has happened. Metro has attended only one security meeting since November. They encouraged neighbors to call a certain telephone number if they witnessed any untoward activity happening on a train or platform. At the March security meeting, Skinker DeBaliviere residents related personal experiences on the train and platforms regarding criminal activity. MetroLink ridership is down 17%.

Metro is an independent authority. It covers the city, St. Louis County and St. Clair County. Each jurisdiction names members to the board. But, because of its structure, it is particularly hard to hold this bureaucracy accountable.

Alderman Lyda Krewson (D-28) has been addressing this security issue with Metro. She is trying to get cameras placed in the vicinity of the station. In addition, St. Louis County has pledged additional officers to ride the trains and St. Louis city chief, Sam Dotson, said he is considering that as well. Hopefully this is a beginning but the Security Committee will continue to monitor the situation. The Committee meets on the first Tuesday of the month at the SDCC office, 6008 Kingsbury, at 5:30pm. All residents are welcome.

Little Library at Kingsbury and DesPeres

By Andy Cross

Do you want to share a good book? Are you looking for something good to read? Our new "Little Library" is part of a national book-sharing project which encourages people to share books they have read with people they may not even know. Mike Whisenhunt presented the idea of a little Library in SD at the Skinker DeBaliviere "Better Block Project" in 2014. Our little Library is constructed almost entirely with reclaimed materials. Andy Cross built the structure with a little help from Mike and Sophie Brieler, both of whom have a goal of increasing literacy in our surroundings, and they will maintain the books in the library.



St. Louis Strong

by Richard Bose

St. Louis Strong (stlstrong1764.org) is a non-partisan non-profit advocating for the unification of St. Louis. By gathering citizen input through community roundtables and collecting expert insights, St. Louis Strong will create a restructuring and implementation plan to advance our local governance system. Our goal is to put such a plan on the ballot and carry through a campaign for its passage.

As Vice President of this new organization, I would appreciate your support and am eager to engage more about the organization and your vision for the future of St. Louis!

To reach me, or to give your input, send an email to: staff@stlstrong1764.org.

Editor's Note: Richard Bose is a resident of the 5800 block of DeGiverville, a member of both the Delmar Commercial Committee and the board of the Skinker DeBaliviere Housing Corporation, and a frequent contributor to the TIMES.

Critical Tax Votes April 5

By Lana Stein

1. Renewal of the Earnings Tax The Earnings Tax is paid by those who live and/or work in the City of St. Louis. It has been in effect for almost 7 decades. It makes up a third of the city's revenue. No taxes are popular but if this tax is eliminated there is no painless replacement. Our sales tax hovers around 10% and property taxes are not slight either. Did residents rise up and demand a different tax structure? No. The fact that this is on the ballot and all the efforts to get people to vote no are supported solely by a very wealthy retired investment banker who does not believe in income taxes. My vote will be to retain the earnings tax, or the consequences will be catastrophic in a city already starved for revenue with too few police, etc. Note: The Earnings Tax is the subject of my recent interview with journalist D.J. Wilson for podcast at KDHX.org.

2. School Tax The St. Louis School District wants to increase its operating levy by 75 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. One estimate is that a house assessed at \$150,000 would pay an additional \$112.50 a year in property tax. This levy would affect educational options and teacher pay. It has been twenty years since the schools have had an increase in the tax.

3. Two bond issues from the Metropolitan Sewer District To address storm sewers, there is a \$900 million bond issue and a property tax raise of 10 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. This will also repeal a property tax levy within the original boundaries of MSD and have a uniform levy throughout the district.

4. City of St. Louis Bond Issue not to Exceed \$25,000,000 To replace emergency vehicles, update computer hardware and software, repair or replace bridges, etc. From the ballot language, "If this proposition is approved, the property tax levy is estimated to remain unchanged."

Whatever you decide to do, vote on April 5.

SDCC REPORT

The Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Council held a board meeting on March 7, during which a new slate of executive committee members was elected. The new President will be Jim Holzer (Rosedale), Vice President will be Mary Pat O'Gorman (Parkview), Treasurer will be Sheryl Davenport (Washington Heights) and Secretary will remain Molly Rater (Kingsbury Square). We took time to thank Gayle Evans (Kingsbury Square) for her service as Treasurer for the past year. While there is no scheduled meeting in April, we will celebrate the SDCC volunteers at the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon (and Washington University Neighborhood Block Party) on Saturday, April 9, 1-3pm. The next scheduled board meeting will be on Monday, May 16, which will also be the organization's Annual Meeting. We encourage residents to attend this annual meeting where we will present a programmatic and financial report on 2015, followed by light refreshments.

The TIMES of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Co-Editors: Lana Stein and JoAnn Vatcha
 Business Manager: Linda Cross
 Contributors: Rachel Boxdorfer, Susanne Knese, Sean McGroarty, Cristina McGroarty, Cecelia Nadal, Tom Hoerr, Richard Bose, Art Santen, Liz Pund, Sen. Joe Keaveny, Cheryl Adelstein, Andy Cross, Marj Weir, King Schoenfeld, Lana Stein, Jo Ann Vatcha, Elizabeth Krasnoff Holzer, Derek Knight

The Times of Skinker DeBaliviere is published by the West End Publishing Co., a not-for profit, independent, community organization.

Layout: Karen Hilmes Printing: Arcade Printing

Advertising Rates:

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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, 2016. 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 neighbors and happy spring. As I write this, the weather is absolutely beautiful and as I enjoy walks in the neighborhood and in Forest Park it seems spring has sprung. I find myself looking forward to the upcoming neighborhood Garden Tour on Saturday, June 4th. I really hope, that as we read this issue, we have not been hit with some crazy spring snow storm! You never know in St. Louis.

Moving on to News of Neighbors. Congratulations are in order for Monsignor Salvatore Polizzi on his 60th Anniversary of his ordination on March 17th. Monsignor is also celebrating 35 years as the Pastor and leader of St. Roch Church and his 85th birthday. A special celebration and fundraiser for all of these occasions and to support St. Roch Parish and School will be held on Sunday, April 17 at the Chase Park Plaza. For Building the Future ticket information please contact the St. Roch Parish House at 314-721-6340.



In other news from St. Roch School, a new principal has been hired. Dr. Mark Gilligan will begin as principal of the school on July 1. Dr. Gilligan has served as principal for the past four years at Valle Catholic Schools (pre-k through high school) in St. Genevieve and prior to that was at Ursuline Academy for 13 years as a theology teacher, Dean of Curriculum, and then Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction. Our previous issue of the Times included an article about the preschool at St. Roch expanding. It's nice to know great things are happening at St. Roch.



from Margaret Hermes

Skinker DeBaliviere neighbors said goodbye to a longtime friend and former neighbor recently. Kenneth A. Cohen, 74, died on February 9. Ken leaves his beloved wife Marjie Brammeier, his son Daniel and daughter Kate (Eli VeerKamp) and grandchildren Talavan, Rirajah, Jonah

and Abram, and his stepsons Ben & Joe Brammeier. Ken was preceded in death by his son AJ.

Ken had a strong passion and appreciation for nature. Several years ago, he envisioned and helped implement the building of a pond in the Kennedy Forest, a wooded area in Forest Park. In recent years the pond has fallen into disrepair and no longer holds water. Up until his death, Ken was actively working on plans to repair the pond and augment the plantings around it. These improvements will offer people who are walking in the Kennedy Forest a place to spend some peaceful moments enjoying and reflecting on life surrounded by the beauty of nature.

Any neighbors interested in donating to "Ken's Pond" in Forest Park can easily do so. Please make checks payable to Forest Park Forever and be sure to put "Ken's Pond" in the memo line. Mail checks to: Forest Park Forever, 5595 Grant Drive in Forest Park, St. Louis, Mo 63112.

The neighborhood lost another family member far too early in her life's journey. Jane Wayne, longtime Parkview resident, lost her daughter Ursula in February. Ursula Claire Wayne passed away Monday, February 22 at Missouri Baptist Hospital. She had been in treatment for multiple myeloma since 2012. She was 46 years old and leaves behind a beloved daughter, Isabella Bamnolker, age 11; mother Jane O. Wayne and step-father Sheldon Helfman; sister Justine Wayne; niece and nephew Lula and Sam, former husband Uri Bamnolker.



Ursula was a graduate of University City High School and Kansas University. She was a curious soul who explored various professional fields without ever settling on one career path. She had a talent for creating beautiful spaces and enjoyed interior design. Ursula was also a gifted writer, having written for The Jewish Light and several blogs. She seemed to find an ease and assurance on the written page which sometimes eluded her in social interactions.

These final words are Ursula's own, "I guess that's the thing. No matter what we do or go through, no matter what loss or upset, our heart can and will stay intact. Chemo messes with your brain. It takes away your memory and decision-making function, slows you down and makes you less "with it." Yet, it has no capacity



Ken's Pond in Forest Park

to touch your heart. In fact, if you let it, it can help you open your heart even further."



Congratulations to Nylah Johnson from the 5700 block of Pershing, whose team at New City School won 2nd place at the Gateway Memorial Chess Tournament in Clayton.

Another bright note: the 5th Grade Girl Scout Troop at St. Roch School was charged with creating their own service project. The girls debated whether to help people, the earth, or animals. They chose animals and then compared several shelters, deciding they wanted to help the Humane Society of St. Louis. In January they toured the facility on Macklind, spent the afternoon with a Humane Society educational volunteer, and got to see behind the scenes including operating rooms as well as visiting with animals in the shelter. They even spent time reading to some of the dogs (a program that is becoming popular at many shelters and seems to soothe the animals). It was an incredible experience for each of the girls.



In follow up to their visit the girls project was to conduct a collection of gently used blankets and towels, gently used stuffed animals, and jars of creamy peanut butter. All of which are needed at the Humane Society regularly. The girls spoke to all the classrooms at their school and students donated over a period of two weeks. Some girls even took the collection to their neighbors and had great success with that as well. As of this writing, the girls are set to deliver the very large collection to the Humane Society at their next meeting. Great job ladies! With determination like that you are bound to make this world a better place!

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!

Proud to be a Skinker DeBaliviere Resident!

Rachel Boxdorfer

www.RachelBoxdorfer.com

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2016 Meetings: April 21, June 16, July 21, September 15, October 20, and November 17

For up to date info on programs & other news of politics, go to the 28th Ward website:
<http://ward28.citywestend.org/index.html>

Alderman Lyda Krewson
367-9765
lyda.krewson@pgav.com

Better Walking and Biking in Skinker-Debaliviere

For 27 years Trailnet has been the St. Louis region's leading organization for getting people moving. Trailnet works to make biking and walking better through advocacy, education, community planning, and organized rides. This year Trailnet launched a new program, Walk Bike Ambassadors, to expand advocacy at the grassroots level through trained volunteers. In January, twelve Walk Bike Ambassadors from the region were chosen from a field of 45 applicants. Ambassadors raise awareness of Trailnet in their neighborhoods, build relationships with community leaders, advocate for and against statewide legislation. They also work to identify and resolve local safety and connectivity issues for those who walk and bike and on Trailnet campaign issues such as:

Vision Zero - Traffic deaths are not an inevitable byproduct of transportation. Deaths and serious injuries to pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists can be prevented. Cities across the U.S. are implementing Vision Zero plans and setting target dates to achieve zero traffic deaths.

Stop for Pedestrians - Nine states require motor vehicles to stop for pedestrians in a crosswalk. Most states, including Missouri, only require vehicles to yield. With 22 pedestrian deaths in the city of St. Louis last year, and many more injured, the need to improve pedestrian safety is clear.

Distracted Driving - Cell phone use while driving quadruples the risk of an accident, about the same as if the user were driving drunk. Text messaging creates a crash risk 23 times greater than driving without distraction. Missouri is one of only four states without a ban on texting for drivers of all ages. Vulnerable users of the road - pedestrians and bicyclists - are most at risk from death or serious injury by a driver who is texting or talking on the phone. Trailnet is advocating for a state ban on texting while driving, as well as a law requiring use of a hands-free device when talking on the phone while driving.

The Walk Bike Ambassador for the Skinker-DeBaliviere neighborhood is resident, Michele Oesch. Please contact Michele at Michele.oesch@yahoo.com to volunteer, support, or help identify and address local safety issues for those who walk or bike.



SDCC's Annual Police Firefighters Lunch was held in February. Volunteers cooks and servers made this a special event.

Report from Historic Review Committee

by Nancy Hohmann

The Cultural Resources Office for the City has proposed a new standard for modern buildings in historic districts. This new standard would allow for modern design alongside historic buildings, and per Betsy Bradley, CRO Director, would convey 'a sense of vibrancy and authentic change'. New construction in a historic district should be constructed with a sense of durability and attractiveness. Compatibility is not just about the visual. The quality of construction and the materials used are key to that compatibility in any historic district neighborhood. As always, suburban design themes, such as street facing garages and cul-de-sacs, are not meant for historic district neighborhoods.

This standard is a start on the right track, per Andrew Weil of Landmarks Association of St. Louis. Architects and city planners nationwide are coming together in the belief that good contemporary design can successfully co-exist and complement historic architecture. Architecture can be seen as a cultural expression and should be allowed to evolve. For a more in-depth view of the report, it can be seen on the Cultural Resources page on the City of St. Louis Website under "Documents".

Sen. Keaveny Named Distinguished Legislator by Missouri Community College Association

Just a few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of receiving one of the most prestigious honors the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA) gives to leaders and supporters of community colleges. I was awarded the Distinguished Legislator Award. Recipients were selected based upon their support for MCCA's legislative priorities, institutions, members, and most importantly students in community colleges from around this great state.

Missouri is home to 12 community colleges with more than 70 locations, with more than 98,000 students enrolled. Each year those 12 colleges award more than 12,000 degrees and certificates.

I am honored to have received this award from a group that helps so many Missourians and our state as a whole. Unlike other colleges and universities, 98 percent of community college students are Missourians, and 93 percent stay in Missouri after graduation, contributing to the state economy and strengthening Missouri's workforce.

For more information about the MCCA visit their website www.mccatoday.org/.



Jeff Pittman, chancellor of St. Louis Community College, with Sen. Keaveny.

From Ald. Lyda Krewson:

Thanks to all of you, I appreciate the healthy dialogue regarding the proposed new apartment building project at 6105 Delmar. Thank you for letting me comment, and for your thoughtful and deep interest in doing what is best for Skinker DeBaliviere.

It was just a few years ago that we were worried about new projects being too short, essentially 1-2 story buildings that would forever use up scarce land and set the tone for generations.

In my view, tall buildings are part of any dynamic urban landscape and they fit best at corners and along major streets. Density is the key to a vibrant community.

Think of the many hi rises along S. Skinker (625, 665, 709, 801), or the Congress, Senate, Westmoreland hi rises on Union, or the Chase Park Plaza, Montclair, Frontenac on Kingshighway, or Lindell Terrace, 4545, Park Royal, the President along Lindell, or the Greystone and Hamden Hall on Newstead,

or Park East Tower on Euclid. Most of these 'vertical neighborhoods' are immediately adjacent to single family homes.

The building proposed for 6105 Delmar is a highly amenitized 14 story building with commercial space along the street. It is 209 apartments with a mix of 1, 2, & 3 Bedroom units. Each bedroom has its own bathroom. There are 211 parking spaces, a pool, fitness center, 150 bike spaces, concrete construction, and brick on all sides. It will also be LEED certified. In addition its location on Delmar will mean that it will not block any sun from yards and houses in Skinker DeBaliviere.

It is also important to remember that Clayco is a competent, quality developer, with a good reputation, and a long history in St. Louis. That will make a difference in both the short and long term.

Neighbors who participate on the SDCC Historic Review and Commercial Committees gave serious consideration to all aspects of this project. The design was revised 3 times to accommodate committee comments, Cultural Resources and the Preservation Board.

Kids Corner

By Susanne Knese

As we welcome Spring and shake off the Winter blues, let's focus on Mother Earth and celebrate her April 22nd on Earth Day!

4 Simple ways you can help:

1. **Recycle clean plastic, metal, paper and glass.** Check the guidelines from recycling company to see what types of plastic they recycle.
2. **Invest in "Reusables"**
 - Invest in reusable shopping bags rather than relying on the paper or plastic bags from stores.
 - Use a reusable lunch box for school
 - Use reusable water bottles that are metal or rugged plastic (BPA free)
3. **Reduce your energy consumption**
 - Turning off lights when you leave a room and turning off electronics when not in use (though be sure to ask your parents first as some electronics must stay on for various reasons)
 - Keep the temperature moderate in your home. Bundle up with extra clothes or blankets in the winter.
 - Use less water. Take shorter showers and turn faucets off when not in use (like when brushing your teeth).
4. **Be Earth's Caretaker!**
 - Pick up trash as you walk the neighborhood
 - Plant trees, plants and flowers which provide food, rest and shelter for animals . . . not to mention trees help reduce pollution and provide us oxygen!

Don't forget to enroll in our local Library Summer Reading Programs!

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

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@sttimes.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!

Crossroads Adds to Neighborhood Diversity

By Jo Ann Vatcha

Crossroads College Preparatory School, located on DeBaliviere in our own Skinker DeBaliviere neighborhood, is known for many outstanding programs. Currently, they also have an international program placing students from around the world in a home environment as they pursue studies in the US. Megan Bonacker-Sequeira is the local coordinator of Homestay, placing eleven students this year at Crossroads, most from China, who have come here because their families believe it is important they have this cultural experience in America.



left to right: Muning Wang, Tova Cohen, and Su Yufang

The program places these students with volunteer families, who agree to provide a private room, meals, transportation back and forth to school, and who will treat the student as their own, including planning for holidays and weekends and helping with such life skills as eating different foods and dealing with different rules. Families with children are encouraged to apply, as even the concept of dealing with siblings can be new to Chinese children, who have been raised in a one-child setting. To offset the costs of hosting a student, families are provided with a \$900 monthly stipend. Families also have access to ongoing local support. Students arrive with their own insurance and spending money. All have studied English for years.

One family who is participating in the program this year are Glenn and Narci Herr, who live on the 6000 block of Westminster. Narci says of their experience, "Living so close to the school has made it easier for us to host Emily and I'd encourage other neighborhood residents to consider hosting a student. It is a great opportunity to build friendships across cultures and provide a home environment for young students far from home."

As Megan says, "Are you interested in meeting people from other countries? Do you want to make a lasting impact on the life of an international student and make a friend for life?" Megan will interview interested families and do a background check. A ten-month commitment is typical. You can begin the process of becoming a host by completing our online inquiry form at: <http://www.gphomestay.com/international-host-families/host-family-inquiry-form/>. For more information, please visit www.gphomestay.com or contact us at info@gphomestay.com or (781)996-0429 with any questions.

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Earth Day Puzzle

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SAINT LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Vital Daily Presence page 1 continued

Westminster, running west from DeBaliviere, had a number of these. Their height and close spacing gave them the appearance of the tenements more familiar in certain cities on the East Coast. These blocks were sometimes called "the canyons" by local people.

DeBaliviere Boulevard itself was becoming seedier and the ambience was "late Gaslight Square". While the Apollo Theatre was operating as an art house, showing quality foreign films, the Stardust Lounge did steady business as a strip joint, featuring the ecdysiast Evelyn West and her heavily underwritten if not supported bustline. There were some vacant storefronts on "The Strip" and some fires of suspicious origin.

Neighborhood appearance issues weren't the only things on the minds of the people at the Grace Church meetings. Crimes such as petty theft, burglary, and stealing from automobiles seemed to be on the increase. Street crimes like purse snatching, virtually unheard of years before, began to occur. Then, too, the neighborhood seemed to be getting shortchanged on services from the City for dealing with these problems and political representation seemed dormant if not comatose.

The neighborhood, as it began to integrate, was beset by some of the sleazier tactics of unsavory real estate dealers. People were steered to certain blocks only. Residents on some blocks were getting scare calls from agents telling them that if they didn't sell soon they would surely see their investment drop. Federal housing agencies' programs were being abused by some agents who placed people in houses they could not possibly afford to maintain, since their entire subsidies were being consumed in house payments. Other agents were starting to pull back from doing business in the neighborhood.

The local public schools were overcrowded and rundown. Many neighborhood people felt that the school administration wasn't sufficiently concerned about local problems.

All of these issues were part of the agendas of those who attended the meetings at Grace Methodist Church. Clearly, some new approach was needed in working on these problems, because they weren't being solved by the old methods. But the meetings, as is often the case with such things, usually ended inconclusively. A number of ideas were proposed, but for a while nothing much happened. Finally, attorney Richard Hart of the 6000 block of Westminster, proposed that what was needed was some sort of funding to hire a full-time person who would work on problems affecting the neighborhood. It was this idea which led to the formation of the SDCC.

The concept was that the three churches, Washington University, and the two neighborhood organizations would join together to form a not-for-profit corporation. The board of directors would consist of one representative from each of these groups (this was to change in later years). Dick Hart

filed the incorporation papers and helped write the first by-laws.

The four funding institutions contributed a budget total of about \$ 14,000. WU put in \$ 5,000 and the three churches put in \$ 3000 each. With this money in place, the Council hired its first executive director, Jim L'Ecuyer, of the 5700 block of DeGiverville. Prior to this, Jim had been president of Rosedale Skinker. It was Jim who opened the Council's first office in space donated by Delmar Baptist on the second floor of a building at 5858A Delmar.

Thus established, the Council needed to define itself to the neighborhood, to pick its goals, and to select the problems on which it was going to work. Some in the area totally misunderstood the Council. Jim L'Ecuyer remembers, "They wanted me immediately, within two or three weeks, to stop the trend of integration in the neighborhood." The Council, itself integrated from the beginning, was determined to proceed in the opposite direction. "We were going to promote integration at any cost, I mean integration was going to work here, or it wouldn't work at all," L'Ecuyer said.

The Council embarked upon a period of trying things, experimenting with approaches, seeing what would work in helping the neighborhood. In so doing, it began to establish, through its director, a permanent daily presence in the neighborhood, which proved to be vital in years to come. In coming together in the Council, the neighborhood groups and institutions could talk frankly and freely among themselves and could present a united front to outside groups, city agencies, and federal agencies when needed.

In the fall of 1970, Jim L'Ecuyer resigned as executive director after nearly five years of strenuous efforts on the Council's behalf. The Council turned to Calvin B. Stuart in January, 1971, to be its new director. Cal Stuart...had been the Council's president and a representative from Rosedale...By this time the Council was in the office most familiar to neighborhood people at 6008 Kingsbury. It had moved from a storefront at 404 DeBaliviere which it occupied after being burned out of 433 DeBaliviere in March, 1970.

Housing problems in the area became a major focus of the Council. While the Council in the period of the early 1970s withdrew from direct real estate management, it did not pull back from dealing with real estate problems in the neighborhood. On certain blocks a deadly sequence threatened certain houses and apartments. It was foreclosure followed by abandonment, followed by demolition. It was desirable to head off the sequence entirely, but it was absolutely essential to stop it before step three.

Foreclosures in that period were usually started by one of the federal agencies having to do with housing: HUD, FHA, VA. Banks rarely foreclosed because they rarely made loans in the first place.

Remembers Stuart, "The HUD policy for foreclosures, nationally, was to tear them



Ken Cohen and Jim L'Ecuyer

down, that they were uninhabitable, not worth a dime, and better cleared." This policy, if left to operate in the area would have devastated some blocks. Working with newly elected Alderman John G. Roach, Stuart and the Council sought to fend off demolitions. Roach approached HUD with the idea that if they would stop tearing down buildings, the Council would get the buildings rehabbed, and then find buyers and find loans for the buyers. The marketing would be done through the Residential Service.

This was all enormously difficult and time-consuming in the early 70's, but little by little it was accomplished. Stuart recalled that, not counting the "triangle" redevelopment area, the neighborhood only lost three houses to HUD demolition. At one time, said Cal Stuart, "There were twelve houses in the 5800 and 5900 blocks of Waterman almost gone!"...

The Council was always working on every aspect of neighborhood life. It was the Council which obtained Community Development Block Grant funds through CDA to build the Four Corners project at Kingsbury and Des Peres in 1976. It was the Council which obtained funding to start the Community School at Hamilton School, and at one time or another helped THE PAPER and the People's Clinic with volunteers and money, encouraged Grace and Peace Fellowship to come into the neighborhood and worked with the churches on their summer programs.

All of this work and activity over the years did pay off, and in many ways. It attracted many people to the area who found that there was a genuine sense of neighborhood here that didn't seem to exist elsewhere in the City or County. It resulted in property values moving upward from the trough they had been in the early 70's, slowly at first, but then more rapidly later. It gave the neighborhood a good reputation far beyond its borders and throughout city government. It made us proud of ourselves.

About the time the Council was being planned (mid 60's), someone at Washington University's School of Architecture predicted that the Skinker-DeBaliviere neighborhood would be abandoned and demolished by 1970. He was wildly, spectacularly wrong. He was wrong because he didn't pay attention to the kind of people who stayed here in those early days and to the kind of people who joined them. He didn't note their ability to organize a Council, for which there was no model, and to make it work. The Council, ultimately, was the people, and the people have made all the difference.

Laura McCarthy
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Round the Corner to the End of the Track

By Derek Knight

Changes for the Loop Trolley have been continuous for the last year, and DeBaliviere is in the middle of a transformation. The junction of Delmar and DeBaliviere has seen some significant work, particularly on the water lines, and for the last few



weeks the traffic lanes around the junction have been changing it seems almost daily. Rails were laid on the two streets and concrete poured, and then one morning on my drive I saw that the two sets of tracks were connected by a gentle curve, and it was suddenly possible to visualize the trolley taking the corner. The project recently publicly celebrated the milestone of the last long straight rail being laid, but for me, seeing this curve somehow made the process more real, and brought home the fact that soon there will really be a trolley taking this corner along with the cars and trucks.

Once on DeBaliviere, the trolley will travel to the terminal at the History Museum. The end of the line there has now become very apparent, with the tracks stopping at a pole which will carry the overhead power cables. Since the roadway has been reopened, it seems that it has always had this configuration, or perhaps it's just that the tracks look natural being there.

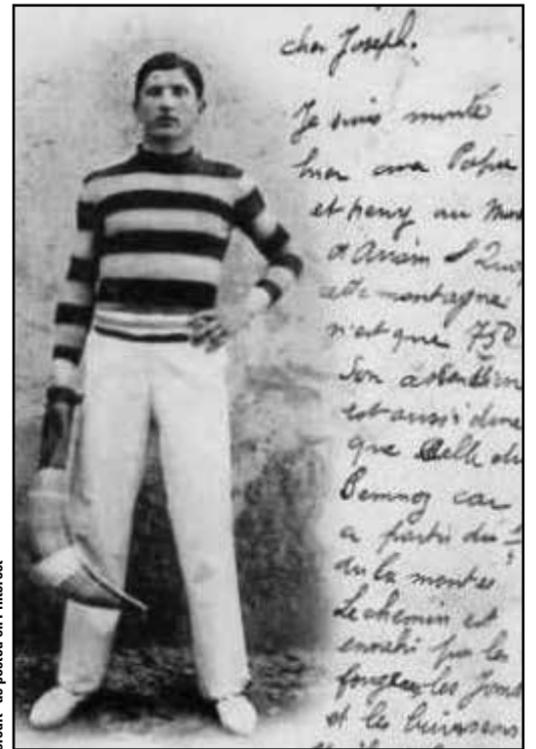
When I was in the area a few days ago, I took some pictures of the end of the line and started to walk around the curve towards Lindell. As I did so, I noticed something that struck me as odd. Everywhere I'd seen the tracks there were two metal rails, one each side, but here there was another rail, on the inside of the one nearest to the History Museum. About halfway around the curve, it stopped, and the standard 2 single tracks were seen again. Inquiring minds need to know, and I discovered that this is called a "restraining rail." This configuration is seen on curved areas of track only and is an extra safety feature to ensure that the trolley wheels stay "on track" (literally) as the train takes the bend.

The next excitement at this end of the line will be when the tracks around the History Museum are joined up with the ones already there in the southern part of DeBaliviere. This is now underway, which entails the closure of Lindell for 2 weeks while the work is undertaken. As spring fills the air, it won't be long before the clang of the trolley joins the birdsong in Forest Park!

Echoes of History: 500 DeBaliviere

By Jo Ann Vatcha

The present day Crossroads College Preparatory School is located on a historic site on DeBaliviere. At the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, the Spanish game of Jai Alai came to America for the first time. Fairgoers could recall years later looking down what is now called art hill and seeing the "odd shaped roof" of the Jai Alai building. The game didn't catch on in St. Louis, and, not long after the fair ended, the building was being used for roller skating and then to showcase the new cars being manufactured right next door. These car shows went on for many years and were resurrected in 1950 for a new Horseless Carriage Club.



credit "as posted on Pinterest"

Jai Alai player image on a 1902 program. In 1904, the game was first played in the USA at 500 DeBaliviere in a huge "fronton" site built for the World's Fair.

In 1916, the property transformed into a combination ice plant and ice skating rink, the Wintergarden, a hugely popular venue for those who had previously had to walk to the park for skating on the ponds. The old Jai Alai building was razed to build a "modern" supermarket called Bettendorf-Rapps in the 60's and was later used for the Welfare offices of the State of Missouri.

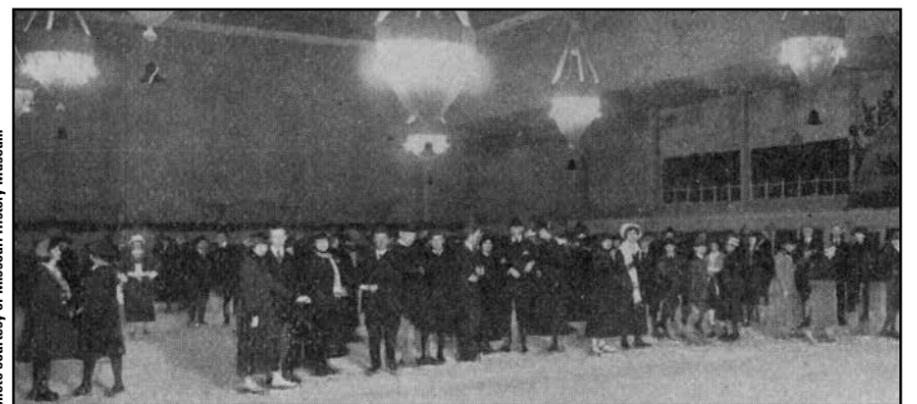


photo courtesy of Missouri History Museum

Transformation to the Winter Garden Ice Rink occurred in 1916. The 7 story building was both an ice factory and a rink for ice skating by entrepreneur M.E. Springer. This picture was featured in a trade magazine called Wire and Pipe. To read neighbor Anne Voss' memory of skating there in the 30's, go to our website, sdtimes.org/history.

The 60's building was renovated as Crossroads School in 1981; now called Crossroads College Prep, its recent improvements have made it the first school in the Midwest to receive the Leed Platinum Certification, and the rain garden and solar panels show its continued dedication to energy efficiency.

500 DeBaliviere echoes all the phases of development through the decades on this short street with a window on the history of Skinker DeBaliviere.

Note: A few clicks on our TIMES website brings you to all the "history" articles we've featured in recent issues. It's also a great way to see the photographs!

A few copies of the book, published by the TIMES following our 2008 neighborhood centennial, are still available. "Celebrating Skinker DeBaliviere--History and Comeback" also includes a copy of the DVD with interviews of several neighborhood residents and leaders which was produced in cooperation with Missouri History Museum. To order, go to sdtimes.org or contact Jo Ann Vatcha or Marj Weir.

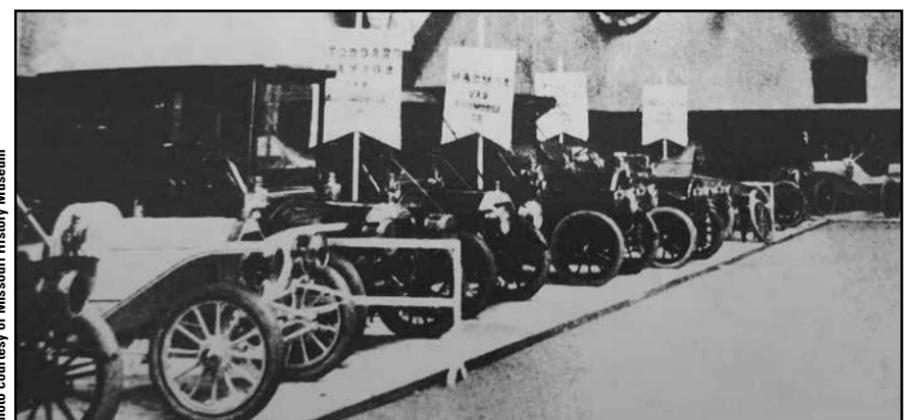


photo courtesy of Missouri History Museum

The building was also used for various car shows, both before it was the Winter Garden and after the ice rink's demise. In 1907, St. Louis' first automobile show was held there.

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SUN., APRIL 24 | 2pm
 Historical Resources for Family and Local History at the Missouri State Archives with Mike Everman

SUN., JUNE 26 | 2pm
 What's in the History and Genealogy Department at the St. Louis County Library? with Larry Franke

SUN., OCTOBER 16 | 2pm
 Researching Your Civil War Ancestors with Dennis Northcott

To receive the monthly Genealogy and House History News eNewsletter, send an email to dpn@mohistory.org with the word "subscribe" in the subject line and your name in the body of the email.

IN YOUR EAR

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

Wise readers will recall that last month I began sharing the titles of folks' favorite books. So many people raised their hands that the responses fill two, gasp, columns.

The Heart of the Matter by Green is picked by Marty because of "The beauty and anguish of passion, and the anguish - and not the beauty - of Catholic guilt." Mike chooses **Infinite Jest** by Wallace, observing, "I went straight through it on the first reading and have re-read sections over the years."

Susanne selects **A Separate Peace** by Knowles, "largely because it was one of the first books in high school I actually read cover to cover rather than highlighting the Cliff Notes." Jean and Bob, evidencing their marital compatibility, each chose a book by Stenger. Jean picks **Crossing to Safety**, and Bob selects **Angle of Repose**.

The challenges associated with human diversity were in many books. **The Warmth of Other Suns**, by Wilkerson, about the migration of southern Blacks to northern cities is chosen by Mary, and **The Namesake**, about an Indian growing up in America, by Lahiri, is Nicole's choice. Claudia names **The Space Between Us** by Umrigar: "a compelling tale of the relationship between two women in Mumbai separated by caste yet perhaps more intimately connected to each other than to their family members. That the setting is in a culture other than my own made it especially interesting."

Cry the Beloved Country by Paton, chosen by Tina, looks at "The juxtaposed white and black worlds of apartheid South Africa fused together by the commonality of the two father's pain and ultimate understanding of each other's suffering." Similarly, Robbyn chooses, "**The Good Earth** by Buck. "I'm probably the only person to read this as an adult, not in a lit class. It is a reminder of how people are of their time. But for me it was less political or cultural, and more about family."

Motoko favors **The Cider House Rules** by Irving. She says, "Not only do I tend to love Irving's work because of how he sheds light on how normal it actually is to have a life full of 'unusual' experiences," but in this particular book his message of actively making decisions in life and not just leaving things to a wait and see type of approach really speaks to me."

Joyce says, "I underlined passages on nearly every

page of Robinson's novel, **Gilead**. Her prose is lovely and deceptively simple -- she tells of people going about their daily lives in their small town, in the vocabulary that would be familiar to them, and that represents them."

Perhaps not surprisingly, several folks cited a children's book. "Having still not progressed to politically correct adulthood from savage childhood," Susan admits, "My all-time favorite is still Kipling's **Jungle Book I**." Elizabeth says, "It's a toss-up between **Where the Wild Things Are**, by Sendak, and Silverstein's **The Giving Tree**." She continues, "What I love about both is that such powerful messages can be communicated in so few words and understood by people at all developmental stages."

Maureen selects a kids' book written by Julie Edwards (a.k.a. Julie Andrews), **The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles**, and says, "It follows three children and a somewhat mad professor through their journeys to and through a magical land." Franklin names **Fun Home** by Bechdel, noting "This book is a masterful work in the graphic novel genre, blending story and visual information in a beautiful and seamless way." Conversely, Dahven cites **Einstein's Dreams** by Lightman: "The poetry of physics allowed me to rethink the relationship between time and space."

An artist, Mary's favorite book is **The Song Of The Lark** by Cather. Mary says, "It's a story about the creative spirit, and all through the book I would stop and think, 'That's it! That's exactly right!'"

Rob's fictional pick is anything by St. Aubyn, especially the Patrick Melrose series, and he also mentions **MAD Magazine**. In contrast with MAD, Linda picks **Rock's Quiet Leadership**, a book about human nature.

Terry picks **Guns, Germs & Steel** by Diamond. I was pleased to see this because it's my favorite book too. Terry notes that Diamond "debunks this whole arrogant notion of European superiority, and points out the natural advantages the European geography offered (e.g. temperate climate, domesticated animals, early exposure to diseases that allowed them to develop resistance, and many others)." I'd add that this is a must-read.

OK, is your favorite book listed here? I'd be pleased to hear the identity of your #1. You can shoot me an email at trhoerr@AOL.com.

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