



The Souldard Restorationist

Volume XI Issue V

August/September 1986

Art Show Highlights House Tour

September 27-28
Noon-6 PM



"Couleurs de Souldard"
Art Exhibit

Horsedrawn
Carriages

Phillips & Wall,
KY-98

Antique Cars

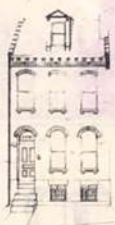
12 Houses

2 Churches

**Anheuser-Busch
Visitors Center**

Gardens

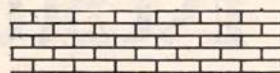
NOTES FROM THE BRICK HOUSE



As we ready ourselves for the Soulard Restoration Group's 12th Annual Fall House Tour, we should all remember that we are celebrating a special event: Soulard's 150th birthday. In 1836, our neighborhood's namesake, Julie Cerre Soulard, finally won the quit claim deed from the City of St. Louis granting her title to her family's estate here on the near south side. The theme of this year's tour, "Couleurs de Soulard," reminds us of our French beginnings and, as in an artist's palette, the ever-changing colors and tones of our neighborhood.

I know that the house tour this year will be one of the best yet, and I want to thank Dr. Richard Eaton and the entire house tour committee for the months of work they've done to put the entire weekend together.

Other exciting events for the Sou-



lard community include the annual fall tree planting, the beginnings of much-needed physical improvements to the Soulard Market park, and the installation of the first historic markers around the neighborhood. The dedication of these plaques will take place in conjunction with the house tour weekend.

Remember that Fall House Tour is September 27 and 28. This is a special event, and your help is needed to make it successful. So I am asking everyone to get involved with this year's tour!

Nancy Ray Farber, president
Soulard Restoration Group

GUEST EDITORIAL

Pride in Soulard Starts at Home

It's that time again, when the streets of Soulard are crowded with people carrying house tour booklets. The big excitement this year is the fabulous house that was a shell last year. The big disappointment is that the shell that appeared to be on its way last September is still just a shell.

It sometimes seems as if people from outside the Soulard area, especially those on the house tour, appreciate the neighborhood more than many of the residents. House tour brings out the best of the neighborhood.

When was the last time you took a tour of Soulard? Normally we are in such a hurry to get to and from work or some other place that we fail to stop and look. We might notice that the house on our block is finally getting finished, or that a parking spot seems harder to find, but we don't see all the work going on around us. Maybe if we moved at a slower pace, we would appreciate more.

Besides appreciating what Soulard has to offer, we may even get what a popular TV commercial calls "a sense of pride and commitment." There are many Soulard residents who have this sense. Why should

they feel proud? What have they done to be able to boast about the neighborhood?

Maybe it's the effort they put into planting trees that looked so small when they were planted but now are beginning to provide shade and greenery. Maybe it's the new porch they put on their house, which meant they had to forego a vacation this year. Maybe it's being part of the rebirth of a neighborhood.

Their commitment is shown by the number of volunteers participating in events such as the house tour. It is also evident in the large investment of time, energy, and money by individuals in the neighborhood.

What we have received from our ancestors is worth preserving and passing on to our children. If you don't feel the sense of pride and commitment, or if what you have is beginning to wane, then house tour time is a good time for you. Walk around the neighborhood, stop and talk to your neighbors, stop and talk to the tourists. See and feel the heritage of Soulard.

Arnold Montgomery
Heritage Commissioner
City of St. Louis

CALENDAR

Sept. 27-28 SRG House Tour & Art Exhibit, Noon-6 p.m.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL PRETZEL MONTH

Oct. 1 SRG General Membership Meeting, Trinity Lutheran Church, 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 6-11 NATIONAL POSSUM WEEK

Oct. 15 SRG Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Nov. 5 SRG General Mem-

bership Meeting, Trinity Lutheran Church, 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 6 John Philip Sousa's Birthday

Nov. 19 SRG Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Nov. 27 Thanksgiving Day

Dec. 1 The Soulard Restorationist, December/January issue

Dec. 3 SRG General Membership Meeting, Trinity Lutheran Church, 7:30 p.m.

COULEURS DE SOULARD



THE TWELFTH ANNUAL SOULARD HOUSE TOUR & ART EXHIBIT

SEPTEMBER 27 & 28
12 NOON-6:00 P.M.

TICKETS \$4 IN ADVANCE
\$5 DAY OF TOUR

FOR TICKET INFORMATION
CALL 771-5562

The poster announcing the Fall House Tour features a watercolor by Charles Wallis, the art exhibit's guest artist, of the streetscape at Menard and Russell.



The Soulard Restorationist

The Soulard Restorationist has a circulation of 6,000 and is published every two months by the Soulard Restoration Group. It is mailed to SRG members, advertisers and subscribers and is distributed in Soulard and St. Louis area businesses.

Call 771-5563 to place ads and subscriptions. Letters to the Editor and articles are appreciated. Address correspondence to The Soulard Restorationist, P.O. Box 13312, Soulard Station, St. Louis, MO 63157.

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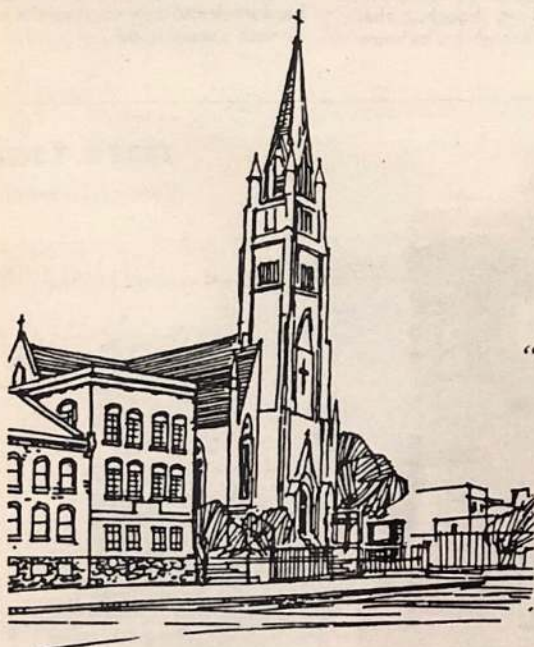


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The Skeletons in the House Tour Closet

by Skip Gaternann

There are many reasons why people come to the annual Souland House Tour. There is the beautiful architecture along with a lot of history. Some come to see how the homes are decorated. Many come for the fun of it.

There is, however, a small group lurking out there in metropolitan St. Louis who come to the house tour to find out those weird stories which are hidden behind the brick and mortar of Souland homes. Yes, the skeletons in the closet!

We won't tell all in this article, but here are a few tales to whet the appetite.

To start with, this year's house tour features a home that was in an automobile accident. Yes, the injuries were serious, and 1836 S. 9th Street remained on the critical list for a long time, but things are well now. A car drove into the southwest corner of the building back in the early 1970s. After frequent "house calls" made by the restorationist doctors, 1836 was declared in such top shape that it should be placed on house tour.

Across the street at 1839, Dr. Jay Gibbs, Chief of Surgery, has been performing miracles. Cosmetic surgery has been performed and other needed operations have taken place. The best news here, though, is that 1839 has become a mother. The house

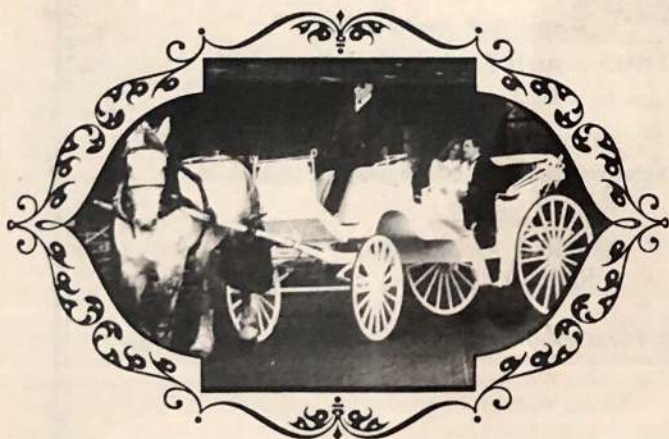
has given birth to a new room just in time for house tour. Jay, the new proud father, won't be handing out cigars on tour day, but I'm sure as with any new father he will tell you all about his new baby.

917A Geyer has been fortunate in that it has needed no medical attention recently. This beautifully restored apartment features most of its original woodwork and has an unusual entryway. House tour guests will be able to feel like a contestant on "Let's Make A Deal" when they try to guess behind which door this lovely apartment hides. Guests should not, however, expect Monty Hall waiting for them with a handful of cash as an alternative to finding the apartment.

On tour this year are the "Menard Triplets." The triplets are a little old-fashioned in that they were delivered at home. 2105, 2107 and 2109 Menard Street are three homes which were built within 25 years of each other, but look identical. Their striking resemblance demonstrates the care of early Souland builders in preserving the streetscape's integrity.

On the house tour menu this year is flounder at 2212 Menard Street. No, this isn't the kind covered with almonds at fine area residents. It is one of Souland's most beautifully and meticulously restored flounder houses. It is a fine example of what hard work and a lot of creativity can do with a small home.

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2222 S. 13th

Roaring Twenties



1836 S. 9th

Accident survivor

Your next step on tour is a home that was owned by a couple of dairymen. The nice thing is that the cows are gone and you won't have to milk them. All you will have to do at 2224 South 11th Street is enjoy the beautiful contemporary decor and antiques of the charming home.

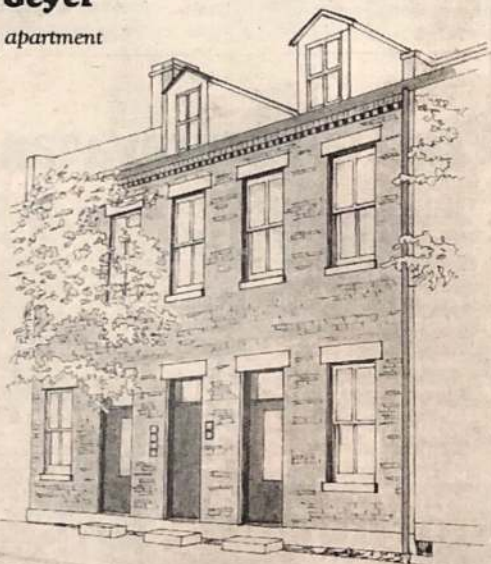
Across the street at 2219 is a home that was once owned by Southern sympathizers before and during the Civil War. With the Stars and Bars long gone, tour guests will delight in viewing the authentically restored interior.

If flappers and eating goldfish aren't your thing, but you do enjoy the architecture of the Roaring Twenties, then 2222 S. 13th Street is the place for you. This apartment features a well-preserved period interior.

Last, what would you do if you only had half of a house to restore? Most people would tear it down. 2348 South 12th Street met a different fate. If you want to know what that fate was, well, you'll just have to come to the 1986 Souland House Tour. ●

917A Geyer

Mystery apartment



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Mr. Gibbs entertains in his living room

The Amazing Cultural Architecture Pre-Tour Extravaganza

by Jay Gibbs

Here comes another Fall House Tour! This will be my third open house in as many years. Our 3,000 to 5,000 guests will be able to see my inexorable progress since last year.

Don't believe me? Well, I have rebuilt the dining room floor — there's no dining room, of course, but it has a great floor. In the "kitchen," where a wheelbarrow sat last year, a real refrigerator stands proudly (if dustily). Unfortunately, there are no other signs of life there yet. The fridge shares the room with two x four studs, sacks of mortar, an uninstalled two-ton air conditioning compressor, a bunch of used cabinets, and a

pile of old iron window weights.

Progress upstairs takes the form of one mostly drywalled sunroom, an absence of stacks of floorboards (remember the non-dining room?), and the sight of TV cable running through the still-open walls and ceilings. The cable isn't connected to anything yet, but that's just a detail.

On the third floor, one can see a figment of civilization, as one room

has been drywalled and taped! I reside in the front, so-called "Penthouse" room, with its exposed brick, slanted roof, and arched art glass window. Look at all the progress! Never mind the lack of a closet, the unfinished bathroom, and the creaky, still-temporary open staircase. Details, details! I'll get to those things, and window trim too, maybe when the cows come home.

You see, I feel that some homeowners on tours, both here and in other neighborhoods, take it all too seriously. I see things differently. What an ego trip: people paying to admire our streetscapes, carpets, gardens, lightfixtures, brick sidewalks, curtains, and my wreckage! It's a blast meeting all the different kinds of people, and it really recharges my rehabber batteries.

The neighborhood is progressing — why, even the now infamous collapsing house next door has been rebuilt and will be occupied by Christmas. The only downside to all this progress around me is that my house has gone from being a relative pillar of the block to being one of the

More Adventures of an Amateur Rehabber

last unfinished dwellings. But as long as I still enjoy (and can afford) this rehabber stuff, I'm going to have fun as I fix up, and show off, this relic.

Speaking of relics and such, I was very miffed when the house tour committee decided not to include my home on the fancy formal Pre-Tour Gala, where selected beautiful homes are shown in their full finery and exquisite taste. What do those places have that mine doesn't? Humph! For that I'm gonna give you a pre-tour of my house right now, entitled "The Amazing Cultural Architecture Pre-Tour Extravaganza." Don your tux or long gown, and let's begin.

Notice the landscaping as we traverse the front garden: what look like inner-city weeds are actually exotic plants carefully placed to mimic the unfettered nature of a wild meadow. What a dramatic statement of contrast to Souard's usual tidy little gardens! Careful over that crooked threshold.

Now, the first floor is an example of the latest trend in contemporary decor, called the Titanic look. This charming atmosphere is achieved by taking an elegant area, boarding up the windows, and cunningly dropping various wreckage about the rooms, leaving just enough of a path through which to pass. This style is an example of decor made to fit the house rather than one's lifestyle. It does render the space totally unusable, but in the interest of avant garde taste some compromises are necessary.

The upper two floors display in concrete form the concept of humankind's basic conflict between savagery and civilization. The second story favors brute savage mayhem, while the third story tips just perceptibly toward the societal realm. This dramatic tension can be related to the precarious inner balance between the id and the superego, tickling and offending all the senses in the process.

Returning to ground level (the stairs should be employed), we venture to the side and back yards, where another cross-cultural conflict is in evidence. Observe the pristine, ancient-Greek-like ruin of a carriage house and stable rising mutely above the trappings of rapid-fire modern technology: building materials, trash dumpsters, and automobiles. Ten tons of stacked brick add "weight" to this fleeting, airy dynamic, and keep it all from becoming too esoteric.

As a whole, this place displays the implicit conflicts of any rehab decor: man versus house versus bank account versus sanity versus common sense.

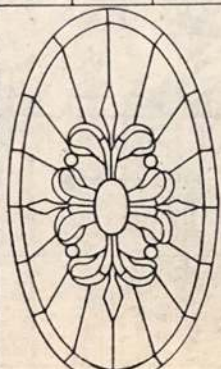
Well, Mr. John D., that will teach you to make fun of my defenseless house — beauty and meaning are always in the eye of the beholder. With that thought I leave you all; hope you'll come see my constructive lunacy on tour! ●



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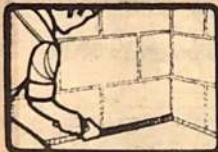
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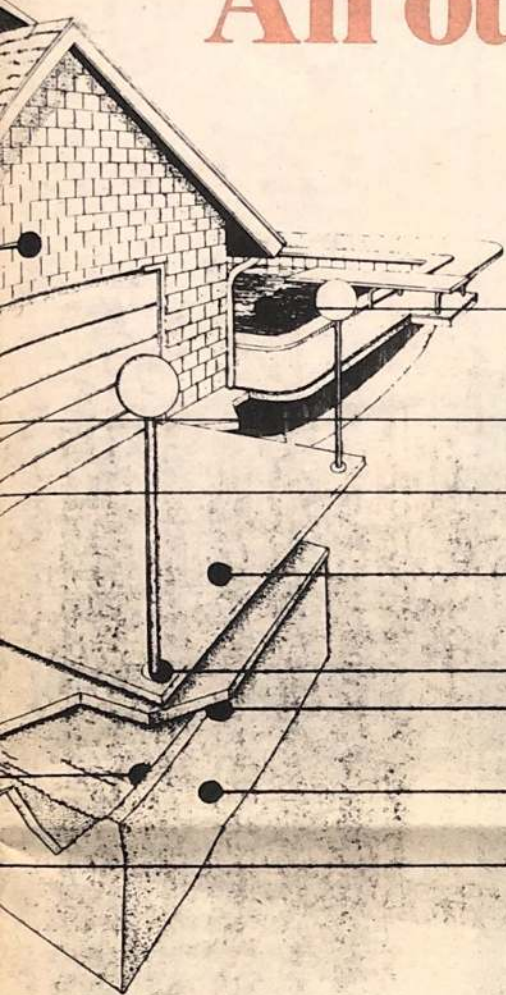
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Party Down at the Gala

by Richard Eaton
SRG House Tour Committee

On Thursday evening, September 18, the Souland Restoration Group will introduce the 12th Annual Fall House Tour with the traditional Pre-Tour Gala.

Guests will be treated to a progressive dinner at the elegant homes of Richard Cottrell, Carolyn Swindell, and John and Gerri Soderberg, traveling from hors d'oeuvres to dessert in the "Hello Dolly" horse-drawn carriage from the Cheshire Carriage Service. During the gala, the announcement will be made of the top three winners in the "Couleurs de Souland" art exhibit being held in conjunction with this year's house tour.

This will be a special evening, as indicated on the invitation written by Richard Cottrell and Pat Price:

Come to Souland, take a trip across the threshold of time.

Leave behind the care of the moment to stand refreshed in the long shadows of Souland's past.

Come to Souland, ride our horse drawn carriage, taste our French cuisine, sip our champagne and enjoy friends against a background of music and candlelight.

Come to Souland, listen to the stories that have passed this way.

Once your foot falls upon these doorsteps, your neighborhood may never seem the same.

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Have the beautifully restored homes, history-drenched streets, and neighborly spirit of Souland inspired you to seek your own dream domicile here? The Souland Restoration Group has the inside track for you.

The group has prepared a comprehensive list of real estate for sale in the Souland neighborhood. The selections range from fully rehabbed Victorian mansions to flounder shells just waiting for your love and attention. Multi-family dwellings and commercial properties are included as well. The list is updated regularly.

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Radio Station WII/FM Tells All: What Is This SRG,

Well, folks, here we are in Radioland, and your favorite station, WII/FM, is about to bring you the show you've all been waiting for: our very own "What's In It For Me"! As usual, we have our secret DJ on hand to probe the inner depths of some poor slob — I mean, probe the... well, you know what I mean.

Today on our show we have a member of the internationally acclaimed Souland Restoration Group, sometimes known as the SRG. This personality has graciously agreed to answer all our questions about the group, provided we run his/her voice through a scrambler and keep his/her identity a TOTAL secret. This SRG-Person is now wired for sound and ready for the question, "What's In It For Me!"

Well, SRG-Person, tell all the fans out there in Radioland about this SRG...

SRG-P: Well, as you've already noted, the initials stand for Souland Restoration Group, which is an...

WII/FM: Hey, wait a minute. What exactly is a Souland anyway?

SRG-P: Souland isn't a what, it's a... well... it is a what, sort of. It's a place.

WII/FM: A place! Is it near I-270?

SRG-P: No. It's in the city.

WII/FM: The CITY???? You mean people live there and it's in the city?

SRG-P: Lots of people live in the city, you ninny. Yes, it's right near the river, as a matter of fact. The boundaries are I-55 to the west and north, Broadway to the east, and Arsenal to the south. And that, my dear fellow, includes the largest Brewery in the WORLD!!! So there!

WII/FM: The largest Brewery, did you say? (Is there a pipeline?)

SRG-P: Yes, included in the Souland area is the Anheuser-Busch brewery on the south. On the north, there's the Souland Market.

WII/FM: Souland Market? Souland neighborhood? Who is this guy Souland anyway? Is he in city politics?

SRG-P: Well, Mr. DJ, if you'd done your homework you would have read last month's *Souland Restorationist* and you'd know all about the Souland family. It was a lot of people, especially Antoine Souland and his wife Julie Cerre Souland. They were some of the first settlers on this land. After Antoine's death, Julie left the property for the present Souland Market to the city on the condition that the land always be used for a public market. So it's called Souland Market (things being what they were back then, it's probably called so after him because he died rather than for

her because she donated the land).

SRG was formed in 1974 to preserve the neighborhood from the "headache ball" and to make viable the burned-out, vandalized and vacant buildings that dotted every block. SRG proved that saving could be accomplished and that the buildings were worth it. Passage of the Historic District legislation in 1975 made it harder to tear down buildings and gave SRG some breathing room. The group then began to focus on creating a more desirable image of the area: "See, here we are; come visit and come buy."

Since its origins in 1974, SRG has been responsible for millions of improvements to curbs, sidewalks, streets, and buildings. Scaffolding on your house has become a status symbol! Features on the buildings, such as the multi-colored cornices, authentic windows, and doors over 100 years old, continue to draw new residents. But there's more to life than buildings, so SRG continues to work to create a healthy area in which to live and raise children. Safety and quality education are in great demand, and both are available in the Souland neighborhood.

WII/FM: So what do you SRG-types actually do? If I lived down there, would I join the SRG?

SRG-P: We'd like to think that if you were community-minded, interested in preserving the natural beauty of the historical area, and willing to invest some time to assure a strong future for Souland, you just might.

WII/FM: You mean you do all THAT? I was under the impression that all you guys did was stand around in other persons' back yards and swill beer and wine punch and stuff down Brie cheese and mushroom pizza while arguing the advantages of covering your windows with drywall or something like that.

SRG-P: We do our share of that, too, but we have a lot of things going on and would love to have new blood in the group.

WII/FM: New blood? You mean you make sacrifices????? During a full moon or something?

SRG-P: New blood means new members, you ninny! We'd love to have some fresh ideas for turning our area into a safer and more enjoyable neighborhood. And if I do say so myself, SRG is a great way to meet your neighbors and gives you somewhere to go out to once a month.

WII/FM: Tell us about the meetings. I've heard them described as barroom brawls.

SRG-P: You must have been talking to one of the old-timers. Things have quieted down a bit in

recent years. As a matter of fact, if a person attended all the meetings in one calendar year, the chances to observe Robert's Rules of Order in fractured form are quite awesome. But we get a lot done, just the same. We meet once a month, on the first Wednesday at 7:30 in the evening, usually at Trinity Lutheran Church at 1805 South 8th Street. And then afterwards there are the socials...

WII/FM: Socials? Like with tea and little cucumber sandwiches?

SRG-P: No, like with beer and wine punch and cheese and mushroom pizza. We go to someone's home after the meeting for a little refreshment and some relaxing talk about the comparative worth of roofing materials.

WII/FM: Supposing a person got up the guts and went to a meeting and really liked the idea of it all and paid the dues and joined up and kept coming to meetings and really wanted to get into the group a little deeper? Do you have to have a post-graduate degree in copper conduit to be in the best clique?

SRG-P: Of course not. First of all, not everyone who belongs to the group is actually rehabbing. Some are done. Some quit after seeing The Money Pit. Some other, more broke, people rent (although if you talk to a rehabber, don't expect him/her to admit there is any other more broke category of person). We welcome members of any of these groups.

If a person wanted to become more deeply involved, that person could volunteer to be on a committee, which is the best way to get on one because then you can volunteer

for the one you want. If you don't volunteer, and do come to eight meetings in a row, you will automatically be assigned as chairperson of the membership committee.

WII/FM: You mean there's lots of little groups inside this big group? Like what do the committees do?

SRG-P: Since I've mentioned it already, we'll start with the membership committee. Those people plan and produce a family picnic in June and a dinner to welcome in the new officers in November. They also coerce other members into having the socials after the meetings, and if they are unsuccessful at that, they invite everyone over to stand around their back yard and swill...

Membership committee persons also keep an accurate mailing list, storing such information as names, addresses, phone numbers, dues payments, and the R factor of the insulation of each home. Sometimes they even get asked to figure out new ways to get new people to join the group...

If planning parties sounds like a good time to you, perhaps you'd enjoy helping the membership committee. If so, you can call Jann at 771-5099 or Kathy at 776-3655. (They're the last persons who came to eight meetings in a row without volunteering.)

WII/FM: I think I'm catching on. I bet you have a committee that helps keep the streets safe, huh?

SRG-P: You got it! That's the crime committee, made up of neighborhood residents who are willing to offer and then implement ideas on reducing crime in the Souland area.

"What's Your Favorite Thing About SRG?"

Real Members Respond!

Cecelia: "All the wild gossip, of course. Wait, you can't say that! How about just saying that I like the social aspect of it. I like the heated meetings, but kibbutzing with the neighbors, that's my favorite thing."

Louise: "I like the ability of the group to attract new members, and the enthusiasm with which everyone works together. I've seen it evolve and change and just go on, and that's great."

Jay: "I enjoy the other rehabbers who are into the work themselves."

Peter: "I love the neighbor-

hood atmosphere, being part of a community — like a college dorm. Souland is a fun place to live; it's a challenge to reform and restore the city."

Vicki: "I love it when we all work together for a common goal and manage to bring the spotlight on Souland, showing people what a special place this is."

Jann: "My favorite part is going to the meetings and watching the flies walk on the ceiling of the Trinity Lutheran gym with their little suction cup feet — wait a minute, are you writing this down?!"

Anyway?

They want to sensitize other residents to be protective of their own and their neighbors' property. They work with the Third Police District to identify those individuals who are involved in criminal activities.

The crime committee has several success stories, and is proud to have worked with Alder-rep Phyllis Young to make Pontiac Park in Souard a place where families can bring their young children, youngsters can participate in sports, and others can just sit around and enjoy the fresh air. If this sounds like the kind of challenge you're looking for, get in touch with Vicki at 771-5087 and find out how you can help.

WII/FM: What kinds of things do you do to preserve the historical nature of the area?

SRG-P: I thought you'd never ask that, DJ. First off, there's the code committee. Right now they're working on revising the St. Louis City ordinance that regulates building construction and appearance in Souard, making it a lot clearer and easier to understand. If you'd like to help in this area, call Phil at 773-6573.

WII/FM: What was it that First Lady with the drawl said? "Keep America Byootiful, Plant a Tree, a Buusch or a Shruub?" Doesn't someone take charge of that?

SRG-P: Right you are. That's the beautification committee, one of SRG's busiest. Their job is to identify and implement projects affecting common areas. Some of the things you could work on if you joined this committee are an annual gardening fair, landscaping the park at Souard Market, planting trees all around the neighborhood, maintaining a seedling lot to provide future trees, placing commemorative plaques at significant neighborhood sites, and producing a guide to a walking tour of Souard. If you have a green thumb (and even if you don't), this might be the place for you. Call John at 664-5411.

WII/FM: Besides this walking tour, isn't there some big tour in the fall? What's that all about?

SRG-P: That, big guy, is the Annual Fall House Tour. It takes place in late September. The house tour committee is responsible for all phases of the tour's development, like selecting what houses will be on view and arranging publicity, posters, brochures, tickets, transportation, and so forth. Once it's all done, they get ready to do it again in December on a smaller scale for the Christmas Parlor Tour. You can find out more about this committee by calling John or Richard at 621-4460.

WII/FM: I guess the house tours really make other people aware of what Souard has to offer. What

other ways do you do that?

SRG-P: The housing sales committee continually updates a list of available property in the area. Anyone interested can get a copy of the list by calling Thelma at 771-5563. If you want to help scout out realty, call Jay at 644-7122.

WII/FM: You know, so far most of this sounds like regular club-stuff. I thought this was supposed to be a wild and bizarre group. What's left?

SRG-P: I've heard that the action's all with the staff of *The Souard Restorationist*, who are better known as "Hot Wheels."

WII/FM: Now you're talking about wild and crazy. Tell me more about these Hot Wheels persons.

SRG-P: Well, Barbara's the editor and Jann's the advertising manager and Thelma's the business manager, and along with these 1,400 elves who choose to remain anonymous, they produce this top-quality newspaper about every two months.

WII/FM: You mean a real newspaper — big business, big bucks, big time?

SRG-P: Yep. There's only one difference between this paper and the *New York Times*.

WII/FM: Gosh, what's that?

SRG-P: The *Times* reveals secret documents, and the *Restorationist* documents revealing secrets!

WII/FM: Ha Ha. You mean if you wanted to learn how to write, take pictures, sell advertising, or something like that, you could join the staff and the Hot Wheels would train you and everything?

SRG-P: You bet. They'd have you yelling "Great Caesar's Ghost!" in no time flat. Hot Wheels can be reached through answering machines at 771-5099, 421-0341, or 771-5563.

WII/FM: This all sounds pretty much fun. But what if you happen to live somewhere outside Souard and still want to get in on it?

SRG-P: There's a group called the "Friends of Souard." They're a lot like the Friends of the St. Louis Zoo — those people like the zoo a lot, but for some reason can't actually live there. . . . The Friends of Souard create a support base for the SRG. Find out more about this group by calling Pat at 771-1194.

WII/FM: This has all been really interesting, but I see we're running out of air time. Do you have any final words for our audience?

SRG-P: Well, if everything I've said so far doesn't sound weird enough to attract you to SRG, you could always consider running for the board of directors. That's a special place we reserve for people who've really lost their minds!

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James Holloway and Mrs. Evora Butler ("our security guard," he calls her) catch up on the neighborhood news at the YEHS garden.

YEHS Garden Harvests Friendliness

by Barbara Alice MacRobie

There are hundreds of tomatoes ripening on the vine. Cabbages blossom in the enormous deep green leaves you never see in the supermarket. The peppers practically fall from the plants into the pickers' hands, and there are more zucchini than you know what to do with.

"So many people told me this couldn't happen here in this old dirt," says James Holloway.

But it did happen, because he and his kids from the YEHS Exemplary Youth Program made it happen. What four months ago was an abandoned playground full of bricks and sand is now a garden bursting with fresh food for Souldard children and senior citizens.

Located on the south side of Shenandoah between 10th and Menard, the garden is a project of Youth Education and Health in Souldard (YEHS), a community service organization headquartered in a building known as Preservation Hall at 1921

South 9th Street. Among its other activities, YEHS runs the Souldard Senior Citizens Center at Preservation Hall. The organization owns 140 housing units in Souldard and a few by the former City Hospital, as well as several plots of land.

As successful as it has become, the garden wasn't the first use YEHS tried for the parcel on Shenandoah; originally the land was a playground. "But we had rotten luck with that," recalls James Holloway, who is YEHS director of maintenance and youth trainer. "Kids kept tearing it up."

"It was really Joyce Sonn, our director, who created all this," he says as he surveys the garden with satisfaction. "She bought about 12 trays of vegetables and flowers at the Souldard Market back in June. Then she called me up and said, 'Plant these before they die!'"

The ground of the old playground was hard and gritty, full of sand and broken brick. So Mr. Holloway borrowed a post hole digger and borrowed holes two feet deep "to get the

plants to root right," he says. "Then I dumped in soil and compost. It took a day and a half to plant everything."

The lack of spring rains looked bad, but early summer made up for them. Now the garden barely has enough room for the pickers, and there will be fresh vegetables until it frosts. "Saturdays are picking time for the haul, and sometimes during the week too," says Mr. Holloway.

The garden is tended in the early morning and late evening by Mr. Holloway, other YEHS staff members, and students in the Exemplary Youth Program. "It's a three-month program in which we train kids to work. If they pass the evaluation at the end, they get placed in a job," Mr. Holloway explains.

The vegetables are distributed free on an informal basis to senior citizens at the Preservation Hall center — "they come in and take what they want," says Mr. Holloway. And everybody around Menard and Shenandoah knows that James Holloway and company will be in the garden

in the mornings. So you might stop by like Mrs. Evora Butler from across the street, who came to show how she'd frozen blackberries from her garden to turn them candy-sweet, and who walked away with a cauliflower and a handful of peppers. You might be there to write a story about the garden and have assistant youth trainer Mary Schultz invite you to dip a finger into her freshly made catsup, warm and spicy — "it's not thick enough yet, but it sure is good!" she says (and she's right).

What about the vandalism that destroyed the playground? "The garden's hardly been touched," Mr. Holloway says. "Of course the kids know I'd make an example of anyone who tried! But people have had a lot of respect for it."

Mr. Holloway is so encouraged by the garden's growth and the neighborhood response that he plans to start another garden next year at 12th and Lafayette. "In that one we'll go for the big vegetables," he says. "Garlic, onions and spuds!" •



1921 S. Ninth St.

Between Geyer and Allen

Preservation Hall was the Hungarian American Society Hall for many years. After that, the Hall was the home of the local union for the American Car and Foundry workers. The Hall was purchased in 1985 by Youth Education and Health in Soulard, Inc. (YEHS) and named Preservation Hall. YEHS is a neighborhood charitable organization incorporated by Soulard residents in 1972. Proceeds from events in the Hall are used by YEHS to support the Soulard Senior Citizens Center which operates Monday through Friday in the Hall and to support various programs for Soulard youth. For more information, please call 436-1400.

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