



# Getting to know your new mayor

by Sal Easterley

St. Louis City voted in a new mayor on April 6th, 2021 using a new election method called “approval voting” where candidates ran in the primary election without partisan labels. Voters could choose any number of candidates to vote for and the two candidates that received the most votes advanced to the general election.

Through the new process, the city voted into office the first black woman mayor and the first north city resident in almost 20 years. Statistics of the election illuminated that voters in southwest St. Louis largely preferred other candidates, which prompted me to ask why?

The new mayor and I are Facebook friends and have been “friends” for a couple of years; that is not to say we know each other well or personally. What I have gotten to see is the human side of a politician that sometimes does not agree with my opinions. What impresses me is that her pride in St. Louis and her family are genuine.

Reaching out to my “friend” the Mayor, I requested to submit some questions that could help us all understand the person I see on Facebook and the person you see in the news. Maybe you will get to know her other side, just as I do.

## What high school did you attend?

I attended Affton High School through the deseg program. I transferred to the school district after attending SLPS through the 5th grade.

## Why do you like Converse brand shoes?

The signature bejeweled red Converse are a shoutout to my sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. My sorority’s colors are red and white. “Chucks and Pearls” is a nod to Vice President Kamala Harris.

## What is your favorite attraction in St. Louis?

I would say the Muny! I am not only a big fan of musical

theatre, and try to attend as many shows as possible, but it was also the first place I ever worked as a teenager. Lots of great memories there!

## Are you a soccer fan and do you plan on attending a soccer game at the new stadium?

My 13-year-old son is definitely excited! We are looking forward to attending St. Louis SC games soon!

## Can you summarize what the term “progressive agenda” means to you?

A progressive agenda means one that reflects on how the old traditional methods of governance were ineffective, especially for poor people and people of color, and creates new methods that instead focus on how we can prioritize and lift up the hardest hit among us. I believe in creating a rising tide which lifts all boats.

## Are you supportive of the new approval voting system for city elections? Why or why not?

Yes, I came out early in support of approval voting. It not only makes our elections more competitive, but it also takes party affiliations out of the question so that the real issues are at the center of the debates and discussion.

**City voters passed a resolution to cut the aldermen in half from 28 to 14 wards. Do you think that the reduction is a good number or would** ■ Cont'd on page 2

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## St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association Board Members, Executive Committee, Chairs and Partners

### Officers

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Nancy Vordtriede

**Vice President**  
Open

**Treasurer**  
Tom Bene'

**Secretary**  
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**Sergeant at Arms**  
Ken Gabel

**Executive Director**  
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**Past President**  
Rick Palank

### Executive Committee

**Advisory**  
Mike Banahan  
John Burghoff  
Carol Wilson

**Business Coordinator**  
Brad Arteaga  
Carol Wilson

**Marketing**  
Sarah Seger

**Membership**  
Janice Starbuck

**Safety**  
Tom Scheifler  
Janice Starbuck

**Streets & Property**  
Don Orf

**Senior Liaison**  
Open

### Committees

**Advisory**  
Mark Johnston  
Wayne Myrick

**History**  
Rick Palank

**Social Media, Website &  
Communications**  
Jesse Rehmer  
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**Newsletter**  
Chip Kastner

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Gary Wells

**Welcome Committee**  
Kate Faust Corcoran

**Young Professionals**  
Elizabeth Kurowski

### Events and Programs

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Kristen Miller

**Christmas Lighting Awards**  
Caitlin Kremer  
Michael Kremer

**Christmas Tree Lighting**  
Rob Curtin

**Gateway Cup**  
Brad Arteaga

**Holiday Party**  
Kim Heitert

**House Tour**  
Rick Palank  
Nancy Vordtriede

**Lawn & Garden Awards**  
Sarah Seger

**Scholarship**  
Michelle Cheli  
Steve Cheli

### Community Partners

**82nd State Representative**  
Donna Baringer

**16th Ward Alderman**  
Thomas Oldenburg

**16th/12th Ward Neighborhood  
Improvement Specialist**  
Kathy Savage

**SLMPD 2nd District  
Captain**  
Christi Marks

**SLMPD 2nd District  
Officer Liaison**  
Vince Stehlin  
Don Veile (Community Affairs)

**Hampton Chippewa  
Business Association**  
Carol Hofer

**Art in the Park**  
Michael Zensen

**Friends of Francis Park /  
Run for the Hills**  
Tom Byrne  
Joni Ott  
Wayne Myrick

**Grub and Groove**  
Kevin Kozminski

## Mayor (Cont'd from Page 1)

### you like to see less wards?

I would actually like to see a combination of wards and at-large seats. The at-large seats would be critical in developing a bench for citywide office.

**Almost every reference for Tishaura Jones begins with “the first woman” or “first African American woman” to hold a particular office. Does the label ever bother you or do you like being a role model for women of all colors?**

Representation is important. In my inauguration speech I noted that I was standing and speaking on a stone that was never built for people like me to lead from, which is true. I take this reference with great pride because I know that when little Black girls see someone who looks like them leading the city they live in for the first time, they will recognize that they can also achieve their dreams.

**St. Louis Magazine dubbed you a “blunt critic”. Would you agree with this description?**

I don't know what that means. But let me be clear, I ran for office to do something, not be somebody.

**Given that there are 10,000 empty lots owned by the city, do you have any plans or programs to support trade schools in order to assist in the rebuilding of those lots?**

We are putting the finishing touches on a citywide Economic Justice Framework that will address decades of disinvestment in marginalized neighborhoods.

**This past month, every piece of property sold on the courthouse steps was bought. Since this is the first time this has happened, what are your thoughts?**

This is exciting, because it shows St. Louis is in demand! However, it's also concerning because we don't know the motivation behind these purchases. I hope they're not purchasing our properties for pure speculation and have plans to create more new homeowners who will love their homes and communities, and invest the time and money it takes toward keeping them safe and clean.

**Can the city government assist children in accessing WiFi in low income homes?**

Yes! In the first passage of American Rescue Act Funding from the federal government, we included funding to set up more public WiFi access points so that those without can get their schoolwork done, apply for jobs, and much more. And that's just the start!

**Due to population shifts and school closings of public and private schools, can the city do anything to improve and bolster the public school system?**

The first thing I did when I entered office was



**Mayor** (Cont'd from Page 2)

become an active, not passive, partner with our school leaders. The Mayor's office doesn't have any control over the schools, but I can control the amount of tax incentives we give out—which ultimately impacts the schools—as well as ensure that we create an environment where our children are safe, healthy, and fed so that when they go into school they are ready to learn and succeed.

**What would you say to people in areas of the city that believe they might be ignored by efforts to re-invigorate north of Delmar and will the effort take away resources from south City in particular?**

It's not either/or, it's both/and! We are turning our attention to areas that have been ignored for the longest time to get more people employed and create more homeowners and business owners where there are fewest. That helps us build our tax base and address public safety, which means everyone will benefit. That does not mean we won't review and support proposals on the South side; we want the whole city to grow and thrive!

**Recruiting for the police is difficult in all cities. Is there anything that you feel we can improve on recruitment efforts?**

Our police officers are exhausted, and for the longest time have been responding to numerous calls that fall outside their training. When we add a wider variety of professionals as responders to 911 calls, we give police the opportunity to do the job they were trained to do, which is respond to violent crime. I believe when our officers feel they are able to do their jobs and have the support from other professionals, we will begin to see a new influx of applicants who want to ensure their communities are safe.

**Areas of downtown have seen a drastic rise in crime and quality of life issues. Do you think there are programs that other cities have tried that could make downtown safer?**

I am the first mayor in over 20 years to be born, raised, and still live in North St. Louis. My son and I go to bed to the lullaby of gunshots in the distance more nights than we would like to admit.

Plus, in 2013, the Missouri Legislature relaxed gun laws to make it easier for people to own a gun so literally EVERYONE could have a gun. We have to get serious about addressing the root causes of crime, poverty and the social determinants of health, in order to see crime decrease and quality of life increase for all St. Louisans, not just those who live in nice neighborhoods.

**Almost every city administration had issues with the homeless. Do you have a plan that you think might work better?**

Homelessness is a very complex issue and there isn't one way to solve it. So, we took steps to address it by passing an additional \$18 million in our ARPA budget to support our unhoused and folks who are housing insecure. Whether it's rental assistance, rapid rehousing for those who are displaced, or safe outdoor spaces for our unhoused to stay while we provide them with services, we did our best to cover the full scale of need to ensure we can bring some stability to their lives—whatever that may mean for each individual.

**The state legislature ignored the will of the voters by not funding Medicaid. What would you suggest people should do?**

Vote in every election, and contact your legislators.


**The St. Louis Hills Association is offering an open invitation for you to attend one of our general sessions. Would you be willing to attend?**

Yes, of course!

**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 your smart phone or navigate to the membership page at [stlhills.com](http://stlhills.com)

**- Check by Mail -**

Mail payment along with this card to:  
**SLHNA**  
**P.O. Box 190314**  
**St. Louis, MO 63119-6314**

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Contact [membership@stlhills.com](mailto:membership@stlhills.com) for questions.

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ APT.# \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: (RESIDENT 1) \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

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

NAME: (RESIDENT 2) \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

<p>R1 R2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Tree Lighting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gateway Cup Bike Races</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Decoration Awards</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Party</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> House Tour (Biennial event)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lawn and Garden Awards</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Run For the Hills</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Block Captains</p>	<p>R1 R2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Francis Park Cleanup Team</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> History Committee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Marketing/Newsletter</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Safety Committee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship Committee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Senior Liaison Committee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Streets &amp; Property</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Welcome Committee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Young Professionals</p>
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# AwareNet: A virtual neighborhood watch

by Tom Scheifler

**We couldn't sit on the sideline.** My spouse, Janice Starbuck, and I volunteered in 2018 to be co-chairs for the SLHNA Safety Committee after a neighbor on our block was carjacked when he arrived home one night. At the time, we'd been residents of St Louis Hills for 25+ years, Janice was co-chair for Art in the Park and I volunteered for various neighborhood events. But we agreed the escalating crime was an issue too important, too concerning to not confront.

Thanks to the volunteers of the safety committee, our efforts have included:

- Raising \$10,000 to help pay for Real Time Crime Center cameras along Hampton
- Working to revitalize the block captain program
- Initiating a neighborhood watch program
- Writing neighborhood impact statements to judges
- Communicating with residents to promote safety and awareness

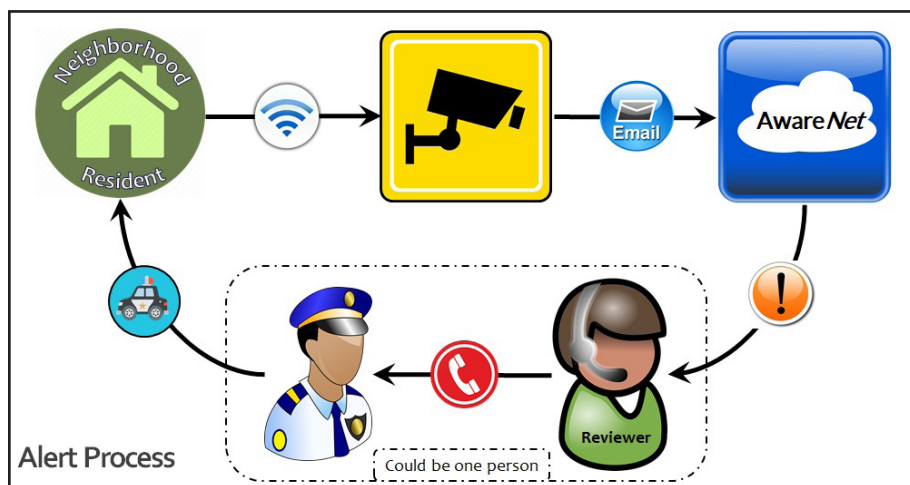
To varying degrees, these and other efforts were helpful and I'm glad we did them. But, they have not been enough. While I support many of the systemic changes that should help address the root causes for crime, systemic change will not come quickly. Every day and night, there are thieves roaming South City taking whatever they can from vehicles, yards and garages. Some thieves work alone while others work as teams of two or more. Some thieves just take what they can carry while others arrive with the means to take scooters, motorcycles and golf carts. Some thieves take flight when confronted while others respond with deadly force. With limited police patrols in South City, the situation can seem hopeless.

**From failure can come new opportunity.** Our effort in

2018 to establish a neighborhood watch program failed for the reasons you probably expect. It was very difficult to get volunteers to patrol the streets between 11pm and 5am. And those that did patrol would, understandably, lose interest because they were rarely in the right place at the right time to actually disrupt criminal activity. At the time, I had already started working with home security cameras and considered the idea of using cameras to facilitate a neighborhood watch program. But the necessary technology was far too expensive. So I set my sights on a more modest project; my block. More specifically, my alley. After a bit of research, I extended my Wi-Fi to reach each end of the fairly short alley and offered neighbors in strategic locations a free security camera if they would allow me to install it on their garage. After a couple months of part-time effort, we had six cameras providing full coverage of the alley and neighbors had donated enough to cover the cost of the cameras and installation (thank you!). The cameras can be credited with catching and fining two different people for illegal trash dumping as well as providing evidence for various thefts and attempted thefts. Good, but not great.

**Another door opens.** In March of this year, a new line of home security cameras was announced by the same company I used for the alley cameras. These new cameras promise the ability to differentiate vehicles from people from other things (raccoons, shifting shadows, etc.) and for a price far below previous cameras with similar features. So I immediately preordered one to check it out. When the camera arrived in May, I quickly realized it had the potential to be "the camera" I had wished for back in 2018. For decades, I've been writing software for a living. So I knew with these cameras and the right

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The following diagram shows the flow of information when using the AwareNet software:

1. A resident purchases a compatible camera and then configures it, enrolls it with AwareNet and installs the camera.
2. During the hours set by the camera owner, the camera immediately sends emails to AwareNet when it detects a person. The emails include information like the date, time and location along with a video clip.
3. AwareNet validates the email, saves the information and video clip to the AwareNet database, and immediately sends a text message to the person(s) designated to review the alerts for that neighborhood.
4. The reviewer determines whether the activity captured in the video clip looks suspicious or criminal and contacts the police or private security as appropriate.
5. The responder goes to the camera location to investigate.



# Ring vs. Nest: Which one should I choose?

by Chip Kastner

Several years ago, I began traveling more for work. In order to keep a better eye on the house, I purchased a number of home security products from Nest (a subsidiary of Google). Avid readers of this newsletter may recall an article I wrote in the Summer 2018 issue entitled “Home security cameras help catch criminals,” which can be seen on page 14-15 at <https://issuu.com/slhna/docs/slhna-summer-2018>.

With the recent birth of our first child, I was looking to beef up our home security system a bit. Unfortunately, I was disheartened to find that Nest had stopped selling their home alarm system and several of their security cameras, vaguely promising that they would launch new cameras later in the year.

Impatient as I am, I decided to check out the offerings by Nest’s well-known competitor, Ring (a subsidiary of Amazon). Impressed by their offerings, I bought a number of products, got rid of my Nest security system, and began

setting up the Ring equipment around my house.

While Ring is best-known for that ubiquitous battery-powered video doorbell, they actually offer four different varieties: The Video Doorbell, Video Doorbell Wired, Video Doorbell Pro and Video Doorbell Elite. They also sell four types of security cameras, although if you count all of the different power options there are actually eleven varieties to choose from.

And I’ve tried a bunch of them.

Let’s start with doorbells. We’re fortunate enough to have power running to our doorbell, so I replaced the old push button with the Video Doorbell Pro (more specifically, the Video Doorbell Pro 2). It came with an optional angle mount attachment, so that I was able to point it more towards my front door. When someone rings it, it will ring the existing doorbell chime in my house as well as send a notification to my phone.

When someone enters its field of

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## AwareNet (Cont’d from Page 4)

software, I could create a “virtual” neighborhood watch; something that would allow volunteer residents to “patrol” their block without the hassle and risk of leaving the house in the middle of the night. Collectively, we could be aware of activity on every block and alley at the same time. That is when I set out to create the AwareNet service.

**By the neighborhood, for the neighborhood.** The real power of AwareNet is the ability to collect real-time alerts from hundreds of otherwise standalone cameras and forward the alerts to designated persons for real-time review and action. The critical step for creating a deterrent is the real-time action/response. Whether the response is the police or private security, there must be a real-time response to disrupt the criminal activity while the criminals are in the neighborhood. It sends the clear message “Don’t stop here, we won’t be an easy target”.

**Privacy as a priority.** AwareNet does not have access to live video or to the video clips stored on the cameras. The camera owner configures which video clips are sent to AwareNet as alerts (e.g. person detection between 11pm and 5am). Typically, after 30 days, AwareNet automatically deletes video clips that are not marked for retention. Camera owners are encouraged to discuss with neighbors,

show them what the camera sees and to set “black-out areas” when requested by a neighbor.

**Step by step.** After initial basic testing, I discussed the idea with members of the SLHNA Safety Committee and Board members as well as several local security experts. With their encouragement and support we continued forward with the project. The next step was a small-scale test for St Louis Hills.

**There is no reliable crystal ball.** As I write this in mid-September we are just starting the small-scale-test. I can’t tell you what the status will be when this newsletter is distributed and I can’t guarantee the outcome for this project. What I can tell you is, I’m committed to making the AwareNet service available to every neighborhood in St Louis City at the lowest cost possible and to working with neighborhoods on ways to acquire cameras and real-time response to alerts. I’m sure each neighborhood will have unique challenges, but I think with the framework provided by AwareNet, we can have a significant and lasting impact on crime. I have reason to be hopeful again and, after reading this, I hope you do too.

If you are interested in learning more, please visit <https://www.awarenet.us/> or email [safetycommittee@stlhills.com](mailto:safetycommittee@stlhills.com).

## Ring Cameras (Cont'd from Page 5)

view, it will also start recording. It offers a feature called 3D Motion Detection, which uses radar to pinpoint the distance to objects and only starts recording when they get within a certain range of the camera. 3D Motion Detection also enables a neat (if gimmicky) feature called Birds Eye View, which displays a satellite image of your front yard and overlays dots showing where in your yard people are.

The doorbells range in price from \$60 for the Video Doorbell Wired to \$350 for the Video Doorbell Elite. The Wired doesn't offer 3D Motion Detection and won't integrate with your existing doorbell chime, although you can buy a chime from Ring if you want the doorbell to ring inside your house. As far as I can tell, the Elite is actually a less functional doorbell than the \$250 Pro 2, but will flush mount to your wall and draws power from an Ethernet connection; this also provides network connectivity, so you don't have to worry about Wi-Fi signal strength.

It's worth noting that all of the doorbells and cameras have a number of features in common:

- Motion detection, which triggers the recording of video and can send alerts to your phone
- The ability to configure "motion zones" in their field of vision so that you can determine the areas that will trigger recording and alerts
- The ability to draw "privacy zones" in their field of vision, so that you can opt to black out areas such as your neighbor's yard
- The ability to talk through the camera with your phone
- The ability to take photos at a predefined interval, even when no motion is detected
- The ability to only send alerts or start recording when a person is detected (a feature that is pretty accurate and greatly cuts down on false alarms, but is not flawless)
- The ability to "link" devices, so that if one camera detects motion, then other cameras can also start recording
- Schedules and mode settings, so that recording can be disabled if you're at home

With regards to security cameras, the simplest (and cheapest) option is the Indoor Cam, which costs \$60 and plugs into a standard wall outlet. As the name implies, it's not weather resistant and is designed to just be placed on a shelf or other flat surface in your home.

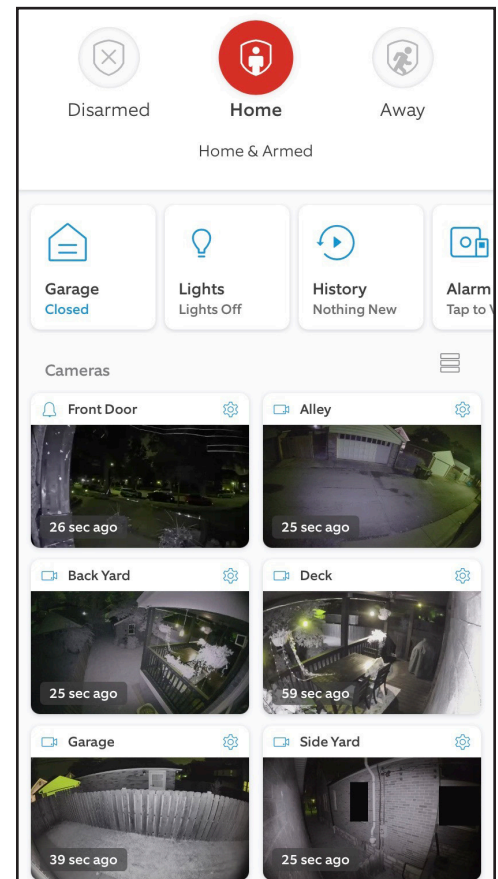
The Stick Up Cam is a versatile option that can be placed indoors or outdoors, either on a flat surface or on a wall or ceiling with a mounting bracket. The battery-powered version and the version that plugs into a wall outlet are

\$100; the battery-powered version with a solar panel to help charge it is \$140; and the version that gets power and network connectivity over Ethernet (much like the Video Doorbell Elite) is \$200.

The Spotlight Cam is a cool option that you probably don't want to place indoors, because on either side of the camera is a strip of motion-triggered LEDs that illuminate a somewhat narrow area; it also has a security siren that you can trigger, and although it's pretty loud, it's not quite as loud as I was hoping. It starts at \$200 for the battery-powered version and the version that plugs into a wall outlet; the battery-powered version with a solar panel is \$230; and the hardwired option is \$250.

My favorite, though, is probably the Floodlight Cam. It's quite similar to the Spotlight Cam (including the siren), except instead of shooting a narrow beam of light it has two adjustable flood lights that illuminate a wide area. The only drawback is that hardwired is the only option for power, but at \$180 it's actually cheaper than the comparable Spotlight Cam; I'm not sure why. For \$250 you can get a Floodlight Cam Pro, which adds the 3D Motion Detection and Birds Eye View from the aforementioned Doorbell Pro 2.

In the end, I purchased a number of different cameras and set them up all over my house and yard. I also bought their 14-piece alarm system kit, which comes with a base station/siren, two entry keypads (which double as sirens), a range extender, eight door/window sensors and two motion



The Ring dashboard shows me a recent image from each of my security cameras, easy access to a list of new events, plus the status of my garage door and alarm system. You can see in the "Side Yard" image that Ring allows me to block out my neighbors' windows so that they are not recorded. Screenshot by Chip Kastner.

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## Ring Cameras (Cont'd from Page 6)

sensors. I ended up buying two more motion sensors, as well.

The alarm system and cameras complement each other. While the cameras can't trigger the alarm system, you can set modes that apply to all devices. For instance, our basement camera only records if the alarm is armed, and our main floor camera only records if the alarm is armed and we're away from home. The door/window sensors will trigger whenever the alarm is set, but the motion detectors will only trigger if it's armed and we're away from home. If the alarm is triggered, all of the camera sirens also sound.

Now, the big question: Ring or Nest?

One huge advantage Ring has is cost. Its Indoor Cam and Stick Up Cam are about 40% cheaper than Nest's comparable offerings, and while there are lots of Ring doorbells to choose from, the cheapest one is less than half the price of Nest's. Furthermore, Ring's standard monthly plan includes professional monitoring of the alarm system, while Nest charges an additional \$30/month through a partnership with Brinks. Of course, as I mentioned before, Nest stopped selling their alarm system, so this plan is only useful if you've already bought one.

Another big advantage of Ring is variety. They have a bunch of different doorbells and cameras to choose from, with multiple power options; Nest only sells a wired doorbell, a battery-powered doorbell, a battery-powered indoor/outdoor camera, a wired indoor camera, and a hardwired floodlight camera.

There are a couple of things that I miss about Nest, though. The big one is the reason why I originally chose Nest in the first place: Ring cameras only record when they detect motion, or when you go to "live mode" to see the camera's current view. Nest cameras can record 24x7. Our neighbor's car was stolen a couple years ago, and our Nest



This is the image quality of a typical video doorbell trying to record a person on the sidewalk about 25 feet away. You would probably recognize them if you knew them, but you wouldn't have a detailed image of a stranger. Photo by Chip Kastner.

doorbell picked up the incident; our Ring doorbell never would have, because I have the motion detection set to fire only when someone sets foot in our front yard.

Additionally, you can set Nest cameras to record all the

time, but send you alerts only if you're away from home. With Ring, you can control whether cameras record based on if you're away from home, but you can only control notifications based on the time of day. I don't really want my backyard camera to send me a notification when I'm home and the alarm isn't set, but I don't really have a choice unless I don't want it to record when I'm home.

Since Nest cameras are always on, they can also send you notifications when they hear suspicious sounds; they can also learn faces and tell you by name who is at your door. Some of their newest models also have a small amount of built-in storage, so if the Wi-Fi goes out, they can store video on the device until connectivity is restored.

The video quality with both Nest and Ring is good, but not great. A camera at your front door isn't going to help you identify a stranger in the street; while you can probably pick out people you know from 20-30 feet away, someone you don't know would have to get fairly close before you got a detailed image. There are less well-known brands, such as Reolink (the brand used by the AwareNet proposal described on page 4), that sell higher-definition cameras, but I don't have personal experience with them.

I haven't gotten rid of all my Nest products. They make a nice thermostat and smoke detector, and as far as I'm aware Ring doesn't offer anything that compares. On the other hand, Ring offers a flood & freeze detector and has a number of "works with Ring" partnerships with third party devices; for instance, I bought a device that can control my garage door from my phone, and the Ring app tells me if the door is open or closed.

One last piece of advice: If you're going to invest in a bunch of cameras and other security devices, you'll probably want to buy a mesh Wi-Fi kit. These allow you to place access points throughout your house that create a single Wi-Fi network across the entire area. This way, if your router is in the basement in the front of your house, you can still get a good signal for a device in your garage with strategically-placed access points. Amazon and Google both make them, although mine is by a company called TP-Link. Whatever product you buy, ensure that it supports both 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz frequencies; many devices (including some of those by Ring) can only connect to one or the other.

All in all, both options are pretty good, and I have been mostly happy with both. Nest's ability to record constantly is a gigantic advantage, but Ring's value and variety are tough to beat.

# Run for the Hills: 30 years on the run!

by Wayne Myrick

Thank you to all our runners, walkers, volunteers and neighborhood supporters who made the 30th annual Run for the Hills a tremendous success. The Hills were definitely alive with the sound of music as the runners turned the corner at Tamm and Nottingham with the Rocky theme song blaring from the park. With 30 years behind us, why should we continue this neighborhood tradition?

**The Park.** In 30 years, the Run for the Hills has raised approximately \$500,000 for Francis Park. What would our park look like without Run for the Hills?

**The Atmosphere.** In one morning, the neighborhood is filled with nearly 1,000 smiling happy faces, friends and family encouraging each other to be their best, kids whose self confidence raises through the roof as they complete their first one mile or 5k race, and runners pushing themselves to a new level of achievement by running so hard they are absolutely exhausted when they cross the finish line. There is no shortage of energy and positivity on the morning of the Run for the Hills.

**The t-shirts.** Let's face it, there is a Run t-shirt in every house in the neighborhood. We wear our shirts when working out, walking the dogs, going on vacation, mowing the grass, playing pickleball, walking

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Runners take off down the 5k course winding its way through the neighborhood during the 30th annual Run for the Hills. Photo by Mike Truax.

## Gateway Cup brings 600 cyclists to St. Louis Hills

by Brad Arteaga

Thirteen years and going strong, the Gateway Cup's Tour De Francis Park once again graced our beloved St. Louis Hills streets this past Labor Day Weekend. There were an estimated 600 men and women that competed in both amateur and professional races. It was truly amazing to watch the speed of the riders in such large groups, rounding tight corners with handlebars nearly touching, with no mishaps in the rain on our slick streets.

New this year, half of all sales from the beer tent went directly to the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association and Friends of Francis Park, further benefiting our community. A big thank you to my Co-Chair, John Lake, and all of the many volunteers that worked in the tent through the challenges of the rain and 2 dollar bills. Last, this treasured event wouldn't be possible if it weren't for Mike Weiss and his Chain Gang at Big Shark, plus all of his many volunteers that come together to make this day

sensational.

Until next year, keep your feet on the pedals and your tires on the ground.



Female cyclists take to the course in one of the multiple races around Francis Park over Labor Day weekend. Photo provided by Brad Arteaga.



# Grub & Groove celebrates 10 years

by Rich Fisher

On Saturday, August 14th, Francis Park once again played host to Grub & Groove. 2021 marked the return of the event, following a COVID-related cancellation in 2020, with things picking up right where they left off in 2019. Produced by the South City Investment Corporation, a volunteer-led non-profit 501(c)(3), Grub & Groove continues to be one of the best free festivals in the City of St. Louis. The 10th Annual version featured nine local restaurants, five local bands, ten local vendors, a school supply drive for the Little Bit Foundation, and was sponsored by a range of local businesses. And like each of the previous years, the event drew a big crowd showing off life in St. Louis Hills and the surrounding neighborhoods. In the ten years since its inception the event has gone through 3 logos, several layouts, showcased over 20 bands, and supported numerous community improvements.

This year's event was planned and produced in just 90 days, following approval from the City of St. Louis' special events and parks department. Despite losing the presenting sponsor, steady financial planning by the leadership team allowed for continued investment in the event. This year saw more activities added to the popular Kids Zone, improved stage production and quality, more restrooms for guests, additional features for adults including the new Lily Pad lounge and bar, all capped off with another



The Kids Zone proved a popular attraction at the tenth annual Grub & Groove. Photo provided by Chris Murphey.

fireworks finale. Thanks to the unbelievable turnout and support from attendees, nearly every restaurant sold out of food! Given the challenging year for that industry, that was exactly what they needed. And with all alcohol sales going towards the event costs and South City Investment Corp., this year saw our biggest sales ever, helping to replace revenue lost from a drop in sponsorship.

Despite turning a modest profit in 2021, South City Investment Corp. is still planning a number of projects in the community. The group will be ■ [Cont'd on page 11](#)

# Elevens FootGolf Classic returns to Francis Park

by Jim Robben

On Saturday, September 18th, Francis Park hosted the 3rd edition of the Elevens FootGolf Classic.

After taking a year off in 2020, the event was conducted throughout the natural landscape of Francis Park and across eleven unique holes while breaking prior attendance records. Participants—people who donated to Friends of Francis Park—were able to enjoy a round of golf while combining the skill of soccer for a unique and fun option to “kick the links.”

As part of the event, over 225 golfers donated for the opportunity to receive a fun-filled activity in the crown jewel of 63109, complete with food & drink—all for a great cause! Additionally, over 35 entities donated to FOFP as part of being event/hole sponsors. The event was capped off with music and socializing into the early evening. A great time was had by all!



A kids' team participates in the Elevens FootGolf Classic in Francis Park. Photo provided by Jim Robben.



# Lawn & Garden award winners announced

by Sarah Seger

Congratulations to all of the 2021 Lawn & Garden award winners and a big thank you to our judges who volunteered their time this summer canvassing the beautiful hills to nominate 118 different lawns & gardens. There were many fantastic design elements throughout the neighborhood and it was lovely to see such wonderful choices. We are excited to announce the award winners below.

If you have a love for gardening and would like to join the committee for 2022, please feel free to reach out to Sarah Seger at sarahseger15@gmail.com.

## Lawn & Garden Winners:

5936 Childress  
5862 Delor  
6556 Delor

6220 Eichelberger  
6512 Eichelberger  
5901 Highfield  
6258 Itaska  
6203 Walsh  
6220 Walsh  
5815 Walsh

## Best Backyard:

6233 Loran Ave  
6009 Guilford Place

## Best Block:

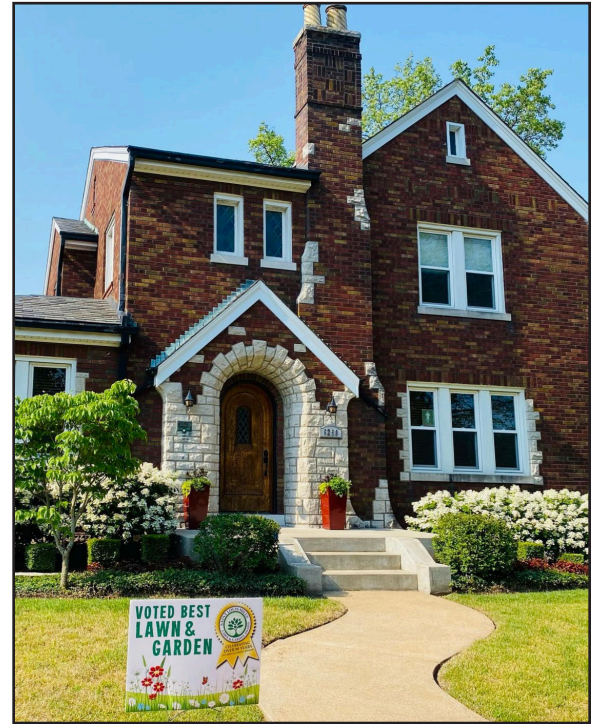
5800 Walsh  
6500 Itaska

## Best Corner at Francis Park:

Donovan & Eichelberger

## Best Church:

St. Gabriel's



One of the houses throughout St. Louis Hills that were awarded with a lawn and garden award this year. Photos provided by Sarah Seger.

## Run for the Hills (Cont'd from Page 8)

to Target and we'll soon be wearing them to Rockwell in the park. These shirts are comfortable and show our neighborhood spirit. What would we wear if there was no Run?

**My favorite topic: food.** Let me know if you are aware of any 5k's in which you can treat yourself to frozen custard from Ted Drewes, bagels from St. Louis Bread Company, pretzels from Pretzel Boys, fruit from LeGrand's Market and coffee cake from the Essentially Fries food truck?

**The people.** There are way too many servant leaders to recognize in this short space but I can tell you that the magic in the Run is the people who serve. Special thanks and recognition to Cathy Myrick, Sarah Seger, Nancy

Vordtriede, Lynn Wolf, Judy Murphy, Gerry Murphy, John Burghoff, Corey Lee, Mary Kate Mullen, Matt Sallaberry, Geralyn Banahan, Mike Banahan, Erin Murphy, Alex Curtin, John Fuchs and the 100 other volunteers who keep making this event successful and safe year after year.

**Our sponsors.** Please see our banner and support those businesses that support us as \$500 Run sponsors! We are so thankful for their support of our park and neighborhood!

We've already started planning for our next 30 years and I'd love to hear from you (wmyrick@lockton.com) if you want to do something great for the neighborhood and great for yourself by joining our leadership team as we prep for the 31st Run for the Hills on September 17, 2022.



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# RUN FOR THE HILLS

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# State lawmakers debate vacant properties

by Donna Baringer, State Representative, Missouri District 82



Last month, the St. Louis Post Dispatch published an article on the city of St. Louis' vacant properties. This is an issue I am very familiar with, especially since I was the director of the Magdalen Community Improvement Corporation in 2000 and part of our mission was stabilizing the area known as Southtown. In that position, I worked with city agencies to address vacant residential and commercial properties.

As the alderman, the most challenging vacant property I ever worked on was in St. Louis Hills. The property had been vacant for ten years before I was elected, and it took me another five to finally clean it up. All of the vacant properties had one thing in common: They were all privately owned. St. Louis City has about 25,000 vacant properties and of those, roughly 15,000 are privately owned. From personal experience, I know how

difficult it is to redevelop property when relatives cannot be found, and financial institutions are uncooperative.

This past session there was a bill sponsored by a Republican representative from St. Louis County that would address this city issue. This bill would allow a change in the process specifically for the City of St. Louis in the handling of privately-owned vacant property. The bill was created by a city "task force" of agencies who are familiar with this issue. I had met with the bill's sponsor prior to the committee hearing to let him know I was a big supporter and would be offering my input and insights during committee hearings which he felt were invaluable.

When our new mayor came to Jefferson City, I spoke to her of the importance of this bill for St. Louis. While the bill sailed out of our committee, it did not pass on the House floor. Because of my experience with the complexity of redevelopment of privately-owned property in the city, I plan to assist in the bill's passage next legislative session. If you would like to read the bill you can go to the state's website, [house.mo.gov](http://house.mo.gov), and look up HB1274. This will be one of my top priorities when we return next session.

## Grub & Groove (Cont'd from Page 9)

making an additional donation to the Little Bit Foundation, funding additional cutting of the park grass, and paying for much-needed upkeep on key playground equipment to keep it safe. In years past, funds from Grub & Groove have been used for new LED streetlights and decorative metal signage around Francis Park (in partnership with Friends of Francis Park), support for a new media lab at Buder Elementary School, reduced entry fees for restaurants in 2021 (to support these small businesses recovery), a donation to support the work of Mission: St. Louis, and support for the study of a CID along Hampton Ave.

The volunteers who produce Grub & Groove and lead the South City Investment Corporation would like to thank a number of groups for the success in 2021. Without the support of sponsors, the event would not be able to remain free for all and improve its offerings; thank you to 4 Hands Brewing Company, Azar Orthodontics, Planet Fitness, USA Mortgage, 1220 Spirits, and Hannah Realty Co. To everyone who volunteered with setup, during the event, and after, we could not be more thankful as their efforts are what help make Grub & Groove. And most of all to the

neighbors who continue to support Grub & Groove, thank you for helping make 2021 our best year ever!

We cannot wait to see you for the start of the second decade of Grub & Groove! Mark your calendars now for Saturday August 13th, 2022!

For more information, including sponsorship opportunities, email us at [hello@grubandgroove.org](mailto:hello@grubandgroove.org).



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# Announcing a campaign for Willmore Park

by Bill Stephens, Ward 12 Alderman



My Dear District 82 Neighbors, Willmore Park, the hidden gem of South City, was recently highlighted in this very newsletter. State Representative Baringer and I have put mountains of effort into revitalizing “that other park in the neighborhood.” There is no small

challenge ahead of us; from entire sections of the park being plagued with environmental concerns, to ensuring the park grounds and amenities are maintained during peak use and off-season alike, to having the alacrity to meet the needs of our neighbors who use it. Needless to say, our City’s sixth largest park is a hands-on job!

Yet our efforts have already proven successful. Working in collaboration with the Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Botanical Gardens, Forestry Division, Parks Division, and Princeton Heights Neighborhood Association, we’ve initiated a native habitat rehabilitation project which will address an area prone to flooding by the South Pond. This project will furthermore serve as a template for how the City maintains unused green space across its 109 parks and greenspaces, saving taxpayer money from seasonal mowing. It also aims to

create an internship program that leads to jobs with the Parks Division.

When pickleball took South City by storm, we installed new courts. We worked with the Board of Public Services to update and renovate the women’s restroom by the playground. The phenomenal St. Louis Disc Golf Association is working with us to expand into a nearby greenspace. There’s plans for a capital improvement project with the Southwest City Dog Park, planned speed humps, a partnership with South City Cyclery, a proposed Farmer’s Market, and so much more.

Which is why I’m taking this opportunity to announce the creation of a Willmore Park Task Force, and hereby launch my Campaign for Willmore Park. Truly, we have a gem of the most rare kind tucked away between Gravois and Jamieson, and we intend to polish it to a shine. Not because it’s easy, but because that is what our citizens deserve.

Please send any interest to StephensB@stlouis-mo.gov, and as always neighbor, thank you for being here; it means a great deal to me.

(Editor’s note: Ward 12, represented by Alderman Stephens, includes Willmore Park and the Carondelet, Boulevard Heights and Princeton Heights neighborhoods.)

## Everybody’s Aunt Rosie: A tribute to Rosemary Spitler


by Steve Doss

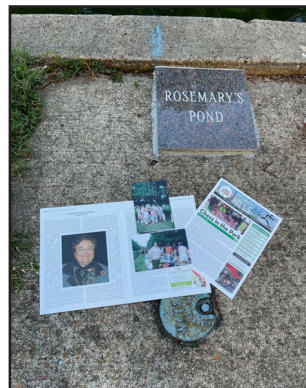
Rosemary was the person with the biggest heart in the neighborhood. She lived on Clifton across from DuBourg. Oh, how she loved the lights and the activity of the school. Her soul was never quiet. She was born with her right hand up. “If it is to be, it is up to me” was one of her mantras.

Rosemary became active in the neighborhood association when she was asked to help coordinate the volunteers. While homebound, caring for an invalid mother, she had time on her hands. The St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association was growing exponentially, but had no one who really knew how to beg for volunteers. With a phone and a list, Rosemary singlehandedly became the go-to person of the association.

Rosie didn’t take NO for an answer as she sold everyone on helping. Rosie helped take the Run to the next level. She initiated the first Christmas Tree Lighting. She was hoping

for 50 participants the first year, but over 500 showed. Candy, sleigh rides, choirs, Santa all became standards as no one ever disagreed with her ideas. You couldn’t because her ideas were always successful and for

 Cont’d on page 14



Members of the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association and Friends of Francis Park recently dedicated a memorial to Rosemary Spitler at the lily pond that now bears her name. Photos provided by Nan Vordtriede.



# It's Tradition! ...or Is It? And other reminders this season

by Nan Vordtriede, President, St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association



"Tradition," defined as a story or a custom that is memorized and passed down from generation to generation, originally without the need for written instructions. While most traditions begin within our families at home, others are developed with friends, co-

workers—and yes—with our fellow neighbors too!

Choose a season in St. Louis Hills, and either the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association or our Community Partners—Friends of Francis Park, Run for the Hills, Art in the Park, and Grub and Groove—has some favorite traditional committee planning, event, or program scheduled to gather all of us together!

While St. Louis Hills is rich and stable in tradition and history, even residents have been reminded (especially through the last two years) that traditions are meant to be upgraded, adapted, or changed to think "outside the box," or simply generate new ideas. It's this willingness to volunteer and contribute to the "Or Is It" question with the addition of new fresh ideas that will enhance our community even more!

I write this challenging each of you to think of at least one new tradition, whether it be an event, program, or committee you would like to see happen in St. Louis Hills. One that you, personally, would actively participate in and encourage your friends and neighbors to do so too. I further encourage you to share in an email to Nan Vordtriede at: [president@stlhills.com](mailto:president@stlhills.com).

In the Spirit of Tradition, many well wishes and celebrations for the following milestones: Congratulations to Wayne Myrick and Run for the Hills as the 30th Annual Run was held on September 18th. Congratulations to President Tom Byrne and Friends of Francis Park on 10 years of their mission to preserve, improve, support, and promote Francis Park. Congratulations to Kevin Kozminske and Grub and Groove as they celebrated their 10th Annual event on August 14th.

The St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association and Friends of Francis Park are absolutely delighted to have a new tradition in Francis Park with Rockwell Beer's beer garden concept. This is a huge investment in the neighborhood.

We look forward to Rob Curtin, Chair of the Tree Lighting

Committee, and his team as they bring to us on Sunday, November 28th the Christmas Tree Lighting in Francis Park at 7:00 p.m. and—back by popular demand—our new tradition, the Santa Parade (details to be determined).

Kim Heitert, Chair of our Holiday Party Committee, and her team are working on our Holiday Party, December 4th at 7:00 p.m. Further details forthcoming.

Caitlin and Michael Kremer are gearing up for the Christmas Lighting Awards. So perhaps we could create a new tradition of Christmas decorations on each property and especially around Francis Park! Remember too, many of our streets take time to decorate, so remind your friends, in an effort to reduce traffic and show off our whole neighborhood, "PARK and WALK the Neighborhood" during the Holiday so you don't miss any of the spectacular lighting.

Our Next General Meeting is December 8th, 2021. We hope to have this one at Bishop DuBourg. Please note this is a Wednesday evening. Our hope is to have Mayor Tishaura Jones in attendance. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Meeting is at 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

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# Safety is about more than just crime

by Pat Talley, Crime and Safety Education

Safety isn't always related to the topic of crime, although that does seem to be foremost in everyone's thoughts these days. I asked Safety Committee members to weigh in on topics they think are important for neighborhood and personal safety. Many thanks to those who sent in their suggestions.


**Stop Signs and Traffic Laws.** It is a fact that the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department is understaffed and it doesn't seem the officers have time to enforce traffic laws. That doesn't mean that traffic laws no longer apply. In these difficult times it is even more important for the citizenry to step up and police themselves. Courtesy and concern for others' safety should be foremost in everyone's minds, not that this is a great opportunity to ignore speed limits and stop signs. When someone blows through a stop sign without even a thought for the consequences the potential for disaster is right there. How could you live with yourself after hitting a pedestrian just so you could save the 10 seconds needed to make a lawful stop?

**Golf Carts.** A brief foray into local social media makes it clear that this is a sensitive topic. The City of St. Louis does not have a specific ordinance pertaining to golf carts, but state law does allow municipalities to regulate them if they choose, and requires golf carts to stay off roads if the speed limit is above 35 miles per hour. Practicality, safety

and consideration for fellow citizens would dictate some additional unwritten rules. Golf carts should be driven following all rules of the road, they should be parked in designated parking just like any other wheeled vehicle, they shouldn't be operated on the road by young children, and they should stay off the paths in the parks allowing pedestrians right-of-way. We make a nicer experience for all living in and visiting the neighborhood by operating these vehicles with courtesy.

**Citizens Service Bureau.** Contact the CSB for any of the following problems or issues: Problem animals; graffiti; park maintenance; fire safety; problem with a food establishment; weeds and high grass; derelict vehicles; trash or debris; street lights out or damaged; street signs missing or requiring repair; water department issues; fallen trees; alley issues; and recycling or trash collection.

The CSB will follow up with the appropriate department and will monitor the request. A neighborhood with trashy alleys, broken park equipment, and street lights out invites crime and gives the impression that it is not a safe or desirable place to live. [www. https://www.stlouis-mo.gov](https://www.stlouis-mo.gov) or call at 314-622-4800.

**Hampton Avenue Restriping.** Another touchy subject on social media is recent changes to driving patterns on Hampton that have been heralded by  **Cont'd on page 15**

Rosemary (Cont'd from Page 12)

the benefit of the neighborhood.

Rosie, with her merry band of men, led the charge to make sure Francis Park was the neighborhood gem. She recruited volunteers to groom every corner of the park. Convinced the board to hire summer help to water and do landscaping. She coordinated the twice a year Francis Park Cleanup. Reforesting of the park was one of her goals for sure. And every volunteer was always rewarded with donuts upon the completion of the task. She kept the neighborhood shops in business on her own nickel. The volunteers' children became her nieces and nephews. She loved to be called Aunt Rosie. Every child was remembered with an Advent Calendar at Christmas. Delivery was always included.

But her greatest claim to fame was reopening the lily pond. Her efforts alone pushed forward a dead piece of the park.

She helped raise the money to seal the concrete, get the water system working and push the city to love the idea. As she climbed out of the lily pond, she would stand and survey her gift to all who would walk by. Her eyes sparkled when she smiled from ear to ear. Rosemary's job was complete. Her lily pond volunteers to this day keep the dream floating with artwork and seasonal plantings.

Rosemary's efforts were recently recognized by the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association and Friends of Francis Park as they named the pond Rosemary's Pond. The naming is a fitting tribute for a person who always thought of others first. A true woman for others. So remember, whenever you're in a position to help someone, be glad and always do it, because that's God answering someone else's prayer through you. Rosie always answered the call.



# Local teacher leads the charge in trash pickup

by Chip Kastner

When Aaron Dohogne, a teacher at Gateway Science Academy, lived in the Central West End he found himself frustrated at the amount of trash he would encounter while walking his dog.

"After a while, I realized this negative thinking wasn't helping," Dohogne says. Realizing that picking up trash was a way to make a difference for his neighborhood and the environment, he decided to do something about it.

Dohogne began by taking some of his students to the annual Meramec Stream Clean from 2016 through 2018. In 2019, he organized a trash pickup after the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Dogtown. Dohogne and his small team filled six portable trash cans with plastic beer cups and beer cans.

Starting in March 2021, Dohogne—now a resident of the Lindenwood Park neighborhood—organized his first monthly neighborhood trash pickup event. He and a group of volunteers meet at a designated time in Lindenwood Park, where Dohogne passes out buckets, trash bags, yellow vests and gloves.

"I encourage people to work in pairs or groups, as the socialization makes the pick up effort much more enjoyable, at least for many people," Dohogne says. "My main piece of advice for the volunteers is to walk in a

direction that no one else is walking. In that way, we can get as much trash off the street as possible."

Dohogne and his volunteers clean up and down Jamieson, in and around Lindenwood Park, and on whatever side streets volunteers decide to go down. However, Dohogne has hopes that he can take his project beyond the Lindenwood Park neighborhood. Next spring, he plans to coordinate with the Ellendale neighborhood, which holds community trash pickups from April through June.

Dohogne has also reached out to the board of the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association, which was supportive of joining forces with his efforts.

"My proposal to St. Louis Hills is to help us in Lindenwood Park build a community of neighborhoods that work together to help pick up trash in St. Louis City, preferably once a month," Dohogne says. "For St. Louis Hills, this partnership can be unique, because we share main streets, such as Jamieson and Chippewa, and we can work together to clean them up."

Readers who are interested in a joint St. Louis Hills/Lindenwood Park trash cleanup event should keep an eye on social media for further updates.

## Safety (Cont'd from Page 14)

some and hated by others. In a two-year period there were 167 vehicular accidents on that stretch of Hampton and it was felt traffic-calming changes were necessary. One thing to consider is that the changes so far are only painted on and can be altered if considered ineffective.

**Surge Protection and UPS.** Consider installing whole-house surge protection at the breaker box in addition to uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) at all computers, audio visual equipment, streaming devices, major appliances and all other items that can be damaged in the event of a power surge to your house.



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## Important Neighborhood Contact Information

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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, [dlveile@slmpd.org](mailto:dlveile@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

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

**Citizens Service Bureau:** 314-622-4800

**Refuse Division:** 314-353-8900

**Neighborhood Improvement Specialist, Ward 16:**

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

**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)

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

**16th Ward Alderman:**

Tom Oldenburg, 314-896-0204  
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**82nd State Representative:**

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## Upcoming Events

**November 28, 7:00 p.m.:** Christmas Tree Lighting @ Francis Park

**December 4, 7:00 p.m.:** Holiday Party @ TBD

**December 8, 7:00 p.m.:** Neighborhood Association Meeting @  
Bishop Dubourg Cafeteria (tentative)



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