



# Lane reduction proposed for Hampton

by Chip Kastner

In early 2019, the City of St. Louis commissioned a traffic study on the Hampton corridor between Gravois and Chippewa. The study evaluated the impact of reducing the lanes on a section of Hampton from two in each direction to one in each direction, with a turn lane running the length of the section.

A lane reduction, also known as a road diet, has been successful in other areas such as South Grand and on Arsenal Street along Tower Grove Park. Reducing vehicle traffic can have a positive impact on businesses along Hampton, and improve the walkability of the neighborhood by making Hampton safer to cross.

Space saved from a potential lane reduction would be used to expand the curb, extend the bike lane that currently runs between Jamieson and Loughborough, and provide two extra feet for parked vehicles north of Jamieson.

Notably, the busy intersections at Chippewa and Gravois would not be altered, and two lanes of traffic in each direction would be preserved north of Bancroft (along Hampton Village) and south of the entrance to Willmore Park. Streetside parking along Willmore Park, which is currently sparsely used, would be replaced with a dedicated bike lane.

The traffic study found that a lane reduction would reduce traffic speeds, increase line of sight at intersections, and reduce pedestrian crossing distances. This would be accompanied by an expected reduction in crashes and street racing along Hampton. Overall, the slower traffic would provide a more welcoming environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, and make it easier to get in and out of cars parked on the street.

On the other hand, the inability to pass slower-moving traffic may create perceptions of increased congestion. Longer lines at traffic signals would also be expected, particularly at the Nottingham and Eichelberger intersections. However, the

six traffic signals between (but not including) Chippewa and Gravois would be adjusted to optimize traffic flow through the corridor and clear most lined-up cars within a single green light. The time required to drive through the corridor during peak hours should be minimally impacted. A small amount of traffic that currently utilizes Hampton would likely take alternate routes, primarily Jamieson, Macklind and Kingshighway.

The project, if implemented, would cost between \$210,500 and one million dollars. The least expensive version of the project would apply pavement markings and bollards (posts) to delineate the new vehicle lanes, bicycle lanes and curbs. More expensive options would include curb bumpouts, longer-lasting paint, ADA-compliant pedestrian signals, and upgrades to the intersection of Hampton and Jamieson.

Funding has already been secured to resurface Hampton. If the lane reduction is implemented, it would likely be tied to the resurfacing. Decisions about the project are expected this spring, with implementation to potentially occur in the fall.

Questions may be directed to Brenna Brown of the City of St. Louis Board of Public Service at [brownbr@stlouis-mo.gov](mailto:brownbr@stlouis-mo.gov) or (314) 589-6637.

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# Run for the Hills: 30 for 30

by Wayne Myrick

What comes to mind when you think of the year 1991? Perhaps Operation Desert Storm, Silence of the Lambs, Run for the Hills, Jeffrey Dahmer, Nirvana and Rodney King.

"Wait, did he include Run for the Hills on that list?" You bet I did. Run for the Hills greatly impacted our little corner of the world and is alive and well after 30 years and hundreds of thousands of dollars that have been invested into Francis Park.

The 30th Annual 2021 Run for the Hills will be held on the morning of September 18 at 8:00 am. And we all really need it this year!

This is our year. The year we bust out like a caged lion and get back closer to our lives as we knew them. I invite you to think about how this Run for the Hills, which started as a simple and small neighborhood 5k race 30 years ago, can impact your life in 2021.

I, state your name, am busting out this year with the Run for the Hills by selecting one of the following:

I'm planning to RUN/WALK my first 5k or run/walk my best 5k race in 2021. You have several months to train so if you are looking to accomplish something you have never done or hoping to top your past results with faster times, your time is now. Spread your spirit of hope, competition and enthusiasm by inviting your friends, family and neighbors to register for the race also. Who wouldn't want to improve themselves while improving their friends and neighborhood at the same time?

I'm ready to SERVE! We would love to welcome new members to our Run for the Hills leadership board. Bring your creative ideas and cheer to this high energy group of leaders. There are so many ways you can get involved and the only requirement needed is a love for our neighborhood and park and desire to serve. Email me at waymyrick3@yahoo.com for more information. If you aren't interested in serving in a leadership role but would like to serve your community on the day of the race, we need you! Email Nancy Vordtriede at president@stlhills.com for more info.

I want to RAISE money for Francis Park by becoming a \$500 Run sponsor or I can help sign up new sponsors for the Run. Contact Mike Banahan at mbanahan@evans-dixon.com for more info.

We are so thankful for all of the runners, volunteers and sponsors who supported our virtual Run in 2020. With their generosity, we raised \$12,500 for Francis Park and sold out of all of our 450 amazing Run t-shirts designed by StL Hills resident Corey Lee. We will start registrations for the Run early this summer and look forward to the big day in which our finish line area will be filled with happy runners and walkers, loud music, Ted Drewes frozen custard and bounce houses for the kids. Let's bust out of this pandemic and get back to the way life should be in St Louis Hills.



# Ten years of Friends of Francis Park

by Tom Byrne

Just over ten years ago, Friends of Francis Park was merely an idea discussed among neighbors and promoted by then-Aldерwoman Donna Baringer. But the idea was a good one: Create a not-for-profit charitable organization supported by contributions from neighbors, neighborhood organizations, and users of Francis Park that would be focused exclusively on helping the City maintain and improve the park.

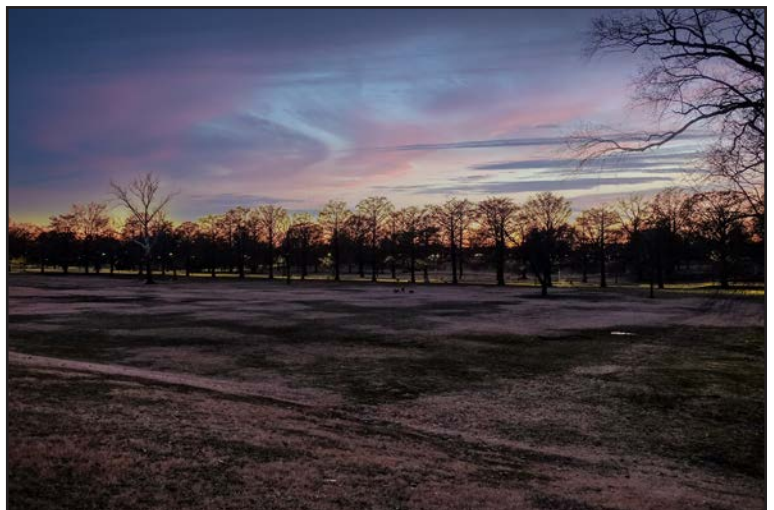
The organization could buy plants and tools for park gardeners, sponsor maintenance of the lily pond, obtain and plant trees in the park, install park signs, hire workers to water the plants in the summer and pick up debris, provide park security, and cosponsor events like the Christmas Tree Lighting. It could also initiate park improvement projects, like painting and repairing the handball courts, building the gazebo, installing chess boards and working with a committee to finance and install the David Francis statue. It could purchase and maintain needed equipment like the gator and a commercial-sized lawn mower.

Perhaps equally important, Friends of Francis Park could work with our alderman and the City Parks Department to ensure that the interests of neighbors and park users were kept paramount in all decisions that affected the park. And finally, as a non-profit charitable organization, Friends of Francis Park could facilitate funding park initiatives through contributions and membership fees that were often tax deductible, and it could qualify for grants that are only offered to charitable organizations.

In the past ten years, Friends of Francis Park has accomplished all of that and more, with the support of our members, park volunteers, our alderman, the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association, Run for the Hills, and other neighborhood organizations. We were not the first ones to think of the

idea of forming a charitable organization to support a city park. But the other park charities in our area—Forest Park Forever and Friends of Tower Grove Park for example—are much larger organizations that benefit from corporate sponsorships. Ours is a purely grassroots organization, sponsored and held together by the people who live in our neighborhood and who have a personal stake in Francis Park.

So, thank you to everyone who has helped our organization be a success over the past ten years including our members, park volunteers and everyone else who has had a hand in helping our organization thrive. If you would like to become a member, please visit our website at [www.friendsoffrancisark.org](http://www.friendsoffrancisark.org). We look forward to serving Francis Park and our neighborhood for the next ten years and beyond.



With the help of its members and volunteers, Friends of Francis Park has been working to keep the neighborhood park beautiful for the last ten years. Photos by Kristi Foster Photography (<https://kristifosterphotography.com/>).



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# A sincere thanks to all SLHNA members

by Nancy Vordtriede and Gary Wells

We want to sincerely thank all of you who have renewed your 2021 membership dues. Haven't renewed yet? There is still time for the calendar year. Whether it be via the membership card recently mailed to you, online through PayPal (the preferred method) at our website [stlhills.com](http://stlhills.com), or by utilizing our new QR code both on the membership cards and membership signs around the neighborhood, we appreciate you!

Have you noticed the new improved membership card? The QR Code and the opportunity to pay online, volunteer, and auto-renew? Well, the membership card does have a few changes of note. For one thing, there are places where two distinct names can be entered (marked as Resident 1 and Resident 2), so that our membership records can appropriately show members in the same household who may not share the same last name. The lists on the card show event committees (left side) and standing committees (right side). Each resident of a household can now mark which event or committee they would like to help with as a volunteer. This should cut down on confusion on our end when Resident 1 wants to volunteer for a committee but Resident 2 wants to help with some events.

If you received a membership card in the mail, and the addressee on the front was not correct, please let us know by sending a message to [membership@stlhills.com](mailto:membership@stlhills.com). We are still a work in progress! Thank you to Janice Starbuck for overhauling the membership card, and thank you to Tom Bene' too for the great idea on membership signage for the neighborhood!

What you have in your hands is just one of the benefits of membership in the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association. Our "St Louis Hills News and Views" newsletter coordinated and edited by Chip Kastner, includes stories, pictures, and events from our community and several volunteer contributing writers.

What are the other benefits of becoming a member of the SLHNA? Serving and volunteering on our SLHNA Board as an Officer. By the way, elections will be coming this fall. So, if you are interested in serving, email Nancy Vordtriede at [president@stlhills.com](mailto:president@stlhills.com). Or perhaps serve as a member of our Executive Committee such as business, marketing, membership, safety, streets & property, young professionals, or senior liaison. Or volunteer on one of the many committees such as history, social media, scholarship, newsletter promotion and advertising, welcome new

neighbors, or volunteer for events during non-COVID-19 times, which include the Easter Egg Hunt, Christmas Lighting Awards, Christmas Tree Lighting, Gateway Cup, Holiday Party, House Tour, Lawn & Garden Awards, Run for the Hills and Park Cleanup, and Lily Pond (shared with Friends of Francis Park).

Whichever you decide to do, do not forget to renew your dues and support your neighborhood too! We need you!

**The St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association  
invites you to add value to the community with your  
2021 membership dues and volunteer efforts.**

Join or renew now by remitting \$30 using one of these methods:

**- Online via PayPal -**



Scan the QR Code with  
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navigate to the  
membership page at  
[stlhills.com](http://stlhills.com)

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**SLHNA  
P.O. Box 190314  
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**NEW RESIDENT?** ☐ The first year of membership is FREE.  
Contact [membership@stlhills.com](mailto:membership@stlhills.com) for questions.

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EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** We rely on volunteers for the following events  
and committees. Please check any which you are able to assist:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>R1 R2</b>   | <b>R1 R2</b>                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Tree Lighting     | <input type="checkbox"/> Francis Park Cleanup Team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt             | <input type="checkbox"/> History Committee         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gateway Cup Bike Races      | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing/Newsletter      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Decoration Awards   | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Committee          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Party               | <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship Committee     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> House Tour (Biennial event) | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Liaison Committee  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn and Garden Awards      | <input type="checkbox"/> Streets & Property        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Run For the Hills           | <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome Committee         |
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# Adjusting to the new normal

by Nancy Vordtriede, President, SLHNA



If memory serves (Wikipedia reference below) in July of 2006\* a major derecho took place, causing a direct hit in St. Louis, with 100 MPH winds, nine storm related deaths and seven confirmed tornados.

This storm downed trees, power lines, and created the largest

electricity outage during 97-degree days in the history of the St. Louis Area. Then in April of 2011\*\* on Good Friday, another round of storms and tornadoes this time were endured, with an EF4 tornado and 165 mph winds. This again wreaked havoc in the neighborhood. Being the community we are, neighbors assessed damage, coming out in full force together to share helpful resources.

New Year's 2020 rings in an unbelievable storm of a different sort, with an un-imaginable MPH crisis. A pandemic called COVID-19 rolls in, wreaking a public health crisis and a rapid, massive change to our daily lives, with an immediate call for survival mode.

Communications begin calling for words and phrases such as "lock down," "isolation," "masking," "self-diagnosis," "anxiety," "adaptation to change," "adjusting to the new normal," "patience," "flexibility," "economic crisis," "event shut-downs," "remote working," "virtual learning" and "virtual meetings."

Yet, through a time of uncertainty and lockdown, our neighbors shift and gain a new and different sense of resilience, strength, and support. Neighbors find a way to reach out to each other to forge new bonds and friendships and are supporting their neighborhood in ways they would not have thought of a year ago. Families focused on spending more time together, whether it be quality time at home, biking, hiking, walking, enjoying portions of the park, teaching, learning, and shared creative activities. Neighbors reached to small local businesses in their time of need as part of their extended family for curbside and home needs.

Through this same uncertainty and behind the scenes, the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association and Friends of

Francis Park kept up our work too. Although many of our wonderful events were shut down this year, from the Easter Egg Hunt, to sponsoring the Gateway Cup, to the House Tour 2020 (a major event for us), to the Holiday Party, we were still able to provide Lawn and Garden Awards, Christmas Lighting Awards, Scholarship Awards, and help with Francis Park Cleanup and Co-Partner in the Christmas Santa Parade, with Friends of Francis Park.

While we maintained Board Meetings via Zoom or through the means of email, text, or phone call, two specific Committees have made major improvements. Our Membership Data Manager, Janice Starbuck, has worked tirelessly to clean up and better organize our SLHNA membership and volunteer files. Janice engaged the help of our Treasurer, Tom Bene, and Webmaster, Jesse Rehmer, engineering better ways to link to our membership page to become a member, auto renew and volunteer too! MailChimp has been renewed under the SLHNA and better designed to communicate with members, non-members (who should be members!) and local business owners.

Our Marketing Chair, Sarah Seger, has been posting announcements, virtual events, and socially distanced events, and other items to communicate to those who are Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/stlhills/>) and Instagram users.

Although behind the scenes, I would write we remain here to serve and support YOU, our neighbor. I am extremely proud and grateful for all our Board Members, Committee Chairs, and Committees. All have in some way continued work on some Association or Neighborhood related project, whether it be Safety, Streets & Property, Business, Newsletter Blogs, and future virtual or socially distanced events to be had. We are charged to bring back our events, hopefully sooner rather than later.

Please remember to renew your membership and volunteer as we thank you too, for making our community strong! As always feel free to contact me at [president@stlhills.com](mailto:president@stlhills.com).

Wikipedia Research:

\*[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heat\\_wave\\_of\\_2006\\_derecho\\_series#St.\\_Louis\\_area\\_derecho\\_event\\_\(July\\_19,\\_2006\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heat_wave_of_2006_derecho_series#St._Louis_area_derecho_event_(July_19,_2006))

\*\*[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011\\_St.\\_Louis\\_tornado](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_St._Louis_tornado)

# Pregnancy amidst a global pandemic

by Chip Kastner

You know that dream that a lot of people have when they're kids, that they get to class and realize they're in their underwear? I've had a variant of that dream three or four times in the last year, except I get to a store or some other public place and panic because I don't have a mask on.

I guess I've always been a stickler for the rules. But it was last September that I realized, I sometimes even like face masks a little.

My wife was in the hospital for about three weeks—more on that in a minute—and was allowed one visitor (which was, invariably, me). I was making a supply run to the house, and before leaving to head back to the hospital decided to grab something chocolatey from the pantry.

I drove back to the hospital, put on my mask, went up to my wife's room and took it off (at the time, they let you do that if you were alone). The first words out of her mouth: "You have chocolate stuck in the corners of your lips." Good thing I had a mask on as I walked through the hospital lobby!

Other good mask side benefits I've found: Garlic breath blocker, face windbreaker, and smirk concealer.

Anyway, enough cheesy mask anecdotes. It's been about nine

months since we last published one of these newsletters; the most recent issue, from summer 2020, felt to me like twelve pages of announcing the cancellation of all the usual neighborhood summer and fall events. The lack of events to retrospectively cover made a fall issue rather difficult to put together, but I might have been up for the challenge...

...were it not for the situation that sent my wife to the hospital for three weeks. We welcomed our first child last September; she was born about six-and-a-half weeks early, and some complications kept my wife in the hospital for almost the entire month.

Although she was born during a pandemic, she wasn't a so-called "quarantine baby." In fact, she was conceived in July 2019 via the assisted reproductive technology known as in-vitro fertilization (IVF). She spent a few months cryogenically frozen before being thawed last February for what's called a frozen embryo transfer (FET), and the timing couldn't have been crazier.


I journaled the whole process of our IVF journey, and the word "coronavirus" didn't even appear in my writings until three days after the FET. At that point, there were only 35 confirmed cases in the United States, and the first case in Missouri wouldn't be detected for another two weeks: Remember the college student who came back from Italy, took the train from Chicago to St. Louis, and whose family went to a school dance while she was waiting for her test results? It feels like ages ago.

Not surprisingly, COVID-19 pretty much colored the entire pregnancy. I wasn't able to attend our first ultrasound, which was four weeks after the FET and pretty much at the height of society's panic about the virus. I drove my wife to the clinic and waited for her to Facetime me while I sat in the car. Another patient didn't get the memo that she couldn't bring her family into the office, so my wife had to sit in the waiting room with the other woman's coughing children—a fairly unnerving situation at that stage of the pandemic.

While I was skeptical last February of the threat posed by COVID-19, the pregnancy put things in a whole new light for me. Early on, they really didn't know whether COVID-19 posed an increased threat to pregnant women or to a pregnancy; and while I'm sure that most expectant couples felt heightened anxiety during the pandemic, the long, costly, heartbreaking and uncertain road of IVF really made the stakes feel astronomical.



Fears of COVID-19, accentuated by our nascent pregnancy, caused me to engage in some late-night panic shopping on Amazon. Photo by Chip Kastner.

 Cont'd on page 7



**Pandemic Pregnancy** (Cont'd from Page 6)

I worked from home before the pandemic, but my wife did not. She was allowed to work from home after the pandemic began, but as a social worker, she was still required to go on home visits until late March. When they finally suspended those, it was an enormous relief. For a long time, I did almost all of the venturing out of the house, limiting grocery store trips to off hours and trying to avoid going anywhere else.

Before mask-wearing became the norm (the CDC didn't start recommending them until April, and St. Louis didn't start mandating them until July), I became an expert "people dodger" in the store. It's probably for the best that I usually went by myself; before she started staying in the house, my wife became embarrassed to go to the store with me, as I would make abrupt turns, swerves, reversals and stops to avoid anyone else nearby. (This skill has served me well again in recent weeks, which you may know if you've seen an avoidant maniac with a stroller walking around Francis Park.)

For my part, though, I spent a lot of time eating canned food. That's right: I was one of those people who panic-ordered a bunch of supplies at the beginning of the pandemic. For a month or so, I refused to touch any of it, assuming that the worst was yet to come; then, I instituted a "take one, buy one" policy where I'd buy a new canned good to replace every one I ate. Time passed, though, and I realized that perhaps the end of the world wasn't imminent after all. I began to drain my supply, and eventually donated the rest of it to a food pantry.

As summer stretched on and the pregnancy progressed, anxieties lessened and we decided that a baby shower could be held reasonably safely if certain adjustments were made. It ended up being held in a backyard with lots of spacing, mandatory masks, hand sanitizer as a party favor, and boxed individual meals. The 100-degree heat index wasn't fun, but once you've soaked your entire shirt in sweat you pretty much don't notice that you're sweating anymore.

My wife ended up at the hospital four times over the course of the pregnancy (nothing COVID-19 related), with three admissions. We both ended up bringing our work laptops to the hospital so that we could save all of our time off for after the baby was born; after all, we were used to working remotely by that point. While we knew that a preterm birth was almost a certainty, the decision to induce labor happened so suddenly that I had to abruptly end multiple work conversations, fire off a quick "Talk to you in a few weeks" email to my boss, and pack up to relocate to the labor and delivery unit.



Born six-and-a-half weeks early, our daughter spent ten days in the NICU. Only my wife and I could visit, and masks were required whenever anyone else entered the room. Photo by Chip Kastner.

One additional visitor besides myself was allowed in the labor and delivery room, but my wife ended up needing a c-section. Our daughter was whisked away to the NICU immediately after birth. My mother-in-law got a fleeting glimpse of our daughter in the incubator as they transported her there, but beyond that, only my wife and I were allowed to visit the NICU during our daughter's ten-day stay. Ultimately, our parents didn't get to see their new granddaughter until weeks after she was born.

I had assumed that after our daughter was born, my coronavirus anxiety would fade somewhat; after all, the odds of an infant getting seriously ill from COVID-19 are incredibly slim. However, my concern has now shifted to my wife and/or myself getting sent to the hospital and being unable to care for her. Meanwhile, I think my wife has gotten more worried about COVID-19 than she ever was while she was pregnant. Weird how these things work.

As our daughter sleeps in her bassinet next to my bed as I write this, I realize how fortunate we were to have made it through the pregnancy without getting sick ourselves, and being able to smoothly transition to working from home. I can only hope that the only catastrophic pandemic my daughter has to live through is the one that she'll hopefully have been too young to remember.

# Route 66: History on the Highway

by Ron 'Johnny Rabbitt' Elz, KMOX Radio

Route 66 and St. Louis Hills were born in the mid-1920s and the Mother Road was, and is, the north border of St. Louis Hills. The road, first named Route 60, has covered far more streets than Chippewa and Watson with the designations of Route 66, City 66, Bypass 66, Business 66 and today Historic 66.

The highway crossed the Mississippi on the Municipal, Veteran's, McKinley and Chain of Rocks bridges and then, as The Three Stooges would say, spread out with alignments on Salisbury, Natural Bridge, Hall, Washington, Delmar, Grand, Riverview, Forest Park, Boyle, Sarah, Skinker, McCausland, Chouteau, Manchester, Gravois, Chippewa, Watson, Denny, and Lindbergh.

The Chippewa stretch started at Gravois in the 4100 block

then made a bee-line to just past River des Peres to the 7000 block, where Watson took over. But for some inexplicable reasons some blocks were missing such as 4500, 4700, 5100 and 6300.

Of the many notable places along 66 from the east was White-Line laundry, The Bungalow, Nordman printing, Shaw Marble, then east of Morganford there was the St. John's bowling alley and Steak & Shake. A couple blocks west it was Bud's Place sporting goods, and Ozark Dairy which had a big ice-cream shop.

On the south side at Ridgewood, Purex Corporation had a large operation, than at the northeast corner at Kingshighway there was a Phillips 66 service station that was replaced by the beautiful Famous- Cont'd on page 9

## Lawn & Garden Awards judging to begin

by Sarah Seger

We are excited to announce another year of the annual Lawn and Garden Award judging will commence this spring, running through June 26, to recognize our neighbors and their landscaping efforts.

In addition to the traditional front yard awards, we will once again have the backyard award. Backyard awards are nominated by the homeowner or another party with the understanding that our judges will be coming into your yard at various times to judge. Nominations can be made via social media or to [sarahseger15@gmail.com](mailto:sarahseger15@gmail.com).

The best kept block will also be recognized. The block award will take into consideration the block as a whole and with so many beautiful yards strung together it gets harder and

harder to select this one each year.

Winners will receive a customized plaque for their home and will have a temporary yard sign placed in their front yard recognizing their home as being one of the best landscaped homes in our neighborhood.

Becoming a judge is easy and is a good excuse to get out and about in the nice weather and take in the neighborhood. If you are interested or have questions please email Sarah at [sarahseger15@gmail.com](mailto:sarahseger15@gmail.com)! If you are not a member of the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association or have not renewed your membership for 2021, be sure to sign up today, which allows us to do things such as Lawn & Garden awards among many other events!



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# Once-a-decade redistricting to begin

by Donna Baringer, State Representative, Missouri District 82



During the 2021 legislative session, the Missouri General Assembly will have the once-a-decade task of drawing new congressional districts based on the results of the 2020 U.S. Census, which are expected to be submitted by the end of summer. This will be six months later than usual

because of the COVID-19 pandemic. After losing one congressional seat following the 2010 Census, Missouri has had eight congressional districts and is expected to retain the same number under the new Census.

Congressional redistricting follows the normal legislative process, with the Senate and House of Representatives passing the new congressional redistricting plan as a bill, which the governor can either sign into law or veto. Since the language of a redistricting bill consists entirely of indecipherable voting districts and tract-blocks, each bill

will be accompanied by maps to provide a visual description of the various redistricting proposals up for consideration.

I have the honor and responsibility of being appointed to the House Special Committee on Redistricting by the Speaker of the House. This work will be tedious, as the districts must be drawn as equal in population as is mathematically possible, but it is an honor to be chosen to work on this historic undertaking that will literally shape our state for the next decade.

I will be spending most of August through November in Jefferson City to give this issue my undivided attention. If you need anything from me during that time, I can be reached at (573) 751-4220 or [Donna.Baringer@house.mo.gov](mailto:Donna.Baringer@house.mo.gov).

## Route 66 (Cont'd from Page 8)

Barr Southtown store where their French onion soup was a big seller in the store's Mississippi Room. Across the street on the southeast corner was a busy location of The Parkmoor drive-in where the boys in orange jackets served eats such as Kingburgers and Chickburgers. On the southwest corner it was a Chippewa Drug store with a great soda fountain and a big Pevely Dairy neon sign. On the northwest corner in the Kings-Wa apartments, one of the occupants was a cafe that specialized in hot dogs and root beer that was named Frank 'n' Stein.

It wasn't until the early '30s that the recently-widened Chippewa started to get built up west of Brannon. At that intersection you'll find the Frank Hardt Memorial Medical Building, and the reason it was so named is on a plaque inside the Chippewa entrance. Joe Keller's Apothecary was at that corner for decades, and nearby there was Armin's bakery and a Velvet Freeze.

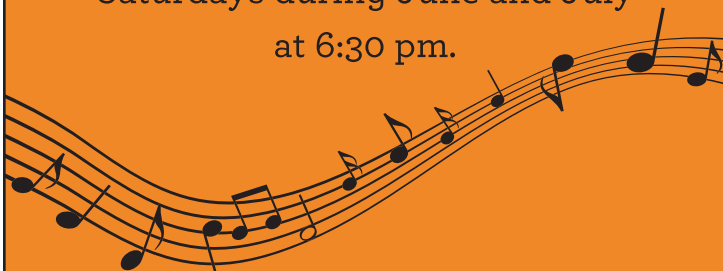
At Macklind you'd once find Pring's Landscaping, a Cities Service and a Shell station as well as the Zesto Drive In. There was a St. Louis Public Service streetcar line on Macklind that went all the way to Oakland. Kids from Mallinckrodt would march to Buder School to take the streetcar to their annual school picnic at Forest Park Highlands.

Walter Knoll Florists was at 5501 Chippewa and in much of the area to the north were clay mines. There was a small railroad that took the clay to the Hydraulic Press Brick Co. on S. Kinghighway, where the Venture store and other businesses would locate. The track ran east from Macklind in the alley south of Chippewa.

I'm afraid we're at the end of the line for now, but we'll pick up where we're leaving off in the next issue.

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# Commerce in the age of COVID-19

by Gary Wells

As we are all waiting our turn to get vaccinated, or celebrating the fact that we have gotten vaccinated, it may be a good time to reflect on the variety of new challenges that this pandemic has produced. More importantly, this may be a good time to consider how we have persevered over those challenges. After all, the world didn't stop this past year, even though it felt like it at times. No, the world kept turning and people kept taking care of business, as best they could.

Using a sampling of our neighbors as representative of the broader community, we can see what had to be done to adapt to a new reality.

"My work life has changed significantly during the current lockdown," says Russ Smith, with IGEL Technology. "I have been based in my home for over 20 years, but I traveled 75% of the time." COVID put an end to that.

"I had just returned from Munich when the lockdowns started and my travel schedule just stopped. Now my travel is from my bedroom, down the hall to my office where I might go from Zoom at 8:00 a.m. to Teams at 10:30 a.m. to Webex at 1:00 p.m. to Google Meet at 2:30 p.m. to Go-To-Meeting, etc."

Many of us can attest to the unsettling but necessary task of connecting with people through the internet. But for some, the need for additional technology went beyond downloading Zoom or Webex.

"I soon found myself accruing equipment, slowly but surely, until my office looks like a small TV studio with lights, cameras and monitors," Smith added.

Although such impersonal connections worked just enough for most of us, it did have an impact on others.

"I worked from home March-April of 2020 due to Covid," Jamie Dunphy, an agent with American Family Insurance, replied. "Fortunately, our company supplied us with the technology to still be effective and efficient. Nonetheless, it was challenging working from a laptop and cell phone! I would say our capacity was 70% of working in an office setting [during that time]."

While a temporary drop in productivity or capacity to serve clients was seen in many industries, in other fields the impact of quarantining and lockdowns was more prominently felt.

Michelle Wells described the severity of the situation in her office. "Several major projects were postponed indefinitely." Wells is an architect with Chiodini Architects. Some

employees were furloughed, while the rest of the company faced temporary salary reductions to offset the loss in business. The negative effects didn't stop there. "Over the past year, six co-workers tested positive for COVID. In each case, the office was closed and we had to go back to working from home for a few weeks at a time."

Working from home provided a whole new set of challenges, especially when other people were also confined to the home safety zone.

"It was really difficult when the girls were learning from home," Michelle remarked. "They're not used to having me at home during the day, and without a separate office space we had to set up some guidelines so there wouldn't be as many interruptions to the 'work day.'" Trying to be an engaged parent while also trying to get work done was a difficult balancing act for Wells.

Russ Smith concurred. "I have been blessed that my wife, Stacy, and my son, Cosmo, have tolerated my closed office door and conference calls from 6:00 a.m. to as late as 9:00 p.m. "

While the presence of people not affiliated with a job was a distraction for some, the absence of people affiliated with a job was a new test for others.

"My job is a Field Property Estimator for homeowner claims with AAA Insurance," Rob Gordon told us. "Not much had changed due to the COVID for me until our company put us in lockdown for several months and we were using vendors to do virtual inspections with us." When describing the effect of not being on site for an inspection, he offered this: "Some customers do not adapt well to contactless customer service. They want in-person."

The restaurant industry was among the hardest hit industries this past year. You may think first about the servers and cooks, but the suppliers and vendors also felt the ground shift, forcing them to adjust.

"I work at A. Bommarito Wines—a family run wine and spirits wholesaler and importer," says Marco Angeli. "As a Sales Representative I handle St. Louis Sales with retailers, fine wine shops and restaurants... I used to participate in many wine and food events in person. Now I do some virtual wine dinners and tastings. For example, a Club I do business with has diners pick up food and wine on a Friday afternoon. That evening a Zoom link is sent to them. Myself and the chef then host a virtual 'wine

■ Cont'd on page 11



# CSB improves your neighborhood, saves you money

by Chip Kastner

Our neighbor texted us last August with a picture of a large tree branch lying across the back left of my car. There's a tree across the street that's had some dangerous-looking branches for awhile, and even though it was a clear, calm day, one of them decided to break free.

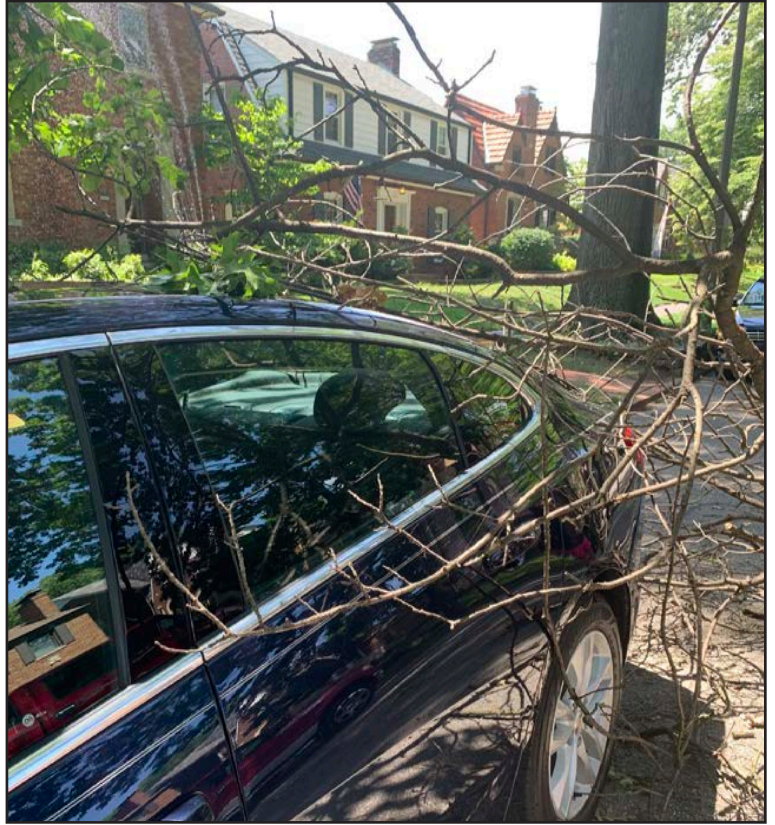
My wife called the Citizens' Service Bureau (CSB) at 314-622-4800. Someone came out later in the day to remove the large branch, and told my wife that someone would be in contact with us about the damage to our car.

Sure enough, about two weeks after the incident, my wife received a call from a blocked phone number. She answered the phone, and it ended up being an employee of the St. Louis City Counselor's Office.

He explained that although the city is responsible for upkeep of trees between the sidewalk and curb, the city doesn't automatically accept liability for any downed branch from one of these trees; sometimes, random accidents happen and the incident is no fault of the city.

However, he collected details about the incident, including the address of the house where the offending tree was located. He told me that he would be in touch with me in a day or two.

■ Cont'd on page 14



When a tree branch fell on my car, the Citizens' Service Bureau worked with me to investigate the incident and provide compensation. Photo provided by Chip Kastner.

## COVID Commerce (Cont'd from Page 10)

dinner'. He shares cooking techniques and how the dishes are prepared. I share how the wine was produced and stories about the winery. It's been one of the many unique ways we've had to adapt."

It is likely that many of the adaptations are going to be temporary. Other modifications are likely to be more lasting. Ever the optimist, Tom Bené sees a silver lining in the changes that companies have had to make.

"I believe COVID helped speed up the acceptance and normalcy of flexible work arrangements which was very much needed." Bené is CFO of RBM Partners. "Small companies like mine probably would not have adopted this approach without a pandemic pushing the innovation."

Companies were also faced with the harsh reality of making spaces safe for their employees. "I cannot see us ever going to back to close group desk arrangements and now I see questions about ventilation and air flow becoming more prevalent in office lease discussions," he adds.

Bené did point out one thing that did not improve with working at home: teamwork. "It was a welcome change of pace initially. However, I did miss the interactions and ease of quick communication when we were all together in an office."

Michelle Wells likewise addressed the difference between working in an office and working at home. "Trying to have an online conversation with your in-house team, contractor and owner representatives can be really challenging, especially when you all need to be referring to the same drawing or image on screen." Getting back into the office where the group could gather, with masks and well separated in a meeting space, made a huge difference for her.

Still, not everyone was lucky enough to go back to work.

"All in all, I have been lucky and thankful that I was able to continue working when many others couldn't," Russ Smith reflected. "I pray that we can get back to some semblance of normalcy soon and we can get our neighbors and small businesses back to work."

# Safety Committee works hard behind the scenes

by Sal Easterley

Most residents of St. Louis Hills are very familiar with the Crime Report sent out by block captains, but what you may not know is that there are other volunteers that go above and beyond to assist the safety needs of the neighborhood, called the Safety Committee.

The SLHNA Safety Committee is co-chaired by Tom Scheifler and his wife Janice Starbuck. Their purpose was outlined by Tom as a committee that collaborates with residents, businesses and adjacent neighborhoods as well as police, fire, rescue, and political leaders to promote a safe neighborhood for all.

As an attendee to several of the St. Louis Hills Safety committee meetings at Buder Library (pre COVID-19), the purpose outlined by Tom Scheifler is not as descriptive of the many things that this group actually does for the area and residents. While the committee lacks legal authority, it does carry weight with police, politicians, the court system, and businesses, which are all geared toward safety.

The group spearheaded letters for signature drives for sentencing of defendants that have initiated criminal activity in our areas. At another meeting, Tom and Janice presented crime statistics that did not match up with explanations of a local retail chain store and their use of our police resources without admitting an issue that affected their business and our neighborhood. The information presented to the group compared the high number of calls to the low number of arrests, suggesting police resources were being used to scare rather than arrest suspects.

The co-chair of the safety committee was able to explain some of the new programs that have helped the area, including license plate readers (LPRs), which are located at Hampton

and Chippewa and other intersections. These cameras assist police in real time to scan license plates of stolen vehicles to “The Real Time Crime Center,” and then disburse the information to police in the area. This has resulted in arrests on parking lots of Walgreens, Schnucks, and Target. The cameras have also facilitated the identification of suspects after crimes were committed in the neighborhood as well. This program was supported by Ward 16 Alderman Tom Oldenburg. More details can be seen at <https://ward16stl.com/cameras>.

The safety committee is also working on issues of transient apartment dwellers, and ensuring that property is protected by promoting a “group buy” program for residents and landlords to purchase security cameras at a discounted cost. “There are many options for cameras and the committee knows that not all options are suited for everyone,” says Scheifler. “The safety committee is available to discuss security camera options one-on-one with homeowners and landlords.” I have personally been the recipient of the committee’s help and expertise on our Sunshine Condo building, and with our limited resources we have contributed to the apprehension of a car thief and a burglar.

Going forward, the safety committee asks for us to continue practicing safety: Buy a security camera, attend a committee meeting, become familiar with your Block Captain or volunteer to be one, lock your doors on your car and home, do not leave valuables in sight, use your porch light or install dusk to dawn lights, and make sure your address is visible during day or night.

Let’s be careful out there!


## Catalytic converter theft: Costly but preventable

by Pat Talley, Crime & Safety Education

If you are following conversations on Nextdoor St. Louis Hills, you may have noticed numerous mentions of catalytic converters being stolen from cars. What is a catalytic converter and why are thieves targeting them?

Every car built since 1975 has a catalytic converter as part of the exhaust system. Its purpose is to reduce the amount of harmful gases emitted from the tailpipe resulting from the engine’s operation. The emissions inspection your car is required to go through is to test the effectiveness of the catalytic converter.

Catalytic converters contain precious metals like platinum, palladium and rhodium. Rhodium has gone from \$640 an ounce five years ago to \$21,900 an ounce now, creating a high demand. Catalytic converters are sold to scrap dealers for as little as \$200, while the cost to replace the stolen item is in the range of \$2,000 to \$5,000.

Because they are attached on the groundside of your tailpipe, they are easily accessed and quickly removed with just a saw or wrench. It only takes minutes. SUVs and trucks sit higher than sedans so they are most  Cont’d on page 13



# SLHNA raises money for Nottingham High School

by Janice Starbuck

In November of 2020, the Junior League of St. Louis (JLSL) reached out to the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association to help them raise money to benefit Nottingham CAJT High School, located at Nottingham and Donovan.

You may not be aware that Nottingham CAJT High School is for disabled students. The school's mission is to "Build positive character in students and for them to have a successful transition from school to post-secondary independence." They focus on teaching life skills in hopes that graduates can obtain some type of employment or learn to live on their own. These are sweet kids that have been dealt a tough hand.

The Neighborhood Association quickly agreed to help. Further, they offered to match the first \$3,000 raised from resident contributions.

An email blast was sent to the neighborhood and flyers were distributed to those closest to the school. Within just a few weeks, more than 70 contributions were made totaling \$5,900. The Neighborhood Association happily donated their \$3,000 match.

Also, local high school students Caroline Breville, Bella Uxa, Bell Farace and Leah Wegman collected at Candy Cane Lane just before Christmas and raised \$4,250 for the school. All in all, St. Louis Hills raised \$13,150 to help the students and faculty of Nottingham CAJT High School.

So far, the JLSL has used approximately \$4,000 for coats, outerwear accessories like hats and gloves, tennis shoes, underwear and socks for both boys and girls. They also purchased school uniforms and personal hygiene products such as deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothpaste and sanitary products. These items were distributed at the school in mid-February.

The remainder of the donations will be used for upcoming programs to benefit Nottingham High School, like:

- \* Food Pantry Program
- \* Affinia Healthcare Dental Clinic with PPE distribution
- \* Prom
- \* Backpacks and school supplies for students in August
- \* Fall Festival

Nottingham students and faculty were overwhelmed, overjoyed and beyond grateful for the kindness of their neighbors.

Just another reason to be proud of the great neighborhood we all live in.

Note: The JLSL is committed to helping this school in our neighborhood. If you are interested in participating, please contact Beth Ann Riechman at [Fashion1st@msn.com](mailto:Fashion1st@msn.com) or 678-371-2126.

## Calling all St. Louis Hills young professionals!

**Are you looking to get more involved in your neighborhood and meet more of your neighbors?**

**Lizzie Kurowski moved to the neighborhood about a year ago and is reigniting the neighborhood young professionals group and needs your help.**

**Obviously COVID-19 presents unique obstacles, but we are hoping to get a group together to start bouncing ideas and come up with events and other ideas for involvement in our beautiful neighborhood.**

**The group will start off more informal so we can get some great ideas to the table, so please email [elizabeth.kurowski@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.kurowski@gmail.com) for more info on getting involved and with any ideas you may have!**

## Catalytic Converters (Cont'd from Page 12)

often targeted. Hybrid vehicles are also targeted because their catalytic converter doesn't get as much use as those on traditional gas-powered engines.

To avoid any kind of theft from your vehicle always park in well-lit areas close to the building entrance, or clean out your garage and park the car there. Keep an eye out for suspicious people or vehicles in the neighborhood and report to the police if you see something that doesn't look right.

There are also anti-theft products on the market like Catstrap or Catclasp that make removal difficult. Talk to your mechanic about the best options available for your particular car.

According to the SLMPD, there is a coordinated investigation underway by federal and local law enforcement to identify subjects responsible for purchasing the stolen devices.

Remember: It's within your power to contribute toward a safe neighborhood for all.

# Welcome Committee gets back to business

by Gary Wells

Like so many other activities, our Welcome Committee activities were ceased by The Thing That Shall Not Be Named in 2020. People are reluctant to open their doors to strangers in most cases. Having the specter of a virus standing behind them made it even less likely for new residents to become engaged in a conversation on their porch.

Well, “Game On!” as the kiddos might say after a brief interruption in play.

The Welcome Committee has started delivering Welcome Bags again to new neighbors, and since we were delayed, we have several—so be patient with our team!

These sturdy green totes with the SLHNA logo on them

include a simple questionnaire from the Neighborhood Association, informational brochures, and little gifts from local businesses that would love to see more customers in 2021. Under normal conditions, Welcome Bags are delivered within a couple weeks of someone moving into our neighborhood.

If you or someone you know is new to the neighborhood and you have not received a Welcome Bag, please reach out to us at [welcome@stlhills.com](mailto:welcome@stlhills.com). We are also always looking for volunteers who would like to help deliver these totes.

See you around the neighborhood!

CSB (Cont'd from Page 11)

When he called me back, he confirmed that someone had previously reported the tree in question to the CSB. The city inspected the tree, determined it was in need of trimming and scheduled it for service, but never completed the trimming. Thus, the city would accept liability for the damages.

I was asked to obtain two estimates for repairs, and submit proof that I owned the vehicle as well as pictures of the damage. I was then sent a release acknowledging that in exchange for payment in the amount of the lower of the two bids, I absolved the city of further liability for the particular instance of the tree falling on my car. Per the city's request, I had the release notarized and mailed it in. I found the representative from the City Counselor's office to be professional, polite and clear in all of our communications.

That being said, the process wouldn't have gone anywhere if nobody had reported the tree to the CSB. The city has a large number of trees it's responsible for maintaining, and many of them are showing their age; the only way the city knows which trees need to be maintained is by reports made by residents.

If you're aware of a tree between the sidewalk and curb in dire need of trimming, make sure you visit the CSB online and perform a search of the address where the tree is located.

If there's a request already logged for the address under a relevant problem category

such as “Broken/Hanging Limb” or “Inspect City Tree,” click on the Request ID. If the status of the request is listed as “Open,” then there should be nothing further to do. If not, then you can report a problem anonymously online through a link at the top of the page.

If you haven't used the CSB's webpage before, it's a great resource for purposes above and beyond requesting tree trimming. You can report a huge number of issues including abandoned cars, overgrown lawns, rodents, graffiti and now COVID-19 violations. Providing personal information is always optional, and you can always track the status of any request you file online.



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# COVID, polar vortexes and disaster preparedness

by Chip Kastner

As I mentioned in the article on page 6, during the early stages of COVID-19, I bought a big pile of non-perishable goods. This was, basically, the worst time to do so. Store shelves were empty, online retailers were picked over, and I really had to start scraping the bottom of the barrel for supplies. They took a really long time to arrive from Amazon. What if there was a disaster that completely shut down the city, like the polar vortex that hit Texas in February?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends keeping between 72 hours and two weeks of non-perishable food and water in your house, in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency that prevents you from accessing food for an extended period of time. There are, of course, plenty of considerations to make regarding storage and durability; they have a pretty good guide online at <https://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/f&web.pdf>.

Many online retailers sell emergency food supply kits in all different sizes and varieties. Some of these kits advertise shelf lives in the decades, which is significantly more convenient than constantly checking a pile of canned goods to see when each item expires.

Other highly recommended options include a battery-operated or hand-crank radio, a NOAA weather radio, a flashlight, first aid kit and extra batteries. Some of these

might sound old-fashioned, but if the power goes out for an extended period of time, your phone isn't going to be all that useful. FEMA's guide to building an emergency supplies kit can be found at <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/20200716/how-build-kit-emergencies>.

For a bit of extra power to keep your devices charged, you can purchase portable power stations: Effectively, really big batteries that you keep charged when the power is on and then use if the power goes out. These are mainly designed for camping, though, and wouldn't be able to come close to powering your house; the biggest one I found stores 500 Wh of energy, which would power a refrigerator for a few hours at most. Some models do have optional solar panels, allowing them to be recharged even when the power is out.

If you do feel the need to power your entire house (or a large portion of it), portable generators are on the market capable of putting out thousands of watts. Some of them even support a transfer switch, which an electrician can install in your house to switch all power over to the generator. It may be worth considering a dual-fuel generator; gasoline degrades after a few months, but propane can be stored for decades. Keep in mind, though, that you'll need quite a bit of fuel to run a generator for an extended period of time, so ensure you follow all guidelines and laws for safe fuel storage.

## Spring brings opportunity for home improvement

by Gary Wells

Although your thoughts may turn to budding flowers when the calendar flips over to April, springtime also brings out something much harder: construction crews. Those lumbering trucks and yellow-vested crews had to wait for the freezing temperatures to go away before carrying on with their long-term projects. While the big energy companies and city departments make their scheduled repairs and upgrades, this would also be a good time for you to review what needs to be taken care of around the house.

Did you replace those batteries in the smoke alarms like you were supposed to with the switch in Daylight Saving Time? What about the air filters in your furnace—has it been a while since you put new filters in?

Did your house feel drafty when the cold spell hit? Now would be a good time to get those old windows replaced. Make sure the seals around the doors are good, too.

Notice any seepage into the basement or along the mortar in your brick walls when we had all of that snow? Is it time to call a tuckpointer or plumber to make sure that water is staying outside the house?

Keep in mind that little critters which may have been hibernating will now be out and about. Seal up any gaps along the foundation wall in your basement and use pet friendly repellent when spraying. PLEASE do not use poison for rodents, as those pellets can be moved around and easily harm neighbors' pets, birds and cute little bunnies.

Finally, do you need to take better care of yourself? The temperatures will be ideal for getting some sunshine and fresh air with a little walk around the park. Make sure you set aside a little time to chat with neighbors you may not have seen through the cold winter!

St. Louis Hills  
News and Views



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# SLHNA volunteers needed!

by Nancy Vordtriede

Due to volunteer retirement and new committee formation, the SLHNA needs Committee Chairs or Co-Chairs for the following Committees.

**Senior Liaison:** Cultivates a close relationship with SLH members who are 50 years and older, developing activities in the spirit of creativity, adventure, and advocacy.

**Welcome Committee:** Coordinates swag and other goodies for new homeowners, provides a welcome letter and survey, and reaches out to new neighbors.

**House Tour:** Coordinates homes, publicity and event needs for the biennial event.

**Newsletter Advertising:** Solicits advertisements for this newsletter.

You must be a member of the SLHNA to participate as Chair. If you are interested in finding out more please contact Nan Vordtriede at [president@stlhills.com](mailto:president@stlhills.com).

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## Important Neighborhood Contact Information

**Emergency:** 911

**St. Louis Police (SLMPD) Non-Emergency Number:** 314-231-1212

**Commander, 2nd District SLMPD:**

Captain Christi Marks, 314-444-0100, [cmmarks@slmpd.org](mailto:cmmarks@slmpd.org)

**Police Officer Liaison, 2nd District SLMPD:**

Officer Vince Stehlin, 314-444-0100, [vstehlin@slmpd.org](mailto:vstehlin@slmpd.org)

**Community Outreach/Business Liaison:**

Don Veile, 314-444-0168, [dveile@slmpd.org](mailto:dveile@slmpd.org)

**Problem Properties Officers:**

Anna Biondolillo, [ambiondolillo@slmpd.org](mailto:ambiondolillo@slmpd.org); Dave Krapf, [dekrapf@slmpd.org](mailto:dekrapf@slmpd.org)

**Crimestoppers:** 866-371-TIPS (Toll Free, anonymous and non-traceable)

**City Fraud Hotline:** 314-641-8600

**Neighborhood Improvement Specialist (Ward 16):**

Kathy Savage, 314-657-1362, [SavageK@stlouis-mo.gov](mailto:SavageK@stlouis-mo.gov)

**Citizens Service Bureau (request and route city services):** 314-622-4800

**Refuse Division (Dumpsters, Roll out Carts):** 314-353-8877

**President, St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association (SLHNA):**

Nancy (Nan) Vordtriede, 314-616-6468, [president@stlhills.com](mailto:president@stlhills.com)

**SLHNA Website:** [www.stlhills.com](http://www.stlhills.com)

**SLHNA Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/stlhills/>

**SLHNA Membership:** [membership@stlhills.com](mailto:membership@stlhills.com)

**16th Ward Alderman:**

Tom Oldenburg, 314-896-0204, [oldenburgt@stlouis-mo.gov](mailto:oldenburgt@stlouis-mo.gov)

**82nd State Representative:**

Donna Baringer, 573-751-4220, [Donna.Baringer@house.mo.gov](mailto:Donna.Baringer@house.mo.gov)