

The Soulard Restorationist

VOLUME VI ISSUE XII

DECEMBER 1981

SOULARD CHRISTMAS PARLOR TOUR

Christmas in the Victorian style arrives in historic Soulard Sunday, December 13 as the Soulard Restoration Group holds its Sixth Annual Christmas Parlor Tour.

The tour, open to the public between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., features guided tours of five turn of the century homes decorated for the holidays. Victorian ornaments, decorations, music, flickering candles, gas lights and freshly baked cookies set the scene.

A highlight will be the old fashioned parlor of one homeowner who uses gas lights and an antique goose feather Christmas tree to create a truly Victorian Christmas atmosphere.

Roving carolers and a rolling hot chestnut wagon will add to the holiday festivities. Cookies and refreshments will be served in one of the homes, and a neighborhood church will provide Christmas music.

Guided tours originate at the Jesus Church, United Church of Christ, S. 12th and Victor STS. Tickets are \$2.00 in advance and \$2.50 tour day. Children under 12 are admitted free when accompanied by an adult. Advance tickets may be obtained by writing the Soulard Restoration Group, 1216 Russell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63104.

For more information call the Soulard Restoration Group Housing Office at 771-5563 or Amy Dawson (241-6704) or Kathy Dabrowski-Poe (771-1566).

The Soulard Restoration Group Inc. is a not-for-profit neighborhood organization dedicated to the restoration and renovation of buildings located within the Soulard Historic District bounded by Interstate 55, Lafayette Avenue, S. Seventh Street and Utah Street. Soulard is the oldest surviving residential neighborhood in the city of St. Louis.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

SRG held its annual election of officers at the November general membership meeting. Elected to the office of President was Debra Manning. Vice President is Terry Berger. Handling the finances for the coming year will be, Treasurer, Alice Jennings, Sherry Compton will serve as SRG's new Secretary. Elected to the Board of Directors for two year terms were Peter Sortino, Amy Dawson and Vicki Renisch. Congratulations to all the winners and a big thank you to all of those who ran for offices.

* * *

NHS ORIENTATION MEETING TO BE HELD.

On the evening of December 3 NHS will hold an orientation which is required for membership. Any area resident who has attended at least three committee meetings or who is about to attend a third meeting is eligible to attend. The next orientation will not be held until spring, so the December meeting is a must for those who wish to be members this winter. For more information regarding the orientation call NHS at 865-3050

* * *

REFLECTION

by Jim Mazdra

I don't often indulge in reverie (it reminds me of my past), but I have been sitting here thinking about what Soulard was like when my wife and I first bought our shell four years ago. It was late August, it was hot, and everyone thought we were fools for buying a completely gutted shell for \$2,000 (How is that for ancient history?).

The baseball Cardinals were doing so-so, the football Cardinals were revving up for another great season and Soulard had more

derelict bars, shootings, and thieves than the Black Hole of Calcutta. LRA was holding onto whatever the Safety Commission wasn't tearing down. No one had a finished house.

Certain people come to mind from those days: the Rowleys, Johnsons, Gatermans, Phelps, Kelleys, Wozniaks, Capiello, Sudholt, Day and Hollenberg. I am sure I have forgotten some people and for that I apologize. Even if I have missed you, you are included in my thoughts. The reason

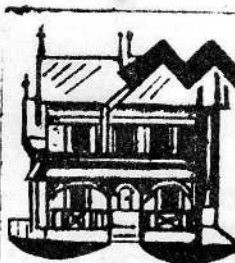
I remember all these people is that they cared. They cared about Soulard. That is not to say that they always got along but they did care about the neighborhood and were the true urban pioneers. Without them and others I have either forgotten to mention or never know, this neighborhood would be nothing but block upon block of weeds.

It is one thing to build something using all the various forms of Uncle Sam's give-aways. It is another to put your savings, your sweat, your heart into something that may never materialize.

Soulard was in a sense a small town and I for one hope it will always be so. Everyone knows everyone and everyone cared about this neighborhood with every ounce of caring that they had. Some of these people moved on, such is life, but those that remain still care just as they did four and five years before we came to this haven from suburban plastic.

I remember going to the bank, looking, almost begging for a loan and hearing a loan officer say, "That neighborhood is starting to grow again." I felt proud even though I was nothing but a novice. That feeling of pride is something we need to continue, indeed reinforce. This neighborhood needs those who come behind us just as much as we needed those who came before. So to those of you I have mentioned and those of you I haven't, I say, thank you, thank you with all of my heart.

* * *



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THE HOUSE WITH NOBODY IN IT

Probably very few people remember the works of Joyce Kilmer, and if they do it is usually his poem about a tree. He also wrote a poem about a house that actually existed in Suffern, N.Y. that expressed his sensitivity to the physical deterioration of a house that was once a home. His thoughts are in accord with every restorationist who perceives his house as more than brick and mortar.

The following poem is from, From Joyce Kilmer, Poems, Essays and Letters.

THE HOUSE WITH NOBODY IN IT

Whenever I walk to Suffern along the Erie track,
I go by a poor old farmhouse with its shingles broken and black.
I suppose I've passed it a hundred times,
but I always stop for a minute,
And look at the house, the tragic house,
the house with nobody in it.

I never have seen a haunted house, but I hear there are such things;
That they hold the talk of spirits, their mirth and sorrowings.
I know this house isn't haunted, and I wish it were, I do;
For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or two.

This house on the road to Suffern needs a dozen panes of glass,
And somebody ought to weed the walk and take a scythe to the grass.
It needs new paint and shingles, and the vines should be trimmed and tied;
But what it needs the most of all is some people living inside.

If I had a lot of money and all my debts were paid,
I'd put a gang of men to work with brush and saw and spade.
I'd buy that place and fix it up the way it used to be,
And I'd find some people who wanted a home and give it to them free.

Now, a new house standing empty, with staring window and door,
Looks idle, perhaps, and foolish, like a hat on its block in the store.
But there's nothing mournful about it; it cannot be sad and lone
For the lack of something within it that it has never known.

But a house that has done what a house should
do, a house that has sheltered life,
That has put its loving wooden arms around
a man and his wife,
A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and
held up his stumbling feet,
Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone,
that ever your eyes could meet.

So whenever I go to Suffern along the Erie
track

I never go by the empty house without
stopping and looking back,
Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling
roof and the shutters fallen apart,
For I can't help thinking the poor old
house is a house with a broken heart.

HOW TO.....

This is the first of a series of "How
To" articles which will be condensed from
a variety of brochures published by the
National Retail Hardware Association.
NRHA has given permission for the articles
to be reprinted in The Restorationist and
other reprinting must have written permis-
sion of NRHA.

HOW TO REPLACE A BROKEN WINDOW GLASS

1. If possible, remove window and place on
flat surface.
2. Using heavy gloves, carefully remove
shattered glass. If glass is only cracked,
the putty may need to be removed first.
3. Remove all putty using putty knife or
chisel. Work slowly and avoid splitting
frame.
4. Remove all glaziers points. (Metal
triangles which hold glass in place.)
5. If putty is extremely hard it can be
softened for easy removal by slowly
running a heated soldering iron ahead
of the chisel.

6. After all glass and points are removed,
use a chisel or knife to smooth any
rough spots on the frame.
7. Old window frames should be treated with
a heavy coat of linseed oil before apply-
ing new putty.
8. By soaking the frame with linseed oil you
will prevent the new putty from drying
out too quickly.
9. Apply a thin layer (1/16 inch) of putty
completely around the frame. By setting
the glass in this bed of putty you will
prevent air leaks. The layer of putty
also provides a shock cushion for the
glass.
10. New glass should be slightly smaller
than the area it is to fill.
11. Insert the glass into the frame with a
slight pressure to seat it into the
cushion of putty.
12. Glaziers points should be inserted snugly
against the glass every four inches. A
chisel is the best tool for inserting
the points. Slide the point along the
glass and use a light blow to insert
the point into the frame.
13. Putty should be kneaded into the consis-
tency of rather dry dough. If it is
too stiff, linseed oil can be used as a
thinner.

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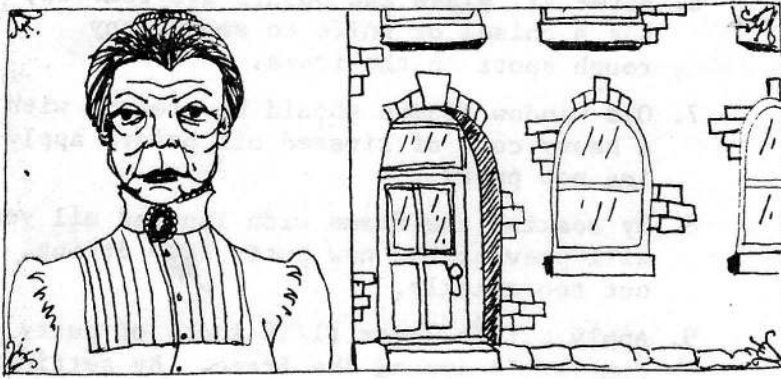


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GREAT GRANDMOTHER'S REVENGE
by Ann Sidney Brickstreet

Synopsis: Davia's parents have arrived, very upset about her spending the night in her city house. Just as they were beginning to relax, gunshots were heard outside.

Chapter Nine --

Mrs. Dubravka froze and put her hands over her face; her husband simply stared in confusion. But, as in western movies, Davia rushed to the front room, flattened herself against the wall and lifted the curtain to peer out the window. All was quiet. Just as a small child came running out of the house across the street, two police cars skidded to the curb. A paddy wagon followed and four officers instantly scattered behind the other parked cars (her van included) with rifles ready. Davia was fascinated. In less than two minutes a pale, stumbling, shirtless man was led from the house and shoved into the paddy wagon. As the officers talked to other members of the household, the street filled with other neighbors - waiting for the victim to come out on a stretcher, she thought. Davia had almost forgotten her parents who now came storming into the parlor.

"I think it's okay," she said, "He must have missed."

Wishing she knew some neighbors and could go out to hear the story, Davia continued to watch the street. She realized that Ethelde would be along soon and smiled when the prim little figure trotted around the corner.

"Standing by a window during a gunfight!" exclaimed Mrs. Dubravka, "You're crazier than I thought! What were you thinking of?"

"Guess I wasn't thinking, Mother, I'm sorry. I just never saw such a thing live and in person."

"What in the world are we going to do?" mother asked.

Mr. Dubravka broke his silence and suggested they go back to the kitchen for hot tea. Though she was very tempted to run out and talk to Ethelde, Davia hoped the little lady

would stop in when she had the story. They went back to the kitchen where the tea kettle was steaming.

The doorbell rang as Davia was pouring hot water. She went to the door and smiled broadly as Ethelde entered.

"Oh dear me, who's this now? Josef! Such a time to arrive! Not like the old days is it?"

Mr. Dubravka stood up and Ethelde giggled and shook his hand vigorously. Davia offered her some tea and she sat down with them, beaming. Davia beamed back.

"That terrible man. Drunk already so early. Good thing! So drunk he missed. Tried to shoot the landlord. Wish he had - always rents to terrible people."

Glad to have found such an ally in her adventure, Davia sipped her tea and relaxed. There was no turning back.

The End

THE RESTORATIONIST SHOPPER
BY Suzanne Connelly

Since this is the Christmas issue of the newsletter I went out shopping for authentic Victorian ideas on home decorating for the holidays. Unfortunately our public library had no books available that dealt with period Christmas decorating. I contacted Mr. John Sholz, curator of the Eugene Field Museum for names of reference books or suggestions. Mr. Sholz stated there are no books currently in print, but in December a book entitled "The Gift of Christmas Past" by Sonny O'Neil would be released.

Since I did not have the book, Mr. Sholz offered some ideas from his own research. Magazines, newspapers, and correspondence were used as reference materials to choose authentic decorating items for the museum. Since Soulard was predominantly a working class neighborhood the majority of residents did not own a horse and wagon or buggy to go out and cut down a large tree, but most likely obtained a small scrub tree that could be carried home. The tree may be decorated with cornshuck

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dolls, cookies, small gifts and homemade ornaments. A German custom was to make peppermint sticks and hang them on the tree.

For exterior door decorations Mr. Sholz suggested an unripe pineapple, greens and crabapples strung together with florist wire. Dried weeds, straw and ribbon also can make an authentic door decoration.

Poinsettias were not used as Christmas decorations in St. Louis until after 1854. Though we may think that for Christmases past childrens stockings were filled with oranges and apples, Mr. Sholz pointed out that in 1850 oranges were shipped from Spain and cost approximately \$6.00 a pound.

If you like to sew, or have someone to sew for you you might want to purchase the Butterick Christmas pattern for \$2.50 titled "Victorian Christmas". This packet includes patterns for a tree skirt, wreath, and ornaments.

In order to see the Eugene Field House and Toy Museum decorated for Christmas you may visit the museum between December 8 and January 10. The admission fee is \$1.00 for adults and 35¢ for children under 12.

Another source for Christmas decorating ideas is the November 1981 issue of "The Old-House Journal". In this article an address is given for the book previously mentioned.

* * *

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

Since the television production of the novel, "Roots" by Alex Haley, more and more people are becoming interested in their heritage.

Many Christmas customs and traditions that are now commonplace are a mixture of many other ethnic backgrounds that very few people know there origins.

Presented here are some common traditions and there widely accepted origins.

Caroling - In England Christmas carolers would go out Christmas Eve and stay out caroling until Christmas morn. During the night their only respite would be when they were invited into homes for refreshments.

Santa Claus - The original Santa was Saint Nicholas, the bishop of Myra. St. Nicholas was brought to America by the Dutch of New Amsterdam (N.Y.). One theory on how St. Nicholas turned into Santa Claus is that childrens mispronunciation of St. Nicholas sounded like Santa Claus, and with the famous poem, "Twas The Night Before Christmas" by Dr. Clement Moore of New York in 1822 the concept of the fatherly bishop was permanently changed into our present day Santa Claus.

This concept of Santa Claus was further reinforced by Santa drawings by Thomas Nast, a Civil War cartoonist.

Candles in the windows - In Ireland a lighted candle or candles were placed in the windows to symbolically light the path of the Christ Child. A lighted candle in a cottage window was also a sign to a weary wayfarer on Christmas Eve that he could find lodging within that home for the night in memory of the weary travelers of long ago.

This custom was brought to Boston by way of the Irish immigrants, and now it is commonplace to see windows lit during the Christmas Season throughout the United States.

Fireworks - The French brought to Louisiana the custom of fireworks. This custom is now almost extinct in the United States. Usually the only noise that is heard is from the ringing of Church bells.

Holiday - In 1659 a law was passed in the General Court of Massachusetts making the observance of Christmas a penal offense. Five shillings could be fined to anyone giving a Christmas greeting to another.

In the middle eighteen hundreds the Episcopal Sunday Schools of New England began observing Christmas day. Christmas did not become a national holiday until 1856 during the Franklin Pearce administration.

Yule log - The celebration of Yule was practiced in northern countries before they accepted Christianity. Today we think of the yule log custom as coming to America primarily from England. A yule log was well soaked in water to ensure it would burn for many days. This yule log was used at plantation parties in

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America. Huge parties were given for friends and relatives. To give you some idea of the amount of food cooked, Martha Washington's Christmas cake called for forty eggs.

Bird feeding - Scandinavian immigrants settling in the midwestern states, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Illinois brought with them the custom of erecting a tall pole in their yard and hanging a large sheaf of grain saved from threshing time in the fall.

Christmas tree - The legend of the first Christmas tree originated in Germany. Winfred, an English missionary traveling the forests of northern Germany presented the idea of the fir tree as being the tree of life and represented the Christ Child.

Legend gives Martin Luther, who founded the Lutheran Church, as the first person to decorate a Christmas tree. Walking home from Church one evening he noticed how the stars seemed to be twinkling on the branches of the trees. Upon arriving home he chopped down a small fir tree and took it into the house. He attached candles to the branches and lit them, hence we had the first decorated tree.

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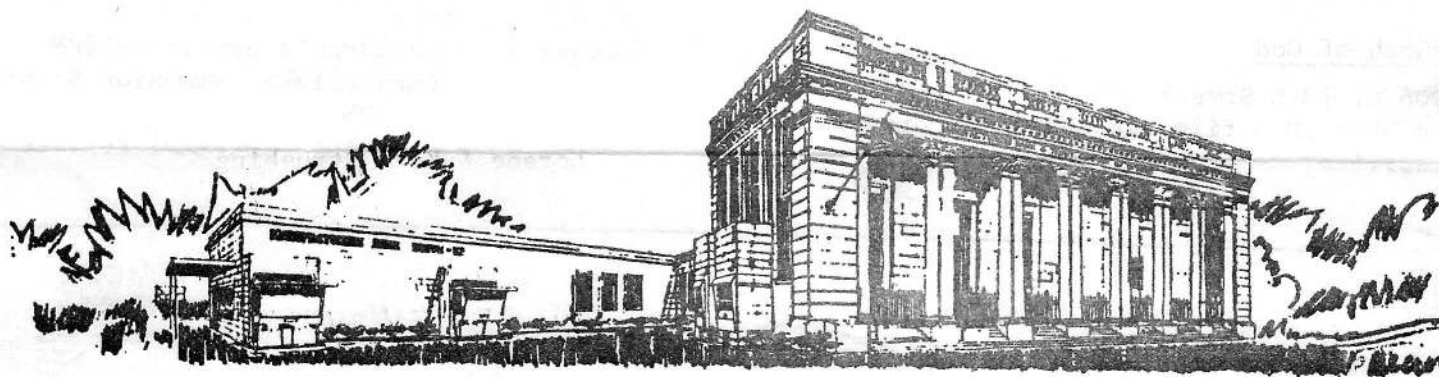


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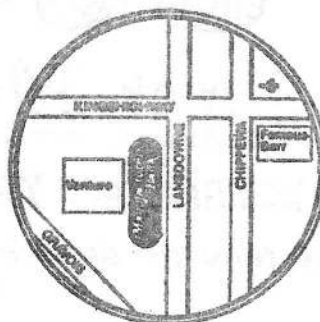


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CHRISTMAS TREE LOT TO BENEFIT SCHOOL

One of the Central West End's most popular traditions will be found at a new location this year. The New City School's Christmas tree lot has moved to 5225 Waterman Ave. on the school grounds.

The lot will be open Nov. 29 through Dec. 23, Sunday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. The lot features a huge selection of beautiful trees and wreaths, fresh greens and pine rope. Again this year, the lot will stock the full range of tree sizes from table size to the larger sizes appropriate for rooms with high ceilings.

All proceeds from the tree lot benefit the New City School, and 40 percent of the purchase price of all items on the lot is tax deductible.

* * *

CHRISTMAS SERVICES SCHEDULE

Church of God

2006 S. 13th Street
December 20 - film and Christmas program service

Jesus United Church of Christ

1115 Victor Street
December 25 - 7AM

Saint Agatha Catholic Church

3239 S. 9th Street
December 24 - Midnight Mass - 12AM
December 25 - Masses at 8, 10 and 11:30AM

Saint Joseph Croation Catholic Church

2112 S. 12th Street
December 24 - Midnight Mass - 12AM - English and Croation
December 25 - Masses at 7:30 (English), 9:30 (Croation) and 11:00AM (English)

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church

1919 S. 7th Street
December 24 - Midnight Mass - 12AM
December 25 - Mass at 9:30AM

Tabernacle Baptist Church

2401 S. 12th Street
December 20 - Christmas Youth Cantata - 7PM

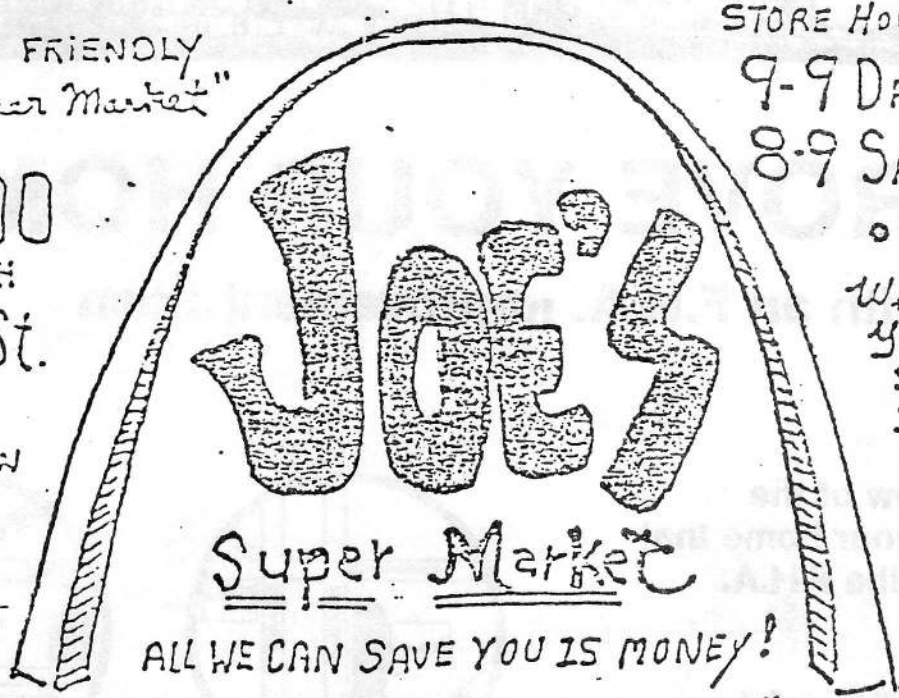
Trinity Lutheran Church

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December 24 - Children's service - 7PM
Candlelight Communion Service - 11PM
December 25 - Christmas festival service - 9AM

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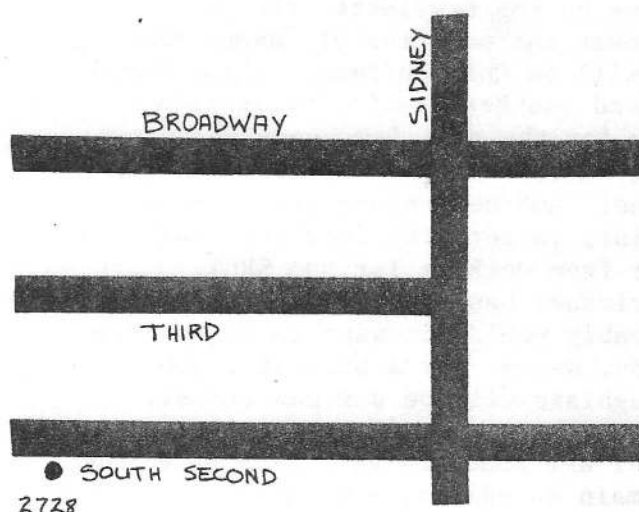
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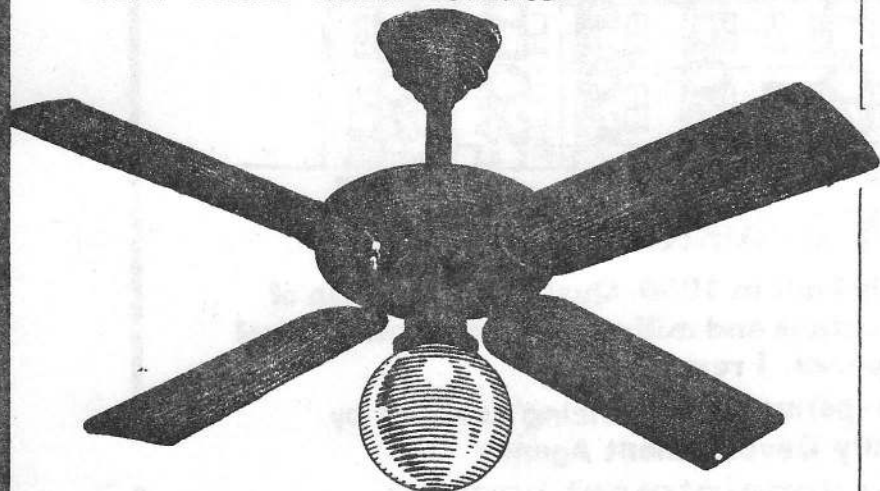
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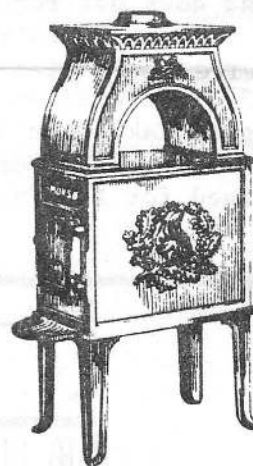


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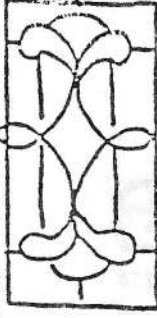
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RESTORATIONIST STAFF CHANGES FOR 1982

For the coming year there will be some new faces on the newsletter staff. Taking over the position of layout and design will be Char Hoffman. Luann Rimel has served the Restorationist in this capacity for the past few years and we extend a sincere thanks to her for a job well done! Another valued staff member, our typist, is retiring from the staff (but not from working for the SRG). Nancy Grimshaw has typed so many issues she probably would not want to count them. Thank you, Nancy, for a beautiful job. Jane Houghland will be our new typist. She has her liquid paper, typewriter, and paper all ready to go. Skip Gatermann will remain as editor, and Carol Ray will be copy editor. Kathy Dabrowski-Poe, Amy Dawson, Phyllis Young, Suzanne Connelly, Jim and Judy Marquis, and Paul Houghland will be reporting the news as contributing editors. We have not heard from our gossip columnist, Tillie the Tattler, but we hope she will keep providing us with juicy tidbits from time to time.

To complete our staff we need a new business manager. The position is available and does not require much time or work. If you are interested in this job please call Skip at 771-4191 or Paul at 436-4474. We need to know if you are willing to take over immediately so that we will have our advertising schedule maintained for the February issue.



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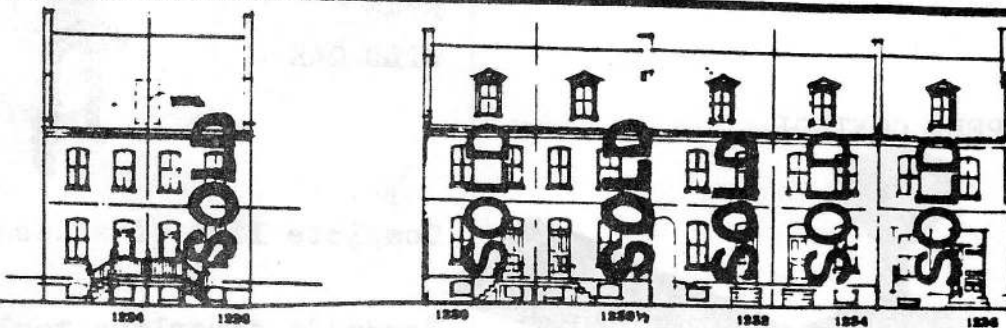
MILLARD FILLMORE'S WINS WOMENS LEAGUE

The Soulard Fall Classic League, sponsored by Sigel Community School, was won by Millard Fillmore's. The Senior Womens League, played at Pontiac Park, ran through October and early November.

Millard Fillmore's also won the Post Season Playoff defeating Burkhardts 12-1 in the final game.

Soulard's Fall Classic League Final Standings:

	W	L
Millard Fillmore's	8	0
Burkhardts	4	4
Mercantile Bank	4	4
Doomsday	2	6
D's Place	2	6

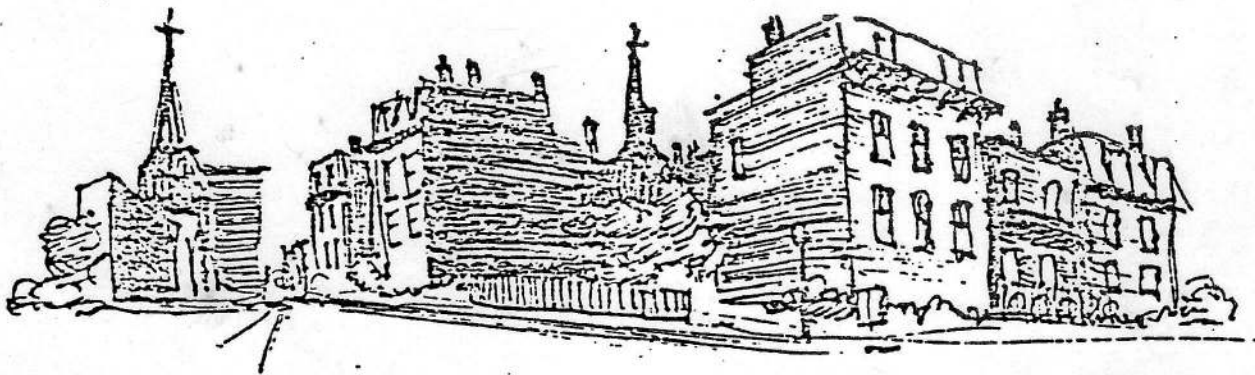


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