

The *TIMES* of.... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Vol. 53, No. 3

September - October 2023

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

The oldest neighborhood newspaper in St. Louis

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Independent and all volunteer-run since 1970



PORCHFEST PREVIEW

By Tim Woodcock

Skinker DeBaliviere will be transformed in the site of wide-ranging music festival on the afternoon on Sunday, Sept. 17. PorchFest STL, returning for its fifth year, takes place on porches and front yards across the neighborhood, with bands playing 45-minute sets and culminating with two main stage acts at Greg Freeman Park, 6008 Kingsbury, for the final portion of the day.

You are invited to soak up the music throughout the day, starting at 1 p.m. Please bring lawn chairs and consider inviting friends from outside the neighborhood. Last year's event was enhanced by picture-perfect late summer weather and hopefully this year will be the same.

Sunday, September 17, 2023

A full listing of performers and neighborhood venues is being finalized, and a map with suggested walking routes will be available online and in printed form on the day.

The performers playing at ad-hoc venues across the neighborhood span a wide range of genres including folk, indie, punk, Americana, new age, classic rock, jazz, and choral music. The unusually wide diversity of the performers gives the event a choose-your-own-adventure quality, and you can easily seek out a kind of music that you have not seen before – one band describes its genre as “chiptune,” electronic music based on arcade machines and computer games. The Opera Bell Band, a Porchfest favorite, describe themselves as a “novelty folk” band.

Of the 35-plus bands who have signed up, half have performed at Porchfest previously and half are performing at the festival for the first time.

Throughout the day, food and drink will be available for purchase at Four Corners Park, as well as commemorative PorchFest posters and koozies. After wandering the neighborhood in search of live music, attendees are encouraged to claim a spot at Four Corners for an evening concert. This year's headline acts are alternative rock singer Hilary Fitz, followed by R&B performers the Diamond K Band, who aim to get the audience up and dancing.

PorchFest STL traces its roots back to Ithaca, New York. This unusual format of music festival has spread across the United States since 2007, predominantly in college towns on the east coast. The first PorchFest was organized by Washington University students and alumni and as it has grown larger, it has been embraced by the neighborhood and is now a project of the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council. Any profits from the festival will be donated to support the work of the community council.

Hope to see you there! The latest information about PorchFest 2023 can be found at facebook.com/PorchfestSTL/ and <https://porchfeststl.wixsite.com/mysite>.



UPDATE: Archdiocese of St. Louis targets St. Roch Parish for closure



An update on the Status of St. Roch Church. The Archdiocese decreed that St. Roch Parish would be subsumed by Christ the King Parish in University City. The decree of the Archdiocese has been appealed to the Vatican and at this time the parish is waiting a response. The following letter was sent to parishioners:

Your representatives on the Parish Council, School Board, and Finance Council recognize this is a time of uncertainty, especially for our school families. We want to assure you that we are working every day to make sure our Parish and School survive this consolidation process. We will continue our engagement and will not go away! Our school remains strong, and we anticipate a robust school year with continued successful outcomes. Shout out to our teachers – despite their own uncertainty, they have all stayed with us and remain resolute in the education of our students.

While we have not received a response to our appeal from the Vatican, Monsignor Turek continues to assure us that our Church and school will have a role in whatever resolution

St. Roch Parish *continued on page 3*

SUPPORT THE TIMES

The Times is a 100% volunteer newspaper. Although small, we take the responsibility seriously to get worthy information out to the neighbors. Due to Covid we were unable to have our usual fundraising gatherings and we now only have funds to print one or two issues of the paper which costs around \$1,300 per issue. We hope that you value the information that we bring to you and hope that you can support the paper with a one-time donation. We rely on both our advertisers and supporters to bring the Times to you. We sincerely thank you in advance for your backing. In order to facilitate giving we have included an envelope for donations or you can donate via credit card at <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/881fd47b-b3c9-4fb6-8901-38252512a9ee> or you can go to our website at sdtimes.org and click on the link 'Donate here'.

Editor's Notes

By Linda Cross

I was going to start this article with 'the seasons they are a'changin' but the record-breaking heat seems to disagree. Regardless of the temps, the fall brings to our neighborhood a new group of students and renters. Summer vacations have been replaced with fall school and family activities. I am looking forward to porch sitting season when it is not too hot to sit outside and talk to our neighbors a sip a cocktail.

Having said that, this is not a time that we can check out. The Vatican is still in the process of addressing the appeal of closing St. Roch Parish. (To clarify that does not mean that they are closing the church. Somehow, they feel that leaving a big empty church with no parishioners is different than closing the building).

In addition, we still have absentee landlords buying up single family homes and turning them into overcrowded rentals or short-term rentals that destabilizes the neighborhood, reduces the number of long-term owner-occupied invested homeowners, and reduces the housing stock driving up affordable housing.

However, we have committed SDCC committee members working on great activities for our neighbors, Porchfest, garden tours, yard sales, and concerts. Other committee members are developing a dog park to add a new and valued amenity to our neighborhood. Another neighbor has invested in a senior living development to help our neighbors be able to stay in the neighborhood as they age. We have block captains who volunteer their time to ensure that their blocks are informed of activities and meetings in the neighborhood. We also have friends that come together to have monthly pizza nights and annual block parties. We have volunteers who keep all the plantings in the neighborhood alive and beautiful, even if they are on city property. We have other volunteers that are running two neighborhood community gardens – a rare treat in an urban setting.

The point is every neighborhood faces challenges. What we do to face those challenges makes all the difference. Andy and I were so lucky to find a house in this neighborhood with a long rich history of activism and commitment. A neighborhood where the homeowners are invested, kind, interesting, and interested. I welcome the new batch of neighbors who will be with us for the year or for longer. I hope that you enjoy your new place and participate in the things that make this place so special.

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: October 15, 2023
for our November/December issue. Please send copy by e-mail to Linda Cross, lcross@sdtimes.org.

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 lcross@sdtimes.org.

15th ANNUAL BLOCK PARTY



photo by Elizabeth Holzer

Residents of the 6000 and 6100 blocks of Westminster enjoyed their 15th annual block party in October, 2022. This year's sweet sixteen block party will be on October 7.
- Anne Posega

SKINKER DEBALIVIERE NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES

Issues will come up in any neighborhood, potholes, lights out, noise. We are fortunate to have several resources that can be utilized to address problems:

The Neighborhood Stabilization Division (NSD) is a section of the Department of Public Safety. NSD houses two important groups: The Neighborhood Stabilization Team (NST) and The Citizens' Service Bureau (CSB). Their mission is to empower residents to sustain a quality environment within their neighborhood by providing information, assistance, education, intervention, and organization while registering and routing City services.

Sheree Hickman

Neighborhood Improvement Specialist (NIS)- DeBaliviere Place, Hamilton Heights, Skinker DeBaliviere, West End, Wydown Skinker

Email: hickmans@stlouis-mo.gov

Phone: (314) 657-1365

Address: 1520 MARKET St. Suite 4000, St. Louis, Missouri 63103

You can contact our Alderwoman of the 10th Ward.

Alderwoman Shameem Clark Hubbard

Email: clark-hubbards@stlouis-mo.gov

Phone: (314) 622-3287

Fax: (314) 622-4273

Address: City Hall, Room 230, 1200 Market Street, St. Louis, MO 63103

You can contact the Citizen's Service Bureau to report an issue.

The citizen's service bureau's purpose is to register and route city service requests, answer citizen requests for information, and provide city departments with statistics as needed. They can be reached at (314) 622-4800.

In addition, we have the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council that aims to be the connector, coordinator, and facilitator of all aspects necessary to maintain and enhance the diverse, desirable and thriving community of Skinker DeBaliviere.

The Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council

Mike Reid – Executive Director

Phone: (314) 862-5122

Address: 6008 Kingsbury Ave, St. Louis, MO 63112

Hopefully these agencies can address any difficulties that come up. Please feel to utilize these resources at our disposal to keep our neighborhood safe, diverse, and beautiful.

News of Neighbors



Emil Banaszak and Julia Trempala

Emil Banaszak of the 6100 block of McPherson married Julia Trempala on July 29th in St Louis. The couple met when they both worked on staff at Camp Arcadia in the summer of 2019. They just bought a house in Dutchtown and share it with their dog, Callie.

Gretchen Boxdorfer of the 6100 block of Kingsbury is engaged to Collin Gillmore. They currently reside in Omaha where



Gretchen Boxdorfer and Collin Gillmore

Collin is doing his residency at University of Nebraska Medical Center and Gretchen is teaching math at Iowa Western Community College.

The Rater family of Kingsbury Square took a much-postponed trip to Senegal Where Claire Rater served in the Peace Corps. They were back at the Peace Corps training center where Claire spent two months before going to her village. An all-girls trip: Claire's two grandmas, two sisters and mom. Claire stayed on after we left and was able to go back to her village for four days-very emotional for her, her departure was very abrupt in March 2020 due to Covid.



Rater family

It's a small world. Recently the Cross family of 6000 McPherson and the Parker family of the 6000 block of Kingsbury found out that both of their children, Isaac Parker and Sarah Cross will be in Wellington, New Zealand. Isaac has been traveling through New Zealand working at Vineyards in the south while Sarah Cross has been working in the north but came home for the summer for a job at the Muny. True to St. Louis, it was discovered during a McPherson block party that they would both be in Wellington starting in September.



Isaac Parker



Sarah Cross

Do you have news to share?

Please send your submissions via email with the subject line News of Neighbors to lcross@sdtimes.org. Be sure to mark it "News of Neighbors". We love to hear about neighbors accomplishments, awards, travels, weddings, anniversaries, births, and more!

Alderman Shameem Clark-Hubbard Answers Questions

By Lana Stein

Re Delmar: Washington University has purchased a good deal of property on the south side adjacent to our neighborhood. Are there any plans for that area?

Ald. Clark-Hubbard: She has met with representatives of the university. There are no plans to announce yet but she wants our neighborhood actively involved in the process.

Are there plans to continue the building of market-rate housing adjacent to the north side of Delmar?

Ald: There are preliminary plans in the works. It is an actively engaged block and a good asset.

What is your opinion about AirBnBs?

Ald: If a neighborhood wishes to restrict short-term rentals, she will support them.

How do you assess the problems with trash pick-up?

Ald: she feels it is improving. If a resident has a problem, call Citizens Service Bureau. If they do not respond, call her at 324-393-1393. Her web site is [www: shameemclarkhubbard.com](http://www.shameemclarkhubbard.com).

Alderman Clark-Hubbard has a 10th Ward meeting on the last Monday of the month. She changes the site each time to help bring the neighborhoods together. The location of the meeting will be on her website. All are welcome.

<https://www.shameemclarkhubbard.com/>

St. Roch Parish *continued from page 1*

occurs. Regardless of where we stand in October, when we anticipate some direction from the Archdiocese on our school, it is important to continue our immediate support for the Parish and school, financial and otherwise. Monsignor Polizzi used to "rally the troops" when an important event was upon us. We are at such a crossroads.

In the next few weeks, we will roll out details on how you can contribute to our fundraising efforts. We plan to hold an event in the Church Hall for those who want to attend live, and we will have options for continuous electronic donations (credit card, venmo, etc.). In the meantime, please remember to turn in your Sunday donations and Church envelopes. We understand and share any trepidation on contributions, however the weekly support from our parishioners is critically important to ensure St. Roch can meet its financial obligation and remain viable. Until we hear otherwise, we are operating as is. We plan to direct any donations as best we can to preserve St. Roch. If you wish to wait until we hear something about the school's future or on the appeal, we understand.

Grace UMC Community-Wide Food Packing Event

On Saturday, October 21, 2023 at 9am, Grace UMC (Skinker & Waterman) will host a community-wide food packing event to pack 2,400 meal kits (14,400 meals) for Midwest Mission to distribute to international destinations. In previous years, meal kits have been distributed through "Food for the Poor"- which distributes food in 17 different Latin and Caribbean countries. Children who are in first grade or older may participate in the food packing (although those younger than 13 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian). When signing up, please provide the ages of all participants under 13 and the names of any family members or other individuals you would like to work with so that we can place related participants on the same team (although there may be others on that team also - since each team consists of 10 participants). Childcare for children not yet in first grade will also be provided (if needed), so parents who would like to participate and bring children who are not yet in first grade are asked to also note their names and ages when they sign up so that we can plan childcare.

To add your name to the list of participants, please complete the form at <https://bit.ly/GUMCFood>, call the church office at 314-863-1992, or email Amy at secretary@graceumc-stl.org by October 12th.

Note: If your plans change after you register, please let us know. We assign participants to teams and determine the equipment needed based on the number of participants. The event runs less smoothly when we have "no-shows" at the last minute.

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND We need more trees!

By Mark Banaszak

We need more trees. They are important for us, for wildlife, and for our environment.

Many people don't know how important trees are important for urban areas, but they truly are. They add nature to an engineered landscape; they have colors, shapes, textures that soften the hard lines and sharp colors of cities. Scientific study tells us that trees can improve our emotional and physical well-being. Exercising or even just being among trees reduces anxiety and depression and can even reduce high blood pressure.



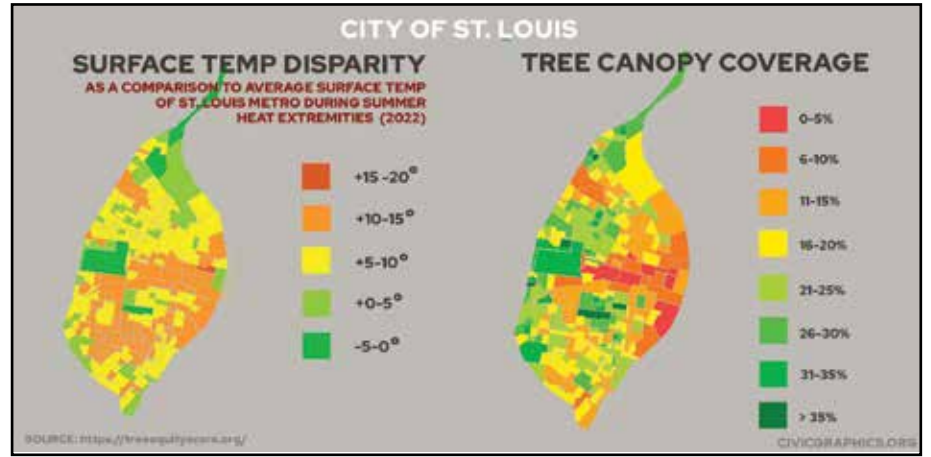
One medical study showed that hospital patients in rooms with a view of trees have shorter average stays after operations.

The presence of trees isn't just important for people. Trees provide habitat for wildlife. Birds, bees, bats, beetles and many other creatures take refuge and make their homes in trees. These animals benefit us directly in many ways. The songbirds living in the maple outside your house help control insect populations. The bats that live there do as well. Bees love our old oak trees because of the nectar and pollen they provide.

Trees provide economic benefit. People stay longer to shop on tree-lined streets, apartments rent more quickly in wooded areas, and healthy, large trees add to house values. Trees reduce street maintenance costs by protecting pavement from the sun. They save energy. The trees shading your house reduce cooling costs and their wind protection helps control heating costs. These savings can amount to as much as 30 percent of cooling costs and 20 percent of heating costs, if the trees are well-placed, according to the US Forest Service.

Most important, however, is the effect trees have on our environment. Trees improve water and soil conditions. Leaf canopies reduce soil erosion by lowering rain impact. Tree root systems take up water, cutting down stormwater runoff that leads to flooding. Trees have a profound effect on urban temperature. According to a recent article by Mike McCubbin in NEXTSTL.com (<https://nextstl.com/2023/08/reforesting-stl-in-the-era-of-climate-change/>), St. Louis city has

temperatures an average of 7 degrees higher because of the Urban Heat Island effect, which can be moderated by an improved tree canopy. An increase in canopy coverage of 6 or 7 percent would lower that heat island effect to safer levels, saving lives and money. Since trees grow slowly, planting them as soon as possible is important.



Fall is a great time to plant new trees. Picking the right tree and location can help trees thrive, so it is good to do a little research. The City of St. Louis Forestry Division has a good information on street trees, including important requirements for planting in the the tree lawn (<https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/parks/forestry/documents/upload/Street-Tree-Information1.pdf>). Forest ReLeaf sells Missouri native tree species in October and November. Planting native species is smart. Native plants are adapted to local soil and climate, so they are more likely to survive planting. They are also better habitat or food sources for local wildlife, like native birds.

There are several things to pay attention to when planting. Check the needs of the fully-grown tree against the planned location to determine whether your site is appropriate. A tree in the wrong spot can stress and weaken it. If you are focused on filling a specific location, evaluate its soil and sun conditions and then choose a tree that will thrive in that spot. Make sure the hole you dig is large enough. One rule of thumb is that the hole you dig should be at least two to three times as big as the pot. Take care with the roots. The root collar where the main stem meets the roots should be just at soil level. In general, you want to avoid doing much with the roots, but if the tree is root-bound, where the roots have started to circle the pot, it is helpful to gently untangle them, and make sure they extend down. Finally, mulch around it and water regularly to help the newly planted tree rebound quickly from transplanting.



When he was young, my son planted a seedling in this way in the tree lawn in front of our house. It was a bare-root, oak seeding, not even the thickness of a pencil. Somehow, the seedling survived neighborhood kids, lawn mowers, curbside parking – to become a beautiful oak tree. Now, it shades our porch during hot summers, and keeps the streetlight out of our bedrooms in the middle of the night. If you plant a sapling this fall, you can watch that gift grow and mature into a beautiful, useful tree.

If you want to give a gift to watch for years and benefit future generations, try one of these ideas:

Ask the city to plant a tree in your tree lawn (free!) via the Citizen's Service bureau (314622-4800) or <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/parks/forestry/trees/report-tree-problems.cfm>

1. Order a tree from Forest ReLeaf (<https://moreleaf.org/releaf-sales-program/>) and follow the instructions for planting above.
2. Go to your local nursery, talk to them about suitable trees, and purchase and plant a tree for your yard.

Find a place to call your own.

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Cecilia Nadal addresses 10th Annual Ulysses S. Grant Symposium at Soldiers Memorial telling the story of German Abolitionists in Hermann and its influence on her play, An Amazing Story: German Abolitionists of Missouri



St. Louis, Missouri- On July 21, 2023 the Missouri Humanities Council presented the 10th Annual Ulysses S. Grant Symposium at the Soldiers Memorial Museum in St. Louis. Cecilia Nadal, playwright and sociologist opened the Symposium with a speech detailing how the history of German Abolitionists



in Missouri inspired her original play, An Amazing Story: German Abolitionists of Missouri featured in St. Louis, Hermann, Washington with excerpts of the play presented in Hannibal recently as part of a Symposium On Shared History of Germans and African Americans in Missouri.



Nadal spoke enthusiastically about the role of German immigrants Carl Strehly and Eduard Muehl in Hermann who started the German language newspaper the *Hermanner Wochenblatt* advocating for the end of slavery while also assisting runaway slaves that sought assistance on the Missouri River. She talked about Judge Arnold Krekel, a German immigrant and abolitionist that assisted members of the 62nd and 65th Colored Infantry to start Lincoln Institute that would become the current Lincoln University. Describing this alliance between Black veterans, German and Black Abolitionists as a “dream team” that left an important and visible legacy in the State of Missouri. Interesting nuggets of history included a mention of George Hussmann considered the “father of the wine industry of Missouri” who was a member of the writing committee for the development of the emancipation decree that freed slaves in Missouri. He also spent time in Hermann and worked with Arnold Krekel who headed the convention emancipating slaves.

Cecilia was inspired by research conducted by fellow Skinker DeBaliviere resident Sydney Norton Ph D and the two have conducted joint speaking tours on the shared experiences of Germans and African Americans statewide. Sydney has edited the book *Fighting for a Free Missouri: German Immigrants, African Americans, and the issue of Slavery*. Cecilia has contributed a chapter in the book to be released by the University of Missouri in October. Readers may secure a 25% discount using FFFM25 at upress.missouri.edu or 800-621-2736

KIDS CORNER

By Jenny Matthews

Welcome Fall with a fun, easy **PUMPKIN PUDDING** you can make with an adult!



Ingredients:

- 1 cup full fat coconut yogurt or coconut cream
- 1/2 cup pure pumpkin puree
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon (optional)

Instructions:

1. Add all ingredients to a blender.
2. Blend on medium-high speed until smooth. Do not over-blend or it will become too thin.
3. Serve immediately or chill for 1-2 hours for thicker texture.
4. Top with whipped cream, chopped pecans & caramel drizzle if you like!
5. Enjoy!
6. Keep leftovers in the fridge.



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TRAPS FOR UNWARY HOMEOWNERS

By SDCC Housing & Zoning Committee

Are you getting calls or text messages from strangers eager to buy your home? Proceed with caution.

Homeowners should be alert to unsolicited offers with enticements of a big cash payment and quick closing. These buyers may employ fraudulent practices to pressure innocent residents into selling fast at a price below market value.

A national investigation by ProPublica, a nonprofit newsroom that investigates abuses of power, has revealed deceptive practices by "We Buy Ugly Houses" that target vulnerable homeowners. On June 28, 2023, the news source reported that David Hicks, president and CEO of parent company HomeVestors of America, resigned after the findings were made public.

Fitting the profile of vulnerable targets are Skinker-Debaliviere seniors on fixed income, squeezed by rising consumer costs and deferred home repairs, who may be exposed to such practices.

Former CEO Hicks claimed that the company helps communities by purchasing difficult-to-sell properties and returning them to the market in an improved condition. However, ProPublica found that the company focused its advertising campaigns on people in vulnerable situations, teaching franchisees how to "find the pain" of a homeowner, enabling acquisitions at rock-bottom prices.

For example, homeowners in dire financial straits, and elderly owners who don't understand the written contracts, were targeted for deceptive tactics. And franchisees searched the premises for negative conditions, such as house pet odors, to add pressure. "That cat piss smell," observed Hicks, "that's money" for the company.

But how do they identify their targets? Searching the public land records is an easy approach. For example, if you recorded your title four decades ago, you are likely reaching retirement age and have earned an unwelcome label: Target.

HomeVestors bills itself as the largest cash homebuyer in the country, with franchisees

increasing from 65 in 2009 to nearly 1,150 today. The company has been bought and sold several times in the past 15 years and is now owned by Bayview Asset Management.

The Housing & Zoning Committee (HZC) of the Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Council is devoted to fostering the residential quality of our neighborhood. We monitor rental property for compliance with city occupancy limits and evaluate proposed city regulations for short-term rentals.

Let us know if you've been subjected to predatory practices involving a home sale. Contact SDCC's office at 314-862-5122 or executive director Mike Reid at mike.reid@skinker-debaliviere.com.

One way to reduce costs is to use cooling and heating systems that are more energy efficient. Energy companies offer rebates and financing plans. Spire can help with furnaces, thermostats, boilers and water heaters: Rebates for home | Spire Inc. (spireenergy.com) or call 800-887-4173. Ameren Missouri has rebates for HVAC systems: www.amerenmissourisavings.com/coolAC or call 866-268-3729.

NEIGHBORHOODS ARE FOR NEIGHBORS: SHORT-TERM RENTAL UPDATE

By Marvin J. Nodiff

Our neighborhood would be directly affected if a proposed ordinance relating to short-term rentals is approved by the St. Louis Board of Aldermen. For the benefit of anyone who's been asleep the past decade, "short-term rentals" are 30 days or less ("STR"), aka Airbnb.

Virtually all of Skinker-DeBaliviere is zoned residential; specifically, "single-family dwelling" and "two-family dwelling." This doesn't include STRs because they aren't residential, but the proposed ordinance would allow them anywhere and everywhere in the city, including districts zoned for residential use.

STRs do not belong in residential districts because they provide lodging, not housing. This activity constitutes a business: (a) operators and travelers connect on an internet platform, (b) they agree to certain terms, including payment, (c) the operator pays a fee to the platform (often Airbnb, a billion-dollar global company) for advertising and other services, and (d) the operator or platform pays hotel/motel tax.

As a business model, STRs are mini-hotels. They should be called "short-term lodging" and treated as a business and located in commercial districts like hotels.

STRs impact neighborhoods because they convert housing to lodging. We lose our most important asset: a NEIGHBOR -- a homeowner or long-term tenant. In 91% of listings, our neighbor is replaced by an off-site investor and a stream of transient visitors with no stake in the community.

Schools are affected. Neighbors have children, and the children attend school. For every house converted to STR, our school enrollment declines and we lose tax dollars.

Housing is affected. The STR business model removes housing from the market. We all know what happens when supply is reduced: prices go up. In this case, homeowners and long-term tenants will find it more difficult to locate affordable housing.



As of August, the Transportation and Commerce Committee of the Board of Aldermen has held two public hearings. Homeowners from across the city described how STRs undermine the quality and character of our neighborhoods. No one wants to live next door to a mini-hotel.

A better approach would be to foster STRs in mixed-use districts where under-utilized dwelling units are available on the second and third floors of stores along streets such as Cherokee, Grand and Delmar. This would allow the city to locate STRs where they would yield the greatest benefits, not where they would do the greatest harm.

In addition to zoning, the proposed ordinance -- Board Bills 33 and 34 -- would require hosts to obtain an annual business permit, subject to regulations and penalties. Only individuals would be eligible to operate STRs, with a limit of four permits per person. The bills are sponsored by Ald. Bret Narayan, 4th Ward, which includes Hi-Pointe and other neighborhoods south of Forest Park.

The proposed ordinance is 31 pages of zoning and regulatory components. It's complex and doesn't come with an operator's manual. The above is my analysis.

The Board of Aldermen is in recess until September. In the meantime, neighbors may provide comments to our 10th Ward Alderwoman, Shameem Clark-Hubbard (clark-hubbards@stlouis-mo.gov). Or contact me (marvin@nodiffcalaw.com).

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DOG PARK PROGRESS

By SDCC Dog Park Committee

A new park for “Man’s Best Friend” is bounding toward reality.

“We’re making good progress,” SDCC Dog Park Committee chair Kaitlin Daniels told the TIMES at “Yappy Hour,” a fundraising event held August 4. “Our site will be a great fit for the dog park, and we’re focused on financial contributions so we can add water service and an enclosure and get ready for operations.”

The area north of the school annex on the east side of Des Peres is under SDCC control for the dog park. Dogs will be able to socialize with their best friends and run around off the leash, under parental supervision.

The committee has sponsored four events since March of this year, including the Dog Show, to raise awareness and funds. These events feature beverages, brats and hot dogs (not the four-legged kind) prepared by committee member Nick Stefani. When he’s not serving as the grill master, Stefani works as a civil engineer.

Callie Kesel, architect and committee member, helped obtain a professional land survey. “The site has approximately 10,500 square feet that’s level and open space,” she said. “We’ll have separate enclosures for large and small dogs, secure gates, fresh water, and clean-up facilities.”

Another volunteer, Andy Cross, is the committee’s Swiss Army knife, arranging for supplies, food, beverages and promotional materials for the Yappy Hours.

“We’re pleased that our events are attracting so many supporters,” said Stefani. “Some bring their dogs and others don’t even own dogs, but they all recognize the benefits that this facility will offer our residents.”

At this time, the closest facility is located in University City. Daniels, who teaches business at Washington University in St. Louis, added, “Neighbors see that having a dog park within easy walking distance will add value to Skinker-DeBaliviere. It will be an important community asset and amenity.”

A challenging detail is how the site should be enclosed. “Fencing will be the first thing people see as they approach the dog park,” said architect Kesel. “It is a vital design element that must secure the site, but in addition, the appearance must be appropriate for our historic neighborhood.” She is working with SDCC’s Historic District Committee to identify the best combination of materials and appearance for the enclosure.

Funding is needed to open and operate the facility. Daniels said, “We’re seeking contributions and grants for start-up expenses, as

well as an endowment to provide for insurance and maintenance over future years. We want the membership fee to be competitive with other dog parks.”

Daniels encourages all residents to voice their interest in the SDCC Dog Park. A survey is available, and donations may be made, on the dog park’s website: <https://sdccdogpark.wixsite.com/home>.




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IN YOUR EAR

By Hawkeye Z. Hoerr, Commentary in the TIMES since 1980

Continued from last month

This saga began two issues ago when I shared being at the cemetery visiting my mom's grave, talking to her, sort of. Angel Fred, wearing a name tag (that's how I knew his name), tennis shoes, a corduroy sports coat, and wings appeared, and told me that a coven of angels wanted my help in reversing declines in church attendance. Traditional media sources cannot be trusted, he said, and they wisely recognized the reach and veracity of In Your Ear!

People know about Dante's levels of hell, Angel Fred proclaimed, but not about the levels of Heaven, so spreading the word about the levels of Heaven would be my task. Who could resist unlimited snacks and your dog living forever? But first I needed to be educated. So in the previous episodes I, gasp, visited hell. Yep, it was horrible, worse even than having a root canal with no novacain while fire ants are in your pants and you had to listen to Lawrence Welk! That's where I left you in the spring, and now...

When I began to awaken, everything was a blur. I remembered feeling the intense heat as I passed out along with the misspelled neon Welcome signs and dancing snakes in hell, but now things seemed chilly, almost cold. Everything was fuzzy but a beam of light from a metal nametag that said ANGEL FRED jarred me awake. Suddenly it all came back to me. Angel Fred wanted me to use my In Your Ear column to spread the word about the levels of Heaven! But that's all I remembered.

Now he was leaning over me. "Are you OK, Hawkeye?" he asked, concern showing through the tiny feathers on his face. "I suppose that I should have given you some warning about what the levels of hell would be like before we visited."

"That's alright," I quickly responded, "I wouldn't have gone there if I had seen the tourist brochures." Besides, I thought, always looking for the positive, this temporary sojourn to hell ensured that I would live a good and clean life from now on. At least until the end of the week.

A huge grin spilled on to Angel Fred's face and he announced, "And now for the excitement. You get to see the levels of Heaven!" I swore I heard a drumroll but we were in a desolate cemetery so how could that be? (Oops, I need to stop swearing. Damn!)

"Fasten your seatbelt!" yelled Angel Fred ominously, but I wasn't wearing one! Suddenly I felt air rushing past me and I was moving higher and higher, twirling slowly. I felt like I was in a self-driving Tesla, caroming up the highway in the sky, but still no seatbelt. My hearing aids became supercharged because I could hear birds chirping and waves crashing against a beach. For a moment I thought I heard the Rolling Stones singing "You Can't Always Get What You Want," but that had to be a mistake. No way would Mick and the team be part of Heaven's greeting committee. I knew that I was in outer space somewhere because the Earth was getting progressively smaller. But I could smell freshly baked cookies! What is happening?

We began to slow and white clouds appeared at my feet. A huge chocolate chip cookie was in my hand, and I realized that I was standing in a giant hot fudge sundae. What? Those white clouds were really marshmallow sauce. Puzzled, I began to munch on the cookie. It was delicious and I wanted to eat slowly and savor it but I saw that after each bite the cookie immediately regenerated itself so it remained new even as I ate it. I chomped more quickly. An ice cream silo appeared in my other hand, I bit, and it was better than Ted Drewes. Imagine that! The music became louder, and look, I saw that the Rolling Stones were just across from me, singing in the flesh while also eating chocolate chip cookies and ice cream. Mick never sounded so vibrant! He nodded at me with a thumbs-up, and I reciprocated. How good is this?

The Stones' volume decreased and suddenly Angel Fred was in front of me. Smiling mischievously, he said, "Welcome to Level Three of Heaven."

I ate another bite of cookie and chugged a gulp of ice cream. It wasn't diminishing either! But I had questions. "Where is everyone

else? I mean, this is great but what about my family and friends?" I swallowed. "And is there pizza too?"

"Heaven has seven levels," Angel Fred responded, sounding a bit professorial, "and the first three are not group endeavors." He rolled his eyes. "There are many, many misassumptions about Heaven, but let's begin with this one.

"You see, the first three levels of each person's Heaven are his – oops, make that his or her – unique bliss. Level One is limited to a solitary painless existence with Netflix and endless pathways down memory lane, not bad. In Level Two, better, you also have access to Apple TV and Hulu. Level Three, that's where we are now, is more idiosyncratic. You are still alone but your impulses and desires are being met and met again. How Heavenly is that? But there's more. Look to your left and check out a giant 3-D video screen that features every movie that won an Academy Award, and you can watch them all simultaneously. Oh yeah," Angel Fred continued, "and there's endless buttered popcorn." Wow, I thought, I can see why they call this Heaven, and I ate some more ice cream.


Angel Fred took a deep breath and continued, "Levels Four through Seven include various configurations of others who are in Heaven, and we're not restricted by time or place. That's why your dad and his four wives could all be here together and apart at the same time." I smiled because I knew that dad would like this arrangement.

"These last few levels of Heaven go beyond mere pleasure. There, people, I mean angels, work collaboratively to improve Heaven."

Puzzled I was. "Improve Heaven? Isn't Heaven, by definition, well, Heaven? How can you improve on perfection?"


"That's another Earthling misunderstanding," said Angel Fred, shaking his head in disapproval. "First, there is joy and satisfaction that comes from working together to make progress, and that would be absent in a perfect Heaven. Angels set group goals and have parties to celebrate their achievements. Sometimes they even try to influence what's happening on Earth."

Angel Fred's wings fluttered a bit and he smiled with pride, "You know enough now to begin spreading the word about the levels of Heaven. Your column, Hawkeye, can start a landslide of public opinion to help fill the pews! Finally, here's a tip from our Angel Marketing Department: Begin by mentioning the endless buttered popcorn."



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