

## A Note From Your President

BY  
**RICHARD SEIFERT**
**G**reetings, again! As I write this article, I am half way through my term as President of the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association. The organization by-laws insist that we have a new President each year and I think that is a good idea. Now hold that thought for a moment.

A few weeks ago we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the TGHNA with a party on Spring Ave. We had a fabulous turnout! I want thank all of you who came, all who helped out during the event, all the venders who supplied food and prizes, and especially the four people who did most of the planning and organizing. Fantastic job!

Earlier this year we conducted a survey of Tower Grove Residents. The last Gazette summarized what we heard from you and you can still find full results on our web site, <http://towergroveheights.com/> A number of respondents, of course, suggested something like a giant block party for our anniversary celebration. I've also been giving a lot of thought to survey Questions 9 and 10, which asked what issues need to be addressed and requested new ideas, activities, or improvements for Tower Grove Heights. Sixty two of the respondents had suggestions there and they range from small to large things.

*continued on page 3*

## Our Recollection Collection


**W**hat would you tell you great grandchildren about the years you lived in Tower Grove Heights? We are starting a collection of residents' thoughts about life in the Heights for people to read in the future. Until we find a better name, it will be TGH's Recollection Collection.

We invite you to participate. Do you have any interesting neighborhood stories or particular thoughts about what brought you here or kept you here? Jot them down and send them in. Whether you have three sentences or three pages, send it in.

We aren't sure where this effort will lead, but it could be interesting. Maybe we will post some responses on our web site. Maybe some will lead to future Gazette articles. Maybe they will be lost and rediscovered in fifty years. Who knows?


E-mails can go to [secretary@towergroveheights.com](mailto:secretary@towergroveheights.com) or send paper mail to our Post Office Box 160069 [63116]. Please note "Recollection Collection" somewhere.





### IN THIS ISSUE

<i>A Note from Your President ...</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Our Recollection Collection ....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Plant a Tree .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Defying the Laws of Physics.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Urban Future .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Membership Form.....</i>	<i>12</i>



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# *Tower Grove Heights Gazette*

is brought to you quarterly by:

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## *A Note From Your President*

CONTINUED

But instead of announcing some new initiatives here, I'm going to turn those questions back at you: What are YOU going to do to make Tower Grove Heights a better place for all of us? Please don't just turn the page – we need you. There are small things you can do and other things not so small. Let's consider a few.

Several survey comments dealt with litter and general neighborhood appearance. So how about you call up a neighbor, grab a trash bag, walk up and down your block or alley and pick up any trash you see. Along the way, say "Hi" to everyone you encounter.

A Yard Award seemed to be a popular idea. Would you serve on a committee to figure out how and when yards or gardens would be judged?

We have a Welcome Packet that Block Captains can deliver when new folks move in. But we have almost run out of them. It would be great to have a few volunteers gather up new materials and assemble a new batch.

Some feel our Block Captains are not sufficiently engaged. How about you taking that on? A third of our blocks currently have no representative. I'm sure the other captains would appreciate any assistance you would offer.

Do you have writing skills? Would you like to submit an article for the Gazette?

In mid-winter, planning usually begins for the Autumn Fest. It's a group effort and you could take part. But what we really need is to find the person to take the lead.

I mentioned above that each year TGHNA must identify our future President. This year we also must find a new Membership Secretary. And our Recording Secretary plans to retire at the end of 2013. Are you willing to step up?

The Survey generated a lot of great ideas for the Heights, and I bet you have others. But what are your ideas on your involvement? I said it above – we need you.

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# PLANT A TREE

*by Marilyn Browning*

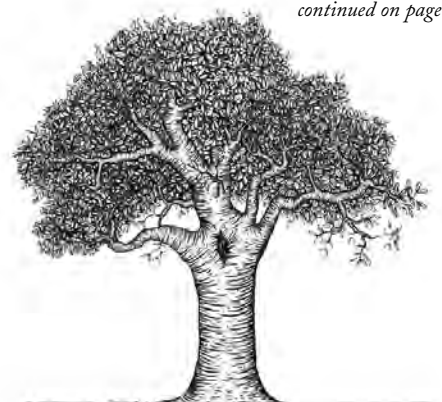
**There are plenty of reasons to plant a tree, and to care for the ones on your own property and in public spaces.**

First off, trees increase water retention and water quality. Trees reduce topsoil erosion by catching precipitation with their leaf canopies. Also, leaves that have fallen from the trees and begun to decay form an organic layer that lets water slowly percolate into the soil. Both the leaf canopy and fallen leaves lessen the force of storms and slow down water runoff and soil erosion. Research has shown that 100 mature trees intercept about 100,000 gallons of rainfall per year. Along with breaking the fall of rainwater, tree roots remove nutrients that are harmful to water ecology and quality. All of this also helps reduce street flooding and sedimentation in streams, leading to greater water quality.

Second, trees increase the beauty and property values on your street. Trees add color to an area, softening harsh lines of buildings and screening unsightly views. Depending on where, what kind, how big and how many trees are planted on a property, property values increase 5 to 15 percent when compared to properties without trees. Studies show that trees also enhance community economic stability by attracting businesses and tourists as people tend to linger and shop longer along tree-lined streets. It's also been shown that apartments and offices in wooded areas rent more quickly and businesses leasing office spaces in developments with trees reported higher productivity and fewer absences.

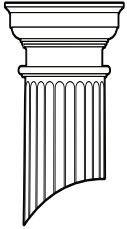
Third, trees help preserve our paved streets. Asphalt paving contains stone aggregate in an oil binder. Without shade provided by trees, the oil heats up and volatilizes, leaving the aggregate

*continued on page 11*



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# DEFYING THE LAWS OF PHYSICS

BY  
RICH IEZZI

While driving the 'Heights' a few months ago, I spied a Realtor placing a for sale sign in front of 3722 Connecticut, a two family flat. Always curious, I asked, "How much"? I was told it was \$50,000 and it was pretty rough. I pestered the Realtor to give me a quick peak and after 30 seconds on the first floor, I walked out confirming, "You're right, it's deplorable".

The building sold in a week and had a beehive of activity from the moment it closed. A few days ago, my wife, Jean, was on our computer and told me, "You need to see this". Incredibly, there was 3722 Connecticut listed for sale with a new floor plan and beautiful, glitzy photos.

When I visited with Mary Krummenacher, the realtor for the project, she explained what was going on. "We've got a group of investors who started out in rentals but have recently gotten into the high-end side of the market. They've done work in Soulard and Benton Park and are always looking for doable properties". Finding 3722 Connecticut was no accident. Mary told me, "We're looking all the time".

Interviewing Mary was fun because she told me just what I wanted to hear. When asked what she knew about Tower Grove Heights and why she thought this project would

work, she replied, "This is a premium location and the Tower Grove Heights neighborhood is one of the reasons I knew the project would succeed." Also, "Buyers love the area—I've already had 25 people come through the property in the first 30 minutes and we've had two offers before holding today's Open House".

When I saw the building this time, it took awhile to reorient myself because I remembered it as a two-family. The first thing I noticed was that the second floor appeared to float effortlessly over the first, defying the laws of gravity and physics. The walls that used to separate the former living room-dining room-bedroom arrangement were removed, giving a dramatic front to back view. When I kidded Mary about still having some remaining walls, she quipped, "We have to have something to mount the flat screen TV on". She's quick. While the building wasn't one of the larger ones on the block, the developers still found a way to add a bathroom and kitchen pantry with a place for a washer/dryer on the first floor and two full baths with a mile long walk-in closet upstairs. Mary caught me studying the exposed brick walls in the kitchen and front room and informed me that the brick exuded warmth and charm that 'resonated' with buyers.

I was pleased to hear Mary's assessment of the current real estate situation---she feels that established city neighborhoods are in a strong recovery mode. Ironically, the scarcity of inexpensive properties in quality neighborhoods was cited as the one limiting factor to doing additional developments.

I guess I better get up to speed on my terminology. Years ago, the Heights 'had potential', then became 'up and coming' but now we're 'resonating'. I like that.

- Rich Iezzi



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**BY JANICE WILDRICK**

The topic of education in St. Louis City rarely brings happy thoughts. Usually it brings thoughts of deaccreditation, knock out gangs, dismal graduation and literacy rates. Depressed now? Well, if you are, stop it! I am here to bring you some good news, and it's happening in our neighborhood (even better).

A couple of years ago my partner, Michael, came home from a TGH Neighborhood Association meeting with all kinds of STL City education facts and figures. He said that UrbanFUTURE, a non-profit located on south Grand, was looking for volunteers to help out at Fanning Middle School. I was working ridiculous hours, so I made a mental note and got on with what I needed to get on with, but in quiet times the figures haunted me.

I was incredibly fortunate, as many of you reading this were, to have grown up in an excellent school district. I knew volunteering an hour or two per week could never repay my parents or the community in which I grew up for that gift. But my hour was needed. I had it so I gave it. That was a year and a half ago, and my experience through UrbanFUTURE at Fanning Middle School has been nothing less than amazing. Before I tell you about my experience, though, I need to tell you about UrbanFUTURE.

UrbanFUTURE's philosophy and action plan is based on their RESTORATION PROGRAMS. What is Restoration? Well, quite simply it is the attempt to restore the belief of parents and students that there will be good, well-paying careers open to the kids in their future. The way to prepare for those careers is through academic achievement. The idea is simple but the fulfillment takes work. Here's a quick snapshot of how UrbanFUTURE does it.

The first Restore program is career exploration. As Carl Sandburg said, "Nothing happens unless first a dream," so the EXPLORE! PROGRAM shows kids where to aim their dreams. Community leaders, business owners, professionals, and tradespeople all volunteer their time to come in to talk about their careers; how the children will need the skills and knowledge they are

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getting at school; and how critical it is to graduate. Workshops and field trips where community businesses and colleges open their doors, help the kids realize that these are real options open to them.

The second Restore program is INSPIRE MENTORING. Mentors, who are community volunteers, play a critical role in the kids' lives because they help create a bridge between the school, the parent and the student. Getting middle schoolers to realize that there is life beyond video games, basketball, Project Runway, or that they will grow up even...

Well, trust me. It'd be easier to pull your own tooth. Not including the parent is like getting in a car with no tires and expecting to get somewhere, but parental involvement can be hard. There are so many reasons why parents sometimes just need a little help from someone in the community, and that's where the mentors come in. By keeping in touch with the student's teachers, meeting with the student and talking with the parent once a week, they make sure everyone knows what is happening.

The Third Restore program is IMPACT TUTORING, where volunteer tutors help build up the kids' communication and math skills so students can meet or exceed their grade level expectations.

But there's more: There is enrichment, character building, and, very importantly, contracts. UrbanFUTURE is an extended day program in which students and their parent(s) have to choose. Openings are limited. Contracts ensure that both the parent and child know exactly what is expected. All of it, everything UrbanFUTURE does, with the help of the community volunteers, is about opening kids' eyes to their dreams. Helping them define the path that will get them there and making sure that they have the tools to travel the road successfully.

So, as I'm wrapping this up, I realize that I dropped a teaser on you at the very beginning. I told you I would tell you about my amazing experience this past year. So I will tell you a little now, and hope that

*continued on page 10*



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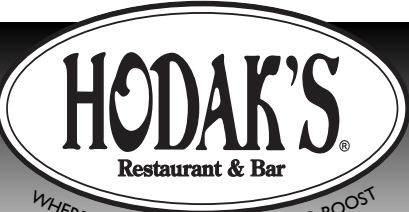
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**URBANFUTURE**  
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someone will let me do this again for the next newsletter. When I started volunteering a year and a half ago at Fanning I was scared to death. I had no clue as to how to talk to kids. I had a pretty good sense that my life might not be the textbook example of how to do things, and schools were never my favorite places. What volunteering at UF has taught me is that kids really want you to ask questions about them and listen way more than they want you to talk. Saying, "I believe in you," trumps a textbook-perfect life any time. Most importantly, I learned that if we want the kids of this city to walk into their school and expect to get something good out of it, we the adults need to go first and lead by example.

If you want to learn more about UrbanFUTURE and how you can help, you can find them at [www.urbanfuturestl.org](http://www.urbanfuturestl.org).



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**MEXICAN  
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# PLANT A TREE

by Marilyn Browning

CONTINUED

unprotected. Vehicles then drive over the aggregate causing it to loosen which grinds down the pavement. Therefore, not only do trees help to maintain the integrity of neighborhood paved streets, but they also lower costs expended on re-paving those streets.

Fourth, trees reduce energy costs. In the summer months, trees strategically planted along streets and near buildings lower air temperatures and reduce glare by providing shade. Large trees strategically placed on the sunny sides of a house provide enough shade to reduce air-conditioning costs by as much as 30 percent. Trees also help with energy costs in the winter by blocking cold winds, thereby reducing the strain on heating units. These energy savings, when spread over many houses, neighborhoods and urban areas, can reduce the demand for power production by utility plants, which also reduce the amount of air pollutants produced by these power plants.

Want to see more trees in and around your neighborhood? The City of Saint Louis Forestry Division plants street trees in the tree lawn, the City easement along public streets between the curb and the sidewalk. Trees are planted at no charge to the adjacent property owner. Property owners can request a tree (or trees) for the tree lawn adjacent to their property by calling the Citizens' Service Bureau at 314-622-4800 or by following the links to CSB (request a City Service) at [www.stlouis-mo.gov](http://www.stlouis-mo.gov). You can plant a tree at your own expense in the tree lawn, but it requires a permit from the Forestry Division. Keep in mind, too, that regardless of who plants them, trees on the tree lawn are the property of the City of Saint Louis, since they're on city property. In either case, it's up to you to care for your new tree during its first years by providing water during drought times. The city will be responsible for any dead limb removal.

If you'd like more trees in the neighborhood, but don't have the space on your own tree lawn, consider a tax-deductible contribution to purchase and care for a tree in Tower Grove Park. Just go to [www.towergrovepark.org](http://www.towergrovepark.org) and click on Get Involved to learn the details.

Facts and figures about trees courtesy of  
Urban Forestry Network



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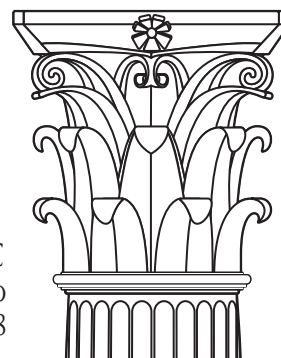
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The Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association can only be YOUR association if you join. With your participation, TGHNA will be a reflection of what YOU want the Heights to become. So please don't delay in joining or rejoining.

- ✓ To find out what is happening in the neighborhood
- ✓ To make the Heights a cleaner and safer place
- ✓ To have a liaison with City Hall and other agencies
- ✓ To better protect our property values
- ✓ To make TGH a more interesting, fun place to live

Indicate your membership level choice: **=====**

\_\_\_\_\_ INDIVIDUAL (1 vote) \$10/year

\_\_\_\_\_ HOUSEHOLD (2 votes) \$15/year

\_\_\_\_\_ ASSOCIATE (non-voting) \$10/year

\_\_\_\_\_ LIFETIME (1 vote) \$100 single payment

\_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS (1 vote) \$25 /year  
(entitles member to a 10% discount  
on TGHNA Gazette Ads for one year)

*Include my name, address  
and contact information in  
the TGHNA Buzz Book. . .*

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

*Please add my email address  
to the Neighborhood Forum  
Email notification list. . .*

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

*Return this form and tax deductible gift to your block representative or send to:*

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(TGHNA is a tax exempt 501c3 organization)

## Test Drive

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