

# Community leaders discuss Francis Park, city budget, crime

by Chip Kastner

Colonel John Hayden, St. Louis Chief of Police, was joined by Alderman Tom Oldenburg and State Representative Donna Baringer at a St. Louis Hills General Neighborhood Meeting on Thursday, September 26. The three community leaders discussed recent developments in the neighborhood and took multiple questions from several of the 103 residents in attendance.

Alderman Oldenburg highlighted recent improvements in Francis Park. New bathrooms were recently completed at a cost of half a million dollars, but at the time of the meeting the Parks Department was in the process of approving them for use. The park entrance at Childress and Nottingham, which had been prone to flooding, was recently regraded and improved with drains and new sidewalks to keep the area drier during rainfall. Pickleball courts are slated to be installed in the park, as well; describing the sport as a combination of tennis and ping-pong, Oldenburg stated that “diversity of recreation is a good thing to have in the neighborhood.” Regarding the re-striping of Tamm Ave along Francis Park, Oldenburg said that the street first needs to be regraded and resurfaced, which should be completed in the spring.

The city had a surplus of 23 million dollars after the last fiscal year. A city ordinance states that half of any surplus must be diverted to the city’s capital fund for infrastructure projects. 1.5 million dollars of the surplus was targeted for roads, prioritizing projects that qualified for federal matching funds. 2.5 million is slated to be used for cameras and the SLMPD Real Time Crime Center, 1 million will be used for fiber optic network expansion, and 1 million will be used to hire contractors to remove dead and dying trees around the city.

Surplus dollars not spent on infrastructure projects will be used to bolster the city’s emergency reserve account. The city prefers to have at least 10% of its annual budget in this account, but it currently only has about seven percent, having dipped below five percent in the last recession.

The soccer stadium is still planned to be developed, at a cost of 250 to 300 million dollars. The city will pay approximately 14% of the cost, but intends to recoup the cost by taxes on tickets and concessions. Oldenburg described this as a “user fee” concept, in which only people who use the stadium end up paying for its costs.

Representative Baringer discussed the ongoing problem of cars with



Colonel John Hayden, St. Louis Chief of Police, addresses the crowd at a St. Louis Hills General Neighborhood Meeting. Photo by Nan Vordtriede.

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## Busy year for Friends of Francis Park

by Tom Byrne, President, Friends of Francis Park

As many of you already know, Friends of Francis Park is a not-for-profit charitable organization formed by a group of neighbors back in 2010. The goal of the organization is to coordinate with the City Parks Department and other neighborhood groups to help maintain and improve Francis Park. We fill in the gaps due to limited funding that is available to the Parks Department. We buy plants for the park, help with tree planting, buy and maintain equipment that park volunteers use, maintain some park facilities and work on special projects—like the David Francis statue and the chess tables by the tennis courts.

This year has been a busy year for Friends of Francis Park. In cooperation with the David Francis Statue Committee, we completed the statue project by installing four period benches in front of the statue. The statue and benches turned out great, and we hope they will provide enjoyment for park users for decades to come. Thanks to the many people who donated to specifically support this effort.

Friends of Francis Park also continued its less flashy efforts to keep the park looking nice. We provided plants and supplies to the volunteers who do such a nice job planting and maintaining the gardens on the four corners of the park. We provided Jodi Freeman and her team of lily pond gardeners with the plants and equipment they needed, thanks in large part to a contribution from Art in the Park this year. We also obtained supplies and equipment for park clean-up days, which are scheduled on a Saturday every May and October. We hired two local students to water plants and help with general park maintenance activities over the summer. Their work was particularly valuable this year because they regularly watered the new trees that were planted by the city to replace about 65 ash trees that had to be taken down from around the perimeter of the park due to the impending invasion of the emerald ash borer. Thanks to the students, the mortality rate for the newly planted trees should be substantially lower than it otherwise would be. We bought a leaf blower, now being used to blow leaves off of the playground. Finally, we again partnered with the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association to sponsor the Christmas tree lighting in November.

The work that Friends of Francis Park does is only possible due to the help we get from our partner organizations, and the selfless dedication of literally dozens of park volunteers. Run for the Hills and the Elevens FootGolf Classic have been incredibly supportive partners, allocating 100% of their proceeds every year to Friends of Francis Park. The St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association has also been our valued partner on many park initiatives. For example, this year we were able to partner with the Neighborhood Association to put on a park volunteer happy hour, to show appreciation for our volunteers and create a chance for them all to get to know one another and discuss park issues. In addition, the City Parks Department has been an important ally in helping park improvements come to fruition. Parks Director Greg Hayes and Kim Haegele are always available and have worked with us to help us get things done, with the able assistance of our alderman Tom Oldenburg, who has been a strong supporter of our organization.

Finally, Friends of Francis Park would not exist  Cont'd on page 3



## Neighborhood Meeting (Cont'd from Page 1)

expired temporary plates due to unpaid sales taxes. She discussed that she had difficulty getting traction on the issue in Jefferson City, until it was discovered that 33,000 vehicles sold in 2018 didn't pay sales tax; these statistics made the issue more bipartisan, and she has gotten a bill addressing the problem fast-tracked for January. If the bill becomes law, starting in 2021 car buyers must pay sales tax at the time they purchase a car.

Chief Hayden, accompanied by Major Daniel Howard (Deputy Commander, Bureau of Community Policing) and Captain Michael Deebea (Commander, Second District), spoke at length on the topic of crime in the city of St. Louis. Hayden stated that, after a drop in homicides last year, 2019 was on pace to have a homicide count on par with 2017.

Over 67% of all violent crime in the city takes place in the city's North Patrol Division. Violent crime in St. Louis Hills through September 25 was virtually unchanged from 2018, with eight violent crimes reported through September 25 last year and nine reported this year. Overall burglary and larceny rates were mostly unchanged as well, although there had been a sharp increase in shoplifting and a moderate increase in thefts from vehicles. However, there has been a significant increase in motor vehicle theft. Captain Deebea stressed the importance of not leaving valuable items unattended in a vehicle, as a large number of vehicle break-ins target items in plain sight.

Hayden reinforced the drug problem in certain parts of the city, citing that there have been more overdose deaths than homicides in St. Louis in 2019. Furthermore, over half of all homicides in the city are believed to be drug related, based on witness statements or the presence of drugs at the scene of the crime. An additional 35% are personal disputes, although the nature of such disputes is often drug-related, as Hayden described the drug trade as a "self-policed enterprise." However, several children under age ten have been killed by standing near the intended victim of a murder. The city has regular patrols that focus on open-air drug markets, and police also work to track and intercept drugs coming into the city. The city also has partnerships with federal agencies such as the DEA, ATF and US Marshals.

Both Oldenburg and Hayden fielded questions about "Cure Violence," a program championed by Board of Aldermen President Lewis Reed. The program treats crime as a public health issue, and hires "crime interrupters" to stop crimes

before they happen. An example cited was that after a murder occurs, crime interrupters will work with people who knew the victims in order to prevent violence taken in revenge. Oldenburg stated that the program should be piloted with a goal in mind, and if the goal isn't met then the program should be held accountable.

Residents expressed concerns that funds were being spent on Cure Violence when the police department has a shortage of 130 officers. Oldenburg replied that the police department is funded each year to be fully-staffed; the shortage is not caused by a lack of funding. Hayden stated that the biggest complaint he hears from his recruiters is the residency requirement; the Board of Alderman recently voted against removing the residency requirement for new city employees, concerned that it would cause many employees to move away. The issue may be placed on the ballot in 2020 for city residents to vote on.

Several residents asked questions about Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner's policy of refusing to take cases from police officers who had been previously accused of wrongdoing. Hayden stated that, unlike the chief of police, the circuit attorney is an elected position and Gardner states that she is following the wishes of the people who put her into office. Rather than engaging in public disputes with Gardner, Hayden said he preferred to focus on ensuring officers are filing good police reports and that the lead officer on each case is not on the "exclusion list." Oldenburg expressed several concerns about the office, including turnover rates; he stated that residents who feel strongly about the matter should vote.

Another common complaint was Target; one resident claimed that the number of man-hours spent by the police answering calls from Target each month should qualify it as a nuisance property. Hayden stated that shoplifting is a crime, and if Target catches a shoplifter, they are entitled to file a police report. He added that Target accounts for 1 million dollars of loss due to theft from the Hampton Village store each year, but corporate policy only allows them to hire loss prevention officers without the power of arrest. Oldenburg expressed frustration that Target had taken tax incentives from the city to fund the store's rebuilding 15 years ago, but has generally refused to meet with community leaders on the large amount of crime that occurs there. However, they had agreed to a meeting with neighborhood leadership on October 15.

## Friends of Francis Park (Cont'd from Page 2)

without the support of its members, donors and event sponsors. We are very grateful to each one of them for their support. If you would like to become a member and support Francis Park, please see our website, [friendsoffrancispark.org](http://friendsoffrancispark.org), for membership options. If looking up the website is too much

trouble, you could just send a check for \$25, \$40 or \$100 to Friends of Francis Park, 5330 Tamm Ave., St. Louis, MO 63109 and write "membership" in the subject line.

Thanks to all who continue to support our organization and we look forward to more park improvements in the coming year.


# 28th Run for the Hills draws 650 participants

by Wayne Myrick

The award winning Run for the Hills is one of the best and oldest 5k runs in St. Louis. Thanks to you, in January of this year, the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association and Friends of Francis Park won the Big River Running award for Best Neighborhood Support in St. Louis. Thank you to all the neighbors who show up to cheer the runners, from the park and from your front porches, to the volunteers who keep our runners safe from traffic and serve our post race food and water. Special thanks to the Run committee who works hard at making this event an annual highlight in our neighborhood to promote health and fitness while raising money to keep Francis Park beautiful.

This year's Run was our 28th annual event that woke up our neighborhood with 650 walkers and runners, 25 sponsors, tons of frozen custard from Ted Drewes, pumpkin scones, muffins and sparkling raspberry lemonade from Edibles and Essentials, bagels from St. Louis Bread Company, a bounce house for the kids and loud early morning music that enlivened the neighborhood on another beautiful Run for the Hills morning.

This year we honored our Stanley Cup Champion St Louis Blues with our blue and gold Run t-shirts and the song "Gloria" blaring in the park as the runners started the race. The Run for the Hills shirts have gained a well-deserved reputation as one of the coolest and most comfortable shirts around. We ran out of shirts this year on the day of the Run, so please make sure you register early for the 2020 race. A special thanks to St. Louis Hills neighbor and talented designer, Corey Lee, for joining the Run leadership team and creating this year's amazing t-shirt design!

Through the years, Run for the Hills has raised \$500,000 for Francis  Cont'd on page 5



Top: Participants in the 28th annual Run for the Hills pose at the finish line in their Run for the Hills t-shirts. Above: This year's Run for the Hills t-shirt commemorated the Stanley Cup Champion St. Louis Blues. Photo provided by Wayne Myrick.

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# Grub and Groove proceeds to benefit area neighborhoods

by Rich Fisher

The team at Grub & Groove want to thank the neighborhood for joining us on August 10th! This year's festival, presented by Alliance Credit Union, was a year to remember for a number of reasons; but what we are most proud of is that the event continues to be enjoyed and supported by the St. Louis Hills community. Stay in touch with us at [www.facebook.com/grubandgroove](http://www.facebook.com/grubandgroove) for information about the projects that will be funded from this year's proceeds.

A special thank you to sponsors Alliance Credit Union, 4 Hands Brewing Co., Tropical Liqueurs, Innovative Construction & Roofing, McDonald's, Hannah Realty Co., and 1220 Spirits; the eleven local restaurants participating in our Food Row; the eleven local business participating in our Retail Village; and the nearly 100 volunteers who helped staff the event!

We look forward to seeing everyone in 2020!



One of several bands takes the stage during this year's Grub and Groove in Francis Park. Proceeds from the event will fund projects in nearby neighborhoods. Photo provided by Rich Fisher.

## Run for the Hills (Cont'd from Page 4)

Park! It was the first and only event which raised money for the park for many years before we welcomed additional fundraising events such as the St Louis Hills House Tour, Art in the Park, Grub and Groove and The Elevens FootGolf Tournament. As residents of St Louis Hills, each of us should generously support these events which exist to make our park and our

neighborhood more beautiful each year.

We should all be thankful for our loyal \$500 sponsors who are shown on the pictured Run banner- please support our neighborhood businesses! We are also grateful for our 100 plus volunteers. Thank you for waking up early on the third Saturday of each September with smiles and cheers for our runners!

We should all be thankful for our Run for the Hills committee- It is so much fun to work on a board with such great, selfless people. We work really hard preparing but we share a lot of laughs too! Thank you Cathy Myrick, Mike and GERALYN Banahan, Judy Murphy, Gerry Murphy, John Burghoff, Lynn Wolf, Nancy Vordtriede, Corey Lee, John Fuchs, Matt Sallaberry, Phil Mannhard, Alex Curtin, Patrick and Emily McGinnis and Matt Helbig. If you love running or you love being part of a fun team, contact me and we would love to have your help next year on the Run planning board.

Mark your calendars for next September 19 so you can have your running and walking shoes ready for Run for the Hills 2020!

The St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association  
invites you to add value to the community with your  
2019 membership dues and volunteer efforts.

You can join or renew by remitting \$30 using one of these methods:

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We're a neighborhood organization promoting community spirit through our many activities. We run on volunteers. **Please check at least one activity or committee which you think adds value.**

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# Tour de Francis Park sees great weather, new food vendors

by Gary Wells

Hundreds of St Louis Hills residents came out to watch professional and semi-pro cyclists compete in the Tour de Francis Park this year. This event is the second stage in the Gateway Cup challenge, which is spread out across St. Louis every year over Labor Day weekend. Since Labor Day was so early, the Tour de Francis Park was held on August 31. The notorious late summer heat stayed away this year, making it one of the most pleasant days in memory for this event.

In addition to the many residents who could just step outside or take a short walk from their front door and watch the race around the park, the event was also visited by scores of people from around the St. Louis area and other parts of the country. One couple stopping at the SLHNA booth had come all the way from Los Angeles to see the Gateway Cup races! Visitors come and go throughout the day, so official numbers are hard to come by. However, there was a general consensus that attendance for the event was slightly down from last year.

Highlights included the children's races in the afternoon and the Ride to Unite, which is a morning tour of the race course by challenged cyclists. We also had some new food vendors this year: Yapi's Mediterranean and Dos Reyes Mexican, both located on Hampton between Holly Hills and Loughborough. Big Shark Cycling was the chief organizer for this event.



Bryan Gomez of New York, NY won Men's Pro Category 1 at Tour de Francis Park.. Photo by @rbkohn77.

The winner of the Women's Pro category 1 was Samantha Schneider of West Allis, WI. Team 1st place was awarded to Cwa Racing P/B Trek. The winner of the Men's Pro category 1 was Bryan Gomez of New York, NY. Team 1st place was awarded to Gateway Devo Cycling.



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# Third generation takes over at local Dairy Queen

by Susan Leonard

Some of my earliest memories are of sitting in the back of the Dairy Queen at Hampton and Eichelberger, watching my dad grill hamburgers and charm the customers with his good nature. I remember rides in our metal Radio Flyer wagon from our home up to the store with my mom. As a multi-generational, family-owned business, the Dairy Queen has been an integral part of my life.

My grandparents, Dennis and Doreen Schutte, purchased the seasonal walk-up Dairy Queen located on the corner of Hampton and Nottingham in 1973. As the story goes, Grandpa saw a 'For Sale' sign and went to talk to the owner. Grandpa was informed that someone else was interested and was coming to look at it the next day. Grandpa went around Francis Park to get his checkbook, came right back, and bought it on the spot - he said he needed something to keep his nine children busy! Thus began three generations of our family-owned and operated Dairy Queen stores on Hampton Ave.

In 1982, the Dairy Queen territory operator secured the lease of the Jack in the Box Restaurant at Hampton and Eichelberger and asked Grandma and Grandpa if they would be interested in moving a few blocks down Hampton to a full-line, year-round store. They were not, but offered the opportunity to my parents,

Mike and Mary (Schutte) Leeper, who were living in Kansas City at the time. On March 13, 1983, when I was eighteen months old, the Brazier Dairy Queen at Hampton and Eichelberger opened its doors, and over the years I spent many days there "helping out" with my three younger sisters. Growing up in the back of a family restaurant is a life experience that you can't fully appreciate unless you have lived it. I remember "sleep overs" in the front lobby while my parents and some of our employees worked through the night to fill cake orders for Father's Day. I spent many hours crushing M&Ms, Reese's Pieces and Oreos in a hand-cranked grinder when they began serving Blizzards.

Over the years, the Hampton Dairy Queen has been an active part of our South St. Louis neighborhood. We have felt the support from the community as our little store's volume has grown, and we have been blessed to be able to give back by sponsoring several events like Run for the Hills, Art in the Park, and neighborhood school and church fundraisers. One of my favorite events that we have participated in was the "Blizzards for Brett" fundraiser in 2017. Every dollar spent on Blizzards that day went to support the family of a student at Bishop DuBourg High School suffering from cancer. It was inspiring to see our community come together and support this amazing family, raising over \$5,000 from Blizzard sales.

My husband Darin has been managing the Hampton Dairy Queen, now called DQ Grill and Chill, since 2012, and in January 2018 we officially purchased the business from my parents. We are excited to continue our involvement in the community of St. Louis Hills and raise our five children in this amazing and vibrant community as third generation DQ operators. As we embrace changes like mobile ordering and our upcoming delivery service, Darin and I are committed to keeping the same family-friendly, neighborhood feel that our store has always had. We hope that kids continue to ride their bikes down to the store for dinners and treats and that families still walk in to pick up a DQ cake for birthdays and celebrations. Stop in and meet your neighbors!



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# Why we moved to St. Louis Hills (and why we'll never leave)

by Michael Heithaus

When I was first asked to write the “Why We Moved to St. Louis Hills” column, I eagerly agreed to the request. My wife and I—and our three kids—had moved into the 5800 block of Neosho only a year ago, and as a new resident of the neighborhood, I was excited to share all the things that make this neighborhood so wonderful. But after writing a few drafts, and reading previous columns, I quickly realized that this column is more difficult to write than I had anticipated.

My first drafts did a great job of expressing all of the things that make St. Louis Hills such a great place to live. From friendly and caring neighbors to well-maintained parks, from the multitude of festivals to the close proximity of so many top restaurants, St. Louis Hills really does have it all. And each time I read my earlier drafts of this column, I was again reminded of why my wife and I love St. Louis Hills. But the truth of the matter is, those drafts were about why we never want to leave St. Louis Hills, not about how we ended up here in the first place.

So why did we choose St. Louis Hills when we could have chosen pretty much anywhere in the St. Louis area to live? Well, that story, is... complicated.

We had been living in the Metro East since my wife and I had gotten married almost 10 years earlier. At that time, I was working as an attorney in Belleville and my wife was in medical school. As the years passed, my wife graduated and took a job in St. Louis City, we had three kids, and I left my job. Yet we were happy in the Metro East and assumed we would simply stay there long term.

In the fall of 2017, after years of saving, we began hunting for a house. We told our agent that we had two main requirements: the house had to have character and it had to be within walking distance of our kids' school. Many houses in Belleville fit the first category, where 100 year old houses are fairly common, but few were near a school, and the few that were generally suffered from other issues that we could not affordably take on. After months of searching to no avail, it became obvious that our desire to remain in the Metro East was simply not in the cards.

At that point we did what any good house hunting family would do: we freaked out. We began considering literally every area on the Missouri side of the Metro. Should we move to North County to be near family? Should we move to Wentzville where the population is growing? Should we move to University City where the architecture has so much character? Should we—gasp!—just move out of St. Louis and start fresh somewhere else?

After we came to our senses and realized ■ Cont'd on page 9



The Heithaus family poses in front of the St. Louis Hills home they moved into a year ago. Photo provided by Michael Heithaus.

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# Real-Time Crime Center seeks funds for expansion

by Pat Talley, Crime and Safety Education

It's no secret that the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department is currently understaffed. One solution to the problem is the use of technology as a force multiplier. Enter the Real Time Crime Center (RTCC)—the SLMPD's technology hub located at headquarters in downtown St. Louis. The RTCC provides investigative support to officers in the field including patrol officers, detectives and specialized units, through the use of License Plate Readers (LPRs), high definition cameras and gunshot detection systems.

You've probably noticed the flashing red and blue lights at major intersections. Those gaudy boxes and lights aren't there just for deterrence: those lights belong to high definition security cameras that record and monitor activity at those intersections. Also located at many intersections are 200 LPRs that capture plate numbers and tag those on a list of vehicles known to have been involved in serious crime such as stolen autos, car jacking, assault or homicide.

The video feed goes to the RTCC where detectives work 24/7 monitoring that activity. The 1000-plus high definition cameras, citywide, have helped in 1,747 arrests resulting in 4,277 charges since the RTCC debuted in July 2015. These statistics include arrests made as a direct result of an LPR hit. Additionally, the cameras and RTCC staff have assisted patrol officers in the recovery of 1,037 stolen vehicles and 241 illegal firearms since 2015.

This technology isn't cheap. Each camera costs on average \$9,000 and requires ongoing maintenance. Funding for the cameras comes from a variety of sources including private donations, fundraisers conducted by neighborhood associations, and contributions from the local Alderman's discretionary capital improvement fund. Our own fundraiser, a Chili Cook-off last spring, raised \$10,000. The St. Louis Police Foundation is conducting a capital campaign to raise \$17 million to improve technology with digital evidence platform improvements and the purchase of more LPRs and high-definition cameras. Additionally, a camera registry is being rolled out allowing individuals and businesses to register their private cameras with the RTCC.

"One of the keys to our success has been the private/public partnerships we have built over the past four years," says Sergeant Keith Barrett of the SLMPD. "The RTCC's relationship with St. Louis businesses, neighborhood groups, security groups and the community continues to grow as we showcase our positive stories and show the impact we are having on crime. Public safety is a team effort and the RTCC is only one piece of the puzzle."

Donations to the Hampton/Chippewa Technology Project can be made to the St. Louis Police Foundation at [www.stlouispolicefoundation.org](http://www.stlouispolicefoundation.org), or by mail to 9761 Clayton Rd, St. Louis, MO 63124.

## Why we moved to STL Hills (Cont'd from Page 8)

that leaving St. Louis would be an awful decision, we finally began to hone in on what we really wanted in a home. Yes, we wanted the architectural character. And yes, we wanted to be close to school, but not just school, we wanted to be close to everything - parks, museums, downtown, restaurants, work and more. Proximity to everywhere was really what we desired.

And so we began to search. Where could we live that would put us so close to everywhere? Where could we live with beautiful architecture that also had great parks nearby? St. Louis City would be a great location - but Lafayette Square was too trendy and the Central West End too pricey. We would have to look elsewhere.

Or so we thought, until one morning I awoke and frantically began to look up St. Gabriel parish's address. I vaguely remembered visiting the parish a few years earlier, and fondly recalled the gorgeous homes surrounding the beautiful Francis Park. As my wife and I began reviewing the houses for sale in the neighborhood, we were struck by the uniqueness and character of every house in the area. It was exactly the style we were looking for.

But we were completely unfamiliar with the neighborhood itself. Was Francis Park safe? Was this a good neighborhood to raise a family? We began to read about the neighborhood and how strong and safe it was. On paper it sounded great, but were all the good things written about it for real? We had to go see for ourselves.

In May of 2018, we made our first true visit to the Hills, and stopped at several open houses. It was a perfectly sunny, 75 degree day, and quite possibly every single person in St. Louis Hills was out in their yard or at the park. We were blown away by the number of families living in the neighborhood, and the friendliness of nearly everyone we encountered. It was on that day that we became convinced that we did not want to live anywhere but St. Louis Hills. And from that point onward, we did not consider any houses outside the neighborhood.

It took us another few months until we finally found the house that was perfect for us, and we couldn't be happier with our choice. We have a beautiful house in the best neighborhood in town. We never would have thought we would end up in the City, but we are so glad that we did. It was one of the best decisions we have ever made.

# Realizing my favorite store in the world is just down the street

by Chip Kastner, with historical information by Steve Doss

I've hated home improvement stores for as long as I've been going to them. They're gigantic and difficult to navigate. It's virtually impossible to find someone to help you, and even then the help is... shall we say... uneven. However, over the past several years, I've found myself going to them more than ever.

Fortunately, I pretty much never have to go to the nearby Lowe's or Home Depot. Why would I, when St. Louis Hills boasts what might be the best hardware store in town?

Southside Hardware got its start when Ed Ripper, Sr. purchased Lemay Hardware at the corner of Lemay Ferry and Carondelet Boulevard in the 1960s. He ran the store and his wife Helen managed the books. Together they raised seven children; three of them, including Steve, became full time employees after they graduated from high school.

Steve purchased the store in the late 1980s from his parents, which helped provide their retirement income. But when the Flood of 1993 struck, the store was flooded and the building was condemned. The store reopened on Hampton Avenue in 1994. Starting in the early 2000s, Steve's children Allison, Sean, Brian and Gary began working at the store.

It's difficult to walk into Southside Hardware without immediately being greeted by a member of the Ripper family, most frequently Sean or Gary (their shirts have their names stitched on the chest). Rather than aimlessly wandering the aisles, I'm usually led directly to the exact product I need. After being asked if I need anything else (and taken to it if needed), I check out, get my purchase packed into a paper bag, and I'm on my way quicker than it'd take me to make it out of the parking lot at Home Depot.

A surprisingly large number of my interactions begin with me stating "I don't know if you have it, but I'm looking for...", and the answer ends up being "yes" an *astounding* number of times. The store can't be more than a few thousand square feet in size—including the back office and storage area—but they have an impressive inventory. Concrete patch? Metal filler? Joist

hangers? Downspout diverters? Garden hoses? Air conditioner filters? Fertilizer? Gravel? Stakes? Mouse traps? Caution tape? I've found all of them here, and of course I'm just listing some of the items that I *didn't* expect to find.

Despite the prompt service, I never feel like I'm being sold something I don't need. A year or two ago, the company formerly known as Laclede Gas performed an impromptu inspection of my gas lines and told me that I needed to sand and paint a rusty pipe. I headed down to Southside Hardware for some Rust-Oleum and was about to walk out with a quart of paint... until Gary stopped to do some quick math of how many square feet I was actually going to coat, and talked me into buying a *smaller* can instead.

Another time, the 80-year old doorknob in my bathroom was being troublesome, and I suspected that a set screw needed replacing. Sean brought out a device that I can only describe as a "screw matcher," which was a board covered in dozens of sockets matching screws of different dimensions and thread sizes. When Sean concluded that my screw was nonstandard, Steve suggested looking at Krause Key & Lock; if they didn't have a match, he said to bring the whole doorknob in and they'd see what they could do. Well, Krause didn't have a match, so I brought the doorknob in. Gary played with it for awhile, realized that I just had the doorknob mounted incorrectly, and sent me on my way, free of charge.

Beyond the well-stocked shelves and incredibly helpful staff, the Southside Hardware team provides a number of other services. I've used them to duplicate keys, service my trimmer and fix my chainsaw. They fix glass and screens, repair small engines and other household devices, and even color-match paint.

Not only has Southside Hardware changed my views of what a hardware store can be, I daresay that they might be my favorite store... period. We're lucky to have such a gem in this neighborhood.



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# Crowds brave late September heat at Art in the Park

by Michael Zensen



A drone captures the crowd at Art in the Park. Crowds braved the 92-degree heat to peruse art booths and listen to music around Francis Park's lily pond. Photo provided by Jan Starbuck.

Mother Nature danced a waltz with the Art in the Park planning committee all the way up until the first volunteers arrived, but in the end She decided to play nice and bring out the sunshine and blue skies. Although the temperature reached 92°, the annual event drew its usual busy crowd.

The day started off strong as Jason Garms took the stage filling the morning with a steady stream of melodies. Art patrons and stray churchgoers filled Francis Park at 10:00 a.m. to start a morning of treasure hunting among the 75 artists showing their unique point of view. Shortly before noon, you could catch Tom Oldenburg slinging suds with the Two-Three Fund, a St. Louis Hills charity which uses the proceeds from Art in the Park liquor sales to help neighborhood families who have a member suffering from cancer or other serious illness. Tom better watch out, with that smile and those moves, Hollywood might decide to make *Cocktail 2*.

The noon hour brought the sun high and bright in the sky and local dignitaries: Tom Oldenburg, 16 Ward Alderman; Greg Daly, Collector of Revenue; and Mayor Lydia Krewson to the stage. Art in the Park benefits from their support throughout the

planning year, and welcomed their comments about this great South City event.

If you were at the fair you might have thought you heard Sheryl Crow during the early afternoon hours, but it was a well-executed homage by the River Kittens, whose afternoon harmonies drew a crowd up close and personal to the bandstand and provided a great background for the Classic Car Show and the Old Time Baseball competition.

Perhaps it was the varied selections of Falling Fences which made the afternoon disappear so quickly, leaving patrons at the Raffle Booths wishing they had gotten there just a few minutes earlier.

All in all, it was a fabulous day enjoyed by many in a gorgeous setting.

Thank you to all the event day volunteers, this is not possible without you and your neighbors getting involved. If you are interested in helping the logistics crew or if you would be willing to host an artist from out of town, please contact [info@artintheparkstl.com](mailto:info@artintheparkstl.com).




# Bishop DuBourg renovates front entrance, updates facilities

by Sam Bettlach, Bishop DuBourg High School Class of 2021

Over the past summer, Bishop DuBourg High School renovated its front entrance. Before the renovation, Dubourg had a semi-circle drive up to a long canopy that was poorly supported, dirty and beat down.

Bishop DuBourg's outgoing president, Father Michael Lydon, decided to take action, raising money to not only remodel the canopy but also to add a new circle drive-through with a drop-off lane and a parking lane. The new design also features additional green space in the front.

School renovations can have a large positive effect on the morale of students, teachers, and the school community as a whole. With the school implementing  **Cont'd on page 13**



Bishop DuBourg High School celebrates its recent renovations with a Family Food Truck event during Homecoming week. Photo by Meghan Meehan.

# Missouri legislature to consider vehicle sales tax bill

by Donna Baringer, Missouri District 82 Representative



Per our state constitution, the legislature has a veto session each September.

This past September, the Governor simultaneously called a special session to introduce a new bill. His bill put back into law that other motor vehicles, trailers, boats, or outboard motors may be used as deductions against the sales tax owed on a new vehicle.

While the bill did not open the specific chapter of law needed to add my temporary vehicle tags amendment, the House of Representatives leadership permitted me time to discuss this issue during floor debate.

The fact that in 2018, around 33,000 vehicles never paid sales tax, very much caught the attention of my colleagues—so much so, that many came up to me on the floor and pledged to assist in moving this legislation next session.

More importantly, leadership in the House now sees the need and wants to move this bill when we return for the 2020 regular session in January.

The link to view the House floor explanation

on why there is a proliferation of expired tags and how to solve it can be found in the 82nd district email blast. We are finalizing the language for the car sales tax bill for 2020 which will require all sales tax be paid at purchase.

As soon as I have the bill prepared, I will send it out in my blast so that 82nd district residents will be the first to read it.

If you need to sign up for the e-mail blast please contact me at [Donna.Baringer@house.mo.gov](mailto:Donna.Baringer@house.mo.gov).

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# Art in the Park Car Show proves not all art is on canvas

by Terry North

This year we celebrated the 11th year of the St. Louis Hills Art in the Park Car Show. With over 20 classic and unusual pieces of iron gracing the lawn at Francis Park, to say the show was diverse is an understatement.

Our thanks to Naeger Family Insurance for once again being the keynote sponsor, providing doughnuts, coffee and—most importantly—the trophies. This year's People's Choice Awards went to the '58 Cadillac and the VW Camper. Thanks to Brad Arteaga and his band of volunteers for the organization!

Rules state that the cars come from the neighborhood... although I don't remember seeing most of these cars around St. Louis Hills. Nevertheless, it was a nice outing and a welcome enhancement to Art in the Park! There must be some amazing barn finds tucked away between Hampton and McCausland!

Over 20 registrants rolled in, waxed off and talked about their beloved treasures. This year there was an abundance of European autos in the show, from a vintage Euro BMW 635i to a Classic MGC and a rare VW Westfalia Camper. Not to be outshown, American art was obvious with the amazing white



A rare Volkswagen Westfalia Camper was one of two People's Choice Awards winners. Photo provided by Terry North.

'58 Cadillac, the pristine '65 Buick Riviera and the classic white-over-red '58 Corvette, stealing hearts of all ages. Forgetting to mention the beautiful Wimbledon White '66 Mustang, a perennial participant, would be a huge oversight—such a well-cared for icon of Americana! They seriously don't design them like they used to!

To all who participated, thank you, let's do it again next year! To those who strolled and appreciated this form of art, thank you as well!



A 1958 Cadillac was the other recipient of a People's Choice Award. Photo provided by Terry North.

## DuBourg improvements (Cont'd from Page 12)

a great deal of updates inside—with new science classrooms, technology infrastructure and a one-to-one laptop program with Microsoft Surface Pro 4s, Bishop DuBourg needed a way to bring the outside of the school up to date.

The renovation took place over the summer, necessitating the closing of the front entrance. Bishop DuBourg's front parking lot was closed all summer, with summer staff and visitors using a back entrance.

Bishop DuBourg's new renovations have given a positive vibe to the start of the school year. Students entered the building through the new construction. During Homecoming Week in early October, the school hosted a Family Food Truck evening to formally celebrate the successful renovation project. One of the most important parts about a building is the front entrance, and putting a brand new look on the front of the building puts a brand new face on DuBourg in the community.

DuBourg has done a very good job of adapting, with its physical changes moving the school in the right direction, driving the students and the community towards success.

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# The rise and fall of the Easter orchid corsage

by Jeff Leshner

The orchid plant dates back to the days of the dinosaurs. Researchers have found evidence of orchids dating back to between 195-136 million years ago. The first human record is attributed to Theophrastus, a student of Aristotle, around 300 BC. A Greek medical botanist in the first century, Dioscorides, is thought to be the first to identify them as orchids.

The philosopher Confucius was an admirer of orchids, apparently because of their resilient way of life, beauty and fragrance. He also wrote a poem about the plant which is worth a read.

The Romans are thought to have used them as an aphrodisiac; they would eat them or steep the plants in a liquid and drink it.

In the year 1818, a horticulturist living in England named William Cattleya was unpacking some plant samples from Brazil and discovered what appeared to be parts of an orchid plant. He nurtured it back to life and it grew into a beautiful orchid which was named in his honor. The Cattleya orchid has one of the largest blooms of any orchid. Greenhouses were introduced in the early 1900s, and the propagation of the orchid increased and the number of varieties grew into the thousands.

During the years of the Great Depression, Nettie Kurtain started selling flowers from a cart at the corner of Grand and Chippewa. With the help of her husband Frank, the cart grew into Netties Flower Garden. Netties flourished and grew into one of the largest flower shops in the area. It expanded into the orchid growing business in the 1940s, building greenhouses in Kirkwood and hiring a botanist who I believe came from the Netherlands. Netties grew mainly Cattleya orchids, and possibly became the largest grower of its time.

My father, who worked for Netties from 40s to the 70s, was part of this operation. During that time, most mothers who attended church on Easter and Mother's Day had to have an orchid corsage pinned to their dress. Mr. Leshner tells me a crew of seven would spend three full days cutting orchids. Most were shipped out of state to cities all around the Midwest. He estimates they cut 15,000 orchids during the busiest years.

The orchids at Netties were made into corsages with a sort of assembly line of six people, each adding their part to complete the end product, which was passed to a salesperson who would give it to the waiting customer in the long line of people picking up mom's corsage. The best my dad can recall of the cost was from \$2.50 to as much as ten dollars for the premium corsage in the early days, and they sold thousands.

Frank and Nettie Kurtain were long time residents of St. Louis Hills, living in the 6200 block of Itaska, I believe one of their grandchildren lived there for many years after they left the home.

In the early days of Leshner's Flowers, as business grew our holiday orchid corsage sales grew as well. From the mid seventies through the early nineties, we sold an average of 150 cymbidium orchid corsages for Easter and Mother's Day. This year we didn't sell a half dozen if you combined both holidays.

The popularity of the orchid corsage at church just dwindled away to nothing over the years. We do still supply different varieties for weddings and prom corsages, and also sell orchid plants which are quite easy to grow.

So, pick-up an orchid plant and place it on your kitchen windowsill and enjoy.

# Trick-or-Treating in St. Louis Hills: Rules of the road

by Gary Wells

October 31st is rolling around pretty quick. That date brings out tiny princesses and pirates, ghosts and ghouls, aliens and adventurers. One of the most frequently asked question will be "And who are you supposed to be?"

As always, be extra careful when driving around the neighborhood that evening. Some schools will actually be closed the next day, so the caution should extend through the weekend. On the flip side, some people return home from work during the evening hours, so please be sure to keep your trick or treaters from running out in front of cars.

We frequently see visitors from outside of



A St. Louis Hills home is decorated in preparation for the hundreds of trick-or-treaters who come through the neighborhood on Halloween. Photo by Chip Kastner.

Cont'd on page 15



# Good neighbors make St. Louis Hills a neighborhood

by Gary Wells

A few weeks ago, a young man in the neighborhood had to make a run to Target. Getting in his car, he turned the corner to head off to the store, when he noticed a neighbor's car sitting at the curb with the driver's door slightly ajar and the driver just sitting there with her head resting against the back of the seat. Knowing that this woman lives alone, the young man decided to pull over and check on her. As it turns out, she was fine—she had just gotten home from a long day at work and was taking her time getting out of the car before going into her house. But

she expressed sincere gratitude that someone had stopped to check on her.

This is an example of what being a good neighbor means. We check in on each other. We take the time to investigate something that doesn't look right. We know, at least to some small degree, who lives around us. Otherwise, we don't have a neighborhood, we just have a "residential area".

It is especially important to be a good neighbor in the months coming up. For people who don't have family or close friends living nearby, the holiday season can actually be a lonely and isolating part of the year. For people who are physically infirm or unsteady, the onset of autumn and winter brings the trouble of dealing with fallen leaves and ice on the ground. Some have a medically-recognized condition where the long, dark hours of nighttime between Halloween and Valentine's Day bring about depression.

Whenever you have a few spare moments, be sure to check in on people around you. A friendly conversation, an invitation to a meal, an offer to clean off the sidewalk – all of these things can be extremely helpful to the people living around you. Be a good neighbor, and we'll have a great neighborhood!

## St Louis Hills Flora and Fauna

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C P K X L F M X B Q H D L J S L E L Y I

## Halloween (Cont'd from Page 14)

the Hills coming to visit the neighborhood on Halloween. Please be courteous, but also be cautious. As much as teens want to roam the streets with complete freedom this spooky night, parents should know where their kids are going and when they'll be in for the night.

Whether you know this or not, telling jokes or singing songs before getting a treat is particular to the St. Louis area. If you're giving out treats, go ahead and encourage this. However, some families new to the area may not know about this tradition and some kids are just plain nervous. Please refrain from making the kids feel bad if they don't entertain you for a piece of candy. It's all in the spirit of having fun and pretending for the evening. Also, parents—no more than five samples from your kid's bag or basket for a "safety check"!

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EVERGREEN  
HUMMINGBIRD  
LILY  
POPLAR  
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SUNFLOWER

If you have a really spooky story or good joke for Halloween, consider sending them in to the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association Facebook page.

Happy Halloween everyone!

St. Louis Hills  
News and Views



Publication of the  
St. Louis Hills  
Neighborhood Association

newsletter@stlhills.com  
PO Box 190314  
St. Louis, MO 63119-6314

Editor and Layout  
Chip Kastner

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## **NOTABLE DATES**

November 9

Annual Marcia Matreci Trivia Night  
St. Raphael the Archangel

December 1, 7:00 p.m.

St. Louis Hills Christmas tree lighting  
Francis Park

December 7, 7:00 p.m.

Women's Advent by Candlelight  
Word of Life Lutheran gymnasium  
Contact Lisa Holderle at 314-849-  
9945 to host a table or attend

December 7

St. Louis Hills Christmas Party  
St. Raphael the Archangel

December 8

Advent by Candlelight  
St. Raphael the Archangel

December 14, 5:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Live Nativity Scene  
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