



Garden District News

Roseland Terrace, Kleinert Terrace and Drehr Place Historic Neighborhoods

Fall 2015

Ursin de Roche teaches to "Strum This Way"

By: Mindy Piontek

When Ursin de Roche first picked up a guitar at age eleven, he had no idea that one day he would teach guitar to the movie star daughter of a rock legend. As a sixth grader at Redemptorist Middle School in North Baton Rouge, Ursin started group guitar lessons instead of Spanish or any of the other electives, with his mother's blessing. Group lessons led to private lessons through his teens, and before long, he was majoring in music at South Eastern University and then at the University of La Verne in California.

Although he returned to Baton Rouge without a degree, his lack of matriculation didn't interfere with his employment. "If you take, say, the flute," says Ursin, "your instructor will probably have a music degree. Guitar isn't like that."

Soon after moving back, Ursin answered an ad posted on Craigslist. "A guy running a local music studio on the east side of town was looking to expand his business on this side of town," says Ursin. "At the time, he didn't have any solid teachers on this side of town."

Once hired, Ursin began teaching lessons out of what is now Mid-City Bikes on Government Street next to the Garden District Nursery. Ursin's boss was approached by his high school friend and movie producer, who was looking for someone to



Ursin deRoche relaxing after a guitar lesson in the neighborhood.

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teach Liv Tyler how to play the guitar for the movie "The Ledge," that was filming in downtown Baton Rouge. Ursin's name came up, and the producer contacted him

about teaching Ms. Tyler.

"Then there were two weeks of conference calls--definitely a vetting process," says Ursin. During the calls, sometimes with a group of people and sometimes one on one, Ursin answered a variety of questions.

"They asked me wild stuff—what did I have for breakfast, do I drink a lot, how often do I go on the internet, how many

See STRUMMING, page 6

The Sidewalk Project comes to the Fore at GDCA Meetings

By: Eric Troutman, *President*

For quite some time the board has discussed the potential safety and liability hazards that broken sidewalks throughout the neighborhood present to homeowners, as well as to people who walk our streets for exercise, relaxation, or a form of transportation. On many occasions we'd also heard this concern from neighbors, whether from guests who had trouble walking to

our homes or parents who'd been forced to push their strollers or walk their kids on the more dangerous streets because the sidewalks are in too bad of shape to be accessible. Up until now we've been stuck between our desire to come up with a solution and the feasibility of actually being able to help do something about it.

After budgeting out the money necessary to thoroughly support our security patrol needs for quite some time into the

future, the board decided that the appropriate thing to do with a portion of the association's remaining money would be to develop a strategy to bring additional value to the quality of life of our membership in terms of safety and/or beautification. It didn't take long for someone to bring up the sidewalks.

Because the responsibility of fixing

See SIDEWALKS, page 5

Art-O-Mat to dispense small works of art by BR Artists!

By: Mindy Piontek

Did you know that within walking distance of the Garden District you can purchase original artwork for just \$5? The Baton Rouge Gallery at City Park is home to the Art-O-Mat, a refurbished cigarette machine that now dispenses miniature works of art by local artists.

Just purchase a token from the gallery office, slip it in the coin slot, and pull the knob beneath the artist whose work catches your eye. Current artists whose work is available from the machine are Scott Blake, Karen Waiksnis DiSorbo, Pam Brekas, Dennis Wells, Zach Rhodes, and Alex Wilson. Some of the art is printed on metal, some is decoupaged onto a block of wood, and some is wearable, like Rachel O's Fabulous Whimsy Fabric Button Earrings.

As the machine says, "Purchasing Art is not illegal for children of any age."

"Don't Go Round Artless!" is the inspiring herald for the Art-O-Mat dispenser.



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Garden District News

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Mindy Piontek

If you have comments or story ideas that you would like to submit to the publication contact Mindy Piontek at mmpiontek@aol.com.

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Join your neighbors for the Civic Association Champagne Stroll!

By: Ray Mack

Join your neighbors for the Garden District Civic Association Champagne Stroll on Sunday, October 25, 2015, from 3:30PM until 7:30PM. The rain date will be No v. 1 with the Stroll starting and ending at the same times. The Stroll will default to the rain date, if the chance of rain is greater than 40% at 8AM October 25, according to forecastweather.gov.

You may purchase tickets starting on October 1 at GDCABR.com. Projected ticket prices are \$20 each for Garden District As-

sociation members and \$30 for non-members. Prices will be set by the time tickets go on sale.

The Stroll will feature five homes. At the first house, you will turn in your ticket and receive a commemorative champagne flute.

You will receive a pour of champagne at each home accompanied by snacks at the second and third homes and a light supper with live music at the fifth home. Home addresses and a map will be available for downloading from the GDCABR.com website.

Would you like to be on the GDCA E-Mail List Serve?

By CAROLYN SCHWARZHOFF

The name of our official neighborhood e-mail list is: GDCA_BR, also known as the Garden District E-Mail List. It runs on free Yahoo Groups software and there are nearly 700 Garden District neighbors subscribed.

Our e-mail list has been up and running since 2000 and it grows larger every month!

We use the list to:

Post Garden District announcements, security alerts, calls for neighborhood action, etc.

Send reminders and calls for volunteers for neighborhood events and activities

Discuss neighborhood concerns and answer questions

This is a closed list. Only Baton Rouge Garden District residents or landowners may sign on (our boundaries can be found on the GDCA website here <http://gdcabr.org/districts-filings>). All messages are checked by the administrator for appropriateness before being posted and must concern topics regarding the immediate neighborhood or closely surrounding areas.

All messages must also be signed with your first and last name AND follow all other guidelines for posting. Complete guidelines and other information for the GDCA_BR e-mail list can be found at our website at: <http://gdcabr.org/> (under: Connect with the GDCA, Join the Yahoo Group).

Our guidelines to try to keep the list focused so that your mailbox doesn't overflow and neighbors will stay subscribed.

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UPDATED PHONE NUMBERS FOR GARDEN DISTRICT SECURITY

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, or if you see a crime in progress, call BR Police Dispatch at 389-2000, or call 911.

If a GD security patrol officer happens to already be in the area, Dispatch will call them.

TO DISCUSS ONGOING SECURITY CONCERNS regarding criminal activity, Sgt. Don Stone, BRPD and head of the GD security patrol, is available at 389-5247 (office) or 571-7244 (cell). Please begin all messages with your name, address, and phone number.

Sgt. Stone is happy to talk about security concerns, but he should not be called for emergencies, traffic or parking violations, or other non-threatening matters. For those concerns, please call BR Police Dispatch or the appropriate EBR agency.

If you would like to inform the GD Security Patrol that you'll be out of town, you can submit a house vacancy notice at the Garden District website: http://www.gdcabr.org/form_outOfTown.php

Do you have HOME REMODELING questions? Do you want to stay in your current home and AGE-in-Place?

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3RD Annual Garden District Garage Sale Success!

By: Mindy Piontek

The Garden District lucked out and managed to squeeze the garage sale into a week beset by showers and thunderstorms. Judging by the numbers of cars and trucks parked along neighborhood streets, and the heavy foot traffic between sale venues, the garage sale was a huge success.

Lauren and Lillian Richard of South-downs found children's books and toys, much to Lillian's delight.

Garden District resident, Heather Westra was shopping to furnish her son's college apartment kitchen and scored a Keurig machine and a toaster.

Scores of neighbors and visitors strolled our streets carrying shopping bags of books, pillows, CD's, videos, and records, and loaded furniture into pick-up trucks and SUV's.

From homemade jams and jellies on Terrace, to shaggy Algerian lamb hides on Camelia, to costume jewelry on Tulip, there was something for everyone.

If you missed out on hosting your own sale, look for announcements next summer, and help make the Fourth Annual Garden District Garage Sale even bigger!



Buyers converge on the tables...

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Marketing Boon for Homes

By: Ray Mack

If you are considering selling your Garden District home, remember to market your house as part of an American Planning Association "Great Neighborhood." You might even consider linking to the APA's website (<https://www.planning.org/greatplaces/neighborhoods/2012/>) that gives many reasons for our neighborhood's greatness.

According to several real estate professionals, Great Neighborhood status increases the value of homes in the Garden District because of the rigor of the APA's analysis. Great Neighborhood status is awarded to

only ten neighborhoods each year.

Currently there are fewer than 100 designated Great Neighborhoods in the United States and only one other in the state of Louisiana.

The Garden District was chosen to be one of the Great Neighborhoods in America during 2012 because, according to the APA, "the Garden District is unique and memorable with elements that combine to produce a place that not only works for people in the community but rises far above the ordinary."

Be sure to check out the APA's website and see if their favorite things about our neighborhood are the same as yours.



If your sidewalk looks like this see flyer enclosed.

SIDEWALKS

Continued from Page 1

cracked sidewalks falls on the homeowner, and we've been told that the cost of repair is often the major barrier of having sidewalks fixed, we decided to create a program that will offer our members an incentivized opportunity to replace sidewalk slabs in front of their homes that in some cases have been on their To-Do lists for years.

One main reason that we chose sidewalk improvements is because we believe that the benefits of this initiative will be felt neighborhood wide.

For our member homeowners, this is an opportunity to make their house a safer, more attractive place while also reducing potential fiduciary liability that they would be responsible for should someone be injured on their property.

For the rest of the neighborhood, corrected sidewalks will provide safer paths for leisure strolls or family walks, not to mention the increased value that it will add to the aesthetic appeal of the Garden District.

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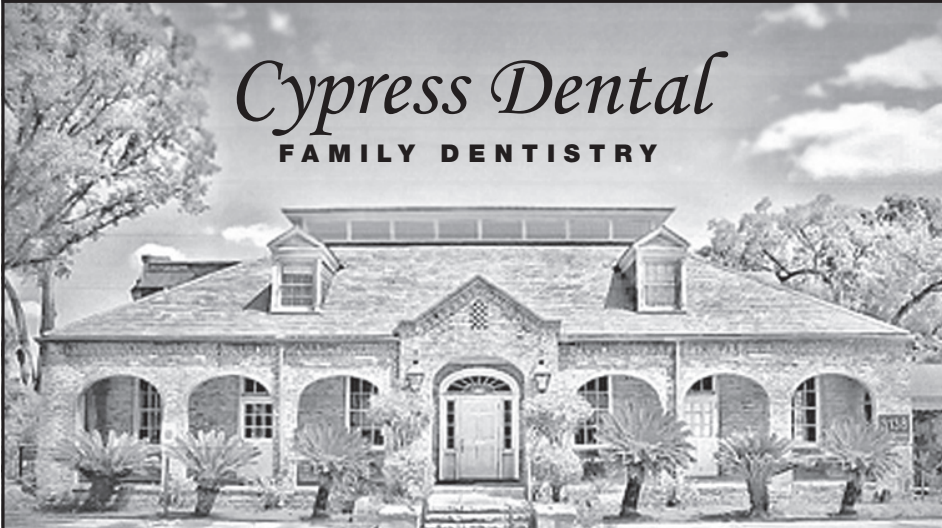
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STRUMMING

Continued from Page 1

hours of TV do I watch a week. They wanted to know if I knew who Liv Tyler was, and I said, 'Yeah, Steven Tyler's daughter.'"

Once the production team had determined that Ursin wasn't a secret Liv Tyler stalker, and they had approved his guitar skills courtesy of YouTube videos, it was time for Ms. Tyler to make the final call.

"They asked me to come down to the set to meet her," says Ursin. "They were filming above Lucy's in a really old apartment." After a brief introduction—"Hey, Liv, this is Ursin deRoche"—Liv asked him if he smoked. Ursin replied, "Yeah," and she said, "Let's go have a cigarette on the balcony."

The two smoked and chatted for a while—"She was just like a regular girl, like my sister"—until Ms. Tyler decided that Ursin would do just fine.

Ursin's assignment was to teach Ms. Tyler to play a rendition of Ave Maria arranged for solo guitar. "The director told me to get her to the point where she could have been playing, with her hands in the right places, but that they'd dub in a professional when they got to editing." Ms. Tyler had other

ideas and insisted, with language inappropriate for a community publication, that she really be able to play it.

For the next few weeks, Ursin says, "I was on call 24/7. They'd call me at 8 AM or 2AM and ask me to come down to her trailer. Sometimes she'd show, and sometimes she wouldn't and they'd pay me to sit in her trailer, watching TV and eating free catering."

When Ms. Tyler realized she wasn't making much progress in the brief bits of time squeezed in between takes, she called Ursin to make other arrangements.

"She asked if I minded coming down to her hotel," says Ursin. "She was staying at the Hilton." When he arrived, she asked if he wanted something to eat or drink, and despite his answer to the negative, she insisted, picked up the room service menu and ordered most of the items listed.

"You know how it usually takes half an hour, forty-five minutes to get your room service order?" asked Ursin. "In five minutes there was a knock on the door, and the hall outside was lined with waiters pushing silver serving carts." For the next few hours, Ursin worked with Ms. Tyler, until she was satisfied with her progress. When

the movie was released in 2011, it was Liv Tyler playing Ave Maria for solo guitar.

As is so often the case, one great opportunity led to many more. "It was like dominoes falling," says Ursin. He was featured in 225, was given the cover of the Baton Rouge Business Report, appeared on Liv Tyler fan web sites, had stories in The Sound guitar magazine and on a French guitar web site. He also garnered endorsement deals from Ernie Ball guitar strings, Intex cables, and Music Man guitars. The band he was with was able to play all over the South, due to his fat stack of press clippings.

Eventually, as Ursin says, "that all ran its course."

Today, he's self-employed, teaching anyone, famous or not, how to play the guitar.

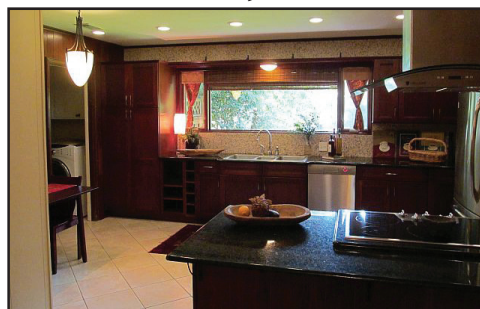
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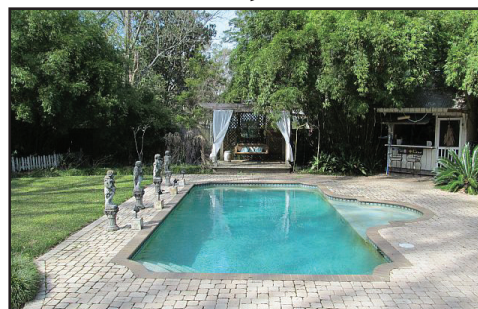
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