

# The *TIMES* of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Vol. 48, No.4

November - December 2018

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

The oldest neighborhood newspaper in St. Louis

FREE

Independent and all volunteer-run since 1970



photo by Rachelle L'Ecuyer

Two ribbon-cuttings were held on Friday, October 3: The Yoga Source, 6170 Delmar, moved from Richmond Heights. The Baked Bear, 6140 Delmar, is locally-owned by Steve Lemley and is the first of its kind in St. Louis. Ice cream cookie sandwiches? Yum!

## The Holidays in the Loop – Shopping, Dining and Entertainment at Your Doorstep!

By Rachelle L'Ecuyer, Executive Director, The Delmar Loop

First off, you need something to wear to the Homecoming! These locally-owned shops are just around the corner and offer a unique collection of shoes and clothing that will make you stand out at holiday parties, Posh Shoe Bar, 6193 Delmar, Calla Lily, 6195 Delmar, or Cocktailz – A Beauty Bar, 6150 Delmar?

The St. Louis International Film Festival runs from November 1 to November 11 with the Tivoli, 6350 Delmar, serving as a key venue for film screenings and events. The Loop's very own Joe Edwards is being honored with a tribute at Delmar Hall on Wednesday, November 7. Tickets are available on St. Louis Cinema's website, CinemaStLouis.org.

The real holiday kick-off is Small Business Saturday on November 24, an all-day event that is a great time to shop some tried and true Loop favorites, Plowsharing Crafts, 6271 Delmar, The Silver Lady, 6864 Delmar, and Subterranean Books, 6275 Delmar. Also, discover other locally-owned shops like OSO: A Style Lab, 6321 Delmar, Baked T's, 6368 Delmar and Artisans in the Loop, 6511 Delmar. Did you know, you can even get your own eyewear made on-site at Copper Hinge – Small Batch Eyewear, 6513 Delmar, just bring in your prescription. There are so many shops we can't name them all but we can tell you that there's something for everyone.

The Delmar Loop will host a series of holiday events in December, check out VisitTheLoop.com for a full listing of events including the Loop Ice Carnival, January 18-20.

There is also a whole host of new businesses. The Yoga Source, 6170 Delmar, just relocated to the Loop and offers yoga classes and workshops daily. The Baked Bear, ice cream sandwiches featuring fresh-baked cookies at 6140 Delmar, Krab Kingz serving Louisiana-style seafood boil dishes at 5860 Delmar, and HopCat boasting 80 beers on draught and a tasty pub menu at 6315 Delmar have all opened to rave reviews.

If you are looking for entertainment, The Duck Room at Blueberry Hill features live music by local and national acts at 6504 Delmar, The Pin-up Bowl offers an evening of bowling at 6192 Delmar and the Red Herring Escape Rooms provide a true escape challenge with several rooms and adventures at 6358 Delmar. The Pageant, 6161 Delmar, and Delmar Hall, 6163 Delmar, have a full calendar of concerts but make sure you get your tickets because many of their holiday shows sell out.

Make your tour of the Delmar Loop easier to navigate and pick-up a brochure with a listing of all of the businesses at the Moonrise Hotel, 6177 Delmar. You can also try out the new menu at The Eclipse Restaurant while you are there. Keep up on everyday events and happenings by following us on Facebook and Twitter, @TheDelmarLoop, or check out our website at VisitTheLoop.com.

## Celebrating 40 years!

Founding vet, Steve Brammeier, on the right, joins current top doc, Bret Shaw, to celebrate Kingsbury Animal Hospital's 40th anniversary in our neighborhood. Present and former staff joined the vets on October 13 to celebrate along with human and canine clients.



## A Decade of Homecoming A Night of Decadence

Saturday November 10

7:00PM - 10:00PM

St. Louis ArtWorks, 5959 Delmar Blvd.

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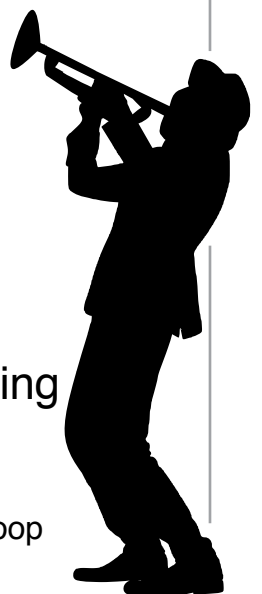
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## Wintermarkt Returns December 1

Every winter, craftpersons and artisans from across the St. Louis Region gather at Greg Freeman Park at Kingsbury & Des Peres to display their talents with wonderful gifts you can purchase for your holiday celebrations. All that and more at the 19th Annual Wintermarkt – Saturday December 1st 2018.

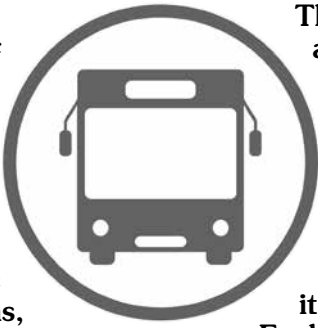
You can always find great food to eat (bratwurst, Glühwein and roasted chestnuts) at the festival and delicious baked goods to take home. Live musical performances fill the air while you browse, shop, and visit with your neighbors.

If you wish to enjoy the festival as a volunteer, vendor, or donate baked goods, contact Karen Kelsey at [sdcc@skinker-debaliviere.com](mailto:sdcc@skinker-debaliviere.com), call (314) 862-5122, or visit [www.skinkerd.org](http://www.skinkerd.org).

# Editor's Notebook

By Lana Stein

various untoward behaviors at stations and on trains.



My thoughts of late have been preoccupied by climate change. The warming of the planet, with dire consequences, is real. We already see more virulent storms, droughts and hunger. What can we do? We can recycle because recycling takes less energy than assembling cans, bottles and plastic containers from scratch. But that effort is picayune compared to the need to stop carbon emissions and keep our air and water clean. Certainly, our federal government has led us backwards in the last two years with its extensive deregulation. It's a case of take the cash and let the credit go. Maximize profits; appeal to the one percent. Although climate change should be in the forefront of people's consciousness it is not.

One easy way to cut emissions is to use public transportation. There was great excitement in our neighborhood when MetroLink began operating in the summer of 1993. Many began commuting to downtown or going to ball games. It's hard to pinpoint when the bloom left the rose. For several years at least, our Security Committee has been discussing drug dealing and other criminal acts occurring at the Delmar and DeBaliviere stations. A community meeting was held two years ago and residents of DeBaliviere Place and Skinker DeBaliviere voiced their concerns about crime and

The security problems are widely recognized. However, multiple actors from multiple bureaus cannot join together to implement solutions. For those who study bureaucracy, it's called turf rivalry. Each bureaucracy wants

to guard its area of operation. Here we have city police, county police, police in Illinois plus Metro Security. Metro wants its officers to have police powers, other police do not. There is no universal radio language by which officers can communicate with their counterparts in other forces.

There are a couple bright lights on the horizon. Because of fiscal concerns 25 years ago, the MetroLink stations were built without turnstiles. There would be an honor system for entry to the platform. Now everyone acknowledges that turnstiles would have prevented some of the problems we currently face. Metro is using barriers to funnel passengers to the platform at the DeBaliviere station and is making sure that every passenger has a ticket. In addition, St. Clair County police have said they were willing to ride trains into St. Louis. Again, turf considerations seem to have held up this plan. Metro is trying to have 3 security officers on every train. If all these entities could work together, much more could be accomplished and more than one environment would improve.

# Block Organizing Moving Forward

In order to increase security and provide better communication, Christina McGroarty and Molly Mulcahy are spearheading a group designed to revivify block groups throughout the neighborhood. To date, there are now 16 block captains. Eleven more are needed, particularly on Pershing and Waterman. A Facebook page will be set up for the block groups. For blocks without captains, flyers will be delivered door-to-door to ask residents to participate. Each block will develop a directory of all block residents so everyone can be contacted about safety and other activities. Future meetings will be on the website and mentioned in SDCC email newsletters.

# The Envelope, Please!

With this issue, many of you will see a little envelope for contributions to the TIMES. Please consider making a charitable donation to your neighborhood newspaper, which operates on the good will and time contributions of many, many volunteers. We especially appreciate those who faithfully deliver the paper on their block! If you don't see an envelope, you can donate by sending a check to TIMES OF SKINKER DEBALIVIERE, 6060 McPherson, 63112. Thank you for continuing this long tradition in our neighborhood.

# From "Anonymous" came this witty reminder about recycling:

Things that are incredibly difficult to understand:

- Astrophysics
- Cures for Cancers
- Alzheimer's
- The US Tax Code

Why otherwise intelligent humans can't grasp that one (1) unfolded cardboard box consumes the same space as two dozen folded (broken down) cardboard boxes.

Who'd a thunk it?



## 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: January 15, 2019.

Please send copy by e-mail to [jvatcha@gmail.com](mailto:jvatcha@gmail.com) or by disc to 6117 Westminster, St. Louis, MO 63112.



Sheryl D transformed her backyard in the Skinker-DeBaliviere neighborhood with a new fire pit and patio, surrounded by rain garden features that work to manage stormwater runoff, keeping her yard free of ponding or flooding during heavy rainfall. We have lots of ideas for improving your yard. See [quietvillagelandscaping.com](http://quietvillagelandscaping.com) for more ideas.

# The TIMES of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

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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](mailto:jvatcha@gmail.com) or [maxlana@sbcglobal.net](mailto:maxlana@sbcglobal.net).



# News of Neighbors

By Rachel Boxdorfer

Talent is our theme.....

As the seasons change (in St. Louis from extreme heat to cold), and I write this column, I am reminded of the seasons of our lives. They are filled with exciting news and accomplishments, and some seasons are shorter than others.

Let's start with some happy news today. Congratulations and best wishes go to our 28th Ward Alderwoman, Heather Navarro, and Johnny Zokovitch on their engagement! They will be married on December 28th.

Big news for Lucy HG Solomon, daughter of Margaret Hermes and sister of Sarah Griesbach, grew up on the 6100 block of Kingsbury (where her mother and sister reside on opposite sides of the street!) and now teaches art, media, and design at Cal State University at San Marcos. Lucy collaborated on a work that received the international Lumen Prize for Artificial Intelligence, necessitating two trips to London in September. In the interactive installation, fungi cover the pages of a book, destroying text. The AI component analyzes the fungal growth and searches the internet for similar patterns. Readouts from the consumption of the book and the digital database are visible in the twitter feed of @HelloFungus and printed out on-site on a thermal printer!



Kingsbury Square resident Dr. Rodney Wead was recently honored with a commemorative street naming, at the intersection of 52nd and Ames St. in Omaha, Nebraska. In the late 60's and 70's, Dr. Wead was a major activist in the establishment of a Black owned and operated bank, the first such credit union, as well as the first Black owned and operated radio station. He is known for his civil rights activism and speaking for the poor and disenfranchised. Dr. Wead has taught Sociology at the St. Louis Community College at Forest Park for the last 17 years.



Michael Noble, Junior, a freelance photographer, covered the Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires, selected by the International Olympic Committee's young reporters program. He is the son of Michael Noble, Sr. of the 5700 block of McPherson and a 2012 graduate of Clayton High School.



Terry Barber, The Countertenor, moved to Parkview (on Waterman) a few months ago. His USA/Canada tour season included one "home" St. Louis performance in 2018, on October 13th at the Kirkwood Community Center Theater. It was so well received there may be a local Christmas performance in the works. Congratulations to Terry. If you would like to learn more about this talented neighbor you can do so at <https://terrybarber.com>.

The cancellation of Loufest this year was certainly a disappointment to St. Louis music fans but was also a loss to the comedy community as this year there was

going to be a comedy stage. One of those funny entertainers who was going to be performing at Loufest was Kenny Kinds. Kinds, who grew up on the 5900 block of DeGiverville, the son of Rogerine and the late Willie Kinds, began his comedy career in 2008 after a job contract as a computer programmer for AT&T fell through and Kenny signed up for an improv class. Kinds is now a regular on the St. Louis comedy scene performing at venues including the Pageant, Helium Comedy Club, the Duck Room at Blueberry Hill and the Funny Bone.



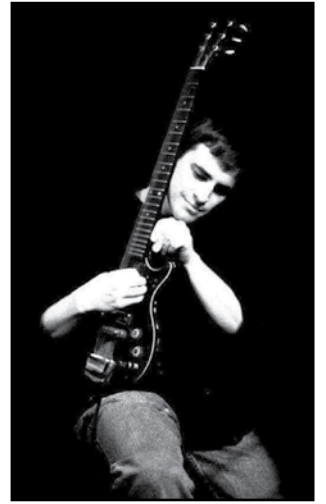
Longtime neighbor and friend to many, Georgi Fox passed away peacefully September 5, following complications from a series of prolonged illnesses. Her dedication as a single mother, staunch neighbor and community advocate, dog lover (and stray collector), Support Dog volunteer, loyal friend, and lover of all things Christmas will be her legacy. A 1957 Visitation Academy graduate, Georgi was an early and outspoken member of the Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Council, one of the first to sign up for a newly launched Operation Brightside, and active in many aspects of parish life at St Roch for decades. Our condolences go to her son, Alex; grandchildren, Hannah, Noah and Kate of Denver, CO; her daughter, Gen and her husband James, and their children Luke, Clare, Grace and Ian, who live in the UK and Tokyo.

Another loss as time passes on has come with the passing of Ronald "Rocco" DiLorenzo, Ph. D. on Friday, October 5 at the age of 86. Rocco was a professor emeritus in the Department of English at Saint Louis University. But for many in the neighborhood he is remembered more for his broad smile and for being a loving husband to Bernadette and father to his nine children. Rocco was involved in the neighborhood "back in the day" especially the dinner theater where he delighted neighbors with his talented performances. We probably need to feature a story again about those memorable performances! Our sympathies to the entire DiLorenzo family.



In the last issue I noted the passing of Al Nerviani. Sadly, the Nerviani family has suffered another loss since then. Vicki Nerviani passed away in August. Our condolences go to the Nerviani family who lived on the 6100 block of Kingsbury for a very long time and have suffered too many losses in recent years. Rest in peace Vicki.

And with a very heavy heart I also hate to announce the passing on October 14th of Josh Kohn, talented guitarist and illustrator. Josh is the son of Pat Kohn and the late Bill Kohn, and brother of Sophie Kohn. Josh grew up on the 6100 block of Kingsbury and is among my first memories of friendship and life on Kingsbury. Josh played guitar throughout his life with many bands and incarnations of bands and performed on many albums for a wide range of artists. His music touched and made an impression on many lives, as did he. The world lost a great talent and our hearts go out to Pat and Sophie, his son, and all his friends and family for their loss.



Here's to lives well lived and enjoying the moment as the seasons continue to change. Thank you to our neighbors who share their talent and news. Enjoy the ride and we'll share more news soon.

## 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

A question occurred to me while I was stuck on Highway 64 trying to cross the Poplar Street Bridge so I could access Highway 44, take a short cut through the park, sneak past construction, fight off periodic episodes of road rage, check my text messages, even though I know it's wrong, and pick up my daughter from school on time.

Whatever happened to the Sunday drive? We all remember the carefree ritual of touring the back roads looking for trees. The answer came to me as I was flipping the bird toward the car ahead of me, after he cut me off. Traffic sucks. If I want to see trees, I'll watch the Tree Channel.

My wife and I took a road trip to Chicago to celebrate my parent's 60th wedding anniversary. I let her drive because it's easier on my ears. It was a beautiful day as we drove north on Highway 55. Traffic was light, construction was minimal, and the mood was relaxed. We talked, laughed and sang carpool karaoke. I remember reaching across the seat and holding her hand.

As we neared Chicago, she took back her hand and assumed the 10 o'clock- 2 o'clock position. It was time for some serious driving. I was on navigation duty. Do you remember the AAA TripTik? That seems so horse and buggy these days. One time I asked Google Maps directions from my house to the Sun. It said to go straight through the Milky Way for 48 million miles until

you hit Mercury. Then take a left for another 45 million miles until you reach your destination; arrival time in 19 or 20 years, depending on your type of vehicle. With possession of tools like this, how hard could it be to find our hotel in downtown Chicago?

All I have to say is it's easier to get to the Sun than the InterContinental on the Magnificent Mile of Michigan Ave. I always get us close, but not enough. I blame the navigation system, my wife blames the navigator. I looked over at her white knuckling the steering wheel and said, "Relax. We made it." She flashed me a glare like she was lawyering up. "You are a terrible navigator." Wounded in pride, I hissed back, "You can't handle traffic in the big city!" She pulled out the verbal dagger and plunged it into my excuses, "You couldn't problem solve your way out of a trash can!"

I've been thinking about it for awhile, and I've come up with three scenarios. The first one is, I would use my body weight in an effort to tip the trash can over, and crawl out. Second, I would make myself small and get out through the swinging gate lid at the top. Or, I could yell and scream until someone heard me and let me out.

I arrived at Anne's school in time to pick her up. I'm teaching her how to drive, so she takes over the driver's seat. I tell her to check her blind spots, and keep her left hand ready to flip off the guy who tries to cut in front of us.

She's almost ready to take the driving test.



A group of aldermen and others concerned with city government met with neighbor and author, Lana Stein for an "Book Club" evening of discussion at Alderwoman Heather Navarro's home recently. They read and discussed Lana's book, St. Louis Politics: the Triumph of Tradition, You can get the book from Left Bank Books in the Central West End.

## 28th Ward Democrats 2018:

28th Ward meets at  
**Eclipse at the Moonrise Hotel,**  
6177 Delmar

November 15 meeting  
7:30 p.m. or come early to have  
drinks or order from menu if you wish.

More info at  
<http://ward28.citywestend.org/index.html>

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# KIDS CORNER

By Susanne Knese

Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving. ~ W. T. Purkiser

## Fun OUTSIDE activities during these coming months:

- Explore a new trail in Forest Park and enjoy the Fall leaves. See if you can find fresh animal footprints in the soil or spy fuzzy caterpillars crawling up the trees.
- Science Center has a Public Telescope Viewing the 1st Friday of every Month (We attended in October and actually viewed the rings of Saturn! Plus you learn so much information about the stars and planets!)
- Sled riding down Art Hill followed up with Hot Chocolate by the fire at the Boat House!
- Skating at Steinberg outdoor rink in Forest Park November 9th – February 28th. Special events include Skate with Santa December 2nd from 2 – 4pm and New Year’s Eve Party!
- Wild Lights at the St. Louis Zoo
- Delmar Loop’s Ice Carnival in January

## Fun INDOOR activities during these cold months:

- Make a blanket fort and nestle up with pillows for a perfect reading nook.
- Play some favorite board games like Aggravation, Sorry, Monopoly, Twister or any kind of card game.
- Build a card castle . . . all you need are cards and patience.
- Ever hear of MakerSpace? See what fun crafts you can make with empty paper towel rolls, straws, yarn and some glue.
- Start a jigsaw puzzle. Best part is you don’t have to complete it in one sitting!

“Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas Tree, how lovely are your branches!”

Calling all kids to come decorate the Christmas tree at our very own neighborhood library, Charring Cross at 356 North Skinker November 27th – December 24th. Please write your name and age on the ornament. If you would like your ornament back after the holidays please pick it up by January 8th. Do check out the beautiful model train and toys in the window, a personal touch by our own Mr. Charles! C:\Users\Susanne\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\NetCache\IE\83B9IBOY\large-Christmas-Tree-66.6-11066[1].gif



## Question for February edition: What is your favorite Dr. Seuss story or quote? And / or Submit a valentine picture.

Include your name and age. Please submit drawings to kidscorner@sdtimes.org by January 10th! If you have other kid friendly events you would like included in this section, please email kidscorner@sdtimes.org

O S K R M G T H S G Q T Z Y W	BLESSINGS
S E N W E U Z G O N R N R L P	CHILLY
N N K O R T N I T I Y A A L Z	CHOCOLATE
H C X K W I N I P V M F N I X	FAMILY
C W E L S M W I D I C W P H I	FEAST
P Y G S V M A S W G E J K C A	HOT
P O E L U Y O N L S H O T V Z	LEAVES
J L S E N U L B S K V D A Y Z	SNOWMAN
B E R A B T S V P N K M N O M	THANKSGIVING
J O S V R Z I T S A R D X R S	TURKEY
M U O E U R M X T H O U V B X	WINTER
T B D S V W N S T T B E Y T S	
C H O C O L A T E Y L I M A F	
Q N D G D E T K T X B C F C Y	
L L T H F O U Y B L Q C Z V M	

## Happy Holidays

By Frank C. Schaper  
aka Frank the Fireman

Hello Neighbors! Frank the Fireman here with another article. Where does the time go? It was not that long ago we were strolling down Skinker in warm weather and now it is fall. Here comes Halloween. With that in mind, let me be one of the first to wish you all Happy Holidays. They are approaching quickly. What a fun time of year, but let’s not forget fire safety during the holidays, because house fires never take a holiday.



While working at the fire house on DeBaliviere Ave, I celebrated five or six Halloweens, Thanksgivings, and Christmases there over the years. Those times spark many memories for me – especially the dinners. You see, it was not unusual for Engine Company #30 to be invited to dinner by someone in the neighborhood. But these invitations to dinner were a bit different in that they did not come through the mail. Our dinner invitations came over a loud speaker in the firehouse. “Food burning on a stove, XXXX Pershing, Pumper #30, Hook and Ladder #3, Car 805 respond.”

We would pull up to the Pershing address and the family would be out on the front lawn. Mom would be crying, the kids were jumping up and down, and dad was trying to calm everyone down. You could hear the smoke detectors blaring out on the sidewalk as smoke lazily poured out the front door. Just another dinner invitation that needed

our professional expertise. However, some of these dinner time fires were more exciting than others. Turkey fryer fires come to mind, which brings me to the purpose of this article

Turkey fryer fires can be spectacular, dangerous, and destructive. Since a picture is worth a thousand words and a video much more, check out turkey fryer fires on Youtube or another internet location. This will surprise and shock you if you have never seen a turkey fryer fire before. They are caused by placing a wet or even damp turkey into very hot oil. As you will see on the videos, the fryers literally explode into fire. They can severely burn you and spread fire everywhere.

Now Frank the Fireman is not against frying a turkey. They are very tasty, but you must be careful.

So keep these tips in mind.

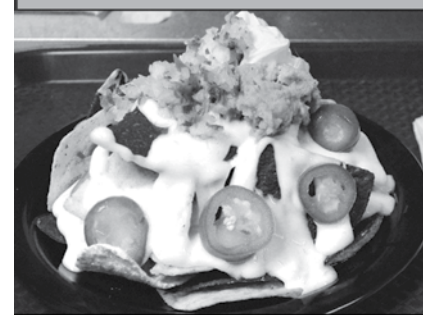
1. Make sure your turkey fits into the pot. A large turkey in a small pot will cause hot oil to spill out and catch on fire. (Remember the videos you watched?)
2. Never place a wet or damp turkey into the fryer. Make sure the turkey is dry inside and out. Water and oil do not mix and water in hot oil really, really does not mix.
3. Never fry your turkey on a wooden deck. Spilled, hot oil will flash into flames igniting your wood deck and spreading the fire.
4. Never fry your turkey inside the garage. Turkey fryer fires have been the cause of many garages catching fire and spreading to the house.
5. Perhaps a good idea would be to cook your turkey the way grandma did it, in the oven.

With a bit of caution and a little preplanning, you can successfully fry a turkey and avoid inviting Engine Company #30 to dinner the exciting way. We actually like your invitation to come through the mail.

So stay safe and Happy Holidays.

Learn about our community's history  
Check out our website at  
**sdtimes.org**

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## Dog Park Plan

By Mickey Clarke

Since the success of the pop-up dog park at the Better Block day in 2014, the buzz for creating a permanent dog park has been building.

As anyone who looks out their window sees, we have gobs of dogs in the Skinker DeBaliviere neighborhood. Unfortunately, most houses have relatively small yards and some have no yards, so free running is not a regular form of exercise for our dogs - unless of course you drive to a dog park. This is a hassle, not great for the environment and most importantly, not an option for many of our Skinker DeBaliviere neighbors. Creating a dog park that is within walking distance will give more dog owners the opportunity for an exciting enrichment to our dog's daily routine.

But the benefit doesn't stop at the dogs. If you've ever been to a dog park, you know that people visit with each other while their dogs play. Friendships develop because of a shared love of dogs. Age, occupation, dare we say political views (?) and

other differences matter less. Dogs and their antics, bring us together.

Plans are progressing well. A leadership team was formed this past Spring that has been meeting to work out details, create documents (e.g. Frequently Asked Questions, budget). They will be going before the Skinker DeBaliviere Council soon. The team has also been surveying neighbors to quantify interest in annual membership. Spoiler alert: There is a LOT of interest. The park will be operated and maintained by a leadership group under the umbrella of the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council. It will be a fee based park.

If all goes well, you'll be seeing dogs playing in The Dog Park of Skinker DeBaliviere in the late 2019.

**Short Mission Statement:** The Dog Park of Skinker DeBaliviere will provide a beautiful gathering point to build community within our neighborhood and to give our dogs a safe place to run, fetch, socialize and play.

The planned location, north of the school parking lot on



Pop-up dog park, 2014. Dogs behave better when they exercise regularly. Neighbors are better neighbors when they know each other. A dog park creates the space for both.

Des Peres (east side), is on land agreement with SDCC for the Dog Park Membership Group's use of the site as a dog park. that SDCHC owns; they are ready and expect to have a use

## This Land Is Your Land - Build your soil!

By Mark Banaszak

Imagine a world where soil is gone. It has happened in the past. The cradle of civilization, Mesopotamia, is one example. Archaeology has shown that over-farming led to soil loss which led to famine and then to population decline. In the fertile crescent, the evidence shows that within a few hundred years, Mesopotamian topsoil became so depleted that population was reduced by 96%, the area became desert-like, and sand covered up many of the larger cities. There are similar archaeological sites around the world. The dust bowl, from recent history, is another example. Soil conservation and composting is needed to prevent another "Dust Bowl" crisis.

Even middle school students understand what would happen if soil eroded away. A 7th grade middle school science class, when asked what would happen if soil eroded away, gave answers like, "If all soil was gone that would affect plants and humans, because plants are used for oxygen and food." Another student wrote, "If all soil was washed away, plants and trees would die, which would kill animals and eventually us." My favorite answer was "All living things would slowly suffer a painful and agonizing death." Although middle school answers range from the delicate to the gruesome, the truth of each is clear; without soil, humanity would most likely perish.

In the millennia since the collapse of Mesopotamia, farming practices have evolved to help soil remain in place and productive. Farmers realized that keeping soil from eroding and adding organic material helped maintain soil productivity. In addition, better plowing methods and terracing prevented soil erosion.

Over recent centuries, humans developed scientific explanations of how soil came into our world. The story of soil science is, like much scientific history, full of quirky humans doggedly pursuing strange ideas. One such story is that of Darwin and worms. In his later years, Charles Darwin withdrew from public life. He still wrote scientific articles, but of a more limited scope than the theory of the evolution. One of these articles measured how fast worms added material to soil. From it, he eventually was able to suggest a rate at which soil is added by the decomposition of organic matter by worms and other organisms. Over time, such thinking led to the development of soil science.

As our understanding of soil advanced, it became important for states to monitor soil quality. The University of Missouri Extension is one way the state does this. One Missouri Soil Specialist for soil is Debbie Kelly. She is very clear that the erosion of topsoil is a very serious problem facing our state. Soil compaction and degradation are also problems in urban areas. Two things that help these problems are adding organic material and adding compost.

So, how can you make a difference? One word: Compost. It is an essential part of soil. Adding it to flower beds and lawns can improve soil in several ways. It improves soil structure, which

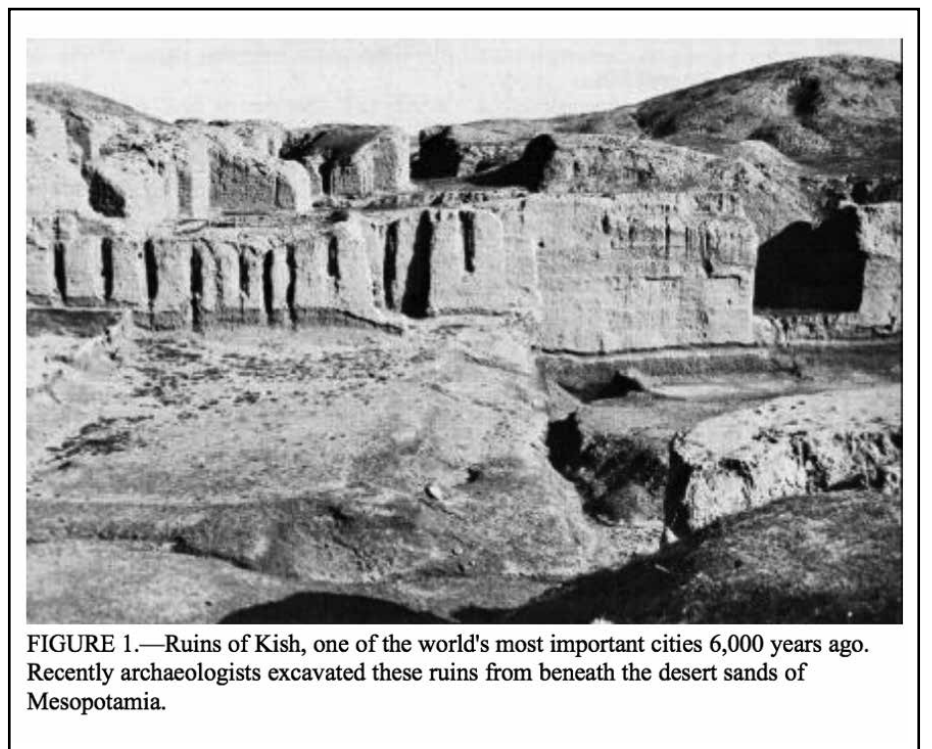


FIGURE 1.—Ruins of Kish, one of the world's most important cities 6,000 years ago. Recently archaeologists excavated these ruins from beneath the desert sands of Mesopotamia.

means reducing soil compaction and improving drainage. It adds necessary nutrients and helps balance soil pH. Poor soil pH is a common problem in urban lawns and garden beds. A common method of adding compost to a struggling lawn is applying a thin layer and raking it in.

There are long books describing the methods of building a great compost pile, but in short, there is one method that works for anyone: Pile up kitchen and garden waste and let it sit. The process time varies depending on what is being composted, how it is deposited and how it is turned. The fact remains, when you pile it up, it starts to decompose and become compost. Managing the process by layering, making sure it has the proper mix of organisms, or turning can speed up the process, but it isn't necessary.

If you need more compost than you can make, there are many types composted from industrial waste. Cotton burr compost is often cheap and available in garden home centers. It is often available in organic versions too, because otherwise it may contain the herbicides used to produce the cotton originally.

If you aren't prepared to keep a compost pile in your yard, a small change is helpful. Consider keeping a kitchen compost bucket for vegetable scraps and empty it into the yard waste dumpster. By doing this, you are reducing trash and helping create compost in our city, even if you won't have it for your lawn and garden beds. Creating and adding compost to your soil is helping maintain soil and by doing that you may be helping prevent what one middle school student describes like this:

If all soil was washed away, I think that trees, cars, buildings and a lot of other stuff would go with it. Civilization and a lot...just a lot.

# Our Great Block



**Editor's Note:**

An Airbnb on the 6100 block of Westminster stirred considerable discussion among neighbors and with the owner. We felt that the following is a lovely description of what it means to live among good neighbors, and we asked the writer, June Vaughan, if we could use it in the TIMES. There were several more good letters, and it became clear even to the owner that this was not the right place for an Airbnb. While it has not yet been put on the market for sale, the residents on Westminster, who recently had their 11th annual block party, are definitely celebrating their neighborhood!

**To the Airbnb owner:**

Over 52 years of marriage we have lived in 10 states and more municipalities. One was a coastal village in New England, where up-market, short-term rentals were often the bane of year around residents. Many perfectly pleasant Jekylls display varying degrees of Hyde while on vacation, probably more from negligence and lack of awareness or social relationship than

from malice. Nevertheless, noise and other disturbances of daily life leach away the joy and comfort that we expect to find in our homes--our sanctums. We invest in our neighborhood knowing that we will have university students living among us. These students have a greater stake in the quality of our neighborhood than do short-term renters, even when those renters are their parents. Students often form relationships with us, even cultivating plots in our community garden.

We lived on our block for six years before work required our living elsewhere for another six. In 2010 we eagerly returned, finding another house on our old block, and have no plans to leave. We returned because our adventures have taught us how unique this neighborhood is. People here work together. The previous owners/occupants of the house under discussion were the first to offer residents an opportunity to make monthly neighborhood donations to local food pantries, typifying how many individuals find a niche through which they can offer service to the whole. Few do everything that can be done, but many do something. We are grateful to each person who contributes by planning block parties, dealing with our feral cat population, adorning the entrance columns with holiday wreaths, serving on security and planning committees, posting neighborhood e-mail messages, caring for the community gardens, publishing the SD newspaper--the list goes on and on. The reward for this time and effort is not monetary gain, but rather to live here, striving always to make SD a better place. We treasure the paid staff of our community council who appear to share our appreciation for what generations of neighbors have created here. They certainly are not attracted by the millions which we cannot pay them!

Regarding noise and neighborliness, please remember how noise resembles smoke in that, once a decision is made

to loose it on the air, all freedom of choice is taken from those people within its range. Both pollutants dissipate slowly, traveling far along unpredictable paths, and so should be released with discretion. We human beings are born with varying degrees of sensitivity. I am constantly amazed by how sound ricochets along our streets and up between our closely spaced houses. Upstairs in our house we can hear loud voices addressing each other in front yards several houses away, bouncing around, shooting up our gangway and in through a closed window, as if the people are standing just there below. Sometimes we hear every word. Fortunately, our neighbors on each side--for as far away as seems to matter, are considerate people, so this almost never happens late in the evening, at night, or in early morning.

If requesting quiet in the yards, or even limiting volume from inside, after 10P.M. meet legal requirements, it fails the requirements of common courtesy. Nor does it respect the right of others to hear what they wish to hear--or not to hear, in their own homes or outdoor spaces. Many of us have worked hard to make our gardens into small islands of peace and beauty amid city life. On those rare and magical evenings when STL weather allows, we treasure an hour or two of reading on our screened porch before going upstairs around 10P.M. We turn on lamps while listening to the rustle of leaves, crickets, twitterings as birds settle, the occasional voice of a child or bark of a dog, muffled traffic sounds from Skinker or Delmar-- even a siren or two. These remind us that we dwell amidst a community of thoughtful, considerate neighbors who tend to curb sound and activity by 8 or 8:30P.M. because they care. We are grateful and have great sympathy for any of you who are not so blessed.

With gratitude to all of you wonderful people,  
Grady and June Vaughan

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# IN YOUR EAR

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

Where did I put that? is probably the question that I have asked most in my life. Misplaced, left, lost, and forgotten haunt me. Sure, there are other high contestant questions that plague me, too. I often wonder Does anyone really pay that much for a parking space? How can you eat that? and We elected him???

And there are some questions that I've never asked, such as How many calories are in this tasty muffin and chocolate syrup delicacy, sitting astride a hunk of ice cream? I don't ask because I'm fortunate enough to have been born a svelte ectomorph, with a high metabolism. (To readers who know me, this month's article is being guest-written.) I also never ask Does this tie go with that shirt? I mean, who cares and why bother? I consider articles of clothing as distinct and autonomous; they only need to match themselves. I'll start thinking about coordinating my clothing during next MO solar eclipse or beginning of the Delmar Trolley, whichever comes first.

But Where did I put that? is embedded on the inside of my eyelids and across the top of my corpus callosum. I've been losing things for as long as I can remember. To be fair to myself (something I do very well), my misplacement is due to heredity. Both of my parents constantly lost things, too. My dad lost a lot of money – several times. Once he and his partner, Otto, purchased a fleet of boats to bring bananas from Honduras to the U.S. to sell, planning to undercut Chiquita, but the boats were all sunk in a hurricane. My dad and Otto each mistakenly assumed that the other guy had bought insurance. Oh well.

As far my mom, she once lost me, even though I didn't feel lost. We were at one of those new-fangled inventions called a shopping mall (yes, dear reader, I am that old), and I wandered into a book store. I was a happy camper and embedded reader while she was frantically searching the mall, looking for me, I learned later. Unlike the banana boats, I was found safe and sound.

I constantly misplaced things in my childhood. I remember my mom being really upset with me because I lost my winter jacket. It was snowing when I left the house and snowing

when I came home; the only thing that changed was that I returned without a jacket. I still am not sure what happened. I do have some vague memory of cheap wine and a bonfire.

Rarely did I make it to school with the full complement of books, papers, and pencil. My high school homework was left at the kitchen table so often that in two courses, I received a grade of D, while the table got a C+. By the time I was a senior, I had mastered a technique to avoid this: After completing my homework, I nicely folded it and placed it inside my shoes. That way I couldn't forget it the next morning as I finished dressing and headed out of the house. Yeah, the papers were wrinkled and had a lived-in smell, but at least they weren't lost. (This is another reason why we should raise teachers' pay.)

I never lost my door key because I wore it around my neck on a long shoestring. My car keys, however, were a different matter. For a while, I assumed that they were living objects, capable of moving on their own. How else to explain that they were never where I left them? I was often late in my teenage years because I couldn't find my keys. Wise man that I was, this changed once I got a job. I purchased several sets of keys and placed them around the house and under the floormat in the car. Habits change slowly, though, so I needed to replenish my key supply every six months or so.

That became expensive but it was better than being late.

Now, as a semi-youthful adult, I still lose things but the things are different. Losing my recollection about medication is a big problem. Most mornings I ask myself: Did I take my pills? I realize that younger readers may not see this as a problem, but wait, you'll get there too. At 10am, it's difficult to remember if you took today's pills at 7am. I initially tried to solve this by writing the date and YES on a small piece of paper. Smart, eh? Well, not so much because I kept losing the paper. Currently, I immediately send myself an email after taking the pills, noting the date and time. So far that is working, though twice the message wound up in my spam folder.

Worst is that I constantly lose my books. I usually am reading three or four books, so I can always find one to read, but it's frustrating if I am seeking a particular book because it's almost always missing. But, dear reader, Hawkeye is on this! My new solution comes from the past. Lately I have been jamming the paperback book I am reading at night in my shoes before I go to bed. It's not always an easy fit (I'm only a 9 1/2), but brute force and some Vaseline can get just about any book in there.

Next month I will write about things I have found, beginning with the key to happiness. Hint: chocolate and cheap cigars are involved.




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