

# The Benton Park News

A Monthly Publication of the Benton Park Neighborhood Association

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November, 1993

## November Meeting to Focus on BPNA: Past, Present, Future

by *Linda Dahlheimer*

The November 2 BPNA meeting, according to President Ron Bentley, will focus on a summary of 1993 - where we were, where we are now, and, hopefully, where we're going.

Some unfinished business from last month's meeting also needs to be resolved. At the October meeting the Beautification Committee introduced to the BPNA membership a landscape architect by the name of Tom Saunders whom they had commissioned some time ago to produce a Master Plan for Benton Park. Mr. Saunders presented a proposed plan, along with his bill of \$4,300.00.

Some discussion followed and the Association learned that the plan could be implemented at a cost of \$20,000-\$30,000. Further discussion revealed that the Beautification Committee had hoped to pay for the bulk of these expenses, particularly Mr. Saunder's bill, through grants from outside interests. Unfortunately, at the moment there are no grant offerings in sight and the Master Plan is near completion. Fundraisers, the pursuit of more grants, and a partial payment to Mr. Saunders out of the BPNA Treasury were discussed. In the end, it was voted to pay Mr. Saunders in full from the BPNA Treasury, borrowing from other special interest accounts.

After the meeting, however, it was realized that the vote was null and void because a quorum was not present at the meeting. BPNA Bylaws state that a quorum constitutes a minimum of three officers present (there were two) and at least twenty members in good standing.

As someone later pointed out, this may have been a "blessing in disguise" because some factors were not sufficiently weighed nor feelings properly aired before the vote took place.

Some concern exists among members that if \$4,300 is spent for the plan, what assurances will there be that the plan will actually be implemented and not end up on someone's shelf. Perhaps

## Dateline: Newsletter

by *George Rutter*

This month - November - marks the first of a combined editorship of *The Benton Park News*. Enjoyable as it is phoning you all, gathering copy, and legging it for news items for myself, all will concede that stories don't drift downward like leaves onto the front lawn.

Therefore, unless you wish to read Annie Ross's lyrics to the Getz/Kenton "Early Autumn," please phone me (664-5118) with an idea or item any time of day or night. Your input, in the form of copy, announcements, notices, phone calls and messages is welcome and expected.

Sarah Lindquist and Ed and Donna Jonge have also volunteered with the BPNA News effort. As usual, Linda and Charlie Dahlheimer continue their involvement with this endeavor as they have so tirelessly for the past three years.

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more importantly, how will \$20-30,000 be raised for the implementation? Another factor for consideration is, with no money in place for a project of this magnitude, should money previously earmarked for other "special interests" such as crime prevention, new banners, and marketing now be used for this project?

On the other hand, Mr. Saunders's plan appears to be a good one and although, according to his comments at the meeting he has known all along payment in full may be a long time coming, certainly if we are going to use his plan, he needs to be paid at some point. Additionally, the Beautification Committee may not have handled the hiring of a landscape artist in the most judicious fashion, but they certainly have worked very hard on a project they believe in and feel is for the betterment of the community.

Somewhere, a solution exists that will satisfy everyone. Please be thinking of one, and bring it to the upcoming meeting this Tuesday.

**The Benton Park Neighborhood Association meets on the first Tuesday of every month, at 7:30PM, at Epiphany Parish Hall, 2911 McNair. The Public is invited to attend.**

# The Haunted Caverns of Lemp Brewery

An Interview with Tom Carroll

by *Linda Dahlheimer*

BPNA resident Tom Carroll has been a haunted house enthusiast for a long time. His visits to haunted houses far exceed the provincial boundaries of St. Louis and extend to such places as *The Beast* in Kansas City, considered one of the top ten houses in the country, and Terror on Church Street, a year-round attraction in Orlando, Florida. Perhaps his and wife Debbie's favorite haunt is Lahaina Town, Maui, Hawaii, where once each year the entire town becomes a haunted city.

The Carroll's shared fascination for the macabre began when the two went through a haunted house on their second date. Their continued enthusiasm was subsequently noted at their wedding celebration several years ago when part of the festivities included a "murder mystery dinner" for friends and family at the Lemp Mansion Restaurant and a honeymoon overnight stay in a hauntingly beautiful room at the Lemp Mansion Bed and Breakfast.

Last year Tom masterminded Hell at Hazel Dell, a haunted house in Jerseyville, Illinois, which he now considers to be a learning experience, or test run, for putting together a haunted house.

So it comes as no surprise that Tom is a visible and vital link in this year's wildly successful Haunted Cavents of *the Lemp Brewery*, a terrifying extravaganza which opened October 2 and is anticipated to continue through the first week in November. The Lemp Brewery is the cavernous, now defunct brewery complex on Lemp at Cherokee Street in the southeastern reaches of the Benton Park neighborhood.

Highlights of this ghoulish odyssey include a ride in an ancient 70-foot underground "elevator from hell." From there, the unsuspecting guests pass through eighteen stations, all guaranteed to induce varying degrees of fright. Rumor has it that Station 13 holds some particularly bizarre surprises that have brought even veteran visitors of haunted houses to their knees.

Sometime during the tour, guests are videotaped at their horrifying best by Claudia Baker, owner of Copycat Videos. Prints are

available for \$7.00 after the tour, along with the sale of T-shirts, sweatshirts, necklaces, key chains, glow-in-the-dark buttons, and snacks.

On October 31 a drawing will be held for a trip for two to Cancun, Mexico. Only tickets purchased on October 31 will be eligible for the drawing, although you need not be present to win.

The Haunted Cavents did not come about overnight. Tom spent much of this year gathering information and ideas and conducting feasibility studies with a number of people. Initial conversations with the Lemp Brewery owners brought enthusiastic support for the idea of a haunted attraction. According to Tom, perhaps the biggest, if only, roadblock was with the people at City Hall, who had grave reservations about the exit route and fire codes. These problems were solved with the construction of a suitable exit that involved digging through thirteen inches of concrete, thirteen feet of dirt, and almost a four-foot floor. Fire code requirements were met in that smoking is forbidden; a fire retardant blankets all displays; a functioning sprinkler system covers every square inch; and all eighteen manned stations are equipped with a panic button, fire extinguisher and smoke detector. Turn credits Jim Goss, one of the Lemp Brewery owners from Houston, Texas, and Ray Simon, Benton Park resident and architect who submitted the blueprints, as two people who were very instrumental in getting the plan approved at City Hall. In fact, according to Tom, "if it weren't for Ray Simon, we would not be open today."

The staff consists of thirty-two people including three professional actors. Tom's

(Please see "*Haunted Cavents*" on Page Four)

## The Benton Park News

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## PUBLICATION DEADLINE

The 20th of each month is the cutoff date for material to reach the Benton Park newsletter editor. We welcome input from all of our readers regarding people and events that involve Benton Park and its residents. Submit information by phone (664-5118), or by FAX (664-6310), or mail (2036 Victor, 63104).

## Our Neighborhoods

by George Rutter

Recently Mayor Bosley stood up for neighborhoods, referring specifically to rehab and restoration. These remarks presaged his themes regarding bussing, crime, and schools. On the same subjects I hope BPNA members saw our Mike Vosler's excellent comment to Ray Hartmann which appeared in a letter to the editor in the October 13 issue of the *Riverfront Times*. Mike, of course, speaks for the 4 C's group: Churches Committed to Community Concerns. The proximity and accountability of schools to parents; the resulting parent and neighborhood organizations; the tightening of neighborhood fabric to promote information sharing, crime prevention, and upkeep of dwellings: these are worthy goals.

We should take note and take heart that ameliorization of these ills, defined variously as problems with race, society, crime, or whatever, depends on revitalization of neighborhoods. That we can all agree on.

## Feed the Hungry

BPNA member Jane Huber suggests we collect for distribution to the needy sacks of nutritional food items. Each member might bring to Tuesday's meeting a sack containing one can of chile, one can stewed tomatoes, one package white rice, and one can peaches.

## Beautification Committee

by Jane Huber

The BPNA's Beautification Committee Subcommittee for parks wishes to develop a long term master plan for the park to provide a framework to guide future development and restoration of this lovely Victorian Park, jewel of the neighborhood. This plan will assure continuity though the members of the association and the Beautification Committee change over the years. All residents of Benton Park will benefit through the beautification of this park to assure high quality and future maintenance. Development and conservation of the park will be protected for the next generation.

## Walking for Safety

Every Wednesday at 7:00 PM a number of people from several neighborhood associations have been meeting and walking together throughout the neighborhood. They are promoting a "march for safe neighborhoods" but additionally are having a good time and getting some needed exercise. Plan to join the group this Wednesday at their meeting place at Kirby Presbyterian Church at Utah and Texas. Captain Reeves of the Third District accompanies the group.

### Membership Application

Activities of The Benton Park Neighborhood Association are funded primarily by the dues and donations from neighborhood residents, and property and business owners within Benton Park.

Annual dues of \$5.00 include a year's subscription to The Benton Park News and a 10% discount on all purchases from participating area merchants. The growing list includes: Allen's Garden Shop, 3201 Cherokee; Morands Hardware & Supply, 1801 Pestalozzi; TEASE Hair Salon, 1615 South Ninth; Edele & Mertz Hardware Co., 1822 S. Broadway; the Icarian Studios, 3016 Wisconsin; and Sidney Street Cafe, 2000 Sidney Street and Art of the Ages, 2205 Cherokee.

#### Count me in as a member for 1993:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues enclosed

Additional gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed to support neighborhood programs/events.

(Make checks payable to Benton Park Neighborhood Ass'n.)

Mail to: BPNA, P.O. Box 2066, St. Louis, MO 63158

## Christmas Concert

Benton Park resident Nancy Christen reminds us that the Compton Heights Concert Band presents their annual Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 5 at St. Elizabeth Academy, 3401 Arsenal. Admission is free. Come all ye faithful!

## Crime Watch Program

The "Take a Bite Out of Crime" Committee asks for more volunteers to sign up for a three-hour shift once a month. This involves driving around our neighborhood looking for any suspicious criminal activity. All volunteers are given a cellular phone for use during their shift. Please phone Nancy Christen at 776-2972.

## Wood Chips for the Taking

Wood chips are available in the pocket park at Salena and Arsenal. Grab your wheelbarrow and winterize your plantings. Cold weather is right around the corner.

## Haunted Caverns

*(from Page Two)*

brother, Mark Carroll, handled the hiring and all the construction. Tom is responsible for all the special effects. He also heads up security (installing security devices is his profession). A strong emphasis has been placed on good security involving security devices, security personnel and an armed guard. Wife Debbie handles all ticket sales which, as of October 22, had reached over twelve thousand sold with the peak weekend still approaching.

Tom has been granted two separate interviews on Channel 5, and has been written up in *The St. Louis Inquirer* by owner Steve DeBellis who also owns the rights to the Lemp name. According to Tom, he paid Mr. DeBellis one dollar for the rights to use the Lemp name.

When asked if he intended to do this again next year, he replied with a resounding "absolutely!"

The attraction is wheelchair accessible. Tickets sell for \$9.00. Children under five are free. No one under fourteen will be allowed access without a parent. The *Haunted Caverns* are open seven days a week 6-11 PM and until midnight Fridays and Saturdays.

***For further information, call Tom at 664-4009.***

### The Benton Park Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 2066  
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