

# The Pacer

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## MSD Plans

*City Council pushes back*

At the City Council meeting Jan. 12, representatives of Metropolitan Sewer District presented their plans for a big project, the Upper River des Peres and River des Peres Tributaries Storage Tunnel. It would consist of a deep underground tunnel, pumping station and near-surface sewers. The goal is water quality improvement, not flood control. It would achieve this by capturing the overflow during storms of rainwater and sewage so that polluted water does not flow into creeks and rivers. Construction hasn't started yet, but MSD is negotiating with University City homeowners to buy and demolish their houses without prior notice to city officials. Councilmembers criticized this. Mayor Terry Crow said that the project would be disruptive to U City and would remove properties from tax rolls. He added that MSD has a long history of

high-handed treatment of the city.



*Competitors gather before 2022 Memorial Day Run.*

## Spring Prep

*Time change, parking, Run*  
Daylight Saving Time goes into effect at 2 am March 8. Brace yourself to lose an hour's sleep, and set your old-fashioned watch or clock forward an hour. Your phone and computer will probably figure it out on their own. U City will resume sweeping the streets of Parkview Gardens next month, meaning that alternate side of the street parking regulations will go back into effect in March. Registration opens

Feb. 14 for the Memorial Day Run to be held May 26, co-sponsored by Parkview Gardens Association SBD. The fee for the 5 or 10 K race is \$30. Register online, [ucitymemorial-dayrun.org](http://ucitymemorial-dayrun.org)

## Flu Surge

*Get your shot*

Influenza is spreading fast in the local area. On Jan. 15, the St. Louis County Department of Health rejected federal childhood vaccination policy changes, instead recommending flu vaccines for everybody over six months in age, except for those at increased risk of a reaction. Walgreen's and CVS provide vaccination against flu.

## Free Ride

*How much longer?*

When you approach the gates at Delmar Metrolink Station, a security guard emerges from the booth to let you in. It's possible but not obligatory to buy a ticket from the machine. This has been the

situation for about a year now. Metrolink officials have stated that reducing crime takes a higher priority than revenue. The \$50 million Secure Platform Plan, adding new gates, fencing and CCTV cameras system-wide, is scheduled for completion in January, according to Metrolink's website, but at press time, it doesn't look like they're going to make it.

## EV Charger

*Sponsored by PGA*

The electric vehicle charger sponsored by Parkview Gardens Association is located at 746 Leland Avenue. Parkview Gardens residents can use it for free; email the editor, davidlinzee@yahoo.com

## Jeff City & DC

*MO political news*

In the State of the State speech Jan. 13, Governor Mike Kehoe announced a plan to phase out Missouri income tax over five years. He said that with lower taxes, consumers would spend more, improving the state's economy and growing the population. To offset the revenue loss, the sales tax would be extended to include services, such as subscriptions. This step would require a vote of the people, since it would reverse a 2016 law that banned taxes on services. Democrats criticized the proposal for vagueness about what would be taxed. The speech also announced that the state will cut spending in the coming year by \$600 million, to ensure a balanced budget.

Jeff City will continue to help fund St. Louis's recovery from the May 2025 tornadoes.

Missouri's senior US Senator, Josh Hawley, joined four other Republicans in voting for a resolution that would block President Trump from using military force against Venezuela (again) without Congressional approval. Trump responded by announcing that all five senators should not be re-elected. On Jan. 14, Hawley stated that he was changing his



*A light snow fell January 10.*

vote. He would now vote against the war powers resolution. He said he had been reassured by Secretary of State Marco Rubio that US troops would not be deployed to Venezuela without approval. The war powers resolution failed to pass the Senate, on a tie vote broken by Vice President Vance. US Representative Wesley Bell is urging Energy Secretary Chris Wright to hurry up the long-delayed cleanup of the radioactive West Lake Landfill.

## Monkeys Run Wild

*Or do they?*

Pictures of vervet monkeys, native to Africa, running free in the streets of north St. Louis caused a sensation nationwide in early January. The story faded out, leaving behind many questions. How many monkeys were there? Where did they come from? Where did they go? It's possible they were somebody's pets. It's

illegal to keep monkeys in St. Louis, and the owner may have quietly rounded them up. It's likely that many of the pictures originating on social media were fakes, created by AI. It's even possible that *all* the pictures were fakes, and there never were any real monkeys running around St. Louis. Everyone seemed to have a lot of fun with this story, but

it's more than a little disturbing that even experts can't always tell the difference between real and fake photos anymore.

## To Be Car-Free

*Or not*

Car ownership is expensive. Is it possible to do without a car, and how much money would you save? The Pacer editor, who has been car-free for three years, will address these questions.

First, how much does it cost to own and operate a car?

Kelly Blue Book estimates that if you buy a car that costs \$19,272 and keep it for 5 years, it will cost you \$13,365 in depreciation and \$22,633 in out of pocket expenses. That averages out to \$7,200 per year. According to AAA, the average cost of owning a car through the year 2025 was \$11,577. There are so many variables that estimates are bound to be inconsistent. Are car costs going up? That too varies. The price of gas is fairly low at present and depreciation was slower last year than in previous years. But car loan rates are rising, as is insurance. Tariffs have raised the purchase price of foreign cars. Those cameras, sensors and warning systems that make driving safer are also making repairs more expensive.

What are the costs of going carless? Turning away from the internet, I'll address this question based on personal experience. Last year, my wife and I spent \$862 on Uber rides. We spent \$583 on renting a car for a day every six weeks or so to load up on canned goods, paper products, etc. I estimate that we spent about \$75 on public transit (We have senior half-price cards.) and \$92 on maintaining and repairing our bicycles. Total: \$1,612. So we saved \$5,588, using the Blue Book figure, or \$9,965 using the AAA figure.

Opting out of car ownership is not possible for everyone. We have several advantages. We're retired; we don't have to commute. Nor do we have children who need to be chauffeured around. But our biggest advantage is living in Parkview Gardens. This neighborhood has three Metrolink stations in walking distance, on the red and

blue lines. Numerous bus routes run along Delmar, Olive and Skinner. We have two food markets close by. Delmar has a post office, public library, bars, restaurants and entertainment. The neighborhood is very bike-friendly, with many streets partially closed to car traffic, making it easy and pleasant to get to Clayton or Forest Park.

There are inconveniences the car-free have to bear. Grocery shopping is a challenge; you have to make a list care-



fully and stick to it. Spontaneity takes a hit. You can't decide at the last moment to go to a movie at a suburban omni-plex, or take a country drive if the weather is nice. But there are advantages, too. You don't have to think about the irritating fact that you drive your car for an hour or two a day, but it depreciates 24 hours a day. In winter, you don't have to dig your car out or scrape its windshield. Finally and most obviously, getting around by bike or on foot takes more physical effort than driving. It's up to the individual to decide if that's an advantage or disadvantage.

## TV News

*How much of it is ads?*

Not everyone subscribes to CNN and its constantly

"breaking" news. Many still get their news the old fashioned way, by watching the 5 o'clock local broadcast and 5:30 network program. Sometimes it seems that these shows consist of more commercials than news. To find out, the Pacer editor sat down with his stopwatch and tuned to Channel 5. The Five On Your Side show goes to commercials every eight or nine minutes. That works out to three breaks per show, of two and a half minutes each. The show ends at 5:27, leaving another three minutes of commercials before the start of the network news. That adds up to 10 ½ minutes of commercials and 19 1/2 minutes of news. You get a little more content on the national broadcast, and the breaks are craftily arranged. You're half-way through the

show before you get your first commercial break, and it's only a minute. Then the pace picks up, with two breaks, one of 3 minutes, the second of 3 ½ minutes, and another 2 minutes to round out the hour. So: 9 ½ minutes.

Only about a third of the news is commercials. Less than you thought? I haven't counted self-promotion—mini ads for upcoming stories, and news/commercial hybrids. Currently, KSDK runs a profile of an Olympic athlete almost every night, to promote the Olympics on NBC. Some may find the ads on the news more tedious than most. It depends how you feel about drug commercials.

What can you do? Use the mute button, of course. Or turn off the national news when the first commercial

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News of the Neighborhood  
MSD Project Before Council  
\*Apply for PGA Award  
\*\*Go Car-Free?

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comes on. You've gotten most of the news by that point. Or go to Channel 9 at 5:30 for the almost commercial-free BBC News America. The show has an international viewpoint, which you may like more.

## **PGA Award**

### *Apply now*

Applications for the 2026 Parkview Gardens Association Award are due by April 1. This \$5,000 award is for higher education such as trade school or college. To qualify, you must be a Parkview Gardens Resident and a high school senior who has demonstrated the ability to succeed in your studies as well as commitment to working for the betterment of school and community. Applicants must also show financial need. For more information, consult your high school guidance counselor or call 314-721-5357.