



University Heights Subdivision No.1

# FenceTalk

[universityheightsonline.com](http://universityheightsonline.com)

## Inaugural Tree Talk Tour is New for U. Heights

University Heights is special in many ways, but one of the intriguing aspects of our neighborhood is our trees. We have one of the most diverse tree populations in the St. Louis metro area, and we want to show off our collection. **Sunday, June 3 at 2 p.m.** is the date for the Tree Talk Tour, led by arborist Colleen Baum from Droege Tree Care and our neighborhood tree person Judy Harmon.

U. Heights has approximately 467 trees on subdivision tree lawns. The tour begins and ends in front of Judy Harmon's home, 6984 Cornell. Judy has graciously invited the tree tourers to a reception with refreshments in her garden following the event. RSVPs are not necessary, but if you have questions, call Judy at 863-6159. The tour isn't just for U. Heights residents. Invite your friends who are interested in trees and would enjoy a learning about our tree philosophy.

### Who lives there

Some of our residents don't pay association or front footage fees. They live here free of charge but give back so much in the ecological cycle. During the tour, learn how birds, including owls, hawks, the occasional turkey trotting through, opossums, yes, squirrels and bats enhance our existence here. Also sighted are raccoons, the occasional coyote, a deer (Linda Ballard has a picture) and duckling escapees from Lewis Park pond marching down Yale Ave.

### Social and community benefits

We have a human response to our trees in addition to their beauty. We feel peaceful, restful and tranquil with our neighborhood trees. We are "at home" here. Take a look at the number of residents walking, riding bikes, talking to each other. Our trees foster a communal benefit and make the neighborhood feel safe.

The economic benefits are real too. Air conditioning and heating costs are lower. Property values of homes in an area with trees are five to 15 percent higher than those homes without trees. Potential buyers feel the serenity of a neighborhood with a green canopy.

### And those we don't love

Always the elephant on the tree lawn are the ashes and sweet gum trees. The trustees no longer plant ash trees with the advent of the Emerald Ash Borer. They've removed several small ashes, treated mid-sized and a few larger ashes to avoid the pest and replaced them with other varieties. The ashes comprised 10.4% of our tree lawn population.

And now to the beloved sweet gum tree. In University Heights, 108 are sweet gum, or 25% of our tree lawn population. We are no longer planting those trees, but we are taking care of the ones we still have. The sweet gums disgorge their gum balls in the spring and fall. We have had an unusually productive season so far.

But wait, those gum balls do have important uses. Native Americans used an infusion of the bark medicinally for diarrhea and dysentery and also in poultices for cuts, sores, and bruises.



In a year when an aggressive strain of influenza has gripped the nation, the sweet gum holds out its fruit-laden limbs with its own humble contribution to humanity. The infertile seeds found in each of the sweet gum's compound seed capsules are a naturally occurring source of shikimic acid, one of the main ingredients of Tamiflu.

U City In Bloom also recommends layering gum balls on potted plants to reduce foraging by squirrels.

If the slugs are feasting on your hostas, spread the gum balls among the plants. The slugs don't like the prickly balls, which eventually decay and add a little fertilizer.

### Art and the gum ball

Closer to home, we may have a cottage industry in our subdivision. Save those gum balls to make all kinds of creative (things). Topping the list is sweet gum holiday  
*(continued on page two)*

## Art Speaks in Mario Carlos' Yale Ave. Garden

The path through Mario Carlos' woodland garden does not accommodate the casual visitor, just as the natural path through a forest can be a challenge. The path he created is a rugged one with obstacles, just as nature would have it. But, in both cases, the visitor will be rewarded with intricate surprises and natural beauty.

"I look at my plants and how they behave," Mario says. "I look at my plants many times a day, in different atmospheres and sunlight. I know what's going on and watch my babies constantly."

Knowing the essence of a plant, for Mario, is the outcome of research and planning, although a look at his garden may not present that way at first glance. The garden looks to be a jumble, but get close and see an exquisite pattern of textures, color, shapes, lines and angles in the tree branches, reaching out in a mastery of design.

His plant collection includes more than 100 different miniature hostas. He keeps them in shallow dark brown pots that were specifically made for miniature hostas.

"My collection of rare Japanese maples used to be in containers and were being trained for bonsai but I planted most of them in the backyard woodland garden," he says. "My new plant obsession right now are caudiciform plants. I'm also collecting monstrose and crested cacti and succulents. Most of them came from specialty nurseries both locally and around the US and the bigger specimens were imported from tropical Africa, Asia and Madagascar. Some of my plants were already endangered in the wild."

### A neighborhood of trees

Mario and his partner Mark Pope moved to St. Louis from San Francisco in 1996. "Mark had a job offer here as a faculty member at UMSL. We came here in the fall and it was so beautiful—the trees, so many different colors. We lived in the Central West End for a while and I had a small garden, but I wanted a bigger one. We started house hunting and found this one on Yale. Built in 1927, we are

### Art and the gum ball *(continued from page one)*

decorations, including wreathes, sweet gum holiday trees, favors, Easter sweet gum peeps and snowman decorations. Here's an idea—how about sweet gum sculptures on display at each Progressive Party home. While sweet gum balls can be seen as a irritant, in many ways they are still part of our University Heights living experience. We

just the third owners of our home and felt the neighborhood was so right for us. Later, I was asked to care for the garden at the top of the subdivision (the "Marker Garden"). I put my heart and soul into that task because the garden is for everyone."

### An artist of many talents

Born in the Philippines, Mario received an associate's degree there and got a job doing architectural drafting for the shipbuilding industry. When the company switched to digital blueprints, Mario's interest in that technology was not what motivated him. He loved the precision of hand drawing blueprints and so decided to move on. He had a lifetime interest in art, especially painting and drawing, and had taken a number of art classes both in the Philippines and in San Francisco.

The move to St. Louis enabled him to devote his time to full time fine art studies resulting in academic degrees from St. Louis Community College – Forest Park (A.F.A.) and Fontbonne University (B.F.A., M.A., M.F.A.).

Mario is a 2003 MFA graduate of Fontbonne University, and he now teaches there as well as at Forest Park. His specialties are studio art, drawing, figure drawing, painting and design.

"I am a perfectionist who loves the creative process," he says, "whether in the garden or in the classroom. To me, ideas come as naturally as breathing. Everything in my life involves creativity, whether I'm planning and tending my garden, working with my students, or even cooking. One of the joys of teaching is guiding my students through their creative process and seeing those ideas become a finished work of art."



Mario Carlos

### Subdivision Marker Gardener Wanted

For years Mario Carlos lovingly tended the garden at the top of our subdivision on Yale. He retired and Diane Davenport volunteered for that opportunity. Now, she is retiring also. Would you lend your gardening expertise, mainly weeding and watering, to beautify our neighborhood? Contact Barb Chicherio at 727-8554 or [chicherio@aol.com](mailto:chicherio@aol.com) or for more information.

## No fun (run) for U. Heights This Year

The 44th Annual University City Memorial Day Run will be held on Monday, May 28, 2018. The 5 and 10K events begin at 7:30 AM, in front of the University City Public Library. There is also a 1-mile Fun Run for kids and parents which starts immediately after the timed events (approximately 9:20 AM).

The Race Committee greatly appreciates University Heights' willingness to host the Fun Run portion of the day's events, however; for the first time in decades, the Fun Run will not be held in our subdivision. The ongoing (perhaps endless...) Spire gas line work on most of our streets makes the course unsafe for kids, and adults as well. Alternative courses are being considered and the route will be announced as soon as one is selected – it will be somewhere very near the Library.

For further details and to register online: <http://ucitymemorialdayrun.com/>. This is one of the oldest races in the St. Louis area and a family and community favorite. It benefits The Green Center, U City in Bloom and the University City Public Library. Hope to see you there!

## From the Trustees

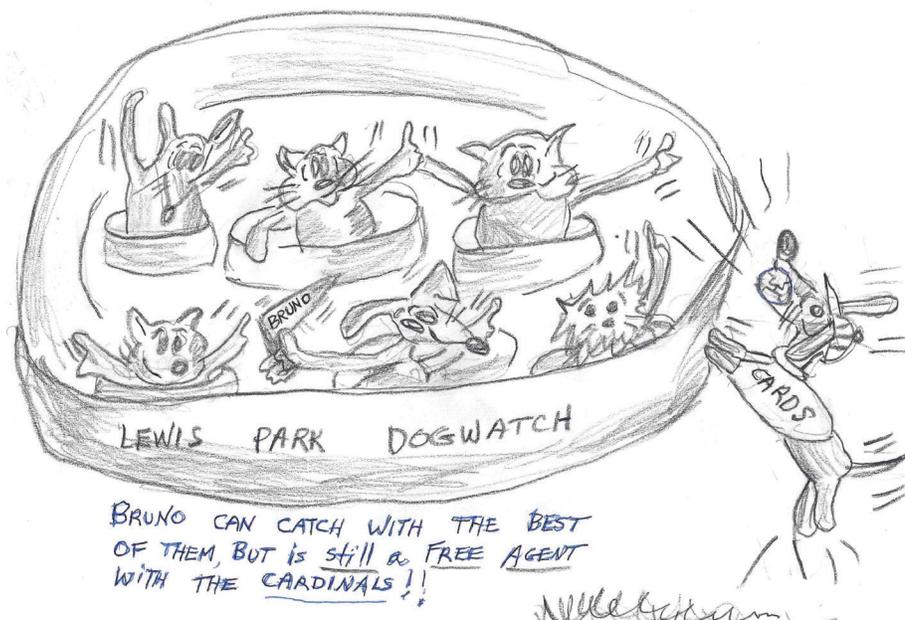
A big thank you to all of our neighbors for your patience with Spire, MSD and Missouri American Water as they are doing work in our streets and tree lawns. We expect the Spire work to be done by the end of September, at which time we will work with them to redo the chip and sealing of the streets. We also anticipate doing some sidewalk and driveway apron work in the fall.

While the Trustees have had another busy month on the court case, we are still not yet in a position to report much. Judge Green issued a Summary Judgment in support of The City, yet affirming the language we were seeking requiring the normal zoning hearing and review process should Mr. Warshaw or any future owner seek a change in usage of 601 Trinity. We are still in conversation with the City, and have not arrived at a formal settlement.

### Board Members Elected at Annual Meeting

Sarah Heyman, Greg Phillips, Phil Slavin and Bart Stewart were approved to second three-year terms. Anil Pillai and Frank Castiglione, former Board alternate were approved for three years, and Amanda Summer and Mario Carlos also joined the Board for first terms. Hope Horn and Joy Gebhardt Beuc are alternates. The monthly meeting schedule is listed on page four. All meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month, except July. Board meetings begin at 7 p.m. All residents are welcome.

## Bruno's Neighborhood Musings by Bruno and Naomi



# Who We Are

## Trustees

Eileen Pheiffer  
314-725-7020  
[eileen.pheiffer@gmail.com](mailto:eileen.pheiffer@gmail.com)

Mark Harvey  
314-398-7485  
[markcharvey@sbcglobal.net](mailto:markcharvey@sbcglobal.net)

Morton Hyman  
314-727-2250  
[99mdhyman.z@gmail.com](mailto:99mdhyman.z@gmail.com)

## University Heights Neighborhood Association

Barb Chicherio, president  
314-727-8554  
[chicherio@aol.com](mailto:chicherio@aol.com)

Marilyn Cathcart, vice president  
314-862-2644  
[mj\\_cathcart@yahoo.com](mailto:mj_cathcart@yahoo.com)

Judy Gainer, secretary  
314-721-6079  
[judithgainer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:judithgainer@sbcglobal.net)

Greg Phillips, treasurer  
314-550-3350  
[greg6983@hotmail.com](mailto:greg6983@hotmail.com)

## New to the neighborhood?

Contact Amanda Summer  
314-727-0339  
[amandasummer@aol.com](mailto:amandasummer@aol.com)

**Join our online community** on  
NextDoorUniversityHeights1  
<https://universityheights1.nextdoor.com/>

**University Heights #1 website**  
<http://universityheightsonline.com/>

**Neighborhood tree management**  
Judy Harmon  
[heyjude6984@att.net](mailto:heyjude6984@att.net)  
(emergencies, call 314 863-6159)

**Fence Talk editor**  
Myra Vandersall  
314-518-1451  
[myravandersall@gmail.com](mailto:myravandersall@gmail.com)

**All Association Board meetings are at 7 pm, the 2nd Tuesday of each month. All residents are welcome.** May 8, Anna Ruffin, 752 Trinity; June 12, Hope Horn, 6954 Cornell; July, no meeting; August 14, Anil Pillai, 6969 Dartmouth; Sept. 11, Amanda Summer and Phil Slavin, 6919 Cornell; October 9, Myra Vandersall, 731 Yale Ave.; November 13, Frank Castiglione, 6900 Cornell; December 11, Judy Gainer, 721Harvard; January 9, 2019, Barbara Chicherio, 720 Harvard; February 2019 Annual Meeting.

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## U. Heights Website Helps Residents to Communicate

**B**ookmark this—[universityheightsonline.com](http://universityheightsonline.com). That's the neighborhood website full of interesting, vital information for every U. Heights resident. Web master Hilde Hochwald has made our website the go-to place for local information and contacts. All in one place are helpful links to utilities, University City services and St. Louis County information as well.

Our history is there too. For light bedtime reading, download all the changes to our trust indenture since 2001 and check out *FenceTalk* newsletters as far back as 1989. You'll find trustee contact information and how to find out the code to the gate in the northeast section. Makes it easy to walk to the little strip mall behind us.

### Moving On and Updating

At the annual meeting Board member Frank Castiglione presented the features available and introduced future enhancements to make our website even more useful. In the works are direct links to local attractions with Goo-

gle map links too. Other live links include directly to the neighborhood's Facebook page and the website [Nextdoor](http://Nextdoor). The Board has also discussed updates to the neighborhood directory, published in the fall of 2012 .

While a published booklet might not happen again, plans are in the works to establish a downloadable electronic directory which would have printable options. The directory should have an opt in/out feature so those who don't want their information published have the ability to do so.

What do you want? Frank and Board member Felix Simmons are assisting Hilde with these enhancements. All suggestions and ideas are welcome.

We really want to make this website a part of your life and enhance residents' ability to communicate easily with each other. Contact Frank at [F.castiglione@liftxl.com](mailto:F.castiglione@liftxl.com) or 612.578.5851 with your suggestions so the U. Heights website can move forward.