

# The *TIMES* of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Vol. 48, No.1

April-May 2018

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

The oldest neighborhood newspaper in St. Louis

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Independent and all volunteer-run since 1970



## SDCHC Announces Walker Townhomes

By Richard Bose

The Skinker DeBaliviere Community Housing Corporation is excited to announce that we are moving forward with presales of a set of four townhomes, dubbed the Walker Townhomes in recognition of the neighborhood's walkability, at 521 Des Peres Ave, at the southwest corner with Washington Blvd.

The development of the long vacant lot carries out objectives of the Skinker DeBaliviere Urban Design & Development Plan which calls for new residential development on the three empty lots on the west side of Des Peres and identifies adding new housing choices and topologies as a short term priority. The project was reviewed and endorsed by the Historic and Residential (now Development) committees of the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council. The project secured a variance from the city and approval by the Preservation Review Board. The architect is Design Alliance, located a block away on Delmar, and the contractor is Reicon Construction. The sales agents are Robin Halterman and Traci Stix of Dielmann Sotheby's International Realty.

Each townhome features a half bath, flexible room, and rear-access garage on the first floor. The second floor has the kitchen, living room, a half bath, and front and rear balconies. The third has two bedrooms and bathroom, and a master bedroom suite. The rooftop has a patio and pergola. The homes share a driveway in the rear to the alley. The project has been approved to receive Missouri's Neighborhood Preservation Tax Credits. The homes are about 2200 sq. ft., with a base price of \$475,000. Construction will commence once two presales are secured, and we hope to have them occupied by the end of this year.

## Missouri Arts Council: Creative Community Award

Thanks to the Missouri Arts Council for honoring the Delmar Loop with the Creative Community Award.

The unique arts organizations, specialty shops, galleries, music venues and multi-national restaurants along this six-block street also thank you.

It's a pretty amazing area. There's a little bit of everything for everyone – including great art.

It's wonderfully diverse and interesting because it has always embraced the arts. Not only have jobs been created and sustained, but the quality of life for those who live, work and visit The Loop has been enhanced.

Here are some examples of what you'll find:

**Regional Arts Commission:** the largest annual funder of the arts in the region has awarded more than 7,000 grants totaling over \$100 million in support of hundreds of groups and individuals from the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra to individual artists and neighborhood arts events.

COCA, the remarkable Center of Creative



Joe Edwards with Sharon Beshore, Chair of the Missouri Arts Council, and Robert Dixon, Director MO Department of Economic Development in the Rotunda of the State Capitol on 2-7-18.

Arts with its classes and performances in visual and performing arts from pre-school to adults.

**Craft Alliance,** a non-profit art center offering contemporary craft exhibitions, classes and a gallery featuring the work of national and regional artists.

**St. Louis Artworks** with its innovative training program, providing teens paid apprenticeships in the arts.

There are impactful outdoor public art pieces on display such as the Rain Man statue (with water falling on his umbrella in warm weather), the Delmar Loop Planet Walk of the Solar System, two statues

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## Has the Housing Corporation Lost Its Way?

A Commentary by Tom Hoerr

We can argue baseball, politics, or where to get the best pizza, but we agree that Skinker DeBaliviere is a wonderful neighborhood! Regardless of your age, family status, skin color, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or whatever other variable you wish to cite, this is a welcoming and great place to live. Our blessings include friendly neighbors, stately homes, a host of nearby coffee shops, Washington University, and Forest Park. Housing is in demand, residential values are strong, many apartments have been renovated by Washington University, and there's even talk of creating a dog park.

But it wasn't always that way. Post-World War II, Skinker DeBaliviere, like many other urban neighborhoods in St. Louis and across the country, suffered from red-lining by real estate companies and lenders, higher crime and poorer schools, and a rush by many to the suburbs. (As noted in Richard Rothstein's book, *The Color Of Law*, governments at all levels supported segregation and fostered white flight.) Fortunately, our neighborhood has always had committed volunteers, and their efforts slowed, and even reversed this decline. That included the creation of the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council and the Times of Skinker DeBaliviere in the 1960's, and the Residential Real Estate Service in the 1970's. Progress continued through the 1980's, and our neighborhood benefitted from the gains made by Pantheon Corporation to our east and in the Delmar Loop to our west and north.

But despite our progress, housing conditions remained a challenge. As recently as twenty years ago our neighborhood had far too many vacant and deteriorating buildings. This led to lower property values, unsafe conditions, and was a deterrent to individuals investing in their homes. The enormity and pervasiveness of the problem was so significant that finding a solution was beyond the scope of any individual.

Fortunately, in 1988, Mayor Schoemehl, under his Operation ConServe Program,

continued on page 9

## SDCC SPRING CALENDAR

Mark your calendar for these neighborhood events coming up:

**Volunteer Appreciation Lunch -**  
Saturday, April 7, 1-4pm

**Project Blitz Day -**  
Saturday, April 21, 9am-Noon

**E-Cycle and Planting Day -**  
Saturday, May 19, 9am-Noon

**PorchFest -**  
Saturday, May 19, 1-4pm

**Breakfast Garden Tour -**  
Saturday, June 2, 8:30 am-Noon

For more information, contact Karen or Brandon at the SDCC office, 6008 Kingsbury, 862-5122, or visit the website: <https://skinkerdebaliviere.wordpress.com>.

# Editor's Notebook

By Lana Stein

The French say "The more things change, the more they stay the same." I hadn't thought of applying this aphorism to our neighborhood but it may well fit. We are experiencing more criminal acts than in previous years. At least eight car jackings have occurred in the past few months. Fortunately, the perpetrators are not from Skinker DeBaliviere. Rather, they are youths from across the river. Nonetheless, this is discomfiting. Kudos to Molly Mulcahy and Christina McGroarty for working on the reactivation of block units for greater communication and for neighborhood watch. These block units helped us in earlier times and they can again. I would caution everyone to be alert when coming home after dark. Increased MetroLink security can help as well and we can hope that the various movers and shakers can come together with more beneficial strategies.

It is a tragedy when any of our existing housing stock deteriorates beyond redemption. It has occurred in previous decades and today certain problem properties remain. Multiple parties are at fault. There is a recent example. Two brothers bought adjacent homes on 5700 DeGiverville. That was a decade ago. The homes stayed unoccupied and were allowed to deteriorate. The brothers did not cooperate with any potential buyers. An owner-occupied home, adjacent to these houses faced a loss of insurance because of the threat posed by one of these vacant houses. Finally, the alderman had the very unstable roof removed and it is likely that the property will be demolished. A hundred year old house gone forever. These brothers paid fines on their properties but did no rehab. The housing corporation did not intervene, but the brothers declined to sell. There are other houses like this in our neighborhood. Hopefully, the Council and Housing Corporation can perform some intervention before the need for demolition rears its head.



photo by King Schoenfeld

# Zoning and Housing Update

The Zoning and Housing Subcommittee, chaired by Linda Cross, meets twice a month and has been active on several fronts. First, they have reached out to landlords who rent to students in a meet and greet. A second event is being planned for late spring. These events allow landlords to become familiar with zoning ordinances and historic district requirements

The subcommittee became aware of absentee owners who rent to four or more graduate students in single family homes. The city's ordinances allow only three unrelated individuals to lease a dwelling unit. Some of the owners have appeared in building court. The city has been very helpful. The owners may keep their tenants till the end of the semester. They will be re-inspected in the early fall to ascertain whether they have in fact complied. No tenants are disrupted but occupancy should change.

The subcommittee is also looking at short term rentals, AirBnBs. No city law forbids these. A number of neighbors do not want this type of housing in Skinker DeBaliviere. Alderman Navarro and several of her peers will be holding hearings on this question in the next few weeks.

**Thanks to our loyal advertisers,** who make our neighborhood newspaper a success! These mostly small businesses remind us of the important role they play in the health of our community. We appreciate their continued loyalty to Skinker DeBaliviere!

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| Blueberry Hill                          | Parker's Table            |
| Eclipse Restaurant                      | Delmar Doggie Design      |
| Pin-Up Bowl                             | Busey Bank                |
| Peacock Diner                           | Quiet Village Landscaping |
| Karleen Hoerr/<br>Feinberg Real Estate  | Weir Concrete Contracting |
| Rachel Boxdorfer/<br>Berkshire Hathaway | St. Roch School           |
| TVA Real Estate Appraisals              | Snarf's                   |
|   | Kingsbury Animal Hospital |

### Dear Neighbors,

Many, many thanks to everyone who again made the 2018 luncheon such a huge success!

- Hamilton school students made many thank you cards for our guests.
- Hostesses were so gracious to all the first responders who attended the luncheon.
- Volunteers worked incredibly hard to set up, staff and clean up the luncheon.
- And our neighbors all responded in droves, as always, to supply ALL the delicious dishes and cash donations in order to feed all those who attended.

We thank and congratulate everyone!

This event means so much to our police, firefighters and other responders. They thoroughly enjoy the fantastic outpouring of good will and great food from our community each year. Please know that they are touched and awed by what you all do for them.

You are each so important to making this luncheon such a success year after year and we, the co-chairs, are more appreciative than words can say to thank you for the concern and love you show by being involved.

With sincere and heartfelt gratitude,  
Ruth Johnson, Gwen LaZard, Arline Webb

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# The TIMES of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Co-Editors: Lana Stein and JoAnn Vatcha  
 Business Manager: Linda Cross  
 Contributors: Rachel Boxdorfer, Susanne Knese, Brandon Sterling, Cristina McGroarty, Cecelia Nadal, Tom Hoerr, Richard Bose, Michael Whisenhunt, Art Santen, Cheryl Adelstein, Andy Cross, Derek Knight, Marj Weir, King Schoenfeld, Lana Stein, Jo Ann Vatcha, Elizabeth Krasnoff Holzer, Sean McGroarty, Dan Rater

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Readers are welcome to send us e-mail or letters commenting on any of our content. Send to jvatcha@gmail.com or maxlana@sbcglobal.net.

### 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, 2018.**

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

## Hello and HAPPY SPRING!



Let's start the column this time with a big congratulations to Monsignor Salvatore Polizzi on his 62nd anniversary of being a priest on Saturday, March 17th. The children of St. Roch school presented him with cards at the school mass on March 16th.



We have exciting news to report about our neighbor Rachel Ebeling and her work with the Angel Band Project. Rachel is being honored by the Women of Achievement organization. The awards began in 1955 and honor female

volunteers who "positively impact and enhance the quality of life" in the St. Louis area. The awards ceremony will be Friday, May 15th at the Ritz Carlton in Clayton. Rachel Ebeling resides in the 6300 block of Waterman in Parkview with her family. Congrats Rachel!



Leah Gruneisen who is the daughter of Joe and Nancy Gruneisen of the 6100 block of Kingsbury is moving to Honduras in June where she will be a missionary as a nanny for a children's home in Santiago, Honduras. She had been teaching 4th grade for the past two years at an international school. Leah said they will call her Tia Leah or Aunt Leah. You can follow Leah's adventures and support her mission through the following link. She encourages anyone interested to sign up for email updates. Safe travels Leah! The link is: <https://tialeahhonduras.wordpress.com/about-me/>

Jeffrey Jones who resides on Washington in our neighborhood has developed a new company, Ancestral Food. He formulates grain free food with all natural ingredients for our canine friends. The growth of this

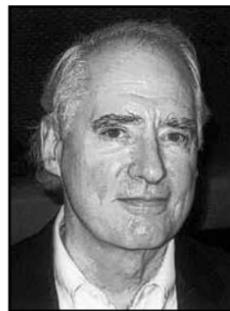
industry parallels the very similar products for humans.

Unfortunately we need to pass along some sad news about some neighbors and former neighbors. Our deepest condolences go to former neighbors, Steve Brammeier and Marjie Brammeier Cohen on the passing of their son Joe Brammeier in February. Donations can be made in his memory to Meds and Food for Kids ([mfkhaiti.org](http://mfkhaiti.org)).



Yvonne Christopher who with her husband Dr. Henry Christopher raised seven children in the 6200 block of Pershing passed away on February 2nd.

And another former neighbor, Stephen Saller who lived for many years on the 6200 block of Westminster in Parkview died on February 9th. Saller was married for 57 years to Lecil Starkloff Saller and they raised their children Gretchen Saller Poag and Christian Saller. His life was celebrated at a service at St. Roch on February 13th.



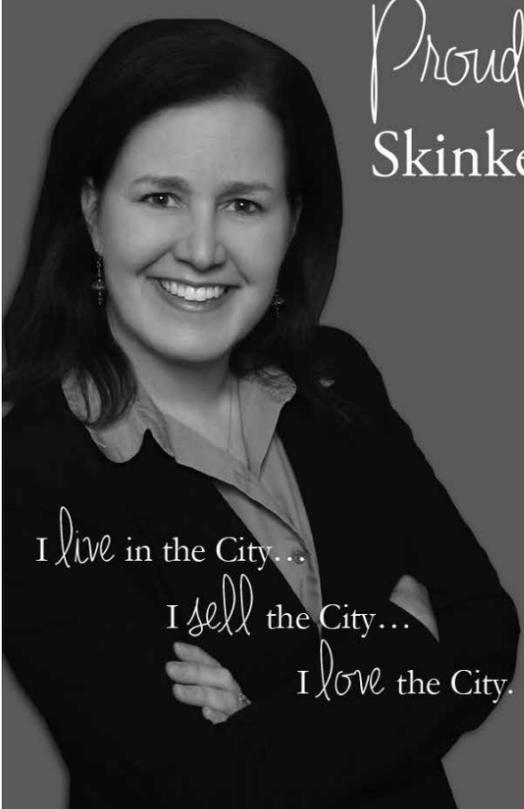
Our condolences to Willis (Loretta) Lloyd, Kenneth (Carol) Lloyd, and Sharon Lloyd, together with others of their family who live in the Skinker-DeBaliviere Neighborhood, on the passing of their

mother, Mary Elizabeth Lloyd on January 24, 2018. Born Mary Elizabeth Clay in St. Louis, MO, on September 1, 1922, she was the second child of Irving and Luella Clay. Her siblings include Congressman William Clay and former 26th Ward Alderman Irving Clay. Mary was a proud Vashon Alum. She and husband Lee Daniel Lloyd had six children. Her husband, three children, three grandchildren, and a special daughter Jennifer preceded her in death. A devout Catholic and parishioner of St. Nicholas Church, Mary had all her children baptised, and they all attended grade school there. She was president of the Ladies' Sodality group for many years and worked as a mental health Psychiatric Aide at the Missouri State Hospital for twenty-five years. After her husband's death, she met Arthur Wells, and together they built a loving relationship that lasted for 35 years until his passing in 2001. Liz and "Doll" got great enjoyment taking grandchildren and other family and friends on cruises up and down the river. She left a great legacy and lasting impact.

## Do you have news to share?

Please send your submissions via email with the subject line News of Neighbors to [rachelb@sdtimes.org](mailto:rachelb@sdtimes.org) or drop off a note to the attention of Rachel Boxdorfer at the Skinker DeBaliviere office. Be sure to mark it "News of Neighbors". 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](http://www.RachelBoxdorfer.com)

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# Getting Even

By Dan Rater

The family trip to Los Angeles started to go south in lot D of long term parking at Lambert Field. We were taking the red eye out to see our daughter for the first time since she moved to LA. I circled the lot, transfixed into vacation mode, and missed the shuttle to the airport. We made the plane, but the tone was set.

When we arrived I relinquished the driving to my wife in an effort to settle the mood. But my navigation skills lead us to the wrong address of our Airbnb. It seemed that, along with my family, Google Maps had stopped speaking to me. Its 3:00 a.m. on the dark streets of Hollywood, before dreams are awake, and I'm confronted with a stark reality; I can't text with my thumbs.

Whoever said it's a man's world was probably a man. I've lived with women for awhile, and I bet he was bluffing. At home, I'm a tiny nation unto myself, with the second largest economy in the household. I abdicated the throne to the King of the Castle, for the largely ceremonial title, the Duke of Kingsbury. My wife asked the girls to give a trait of theirs from each parent. For Molly, they said beauty, kindness and hard work. "What about Dad?" she asked. "Funny?" they wondered.

Touring around Los Angeles in the hands of my confident, charming daughter, I accepted my role as Family Court Jester. Sometimes our children startle us. If my legacy is to be three beautiful, kind and caring human beings, then the last laugh is on me.

She took us to the J. Paul Getty Museum on a hill top in LA. I had heard that it never rained in Southern California, but I must have packed some St. Louis weather, because it was pouring. I love a museum, but they make me tired. Looking at all the old paintings and statues on a dreary day, I just wanted to stretch out on Louis XIV's day bed. When we were leaving I asked Molly how she liked it. She said, "It was nice, but I have to say, I've seen enough penises to last a lifetime."

It's a wakeup call when you're doused with the cold truth. It's a new day and the old ideas belong in the museum. Let's put on a fig leaf and show some respect. I'm living in a woman's world and it's pretty nice in here. The taxes are paid and the trains run on time, as long as I'm not driving.

# Westminster Block Club Food Collections

By Grady and June Vaughan

About 2011 John Lents and his partner Laurence Marsco moved to the 6100 block of Westminster Place. It was not long before John sent an e-mail message to the 6000 and 6100 blocks inviting residents to place food donations on his porch the first Friday of each month. He took these gifts to Operation Food Search, which was then headquartered nearby on Olive Street. John's former work as principal of an elementary school made him aware of the hunger all around us. He never forgot the effect of chronic hunger upon his students. A few years later when John and Laurence moved away, we felt that John had begun a wonderful project, which should continue.

The little striped bin traveled from John's front porch to ours, where it continues to welcome food donations on First Friday each month, from Friday morning until Sunday evening. We do not accept donations each autumn in the month when the Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Council announces a food drive. When Operation Food Search moved their headquarters some distance away, we began taking the donations to the food pantries at New Cote Brilliante Church of God and Grace Methodist Church on alternate months. Some contributors have expressed their appreciation for keeping the donations here to serve our own neighborhood. At New Cote Brilliante Church of God records are kept of food pantry clients, who present identification before being served. The staffs of the both food pantries have joyfully welcomed the contributions made by our generous neighborhood.

All forms of staple and canned foods are needed. Glass containers are hazardous to volunteers and clients, so plastics are preferred. Personal care items are appreciated. We offer a good home for all those stray, unused toiletry items collected in hotel rooms. Many elderly clients have dental problems, so this is good to keep in mind when considering the texture of food.

Brandon Sterling, Executive Director of the Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Council, enthusiastically supports this project. He expresses the hope that other areas in the larger neighborhood might develop similar systems for supporting local food pantries. Meanwhile, we welcome all. Our philosophy is that the practice of donating food to others on a regular basis cultivates in us a constant awareness that we can reach out to people in our community who need a helping hand. It is so easy to forget.



Grady Vaughn of the Westminster Block Club with Vanessa Bogaty and Madonna Durham, co-managers of the Grace Methodist Food Pantry.



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# 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!



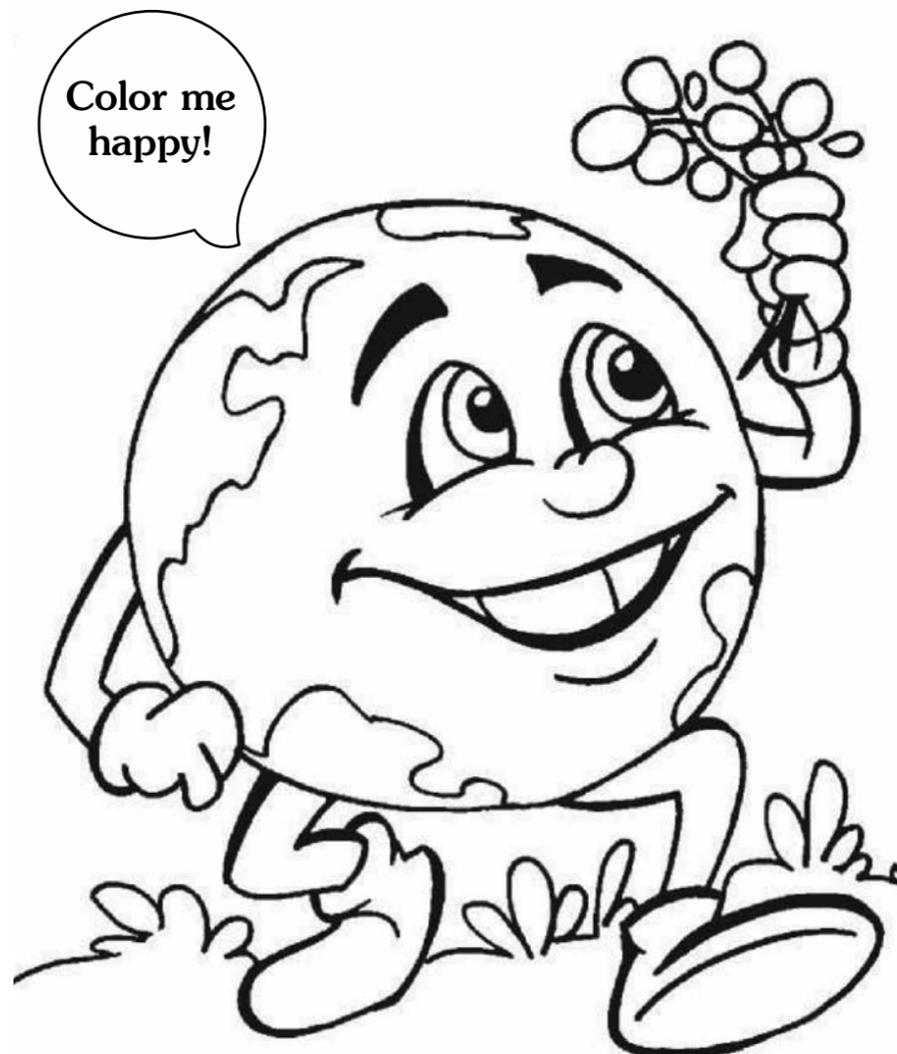
Quinten Gallagher, son of Paul and Angela Gallagher 5700 McPherson, was selected to a 14 player Midwest water polo team. Quinten played in the National Water Polo tournament February 23 - 25th in San Francisco. He has been a player for the St. Louis Area Polo club for 3 years. Congratulations Quinten!

**Don't Forget to Enroll in Our Local Library Summer Reading Programs!**

**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](mailto: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!

# HAPPY EARTH DAY!



# Some DeBaliviere West History

By Jo Ann Vatcha

The completion of the new homes on the 5700 block of McPherson follows the redevelopment which started over 40 years ago in our neighborhood.

In 1978, the Post-Dispatch called it "Wiping Out the DMZ". In the early 80's, east of DeBaliviere, what is now called "DeBaliviere Place" was the largest Historic Tax Credit redevelopment in the entire nation. Leon Strauss, whose other St. Louis landmark achievement was the Fox Theatre, John Roach, 28th Ward Alderman, together with neighborhood leaders like Jack Wright and Calvin Stuart, Executive Director of the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council, worked many years to plan and eventually renovate historic multi-family buildings into nearly 2,000 condominiums and apartments. This massive project was a turning point, east and west.

On the west side of DeBaliviere, 25 acres, including a former car lot and even a golf course, were leveled for new development. During this tumultuous period of the 70's, disagreement among current residents was strong and vocal. Disputes over the direction of redevelopment caused some rifts in the neighborhood organizations. It was a time of controversy and the surveying of the neighborhood to establish it as an historic district, as well. Should the remaining historic buildings stay or go? During this time, as Ken Cohen wrote in the TIMES in 1980. "Able Key and Hardware Store built, the Winter Garden Senior Building rehabbed...clearance of the old Chevrolet lot. Bi-State was ready to build its new garage."

Leon Strauss, who grew up in a U City apartment building himself, once said he did not remember anyone who lived in a house. "The only houses he knew when he was growing up were the white frame houses in the Andy Hardy movies at the Varsity Theater." [Patricia Rice, St. Louis Globe-Democrat, 1976] Architect Eugene Mackey translated the Andy Hardy house into duplex townhouses on Kingsbury Avenue and Westminster Place west of DeBaliviere to Hamilton School. A bandstand in the middle of the "square" reminds residents of this Strauss inspiration. Kingsbury Square was the result.

However, the 5700 block of McPherson was left out of the initial Kingsbury Square plan. Now, as Richard Bose's article reports, it has finally been completed. Developer/homebuilder Martin Jaffee has continued to build new homes in this area for over 30 years. (Those great new homes north of Delmar on Enright, etc. are also his work!). When Kingsbury Square was complete, he turned his attention to 5700 McPherson. This is indeed a milestone for the Skinker-DeBaliviere community!

# DeBALIVIERE...A WEST END RENAISSANCE IN THE OFFING?

### Redevelopers envision bright new chapter in the colorful life of one-time grand boulevard that turned into a Runyonesque 'strip'

By Alan W. Akerson

"The test of civilization is the power of drawing the most benefit out of cities."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

It is the early 1950s, and the scene is the humming, bustling DeBaliviere area in the city's West End. On the street are delightful restaurants, an art theater, a svelte grocery purveyor and various little shops.

With nightfall the street becomes "the strip," kicking up her heels at a clutch of piano bars and jazz houses. Few are the St. Louis college kids of those days who don't have tales to tell of their times down on "the strip" or its environs.

And off DeBaliviere, there are wide streets with grandiose ivy-ornamented apartment houses looking down on them. More than one of the families living in them have a maid or butler.

☆☆☆

It is a decade later, and the setting is the same but there are some frays at the edges of the DeBaliviere community's fabric. The "strip" has taken on a more tawdry neon style now, and there are police raids at the bars and strip joints.

In those once grand apartments, transients — both black and white — are beginning to replace the elderly and the well-to-do families that once lived there.

☆☆☆

And now, finally, it is the 1970s. The street, the neighborhood around it, have hit bottom. The place is one of the most wrung out, washed up, battered down parts of a city where such neighborhoods are all too common.

Yes, there are a few exceptions in the neighborhood, one of the most notable being radio station KCFM. It started there and has grown there.

But, as one city planner put it, the

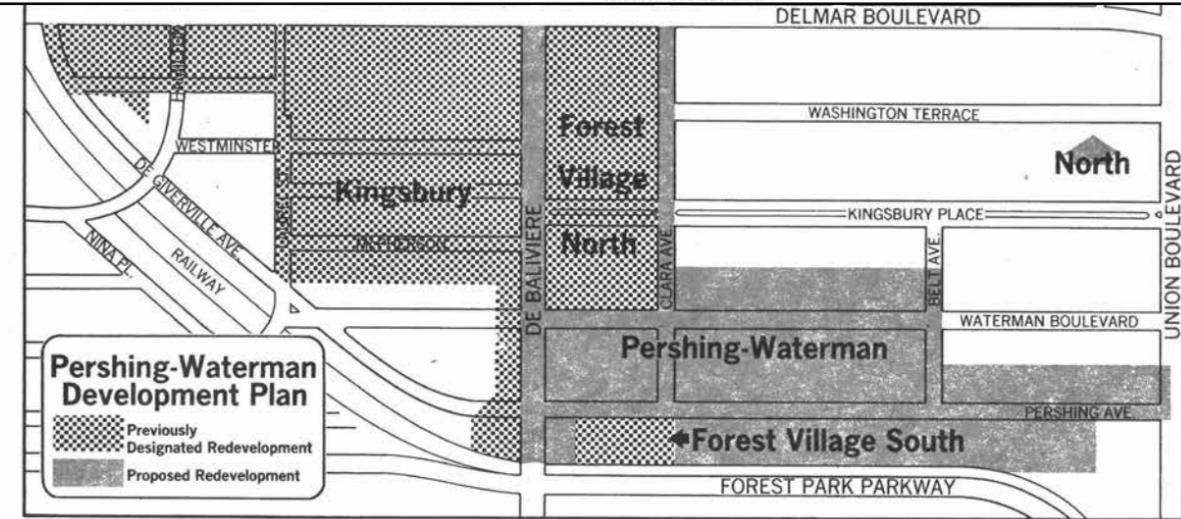
continued



Above, Leon Strauss, left, president of Pantheon Corp., and Carl Lehne, project manager for Pantheon, look over the DeBaliviere portion of their massive redevelopment area. At right, an aerial view shows a portion of the redevelopment area from DeBaliviere to the west.



Pictures by Dick Weddle



Map by Frank Helms

From the St. Louis Globe Democrat archives housed at the Mercantile Library at UMSL



# The Build Out of 5700 McPherson

By Richard Bose



photo by King Schoenfeld

The build out of the 5700 block of McPherson east of Laurel is nearly complete. Only one empty lot remains. Like so many parts of our city, it was ravaged by the government-encouraged spreading out of our cities. By the turn of the century, over half the block was empty lots.

The Jaffe Group, which completed Kingsbury Square to the north, assembled land from the LRA, the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Housing Corporation, and through private sales, and bought Chapter 353 development rights to redevelop the block. They planned to sell not just a house or two, but to market a community. The home design had to pass the Skinker DeBaliviere Historic Committee and the Cultural Resource Office with approval by the Preservation Review Board. The first group of new homes received 25-year tax abatements, 10 years at 100% and 15 more at 50%. Since 2006 the new homes have received 10-year, 100% abatement.

They built 32 new homes, the first completed in 2004, and two rehabs. The housing collapse in 2008 stalled progress. The downturn and a foreclosure on the block left other homeowners underwater. Jaffe “appreciated the confidence in home owners and the community” in sticking it out through the hard times. The last sold last October for nearly \$500k, with an extra big garage, geothermal heating, and solar panels. About half the owners came



from elsewhere in the region and half new to St. Louis. A surprise to Jaffe was how many families with children moved in.

This is certainly an accomplishment to celebrate!

## Reenergizing Our Block Captains

By Cristina McGroarty

On a cold night in the end of January approximately 50 of your neighbors met in an effort to breathe new life into the block captain program.

These efforts started in October after a community meeting held at New Cote Brilliant. The SD wide meeting was arranged as a result in the uptick in personal crime seen in the neighborhood over a two week span in the Fall. Multiple carjackings prompted an urgent call for neighbors to come together. A group of neighbors thought that a block captain program would certainly help the situation and recruited other neighbors to help.

The committee quickly identified three central themes that block captains could be instrumental in addressing.

- how do we disseminate information on our blocks
- how to we bring awareness to safety and security
- how to we keep neighbors alert and aware of what is happening on their block and in the neighborhood.

In conjunction with SDCC, the current security committee and with the generous help of many who have led Block Captain efforts over the years, committee co-chairs reached out to neighbors already serving and solicit new block captains.

The meeting was held on 1/29 and in addition neighbors there

was representation from

- SLMPD
- Wash U Police Department
- Brian Kolde (NIS)
- Deanna Murphy (NIS)
- Representatives from the SDCC Board
- Alderwoman Heather Navarro

At the meeting the following information was shared;

We currently have 32 blocks we are tracking (33 if Parkview, is counted as one entity). Eighteen blocks have identified captains while fourteen do not.

Current and prospective block captains in attendance that night were provided with a packet of information and a template for gathering contact information from their neighbors.

The goals of the program include identifying a block captain or captains for each block and providing them with tools to facilitate communication between neighbors. How do we do that? By gathering contact information for their block thus facilitating communications by e-mails, texts, and /or phone trees. These may come in the form of an urgent email about a crime, AFTER 911 has been called or it may be as simple as-does anyone want to meet for happy hour on my front steps tomorrow night?

In addition to communicating with their block the hope is that once or twice a year neighbors

from each block can meet to discuss issues on their block and even walk their block, front and alleys and identify areas of concern. Is there a problem property on your block? Is there a neighbor who could use some help with lighting or tree trimming. What can YOUR block do to increase safety and security. What would neighbors like to see happening on their block.

With that information the SDCC office can help you make this happen. Communicating with one another as well as with the SDCC office, Executive Director Brandon Sterling and Karen Kelsey is a crucial part of this initiative.

Your block captain needs your HELP to do this. The Block Captain does not have to be one person but can be numerous neighbors who work together. These duties can be delegated by the block captain if someone offers to help. The goal is not to make work for one person but to increase communication among many which in turn makes for a safer community.

If you are interested in being a block captain for your block please contact Molly Mulcahy or Cristina McGroarty. We will gladly share with you tools we have developed to facilitate the process of finding a way to communicate with your neighbors.

So what’s next? We need more block captains. Do you

live on any of the blocks who do not have a block captain or captains identified. If so please contact the SDCC office or Molly Mulcahy (molly.mulcahy1@gmail.com) or Cristina McGroarty (mcbgroarty@sbcglobal.net)

- 5700 McPherson
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- 5700 Waterman
- 5800 DeGiverville
- 5800 Kingsbury
- 5800 Pershing
- 5900 Washington
- 5900 Waterman
- 6000 Kingsbury
- 6000 Lindell
- 6100 Lindell
- 6100 Waterman

The next step for this committee is to focus on Blitz Day. Attendance and participation has been down in recent years and we are looking at this year’s Blitz Day as a day for neighbors to get out and meet or catch up with one another. This is a day focused on neighbors working together to clean up their street and alleys. A great opportunity to make sure everyone is communicating or that there is an organized communication mode. It is also a great time to walk the alleys after cleaning them up to see what some areas of improvement might be.

Contact your block captain and get involved. Don’t know who your Block Captain is? We

## 28th Ward Alderwoman Heather Navarro

### IT'S TIME FOR ACTION

By Heather Navarro  
March 2018

After every mass shooting in our country, we have the same conversation about the glaring need for sensible gun legislation. I feel that there's not much more that can be said. At least I'm not alone in my frustration and desire for action.



Moms Demand Action is an advocacy organization demanding that our elected leaders take action to prevent gun violence. It was founded after the Sandy Hook massacre and urges stronger gun laws to prevent gun violence everywhere.

While it's difficult to imagine something more horrible than innocent children killed while attending school, the death of every child is tragic. And our children are dying every day. According to Moms Demand Action, "Seven American children or teens are shot and killed every day." Of the 205 homicide victims in St. Louis last year, twenty-four were under the age of 19.

So far the solutions from our state and elected officials have been, paradoxically, to increase access to guns. The gun lobby, and specifically the NRA, has been so strong that politicians wouldn't dare challenge them. We, as voters, have become complacent, going along with the notion that it isn't politically safe for our state or federally elected leaders to stand up for gun control. While emotionally strong, the voices challenging the NRA have not seen that emotional power translate into political power.

But the tide is turning. A new group of political activists are taking action that seems to threaten the decades-long status quo. In addition to moms stepping out, our children are issuing warnings of their own to our elected leaders.

Students around the country—including right here in St. Louis—walked out of class on March 14 to protest the deaths of their brothers, sisters and friends because of the lack of sensible gun control in this country. Their actions are aimed squarely at the leaders who have failed to protect them. This up and coming generation of voters is seeing gun violence from a new perspective and are exercising their power. To them, gun violence is not a partisan issue. It's a simple failure of adults to address one of the greatest threats to their own lives.

The worst thing we can do to our kids is to normalize violence, to accept it as just the way things are. We hear about a drive-by, we see the street name isn't ours, breathe a sigh of relief, and go on with our business. We witness school shooting after school shooting, wring our hands for a few days, send out thoughts and prayers, and then go about our business. Nothing changes.

As a mother myself, I admire and stand with moms packing school gyms to demand action on guns in the names of the children they love. There is power there. And now those children are standing up for themselves, taking the lead, and demanding that things change. It is a warning to our elected officials that the call for action is not going away anytime soon.

## Missouri Arts Council continued from page 1

by Dietrich Klinge courtesy of the Gateway Foundation, two installations by Washington University professor Carl Safe and his students, colorful, whimsical bicycle racks designed and welded by local artists, and sculptor Harry Weber's historic "in-motion" eight-foot statue of Chuck Berry, the Father of Rock & Roll – a popular photo opportunity for visitors from around the world.

Enjoy the art and architecture of the City Hall of University City that was built in 1903, Blueberry Hill's famous pop culture displays, the Moonrise Hotel with the world's largest man-made rotating moon on its Rooftop Bar and Restaurant, and the 1924 Tivoli Movie Theatre. The Tivoli features art and foreign films as well as the St. Louis International Film Festival and the St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase.

The St. Louis Walk of Fame is a form of sidewalk art with stars and informative plaques that highlight 150 great St. Louisans who have influenced our culture on a national level. It's an educational self-touring attraction open 24/7 all year. Read about and walk across the stars of John Goodman, Bob Costas, Ike and Tina Turner, Nelly, Betty Grable, Miles Davis, T.S. Eliot and Tennessee Williams.

Many consider the Delmar Loop to be the live music center of St. Louis with Blueberry Hill's 340-capacity Duck Room, the 800-capacity Delmar Hall and

the 2,000+ capacity of The Pageant. Among artists who have performed: Bob Dylan, Dolly Parton, Sharon Jones & the Dap Kings, Ed Sheeran, John Legend, Sting, Pharrell, and Bonnie Raitt. For recorded music check out Vintage Vinyl Records, rated one of the top five record stores in the U.S.

View the neon street-art signs of the Tivoli Theatre, Fitz's Rootbeer, Blueberry Hill, The Pageant, the Loop Trolley, Pin-Up Bowl, and the Peacock Loop Diner, voted "Best New Sign in the World" in 2015.

Stop in the art galleries that highlight Missouri artists, an independent book store, tattoo studios (yes, they are very artistically creative), and boutiques and shops that feature work by designers from Missouri and around the world.

Lastly, this spring everyone will be able to ride the new 2.2-mile, fixed-track, electric, heritage trolley system and delight in what The Loop offers artistically. Even the century-old trolley car designs are stunning.

From restaurants and shopping to entertainment and the arts, riders can take in the magnitude of things to do along the route as they enjoy both the country's "#1 City Park," Forest Park, and "One of the 10 Great Streets in America," the Delmar Loop.

Everyone in The Loop thanks you for this great honor.

Joe Edwards

### 28th Ward Democrats 2018:

Special Meeting with 17th Ward

April 19 – The Ready Room, 4195 Manchester  
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For up to date info on programs & other news of politics, go to the 28th Ward website:  
<http://ward28.citywestend.org/index.html>



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**Housing Corporation continued from page 1**

brought together several disparate forces to stabilize and improve the neighborhood. This began when a failed real estate development in the 6000 and 6100 blocks of Washington was acquired by the City. It was then deeded to a newly-formed non-profit neighborhood Housing Corporation directed by a volunteer board. Its goal was to renovate this housing and to use the proceeds to acquire and renovate more housing, and then continue the cycle. Its focus was properties that were so dilapidated that they were too risky to attract an individual developer. That is clear in the mission statement (at <https://skinkerdebaliviere.wordpress.com/sdc-housing-corporation/>): "To be the buyer and developer of necessity; empowering strong development and homeownership, with the goal of improving the character, heritage and quality of the Skinker DeBaliviere neighborhood and community."

Similarly, its Purpose Statement says, "Founded in 1988, the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Housing Corporation is a non-profit organized for "combatting community deterioration and improving the quality of life by promoting and undertaking neighborhood improvement and housing development activities within service areas defined by the Board of Directors." By design, the Housing Corporation became the developer of last resort. Focusing on improving the neighborhood - and not concerned with making a profit - the Housing Corporation also purchased some decrepit and disreputable buildings on Des Peres and razed them.

There was an improvement in the quality of housing conditions in Skinker DeBaliviere, but there was more work to be done, so the goals of the Housing Corporation

remained the same: improving the conditions of buildings so that they would be purchased by people who wanted to live in our neighborhood, or, at times, selling properties to a developer. According to its website, from 1988 to 1998, the Housing Corporation completed a housing study, acquired seven problem properties (improving five and razing two), and rehabbed five apartment units, for a total community investment of over \$3,000,000. The website notes that the Corporation addressed 25 living units, resulting in improvements of \$573,582, and inspired or assisted projects of \$630,000. From 1999 to 2008, the Corporation rehabbed/sold the Rosedale Square Apartments (now called The Forest Park Condominiums), had a loan of \$1,300,000 forgiven by the City, and was involved in 46 projects, with a total community investment of \$19,123,400.

The weakened economy and housing crisis slowed the scope of activities since 2009: nine living units have been addressed resulting in \$21,627 in improvements, and \$12,500 in projects have been inspired/assisted by the Corporation. In addition, our neighborhood no longer qualifies for Community Development Block Grant Funds, and technical and financial support from the City has declined (in part because of our successes). As the Great Recession took root, the housing corporation did not rescue even one foreclosed dwelling unit, opening the door to speculators renting single family homes to students. And as of 2014, the Community Council no longer has funding for a Housing Specialist, a position created in 1997.

To fill this funding gap, the Housing Corporation has moved away from its original focus -

despite the fact that deteriorated and vacant buildings remain in our midst. Indeed, developer Mark Gorman says, "There are some houses on DeGiverville that I am considering renovating, though it seems to me a perfect project for the Housing Corporation." Instead, the Housing Corporation has turned to long-term ownership of rental property and buildings, but these projects actually have a negative cash flow, draining reserves that are intended to acquire-rehab-resell. This includes the purchase and rehab of a commercial building - outside the Corporation's residential purpose - at the SE corner of Delmar and Hamilton and a six-family and two-family home, but these properties resulted in a negative cash flow.

And now, the Housing Corporation is planning to build the upscale "Walker Townhomes," on Des Peres, just south of Washington Avenue. This is not a development of the last resort, and I raised the issue of whether the Housing Corporation was being true to its mission with Executive Director Gary Boehnke. He said, "The Walker Townhomes Project is a stated objective of the Skinker DeBaliviere 2014 Neighborhood Master Plan and fits within the SDCHC 1988 & 2002 Purpose Statements and its Mission Statement of being the developer of necessity; this lot has been vacant for over 25 years with no developer coming forward." But it's not that simple.

Beyond the issue of the Housing Corporation being a developer of last resort for older homes needing rehabilitation, Marvin Nodiff, a neighborhood attorney who has been involved with local housing wonders if the \$75,000 fee paid to a developer of these townhomes indicates that this project is outside the

organization's mission. Further, he observes, "My experience with attached housing is that it doesn't attract young families with children. Seniors want to avoid stairs. And the price point (an anticipated cost of \$475,000) is very high for the neighborhood. I don't find the green space offensive as is, and would hope the Housing Corp would focus instead on renovating existing housing that's in bad condition."

Lana Stein notes, "The housing corporation received over \$1 million for the sale of what is now the Forest Park condos. This nest egg has funded substantial operating deficits over the past few years. The Walker townhomes will add to this drainage. A change in direction is badly needed to insure that funds exist to address problem properties."

Times change and the Skinker DeBaliviere neighborhood has improved enormously over the past twenty years. An important factor in this success is that the Housing Corporation focused on problem properties that were not likely to be addressed by individuals or developers. Although far fewer in number, those kinds of properties remain in our neighborhood. Susie Feinberg and Karleen Hoerr, named Board Members Emeritus of the Housing Corporation because of their efforts, former 28th Ward Alderman Dan McGuire, who helped create the Housing Corporation, Mark Gorman, Marvin Nodiff, Jo Ann Vatcha and Lana Stein all say, "We need the Housing Corporation to focus on problem properties, take risks, and help to improve our neighborhood. We do not need the Housing Corporation to act like a for-profit developer."

**Reenergizing Captains continued from page 7**

haven't asked for their permission yet so we are not publishing it the list of current block captains here but contact Brandon or Karen at the SDCC office and they can connect you with your block captain.



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# MOHIS FINALIST FOR NATIONAL AWARD



The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) today announced that the Missouri Historical Society, which operates the Missouri History Museum, the Library & Research Center, and Soldiers Memorial Military Museum, is among the 29 finalists for the 2018 National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

The National Medal is the nation's highest honor given to museums and libraries for service to their communities. For 24 years, the award has celebrated institutions that demonstrate extraordinary and innovative approaches to public service and are making a difference for individuals, families, and communities.

This is not the first year the Missouri Historical Society (MHS) has been recognized by IMLS. MHS was selected as one of only three institutions to receive the National Medal in 1994, the award's inaugural year. MHS is a long-established national leader in the museum field, receiving awards from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, the American Alliance

of Museums, IMLS, the American Association for State and Local History. Most recently, the institution was recognized by the American Alliance of Museums as the first museum in the country to receive the Award for Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion in 2017.

At the Missouri History Museum, the Library & Research Center and Soldiers Memorial (opening Nov. 2018), MHS provides a safe and welcoming space for visitors to learn about their region's history and understand the perspectives and experiences of their neighbors. The institution has long facilitated programs that explore difficult topics in the community, such as race and class.

You can share your own thoughts about visiting the Missouri Historical Society by sharing your story on social media on Monday, April 9. To #ShareYourStory, please visit [www.facebook.com/USIMLS](http://www.facebook.com/USIMLS) or [www.twitter.com/us\\_imls](http://www.twitter.com/us_imls) and use #IMLSmedals.

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[www.stlartworks.org](http://www.stlartworks.org).

## Civil Rights Exhibit at MOHIS

Westminster neighbor and associate professor of history at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Dr. Priscilla Dowden-White spoke recently at the Missouri History Museum about the "Pragmatic Civil Rights Vision" and the life and legacy of St. Louis attorney and NAACP titan Margaret Bush Wilson. In her lifelong struggle to advance freedom and equality for African Americans, women, and all those who were excluded from mainstream society, Margaret Bush Wilson blazed a courageous legal trail marked by landmark decisions and major advances that opened up doors to equal opportunity for all Americans. Dr. Dowden-White is author of *Groping toward Democracy: African American Social Welfare Reform in St. Louis, 1920-1949*.

The history museum's special exhibit "# 1 in Civil Rights" closes on April 15.



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# IN YOUR EAR

By Hawkeye Z. Hoerr, Commentary in the TIMES for more than 35 years.

Do you have a tattoo? It seems that just about every forearm, ankle, or shoulder that I see is adorned with a design, picture, or so-not-pithy saying. What's happened here? Twenty-five years ago, the only people with tattoos were guys who were in the military or straddling motorcycles! Honestly, Hawkeye doesn't get this. I mean, he has always viewed the human body as a living cathedral (that explains him growing up on Hostess Cupcakes and Cokes for breakfast), so why defile it with an artistic whim?

However, the body as an art gallery must have some merit because tattoos have been around for over 6,000 years – remember how Fred Flintstone had Make Pangaea Great Again on his forearm? - and today they are now part of our mainstream culture. Whether it's buying coffee, having my blood pressure checked, or ordering a Teds Drewes' Bacon Concrete, chances are I'll see some art on the server's skin. This is perhaps nowhere more apparent than at any sporting event where bare, bulging biceps show multi-colored arrays of designs and pictures.

Plus, these are on the athletes' bodies too.

No, dear reader, I am not making this up. Dr. Google says "Tattoos have become more common over the past couple of decades. A Harris poll in 2012 found that 20% of adults have at least one tattoo, and a Pew Research Center study found that the nearly 40% of people age 18 to 29 have a tattoo. So, if you're under 30 years of age, you probably nodded yes to my opening question. I knew a principal who told me that he would never hire a teacher with a visible tattoo. My guess he has a very small and very old staff.

The most popular tattoo is an arrow, followed by stars, flowers, and words of inspiration. But I've seen tattoos of animals, seashells, and, even, a skull! I asked a few people about their tattoos, and creativity rules the day. Jan has a koala bear holding onto a piece of bamboo. She got it at age 56 while on a sailing trip. Patricia acquired her musical note tattoo, the size of a quarter, at age 40 (but it's not, ahem, visible to the public). A self-proclaimed avid outdoor enthusiast and backpacker, Chris, chose to

get a sun with a compass around it on the inside of his wrist. "I will someday add a mountain and a redwood beneath the sun," he says.

For some folks, tattoos are more than art; they are a way to honor and commemorate. Nina, for example, says, "My fourth tattoo is one that makes me smile. It is on my wrist, and it is my only tattoo that is visible almost always, intentionally. The tattoo is of three birds, in various phases of flight; each of them looks different visually, but they are all flying in the same direction. The three birds symbolize my three children, all unique, all in varying phases of their life, but all connected in a very big way." Gretchen has a tattoo of a starfish on the inside of her left wrist, symbolizing the wisdom of the boy who walked along the beach saving just one starfish at a time – a reminder that saving the world doesn't need to happen all at once (she plans to be a teacher). Gretchen says, "The tattoo is also a reminder of my grandfather, Rick Bender, who lived his life and his education career in this way."

Of course, not everyone wants an adorned skin display. Tattoo-less Jenny cites a fear of permanency and fear of needles as reasons not to do so. Frank says, "I have never understood people's desires to make themselves a billboard. Especially when the message is permanent." Ever the teacher,

Marj says, "The only tattoos I would consider having would address egregious grammar errors, to wit: failure to use the possessive form preceding a gerund. I could go on with examples, but the tattoo would become disfiguring." She ain't wrong, but I'd like to see what emoji she chooses to represent a gerund.

We are besieged with advertisements to convince us to switch our wireless carrier, 15% of Americans move each year, and our president is on wife #3, so Jenny's tattoo hesitation because of their permanency makes sense. But what is permanent need not be lasting! While tattoo art is a big business, so is the art of tattoo removal. The Huffington Post says that over 60,000 people underwent laser tattoo removal in 2012. I wonder how many of those tattoo retractions were due to correcting misspellings versus obliterating the names of now past-tense lovers. (By the way, my favorite names for local tattoo removal parlors are Clean Slate and Vanishing Point.)

It's clear that tattoos have become a rite of passage, and just as clearly, I've failed that passage. Try as I might, I cannot conjure an image, phrase, or word that I want to brand on my body. The best I could do is Don't Blame Me: I Voted for McGovern. What about you? If you HAD to be tattoo engraved, what would it be???

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