



Celebrating a St. Louis Hills Christmas tradition

by Jamie Dunphy

In November of 2002, an idea was born. There was a block lighting award, and the block of 6500 Murdoch was hellbent on winning it. John Kuehner had the idea of wrapping all the oak trees on the easement like candy canes with red and white lights. Then, block captain Bob Klasek knocked on everyone's doors to get them on board, hence Candy Cane Lane was born. It now boasts a 500-pound MERRY CHRISTMAS sign hanging 25 feet in the air from oak trees, 3 tunnels, tens of thousands of lights, and 12-ton sand sculptures from award-winning sculptor, Dan Belcher ('86 Vianney grad), who has now created 7 sculptures for the block over the years. It has been a pleasure to have Dan share his art with our community.

The St. Louis Hills Christmas Lights' tradition goes back to the 1960s when locals would get Ted Drewes and drive around to see the displays. St. Louis Hills lifer Nan Vordtiede said, "I remember our family tradition included jumping in the station wagon, cruising around the neighborhood, and viewing all the spectacular light displays. It often included a special dessert or hot chocolate later at home". Even today, we still see those wagons cruising around.

The tradition has continued and grown with streets like Angel Avenue, Llama Lane, Snowflake Street, and the Francis Park Christmas Tree Lighting. Steve England, Russ Smith, and a few others helped lead the effort to get Angel Avenue up and running. Smith said, "We wanted to have continuity as people came down Murdoch past St. Gabriel, then turned right on Angel Avenue to see beautiful angels hanging from all the trees and a Lora Light display of 20,000 lights synced to music."

Thousands of walkers and cars have made the tradition stronger than ever. By one estimate, we had over 20,000 walkers come through this season. A big reason for so many visitors is our 500-pound flagship Christmas sign that Kuehner, a veteran of CC Lane, has been hoisting up for 23 years. The sign was specially made by a welder for the display. "This time of year, that

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Easter Egg Hunt
Open

Christmas Lighting Awards
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Christmas Tree Lighting
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January 2025 SBD update

by Don Orf, Secretary, St. Louis Hills SBD

As we move into our second full year of the St. Louis Hills SBD, the Board continues to work on opportunities to promote safety, security, beauty and enjoyment in our terrific neighborhood.

Safety is our primary priority, and we continue to work with TCF (The City's Finest) as our provider of nightly security patrols. TCF is doing an excellent job and working to consistently cover all of our neighborhood on a regular basis. It provides monthly updates to our Safety & Security Committee as well as presenting at each month's board meeting. Monthly reports are posted on the SBD web site at www.stlhillsbd.com. Just scroll down from the top of the page and click on the "Safety & Security" button.

During the Holiday Season, working with the SLHNA, the SBD funded the annual Christmas Tree Lighting, which is one of the highlights of the year for the neighborhood. Also, we're hoping to see another major funding project come to fruition—the complete rebuild of the Francis Park Playground. As of January, we don't have a firm date, but hope to see progress from the City Parks Department very soon. And as it did last year, the SBD will be funding the annual SLHNA Easter Egg Hunt in Francis Park this April.

Other things the SBD is working on include: an RFP to hire an audit firm to do annual audits of SBD financials; looking at setting funds aside for a contingency plan that could be available for emergencies—like the snow/ice situation we had in January; continuing to work with our Alderman, Tom Oldenburg, on a couple of projects for 2025 related to street improvements and signage.

So, here's a request for the residents of the SBD—Participate! Consider the following . . .

- We have a current Board opening for someone who rents an apartment, home or business location within the SBD boundaries.
- By the end of this year, we will have two openings for new Board members as current Board members rotate off, having completed their terms.
- Come to a meeting. We meet at 6 pm on the third Wednesday of every month at Buder Library, typically in the basement meeting room.
- Consider participating in our AwareNet camera system, which provides real time data to TCF during nightly patrols. Other than the cost of your camera(s), which you own and control, there is no cost to you to link to AwareNet.

If you have interest in any of these areas, contact a Board member—our emails are available under the "About" tab at the top of the SBD site; or email the SBD at: SBDinfo@stlhills.com.

Captain's Corner

by Captain Tom Zipf, Commander,
SLMPD 2nd District

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

I want to give you some quick updates regarding Second District crime and share some really good arrests that were made by our police officers and detectives. As you probably know, we recently saw a significant uptick in gas station car cloutings and car thefts, particularly along the Hampton and Kingshighway corridors. The vast majority of these incidents were committed by armed individuals in organized criminal gangs, operating in stolen vehicles and working in concert with one another. Some of these incidents escalated into armed robberies when victims or witnesses attempted to thwart the efforts of these criminals. This quickly became a regional problem affecting all of Saint Louis City and many parts of Saint Louis County and consequently became one of my top priorities.

Second District detectives collaborated with detectives from the other districts as well as detectives from our Intelligence Division to identify suspects who were responsible for these incidents. I was then able to spearhead an initiative which involved several Second District officers and detectives working with detectives from our Anti-Crime Task Force. Over the course of two weekends, we arrested numerous suspects in stolen vehicles who we believe are responsible for dozens of these incidents. A couple weeks later, additional suspects

were taken into custody after officers and detectives from multiple districts executed a search warrant at a residence. There is overwhelming evidence linking the suspects we arrested to many of these thefts and robberies. Warrants were issued by the Saint Louis Circuit Attorney's Office against numerous adult suspects and the Juvenile Building found sufficient cause to hold and charge those suspects who were juveniles. As a result of the exemplary police work by the officers and detectives of this department, the gas station incidents have plummeted over the course of the past month. We recognize that the next challenge is always right around the corner, but I'm confident we'll have an answer for whatever problems may come our way.

Lastly, I want to share with you some very sad news regarding the recent passing of Second District Police Officer Lawrence Irving. Officer Irving, who was 58 years of age, had been battling a very serious, long-term illness for the past couple years and fought heroically up until the very end. He was a United States Army veteran who proudly served and protected the residents of Saint Louis City for 29 years and was a mentor and friend to many. Officer Irving is survived by his father, son, daughter, and his infant grandson. Please keep the Irving family and Officer Irving's friends and coworkers in your thoughts and prayers.

Candy Cane Lane (Cont'd from Page 1)

sign really has become a landmark of our community along with the great sand sculptures," said Alderman Tom Oldenberg, who has been a big supporter of the community's efforts and an annual sponsor of the lane.

Charlie Billings and Ben Moramarco have been a part of a new generation that helps organize Candy Cane Lane. They have given a lot of time and dedication to keeping the tradition strong. Billings spends countless hours managing the project and making sure all the neighbors have the lights they need. Moramarco rents a lift every year to hang the overhead lights. He voiced, "My family immediately embraced everything about CC Lane. Decorating all the lights brings our family together along with the block... and how the decorating brings the St. Louis community together as a whole through our charities". There are several collections every year for local and national charities.

Also, 3rd-year resident Laura Naeger added, "It continues to amaze me how many people come to see our lights and make it a tradition year after year. I am lucky to be a part of this neighborhood tradition, and I take pride in the lights and decorations that I put up for everyone to see. Christmas Lights truly bring people together!"

Finally, as a resident of the neighborhood for over 22 years, many people have asked about the traffic and inconveniences it can cause. First, the kids always come in droves, and I always say there is no better place for kids than our neighborhood this time of year! The kids always bring joy with them! Then, I respond that this time of year some people can have difficulty and struggle, and if someone comes and sees our lights and it gives them a little bit of joy, then it's all worth it.

The SLHNA would like to thank the St. Louis Hills Special Business District for its generous support of the neighborhood Easter Egg Hunt, Christmas Tree Lighting, newsletter, and other events and initiatives that help make our neighborhood great!

Easter Egg Hunt returns April 19

by Chip Kastner, Editor

Join us for this year's Easter Egg Hunt on April 19th, 2025, at 11:30 a.m. in Francis Park, between the Tennis Courts and Playground. It's a fun-filled event for kids of all ages, and we need volunteers to help make it a success!

If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Ed Naeger at 314-660-5905 or via email at enaeger23@gmail.com. Don't miss out on the fun! Mark your calendars and come out for a great time!



St. Louis Hills

HOUSE TOUR

2025

The St. Louis Hills House Tour is returning on

Sunday, October 19!

The primary purpose of the House Tour is to draw people who are not familiar with St. Louis Hills.

It is also an excellent source of revenue for our Neighborhood Association.

The increased awareness of St. Louis Hills results in people wanting to move into our neighborhood, thus increasing the demand for homes, condos, and apartments.

The House Tour Committee still needs a few more homes or condos for the Tour. No home is too big or too small to be included on the Tour. If you might be interested, please email Katie McLaughlin at katie@localitystudio.com; or call/text 314-440-5676.



Saint Louis Hills
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

St. Louis Hills Shines Bright: 2024 Christmas Light Awards

by Sarah Seger

The holiday season brought incredible joy and sparkle to St. Louis Hills, and we're thrilled to announce the winners of the 2024 Christmas Light Awards! Each year, our neighborhood dazzles with creativity, effort, and festive cheer, making St. Louis Hills a truly magical place during the holidays.

Residential Winners:

- 1 Homeland
- 6530 Murdoch
- 6563 Murdoch
- 6360 Murdoch
- 6514 Devonshire
- 6220 Walsh
- 4708 Prague
- 4912 Tamm
- 6018 Childress
- 6254 Delor

Block Winners:

- Angel Avenue
- Candy Cane Lane
- 6300 Murdoch

Business Winner:

- STL Pizza & Wings

A big congratulations to all our winners and heartfelt thanks to Mike & Caitlin Kremer for heading up the holiday lights committee year after year as well as to everyone who took the time to decorate their homes, blocks, and businesses. Your efforts truly spread joy throughout the neighborhood and made the season unforgettable.

Even though the lights are now packed away, the memories and inspiration they created will last until the next holiday season. Let's continue to celebrate the community spirit that makes St. Louis Hills so special!



Make your voice heard: City elections coming this spring

by Carol Wilson

Voting is a fundamental pillar of democracy. It's how citizens have a say in their government and influence the direction of their country, state, or local community. By voting, you exercise your right to choose leaders who represent your values and interests. In this municipal election, you have a voice in the decision-making process on issues such as basic city services, public safety, and development.

Everyone is encouraged to get out and vote in our City's Primary and General Elections on March 4th and April 8th. Both the mayor and comptroller will be on the ballot.

Even though March 4 is a Primary Municipal Election, due to the passage of Proposition D in November 2020, all candidates are nonpartisan. This means that you do not receive a party ballot, and you can vote for as many candidates for a given office as you wish. The two candidates who receive the most votes for each office on March 4 will run against each other in the General Municipal Election on April 8.

Exercise your right to vote on March 4th and April 8th! Your city is counting on you.



Publication of the
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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

Want to learn more? Check
out these links from Missouri
Botanical Garden and
OneSTL.

How recycling works in St.
Louis:

[https://discoverandshare.org/
2024/10/05/is-my-recycling-
actually-being-recycled/](https://discoverandshare.org/2024/10/05/is-my-recycling-actually-being-recycled/)

How to recycle printer and
toner cartridges:

[https://discoverandshare.org/
2024/12/02/printer-and-toner-
cartridges-recycling/](https://discoverandshare.org/2024/12/02/printer-and-toner-cartridges-recycling/)

How and where to recycle
everything else that can be
recycled:

[http://www.onestl.org/get-
involved/regional-working-
groups/materials-recycling/
recycle-responsibly](http://www.onestl.org/get-involved/regional-working-groups/materials-recycling/recycle-responsibly)

Upcoming Events

Easter Egg Hunt
April 19
Francis Park

House Tour
October 19
Francis Park

Thank you for recycling!

by Teresa
Turin-Lis

On a walk around St. Louis Hills recently, I noticed a blue recycling roll-cart at the curb waiting for pick-up. It was full to the point of overflowing, which can be a very good thing. We have (and are) lovely neighbors who take care of our environment.

That particular cart, though, made me sad because I knew its contents wouldn't be recycled. And it might even cause the recycling truck's entire load to be sent to a landfill.

Why?

Because the conscientious homeowner had put those recyclables in plastic bags before putting them in the cart--probably thinking that pre-sorting the bottles, cans, and paper would make it easier to recycle them and would certainly keep them from blowing down the street.

Our neighbor was trying to do the right thing, but didn't know plastic bags are the #1 contaminant in our recycling system.

So what's the easiest way to make sure our recyclables get recycled? Here's what the experts tell us.

These CAN go in our blue carts and bins:

- Glass bottles and jars
- Plastic bottles and containers (with their lids on)
- Metal food and beverage cans
- Paper
- Flattened cardboard
- Food and beverage cartons

These CAN'T:

- Plastic bags and anything else not on the list of what can go in

I'll leave you with this last guideline (even though you may fight yourself to follow it): when in doubt, leave it out.

Let's keep those recycling bins and carts working.

When in
doubt,
leave it
out!

Important Neighborhood Contact Information

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

Commander, 2nd District SLMPD:
Captain Tom 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:
Darius Redmond, 314-657-1730
redmondd@stlouis-mo.gov

SBD Website: www.stlhillsbd.com

SLHNA Website: www.stlhills.com

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

Friends of Francis Park Website:
www.friendsoffrancispark.org

Friends of Francis Park Facebook:
www.facebook.com/FriendsOfFrancisPark/

Friends of Willmore Park Facebook:
[https://www.facebook.com/
groups/3275363809382426/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/3275363809382426/)

2nd Ward Alderman:
Tom Oldenburg, 314-896-0204
oldenburgt@stlouis-mo.gov

82nd State Representative:
Nick Kimble, 573-751-4220
Nick.Kimble@house.mo.gov