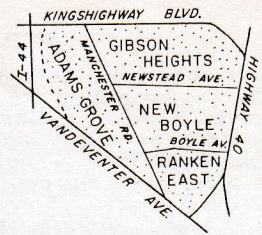


FPSE NEWS & VIEWS

THE FOREST PARK SOUTHEAST NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER

"THE NEWS YOU NEED TO KNOW"



SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1991

AUTUMN ISSUE

Vol. 4/No. 1 COPYRIGHT 1991

NEIGHBORHOOD BARBECUE

for the FPSE Housing Corporation
Saturday, September 28, 1991
From 11:00 to 3:00
Rainbow Park (corner of Gibson
and Taylor aves.)
Hamburger or Hot Dog plate* \$1.50
Bratwurst plate* \$3.50

Soda and desert on sale.

*includes potato salad and baked beans.

METRO MINISTRY

By Karl Chauffe

Metro Ministry's Executive Director Dianne Johnson explained Metro's role in the community at Block Unit 6's July meeting. She stated, "Metro was founded in 1968 to minister to the poor and suppressed in the St. Louis Metropolitan area. We attempt to do this through our many community-based programs, including Food and Clothing Assistance, Shalom House, Metro-Preschool, and Legal aid. We are trying to be a positive force in the community and a good neighbor." Metro is at 1040 S. Taylor in the Wagoner Memorial Methodist Church and claims to serve more than 12,000 people each year.

The Pre-School program is directed by neighborhood resident Trish Curtis. Began in 1983, it provides subsidized Montessori education for about 40 neighborhood children. Johnson stated, "We provide a learning environment for many neighborhood children who otherwise could not afford to attend pre-school."

Food and Clothing Programs provide emergency assistance. Metro gives each family member enough food for three days (nine meals). Johnson stated, "It is important to give food for several days. A person needs to feel that he does not have to spend all of his time searching for his next meal. It gives him time to seek employment or other assistance." Because of limited resources at Metro, families may only apply for emergency assistance once each month. "At the end of the month we frequently are overwhelmed by requests," Johnson noted. Clothing, furniture and money to assist with utility bills are also provided when available.

The most controversial program operated by Metro has been Shalom House, a shelter for homeless women. Started in 1988 as a night-only shelter, past Metro Director Harry Smith, expanded the program to 24 hours. This violated an agreement with the neighborhood not to alter the program without neighborhood consent. Poor management and lax security lead to violence within the shelter and disturbance in the neighborhood.

Since Johnson replaced Smith, most of the problems have been eliminated. Johnson explained, "We now

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BULLET STOPS TRAFFIC ON ARCO AND GIBSON --STREET CLOSINGS--

By Mark Jefferies

The bullet that killed Christopher Harris also ended through-traffic on Arco and Gibson avenues. Negative publicity generated by the murder prompted the FPSE Housing Corporation to endorse closing all east-west streets at Newstead Ave. between Chouteau and Manchester avenues. Alderman Joe D. Roddy agreed to support the closures. If the Housing Corp. assumed responsibility for the action.

In early June, eight-year-old Christopher Harris was shot and killed while being used as a human shield during a drug-related gun fight on Gibson Ave. The ensuing avalanche of negative publicity placed pressure on Alderman Roddy and the Housing Corp. to respond in a visible way to the growing drug problem. Increased police protection and letters in the POST-DISPATCH noting redevelopment and the "high" level of FPSE community commitment, did little to calm residents' fears when they could still witness drug deals outside their front doors.

According to Russ Lauer, a non-resident landlord with extensive holdings in FPSE, he began speaking to Roddy about closing Gibson Ave. shortly after the shooting. Some area residents had been endorsing street closings as a way to discourage the flourishing curb-side drug trade for several years (See - Historical Perspective). Their requests had been ignored; Lauer's was not. In June, two block units endorsed closing Gibson at Newstead. Few residents from Gibson attended the meetings.

Roddy requested a special Housing Corp Meeting in mid-July to discuss closing Gibson, according to Board Member Allen Levin. At the semi-private, unannounced, special board meeting Russ Lauer, who is not a board member, proposed and the Board endorsed closing both Arco and Gibson at Newstead Ave.

According to a source at the meet-

ing, "Roddy made it clear that the Board would have to take the blame, if there were any complaints." Following the meeting one Board member explained, "If protecting Roddy from criticism and allowing him to take the credit is the only way to get him to do something, it is worth it. There are many things that we need and only an alderman can do them." At Block Unit 6's July meeting Roddy stated, "It was the Board's decision to close the streets...they are your representatives."

Roddy's acquiescence to Housing Corp plans, without insisting upon a neighborhood-wide consensus, represents a major policy change. The Board's earlier request to close Oak and at Newstead, and Gibson and Arco at Manchester were delayed for over a year because Roddy demanded a neighborhood-wide meeting. Housing Corp. Executive Director Kate Roth explained, "Roddy insists a demonstration that the majority supports the closures before he will do anything." Roddy's recent willingness to take immediate action may reflect the pressure for him to make a "concrete" response to the rapidly decaying situation on Gibson.

Board Members have defended their decision to close the streets without first discussing it with their block units. Publicly, they noted the need to act before conditions deteriorated further and before the Kingshighway Viaduct was closed. Closure of the viaduct is not expected until 1992. Privately, some board members confessed to doubting Roddy's resolve to act, "if the process became protracted or generated any opposition."

Initial resident response has been positive on both Gibson and Arco. Some Gibson residents stated that drug trafficking appears to have significantly decreased, as has the noise

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ARCO FOOD SHOP BUILDING WILL IT SURVIVE THE NEGLECT?

By Karl Chauffe

Will decades of postponed maintenance and extensive deterioration sentence the Arco Food Shop building at 4471 Arco to demolition? The building is owned by a group of FPSE residents who are attempting to control the property's redevelopment. United Metro Ministries, located across the alley from the food shop, has expressed interest in buying and demolishing the building. They would use the property for parking and/or to build an administration facility.

The Arco Food Shop was a mom-and-pop grocery in the early 1970s. When the owners retired, they leased the store and planned eventually to sell the building. The new store manager reportedly began dealing drugs. After several arrests at the store front, the David Ranken (now FPSE) Housing

Corp. purchased the building, evicted the tenant and closed the food shop. For several years the building remained empty while the Corp. searched for a redeveloper.

In the mid-70s Joe P. Roddy gained control of the Housing Corp. He sold the food shop building to a redevelopment company specializing in Section 8 housing. Before they could develop the property, the company went bankrupt.

By this time extensive deterioration had occurred to the building. A tenant allowed the pipes to freeze. Water damaged walls, floor and ceilings in part of the building. Leaks developed in the roof and accelerated the decay. Floor joists and rafters rotted. The rear porch collapsed. The rear wall began crumbling as mor-

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and number of people out late at night. According to neighborhood reports, however, Gibson's problems may only be migrating to the 4500 block of Oakland. The recent murder and attempted murder there may reflect this shift. Some residents of Oakland and Wichita have begun discussing the possibility of closing those streets before drug trafficking becomes entrenched and violence escalates.

The street closings are temporary. They will be reviewed in about six months, according to Alderman Roddy. If made permanent, the construction of cul-de-sacs would not be expected soon because of costs. Cul-de-sac construction can range between \$50-75,000.

STREET CLOSINGS: THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Expectations ran high in 1987. The Oakland Rowhouse was being rehabbed. There were promises of additional redevelopment. Drug trafficking was a concern, but not yet a major problem.

Some area residents saw this as an opportune time to effect needed improvements. They decided to address the problem of curb-side drug dealing, noisy late-night traffic and large commercial trucks using our residential streets.

Other neighborhoods successfully addressed these problems by changing traffic patterns to eliminate non-local traffic. A group of residents presented a series of possible traffic pattern changes to 17th Ward Alderman Tim Dee.

With Dee's encouragement, a neighborhood meeting was held to discuss the proposals. Dee eventually endorsed a plan creating three traffic loops by closing Newstead at Manchester and installing a divider diagonally across Newstead at the Gibson and Arco intersections.

Shortly after Dee introduced legislation to allow temporary street changes, protests arose. Some opposition was based upon honest concerns, but some appears to have been orchestrated by a neighborhood political force. There is some circumstantial evidence that some resident were paid to oppose the changes and to encourage others to protest them. Reasons stated for opposing the trial changes were that they were racially motivated, they would increase traffic on Taylor Ave. and they would delay fire, ambulance and police service.

Lead by Pepsi, businessmen in the industrial corridor just north of FPSE lobbied the Mayor in opposition to the changes. They claimed that Newstead was essential for their survival. At one meeting a representative from Brauer Supply declared his employees would have difficulty finding their way to work without Newstead.

Additional meetings were held for and against the proposed changes. Petitions were circulated. An officer of Block Unit 6 resigned because the block unit voted to endorse the trial changes.

Through all this, the FPSE Housing Corp. was silent. According to ex-board member Tom Ernst, the Corp. never addressed the issue. At the time, future-Alderman Joe D. Roddy was president of the Board. At one neighborhood meeting Roddy was asked where he and the Corp. stood on the issue. Roddy stated, "This is too controversial for me," and immediately

left the meeting. Shortly after being elected alderman, Roddy summarized his feelings on the street issue saying, "Here we (Housing Corp.) had just gotten the Oakland Rowhouse done and suddenly people wanted to do something about the streets. I don't understand it."

The petitions demonstrated that a narrow majority favored trying the changes. Although the Board of Aldermen initially defeated Dee's proposals, a few weeks later they passed. On the day of the successful vote a representative of Pepsi sat in the gallery noting how each alderman voted.

Mayor Schoemehl vetoed the bills. Dee was unable to garner sufficient support to override the veto. The streets remained open. Shortly thereafter, Dee resigned as alderman.

After Roddy was elected alderman in 1988, he was approached by some residents to close the east-west streets. Roddy steadfastly refused. Curb-side drug dealing flourished. Gibson became known city-wide as a

"If Alderman Roddy had had the courage to act then, Christopher Harris might still be alive today."

place to buy drugs. Only after eight-year-old Christopher Harris was killed in "a drug deal gone bad," and the FPSE Housing Corp agreed to accept responsibility for the street closures did Roddy agree to close the streets.

Absence of protests reflects neighborhood changes in the last four years. Drug dealing and related violence have become intolerable. Residents are willing to accept inconvenience to limit the drug problem on their streets. Many of those who previously opposed the changes have died, moved away or are too elderly to protest actively. Because the street closures have Roddy's name on them, it is unlikely the alderman's father will organize political opposition to them.

Recently, a member of the group who originally proposed the traffic changes was replanting flowers in one of the pots blocking Gibson. When asked if he was pleased that the streets were finally closed, he stated, "So many of the problems we have today could have been avoided if the streets had been closed three years ago. If Roddy had had the courage to act then, Christopher Harris might still be alive today."

METRO MINISTRY

from page 1

do more than just house the homeless women. We offer life skills and job training, access to health care and assistance in locating permanent housing." Shalom House provides a safe shelter for 25 women.

Metro also provides free legal assistance to low-income people and trains professionals to recognize and respond to family violence and abuse.

In addition to the Wagoner Church, Metro also maintains Rainbow Park on the corner of Gibson and Taylor. Johnson stated, "We recently acquired \$10,000 worth of play equipment and are planning to re-organize the park. To protect the children, we plan to place a wrought-iron fence around the new play area." Metro is currently considering the purchase of the Arco Food Shop property at 4471 Arco (See Arco Food Shop). They plan to demolish the building and use the property as a parking lot. An administration building may be built on the property later.

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HOUSING CORP. NEWS

By Karl Chaffe

July: Gibson, FSIP & Display House

4339 Gibson, owned by New Life Evangelistic Center, was approved for higher than normal occupancy despite opposition from Block Unit 7 (New Boyle) and FPSE Housing Corp. Permission may have been granted for political reasons.

Availability of FSIP (For Sale Incentive Program) and 108 funds for the redevelopment of 1091-93 S. Taylor means that Operation Conserv money will not have to be used for the project. Housing and Urban Development rules require retaining the original entryways to the building. This is expected to increase the cost of the project by about \$2000.

The Board authorized the Corporation to enter an agreement with Mercantile Bank and a limited partnership with Boatman's Bank and John Durnell Inc. for the redevelopment of the Display House at 1091-93 S. Taylor. The Board approved use of \$40,000 of the 1989 FSIP funding for the project.

Also briefly discussed at the meeting were plans for a Housing Corp. fund raiser, closing Gibson Ave. at Newstead and a farewell party for Jerry Scherer, past president of the Corporation.

August: DART, Stone House, Deficit & Donation

Representatives from DART (Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Treatment) requested support in expanding the inpatient treatment program housed in the Chouteau Building at Hemp Ave. near the intersection of Chouteau and Vandeventer. The Board voted to support the expansion to 30 patients.

No letter of commitment has been received for FSIP or 108 funds for the redevelopment of the display house at 1091-93 S. Taylor Ave. Work should begin by late August.

Development of the stone house at 1060 S. Kingshighway has begun. The buyer has reportedly expressed displeasure at the lighted sign recently installed by the Chinese Restaurant at 1070 South Kingshighway. The Board suggested planting trees to hide the sign from the stone house.

1084-92 S. Taylor continues to run a deficit. The Housing Corp. redeveloped the building with Operation Conserv funding. Only 7 of the 12 units are occupied. Rents will be decreased to \$295 for 12-month leases.

Boatman's Bank has contributed \$3000 to the Housing Corp. and CDA (Community Development Agency) has agreed to contribute an additional \$7500 in funding.

The Housing Corp. is planning two fund raisers. On September 28 there will be a barbecue in Rainbow Park. Next Spring, a flea market will be held in the parking lot of Commerce Bank. Continued on page 3.

Concerned Citizens of Forest Park Southeast, a non-profit, non-political group working to improve FPSE, publishes NEWS & VIEWS bi-monthly. Founded in June, 1988, N&V is delivered at no cost to approximately 1700 homes and numerous city officials. N&V provides free distribution of fliers for non-profit organizations and campaign literature for candidates. This is not to be construed as an endorsement. Contributions by FPSE residents and others pay for printing. Direct inquiries to editors K. Chaffe, R. Sandall and M. Jefferies at FPSE NEWS & VIEWS, 4420 Arco Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63110. Deadline for the next issue is December 1, 1991.

tar washed from between the bricks after the gutters were removed.

Eventually, the building was purchased by a group of area residents. Because of its strategic location at Taylor and Arco, they felt it was important to have control over the property. Limited funds prevented them from hiring a contractor to stabilize the building. Few investors were interested in doing the work themselves. Periodically, developers would show interest in the building, but projected rehab costs were considered too high. According to Kate Roth, the cost to rehab would now exceed value of the finished building.

The west and rear walls of the building have not been tuck-pointed in many years. Bricks are shifting outward and several in the west parapet lean precariously over the sidewalk on Taylor Ave. This hazard prompted a recent meeting of the investors. Only a small group attended, because the meeting notification did not include a time. Those at the meeting have reportedly abandoned all hopes of saving the building. Discussions assumed demolition was inevitable. Their major concern was recouping their investment.

United Metro Ministries at 1040 S. Taylor Ave. has expressed interest in the property. Several years ago Metro sought to purchase and renovate the existing building for use as their free food distribution center. This was an unpopular proposal with residents on Arco. At the recent meeting,

Metro suggested demolishing the building and using the land for parking. Metro currently has an unsecured parking lot on the north side of Rainbow Park. Cars on the lot have been vandalized. A parking area closer to Metro's facility could be more easily secured and supervised. Metro has also suggested that an administration building could be built on the property in the future. Although interested in the proposals, the investors insisted on retaining the right of approval for any use of the property.

NEWS & VIEWS has recently learned that the property may not be wide enough to allow diagonal parking, the most efficient parking arrangement. According to two sources, the minimum allowable width to accommodate diagonal parking is 25 feet 9 in. The property is reportedly less than 25 feet wide.

Similarly, without variances from the city, only a much smaller building could be constructed. City building codes now require a three to four foot setback from the property lines. The new building would be six to eight feet narrower. Sam McRee codes require new buildings to be setback from the sidewalk, consistent with existing buildings along the street. A new

structure would require about a 16 foot setback.

Investor Paula Lemermann has suggested that Metro could move their pre-school playground to the property. She stated, "Fencing the food shop property would be less expensive than Rainbow Park. It would also be closer."

Executive Director Kate Roth has suggested that investors could donate the property to Land Reutilization Authority if Metro withdraws its offer. She said, "The city would then demolish the building and the lot could be converted into a small park." Sources to fund a park are limited. Roth continued, "Neighborhood participation would be essential."

In contrast to most investors, Maud Essen has not abandoned hope for the building. According to Essen, "When we bought the building, I wanted to set up workdays. Working together we could have stabilized the building. No one was interested. They just let the building fall apart." Regarding the proposed demolition, Essen said, "I think it is a mistake. We should still try to save it. With all the negative publicity, demolishing more buildings will give the neighborhood

BLOCK UNIT NEWS

by Karl Chauffe

See also Alderman Roddy Reports [page 5], Street Closings [page 1], Metro Ministries [page 1].

GIBSON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORS (BLOCK UNIT 5)

June: Gratitude, NSN & Selective Contributions

Block Unit 5 expressed gratitude to the following members: Caroline Wurm for organizing the candle-light procession demonstrating neighborhood concern for the death of Christopher Harris; Mark Weber and Larry Ritter for work on Neighborhood Safety Network (NSN); Phil Heaghey for publishing the Gibson Heights Neighbors Newsletter; and to Joe P. Roddy and Sam Varvaro for work on Brightside.

The Block Unit welcomed Mr. Lu, the new owner of the Chinese restaurant at Kingshighway and Arco.

Mark Weber announced that 12 arrests were made by NSN patrols. He encouraged residents to talk with the patrol officers about problem areas in the neighborhood. The officers are also available to discuss crime prevention.

During a protracted discussion of area crime, Rev. Shannon (Church of the Living God) proposed that residents make the neighborhood uncomfortable for criminals. He also suggested that residents should compile a list of recommended tenants.

BU5 donated \$100 to the summer youth program sponsored by Alderman Roddy, but declined to fund a proposed program by Caroline Wurm. Wurm wanted to hire neighborhood children to collect litter from the streets.

July: Resignation, Corbin & Streets.

The Block unit spent a few minutes remembering Owen George Eaton, deceased president of Block unit 6.

Secretary Bill Heigold resigned because his new job prevents him from attending meetings. Phil Heaghey agreed to serve through September.

Ranken East Presiden Dan Corbin

displayed the first place award his block unit won in the city-wide Operation Brightside competition. The prize-winning project was a landscaped park and mural in the 4000 block of Chouteau.

Allen Levin explained the planned street closings along Newstead.

GIBSON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (BLOCK UNIT 6)

July: Metro Ministries, Real Estate, Police & By-laws

Dianne Johnson explained the role of Metro Ministry in the community. (See Metro Ministries page 1).

Trish Curtis reported that the Real Estate Committee was working to identify drug houses, poorly maintained properties, and overcrowded residences. The committee meets every two weeks and will attempt to work with landlords to improve their tenant selection.

In response to the increase of drug activity and violence, the 4300 and 4400 blocks of Gibson have been targeted for additional police patrols. The police urge residents to organize into Neighborhood Watch groups and report suspected activity.

Helena Perine volunteered to organize a youth task force. Jackie Jackels, Bill Jackels and Jane Sykes volunteered to maintain the planters used to close the east-west streets.

Karla Eaton suggested that the corner park at Gibson and Newstead be dedicated in honour of her late father, past block unit president Owen George Eaton, and Christopher Harris, the child who was killed on Gibson. She proposed placing a plaque on the lot. A formal proposal will be made at the next meeting.

The block unit voted to reimburse Treasurer Angie Renner for flowers sent in Block Unit 6's name to Owen Eaton's funeral. The block unit also appropriated \$100 for National Night Out. Jane Sykes proposed several By-law changes.

HOUSING CORP. NEWS

from page 2

The Board voted to donate \$50.00 to the Association of Southside Police and to send a letter of thanks to Alderman Roddy for street closings.

Also briefly discussed were plans by Family Health Care of Carondelet possibly to absorb the Ranken Health Clinic, the opening of Blitz Restaurant at Manchester and Tower Grove, and the closing of Arco and Gibson at Newstead.

New Boyle representative Tom Goshen has moved from FPSE and will be replaced by Lee Jesenick of the 4300 block of Arco.

September: FSIP, Panel, Oakland

The Housing Corp has applied for \$380,000 in city funding for redevelopment in 1992. Only \$1.3 million is available for the entire city. Roth stated, "Without FSIP funding, most redevelopment projects here would not be possible. We need the allocation to keep development moving south and to the east." The Board agreed to send a letter to Alderman Roddy requesting him to lobby for more city funding in 1993.

Responding to the escalating drug trafficking and violence in the 4500 block of Oakland, the Board will investigate the possibility of closing Oakland at Kingshighway. Roth said, "If we intend to redevelop 1091-93 S. Taylor, something must be done about Oakland."

Dan Corbin (Ranken East) and Lee Jesenick (New Boyle) agreed to accept concrete barriers to close Arco at Manchester, and Gibson at Boyle and Manchester until concrete planters are available. These approved closings were not executed because the city's supply of concrete planters was exhausted.

LEGAL ADVISOR: AUTO INSURANCE

By Gaylard Williams

The law requires all drivers licensed by Missouri to carry liability insurance. Without the protection provided by insurance, many lives could be ruined. Those responsible for accidents could face bankruptcy. Victims of accidents might be uncompensated for their financial losses and unable to pay their medical expenses. As a result, society would bear the burden of higher insurance premiums and taxes.

Unfortunately, consumers have little protection from the powerful insurance companies. Insurance company lobbyists have persuaded the legislature to pass laws that require all drivers to purchase insurance, but do not regulate the options and costs available. Insurance companies have worked hard and spent fortunes to prevent reform of current laws.

Many people carry full coverage on their cars. This means they are insured for bodily injury and property damage (liability), medical costs, accidents involving uninsured and underinsured motorists, comprehensive and collision for damages to their own car, towing and labor costs. Frequently, people are sold policies which overprotect them and increase their premiums.

One reason to have insurance is to protect your assets. If you are in an accident and sued, insurance coverage protects you from loss of personal property (i.e. car, jewelry, wages, etc.) and real property (i.e. your home). A person should only insure for the amount of his net worth, the value of assets minus liabilities/debts. If your total worth is \$100,000, you only need insure against a loss of \$100,000.

Some agents are willing to sell inflated coverage and over-insure their clients. Larger premiums benefit the insurance companies and the agents who receive commissions. Inflated coverage does nothing for the pur-

W.I.C. PROGRAM CHALLENGED

By K. Chauffe

The supplemental food program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) has been hailed as a success at reducing infant mortality. According to a report in SCIENCE (May 24, 1991, p.1063), the 2.5 billion dollar program may actually be doing more harm than good.

George C. Graham, professor of pediatrics and nutrition at John Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health states that undernutrition plays only a minor role, if any, in premature births in U.S. babies. He contends that low birth weight is caused by behavioral problems associated with drug abuse, smoking and venereal infections. These problems are not addressed by the costly WIC program. Gram also asserts that WIC is contributing to the alarming prevalence of obesity among the poor.

Graham states that claims for the success of the WIC program are not properly substantiated. The last major evaluation of the program was in 1979. He additionally notes that the number of low-birth-weight babies has increased in some areas where WIC participation is high.

Gram concludes that the WIC program is worthless and the money should be spent on prenatal care programs and education.

chaser.

Substantially reducing coverage may not significantly reduce premiums. Insurance companies are in business to make money. Insurance costs are based upon the probability that an individual will be involved in an automobile accident. They use such factors as car type, age, sex, marital status, driving record and residence to determine the premium.

Some states have laws requiring insurance reform. Missouri still lags behind in this important aspect. Until we demand change from our legislators, we will continue to be at the mercy of the insurance companies.

If you have a complaint about an insurance company operating in Missouri, contact the Missouri Division of Insurance, Wainwright Building, 111 N. 7th Street, Room 229, St. Louis, Mo. 63101-2176, or call 340-6830.

BUSCH DENIES PRESENCE OF DIOXIN

By K. Chauffe

At Block Unit 5's may meeting Joe P. Roddy asserted that dioxin contaminates the Manchester-Kingshighway-Cader wedge. Part of the land is owned by Anheuser-Busch. Roddy stated, "I talked with Busch and they said the soil was contaminated with dioxin, but they're cleaning it up."

Dioxin has been considered a highly hazardous material. It was the spraying of dioxin at Times Beach which caused the Federal Government to evacuate and eventually buy the town.

According to Rick Buckley of Fleishman-Hillard, the firm handling Anheuser-Busch's public relations, no dioxin is present on the property. Buckley stated, "The clean up involves the removal of the gasoline storage tanks from the property where the old Phillips 66 station was located. The contamination in the soil is mainly petroleum. There is no dioxin. The project should be completed in about four weeks." Buckley said that he could find no one who remembered speaking to Roddy either at Busch or Fleishman-Hillard.

AUTOMATIC LIGHTING

By K. Becherer

Darkness allows burglars and robbers to work unobserved. You can avoid being victimized by adequately lighting your home, especially your front door. An entryway light makes your home safer and more attractive.

Lights are only good if used. Once, you had to leave the light on all day, if you wanted light when you returned. This was costly and advertised your absence. Modern technology now provides low-cost, easy-to-install automatic lighting.

DUSK-TO-DAWN SENSORS turn lights on at dusk and off at dawn. They self-adjust for the season and are ideal for south-facing, sunny locations.

TIMED SWITCHES can be set to turn on and off at any desired time. Although they must be reset as day length changes, they are ideal for north-facing and shaded areas.

MOTION DETECTORS turn lights on when a warm body moves across the area they survey. They only operate at night and can be adjusted for sensitivity and duration. Motion detectors are ideal for areas that only need be lighted, if an intruder approaches.

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ON OUR OWN

By M. Jefferies

WILL JOE RETURN THE DOUGH? In 1989 our own JOE P. RODDY received the city's largest bonus, \$3,240, for his job performance as clerk of city courts. Recently, almost half of Roddy's Traffic Violation Bureau staff was arrested for stealing \$600-800 a day since 1989. Sounds like Joe's performance did not include watching his employees. Considering the city lost \$300,000, shouldn't Joe return the bonus dough?

BETTER DAILY TAKE. FPSE's own DWAYNE HESTER, manager of the food shop at 4399 Gibson Ave. has closed his store. Hester alleges that some employees were stealing up to \$20.00 a day. When last seen, the employees were heading towards the city courts office to apply for a job in Roddy's Traffic Violation Bureau, where "The hours are shorter, no one watches you and the daily take is better."

LEAP OF FAITH. For the first time a Housing Corp executive director has purchased a house in FPSE. Our own KATE ROTH now resides on Arco Ave. Is this a sign of faith in the FPSE or did she just begin to believe her office propaganda?

ALL BAD THINGS. No longer FPSE's own, TOM GOSHEN has moved from the neighborhood. Over the past few years Goshen's schemes depleted the New Boyle Neighborhood Association's treasury. He was twice nearly removed from the FPSE Housing Corp.'s board of directors for questionable activities. Yes, even all bad things come to an end. (Suzanne, you are forgiven.)

IRONY. Our own anti-crime party, National Night Out, had just ended on Arco Ave., when there was a shooting and robbery on Gibson Ave. Better hope no one holds anti-nuclear war rally on Arco or the entire neighborhood could really be in trouble.

TWO TACOS AND A SERMON TO GO. Despite appearances, the building at 4454 Manchester is not a Taco Bell. It is the newly remodeled New Hope Temple Church. They serve fast religion, not fast food.

LIKE FATHER LIKE SON. FPSE's own JOE P. RODDY is known to take credit for anything not marked with a bronze plaque. Apparently his son, ALDERMAN JOE D. RODDY, is following his father's example. Although not invited to co-host National Night Out by either the National Night Out Committee or Block Units 5 or 6, Alderman Roddy reportedly allowed his name to be listed as co-host on the fliers distributed in FPSE. He really must be a chip off the old crotch.

SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL. Board members of the 17th Ward Franklin D. Roosevelt Democratic Club's just can't keep out of the headlines. In February City Counselor JAMES J. WILSON was reprimanded for using city stationary to request donations for Cor Jesu Academy. In early August, it was revealed that City Registrar PELHAM J. ROBINSON had not paid his property taxes for 3 years. In mid-August the POST-DISPATCH called for JOE P. RODDY's resignation because of his mismanagement of the city courts. And we still have four months to go until 1992.

ALDERMAN RODDY REPORTS

By K. Chaffee

The city has commissioned a study of the area between the Washington University, St. Louis University and Deaconess hospitals. The study will determine the feasibility of creating a "Technopolis", a high-tech center related to the medical industry.

The Food and Drug Administration has expressed some interest in relocating to this area. The FDA is searching for a new or existing building of 50,000 square feet. Half would be used for offices and the remainder for laboratories. The facility would analyze prescription drugs and conduct research on new drugs. Roddy stated that jobs paying up to \$7 00/hr. may be available, if Technopolis is created.

Roddy again stated that he has set aside \$100,000 for improvements along Manchester Ave. He explained that nothing has yet occurred because, "I was dissatisfied with the plans done by the St. Louis Development Corporation (a city agency)." The rejected plans included planting trees between parking areas at the Vandeventer-Chouteau end of Manchester, a park at the intersection of Tower Grove and Manchester and another park on the Kingshighway-Cadet-Manchester wedge. Trees would also be planted along the length of Manchester. Several east-west streets would be closed where they intersect Manchester. Some demolition is reportedly suggested in the plan.

Roddy continued, "I have been trying to get Leon Strauss interested in the project." Leon Strauss was the developer of De Balivier Neighborhood and the Fox Theater. Reportedly, Strauss has shown little interest in the Manchester project.

Roddy announced that he will support the Housing Corp. proposal to close all east-west streets along Newstead Ave. This is in addition to plans already approved to block Arco and Gibson at Manchester. The closings will be for a 6-month trial. (See STREET CLOSINGS page 1)

The alderman expressed support for a plan to make Forest Park a joint city-county venture. He stated, "We need the additional money to improve the park." When pressed for more details, however, Roddy admitted he was "not really well-informed on some aspects of the issue."

PET CORNER ALLIANCE FOR ANIMAL LEGISLATION

By S. Bowie

Missouri ranks third in cruelty to animals and their plight is getting worse. A bill introduced into the legislature last year would have required animal shelters and pounds to surrender all unadopted animals to researchers. The session ended before the bill was voted on, but if passed this session, a quick humane death would no longer be assured for animals brought to the pound.

Alliance for Animal Legislation was established in 1990 to work for laws to protect animals from economic exploitation, neglect and abuse. The Alliance will monitor and lobby for bills about the treatment of animals, provide expert testimony to legislative committees when needed and produce newsletters and bulletins to keep the public informed. Annual dues to join the alliance are \$10.00 and can be sent to Alliance for Animal Legislation in Missouri, P.O. Box 270024, St. Louis, Mo. 63126.

STREETCARS

By Marge Berg

"Where did all the St. Louis Streetcars go?" someone asked me several weeks ago. After a moment I answered, "Down south, along with the bricks from all the houses demolished in the 1970s."

Streetcars were the "mass transit" before that expression was coined. They ran often, never more than ten minutes apart, except after midnight. The Grand Avenue streetcars ran every five minutes. The streetcars were painted a bright yellow and were well-maintained.

My earliest recollection was of a two-man car. The motorman was in front and the conductor was at the rear. You would enter at the rear, pay your fare and exit from the front of the car at the end of your ride. Later, it became a one man operation. Fares were collected by the motorman in the front of the car and riders exited from a side door. Work on streetcars was a good steady job, but for men only.

At least six streetcar lines serviced this neighborhood. The Manchester and Forest Park lines ran east to Down

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movie.**

town and west to Kirkwood, Richmond Heights and Clayton. The Taylor, Kingshighway, Vandeventer and Sarah ran north to south.

During rush hour downtown, if the first streetcar was full and passed by, there was always another car close behind. In the middle of the streets there was a safety zone for passengers, where no automobile was allowed to drive. During the 1930s the fare and a free transfer were about ten cents. Everybody rode the streetcar during the depression.

I remember one particular streetcar ride from my childhood. After church on Sunday my mother packed a picnic

**GET TOUGH ON DRUGS
622-4333**

St. Louis Police admit that the drug and crime problem is too big for them to handle alone. They need our help.

GET TOUGH is a program to assist the police in ridding neighborhoods of drug dealers and houses. If you know of or suspect drug activity on your street, call the NARCOTICS HOTLINE at 622-4333. Your call will not be traced. No one will know who you are. No one will come to your door. No one will ask your name. You can give what information you have to them in complete security.

Don't complain about crime, unless you are willing to fight it. Our neighborhood will never be safe unless we work with the police.

SENIOR SOCIAL EXPANDS

By R. Sandall

Gibson Heights Presbyterian Church (1075 S. Taylor) has expanded its Senior Social to twice a month. The highly successful program provides a Saturday afternoon of entertainment to any FPSE senior, regardless of religious affiliation, each second and last Saturday. Included are a meal, movie and sing-along. Reservations are not required, but the church requests that those planning to attend call 531-0640 and leave a message on the answering machine. Senior Social is part of the church's outreach program.

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basket. We boarded a streetcar and rode to the end of the line. Then boarded the Creve Coeur Lake open-air streetcar for the ride into the amusement park. This streetcar had long wooden seats the width of the car. Each seat could hold 8 to 10 people. The car was open on both ends of the seats for boarding. There was no top deck, as one sees in movies, but it did go "Clang, clang, clang", like the trolley in the movie "MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS".

Another streetcar I remember was a trolley. It had a short run from the old County Hospital in Clayton, down Wydown to Skinker and across Skinker to Delmar. There it reversed and ran back. It looked like the Tooterville Trolley from the comics and ran every twenty minutes. I rode this streetcar whenever I babysat for a young couple, when I was in high school.

The last streetcar line in St. Louis was the Olive. It was replaced about 20 years ago. My husband, daughter and I took our grandchildren for one last nostalgic ride just before it stopped running. Other cities have kept at least one streetcar line operating and have turned them into tourist attractions. Unfortunately, St. Louis only has the trolley in the movies.

SPAGHETTI DINNER

By R. Sandall

On Saturday October 19, 1991, Gibson Heights Presbyterian Church (1075 S. Taylor) will sponsor its second annual Fall Spaghetti Dinner from 4:30 to 7:30 PM. Adult tickets are \$4.00 in advance and \$4.50 at the door. Children under 12 are \$2.00. In addition to spaghetti, there will be salad, bread, refreshments and desert. The dinner will be served in Fellowship Hall. Use the Arco Ave. entrance.

THE GARDEN APOTHECARY THYME FOR BETTER TIMES

By A. Powell

Thyme (Thymus vulgaris) is a common spice in kitchens, but it has a rich history in apothecaries extending back centuries. Thymol is the active ingredient in thyme. It is an antiseptic, expectorant and antitussive (relieves coughing).

According to Dr. John Farnsworth (READER'S DIGEST 1986), spraying tea made from thyme leaves into your throat maximizes its expectorant effects. To use it as an antiseptic, make a paste from mashed leaves and apply to inflamed areas and sores.

Thyme is a perennial herb. It requires fairly dry alkaline soil and is susceptible to fungus in moist conditions. Thyme grows to 15 inches high and best in full sun. It can be started from seeds or propagated by division.

DID YOU KNOW?

The highest point in FPSE is at the pedestrian walkway across Highway 40. The elevation here is 510 feet above sea level. In contrast, the lowest point in the neighborhood is near the intersection of Chouteau and Vandeventer, only 475 feet above sea level.

If all of the polar ice would melt, the rise in sea level would make FPSE a seaside resort, located on an arm of the Gulf of Mexico. Waves would be gently lapping along Sarah Ave.

EDITORIAL: SHOULD JOE P. RODDY RESIGN OR BE FIRED?

On August 8, police arrested eight employees of the Traffic Violation Bureau. It is alleged that over the last few years they stole \$300,000 in traffic fine payments. Joe P. Roddy, Clerk of City Courts, administers the Bureau.

After the arrests, several aldermen, the POST-DISPATCH, and Watch At City Hall, a citizens group, called for Roddy's resignation or dismissal. Roddy says he will not resign; Mayor Schoemehl gave Roddy a vote of confidence.

Before deciding if Roddy should be held responsible for the theft in his department, we need to know something about his history and his record as an administrator.

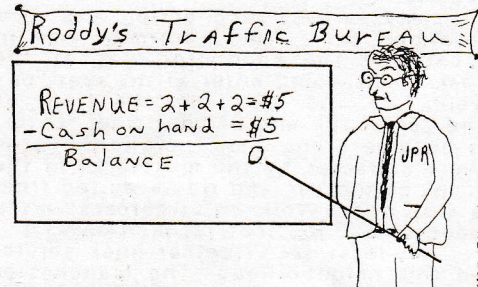
Roddy lost his re-election as Circuit Clerk to Freeman Bosley in 1982. Schoemehl then appointed him the Administrator-Clerk of City Courts. Roddy was one of the first ward bosses to endorse Schoemehl for mayor. Since then, Roddy has championed Schoemehl's causes. Many people state that Roddy's appointment to the Clerk's office was a political payback for past and future support. Roddy's salary is about \$50,000.

Clerk of City Courts is a patronage position appointed by the mayor. Historically, it was awarded more for political support, than competency of the appointee. Roddy did not have to compete with other candidates or demonstrate that he was the most qualified person for the job.

On paper, Roddy's qualifications are impressive. He reportedly served 15 years as alderman and 14 years as Circuit Clerk. He was Democratic committeeman for the 17th Ward and Democratic City Central Committee chairman.

According to POST-DISPATCH stories from 1983, Roddy was a poor office manager. His main concern, as Circuit Clerk, seems to have been the 200 patronage positions he controlled, not the accounting or running of his office. Barbara Hill, a Roddy employee at the Circuit Clerk's office, stated that Roddy required everyone who worked for him to belong and participate in the 17th Ward FDR Club.

When Bosley took office, he requested a complete departmental audit. It revealed serious defects in the "horse and buggy" accounting system used by Roddy. Among the problems were \$83,500 that could not be assigned to the proper files because of flawed records and \$97,300 that had not been refunded. A similar problem had arisen in 1981 when \$107,000 could not be assigned to the correct accounts. Roddy did nothing about it.



What theft? We took in five dollars; we got five dollars. It balances to me.

Auditors pointed to administrative problems identical to those found in Roddy's City Court office. They noted that the accounting system could not detect fraud or petty theft because of lax internal controls. Bosley updated the accounting system and reportedly saved the city \$500,000 the first year.

Audits of Roddy's City Courts office indicate that poor management practices characterizes his administration. Roddy's department was alleged to have been in chaos earlier this year. In response, he hired past Neighborhood Liaison Officer Patricia Griffin McHugh. She organize Roddy's department and alerted Roddy to the suspicious activities of Bureau employees. Roddy apparently was aware of nothing before her reports.

Since the thefts were uncovered, Roddy has instituted several changes in the Bureau to prevent additional theft. It is unknown if all potential problems have been addressed.

Neither state nor internal audits discovered the thefts. This is not surprising. An audit is only as good as the records audited. Bureau employees allegedly altered the records to hide the thefts.

Auditors had criticized Roddy's management long before the thefts were discovered. They warned him that the Bureau did not reconcile fine payments with total tickets processed. Had this recommendation been implemented, the theft might have been detected sooner. It was not and the theft continued.

Auditors criticized the Bureau's faulty record keeping and specifically warned that theft could occur because some employees had too much control of cash. Roddy claims to have made changes, but they were ineffective. The theft continued unabated.

There have been accusations that Roddy does not spend enough time at his office. One employee explained, "Mr. Roddy is an old man (72) and not in good health. You can't expect him to work all day." Neighbors on Gibson Ave. and other FPSE residents have commented on how frequently Roddy is seen in the neighborhood during the day.

Mayor Schoemehl and Circuit Attorney Peach do not blame Roddy for the thefts, nor does Roddy blame himself. In contrast, Virvus Jones, the POST-DISPATCH, several aldermen and Watch at City Hall do hold Roddy responsible for what happened in his department.

Schoemehl cannot fire Roddy without bringing criticism on himself. Roddy is a Schoemehl appointee. To blame Roddy would imply that the mayor erred in selecting him. Schoemehl also needs Roddy's support in the upcoming election.

Did Roddy mismanage his office and should he resign or be fired? These are questions we must each answer for ourselves. We have a right to answer them because the money stolen was ours.

LETTERS TO FPSE

RODDY MUST GO

Members of Watch at City Hall were stunned by Mayor Schoemehl's vote of confidence in Joe P. Roddy, head of the Traffic Violation Bureau. Schoemehl's support of Roddy is another betrayal of the trust of the people of St. Louis. It makes a mockery of the police force and tarnishes the reputation of everyone in city Government.

We agree with Schoemehl's claim that Roddy had nothing to do with the theft, but that is the problem. If Roddy was competent in his job, he should have been aware that \$600-800 a day were being stolen. A decrease in fines should have aroused his suspicion, if he was attentive to his job. Roddy has only 18 employees in the Bureau to supervise; so, what was he doing? Because of Roddy's incompetency, valuable police time was wasted writing violations that did not generate desperately needed revenue for the city.

Roddy has helped keep St. Louis under the thumb of political manipulators for years. He is of the same ilk as Boss Tweed of Tammany Hall and Mayor Daley of Chicago. Roddy's appointment as head of the Bureau was a

payoff for past and future support of Schoemehl. If Roddy has any dignity or concern for Schoemehl's credibility, he would resign and allow a new appointee to restore confidence in the office.

Thomas Boulch, Chairman
WATCH at City Hall
5902 Morganford

LOSS OF CONTROL

Plans to allow Family Care Center of Carondelet take over the Ranken Health Clinic will remove control of the clinic from our neighborhood. Ranken Health Committee will have only four people on a fifteen member board. We will have no control in the new clinic or what happens in our neighborhood.

The Carondelet group will own the building the new clinic is in. They will establish policies and programs. If a disagreement arises between the Carondelet group and the Health Committee or the neighborhood, we will not have the final say on what happens. Once the Carondelet group is in, they will call the shots.

The Carondelet group gets money from the Feds. If the government requires that federally funded health groups must establish out-patient drug

clinics, where do you think the Carondelet group would locate the clinic: in Carondelet or FPSE?

Members of the Health Committee's Board of Directors say we must merge with Carondelet or face bankruptcy. But what has our Board done to raise money? If Carondelet gets grants from the Federal Government, why can't we?

Having the Carondelet group take over Ranken Health is an easy way to get a building and expanded services. It may be what the Director wants, what SLU's nursing school wants and what Carondelet wants. But the key phrase is "take over." From the moment that the Carondelet group moves in, the Health Committee and the neighborhood will have lost control.

Name withheld by request

Name, address and phone number must accompany all letters. Some editing for length and clarity may be required. Send to: FPSE NEWS & VIEWS, 4420 Arco Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63110.

N&V gaurentees space for a reply to the subjects of all editorials.