

The TIMES of.... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

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February 1998

FREE

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Andy Cross: A Very Special Activist

by Lana Stein

Many people in our neighborhood are now familiar with Andy Cross. He's been involved with many arts and beautification projects here over the past few years. His energy and enthusiasm

Prep. He found that interesting and challenging because, for many of his students, it was their first major exposure to art. He taught drawing, perspective, shading, a little sculpture, and



are a source of amazement to many of us. He devotes many hours each week to making this neighborhood a better and more attractive place to live.

Andy grew up in Skinker DeBaliviere on 61xx Kingsbury. Aside from several years of his childhood spent in the Virgin Islands, he has lived here all his life. His parents still live on Kingsbury. He has two brothers and two sisters. He is the second oldest. Andy attended Washington University and received a bachelor's degree in fine arts.

After graduating from college, Andy taught for a year at Cardinal Ritter

ceramics. He had spending his summers working at the MUNY. Originally, he sold ice cream. Then he became a paint boy; he went through their apprenticeship program. He still works there preparing sets. After the year at Cardinal Ritter, he painted full time at the MUNY, the Rep. and Opera Theatre. In fact, he still works for the latter two. Most of his work life now is spent at Image Technology. He is in charge of their scene shop. They do industrial shows. He has done work for the St. Louis Blues and

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"Something there is that doesn't love a wall, that wants it down." A big something took down the column and part of the attached wall at Skinker and Forest Park Expressway. The cost of repair is reportedly \$10,000.



In Our 28th Year of Publication

Lyda Krewson Wins Aldermanic Seat

In a special election held on December 9 to file the unexpired term of Dan McGuire, Lyda Krewson was chosen as alderman of the 28th Ward, besting 5 opponents with 53% of the vote. Krewson lives on Lake near New City School with her two children, Taylor and Jack. She is a certified public accountant and serves as chief financial officer at Peckham Guyton Albers & Viets. She may be reached at the Board of Aldermen at 622-3287.

Krewson will be attending SDCC meetings and hopes to participate in many neighborhood events. She looks forward to meeting additional neighbors and working with residents on projects to enhance the neighborhood.



Gwendolyn Packnett Speaks at Annual King Commemoration

Since 1984, the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council has facilitated the organization of an annual commemoration of the life and work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The chairman of this event is Jack Wright of 58xx Pershing who has worked on this event since its inception. With the help of SDCC staff and volunteers, another memorable afternoon commemoration took place on January 18 at Grace and Peace Fellowship.



Kurt Lutjens of Grace and Peace made introductory remarks. Following were a series of readings and songs performed by groups of school children from Bethel School, the Grace and Peace Youth, St. Roch, and Hamilton. The afternoon's address was given by Gwendolyn D. Packnett. She is the director of multicultural relations at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Her late husband, Ronald Packnett, was pastor of Central Baptist Church, and a leading area civil rights leader. Mrs. Packnett addressed the meaning of King's life and work by analogy. She noted that men are free to choose between alternatives but are often limited by fear and react to others with fear. She asked the audience to take a

look at what would happen if we conquered our fears. "We can replace fear with the liberating force of love. Love is the alternative to fear." We have to experience something outside our very own comfort zone, according to Packnett. Those who operate out of fear cannot build; they are bound by the status quo. She closed by saying that "None of us are free unless all of us are free."

The New Cote Brillante Church of God choir performed several lively selections and its pastor, the Rev. Miki Merritt, made closing remarks. The church was quite full with many children of all backgrounds. Jack Wright organized another meaningful and special King Commemoration.



A view of those who came to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King's life and legacy.

Editor's Notebook

by Lana Stein

If there were no controversy in our neighborhood, we might have a very dull neighborhood indeed. Reasonable people have differed about MetroLink extension, aldermanic candidates, and now property acquisition by Washington University. In these cases, the most important issue is to maintain a flow of information to all concerned so that we do not fall prey to rumor or innuendo. This newspaper will attempt to bring its readers information about these issues and others if we receive that information. Although individuals involved with the Times may take sides, the Times usually does not.

On another matter, the mailing announcing classes at Hamilton Community Education Center announces open gym for area youth—at a cost of \$2 per evening. Are they that hard pressed?

Buffer Zone Plans Move Forward

In mid-December, the ad hoc committee monitoring the reconfiguration of the golf course and maintenance of some passive space to serve Skinker DeBaliviere residents, met with Dan McGuire, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry. McGuire showed the group preliminary drawings that include some passive space along what is DesPeres south of Lindell. McGuire spent two hours with the group, answering questions.

After a new lease is negotiated with Triple A for the golf course, final drawings will be made. McGuire assured a committee representative that this passive or buffer area could have a drinking fountain and water available for plantings.

Lana Stein, chair of the committee, will let members know when further drawings are available. She suggested to the committee that it focus on park areas that have not been addressed by the master plan, such as land along DeBaliviere between Lindell and the Forest Park Parkway. In addition, the committee could address the design of the park eventually to be built on Nina Place by the intersection of Kingsbury and Hamilton and focus on a possible plan to enhance Lucier Park.

The TIMES of... SKINKER DEBALIVIERE

Editor: Lana Stein
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The Times welcomes unsolicited articles and letters. Because of the small size and volunteer nature of the writing staff, the quality and range of The Times has always depended in large part on submissions from non-staff area residents. All material - articles, letters, notices, classified ads - must be typewritten on opaque paper, double-spaced, and signed. Copy may be submitted on computer diskette if the diskette is in DOS format or on high density Macintosh diskettes. Submissions on diskette should be accompanied by a printout of the article, the name of the word processing software in which it is written, and the full name and address of the party to whom the diskette should be returned. The signature on correspondence to the editor may be omitted by request. Calendar listings should be phoned in to the editor at 721-7532, or mailed to 5855 Nina Place, 63112.

The deadline for all copy is the 18th of the month.

The writer is responsible for the accuracy of the data, including times, dates, locations, and particularly the spelling of names.

Pictures or illustrations should be in black and white. Color photographs often do not reproduce well.

The editor retains the right to omit or alter any material.

Calendar



Neighborhood Events and Meetings

- 2/7 McPherson Community Garden Committee, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 10:00 a.m.
- 2/9 Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Board Meeting, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Offices 6008 Kingsbury, 7:00 p.m..
- 2/11 Skinker DeBaliviere Community Housing Corporation Board Meeting, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 12:00 noon.
- 2/12 Delmar Business Association, Marion's Cafe, 5890 Delmar Boulevard, 12:00 noon.
- 2/18 Playground Committee, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 7:00 p.m..
- 2/23 BLOCK CAPTAINS MEETING., Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 7:00 p.m.
- 2/25 Skinker DeBaliviere Community Housing Corporation Board Meeting, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 12:00 noon.
- 3/5 Social Services Committee, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 7:30 p.m.
- 3/9 Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Board Meeting, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Offices, 6008 Kingsbury, 7:00 p.m.
- 5/2 Blitz Day

Other Events of Interest

- 1/28 Derekh Torah class begins, 7:30pm, a 20 week program that provides an introduction to Judaism for adults. For information, call 432-5700, ext. 3295.
- 1/29 "St. Louis in the Movies," program introduced by Carrie Houk, at the Urban Forum of Missouri History Museum, Library and Research Center Auditorium, 225 S. Skinker, free, 7-9pm.
- 1/30-2/15 The New Theatre presents "Off the Map" at the Grandel Theatre. Call 531-8330 for information/tickets.
- 1/31 St. Louis Children's Theatre Connection presents "A Thousand Cranes" at the Saint Louis Art Museum for K-5, tickets required. Call 721-0072, ext. 483.
- 2/7-5/5 "Ancient Gold: The Wealth of the Thracians," treasures from the Republic of Bulgaria. 200 gold and silver objects on exhibition at the Saint Louis Art Museum

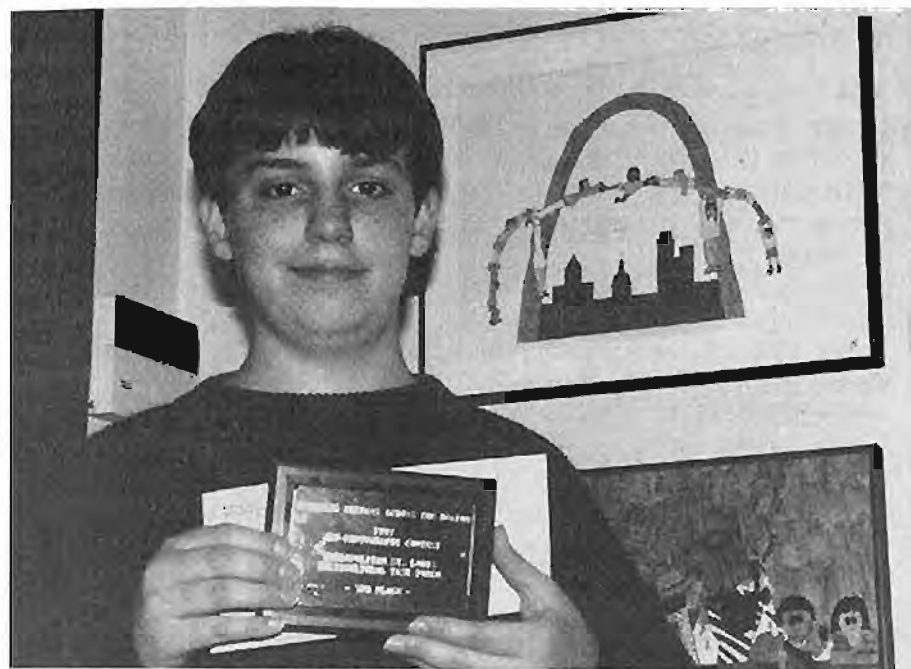


- 2/18 William Gray, President of United Negro College Fund, speaks on "The Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities at the Dawn of the 21st Century," at Graham Chapel, Washington Univ., 11am.
- 2/21-22 Trinity Repertory Company production of "Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities," at the Edison Theatre, Washington Univ.; call 935-6543 for information/tickets.

Grace UMC United Methodist Women present programs at the noon hour at the church located on Skinker at Waterman. Upcoming programs include:

- 2/3 Missions, speaker Janet Wreath
- 2/10 Brazil, speaker AFS student Rodrigo Poletto
- 2/17 UMW Reading program, speaker Lucretia Culberson
- 3/3 St. Louis Symphony, speaker Roberta Dearing
- 3/10 Trip to West Africa, speaker Earlene Carter
- 3/17 US-2 Program with Urlikia Randolph and Kathryn Krautheim

Jeff Schoenfeld Wins Prize in Poster Competition



Jeff Schoenfeld, a freshman at the Metro Academic and Classical High School, has won third place in a poster competition sponsored this past fall by the Metropolitan St. Louis Multicultural Task Force. The Task Force is sponsored by the Civil Rights Enforcement Agency of the city of St. Louis. Schoenfeld, son of King and Dee Schoenfeld, resides at 61xx Westminster in Skinker DeBaliviere. Jeff received an award and savings bond at a reception held November 9 at the Portfolio Gallery Education Center. The theme of the poster competition was "Building Bridges Across the Region." Over 400 students took part. Congratulations to Jeff!

IN BRIEF

NINA PLACE DEVELOPMENT MOVES FORWARD

The Community Development Agency is selecting from 3 proposals to develop 2 vacant buildings that were originally part of the DeBaliviere Place West project. The building at 5899 Nina would be developed as 6 two bedroom, two bath condos and 5921 Kingsbury would be 6 market rate apartments.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR PANHANDLERS

Residents of Skinker DeBaliviere are frequently accosted by children and adults trying to raise money at neighborhood intersections. Forest Park and Skinker and Delmar and Skinker see these panhandlers regularly. It is illegal to solicit funds without a permit and it is always illegal—permit or no permit—for people to go out into lanes of traffic to sell or beg. Captain Hagar of the 7th District, St. Louis Metropolitan Police, has declared zero tolerance for these solicitations that place solicitor and driver alike at risk. If you see this activity taking place, please call 911, or the watch commander at 444-0032, or Captain Hagar, 444-0027.

St. Roch Preschool to Begin Registration

In early February, St. Roch preschool begins registration for the 1998-99 school year. Director of the school, Rose Flynn, invites interested parents to call her for more information and to schedule a visit to the school. St. Roch serves those aged three through kindergarten age. Three or five morning a week programs are available for 3 year olds, and three or five full day programs are an option for 4 and 5 year olds. Flynn can be reached at 721-5320.



Right: Storyteller Dianne Moran with St. Roch's preschoolers and kindergarteners



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Trendmasters. Trendmasters is a toy company and Andy put together a display for them at the international toy fair. He likes this job, being in charge

this handiwork and will for years to come.

Andy has also worked with Arts in Transit of Bi-State in painting a bus.



Andy and his daughter Emily apply some paint to one of the planters he built for the Rosedale barricades.

of the shop, and can hire some of his mentors which he considers a real honor (Bill Christman, Dick Godwin). He teaches apprentices and helps get them jobs.

He married his wife Linda in 1986. They met at Wash. U. After a wedding at St. Roch, they lived in an apartment on 61xx Pershing for 3 years. They then bought a home a 60xx McPherson. It needed some work but it turned out very well for them. Andy has done a lot of work with the landscaping. He and Linda now have two daughters, Emily Judith and Sarah Jane. Andy is block captain.

As time went on, Andy began getting more involved in the neighborhood. His first major project was to recycle newspaper. He began collecting on 61xx Kingsbury. He started with a few hundred pounds and now takes in about 3/4 of a ton a month. In eight years, he has collected about 70 tons.

Catherine Forslund helped put the SDCC Beautification Committee together and he wants to keep carrying out her idea. One part of this to keep working on Four Corners to see that things are planted and watered. Andy decided to help beautify the barricades along Rosedale, first with barrels and now with planter boxes. He also initiated the painting of the dumpsters with help from the Boy Scouts and Beth Bender and neighborhood children. He put 3 different stencil designs on the dumpsters and this won 1st prize in the BrightSide contest.

Andy is particularly proud of the barricade post covers he made and then the plant box. The lumber, liner, and gravel were free. The lumber was reclaimed. The barricade covers were hard to do; the city had to straighten up the posts. They have held up really well.

For several years, Andy has been co-chair of the West End Arts Council with Roy Roncal. They worked on the DesPeres Art Fair and feted a visiting Irish film maker at Four Corners. Their biggest project was Tile Link, decorating the sidewalk and benches at the Delmar MetroLink station. They were helped by a number of people: Bill Kohn, Bill Christman, Nancy DeBettencourt, Emily Blumenfeld of Arts in Transit, and ceramist Catherine Magel. The SDCC and many neighborhood people—adults and school children—were involved in this project. It was a huge amount of work. After many, many people made tiles, they had to be transported and painted. Visitors to the station now admire all

A Note from the McPherson Garden by Andy Cross

A great place to meet your neighbors and get out of the house is a garden. Especially if it is the McPherson Community Vegetable Garden located on the 59xx block of McPherson. Of course, in the middle of winter you may not want to go outside to meet, but you might want to help plan for the upcoming growing season.

Hence:

The McPherson Community Vegetable Garden will hold a meeting on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 10am at the SDCC office, 6008 Kingsbury.

We will be discussing our upcoming projects and the tasks we need to address this spring, the status of our 98 grant from Gateway Greening, responsibilities of the members of the McPherson Garden (easy and fun), and the selection of the raised vegetable beds.

Members of Gateway Greening will be attending this meeting to get to know us better, and to announce some great new ideas for this spring and summer.

Come meet your neighbors and grow with us!

Lazard of 59xx McPherson. Gateway Greening offered grants and help to neighborhood groups to beautify city neighborhoods. Andy assembled a grant application for the two vacant lot parcel on 59xx McPherson as well as for two areas along DesPeres. Beckloff and Lazard were very interested in the vegetable garden. SDCC Director Laure Porterfield received permission from the owner of the lots. There could be a garden there if volunteers would keep it clean and mow the lawn.

Andy drew up a lot of plans for the garden. Ruth Beckloff introduced him

to Chris Manzo who spent many hours working on the garden. Twenty people were on board when the application went in. There were 50 before it was over. Gateway Greening donated even more than what it originally promised. On Saturday mornings, 20-30 people worked from 9-noon hammering boxes together. Andy remarked that it was a wonderful collection of neighbors. There have been very few problems. The only difficulty was a surfeit of tomatoes. No one figured on how many tomatoes one plant could produce.

In the center of the McPherson Garden, Andy created a butterfly garden with sunflowers planted by his daughter Emily. Flowers from the Great Perennial Divide were planted in the front garden. Only a few days ago, Andy and others planted crocuses and tulips donated by Gateway Greening. The McPherson Garden received first prize for the best new community garden.

Andy has also painted a mural on the wall at the Stella Maris pre-school, DeBaliviere and Delmar, designed in part by its director, Ann Bigham.

Andy's eyes light up when he talks about enhancing these projects and beginning new ones. When he has time, he loves the outdoors and canoeing. The garden helps bring a little of the outdoors into the neighborhood. Working with other neighbors, Andy certainly has enriched the appearance of Skinker DeBaliviere and nearby points. Hopefully, we can enjoy his energy and his products for a long time to come!



Above: Andy and Linda Cross and their youngest, Sarah Jane, about to be overwhelmed by the sunflowers at the McPherson Garden.

Below: Some of the gardeners who helped install the wild flower gardens in front of the McPherson Garden.



DRISCOLE-GRUNEISEN PARK - (The) WEST SIDE STORY

by Jane Geiler

If anyone made a New Year's Resolution to be "kinder and gentler," this story could serve as a model for you. It is a report on busy Joe and Nancy Gruneisen, holders of the west side of that unique initiative of yard sharing with Flossie and Frank Driscoll in the 6100 block of Washington.

A visit to the Gruneisens is a great contrast to the Driscolls, at least on the surface. At the Gruneisens, children are everywhere, the dining room doubles as the playroom (adults' antiques and works of art intermingle sans destruction with toys galore), while a table is set formally for dinner, although most present are under five. While we talked, Nancy rocked pregnantly in her chair, and Joe was draped with his girls. When Nancy excused herself for a moment and her little boy cried, Joe said gently, "She's making dinner, Boo. Be happy about that. It's a good thing." Crying stopped. Eventually I was given a free demonstration of what they call the "ta das": Each child stands rigidly on the palm of Joe's hands and gets lifted to the ceiling, something they say they have been practicing since each was born. It's breath-defying, but they are all casual about it. Regarding the strength it must take to lift them, Joe chuckles almost to himself, "They're not that heavy," an attitude that epitomizes the Gruneisen approach to parenting and other important relationships.

The two families actually have a great deal in common. Like "F" and "F", Joe and Nancy are St. Louis imports from another southern state, Kentucky, who moved to St. Louis for Joe's work as an electrical engineer at Boeing—then McDonnell Douglas. Whereas Flossie and Frank made a conscious decision to help hold the line on the 6100 block of Washington Avenue during troubled times, Nancy and Joe could capitalize on the the progress made and make an easier decision to buy the rehabbed house they liked that they could afford. As young marrieds, they rented in University City, grew to

love "the Loop" and wanted to stay conveniently located. Nancy admits most of their "native St. Louisan friends thought we were nuts," and during a couple of times, they thought they might be, but Flossie told them to persevere, things would get better, and they did.

The Gruneisens are also Presbyterians. Joe is an elder at Central Presbyterian Church and on the school board of daughter Leah's school. They live a deep and abiding faith. Joe is presently working on his third masters degree, this one in theology. "We are over-educated," laughs Joe. Nancy has a masters degree in home economics and will "cook for money," although for now she is basically full-time mother. In the recent past, she had a catering business. She specializes in incredible small dinners, incredible cheesecakes and other desserts. To be Nancy's neighbor is to be a recipient of gifts of the baking project du jour. (I did not leave our interview empty-handed.)

Like the Driscolls, the Gruneisens are especially pleased with the diversity of Rosedale. It is very important for their children, they say. Theirs is a rainbow family obvious. Nancy has jet black hair while Joe is fair. They adopted Leah, a child of white blonde curls and bluest eyes. Very quickly thereafter, they adopted Ramya Jane from Madras, India, who calls herself "chocolate" and the rest of the family "vanilla" and has a few questions about all of that. Of course, with two babies in tow, Nancy became pregnant with Jesse, a cute amalgam of his parents. Nancy says they want to live in an area with "the mix and no hassles" so their children easily see "that God created other colors, shapes and sizes."

As to the sharing of the yards, Nancy says she was actually kidding when she said something to Frank about taking down the fence. She is "overwhelmed by their generosity. The arrangement is that the fence can be put back for any reason. We drew up no legal papers." Joe and Nancy

say the impact on the relationship has been "neat." "It was a trust issue for them to do it and an opportunity for us to show trustworthiness. The children respect the yard they get to use. There are many benefits of the sharing. When we want to talk, we don't walk to the fence. We walk to the steps," says Joe.

The depth of caring the Gruneisens feel for the Driscolls is palpable and obviously growing as the cooperative continues. Nancy speaks of a time when Flossie and Frank were considering leaving the neighborhood. "I almost cried," said Nancy. She laughs about having caught a would-be thief recently and says she's trying out for a role as "Flossie Driscoll, Crime Buster." "We want them here," says Joe. "It's a selfish thing." Joe throws the morning paper to the doorstep "so Frank won't have to go get it in his socks," salts the steps when the decks freeze and handles snow and grass removal in the rear. Unlike Frank, Joe is a gardener par excellence. When the fence came down, the garden was suddenly in the middle of an expanse of green. "They said move it." That really impressed Joe. While he plans to expand it, "my challenge is to grow grass in Frank's

yard. He's tried squirting things, but it's a year long process." Nancy, who has four green thumbs, plans to landscape with cuttings she gleans here and there, although she will be wrangling a newborn come planting time. For now, until the cold outside retreats, we



The Gruneisen Family

on Washington are warmed inside by the new community growing year round next door.

LYDA KREWSON

28th Ward Alderman

Lyda Krewson



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HAMILTON SPOTLIGHT

by Betsy King

This month's spotlight is on community involvement. Hamilton students have been involved in many exciting things this semester, and many people have contributed to the enriching environment at Hamilton.

In October, a performance by the Earth Protectors taught the kindergarten through second grade students to "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!" Also, representatives from the St. Louis Metropolitan Sewer District visited our first grade classes. They taught the students about the water cycle, water conservation and water purification. Both programs were excellent and the students enjoyed sharing in these learning activities.

As part of their physical education program, the second graders participated in a six-week ice skating program at Steinberg Ice Rink in Forest Park. Each week they received an hour-long skating lesson from an instructor at Steinberg. Many of the second graders had never ice skated before and they had a wonderful experience.

In January, the third graders will begin the Classical Kids Program. Tricia Oats, from radio, will visit them each week for four weeks to play and discuss classical music. The program is designed to help the students develop an appreciation for classical music. The fifth week the students will attend a classical concert. The third graders are looking forward to this program.

The fourth grade participated in an Urban Systemic Initiative, the Zoo's Animal Adoption Program. A representative from the St. Louis zoo brought animals to school for the students to observe and pet. Then the students visited the zoo twice to observe the birds in their natural environment and to see how they adapt to each different environment. It was an interesting way to bring science to life for the fourth graders!

In December, the second through fifth graders enjoyed a concert by Lori Diefenbacher. Her program, "Music Around the World: Discovery through Song and Unusual Folk Instruments," included entertaining sing-a-longs and very uncommon instruments—even a spoon and a saw! Lori's enthusiasm and spirit along with her music provided an interesting show for the students.

Each month, Hamilton teachers at every grade level nominate students for "Do The Right Thing." This program, co-sponsored by the St. Louis Police Department, KMOV TV, KMOX Radio, the St. Louis Post Dispatch, and Cooperating School Districts, honors children in our community who distinguish themselves by their exemplary behavior. Teachers describe the student's accomplishment, attitude, or outstanding effort that distinguishes that student as a positive role model for their peers. Each month, students are selected from the nominees citywide to attend a reception and appear on a news segment about good citizenship.

This fall, two Hamilton nominees have been selected by the Do The Right Thing Program and have appeared on the channel 4 news. In September, fourth grade student Jarrod Patton was nominated by his teacher, Peggy Meyer, and in December, kindergarten student Sonali Patel was nominated by her teacher, Diane Atkins. Congratulations to Jarrod and Sonali and to all the other students who are nominated monthly for showing exemplary behavior and good citizenship.

For the month of January, twenty students from St. Louis University High School spent their whole school day at Hamilton in order to fulfill their com-

munity service requirement. The volunteers served as tutors and teachers' aides and the Hamilton students really enjoyed working with them. In addition, we still have students from DeSmet Jesuit High School and Westminster Christian Academy volunteering at Hamilton, and our Crossroads students will return in February. The special attention these volunteers give to our students helps to motivate their academic achievement.

Each year the staff at Hamilton makes an effort to get the students more involved in the community. In this respect, this year has been quite successful so far. The students are experiencing many different kinds of people, music, activities, career education, citizenship awareness, and other elements that will help to make our students well-rounded, knowledgeable young people. We thank the many visitors and volunteers that have contributed to this effort and we salute the teachers for initiating these activities and creating a positive learning environment for our students at Hamilton.

Skinker-DeBaliviere Playground Plan

After a hiatus, the Playground committee has re-formed and is again working on getting a playground built. The location is the parking lot next to the Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Center (the lot is owned by the City). The original committee picked the site, drew up plans, and applied for grants. They received a grant of \$3000 from the Whitaker Foundation. The project got delayed when there was a change of leadership and the second grant was denied. This fall, a group of us decided to try to get the ball rolling again. Using the old plans, we worked on updating costs and finding new sources of funding. We have agreed on the equipment, basic ideas for landscaping, and have contacted several sources for funding. The next phase of our project is to have construction drawings made and get some bids for the project. We will be using the Whitaker funds to pay for the construction drawings. Using bids from the construction drawings, we will then be drawing up grant proposals to submit to organizations.

Our next meeting, February 18th at 7p.m., will be the meeting for drawing up the proposals. We intend to ask (at least) Gateway Foundation and Washington University. We would welcome assistance in making the proposals or in locating other sources of funding.

We will also ask the community for support. In order to demonstrate to grant-givers that the community supports the project and to help get everyone involved and interested we will be asking the community to help support the playground project financially. It also appears that we have a better chance of getting a challenge grant (matching community money with a grant) than getting a regular grant. We will need help with planning and executing the fund-raising. The February meeting will also involve pulling this part of the project together.

If you are interested in helping to write proposals, know of grant sources, would like to help solicit money from the neighborhood, would like to give money, or want to help with some other part of the playground, contact either Laure Porterfield (862-5122) or Katrina Stierholz (863-0965) or come to the February 18th meeting at the Skinker-DeBaliviere Community Center, 7pm.

Cat's Pause

by Joe Cat Geiler

This is a cat's report. I'm no Garfield, no cartoon mouser. I'm a serious, humorless cat with a few points to make before I leave this world. Unfortunately, Jane is my only ghost writer option, my brother "Pinky" to edit with the mouse. I've had to get her cracking on this. It would just be too strenuous for me to tackle alone. (Matter of fact, I'm sleeping while she writes it. That was our arrangement).

At 16 (or so) and not counting anybody's "9 lives" theories, I am in people-years an old timer. In cat years, I'm cooked. I've given up fur cleaning and any semblance of "playing with cat toys" (behaviors we cats do to please our humans, who keep spending purrfectly good tuna fish money for fake mice with bells, sticks with feathers, and plastic tires with balls you can't get out rolling around in them). That's too much effort as I round the bend of life, period. I do occasionally still climb the woodpile in my back yard, wobble along the top of the fence, drop to the dumpster and the alley beyond. There is one spot I still claim in the yard next door where I need to go see and be seen, but that's it. It's the food bowl, the rug in front of the radiator and a down pillow for me as long as thyroid pills keep me going. There's not much time to get my messages across.

I moved to 6100 Washington from the Humane Society in the Dark Ages after my first "owners" had given me a good Catholic name and taught me to do a nice cartwheel at the sound of it, and then, voila, they had a baby and decided I had to go. That's all the "reasons" (for dumping me) they gave, just "new baby". (At least my brother cat, "Itty's" information at the ASPCA said, "Lived life in barn, catches mice. Likes people and Purina. Can't afford." Hearts can go out for a cat with such a message.) I was left with a bad reputation, frankly, as a baby's breath sucker or something, and I tell you I don't know any cat who ever was a baby's breath sucker. (I would like to hear from anyway who's known a baby's breath sucker. I'll report it, rest assured.) Anyway my clock suddenly frighteningly ticking, I had to get a compelling telepathic cat message to Jane one Sunday -- "browse at the Humane Society," and when she came, I had to answer to my name and do a cartwheel at her feet (when all I wanted to do was to continue desperately yowling in protest that I didn't deserve to be there). Then I had to ride quietly in her car (a car having driven me to this horrific situation). Then I had to assess 6100 Washington as a place worth staying, quick make friends with cats already in residence lest I be judged disruptive, all just to get to the point where I could safely sit on the garage roof, a dizzying fete of my youth I don't even wake up to consider doing anymore. So, cat's message to readers today is, "It's from h_ _ _ needing a home under the best of circumstances. Think of cats in alleys with no reputation at all and no telepathic success."



New Council Officers Chosen

At the January meeting of the Board of Directors of the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council, the following officers were elected:

President - Gary Hayes
Vice President - Ann Smith Carr
Secretary - Lara Doyle
Treasurer - Lana Stein

Many thanks extended to Nominating Committee chairman Gregory Freeman for presenting such a distinguished slate.

Congratulations to the newly-elected officers. And special thanks to outgoing Vice President Sara Johnson, who has assumed new responsibilities at Washington University and been replaced by a new board delegate, Steve Givens. Thanks, too, for outgoing secretary Gwen Lazard, who worked diligently to keep an accurate record of the sometimes lively discussion at Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Board Meetings. She will be replaced by newly elected secretary Lara Doyle.

Committee reorganization continues. If you are interested in working with the Board, serving on a committee, or helping with a special event please contact the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council at 862-5122. The next Council meeting is Monday, February 9, 7:00 p.m., at the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council offices, 6008 Kingsbury. All Board meetings are open to the public.

HELP WANTED

Successful committee work is the backbone for any organization's progress, and for a neighborhood organization like the Council this is especially true.

If you are interested in knowing more about the Council and how you can get involved, consider becoming a block captain, or teaming up with your current block captain; joining a committee such as Beautification, Social Services, Housing, Recreation or the Playground Committee, or an issue-oriented ad hoc committee like the MetroLink Advisory Committee. Interested in working on a special event? Operation BrightSide is just around the corner and National Night Out will be here before you know it.

Take time to stop by the Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council Office and learn more about how you can get involved or call 862-5122.

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Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting on December 8, 1997

In Attendance: President Gary Hayes, Directors Ann Smith Carr, Lara Doyle, Greg Freeman, Steve Givens, Ronie Haliburton, Ruth Johnson, Gwen Lazard, Susan Littlefield, Maggie Hart-Mahon, Rev. Miki Merrit, Shirley Polk, Julie Schoemehl, Lana Stein. Guests: Paul Hohmann MetroLink Advisory Committee Chairman, Daniel Schesch, Abram Ware, Vivi Wolf, NSO; Gary Boehnke Housing Corporation Project Administrator, SDCC Executive Director Laure Porterfield.

Absent: Arthelda Busch, Peggy Droege, Dan Freedberg, Jane Geiler, Paula Sigman, Jack Wright.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by President Gary Hayes.

Welcome and Introductions

President Gary Hayes introduced Lieutenant Ken Bradshaw, who replaces Lieutenant Art Ruehl as one of three Watch Commanders in the 7th District. Lieutenant Ruehl is now in charge of the detectives in the District. Sgt. Dave Habermaas gave the security report. There were some street robberies in the DeBaliviere and Forest Park Parkway area (Subway Shop, MetroLink Station, Dialysis Center). Some burglaries have occurred in apartments occupied by Washington University students. An arrest has been made. Our stats show a dramatic increase in burglaries, but the total number of incidents in all categories has not increased dramatically. The robbery of CWE Bank last month is still unsolved. Arrests were made in the string of 23 vehicle thefts that took place during the summer. The 57XX blocks of Pershing and McPherson have been reported a couple of times on the Drug Hot Line. Questions were entertained. It was reported that there is a problem with loitering in the 59XX block of Waterman. Also vehicles are being parked on the sidewalk around the old Sinclair lot, and persons are conferring on the lot. There is a problem with graffiti in the rear of the DeBaliviere Strip Mall. NSO Vivi Wolf will follow up and request clean-up.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Greg Freeman and seconded by Lara Doyle that the November minutes be approved. The motion passed.

Financial Report

Financial reports from October and November were reviewed and approved. Projected revenues and projected expenditures were discussed. The YTD capital figure under non-recurring expenditures may possibly change. This figure includes the new phone system, computer and additional software. All funds from CDA have not been received yet.

The draft 1998 budget for \$52,000.00 in CDA funds was passed by CDC per Executive Director Laure Porterfield. It was moved by Susan Littlefield and seconded by Lara Doyle that the October and November financial reports be approved.

MetroLink Advisory Committee

The letter from East/West Gateway Coordinating Council Executive Director Les Sterman was discussed. It was stated in the newspaper that, according to Ganett Flemming, the St. Louis Region has the money for the next MetroLink extension to be above ground only. The business plan for the next MetroLink extension will be an agenda item at the December 1997 meeting of EWGCC. The budget lays out how they will run the process. Executive Director Laure Porterfield will attend this meeting as an observer. A

letter was sent out to those persons who attended the MetroLink public forum in October. The MetroLink Advisory Committee met on November 24, 1997; no action was taken at this meeting. A date for the next meeting has not been set. Lana Stein requested to be kept apprised for timely publication of information in the *Times*.

Executive Director Report

The focus for 1998 will be on two continuing projects, the MetroLink extension and Delmar Enhancement. The 60XX Block of Washington is seeing some tremendous improvement including the redevelopment of 6045 into an owner-occupied townhouse with two rental units, the privately funded rehab of 6041, and the search by SDCHC for a developer to acquire 6048. The three (3) developers who have submitted plans for Nina Place redevelopment will be at the January board meeting. The Nina Place Association would like to review these plans before the January meeting.

A. Housing Corporation Update

There have been changes over the last month regarding the buildings at 5938 and 5932 Kingsbury. There is a verbal proposal to purchase the solid building. Both buildings are on track to be demolished; however two major steps are needed. After an engineering appraisal, the biggest and longest hurdle will be gaining State approval. Some council members expressed their displeasure with the slow pace at which this project is moving. There is not a RFP on the buildings.

There was a discussion about the disrepair of the sign at Talayna's restaurant on Skinker. NSO Vivi Wolf will check into this.

Delmar Planning Process

Sara Smith, Director of Arts in Transit for Bi-State Development Agency, made the presentation on the Delmar Enhancement Project. For the past year Bi-State has been working on a collaborative effort with the City of St. Louis, University City, SDCC, our Commercial District Committee, and the merchants in the area to develop an enhancement plan for the Delmar MetroLink area. Copies of the draft feasibility and site design were shared. Smith recapped the process, which started last February with a planning workshop. The cities of St. Louis and University City have been approved for a grant of \$750,000 to begin the first phase of enhancement. Additional resources are being sought. Recommendations made for University City are that the street pattern will not be changed, but there will be changes in streetscaping and lighting. The recommendation for the St. Louis side is to go from two lanes in each direction to one lane in each direction. Other recommendations on the St. Louis City side include expanded sidewalks, landscaping, additional distinctive lighting, tree grates and seeding. Some of the design elements will be the same as the University City side. It is intended that the .9 miles between the Wabash Station and the Lions look like a cohesive whole. Street parking will continue on both sides of the street. On the north side of the street, a separate bike path is recommended. The merchants opted to have expanded sidewalks in lieu of a median.

The City of St. Louis has purchased the old Wabash Triangle Cafe lot for public parking.

The intent is to divert northbound traffic from Delmar onto Hodiamont and Rosedale to alleviate traffic con-

gestion during certain times of the day, and to have the .9 of a mile between the Wabash Station and the Lions pedestrian oriented. Larger and more defined crosswalks are recommended, which will indicate that this is pedestrian territory. It is also suggested that a transportation plaza, restricted to transit only, be developed north of Delmar at DesPeres. A "kiss-n-ride" and a pedestrian plaza in the station area is recommended.

Bi-State is looking for ways to enhance the transit link between the MetroLink Station and the Loop area. The following options have been considered: (1) a shuttle bus; (2) enhanced existing service; (3) a trolley.

There will be a public meeting February 5 at Crossroads School to further elaborate on the recommendations and to talk about the next steps.

The City of St. Louis has received and allocated funds to rehab or reconstruct the Wabash Bridge. Bi-State has been coordinating their plans around the MetroLink station with this.

With regard to the Forest Park MetroLink station, a committee including neighborhood representative Greg Freeman has participated in the selection process of consultants for this project. The Bi-State has funds to rework the park-and-ride area. Their commitment was to work on the Forest Park station lot when the Delmar station was finished.

Questions were entertained. There was a discussion about the area under the Wabash Bridge overpass. The recommendations for this area are in phase two or three of the process per Executive Director Laure Porterfield. Pedestrian safety at the Des Peres intersection is a major issue beginning with Phase I.

Committee and Neighborhood Update/Reports

A. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee recommended the following slate of officers for the year 1998:

President - Gary Hayes
Vice President - Ann Smith Carr
Secretary - Maggie Hart-Mahon
Treasurer - Lana Stein

The election of officers will take place at the January meeting, but nominations from the floor are welcomed.

B. Neighborhood Services

1. Beautification - No report
2. Social Services - No report (need chair for committee)
3. Dr. Martin Luther King Commemoration. Executive Director Laure Porterfield reported that the speaker will be Dr. Gwen Packnett. One school has responded so far. An art exhibit showing students work from participating schools has been added. The New Cote Brillante choir has again been invited. Any food contributions for the reception will be appreciated.

C. Commercial District

Talayna's Restaurant has until the end of February to close.

D. Rosedale Neighbors

By-Laws were written and adopted at the last meeting and will be on file at the Council Office.

E. Washington Heights - No report
F. Parkview - Residents are still having problems with unleashed dogs.

G. NinaPlace - No report

H. St. Roch - No report

I. Grace Methodist - No report

J. New Cote Brillante - The Choir will be at the Dr. Martin Luther King Commemoration

K. Kingsbury Square - No report

L. Playground Steering Committee. The committee will meet in January. The chair is putting together a revised budget.

Other Business

The 1998 board meeting schedule is included in the agenda package.

Steve Givens, Washington University representative, stated that a demographic study has not been done on the neighborhood in a long time. He will try finding a social work student to do one. He was unable to get an update on the Sinclair lot.

At the request of Dan Schesch, Greg Freeman introduced the following motion with regard to the Washington University ownership of 2-3 family buildings in Skinker DeBaliviere:

We request that Washington University assist the Skinker DeBaliviere neighborhood in maintaining the critical level of resident ownership by selling, in an orderly manner, its recently acquired 2 and 3 family buildings to individual owner-occupants/resident owners, and not purchasing any more.

The motion was seconded by Susan Littlefield.

Daniel Schesch elaborated on the motion.

The following motion was made by Ann Smith Carr and seconded by Lara Doyle: The motion introduced by Greg Freeman with respect to encouraging Washington University to dispose of 2 and 3 family units recently acquired in the neighborhood to resident owners showed be tabled for discussion at our January 12 meeting, with all interested parties encouraged to review the facts and proposal beforehand. The motion was passed.

The reception for the Policemen and Firemen will take place at the Council Office on December 18, 1997. Volunteers are needed for hosts and clean up duties. Ruth Johnson has volunteered to chair this event due to the illness of Betty Newsham.

Rev. Merritt asked about the bike program. There was a brief discussion about restarting the program.

There being no further business, Greg Freeman called for adjournment and Lara Doyle seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.



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In Your Ear

by Hawkeye Q. Hoerr

There we were greeting the start of 1998 in a foreign place: Southern Hemisphere, South America, Argentina, Buenos Aires, shoe stores. Yes, the first wife and I just returned from a jaunt to South America (that's *Southo Americo* in Spanish). It was the first time we have been south of the equator and it was, all in all, an enjoyable experience. We were good *touristos!*

First, to answer the question that I know is posed on your ever-quivering lips, YES, the water does go down the drain in a different direction. Before actually seeing this — scores of times, in fact — I was doubtful. This idea of the direction of the drainage being determined by whether the water is north or south of the equator is a centuries old tale, one that predates the "discovery" of the New World. It is, I always figured, scientifically comparable to the moon consisting of blue cheese. So I couldn't wait to check into our hotel room, fill the sink with water, and pull the plug. Amazing. Even having seen it, many, many times (yes, I have photos), I'm baffled! It beats the hell out of me why or how this happens, but it does. Up here the water goes counter-clockwise down the drain and down there it goes down clockwise. I mean, who even bothered to first note this? And how could anyone have even known this before there were clocks? And does it still work if the room only has digital clocks???

I felt a bit like Mr. Wizard — er, *Senor Wizrado* — repeatedly filling and emptying various water receptacles. We stayed in two hotels (we also visited Santiago, Chile), each of which had a sink and a tub. And I visited numerous restrooms (*banos*) with sinks too. I'll tell you, I spent more time watching water leave the room than a custodian at Sea World. Continually observing and hypothesizing throughout my travels, I felt a bit like Charles Darwin.

But now to the more important issue: globalization. That's a fancy way of saying that the shopping malls are pretty much the same everywhere. Each country has mall upon mall upon mall and each mall features a United Colors of Benetton, J.C. Penney, Gap, Taco Bell, and so on. The background music is even the same. Heck, in Santiago the University of Chile at Santiago even wants to build a multi-million peso performing arts center twenty miles from town so that only their students can use it.

But what is most amazing is the communications network that exists among retailers. Well, to be fair I should say the communications network that exists among **shoe stores**. I assume it is in place among other kinds of stores as well but don't really know.

Planning the trip was largely left to the first wife and she did her usual fine job. By the time we walked on the jet she had a map indicating the shoe stores that we would visit. She also had arranged for us to visit a shoe factory in each country. I had my books and cee-gars.

No sooner had we arrived in Buenos Aires and unpacked when we hurriedly went to the first shoe store, one in an open-air shopping mall called Florida. OK, we walk in the store and are treated, naturally, like any other customer. Each store has a few people who can speak halting English (which is superior to our stopping Spanish) and after some early miscommunications,

we are directed to them. In this case a young girl, mid-twenties, greets us. She and the first wife begin to chat, and the salesgirl is quickly scurrying to bring out pair after pair after pair of shoes. I, having learned from experience, pull out the books I brought and begin to read. One of the real virtues of a vacation is to have long periods of uninterrupted reading time!

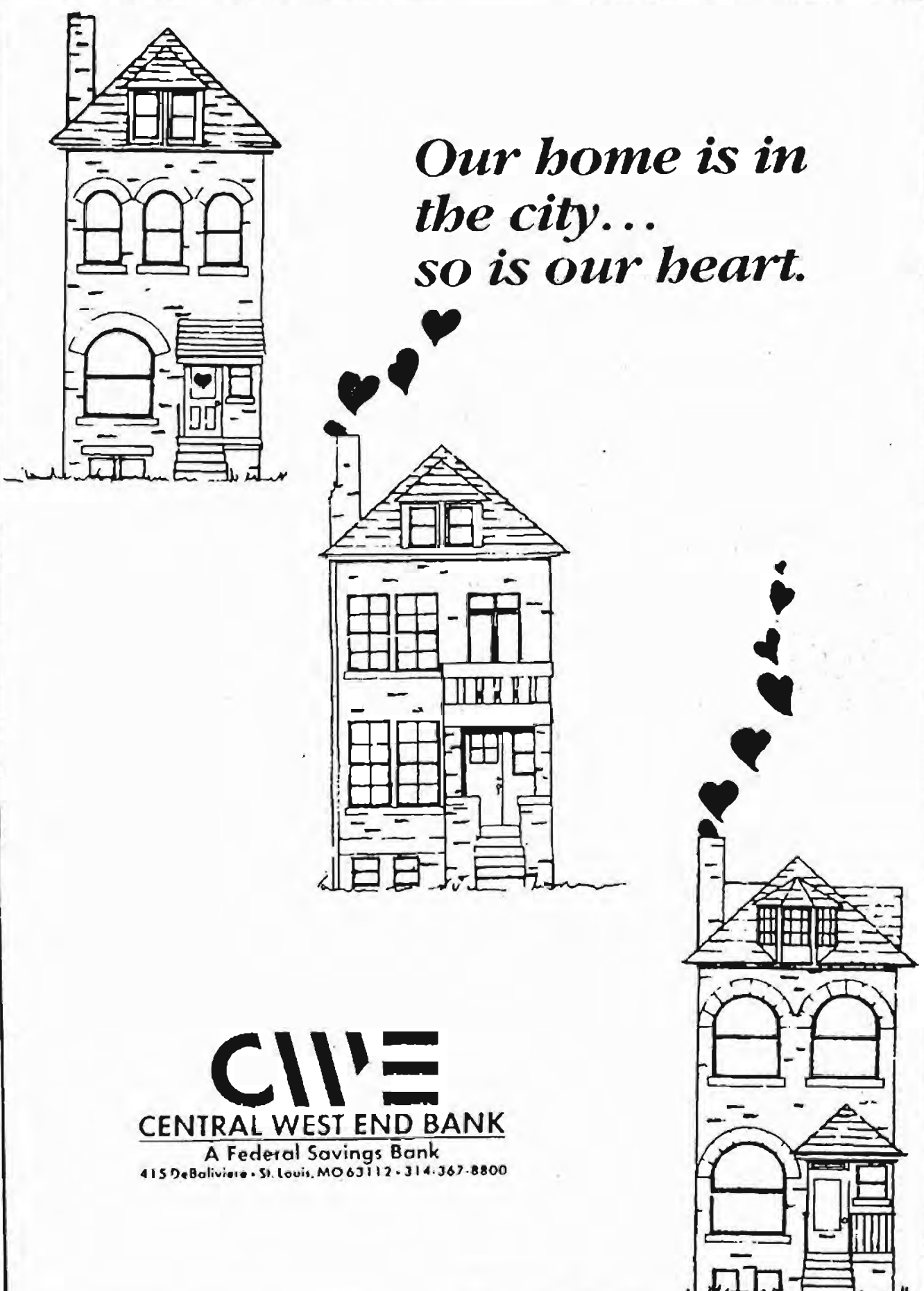
Chapters later, the first wife has made a selection, actually several selections, and we go to the register where she gives the salesperson her weathered credit card. The girl goes to the machine and enters the information. A moment later her face lights up as if she has struck gold. Which, in a way, she has. "*Senorita! Mio apologies,*" she begins, "*Pardona. I did not know who you were. Por favor, please come with me. Vaminos!*" At this, the first wife follows her, me too, into a back room, behind the register. A key is pulled out from under the edge of the carpet and the salesgirl uses it to unlock a door that is hidden behind a curtain. She beckons us to follow her and we do. I've sort of been there, done that before, on other trips, so I

figure I know what's about to happen. The first wife does too and can hardly contain her excitement. We step in to a giant beautifully decorated room with a small pond in the middle, the walls filled with row upon row of shoes. Soft music is playing in the background. I am immediately fascinated by the pond, approximately ten feet in diameter. "Are those real ducks?" I wonder and walk closer.

What is happening becomes clear as the salesperson bows to the first wife and says, "*I didn't know who you were, Senorita. This room, we call it el palaceo, is reserved for our ejecutivo clients, el grande collectors de shoes!*" Another salesperson appears and hands the first wife a glass of champagne and takes her to an easy chair. I mumble something about needing to find a room to check the direction (that the water goes down the drain and announce that I'll be waiting outside, in the mall corridor, reading and smoking a cee-gar or three.

There is far more to this journey, of course, including various mishaps with the camera, mostly initiated by me, but space precludes my sharing the

details. Or even de-heads. Let me simply say that we were given this sort of exalted treatment in a shoe store in Santiago as well. There, though, the back room did not have a pond. The first wife was disappointed, I think, but I actually preferred watching and listening to the entertainers. All in all, we visited around a dozen shoe stores. The shoe factory visits weren't successful because they didn't carry any shoes that weren't already in the stores. Nonetheless, the first wife was a gracious customer, buying a pair of shoes in each factory just to support the cause. In general, she calls the trip a success. Enough shoes were purchased that they were shipped back in two large boxes rather than being carried in our pitifully small suitcases. We've not been home that long, so the first wife hasn't begun to name them yet. Right now her quandary is whether to call the shoes Mr. and Mrs. or Senor and Senorita. Me, I'm still fascinated with watching the water go down the drain, counter-clockwise, and trying to figure out which end is up.



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