

The *TIMES* of.... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Vol. 55, No. 3

September - October 2025

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

The oldest neighborhood newspaper in St. Louis

FREE

Independent and all volunteer-run since 1970

TIMES FUNDRAISER WAS A BIG SUCCESS!

Thank you so much to everyone who came to celebrate the longest running neighborhood newspaper!

We had a wonderful time visiting with friends and neighbors and it was so gratifying to hear that so many people appreciate what the paper delivers to their door. Also, thanks to everyone who couldn't make the event but still stepped up monetarily to ensure the future of the paper.

Many thanks to the wonderful volunteers who cooked, served, planned, shopped, and entertained including Andy Cross, Emily Cross, Sarah Cross, Chef Tim O'Sullivan, Dan Hudspeth, David Powell, and the entire band of the Sophistacatos. Thanks to everyone's generosity we raised around \$7,000.00! What a great evening!



SKINKER-DEBALIVIERE HISTORIC DISTRICT Maintaining Your Historic Property

The Skinker-DeBaliviere Historic District boasts a mix of single-family and two-family homes, and multi-family and commercial buildings constructed primarily between 1905 and 1930. The full district also includes the Parkview Local and Catlin Tract areas. The entire historic district is bounded by Lindell Boulevard to the south, the city limit in Parkview on the west, Delmar Boulevard to the north, and DeBaliviere Avenue to the east.

Many of these buildings are eligible for historic tax credits, but all the buildings in this historic district require special attention for maintenance, repair, and additions.

As a homeowner living in this historic district, you have many things to bear in mind when it comes to taking care of your home and stewarding it into the future. Resources are available to you as a community member as a guide for maintaining and updating your historic home. Please use this information sheet as a guide to help you make legal, sustainable, and appropriate choices for your historic home.

The Skinker-DeBaliviere Historic District Review Committee (SDHRC) is a volunteer committee responsible for ensuring the preservation of the historic character of the neighborhood, reviewing alterations to exterior building changes prior to permitting, and assisting neighbors in historic preservation matters. The committee is comprised of preservation experts and

architecture enthusiasts who are eager and willing to help neighbors make good decisions for preserving and maintaining their historic homes.

The committee meets regularly and will review plans, provide resources, and assist with permitting processes to the best of their abilities. The committee provides letters of support for projects that require permits and consultation from the Cultural Resources Office or Preservation Board for variances.

The neighborhood aesthetic is "governed" by historic standards and a city ordinance. Generally, materials and styles original to the neighborhood are required to be retained and should be used for work. Modern materials such as vinyl siding, aluminum, wood panels, etc. may not be permitted. Window replacements are of major concern to the neighborhood and our Standards. Windows should maintain the original opening size and should mimic muntin or mullion patterns of the original. You must consult the Cultural Resources Office (CRO) before signing a contract or starting any work on your front façade or side façade on a corner lot.

You can obtain a copy of the standards and the ordinance on the city's CRO website or by contacting the Historic District Review Committee Chair. Questions about maintenance may be directed to the committee. We maintain a list of approved materials and may have suggestions for processes or products that would suit

Maintaining Your Historic Property *continued on page 2*

Grace UMC Community-Wide Food Packing Event

Saturday, September 20, 2025 @ 9:00 AM
Location: Grace UMC,
Skinker & Waterman - Lower Level

On Saturday, September 20, 2025 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 to have childcare if it is needed.

Please complete the form at www.graceumc-stl.org/food-packing by Tuesday, September 16th to add your name to the list of participants.

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 event is also subject to capacity limits, so we may close registration when we reach capacity.

Editor's Notes

By Linda Cross

As I write this, the college students are returning to the neighborhood and my social media feeds are inundated with back-to-school photos for children embarking on their next adventure in school.

This time of year is surprisingly emotional for me, the ending of summer and freedom, and back to the structure of school and homework, even though I haven't had a student in my house in many years. However, I try to remind myself of the great benefit of the upcoming seasons, mainly less sweat for this menopausal body.

We have so many great activities coming up in the neighborhood and surrounding areas including the largest event hosted by the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council, Porchfest, which is a great opportunity for neighbors to meet new residents and let them know how lucky there are that they have landed in one of the best spots in St. Louis!

I am hopeful that this less busy season will allow for more outside time, more meeting up with friends, making new friends, more time to take care of the garden. I have included in this issue just a small listing of upcoming events in the areas surrounding us.

I hope to see all of you out and enjoying what there is to offer.

Maintaining Your Historic Property *continued from page 1*

your projects.

Skinker-DeBaliviere Historic District

Making changes to your historic home

Making small interior changes does not often require permitting. Things such as changing light fixtures, swapping plumbing fixtures, etc. can be achieved by a licensed professional or a seasoned homeowner.

Because we are in a city historic district, almost all exterior work requires a permit. Building permits are required for large scale, structural, or aesthetic changes that alter the integrity of existing conditions. The SDHRC should be consulted prior to permitting for guidance.

Often, homeowners make smaller exterior changes that require Cultural Resources Office-only (CRO) permits because these changes are not large enough for a building permit but are still regulated by Historic District Standards. This work includes:

- window and door replacements on primary facades
- gutter and downspout work or replacements
- exterior painting previously unpainted of stone, brick, terra cotta, or concrete
- repair, replacement, or covering of decorative trim
- repointing (sometimes called "tuckpointing")
- replacement of features such as porch railings, balustrades, and balconies
- exterior lighting fixtures and conduit visible from the street
- awnings and canopies
- street furniture (permanent benches, etc)
- on-premise sidewalks and drives
- retaining walls
- fences

How do I get a permit? Applications can be made in person at the Building Division - Permit Section in City Hall. A contractor, design professional, or homeowner may apply for the permit, but it is the responsibility of the homeowner to ensure the permit is issued and posted on the job site before work begins. The SDHRC can provide letters of support for projects to let the CRO know that work would be acceptable in the neighborhood if it requires a deviation from the Standards.

The Building Division will always refer to historic projects to CRO. If a CRO-only permit is needed, owners can visit the Hotspot Office directly and generally receive approval on the same day. If work does not comply with Standards of the neighborhood, applications are held for further review. Site photos (at least 2) should be submitted with the project. Site plans may also be requested. Cost estimates for the work to be completed are required. Please consult the city website for costs for permits as they are subject to project size.

If you do not have a permit when you start work, one must be obtained. In some cases, work may be required to be undone and then redone once a permit is obtained. A fine of \$500 may result in failure to obtain the proper permit.

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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 articles in The Times depend on submissions from area residents who are not on the paper's staff.

The writer is solely responsible for the accuracy of data, including times, dates, locations and the spelling of names. The Times retains the right to omit or alter any material. All opinions expressed are solely that of the author.

The deadline to submit copy for our November - December issue is October 15, 2025. Please send submissions by e-mail to Linda Cross at lcross@sdtimes.org.

The TIMES of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

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UPCOMING EVENTS – History Museum Events

Sponsored By Wash U.

The New Brownies' Book: An Evening With Charly Palmer And Karida L. Brown | Thursday, October 2 | 5–8pm

This program will highlight The New Brownies' Book: A Love Letter to Black Families by esteemed scholar Karida L. Brown and award-winning artist Charly Palmer. Learn more about this stunning book bursting with essays, poems, photographs, paintings, and short stories reflecting on the joy and depth of Black experience.

Nuestra Comunidad, Nuestras Historias (Our Community, Our Stories) | Thursday, October 9 | 5–8pm

Step into the heart of Hispanic Heritage Month as we celebrate St. Louis's dynamic Hispanic community with an evening of storytelling. Local St. Louisans will share their personal stories in a way that promises to stir emotions, spark laughter, and invite moments of reflection and connection.

MHS Book Launch: John Frémont's 100 Days: Clashes And Convictions In Civil War Missouri | Thursday, October 16 | 5–8pm

For 100 days in 1861, John Frémont was the general in charge of the United States Army's Western Department. Hear about the three tumultuous months that

would see him declare martial law, emancipate two enslaved men, and lead a military campaign. Author Gregory Wolk will discuss his new book, John Frémont's 100 Days: Clashes and Convictions in Civil War Missouri.

Ghost Stories And Guitars | Thursday, October 23 | 5–8pm

Brace yourself for a night of wicked fun as a live band jams out to Halloween-themed rock and pop hits. Take a break from the concert for a free tarot and palm reading and gather 'round the courtyard bonfire to hear chilling stories of haunted history in St. Louis.

Pageantry & Pride: Drag Pageants In Missouri | Thursday, October 30 | 5–8pm

The program kicks off with a presentation about drag history in St. Louis and the early days of pageants. Following the presentation, you'll hear from a panel of former pageant contestants and organizers who will share their own stories and reflections.

Book Launch: Threaded And Seasoned In Missouri: Black Fabric & Culinary Artists | Thursday, November 6 | 5–8pm

Join us for the exciting release of Dr. Paulette Sankofa's newest book, Threaded and Seasoned in Missouri: Black Fabric & Culinary Artists. The night will bring together Black fabric and culinary artists from around the state of Missouri for displays, discussion, and celebration.

Voices Of America: A St. Louis Storytelling Event | Thursday, November 13 | 5–8pm

This St. Louis Storytelling Festival event features nationally renowned storytellers in a thought-provoking performance that promises to stir emotions and spark laughter together as personal stories are shared.

Film Screening: The American Revolution | Thursday, November 20

Join us to view segments from the astounding series The American Revolution, which features figures from a wide variety of backgrounds as it examines how America's founding turned the world upside down. After the one-hour screening, stay for a conversation about the diverse landscape of the St. Louis population at the time of the American Revolution.

Thursday, November 27 | No Program, Museum Closed

An Evening With Actor Michael Kearns | Thursday, December 4 | 5–8pm

In the mid-1970s, St. Louis Native Michael Kearns became one of the first Hollywood actors to publicly disclose his sexuality. He made history again in 1991 when he announced his HIV-positive status to Entertainment Tonight. Join Kearns for a night of performance, personal stories, and conversation.

Holiday Concert And Winter Market | Thursday, December 11 | 5–8pm

Our annual event will feature live music performances by some favorite local acts, interactive sing-alongs, holiday trivia, and more! Before the show, check out the Sold on St. Louis Winter Market and shop a variety of festive goods from local vendors.

Celia's Yuletide Express And Winter Market | Thursday, December 18 | 5–8pm

Celia's Yuletide Express, a merry group of singers and sleighbellists, bring the holiday cheer to St. Louis by the trainload. Take a ride and enjoy a festive concert. While you're here, check out the Sold on St. Louis Winter Market and shop a variety of festive goods from local vendors.

Delmar Loop

Wash U Student Discount Days | Saturday, October 4th

Dia De Los Muertos Festival | Saturday, November 1st 4:00pm to 10:30pm

Forest Park

Great Forest Park Balloon Race | September 20, 1:00pm to 7:00pm Emerson Central Fields

Evolution Music Festival | September 27-28th Langenberg Field 10:30am to 11:00pm



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Overview

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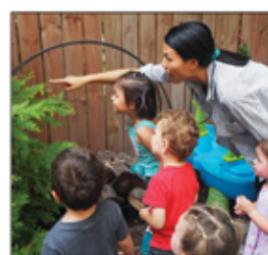
Our hierarchical priorities are safety, happiness, education and parent communication.

Our **SCALE** curriculum focuses on **S**cience, **C**ulture, **A**rts, **L**anguage and **E**thics. We stress what it means to be a good person: share, be kind, take turns, respect each other.

We welcome you to join our family and share the love!

FAQs

Hours	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
AM/PM schedule	Free play, circle time, outside, food
Outside time	Two 45-minute periods per day
Kid/teacher ratio	5:1
Food	Breakfast, lunch, 3 snacks per day
Experience	30+ years combined for David and Fei
Positive parenting	Yes!
Potty training	Of course!
Part-time hours	No
Montessori	Mixed ages, home setting, student-led
Vaccinations	All shots required (including covid and flu)



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David: (323) 868-7000 | Fei (314) 308-2627
info@lionsprideacademy.com

THE APPLE TREE

By Sarah Cross

When I was in college learning about anthropology, identity was theme that appeared over and over.

In one class, we talked about how students could expand their vision of their "self" into the objects that surrounded them. They weren't just their body and mind but also their clothes, their book bag and laptop, the space they occupied. Despite not being a physical part of the person, all of these things mattered in how they were perceived and how they understood themselves in that time and place.

In a very similar vein, the apple tree on the McPherson barricade seemed to be attached to the identity of the neighborhood.

Situated in such a prominent place, the tree was something which people would see everyday on the drive to and from their homes, even if only peripherally. It was also a seasonal experience which neighbors would partake in when the apples were ripe and could be picked and eaten. It was even something which had the potential to bring temporary visitors together as a talking point during the various seasons.

When I was a child, my dad made a special picking tool for us so we could pluck down apples that were out of reach. Quickly, it became an unofficial tradition to pick from the tree during its peak season. Sometimes we made the apples into pies. Sometimes we gave

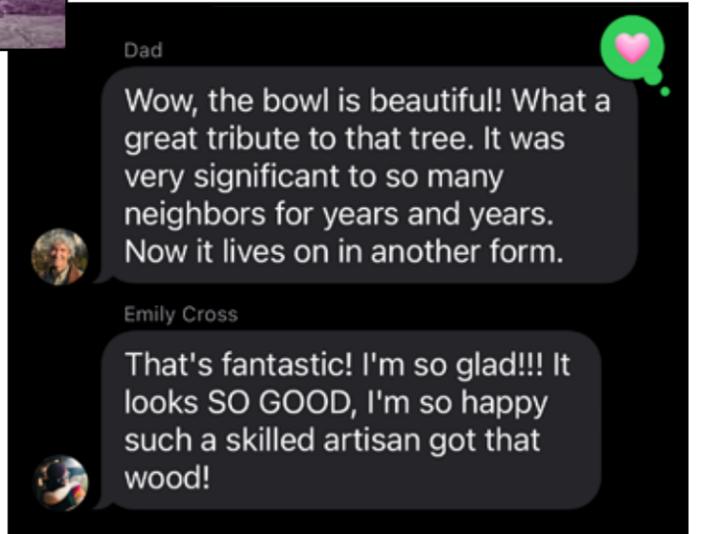


apples to friends. Sometimes we bit into the crisp, sugary fruit right then and there, savoring those watery bites in the hot summer sun.

When the tree began to get sick, it was very sad. This beautiful living thing which held so much significance was fading away, and it felt like it couldn't be stopped. Over the course of several years, its branches began to thin and its shape morphed into something which looked unnatural as dead bits were cut away and discarded. When the tornado finally destroyed it, it felt like such a loss.

But despite its unfortunate turn, this old tree's story wasn't over yet.

Thanks to my sister, Emily, my dad saved the trunk at her request so that we could give it to a wood turner who could utilize this valuable resource. After months of the trunk sitting uncollected in our driveway, I took it upon myself to post it on Facebook Marketplace for free in the hopes that someone with some skill could turn it into something beautiful once again.



That same day, I received a message from someone asking to pick it up, and with minimal back and forth, the collector agreed to send some photos of his work so we could see what he had done with the wood. After only a few weeks, the wonderful artist showed us the first bowl he had produced with the apple wood. He also sent pictures of some of his other previous work, which was impressive, to say the least.

Obviously, my family and I were thrilled with

The Apple Tree continued on page 6



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BOOK REVIEW

By Karen Stokes

Hello! Karen Stokes here. As a bibliophile and new addition to the Times. I will offer my opinion and review of books I have read. While I am not an English major or literary juggernaut, I will review books by discussing plot, characters and writing. For example, does the plot move forward smoothly or was it riddled with plot holes and tangents? Are the characters believable, grow when needed, seem true throughout. Is the writing challenging, good, simple, beautiful or just plain bad. Agree or disagree, that's what makes reviews fun. Books get us talking about something we have shared in common. We need that more these days.

For my first review, I recommend Feeding Ghosts, a Graphic Memoir by Tessa Hulls. Feeding Ghosts is a graphic novel, which is a type of book that uses illustrations and sequential art combined with word text to tell a story. I must confess, I am not a fan of graphic novels. I often find the artwork too stark and harsh, the writing a bit cryptic. So, while I started this book with reservations, I soon became hooked!

The story is about three generations of Chinese and Chinese American women, their complicatedly intertwined lives and the trauma that is passed down between them.

Sun Yi, the author's grandmother, was a Shanghai journalist who spent eight years caught in China's political upheaval of the 1949 Communist victory. She eventually flees to Hong Kong with her daughter, Rose, (Tessa's mother) to forge a life for them there.

Rose is sent to a boarding school in Hong Kong, but Sun Yi suffers a mental breakdown, while Rose is away, and is committed to a mental institution. Rose eventually travels to the United States on a scholarship and brings Sun Yi to live with her.

Tessa, Rose's daughter and the author, grows up under the weight of Sun Yi's unexamined trauma and mental illness and her mother's fears about life. In an effort to escape the emotional trauma, Tessa travels around the world, but comes to realize her freedom is more about avoidance than adventure, so returns to spend a decade researching and writing her book.

The author offers a wonderful interplay of history with a beautiful collective of voices in her narration. She relays her matriarchs' heart wrenching stories in a measured and objective perspective, all the while, demonstrating vulnerability and honesty when working through the emotional traumas from her family's past. Tessa does an amazing job of living in her history.

The book's story line moves seamlessly between the different characters' timelines and the author's commentary, keeping events well connected. The author's goal of self-examination and unraveling of her family dynamics is surprisingly relatable. While we may not share Chinese genealogy, some of us may understand the history of family trauma.

The characters are incredibly well developed. I did not feel any gaps or thinness in how she presented her family. Most importantly, I could sense the love and respect Ms. Hulls has for her mother and grandmother, even as she wrote about their very complicated relationships. The history of China in her family's timeline read for me, as a character as well. I have never studied China's history and frankly, it is brutal. As I read about the fall of a dynasty and the rise of a new, brutal government, an eerie recognition of a country's ideological shifts could not be shaken.

Reading about the horrors of the political upheaval in China/Hong Kong at that time in history and her grandmother's experiences were emotionally challenging and made for a heavy read. The text blocks were word dense at times, yet very concise and well written. Sometimes, I had to put the book down and take a mental break. However, I could not resist picking it up again.

In summary, captivating plot, great characters and excellent writing. I highly recommend this book.

KIDS CORNER

By Jenny Matthews

Fall Vibes



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TREE	GROWTH RATE	LIFESPAN	MATURE SIZE	URBAN TOUGHNESS	COOLING/SHADE	NOTES
White Oak	Medium	150–200 yrs	70–90 ft	High	Excellent	Strong wood, classic native
American Sycamore	Fast	~100 yrs	80–100 ft	Medium	Excellent	Messy bark & seed balls
Swamp White Oak	Medium	100+ yrs	60–80 ft	High	Excellent	Handles wet, urban soils
Tulip Poplar	Fast	70–90 yrs	80–100 ft	Medium	Excellent	Quick shade, storm-prone
Hackberry	Fast	75–100 yrs	50–70 ft	Very High	Good	Workhorse urban tree
Hybrid Elm	Fast	80–100 yrs	60–80 ft	High	Excellent C	hoose resistant cultivars
American Basswood	Medium-Fast	80–120 yrs	60–80 ft	High	Excellent	Pollinator-friendly, may attract beetles
River Birch	Fast	40–60 yrs	40–70 ft	Medium	Good	Great for wet sites, shorter-lived
Red Maple (Autumn Blaze, etc.)	Fast	80–100 yrs	50–70 ft	Medium	Good	Shallow roots, great fall color

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND: Replace Lost Trees!

By Mark Banaszak

There is still a lot of work to do to repair tornado damage, but one thing to definitely include on the list is replacing lost trees. Damage to buildings will be long-lasting, but the loss of trees can also be severe and even longer-lasting. This loss can affect both ecosystems and community systems. The new views to a hot summer sun along many of our streets are a stark testament to the beauty and function of trees.

Trees are important for our urban ecosystems; without trees and their shade, our soil dries out faster, leading to fewer plants, hard soil, and erosion. Since so many birds, insects, and animals shelter in our trees, the loss of tree canopy contributes to the loss of wildlife. And since large trees are so effective at drinking up water, their loss can contribute to increased stormwater runoff, an important concern in a historically flood-prone community like ours.

The loss of trees and shade is not only a blow to our ecosystem, it has consequences for our community. Loss of shade from trees is strongly associated with the urban heat island effect. Urban heat islands form because the building and road materials that form urban areas retain more heat. According to Climate Central, St. Louis already suffers from 7 degrees more heat than the surrounding areas. This heat island has other impacts as well. That 7-degree difference causes increased energy use for air conditioning, costing our communities money. Because it is less comfortable being outside, parks, yards, and public spaces become less inviting.

In addition to adding beauty, good shade trees are a sound investment in our neighborhood and our city.

There are also important things to consider when planting trees, so that the investment pays off. The most obvious is that you must choose the right tree for the spot. That means paying attention to how big and how fast trees will grow, being aware of utility lines above and below, and how the future growth may affect them. To maintain a stable tree canopy, it is a good idea to have a mix of faster- and slower-growing trees. Planting deciduous trees is also a good idea, because they will provide shade in the summer, but in the winter cold, the lack of leaves allows the sun to warm your house more.

Because trees are an investment, it is wise to consider some other factors too. It is very important to have a care plan. Depending on placement and maturity, trees may need to be staked and protected from weed trimmers and mowers. Mulching around trees is very good for them, but take care to keep mulch 3-5 inches away from where the trunk enters the ground. Mulch too close to the tree creates an environment that is harmful to the tree. Ideally, trees benefit from having mulch all the way to the edge of their canopy, but for many areas of our yards, this is just not feasible.

New trees need a watering plan. Newly planted trees should be watered daily for at least several weeks. This can taper off to two to three times per week for the rest of their first year in the new location. Even trees that have been in the ground for more than a year might need water,

This table with tree suggestions is adapted from ChatGPT

particularly if we have an especially hot, dry summer. In general, the larger the tree, the more water it requires.

There are many great choices for species. The City of St. Louis maintains a list of trees that they plant as replacement trees in the tree lawn. Other tree species are an option, but it is very important to look up how much space will be available as the tree grows and the tree canopy spreads.

Oaks are not a fast-growing species in general, but they are a good investment. They have great canopies, are tough, grow tall enough to shade our houses, and have strong wood, so there are fewer falling branches. Sycamores grow more quickly and also have beautiful canopies. Some people don't like their messiness, but their bark-shedding trunks and dappled shade are charms to others. Tulip poplars grow fast, have wonderful flowers, and good resistance to urban issues. For a tough tree that can survive the worst conditions, many choose the hackberry. It's not flashy, but it's reliable. A choice that is interesting but uncommon in our neighborhood is the basswood.

Basswoods make great shade trees with a thick canopy, can be long-lived like oaks, but grow relatively faster. Oaks outgrow them eventually, but just by a little bit, but basswoods survive well in tough condition, and best of all, they have great flowers. They blossom in summer with bunches of flowers that attract many pollinators, especially bees. They are considered a "bee" tree, and honey from basswood trees is highly prized.

Whatever kind of tree you choose to plant, you will be doing our neighborhood a favor when you plant a tree. We and future St. Louisans will all benefit from the new trees that grow.

The Apple Tree *continued from page 4*

the results.

It can be very difficult to let go of things that are personally meaningful, and to me, this tree was more than just a thing that bore fruit, but a symbol of my childhood, of my neighborhood, and of community.

I'm so grateful to this wonderful artist for taking something that held so much value and preserving it, changing it into something which can live out a new life.

And, despite my love and appreciation for what that tree has given me and this community, I'm reminded by this story that it's possible that a new chapter can begin once the old one is finished. I look forward to seeing what new growth sprouts from the empty spot on the barricade. There's so much potential and so much time for new memories to be formed around it.

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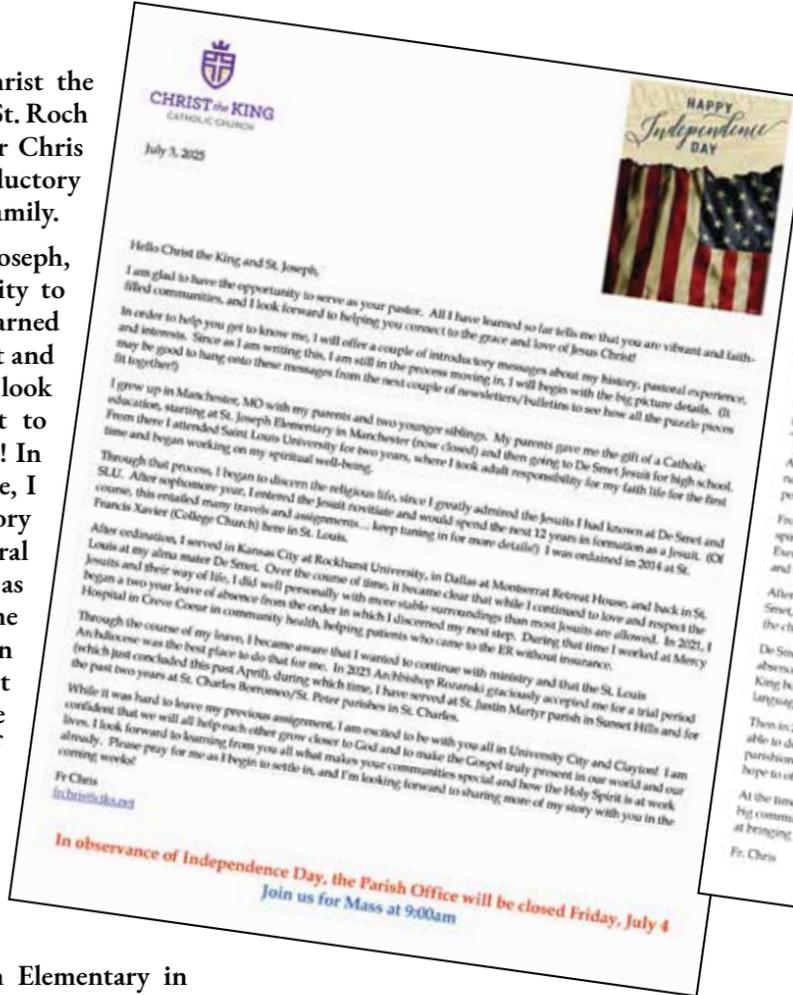
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Christ the King Parish

As of the beginning of July, Christ the King Parish (which now includes St. Roch Church) has a new pastor, Father Chris Schroeder. Below is an introductory letter that he sent to the Parish Family.

Hello Christ the King and St. Joseph, I am glad to have the opportunity to serve as your pastor. All I have learned so far tells me that you are vibrant and faith filled communities, and I look forward to helping you connect to the grace and love of Jesus Christ! In order to help you get to know me, I will offer a couple of introductory messages about my history, pastoral experience, and interests. Since as I am writing this, I am still in the process moving in, I will begin with the big picture details. (It may be good to hang onto these messages from the next couple of newsletters/bulletins to see how all the puzzle pieces fit together!) I grew up in Manchester, MO with my parents and two younger siblings. My parents gave me the gift of a Catholic education, starting at St. Joseph Elementary in Manchester (now closed) and then going to De Smet Jesuit for high school. From there I attended Saint Louis University for two years, where I took adult responsibility for my faith life for the first time and began working on my spiritual well-being.



at my alma mater De Smet. Over the course of time, it became clear that while I continued to love and respect the Jesuits and their way of life, I did well personally with more stable surroundings than most Jesuits are allowed. In 2021, I began a two year leave of absence from the order in which I discerned my next step. During that time I worked at Mercy Hospital in Creve Coeur in community health, helping patients who came to the ER without insurance. Through the course of my leave, I became aware that I wanted to continue with ministry and that the St. Louis Archdiocese was the best place to do that for me. In 2023 Archbishop Rozanski graciously accepted me for a trial period (which just concluded this past April),

during which time, I have served at St. Justin Martyr parish in Sunset Hills and for the past two years at St. Charles Borromeo/St. Peter parishes in St. Charles. While it was hard to leave my previous assignment, I am excited to be with you all in University City and Clayton! I am confident that we will all help each other grow closer to God and to make the Gospel truly present in our world and our lives. I look forward to learning from you all what makes your communities special and how the Holy Spirit is at work already. Please pray for me as I begin to settle in, and I'm looking forward to sharing more of my story with you in the coming weeks! Fr Chris frchris@ctks.net




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IN YOUR EAR

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

Whatever was I thinking? I mean, I should know better by now. You see, I recently ordered a smart watch, gasp. Gasp is because technology is not my friend. Worse, double-gasp, I ordered it online so there was no one to show me how it works.

Despite Hawkeye's appearance, he really works to be part of the "in crowd." He's never been quite successful but he keeps trying. If the term "in crowd" seems odd, it means that you were born too late to appreciate fine, classic music. To prove my point, here are the first four lines compelling lines from "The In Crowd" by Dobie Gray.

I'm in with the in crowd (Do-do-do)
 I go where the in crowd goes (Do-do-do)
 I'm in with the in crowd (Do-do-do)
 And I know what the in crowd knows (Da-da-da-da)

Can you feel what you missed? Do-do-do???

Anyway, wanting to be current, I decided that my iPhone doesn't give me enough status so it was time to get a smart watch. Further wanting to be ahead of the game, I didn't go the easy route and purchase an Apple smart watch. No, not Hawkeye. After reading the reviews (sort of reviews, they were on Facebook), he purchased a Spade 4 Smartwatch. It could do everything and more, from monitoring body functions to playing music and get this, it showed what time it is! Heart be still.

After waiting for weeks, it arrived in the mail and Hawkeye gleefully opened the box. Things quickly went downhill. The first thing I needed to do was attach the watch band to the actual watch. How hard can that be, I wondered? The answer was 13 minutes of hard, eye-squinting, and frustrating effort. It turns out that there's this teeny-tiny post that needs to be pushed down so that it will fit in the watch receptacle. To be fair, for probably 11 of those 13 minutes Hawkeye didn't realize the miniscule post was there; no wonder he couldn't reduce and insert it. At minute 11, though, he read the directions and that helped a lot.

Actually, and this is part of Hawkeye's problem, he could only read the directions after he found a magnifying glass. Yep, his eyeglasses weren't strong enough for the itchy-bitsy print. Can you feel that frustration mounting? One of the reasons he purchased this particular watch is because it can measure stress, but it was probably just as well that the watch wasn't activated.

Once the watch band was affixed, Hawkeye wisely saw (though the magnifying glass) that the Spade 4 needed to be charged by inserting the charger into a computer USB port. In-crowd Hawkeye knew where that was! So he inserted the charger into the port and the other end of the charger, now magnetized, was drawn to the watch. Is this great? No, not really. Despite the magnetic attraction of the charger to the watch, Hawkeye could not get a connection. After 18 more minutes of fumbling, his wife entered the room and asked why he was so frustrated. (How did she know that, he wondered, because the stress monitor on the watch wasn't live?) Hawkeye explained and she said, "Let me try it." Well, something had changed in the computer because a lightning bolt symbol appeared on the watch face as it began to charge.

Hawkeye, ever the optimist, thought it was smooth sailing now. Bear in mind, Hawkeye's track record of optimistic predictions isn't very strong. A few years ago he predicted a City-County merger, that the Cardinals would win the pennant, and that being president would cause Trump to start being honest. Oh well.

It turns out that when charged, the Spade 4 watch face features half a dozen incredible icons that were terribly distracting (and terribly tiny!). How could he get rid of those extra battery-sucking images? Who needs a tiny pic of someone running or swimming on the face when he's sitting at his computer? The directions weren't helpful, even with a magnifying glass. But he didn't give up, and finally after lots of trial & error, Hawkeye managed to dismiss the extra images. Hawkeye was so proud! But then the time vanished too; rather, the numbers that showed the time vanished! Hawkeye tried shaking his wrist, that worked sometimes, and he played with the dial, that worked at other times. But mostly the face was blank. This smart watch isn't very smart, Hawkeye thought.

What to do? Ever resourceful, Hawkeye sent an email to Spade customer support. To their credit, they responded within a day. Not to Hawkeye's credit, he couldn't figure out how to do what they suggested. Their direction seemed simple: "You can find the Raise to Wake option in your watch settings." Alas, Hawkeye could never find that setting, even with the magnifying glass. It's a small watch, but that setting was hidden. However, gritty Hawkeye didn't give up, his chubby fingers (part of the problem?) kept pushing and moving. One spot on the watch face, for example, opened up a dozen different icons and each one of them opened to still other possibilities when pressed. He was lost in his watch.

Weeks later, there is good news. A tiny set of numbers at the top-left of the watch tells the time and date 24-7. And Hawkeye figured out how

to turn the button to see the time in BIG numbers, his heart rate, how long he slept, and, gasp, his stress level. Hooray! Candidly, though, he has no idea how he did this, none, zip, nada. It's a good example of tenacity and luck being more important than knowledge and skills. But Hawkeye is encouraged because he mastered technology. He just dusted off the VCR that was in the basement so he can hook it up and see favorite television shows. He can't wait to catch-up on Desperate Housewives. p.s. If you have a Spade 4 smart phone, Hawkeye would like to hear from you. Please email him at trhoerr@aol.com.



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