



St. Louis Hills SBD has started operation

by Don Orf, Secretary, St. Louis Hills SBD

The St. Louis Hills Special Business District (SBD) was created by a vote of the people in the district on August 8, 2023. The SBD encompasses the area bounded by Chippewa on the north, Hampton on the east, Gravois on the south and River Des Peres on the west.

There is a seven member Board of Commissioners, including: Tom Bene' (President), Patrick Kutz (VP), Brian Hoeltge (Treasurer), Don Orf (Secretary), Tiffany Harmon, Heather Sanders and John Fuchs.

The Board began meeting in September—meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month and will normally be held at the Buder Branch Library from 6-7:30 p.m. Announcements of meetings can be found on the SBD web site: www.stlhillsbd.com.

To date, the meetings have been mostly procedural in nature—electing officers, establishing bylaws, working through various policies and procedures—in order to create a solid framework from which our SBD can serve its neighborhood. To date, two committees have been created—Safety & Security (consisting of two Board members and several residents) and Executive Finance (consisting of the four Board Officers). The Board has established bank accounts and as of this writing, is beginning to see funds deposited from the real estate taxes collected in the district.

Not too exciting? Well, maybe not, but with the expert help of Park Central Development, a community development corporation that specializes in aiding

■ Cont'd on page 2

Year in review for St. Louis Hills security initiative

by Tom Scheifler, Chair, SLHNA Safety Committee

Thanks to everyone, residents and businesses, who made voluntary donations for the 2023 Neighborhood Security Initiative and to everyone who installed a security camera!! Your support was critical to the success of the project. Full monthly reports and the 2023 summary report are available online at <https://stlhills.com/security-initiative-monthly-reports/>, but I'd like to share a few highlights with you from the private duty officer patrols which started March 1, 2023:

- 215 – nights with patrol service
- \$86,500 – cost of patrol service
- 20 – criminal events while an officer was on duty
- 13 (65%) – in-progress criminal events disrupted by the officer
- 16 – criminal events while an officer was not on duty (10pm to 6am)

A question frequently asked is “Were there any arrests?”. The short answer is no. The longer answer is, although arrests would be nice, it is not the most important metric.

Our primary focus is on disruption of criminal activity as soon as it starts, because we know from camera clips on nights there was no officer on duty, unless disrupted, the thieves will continue block-to-block, for as long as they like, taking whatever they want, and often doing costly damage along the way.

The combination of an officer patrolling and using a tablet to view automatic alerts from security cameras has proven to be very effective. A 65% rate for disruption of in-progress activity was a solid start. However, additional cameras in key locations will likely improve the results going forward. I'm glad to discuss details with anyone thinking about purchasing a camera for their property. Please contact me by email at safety_committee@stlhills.com or by phone at 314-406-1166.

For 2024 and beyond, the new St. Louis Hills Special Business District (SLH SBD) will provide the necessary funding for the Neighborhood Security

■ Cont'd on page 4

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

Officers

President
Ken Gabel

Vice President
Liz O'Brien

Treasurer
Matt Borowiak

Secretary
Pat Talley

Sergeant at Arms
Jamie Dunphy

Executive Director
Ed Naeger

Past President
Nan Vordtriede

Executive Committee

Advisory
Mike Banahan
Tyler Hicks
Mark Johnston
Bob Lange
Wayne Myrick
Carol Wilson

Business Coordinator
Brad Arteaga
Carol Wilson

Marketing
Sarah Seger

Membership
Janice Starbuck

Safety
Tom Scheifler

Streets & Property
Nan Vordtriede

Committees

History
Rick Palank

**Social Media, Website &
Communications**
Jesse Rehmer
Sarah Seger

Newsletter
Chip Kastner

Welcome Committee
Sara Hallermann

Events and Programs

Easter Egg Hunt
Angie LeGrand

Christmas Lighting Awards
Caitlin Kremer
Michael Kremer

Christmas Tree Lighting
Rob Curtin

Gateway Cup
Brad Arteaga

Holiday Party
Laura Oldenburg

House Tour
Nina Chastain

Lawn & Garden Awards
Sarah Seger

Scholarship
Toni Zychinski
Steve Zychinski

Community Partners

Art in the Park
Janice Starbuck

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

Grub and Groove
Kevin Kozminske

82nd State Representative
Donna Baringer

2nd Ward Alderman
Thomas Oldenburg

**Neighborhood
Improvement Specialist**
Darius Redmond

**SLMPD 2nd District
Commander**
Capt. Thomas Zipf

**SLMPD 2nd District
Officer Liaison**
Gus Karagiannis

**Hampton Chippewa
Business Association**
James Schmerold

Soha Business District
Chris DePalma

Art in the Park volunteers needed!

Art in the Park is taking 2024 off, but will Art in the Park return in 2025?

That is still to be determined. We are in desperate need of committee members to help with the planning and execution of the event. Below is a list of positions that are currently open. If you have any interest in volunteering for or learning more about one or more of these positions, please contact me at janice.starbuck@artintheparkstl.com. I will provide you with detailed information about responsibilities and time required.

- Electrical Manager
- Entertainment Manager
- Graphics Designer
- Media Manager
- Non-Profit Manager
- Permits Manager
- Rentals Manager
- Sign Placement Manager
- Sponsor and Advertiser Manager
- Traffic Manager
- Webmaster

SBD (Cont'd from Page 1)

efforts like the St. Louis Hills SBD, the board is making sure that everything the SBD does is transparent, and it follows the letter of the laws to which it is held.

The SBD has issued two RFPs (request for proposal) thus far: one for security patrols—both the patrols and the oversight of the program, as well as a continuing relationship with AwareNet—and another for outside legal counsel (to have a qualified attorney available should there be a need). The information on these RFPs, as well as any other public documents related to the SBD can be found on the SBD web site.

Also, while the security RFP is in the works, the SBD has extended the current security relationship with the SLHNA—when the funds solicited by the SLHNA run out, the SBD will continue to fund security patrols until a new agreement is in place.

The SBD is also in the beginning stages of working with our local community organizations—SLHNA, Friends of Willmore Park, Friends of Francis Park—on projects that could get SBD funding in the near future. It's exciting to see the enthusiasm in the neighborhood for finding opportunities that will make our neighborhood safer, cleaner, friendlier, and more livable.

The SBD will communicate with the district via the SLHNA newsletter, but as noted above, up to date information related to the SBD can always be found at www.stlhillssbd.com. The site also includes contact information for the board members should you have questions or wish to participate. SBD meetings are public and all are invited—there is time set aside each month for residents to comment on issues important to them or to ask questions of the board.

St. Thomas' nears seven decades in St. Louis Hills

by Fr. Tiberiu Opris, Parish Priest at St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

The story of our Church began in January 1935, in a manner that is similar to other groups of immigrants at the time: by God's providence, through the efforts and initiative of the "Romanian Fraternity" of St. Louis.

While in attendance at St. Michael's Russian Orthodox Church and at the subsequent banquet that followed the service, a handful of men of Romanian and Macedo Romanian descent and their families discussed and agreed that they would try to establish a Romanian fraternal group that would allow them to come together and celebrate religious and festive holidays, as they had done while they were in the old country.

After some initial efforts in contacting people of Romanian heritage in the St. Louis area, and having been pleased with the interest shown in this initiative, they set up further meetings. Starting from February 6 and continuing to April 4, they established the founding rules for a fraternity group, elaborated their statutes and bylaws, and elected people for their committee. It was this group that would soon be spearheading all the efforts leading to the founding of our Church, and even beyond that.

As such, on May 5, 1935, on the first Sunday after Pascha (the Orthodox Christian Easter), also called the Sunday of St. Thomas, members of the Romanian Fraternity led



St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church has been located at Nottingham and Donovan since the late 1950s. Photo provided by Fr. Tiberiu Opris.

by Bucur "Bill" Binig met to discuss the foundation of a Church that would serve all of the Romanians living in the St. Louis Metro Area.

The initiative was warmly received, and from those that were present, the first one to donate toward this goal was a Romanian Orthodox Priest, Fr. Coriolan Isacu, who at that time was also the Parish Priest of St. ■ Cont'd on page 5



Pascha (Orthodox Easter) at St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church in 2023. Photo provided by Fr. Tiberiu Opris.

Calling all condominium board members!

by Sal Easterley

As you drive down the streets in St. Louis Hills you may marvel at the tree-lined streets with stately brick and stone single-family homes without giving much thought to the other lifestyles in the neighborhood. If you take time to notice, you'll also see duplexes, triplexes and 4-family flats—with several larger apartment buildings located on corners of the blocks.

What you may not know is that some of these “apartments” are actually multi-family condominiums owned by individual homeowners who join together to manage their properties. And if you look closely, you'll see they are well taken care of.

St. Louis Hills has condominiums on Jamieson, Sunshine, Loughborough, and Nottingham. Some are older converted apartment buildings, while some new ones were designed from the ground up to be occupied by individual owners.

Condo owners pay property tax just like single-family

homeowners, and the city really makes out—because there may be as many as 8 property tax bills for the same square footage as the tax yield on a large single-family home.

Individually, some condo owners belong to the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association. These owners are proud to be associated with the 63109 zip code, Francis and Willmore Park, tree-lined streets, and our wonderful area that is one of the jewels of the city.

Recently, the association boards of four separate condos met at the Buder Library for a meeting of the minds—to share experience and strategies to strengthen each condo's management practices.

If you are a condo board member and would like to attend the next meeting, please contact me at seasterley01@gmail.com.

Editor's Note: Condominium board meetings are not affiliated with the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association (SLHNA), which publishes this newsletter.

St. Louis Hills House Tour returns, draws a crowd

by Rick Palank

The October 15, 2023 St. Louis Hills House Tour drew over 820 people. Since 2010, SLHNA has conducted house tours every other year.

While the House Tour is a source of income for the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association, it also increases the awareness and appreciation of this great neighborhood, which in turn increases the demand for, and value of, all of our homes, condos and apartments.

Special thanks to those who volunteered to showcase their beautiful homes:

- Jill & Joe Chatman / 6747 High Circle
- Ann & Matt Curry / 6000 Highfield
- Lisa Greer / 5936 Childress
- Amanda & Rob Hehmeyer / 5900 Highfield

- Kim & John Heitert / 6236 Loran
- JoAnna & Roy Jackson / 6522 Walsh
- Molly & Blake Roell / 6485 Westway
- St. Thomas the Apostle Romanian Orthodox Church / 6501 Nottingham
- Bree & David Saunders / 6446 Westway
- Pat & John Talley / 6446 Eichelberger

Thanks also to Ron 'Johnny Rabbitt' Elz for contributing the “I am St. Louis Hills” article, and to the House Tour Committee members Nina Chastain, Kathy Fellin, and Joan Chadwick.

If you might be interested in being on the 2025 House Tour, contact Nina Chastain at antoninachastain47@gmail.com.

Security (Cont'd from Page 1)

Initiative (NSI). The SBD has formed a new Safety Committee to administer the NSI going forward and the SLHNA has been working to transition the NSI to them

during February and March. For more information and to volunteer for the Safety Committee, please visit the SBD website (www.stlhillssbd.com).

St. Thomas (Cont'd from Page 3)

Andrew's Romanian Orthodox Church in Terre Haute, IN. He would go on to serve St. Thomas Church for 32 years, thus being the longest-serving priest in the church's history.

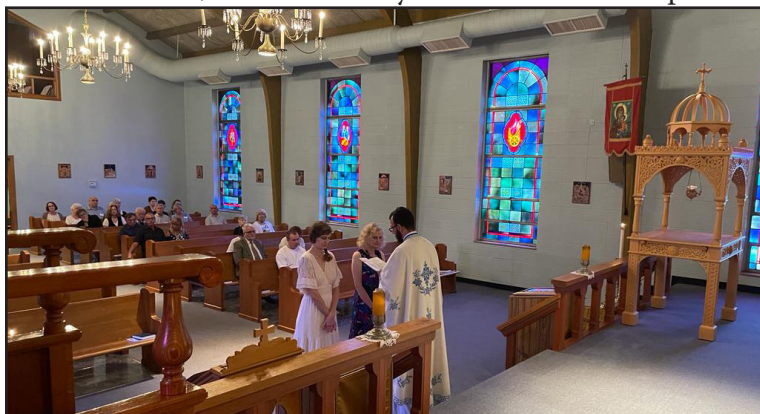
Also, as an interesting fact, the person who made the largest donation at this founding meeting was a man called Toma (Thomas) Palcu; taking this into account, as well as perhaps the fact that their meeting took place on the Sunday of St. Thomas, the decision was made that the Church would be named and have as its patron saint the Holy Apostle Thomas.

The community of St. Thomas initially held its services at Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church, until it purchased its first worship place in 1936. This site was located at 1427 Missouri Avenue and was consecrated by His Grace Bishop Polycarp, the first ruling bishop of The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate, on September 24, 1938. The second property of the community, located at

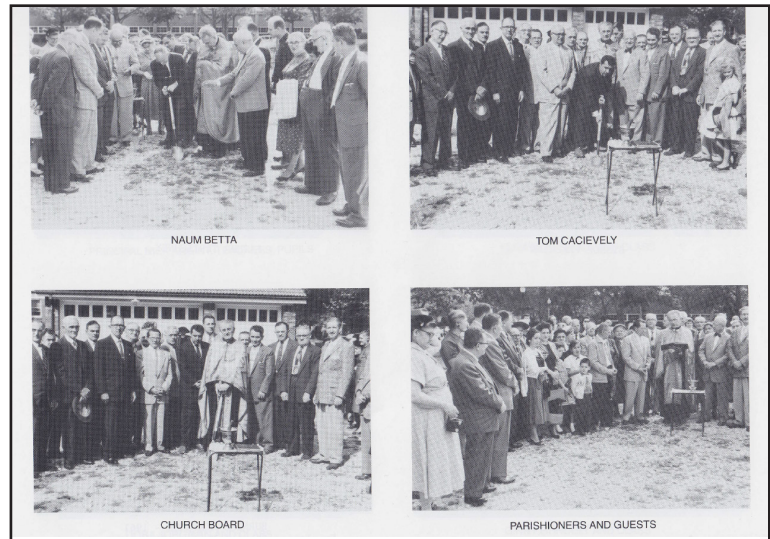
5624 South Compton Avenue (a funeral home converted to an Orthodox temple), was purchased in 1953 and consecrated on June 24, 1954, by Bishop Polycarp's successor, His Grace Bishop Valerian.

The present building which is now the temple of our community was built from scratch, after it was voted by the General Parish Assembly on January 13, 1957 to purchase the vacant lot at Nottingham and Donovan, at one of the corners of Francis Park. Again, it was the members of the Romanian Fraternity, people such as Charles Gaines, Florea "Frank" Minda, Thomas Caciavely, Naum Betta, Mike Simaku, Mina Simaku, John Argint, Nick Argint Sr., Nick Shola, James Zonia, Naum Doias, Michael Durato and many others that are not mentioned here, who were providential in this endeavor of constructing a new temple from scratch.

Ever since then, the community of St. Thomas the Apostle



Catechumens being received at St. Thomas the Apostle in 2023. Photo provided by Fr. Tiberiu Opris.



Scenes from the groundbreaking for St. Thomas the Apostle in St. Louis Hills in 1958. Photo provided by Fr. Tiberiu Opris.

Church has been a part of the St. Louis Hills neighborhood, moving on from the first generation of immigrants who had founded this church to those who succeeded them, but at the same time welcoming all those who wish to join our community, regardless of their ethnicity or background.

As an aside, it has to be said that in spite of the various adjectives put in front of the word "Orthodox" – regardless of whether the word is Romanian, Russian, Greek or even American Orthodox – the Orthodox Christian doctrine is the same.

At our Church, services are held mostly in English, but we also use Romanian, Greek, and sometimes other languages as well. In this way, we continue to be witnesses to the Gospel of Christ in the place and time that we find ourselves in, working in accordance with the legacy of our Orthodox heritage toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission that He has entrusted to His apostles, and to those that succeeded them: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mt. 28:18-20).

In the end, we extend you an invitation to all of you to come and visit with us, as well as to find out more about the Ancient and Apostolic Orthodox Christian faith, which some have dubbed to be "America's best kept secret." Likewise, you are also invited to join us for our renowned Romanian Festival, a tradition that began back in 1988, and which always takes place during the first weekend of October (this year, it will take place between October 5-6).

We are located at 6501 Nottingham Ave, Saint Louis, MO 63109-2659. For more info on our schedule and events, you can access our website, www.stthomasstl.org.

Hope to see you soon, God willing!

Exciting changes for annual SLHNA scholarship

by Toni and Steve Zychinski, SLHNA Scholarship Chairs

Membership in the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association (SLHNA) is an excellent way to contribute to the camaraderie of our beautiful neighborhood. Another great benefit of membership is eligibility for our annual scholarship competition. An exciting update to the program begins this year!

In order to best serve our community, we are expanding the applicant pool for the 2024-2025 academic year. Now, a child or legal dependent of a SLHNA member is eligible to apply based upon the following criteria:

- The member lives within the boundaries of St. Louis Hills;
- The member's household has two current and consecutive years of paid SLHNA membership;
- The applicant is at least an eighth grade student;
- The applicant is attending or planning to attend an educational institution (public high school, private high school, trade school, technical school, vocational school, two-year college, four-year college, university, and so forth).

Two one-time scholarships of \$750 will be awarded.

The Scholarship Chairs will receive completed applications. Personal information will be redacted. The redacted applications will then be reviewed by a panel of judges, who will select two scholarship recipients. The two recipients selected by the judges will be contacted directly by email by May 29, 2024. Updates to the Association's

website and social media will also announce the selected recipients.

The monetary award will be distributed by September 15, 2024 and made payable to each recipient's educational institution, not to the recipient directly.

Each applicant must:

- Complete the application found on the Association's website;
- Provide a list of any academic honors and/or extracurricular activities;
- Independently write and submit an essay of 150 words or less which addresses the question "How has living in St. Louis Hills shaped you as a person?"
- Provide a 3rd quarter/2nd trimester report card;
- Submit two - three reference letters.

The application deadline is April 26, 2024, which is a Friday. The completed application and related documents must be postmarked by that date. No electronic submissions will be considered.

We ask that the selected applicants provide a recent picture for our newsletter and attend the June 2024 SLHNA meeting to receive award certificates.

For further information and an application, go to <https://sthills.com/membership-benefits/scholarship/>.

Please contact Scholarship Chairs Toni and Steve Zychinski, with any questions at thezhome@yahoo.com.

Property tax freeze for senior citizens: What you need to know

by Chip Kastner

In December 2023, Mayor Tishaura Jones signed Board Bill #141. This bill enacted a property tax freeze on certain St. Louis homeowners over the age of 62. The freeze ensures that these residents do not see an increase in their property tax if their home value rises.

While most senior citizens residing in the city of St. Louis are likely to qualify for the freeze, residents will not automatically see a benefit from the program.

Instead, eligible residents must apply through the city assessor's office for a tax credit. Applications must be submitted each year by June 30th.

To qualify for the benefit, a resident must:

- Be age 62 or older
- Reside in the City of St. Louis
- Have earned at least 40 Social Security credits
- Be the owner of, or have a legal or equitable interest in, a home valued at \$500,000 or less
- Use this property as their primary residence
- Be liable for taxes on this property

This credit does not apply to commercial or investment properties, or properties receiving tax abatements.

For more information, contact the [City Assessor's Office](#) at (314) 622-4050.

SLHNA membership cost decreased to \$25

by Chip Kastner

Last year, the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association (SLHNA) raised its annual membership fee from \$30 to \$50. This price increase, the first in many years, was intended to cover funding for critical neighborhood programs such as the security initiative and Francis Park maintenance.

However, last year the St. Louis Hills neighborhood approved the creation of a Special Business District (SBD). This SBD will utilize a small increase in property tax rates to fund various neighborhood projects. Among the projects the SBD plans to fund are some of those previously paid for by the SLHNA.

Because of this, the SLHNA's funding needs have shrunk dramatically. As such, starting in 2024 the SLHNA has decreased its annual membership fee to \$25.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please visit our registration page at <https://www.cognitofrms.com/StLouisHillsNeighborhoodAssociation/SLHNAMembership>.

St. Louis Hills
News and Views



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To view all past newsletters, and
for information on upcoming events,
visit www.stlhills.com.

Visit the St. Louis Hills Neighborhood Association
on Facebook at www.facebook.com/stlhills

Important Neighborhood Contact Information

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

Commander, 2nd District SLMPD:
Capt. Thomas Zipf, 314-444-0100

Police Officer Liaison, 2nd District SLMPD:
Officer Gus Karagiannis, 314-444-0161
gkaragiannis@slmpd.org

Problem Properties Officers:
Anna Biondolillo, ambiondolillo@slmpd.org
Dave Krapf, 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,
St. Louis Hills:**

Darius Redmond, (314) 657-1730
redmondd@stlouis-mo.gov

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

Ken Gabel, president@stlhills.com

SLHNA Website: www.stlhills.com

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

2nd Ward Alderman:

Tom Oldenburg, 314-896-0204
oldenburgt@stlouis-mo.gov

82nd State Representative:

Donna Baringer, 573-751-4220
Donna.Baringer@house.mo.gov

St. Louis Hills history quiz

Ever wonder what business used to be located there? See if you can guess the original business that used to be located where the current business is now located. The address shows the current business. The "original business" locations have been shuffled. Match the current business with the original business. Correct answers are at the bottom of the page.

Address and current business

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. 6456 Chippewa | IHOP |
| 2. 6536 Chippewa | Self-service car wash |
| 3. 5101 Hampton | Dragonfly Fitness Training |
| 4. 4301 Hampton | Bank of America |
| 5. 6435 Chippewa | Mercy Clinic |
| 6. 5625 Hampton | Salt & Smoke |
| 7. 6650 Chippewa | Francis Park Dentistry |
| 8. 6622 Chippewa | Starbucks |
| 9. 6725 Chippewa | Enterprise Bank |
| 10. 6900 Chippewa | Total Access Urgent Care |

Original business (shuffled)

- A. Lammert Furniture Company
- B. Parkmoor restaurant
- C. Venker Drug Store
- D. Del Pietro's
- E. Steak N Shake
- F. Kroger
- G. Musial & Biggie's
- H. Earl's "66" Service Station
- I. Joseph Nesser's "Corvette Corner"
- J. Winklemann Pharmacy



Correct Answers: 1.H; 2.I; 3.J; 4.F; 5.G; 6.D; 7.C; 8.E; 9.B; 10.A.