



The Soulard Renaissance

"The Neighborhood Magazine of Historic Soulard"

Volume XV Issue I

Soulard Mardi Gras 1990

Let The Good Times Roll!



It's that time of year again . . . when winter is losing its bite (we hope), and the people of St. Louis start thinking about the *Soulard Mardi Gras*, now also being called the *St. Louis Mardi Gras*. The theme for this year is "**A Masque A Secret Wish.**"

The celebrations are scheduled to kick off at the *Adam's Mark Hotel* on **Friday Night, February 23**, with the annual **Masquerade Ball 1990**. Festivities begin at 8:00 p.m. with a *Cajun/Creole Buffet* for party goers. The *Ralph Butler Band* will begin performing at 9:00 p.m. and play until 1:00 a.m. The best costumed couple will be awarded the honor of being **REX** and **COMOS** for the 1990 celebrations.

Tickets for the ball are \$25.00 per person, and dress is costumed or semi-formal. For tickets and more information on the ball, please call Larry Bradley at **314-771-5068**.

On **Saturday, February 24 at 12:30 p.m.**, the annual **Mardi Gras Parade** will take place. This year the parade route has been modified to include downtown in the event. It will begin near the *Adam's Mark Hotel* and proceed south on Broadway to Lafayette. It will then turn right and continue west on Lafayette to 9th Street. The parade then proceeds south on 9th until it reaches Russell, making a right, and continuing west on Russell to 12th Street. The parade will finish up the last leg of its route by traveling south on 12th St. until it reaches the *Anheuser-Busch Brewery* at about 2:00 p.m.

Soulard is becoming more popular to those who enjoy French cuisine during the **Mardi Gras**, and this year is no exception. Participating establishments want to offer you a "**Taste of Soulard**" from **11a.m. until 5 p.m.**, on Saturday. Tickets for "Taste of Soulard" are \$10.00 each, and a ticket entitles you to 5 "tastes" either at one place or five different places. All the neighborhood establishments will be open on Saturday until 1:30 a.m. for all you **Mardi Gras** revelers. Festivities run through **Tuesday, February 27**.

So come on down to this place many of us call home. We are sure you will enjoy your visit. Please watch your step and drive carefully through the neighborhood. Please put your refuse in the recently installed trash containers. **Thanks!**

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Notes From The Brick House

by Doug Everley, President SRG

The word is out. The residents of Souland want a new historic code. That was the statement most often made at a hearing February 14, and a door-to-door canvas several weeks earlier. The time is now to define what our historic district is, and how it will grow and prosper for generations to come.

We have all endured the whims of "City Hall" in its interpretation of the present code. A code that defines more specifically what is permitted and what is not, what requires a permit and what does not, is badly needed.

Although a few would like to do away with the existing code and replace it with nothing, this would in effect do away with our historical district entirely. Too many people in the past have worked long and hard to save Souland through its designation as an historic district. We cannot afford to leave the future of our area to a local government that has shown over the years its arbitrary attitude toward the preservation or demolition of the neighborhood.

The Proposed Code that was distributed recently was well received. Many hours have gone into its preparation. While I have heard an occasional criticism of one particular section or another, taken as a whole, our neighbors believe that it will remedy many of the problems which we now face under the present legislation.

However, everyone should realize that it will not resolve every problem for everybody. In fact, there will probably be one section or another that will annoy someone. This is not a reason to throw it aside and say that it is bad. Within the same document, there are probably sections that everyone will agree is good.

What we all must do is look at the Proposed Code in its overall objective. Its purpose is not to force a neighbor to undertake major work to the satisfaction of another. The Proposed Code requires no one to make any changes to their residence. Its purpose is not to make people purchase the most expensive materials when working on their house, for the Proposed Code permits modern and less expensive materials.

The purpose of the Proposed Code is to maintain Souland as a vibrant and liveable area. By doing so, others will be encouraged to experience the city living we have found to be so desirable. Look around...Souland is not finished. Many buildings remain vacant and boarded up. Not only are these eyesores, but they are unsafe for our children and offer sanctuary to vermin.

By letting others know that we are proud of our neighborhood, others will follow our example and select Souland as a place to live and work. Thereby, our neighborhood will one day be complete.

Back to the Drawing Board

To you astute observers who THOUGHT you saw the new SRG neighborhood pole signs hanging from light fixtures several weeks ago: You did! If only for a brief moment (some of the signs stayed up for two days), we have partial neighborhood identification... and it was impressive! However...

Mother Nature sent us a brisk 40MPH wind the first day. It was quickly evident that the signs had some major faults. That is, they either twisted around the bracket...broke off at the clamp... or tore loose completely. Four of the signs have now been lost to souvenir hunters.

The sign company is attempting to rectify the problem by embossing ribs along the edges and using better mounting hardware. As this article goes to print, I have been promised new signs for wind tunnel testing soon.

HOPEFULLY, all signs will be in place for Mardi Gras week-end.

Finally, the SRG is very grateful to Southwestern Bell for the volunteer time and effort provided to install these signs. Jim Mease at Southwestern Bell has coordinated this project and will help us see it through.

Paul Kjolrie of the SRG has agreed to coordinate the site installation with Southwestern Bell, and did so for the initial program. Many thanks to Paul and the Southwestern Bell driver/installer, Ron.

by Pete Grace

Letter to the Editor

Dear Mr. Lester,

I am flattered that someone wants to know what I think should and shouldn't be tolerated in Souland. In fact, I have a couple of thoughts on that subject, and will briefly describe them below, since I can't seem to make it to the neighborhood meetings or other wise get involved with neighborhood organizations.

No, I don't think Souland residents, or anyone else in the greater metro area, should have to tolerate that obnoxious burning smell that comes from the east. I'm convinced that it's illegal, since it seems to occur sporadically, and always late at night. Here's the number for the office of Air Pollution Control at City Hall — 622-3334. Call that office when you smell that stuff, and get them to call you back and report on what they've found and what they're going to do about it. Dial 1-800-223-0425.

I also think that if the city or the neighborhood put special bins for aluminium cans in the alleys, next to the dumpsters, then the people that collect and recycle aluminum wouldn't have to dig through everybody's garbage. Garbage that was bagged should stay that way, rather than blowing all over the neighborhood after the trucks come to empty the big containers.

Although I think Souland is unique neighborhood and a beautiful place to live, I also think she needs lots more trees and green spaces. Trees should be planted all the way around Pontiac Park. Some of the empty lots should be turned into parks and landscaped with trees and benches, and everyone should plant as many trees as their patio and yards will allow. Don't forget to water them!

Gosh, it's been great getting all that off my shoulders.

Thank you for all of your contributions to the neighborhood.

Sincerely,
Kate Berger

The Souland Renaissance

"The Neighborhood Magazine of Historic Souland"

The Souland Renaissance has a circulation of 6,000 and is published every two months by the Souland Restoration Group. It is distributed in Souland and St. Louis area businesses and our advertisers.

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The Souland Renaissance
P.O. Box 13312
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Editor: Dave Lester, Jr.

Copy Editor: Dave Lester, SRG Board

Ad Manager: Jan Van Fleet

Business Manager: Thelma Hemmen

Contributing Writers:

Jay Gibbs, Doug Everley,
Jeanne Weber, Rod Wright,
Tom Cochran, Dave Lester and
Pete Grace

Contributing Photographers:

Jay Gibbs, Dave Lester and
Jeanne Weber

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7th & 9th Ward Aldermen Hold Hearing on Proposed Historic Code

by Jay Gibbs

On February 14, a Soulard neighborhood public meeting was held at the South Broadway Athletic Club, hosted by 7th Ward Alderman Phyllis Young and 9th Ward Alderman Martie Aboussie. The meeting was called in order to hear commentary from residents regarding the building permit process and especially the role of the *Heritage and Urban Design Commission*.

Generally the common chord of the complaints was the inconsistent and overzealous enforcement of the historic ordinance.

The concerns came from a wide variety of perspectives. A developer decried the lack of coordination in City Hall, describing different departments with different agendas, directly conflicting advice from various divisions, and having had 32 face-to-face meetings and over 200 phone conversations with City Hall officials regarding just one project.

A contractor complained bitterly that after he was six weeks into a tuckpointing project, the City suddenly stopped his job and required permits. A rehabber told of having to endure the Heritage Commission's last-minute redesign of the windows on the rear wall of his home, and several residents compared the City's kid-gloved treatment of derelict, vacant buildings owned by developers and by the brewery, to the frequent attention to the code violations of their own houses and apartments.

Kate Shea of the *Heritage and Urban Design Commission* received the strongest criticism, centered around the perception that HUDC requires more stringent historic standards than Soulard's rather vague code law actually states.

The codes themselves were hardly ignored. One elderly resident called the existing historic code "dictatorship," another called it "unfair to poor people on fixed incomes." However, most of the speakers acknowledged the value of historic standards in Soulard and the need for a more specific code. The debate then centered on how restrictive any new code should be.

The *Soulard Restoration Group* (SRG) recently proposed a new, more specific historic code, referred to as the "skeletal document" at the meeting.

Alderman Young again stressed that the proposed code was indeed a framework for solving the current code discrepancies that are causing the confusion.

Aldermen Young and Aboussie have appointed a neighborhood-wide committee of ten to oversee and direct any code changes.

At the end of the 2-1/2 hour meeting the Aldermen invited further comments regarding the issues raised therein. You can phone either of them at 622-3287 or write to:

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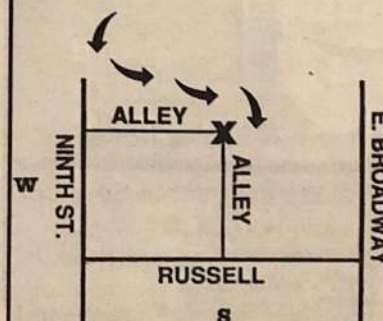
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Soulard Artist Ready for Mardi Gras



Resident Artist, David Classe, hasn't been wasting his spare time as of late. Besides his painting and sculpting and rehabbing, David has been busy creating one-of-kind Mardi Gras Masks using materials he has recycled from the neighborhood. Judging from the other works David has done, these masks may be worth quite a bit one day.

You can contact Mr. Classe at 621-8442. He will be on the streets selling masks and painting faces on Saturday, during the parade.

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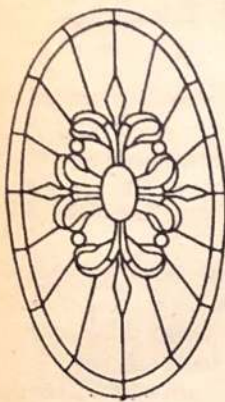
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All parading Mardi Gras clubs are chartered as non-profit entities. They are financed by dues, by the sale of krewe merchandise to members, and by fundraising projects. Over half of the krewes are involved in charitable work.

Each float in the Mardi Gras parade reflects the krewe's theme for that particular year. Maskers are then costumed in a manner that illustrates the overall parade theme and the individual float title.

Gold, Purple and Green, the colors of Carnival were introduced by the Rex organization in 1872. The colors were assigned their meaning in 1892, gold (power), purple (justice), green (faith).

The earliest known Mardi Gras in America can be traced to March 3, 1699. French exporer, Iberville, and his men set up camp in a spot south of New Orleans. Aware of the celebration back home, the men celebrated also and named their camp "Pointe du Mardi Gras", and an adjacent waterway "Bayou Mardi Gras".

There is no official Mardi Gras poster or souvenirs, because there is no licensing agent to proclaim such. Just like Christmas or Halloween, Mardi Gras belongs to everyone!

The 1989 Carnival season pumped more than 300 million dollars into the Greater New Orleans Metropolitan area. Over 40,000 area residents belong to some type of Mardi Gras organization.

A major element that distinguishes The New Orleans parades from other places is that of "throws," which turn the parade into a spectator event. Popular "throws" include necklaces, doubloons and cups. Throwing from the floats is prohibited in the Souldard Mardi Gras parade, so "throws" must be "handed".

Carnival, loosely translated, means "farewell to flesh". It is the season from the "Twelfth Night" or feast of the Epiphany (January 6), until the day before Ash Wednesday. "Mardi Gras" is French for Fat Tuesday, and is the single feasting day before the Lenten fast begins.

The term "krewe" has become the generic term for Mardi Gras organizations. The Mistick Krewe of Comus first coined the word in 1857. Comus was the first to form a secret society, the first to choose a mythological namesake, the first to present a themed parade with maskers and floats, and the first to follow a street parade with a ball.

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... Did you know?

Only a handful of krewes actually build their own floats each year. Most krewes select from a pool of rental floats, and the themes tend to be more general. A city ordinance in New Orleans prohibits floaters from using the same float more than twice a season in the Central Business District.

The backbone of every Mardi Gras krewe is the captain, and he/she is totally responsible for the krewes operation. The King and Queen rule over the parade and ball, but the krewe captain is in charge.

Mardi Gras themes depicted in nearly 2000 parades since 1857 have included mythology, history, legends, entertainment, childrens stories, literature and famous people, to name some.

Baubles have been tossed off floats since at least 1871 when a masker dressed as Santa in the Twelfth Night Revelers parade handed out gifts to the crowd.

Many of the krewe names come from their neighborhood in which their parade is held. Others are named after historical figures or places. The most popular themes though, are Greek, Roman and Egyptian mythology

There is no municipal funding or corporate sponsorship of Carnival in Orleans Parish. By tradition and law, parades are not subsidized. No tickets are sold, advertising is not permitted and political solicitation is also forbidden.



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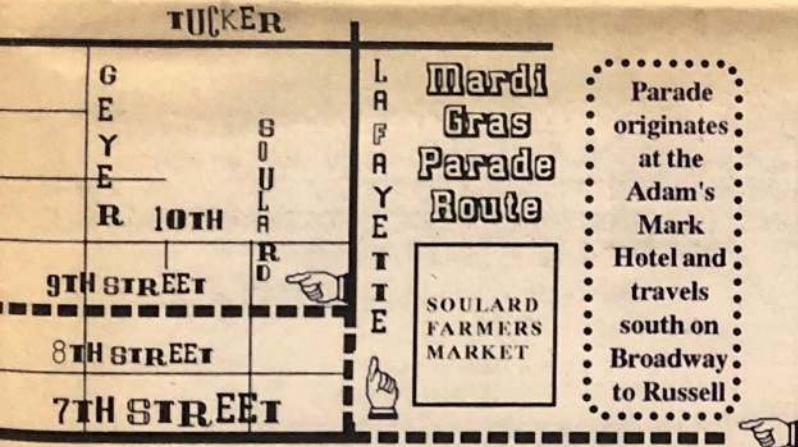
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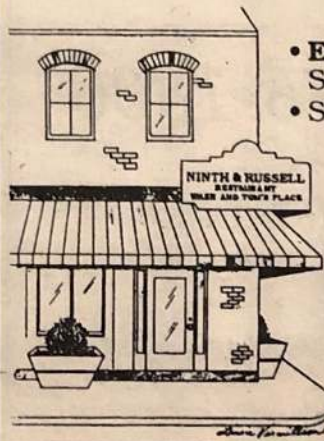
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Ragtime to Rock 'n Roll:

**St. Louis African American Music Exhibition
Opens at The History Museum in Forest Park**

From the turn of the century to the present, St. Louis has been the cradle of African American music, giving the city a well-deserved reputation for producing Ragtime, Jazz, Blues, Gospel and Rock 'n Roll musicians. Opportunities to perform regularly in the river city have never equalled the number of talented artists with roots in St. Louis, and many left to achieve national and international fame.

"Ragtime to Rock 'n Roll: St. Louis African American Music" opened at the History Museum in the Jefferson Memorial Building in Forest Park on Sunday, February 4 with an exhibition and programs that will continue throughout 1990. Honoring St. Louis black history, the exhibition focuses on individuals and music that brought recognition to their hometown.

Musical instruments, posters, photographs, record albums, sheet music, performance clothing and awards will be on exhibit, and music recorded by St. Louis artists will play in the gallery.

Musicians represented will include Scott Joplin, who lived and worked in St. Louis at the turn of the century. Because ragtime was made popular through piano rolls, the exhibition will feature a player piano from the period with ragtime piano rolls.

As St. Louis' black population increased with migration from rural Missouri and the South, the city became a home for the blues. Largely a musical genre created by and for African Americans, the blues expressed the joy and pain of daily life and traced its origins to the South. Blues singers who played piano and guitar found a ready audience in saloons and on the streets, though St. Louis' most talented bluesmen, such as Henry Townsend, did not receive recognition until the 1960's.

In the years prior to World War II, black musicians played on the steamboats that each summer took excursion trips on the Mississippi. When not "playing the boats," they entertained segregated audiences in clubs on both sides of the Mississippi, and St. Louisans became accustomed to high quality jazz. Of these the exhibition will feature Dewey Jackson, Singleton Palmer and even Louis Armstrong. The St. Louis area produced jazz musicians such as Clark Terry, Miles Davis and vocalist Fontella Bass, who achieved international fame.

A new kind of sacred music — Gospel — also made its way to St. Louis. Though some of the founders of the Gospel movement came from a blues tradition, their mission was evangel-

ism, not entertainment. St. Louis' most influential Gospel musicians achieved national recognition before Gospel moved into mainline black churches and commercial concert halls. Considered one of the pioneers of Gospel music, Willie May Ford Smith was a major influence on artists during the 1950's. The exhibit will include her performance robe and other memorabilia.

The music instruction offered by teachers in Sumner and Vashon High Schools, such as Kenneth Billups, produced outstanding classical artists. Grace Bumbry and Robert McFerrin, featured in the exhibition, received their early training in St. Louis.

St. Louisans created some of the earliest and most innovative rock 'n roll music. Rooted in the cultures of working class Americans, rock 'n roll transformed blues and southern "hillbilly" into a new kind of music. With its expression of rebellion against the establishment, rock 'n roll appealed to young people looking for a distinct voice. Working in St. Louis in the 1950's were Ike and Tina Turner and Chuck Berry, who will be represented in the exhibit.

*For Information Call,
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*A series of free programs featuring African American musicians
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Soulard Businesswoman, Peggy Tinsley, Passes Away



Well-known Soulard businesswoman Peggy Tinsley passed away on January 2, after a two-year struggle with cancer. Peggy Tinsley was the owner and founder of Tinsley's 20/20 "Perfect Vision in Hair-styling" which is located at 2020 South 12th.

Peggy was a former employee of Famous-Barr and worked there for several years, but it was her dream to open her own business and she decided on Soulard as a good place to give it a try. In June of 1985, Tinsley's 20/20 became a reality.

Most are familiar with the festive purple awning that adorns the front of the salon, and just about everyone I know in Soulard gets their hair cut by one of the fine stylists at Tinsley's.

All the folks at Tinsley's would like you to know that they are still here, offering the quality services that Peggy Tinsley brought into our neighborhood five years ago.

Even though you'll be missed by us, Peggy, we are glad that you achieved your dream here in Soulard.



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Neighborhood Fabric

by Jay Gibbs

Usually this space showcases the facades of old structures, before and after renovation. But this issue's piece of Neighborhood Fabric is an historically-sensitive example of new construction in Soulard.

Richard Marion, owner of 1860's **Saloon** at 9th and Geyer, is currently building a restaurant adjacent to his existing establishment. The new building resembles a historic storefront in scale and material, and although only a one story structure, its height gives it a significant vertical face on sloping Geyer Avenue. The red brick facades, large storefront-style windows, arched "gangway" entry, and dentilled brick cornice help the future restaurant to settle comfortably in the streetscape. This edifice should serve as a fine model example of historically accurate commercial "infill" new construction.

For information about the forthcoming restaurant itself, watch for the next issue. *The Soulard Renaissance* offers kudos to Mr. Marion for his quality design and construction, and wishes him well in this new venture.



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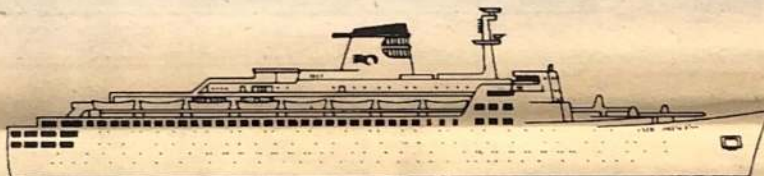
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