

The *TIMES* of.... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Vol. 51, No. 2

Summer 2021

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

The oldest neighborhood newspaper in St. Louis

FREE

Independent and all volunteer-run since 1970

How Our Food Pantries Reflect Who We Are

By Cecilia Nadal

To successfully quarantine during the pandemic, we bought lots of groceries and other necessities to minimize our contact with the public. We hunkered down! There were those among us who did not have the money to buy a stockpile, because what little money they had was used on paying overdue rent and/or purchasing medicines essential to their health. Those facing food insecurity most often have food pantries keeping them from being hungry or even homeless.

Those that regularly came to our neighborhood food pantries during the pandemic knew the volunteers would be there when everything was locked down. They were right!

Pantries have amazingly remained open throughout the pandemic! If you faced food insecurity for the first time, there were several challenges. First, you'd have to muster up the strength to ask for help. Second, you would have to figure out where to go hoping you wouldn't be judged by the fact that you needed help.

Be assured that in our community all are received with care and compassion!

It's not common to find three food pantries within a half mile of each other, yet, that is precisely the case in our neighborhood. Grace United Methodist Church on Waterman Blvd., New Cote Brillante Church of God on Washington Blvd. and Grace and Peace Fellowship on Delmar Blvd. have addressed food insecurity in our area for 20 to 30 plus years.

According to Feeding America, almost 47 million Americans suffer from food insecurity. In 2016 almost 79,500 people in St. Louis City faced food insecurity and needed help from pantries.

I wanted to know more about who the people were that volunteered and kept these operations going for so long and for so many people during this challenging pandemic.

I contacted each Church, set up telephone interviews with volunteers and eventually met them in person for photographs when we were all vaccinated. So, let me introduce you to



Rozita Mitchell New Cote Brilliant Church of God



left to right: Betty Burke and Vanessa Bogaty, Grace United Methodist and Michael Schulte, Grace and Peace Fellowship



Pantry in Pittsburgh serving those affected by pandemic

Pantry Locations and Schedule

Grace United Methodist: 6199 Waterman Blvd.
Every Tuesday from 9:45 AM to 11:45 AM

New Cote Brillante Church of God:
6195 Washington Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63112
Every Tuesday from 12 noon to 1:00 PM

Grace and Peace Fellowship: 5574 Delmar Blvd.
First and third Wednesdays from 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM.
Fourth Saturdays 11:00 AM to 12 Noon
Winter Homeless Shelter (November-April)

McPherson Breakfast Garden Tour



Skinker-DeBaliviere hosted its first neighborhood event since the pandemic shut down the beginning of June with the McPherson Breakfast Garden Tour, a fundraiser for the Community Council.

For the garden's 23rd tour instead of visiting backyards in the neighborhood, the tour was concentrated in the McPherson Community Garden

for safety due to the pandemic protocols. Because the tour was in the community garden, it was an opportunity for neighbors to gather and visit while eating breakfast and to discover parts of the garden that they may not have known existed such as a grape arbor, fruit trees, sunflower garden, an herb garden, and a honeybee hive!

The garden tour always has a theme and this year's theme was heirloom butter beans. There were nine puzzle pieces in the garden with the letters that spelled out the theme and produced a coloring page once the puzzle was put together. In addition, anyone who completed the puzzle could plant and take home their own bean plant! It was great to enjoy a neighborhood event again!

And excerpt from the book explaining the theme is below:

An heirloom is an item that has been passed along from family members through generations. An heirloom plant is created when the best seeds from the plant are selected, replanted, and saved year after year. Today we are sharing a plant that is both an heirloom plant, and a family heirloom. Linda Cross' grandparents Thelma and Otto Schlosser (aka "Tom" and "Spud") lived in Baden, Missouri, and had a beautiful garden, filled with flowers and vegetables. They were very frugal and creative with their resources, and they repurposed materials and plant containers. They collected and saved seeds from each year's harvest, and shared crops and seeds with their friends and family, including their butter beans. Why are these magic beans? Because if children plant them, and water them, and pick them when they are ripe, they eat them and enjoy them! When fussy, picky eaters ask to have lima beans, that is magic. And, if you save the seeds – leave them on the vine until the pods get tan and the seeds dry out – you can plant them again and grow hundreds more – it's magic!



Editor's Notes

By Linda Cross

It is often said, "the only constant is change". This time frame for me has been about transitions. We are transitioning seasons, national political leadership direction, and slowly emerging from the dystopian reality that has been the past 18 months of a global pandemic. Although I see most of the changes as positive, this isolated time has left me leery about going back to my old normal. I recently went to a birthday party that was outdoors and attended by almost entirely vaccinated people. The first topic of conversation among most of us was "Do you think we need masks? We are vaccinated and outdoors, but I feel uncomfortable leaving home without a mask." Just a year ago who would have thought we would feel that way, and who would ever have guessed that science would be politically controversial? Andy and I hosted the Breakfast Garden Tour the first Saturday of June. We had great attendance, great weather, great neighbors and friends, and yet I was thinking to myself "Am I ready to begin all this volunteering again? Not just this event, but the dozens on the horizon. I have learned that this not an uncommon theme. People love to see friends, go to events, volunteer and help others to make the world a better place, but even though the pandemic was stressful and caused uncertainty, this time of isolation has caused much introspection and making choices about what aspects of our life that we want to continue and those that we think should be abandoned – overscheduled, overcommitted, wasteful. I have been working with a professional to help me in making decisions for the future that are the best for me. I recommend this to everyone. Hopefully this shake-up will give us the fortitude to make positive changes. The trouble for me is never the theory but the execution! Everyone, please take this time and analyze what habits you want to bring from your 'old life' into our 'new normal' and be kind to yourself in your decisions.

One of the things that I really enjoy is this paper, and with that I am happy to say that we are adding a new column of book reviews for authors in our neighborhood. We have so much talent in the neighborhood, and I find authors don't get as much press as other artists because their work is not as visual in nature. Thanks to our neighbors Tim Woodcock and Katy Gordon who have agreed to take over this new venture. Please enjoy!

Lindell Reconfiguration Planned

A repaving of Lindell from Skinker to Kingshighway is coming due. This presents an opportunity to reconfigure the street to enhance safety and better serve all users. Under consideration are two vehicle travel lanes in the center flanked by bike lanes and parking at the curbs. The design wasn't ready to share in detail at press time so stay tuned for information and opportunity to give feedback in SDCC emails and on the SDCC webpage at <https://skinkerdebaliviere.wordpress.com/>.

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: August 15, 2021

for our September - October 2021 Issue. Please send copy by e-mail to Linda Cross, lcross@sdtimes.org, by disc to 6060 McPherson Ave, 63112.

The TIMES of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

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The Times of Skinker DeBaliviere is published by the West End Publishing Co., a not-for profit, independent, community organization. Layout: Karen Hilmes Printing: Arcade Printing

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Readers are welcome to send us e-mail or letters commenting on any of our content. Send to lcross@sdtimes.org.

A Paean to City and Hood

By Lana Stein

I have lived in a number of cities and states in my adult life. An academic job brought me to St. Louis but I did not expect to remain for 34 years. Soon after my arrival, I began interviews about the city bureaucracy. I kept interviewing well over the next decade. Unlike other cities, St. Louis politicians and administrators and other community folk were gracious with their time. They sometimes helped me contact others who would be of use. It was a wonderful situation and I am quite grateful. Only 2 people out of more than 200 did not grant interviews. This has been an accessible city for residents and academics alike.

In 1989, I moved to Skinker DeBaliviere and it is here that I formed deep friendships. This is as welcoming place as its diverse population interacts with each other. Generous and friendly is how I would characterize it. Things are not perfect but residents who dispute an issue often come together later. I have pipe dreams of living by the ocean or residing again in my native state. But, I know I can never replace the coterie of friends I have in our hood. Of course, times pass. Some move on. But, the amicability remains. Born in adversity, there is still all for one and one for all, not 100% of the time but more than most hoods. So the ocean will remain a pipe dream and, hopefully, Skinker DeBaliviere will remain a special place.

Winter Garden Apartment Refresh

The owner's of the Winter Garden Apartments, a senior living community on Kingsbury and DeBaliviere have pulled permits for a five million dollar renovation project to commence towards the fall of this year. The building has 122 units that will be receiving new flooring, cabinetry, paint, and appliances. The tenants will receive assistance being located to another unit while their units are being addressed. In addition, there will be upgrades to the common areas of the building including the community room and laundry facilities, as well as new landscaping.



News of Neighbors

By Rachel Boxdorfer

Hello neighbors! Things are opening up as I write my column and begin-ning to feel a little more normal or "new normal". I know that there are a lot of graduations that have been celebrated and I would like to share that news in our fall issue. I want to include as many graduates as we can. So please, send me your news about your graduates, whatever level of schooling they are graduating from. It is an incredible accomplishment, especially this year, and it should be recognized. I would love a photo and information on where they graduated from and what is next in their future. Thanks in advance for sharing.

And now, let's move on to current news about our neighbors.

Special news comes to us from Anna and Eric Friesen of the 6100 block of McPherson. Their daughter, Nathalie Friesen and Matt Brill got engaged in January 2020. They thought that a wedding date they chose May 1, 2021 was far in the future...with Covid things got a bit uncertain. Luckily the time allowed for most to get vaccines and cases to go down so the wedding happened as planned.



Nathalie Friesen and Matt Brill

The ceremony took place at Saint Roch Church, officiated by Monsignor Polizzi, followed by reception at Third Degree Glass Factory. Matt is the oldest son of Dave and Pam Brill of Kansas City. Nathalie and Matt have met at Deloitte. They spent their honeymoon in Hawaii.



Neville and JoAnn Vatcha

Family and friends were deeply saddened when Neville Vatcha died on June 2. Described as the nicest man, he will be remembered for his friendliness to everyone he encountered. The children in the

family all flocked to him. He and his wife JoAnn lived in Skinker DeBaliviere for over 50 years. They were very active in the neighborhood and it's myriad activities. Neville served on the council and was the amiable co-host of numerous new neighbors parties and other special events. He and Jo were also active in the 28th Ward Regular Democrats. A native of Bombay (now Mumbai), he came to Indiana Institute of Technology to study engineering and never left. His contributions shan't be forgotten. Condolences to JoAnn, daughters Chanaya (Marc Jacobs), and Dina (Shintu Kumar) and three grandsons, Will and Evan Jacobs and Argun Vatcha -Kumar as well as numerous devoted friends and relations.

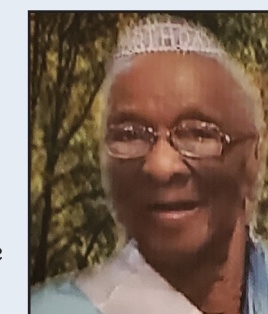


Mary Abkemeir

After 44 wonderful years, Parkview resident Mary Abkemeir has retired from Fontbonne University. Mary has served as the chair of the department of mathematics and computer science and director of the MS degree in computer science. We wish Mary the very best in her retirement and future adventures. Congratulations!

Mrs. Annie Stanfield of the 6000 block of McPherson passed away at the age of 96 years young after living 47 years in the Skinker DeBaliviere neighborhood in the same home. Her daughter Gloria talked of her mother's love to walk through the neighborhood with her good friend Mrs. Crenshaw enjoying neighbors and even going to Forest Park regularly, even in the winter months. Gloria loved her mother's cooking and learned from her every day until her passing. She is another neighborhood pioneer that will be missed.

Mrs. Oletha Sills, of the 6000 block of McPherson celebrated her 102nd birthday in May! Woodrow Wilson was the president when Mrs. Sills was born and she has lived in this same home for more than 50 years. Mrs. Sills



Mrs. Oletha Sills

can often be found sitting on the front porch of the house with a family member looking out over the neighborhood. We all join in wishing Mrs. Sills a very happy birthday! She celebrated with family and enjoyed the day.

Candace O'Connor and Bob Wiltenburg, of the 6100 block of Kingsbury shared exciting news that her daughter Kate Wiltenburg Todrys just published a new book, Black Snake: Standing Rock, the Dakota Access Pipeline, and Environmental Justice. It is the story of four incredible Native American women leaders in their fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline. Candace actually went on a couple of trips to the reservations with Kate while she did her research. According to Candace, it was an eye opening experience.



Kate Wiltenburg Todrys



The Rater Family

The Rater Family of Kingsbury Square was able to take a trip to Juneau, Alaska to visit daughter Claire. Dan and Molly, along with their other two daughters, Mary and Anne enjoyed a week in March enjoying the beautiful scenery. Claire has been in Alaska since August with Americorps. She will be attending graduate school at the University of Washington in Seattle in the fall to study public health.

DeGiverville resident Gloria L'Ecuyer shared sad news of the passing of neighbors Edward Dock Gunn, David Lewis Bradley, and Albert Polk. All three passed away in 2020. We send our condolences to their families.

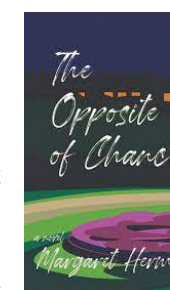
Don't forget to send in any news you have to share. And especially news about our 2021 graduates. Thank you!

Do you have news to share? Please send your submissions via email with the subject line News of Neighbors to rachelb@sdtimes.org or drop off a note to the attention of Rachel Boxdorfer at the Skinker DeBaliviere office. Be sure to mark it "News of Neighbors". We love to hear about neighbors accomplishments, awards, travels, weddings, anniversaries, births, and more!

SD Book Review

By Tim Wookcock and Katy Gordon

The novel by longtime Skinker-DeBaliviere resident Margaret Hermes, *The Opposite of Chance*, came out in March – and it's a book that has been several decades in the making. As the acknowledgements section of the book explains, the first drafts were written in Ireland in the early 1980s – and with some of those earliest drafts literally being "penned" before the advent of widespread personal computers. Most



of the book was written on this side of the Atlantic, however, and some sections have been published elsewhere as short stories.

The story in a nutshell: Betsy, a 30-something librarian reassessing her life shortly after a divorce, sets out on a trip to Europe, making friends easily, and savoring life rather than rushing through a "grand tour" type itinerary of the continent. She never seems to feel especially homesick for Milwaukee but, with this being a fish out of water tale, it is also inevitable that she will make her way back to the Midwest.

Along the way there are many flirtations – some of the men are charming, others

are sleazy, and the line between the two is rarely entirely clear; sometimes the attention Betsy receives is unwanted, sometimes it is encouraged. It is not until the final section of book, which is set in Dublin, Ireland, that Betsy seems to find a true connection.

Much of the book follows a rather unusual repeating pattern – one chapter showing the protagonist exploring a new locale as a tourist, leading to an entanglement of one kind or the other, and then a subsequent chapter in which an illuminating back story of the newly introduced character is revealed. In this context, we meet Donata, the daughter of a sketchy hotel owner;

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND: Consider the butterflies!

By Mark Banaszak and Katrina Stierholz

Summer is peak butterfly season for those who notice and enjoy them. Although less common than in years past, it is still not unusual to see all kinds in St. Louis, fluttering from flower to flower. Missouri Department of Conservation's observers have recorded almost 200 hundred different species of butterflies in Missouri. Appreciating their beauty is a pleasure, but understanding their value to our ecosystem is imperative.



Butterflies are important for pollination. Over 85 percent of plants require pollination to reproduce and the vast majority of the pollination is done by insects. Butterflies pollinate over greater distances than many insects, ensuring reproduction across distances providing needed support for at-risk plant species.

Butterflies are also valuable as indicator species. Indicator species are used by scientists and conservationists to measure the health of ecosystems (like the impacts of pollution), to determine whether an area is being adequately maintained or restored, and to notice warning signs of dangerous changes (like climate change). Reductions in butterflies can be a signal that things are awry.

There are many threats to butterfly and pollinator populations. The greatest has been loss of habitat to development and climate change, but pesticide use and invasive species can also lead to population loss. Many people are finding ways to contribute their efforts to helping save and restore butterfly populations.

One common way to help is by planting a butterfly-friendly garden. Many common annuals and perennials appeal to butterflies, including Gaillardia, Cosmos, Marigolds, Bee Balm, Black-Eyed Susan, Hollyhock, Purple Coneflower, and Butterfly Bush. MonarchWatch.org also encourages waystation gardens specifically for Monarch butterflies. Monarchs are good at spotting their favorite plants, so a garden with several kinds of milkweed will often attract them not only to feed, but a place to lay eggs as they travel north. Watching the caterpillars grow and transform into butterflies is a wondrous thing to see.

Butterflies, because of their role as indicator species, are also a great venue for citizen science. MonarchWatch.org has an annual census where people volunteer to count Monarchs. There are phone apps that assist people to provide research grade observations to scientists. iNaturalist is a common app for this kind of citizen science. One of the most useful ways to contribute to the scientific study of butterflies is to join the Missouri Butterfly Monitoring Network through the Missouri Botanical Gardens. The network plans Pollard Walks and trains people in conducting them. A Pollard Walk is a short walk, conducted several times a year over a documented path, with a specific observation protocol. Most walkers repeat their walks over the course of years, providing observation data that is entered in a nation-wide database. The data is used not just to measure butterfly populations, but to assess the health and quality of ecosystems.

Whether you contribute to citizen science efforts like MonarchWatch or the Missouri Butterfly Monitoring Network, or you start including more butterfly friendly plants in your garden, it is important to recognize that your efforts are important, not just to save butterfly populations, but because butterflies represent an important indicator of the health of our environment. Consider the butterflies, because their presence is not just a blessing, but an indication of the health of our land.

SDCC Appreciates Our First Responders

On the Friday in February closest to Valentine's Day, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council has been holding an annual Appreciation Luncheon to honor the brave men and women who take care of our wonderful neighborhood. This year would have been the 26th anniversary. Given the present pandemic situation, we were unable to have the traditional potluck lunch, but more than ever, we felt the need to express our appreciation and love to our first responders. We had to come up with an alternate plan!

Arline Webb had the brainstorm and coordinated a Pack and Deliver event. Ruth Johnson did her usual bang-up job of calling all previous food providers, but instead of requesting the much-appreciated home cooked hot dishes they usually shared, she lined up donations of bags of fruit, individual chip bags, and homemade cookies packaged in individual serving sizes. The donations poured into the SDCC office!

Snarf's on Skinker generously provided a 25% discount on 90 sandwiches which we were able to purchase using monetary donations from neighbors. Busey Bank purchased red, reusable drawstring bags for packing the lunches. When the number of first responders suddenly increased as the day approached, Mary Anne Rudloff graciously offered to provide additional decorated paper lunch bags.

On the morning of Friday, February 12th, Arline, Mickey Clarke, Ruth Beckloff, and Karen Kelsey came in to the SDCC office, normally closed on Fridays, to divide and pack the multitude of food donations. Once the lunches and goodies were all sorted, Mary Anne and Alderwomen, Heather Navarro and Shameem Hubbard, came to assist Arline, Mickey, and Ruth with the deliveries. Fire Stations on Enright, Vandeventer and DeBaliviere; the Washington University Police; Delmar Metro Security; and 5th District North Patrol all received boxes of lunches or treats.

The recipients expressed effusive gratitude for being acknowledged and the deliverers enjoyed their visits immensely. The alternate appreciation delivery event was a huge success! To be sure, however, everyone is looking forward to the time when we can all come together again to have our crowded, boisterous, potluck luncheon to say THANK YOU to our first responders in person - maybe in 2022!



Food Pantries continued from page 1

Vanessa Bogaty, Betty Burke, Rozita Mitchell and Michael Schulte!

They are accomplished professionals using their retirement and skills to serve others!

Vanessa is the co-director of the pantry at Grace Methodist and grew up in the Skinker-DeBaliviere community and her mother still lives on DeGiverville. She got married, moved to Richmond Heights and worked for the State of Missouri 20 years with the Commission on Human Rights. Once retired, she began volunteering with the pantry at Grace Methodist, her home church. "My mother always believed that no one should want for food and that we should provide for them. So, it was natural for me to do this work with very nice people including my co-workers and the people we serve."

Betty Burke and Vanessa work together at the Grace Methodist pantry and Vanessa describes Betty as "a force of nature" due to her enthusiasm and hard work at the pantry. Betty was born in Shanghai, China but has been in the USA for most of her life, eventually working in healthcare as a Medical Technician. She moved to Skinker-DeBaliviere with her family attending St. Roch Catholic Church. She retired in 2011. Betty joined the pantry because it was close to home and she wanted to serve. As Betty put it, "The pantry is a wonderful way to meet great and kind people. I'm even a member of Grace Methodist Women's Club and continue going to St. Roch!"

Rozita Miller attends New Cote Brillante Church of God and works as volunteer coordinator of the pantry at New Cote Brillante. Rozita worked as a disability rights advocate, visiting nursing homes to investigate abuse and neglect. "I look forward to going to the pantry every week. This past Tuesday was my birthday, even so, I wasn't going to miss this act of service."

Michael Schulte, attends Grace and Peace Fellowship and has worked in their pantry and women's homeless shelter for six years. Before retiring he was a professor of Computer Science at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. (He completely debunks the idea that computer geeks are not compassionate and people-oriented!) He emphasized "as Christians we are here to serve. We see those who come to the pantry as our customers not our clients."

After hours of conversations here are the direct voices of these outstanding individuals about their work, their fellow volunteers and our community.

The volunteers are intensely compassionate, dedicated and care about inclusivity.

The Skinker-DeBaliviere community has a reputation for supporting the pantries

"The Skinker DeBaliviere community has been very supportive of the pantry!" Rozita, New Cote Brillante

Once a month neighbors living on Westminster Place are encouraged to leave donations at the home of Grady and June Vaughan. They have graciously taken the lead in giving everyone a convenient way to give to the pantries. In addition, the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council has an annual food drive throughout our community.

According to Michael Schulte at Grace and Peace Fellowship, "churches in the area that do not have pantries sometimes collect foods and give it to us along with the Boy Scouts and other groups."

After interviewing these wonderful food pantry volunteers, I walked away knowing that the character and compassion of this community is reflected in the success and TLC given by these food pantry volunteers to those in need. In the words of the volunteers, "They are us."



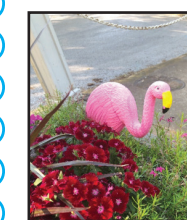
KIDS CORNER

By Tracy Granneman

SCAVENGER HUNT

The Skinker Debaliviere neighborhood has many fun (and sometime hidden) places to explore.

Take a tour of the neighborhood to see if you can find where these pictures were taken!



Many of these birds migrated north this year. Can you find this one? How many can you count as you walk? Hint: Westminster seems to be the favorite habitat.



Have you visited this destination to trade a book? Hint: It is pretty close to where #2 is located.



Find this "water feature" at another fabulous park and playground! Hint: This is located in our largest park that is almost three acres big!



Here is another spot to leave a book and take a book. Hint: It sits right next to one of our two neighborhood gardens!



Can you find this flag in one of our parks? Hint: to get to this park, you have to enter from DeBaliviere.



This is a tough one! Can you find this metal statue? Hint: It can be found in a tiny park at the meeting point of three streets

This newest library in our neighborhood is even lit at night! Hint: Take a tour on Pershing to find this special treat!

Scavenger Hunt Answer Key... (map courtesy of mymaps.google.com)



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From Your 28th Ward Alderwoman: Heather Navarro

Serving on the Board of Aldermen this last year has felt a little like watching the Brady Bunch. Every Friday as we log on to our virtual meeting, the faces of the aldermen populate boxes across the screen where we debate and vote on legislation. With the availability of the vaccine and new guidance from the CDC, I look forward to meeting with my colleagues in person soon. Our meetings will continue to be available to those who want to watch from the comfort of their home, either on STL TV or streaming on Youtube.

Items up for discussion this session are the spending of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds, the closing of the Workhouse, and redrawing ward boundaries for 14 wards (a reduction from the 28 we currently have). We updated the rules this year to require public testimony on every bill before it can be finally passed. Every bill is sent to a committee after it is introduced and first read. These committee meetings are open to the public and, while public testimony has generally been allowed, it has been up to the chair whether to hear it. Before COVID, when we would meet in person it was relatively easy for people to walk in and

share a few words with the committee. In a virtual setting, we are all familiar by now with the challenges of muting and unmuting, raising the little blue hand, and sharing screens. Despite these difficulties, the Board of Aldermen and many government offices are changing and adapting.

COVID has made meeting virtually a reality, but I look forward to getting back to seeing people in person. While we were limited this past year to waving from across the street and straining to hear each other behind masks, we will soon be able to sit across the table and share stories, to greet one another with handshakes, and console and congratulate our neighbors with hugs. I look forward to escaping my Brady Bunch box and sitting next to my colleagues on the floor of the chamber at City Hall. However, we need more people to get vaccinated, especially for the sake of the people who do not have the privilege of working from home, such as our grocery store clerks, bus drivers, custodial staff, and health care workers.

We still have a ways to go, but rest assured, City Hall is getting more accessible for everyone.

News from The Delmar Loop

By Rachelle L'Ecuyer

I am writing to you just a day after the CDC issued new mask guidelines so how that will change local restrictions is still unclear but we are seeing big changes on Delmar as many businesses that adjusted or ceased operations are getting back to something "more normal"! Looking back over the year, many of the businesses in The Delmar Loop are grateful for your support and we hope to see more of our neighbors on the Loop.

The Moonrise Hotel is reopening for hotel reservations and restaurant service. The Eclipse restaurant chef has developed a new menu and the staff is ready to serve you. The Moonrise's Rooftop Terrace Bar is poised to reopen this summer.

The Pageant and Delmar Hall continue their "The Endeavor or Normalcy Series" and looking into the fall and winter hope to see the return of national performers. The Pageant and their staff are fully dedicated to making the venue safe for patrons during this time. Check out the shows and the efforts they are making to create a safe environment at ThePageant.com.

Swade, the medical marijuana dispensary, housed in a former church building that sat vacant for 15 years, is currently training staff and stocking their inventory. They plan to open sometime in June. Swade is located at 6166 Delmar and the website is swadecannabis.com.

There's always something fun on The Delmar Loop's social media: Facebook, @thedelmarloop; Instagram @delmarloop; and Twitter @thedelmarloop. News updates: www.visittheloop.com.


Stay well and healthy!



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June 17 and July 15

More info on Facebook & <https://ward28stldems.org>



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SD Book Review *continued from page 3*

the family of Kassim, who is returning to Montreal after a pilgrimage to Mecca and who encounters Betsy in the airport; Brian and Colin, entertaining bickering best friends in Northern Ireland. (Brian recently crossed paths with Betsy in the grimy French port of Le Havre and describes her as "ancient" but "brilliant for all that.") Many of these chapters are successful and satisfying as discrete short stories (and indeed were published in that way in various literary journals) and yet they also work when stitched together into an episodic whole, exploring the theme of how little people really learn of one another in chance encounters.

Hermes writes vividly about being a stranger in a strange land, with language often being a barrier that is too high to climb, despite the human impulse to connect across cultures. In France, we are told that the American visitor with poor pronunciation "requested a taxi driver to take her to the train station [gare] and he replied that there was no war [guerre] in France" and in fact she had missed World War II by four decades. In the section in Florence, Hermes wittily notes that in Italian, if you don't know the language, everything sounds like a food stuff. And even in Ireland, where English is spoken, the colorful Irish idioms cause much confusion - mostly of a benign nature - to the American visitor.

Whether you are able to travel or not this summer, The Opposite of Chance makes for an enjoyable read, both as a novel and a compendium of short stories, and as well as an evocation of Europe in the 1980s. With Hermes, it is a rare talent with have in our midst.

The Opposite of Chance is published by Delphinium Books.

Tim Woodcock worked at the West End Word newspaper from 2002-2009 and currently teaches English and journalism at St. Louis Priory School.



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IN YOUR EAR

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

What would you like to have written on your tombstone?

Sure, there will be your birthdate, a dash, and when you died, but what else? Think of it as a granite easel, a chance to define yourself for posterity. Or at least for a generation or two. After all, when you're gone, you're gone, and that opens the door to lots of misremembering. You can avoid the "Who was he?" or "What was she like?" debates with an inscription that captures your essence in the granite. If nothing else, this your opportunity to speak to future archeologists.

OK, before you read any further, please take a moment and consider the phrase you want as the epitaph on your tombstone. I am waiting. Do you have it?

One of my favorite columns (a favorite one that I didn't write, anyway) is by David Brooks, in which he wrote about the ways that people are portrayed at their funeral. He categorized the comments into either resume virtues or legacy virtues. Both are said with respect and care, but they are quite different. Resume virtues are those that get us ahead in the work world: hard worker, skilled, gets the job done; you list them on your resume. Legacy virtues speak to our relationships: good parent, great friend, wonderful spouse, takes in stray pets; they capture how we make people feel. Schools focus on our resume virtues, but the legacy virtues are cited at funerals. I've been to quite a few memorials and funerals lately, and he is spot-on.

What about you? When you considered your epitaph, did you envision a chiseled resume or legacy virtue? Did it note your job or reflect your relationships with others? What about your sense of humor or culinary skills? Did it mention a pet? Remember, this epitaph is your chance to define the way you want to be remembered. It's kind of like photo-shop for granite.

Christopher Wren, the architect of St. Paul's Cathedral in London is buried in this majestic church, and the wording on his tomb says, "If you seek his monument, look around." The ambition of Alexander the Great is captured in his epitaph: "A tomb now suffices him for whom the world was not enough." Those inscriptions definitely refer to resume virtues.

For some, the next chapter may hold more promise than today's corporeal existence. Edgar Allen Poe's tombstone says, "Here, at last, he is happy." Impact and the power of memory are inscribed on Abraham Lincoln's tomb: "Now he belongs to the ages." An epitaph which is powerful in reflecting time and culture is on the tombstone of Leonard Matlovich, a Vietnam veteran, recipient of a Purple Heart and Bronze Star and the first serviceman to publicly proclaim that he was gay. It says: "When I was in the military they gave me a medal for killing two men and a discharge for loving one." It hurts to read that.

Some people who lived by generating smiles use their tombstones to continue to elicit them after their death. Comedian Spike Milligan gets the last laugh; his says: "I told you I was ill." On Rodney Dangerfield's tombstone is written, "There goes the neighborhood," and Janet Girolamo uses her tombstone to chastise: "If you can read this, you're standing on my boobs." Gosh, I wish I had known her.

We are all ephemeral – alas, that becomes clearer to me each day – so I asked some friends what they would like as the epitaph on their tombstone. David Brooks would be pleased that the ultimate legacy virtue, love, is prominent in many of the responses. Angela couldn't decide between "she loved deeply" or "she loved ice cream," so my guess is she loved ice cream deeply. Tracy replied, "She had love and she knew how to use it," while Eileen wants hers to say, "My life's journey, filled with seasons of joy, tears, laughter and love of family, children and friends." Their words absolutely describe these folks. Linda envisions "she loved her family, friends, and community and was loved in return." Jim wisely noted our transitory nature when he said, "This, too, shall pass."

The importance of Brooks' legacy virtues are reflected in how Mimi wants to be remembered in granite, "She tried to change the world & enjoy the world, all in one day," and if you met Mimi, you would know that this is her. Travis wishes his tombstone to say, "He found his joy in helping others," and that's him, for sure. Gary's epitaph has a request: "My time on Earth was short, but I hope my memories last forever. When you think of me, I hope it brings a smile to your face." Yep, that is a given. Kathleen's also has request but it seems to stem from a different motive: "Don't believe everything you hear!" her tombstone will implore, and knowing her, that is also a given. Marty's tombstone will say, "If only I had exercised less" and Mindy's will reflect on her wild and exhausting ride with a simple "Whew!" My favorite epitaph comes from Amy: "Make the dash count." That says it all. As for my tombstone, a simple "He tried his best" will suffice.

OK, dear reader, what about you? What would you like on your tombstone? I'd much rather read a preview of your epitaph now than see it later, in granite. Send your semi-pithy final words to me at trhoerr@aol.com. Peace and may the force be with you.

(Note: Brooks' column appeared in the April 11, 2015 NYT).



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