

Tower Grove Heights Gazette

Volume 10, No. 6

Grand to Gustine

Arsenal to Utah Place

July 1999



1999 Festival of Nations Will Take Place July 31st & August 1st

By Janine Lawler

Mark your calendars for Saturday, July 31st and Sunday, August 1st, the new dates for the 1999 Grand South Grand Festival of Nations. The Festival will take place right in the middle of South Grand, between Arsenal and Humphrey.

For newcomers to the area, the Festival of Nations is a two-day international street festival, designed to highlight the diversity and celebrate the unity of our South City community. The Festival features international cuisine, entertainment, arts, and children's activities. If you've attended before, and especially if you haven't, you won't want to miss it - the 1999 Festival promises to be bigger and better than ever before!

The Around the World in 5K Run/Walk, sponsored by the South City YMCAs, will kick off the Festival on Saturday morning at 9:00am. Entertainment and vending will begin at 11:00am on Saturday and wrap up at 11:00pm. Sunday's hours will be 12 noon to 7:00pm. Once again we'll have two stages of international entertainment including belly dancing; Hispanic dancing; Irish

clogging; storytelling; Dragon dancing; street performers; music of all varieties; and much, much more.

New this year will be the Family Village, featuring entertainment, activities and food designed with families in mind. You may want to come back again in the evening after the children have gone to bed, and have a few beers with your neighbors in the Beergarden. There will also be a Community Support Tent providing information on neighborhood associations, area schools and churches, and social programs.

Don't forget that Grand will be closed from Arsenal to Humphrey at 10:00pm on Friday, July 30 and will re-open at 10:00pm on Sunday, August 1. So if you absolutely have to be somewhere else that weekend, you'll want to plan an alternate route. Volunteers are still needed for the weekend of the Festival and there are still booth spaces available for food and arts vendors as well as not-for-profit information booths. For more information on how you can get involved please call (314) 772-4640.

See you there!

From the President

Elizabeth Braznell

We are our own worst enemies. Remember Pogo? He said, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." So true. Barb Potts, our Neighborhood Stabilization Officer, frequently says, "Grouse about the neighborhood in private. When you are in public, this is the greatest neighborhood in the world!"

How many of you have heard someone say, or may have said yourself, "No one would pay that to live here! They could live in the county for that!" Ah, yes, the county. That Mecca of all that is tasteful, wonderful, and desirable.

Well, folks, we have houses selling for great prices and rentals that are truly amazing in places you wouldn't expect. The point is, people do want to live here and they will pay for the privilege. Why? Because what we have here they can't get in the county. People are moving here because they want to live in a culturally diverse neighborhood. Because they want restaurants and shops in their neighborhood. Because they want a neighborhood! And that's what we have.

Shortly after Jay and I moved into our home almost ten years ago, my parents were concerned about our safety in the City. One day they dropped by. My almost-eighty-year-old mother got out of the car and knocked on the door. No response. She peered in through the window. She walked around to the back yard, looking for us. When she got back to the front of the house, she noticed neighbors watching her. Mrs. DeWitt, Mr. Radford, and Mrs. Akin were all standing on their porches. Mom looked back, then sheepishly called out, "I'm her mother!"

In telling me the story, Mom was impressed that people cared enough about their neighbors to keep an eye out. She said it reminded her of the neighborhood of her youth. And it's true. Can you walk your dog without someone stopping to say hello? Can you mow your lawn without someone honking and waving as they drive by? Can you grab a burger at the Diner or pick up your dry cleaning at the Orpheum without meeting someone you know?

That feeling of neighborliness is what makes Tower Grove Heights so special. Let's foster it and grow it. And be proud of where you live. By the way, leave your porch light on all night. It looks really friendly and keeps burglars away. I'd hate for anything bad to happen to you, Neighbor.

The Tower Grove Heights Gazette

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email slangan@stlnet.com.

TGHNA General Meetings are held
at 7:15PM on the 4th Tuesday of each
month (except Dec) at the First
Church of Divine Science, 3617
Wyoming.

Dining on Grand South Grand

By Tim and Debbie Akin

We are tremendous fans of Vietnamese food. The neighborhood is blessed with several excellent restaurants that specialize in this cuisine. The Lemon Grass Restaurant at 3216 South Grand Boulevard is the reincarnation of Da Nang and is still operated by Jennifer and Kathy Ngo. They describe their food as authentic Vietnamese style. We can't testify to it's authenticity but we can sing the praises of the dishes we have tried.

We never go to a Vietnamese restaurant without trying the spring rolls. Debbie selected GOI CUON CHAY (vegetarian spring rolls) and I decided to be adventurous and try the BANH XEO (Vietnamese pancake).

The spring rolls were made with vermicelli, lettuce, tofu, mint and bean sprouts wrapped in rice paper. They were accompanied by a sweet brown sauce sprinkled with peanuts. The pancake was a very interesting appetizer and our favorite part of the meal. It was a thin rice batter pancake filled with shrimp, chicken, bean sprouts and other assorted vegetables. A large helping of lettuce accompanied the pancake.

After attempting to eat it like an American style pancake, our waitress saw our perplexed looks and instructed us to use the lettuce like bread to make a sandwich. Once we learned the proper etiquette we were able to thoroughly enjoy the BANH XEO and look forward to having it again.

The Lemon Grass has an extensive



entree menu including beef, lamb, chicken, pork, seafood and vegetarian dishes. They also serve a group of entrees prepared in clay pots. Judging from the orders taken around us these are popular items.

We tried PHO DAC BIET (combo beef noodle soup) and GA ME (crispy sesame chicken). The PHO DAC BIET was rice noodle soup with round cuts of beef and well done steak meatballs. The GA ME was fried chunks of white chicken meat with a sweet, spicy brown sauce surrounded with broccoli.

We finished the meal with banana pudding served with a tapioca coconut milk sauce and topped with peanuts. It was a very light and refreshing dessert that satisfied without being overwhelmingly sweet.

The Lemon Grass is open Sunday-Thursday from 11:00AM to 10:00PM and Friday-Saturday from 11:00AM to 11:00PM. Lunch specials are available from 11:00AM to 3:00PM on the week days and are served with soup, crab meat ragoon and steamed rice. Call for information or carry out at 314-664-6702.



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Seven Summer Things

By Dave Drebes

Summer is the season for trying something new. Many of us went barefoot in the grass for the first time during the summer. We learned to ride a bike or to swim for the first time during the summer. Here are things you can try this summer. Some of them for the first time, others, just one more time.

For the Consumer — Hone your bargain hunting, window-shopping skills by spending your Saturday mornings at estate sales. Just get up a little earlier on Saturday, pick up the Post Dispatch, grab a pen with a cup of coffee at South City Diner and comb through the estate sales listings in the classifieds. Stay away from moving sales or yard sales. City houses generally have better booty. The further west you go, the newer the homes, the less likely you are to find that antique piece or classic gem. Remember that you don't want their junk, you want their stuff. By the end of the summer you should be able to easily tell the difference.

For the Revolutionary — See what the kids are up to, taking it to the streets. On the rainy day, visit www.mstl.org on the Internet and learn about Metropolis St. Louis, the group that is trying to make the City hip again. Pick out an event they're doing and go check it out. Another neat group is Art This! (961-1181). They're trying to bring art back to the community and the community back to art. They do something called Spin Art at the Lounge Upstairs (3131 Grand) every once in a while that you must experience. But best of all, do your own thing. Go buy some sidewalk chalk and go scrawl your own revolutionary

message up and down Grand at some summer midnight.

For the World Traveler — The MetroLink Tourist. Start at the airport, hop on the MetroLink with a camera and your best French accent. Stop at each station and see the City through the eyes of a World Traveler. See the wonders of UMSL, Forest Park and Busch Stadium. Eat somewhere in the middle like Nik's Wine Bar on Pershing. Then of course you must make the photos into a slide show for the next time company comes over.

For the Beatles Fan — It starts at Streetside Records with your purchase of "Let it Be" by the Beatles. Get a long extension cord, run it up to the roof of your house where you've moved your stereo for the afternoon. Blast Let It Be as loud as you can. The neighborhood will slowly follow the music to your house, stopping life on South Grand until the police come to shut you down.

For the Architectural Historian — Go tour the City Hospital before it is torn down to make way for the parking lot of a new office park. It works best if you go at night, wear black, and good rugged shoes. Make sure to be real still and quiet if some guy with a blowhorn says something about the place being surrounded and where your hands should be.

For the Religious — Try a new angle, find a new angel. Try the Vedanta Society of St. Louis (205 S Skinker Blvd) where they say, "Truth is One: Sages call it by various names." Sunday morning services at 10:30am or their Tuesday and Thursday classes. Even if your mind doesn't get stronger, just saying "Swami Chetanananda" will do wonders for your mouth.

For the Lover — summertime is the time to finally ask out that sassy meter maid. The one who makes you park illegally just so you

can watch her scribble down a ticket and smack it on your windshield. Time to go to Humphrey Deli, buy some fruit and juice and take her to Tower Grove Park for a picnic.

Now, if after all this, you still have some summer left, may I recommend the following possibilities:

- Spend a night in the Park.
- Find your third grade science teacher.
- Memorize a poem.
- Do something naughty.
- Write an article for the Gazette.

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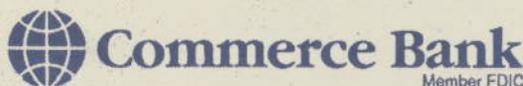
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STREET BEAT

By Don Hardin

“What was the best vacation you have taken?”



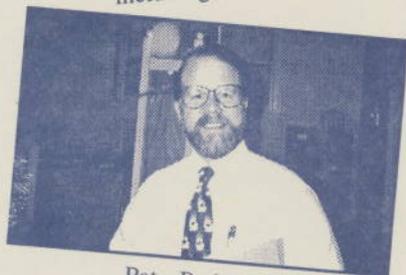
Patty - Wyoming
"A trip to southeast Alaska including Kayaking."



Jennifer - Hartford
"Hanging out pool-side at my mom and dad's place in my hometown."



Cheryl - Arsenal
"A trip to a beautiful resort in Mexico."



Pat - Parker
"Driving across the country (destination San Diego) with the whole family."



Jeff - Connecticut
"A trip to Cape Cod."



Barbara - Humphrey
"A trip to beautiful downtown Boston."

The Treasures of Tower Grove Park

The Lily Pond Summer House
by Don Hardin



Planted modestly into the surrounding foliage, this small but well proportioned shelter house, shows a wealth of tasteful ornamentation including the iron cresting along its roof line. From the interior one catches views of the lily pond, the fountain at the ruins and other objects near the interesting north gate.

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The Tattler

By Sara Langan

Are you wondering what is happening to Grand Avenue? The first step of a 4-step phase entailing the removal of medians and resurfacing of the street was completed in mid-March. New traffic lights that originate from the sides of the street and hang over Grand will replace those that were in the center medians. The second step begins shortly with the City planning and programming department installing new fiber optic lines for synchronizing all the traffic signals. The third step will be the complete resurfacing of South Grand and complete striping of the street designating the center lane as a turn lane.

\$1,507,250 has been awarded to the project through a grant application to the federally funded Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) Enhancement Program according to Anne Moore, Grand Visions Redevelopment Project Chair. The City of St. Louis is the primary backer for the grant and will commit 20% matching funds as required by the program. New medians and streetscape will result. The Grand overpass is also targeted for redevelopment (\$14,562,500). The plan is to narrow it to 4 lanes, create bike and pedestrian paths

with cut ins for metro link station access. The decomposing Southern foot will be replaced and it will be repaved. The Mill Creek Metrolink station a.k.a. the Grand Ave station will be beautified (\$351,670) with landscaping, heaters, bike racks and added signage and security.

The Task Force is gearing up to meet again. If you would like an opportunity for input, contact the T G Heights representative, Elizabeth Braznell.

Grand South Grand House Tour Wrap Up-the tour raised between \$4-5,000 (bills have not all been tabulated) for this year's beneficiary, the South Side YMCA. Over 1000 people came through the tour houses with 33% buying advance tickets. The Water Tower Tour also did very well-800 visitors on Saturday and 1600 on Sunday making \$10,000 for the park renovation. Mark your calendars for next year's tour scheduled April 15-16, 2000. Volunteers are needed for the tour booth, recruiting sponsors and advertisers. Contact Jean Iezzi, Tower Grove Heights committee member, if you are interested.

The City Living Program charged with the responsibility to promote city neighborhoods is up and running. The permanent headquarters are at the corner of Lindell and Euclid in the NationsBank building. All neighborhoods have been asked to contribute to the displays with "cut-outs", photos and handouts.

RECIPE CORNER

By Audrey Anderson

Michelle Hu and I have been neighbors for the last two years, so I didn't have to go far to get this recipe. Last winter Michelle had a few people over for supper and served chicken that she had baked in the oven with this marinade. She accompanied it with pesto pasta and a grilled vegetable dish.



Mike, Michelle and baby Rosa are moving back to Minnesota in July, and Utah Place just won't be the same. Impromptu gatherings on their front stoop are a nightly ritual throughout the week with neighbors on both sides and from the upstairs apartment coming and going, shooting the breeze and catching up on the neighborhood news (gossip). Everyone is anxious to hear about Rosa's latest accomplishment, and we have friendly competitions to see whom the baby likes best on that particular day. I would bet that wherever Michelle turns up next, there will be the same type of neighborhood gatherings.

I hope you enjoy this recipe.

Utah Chicken Marinade

1/2 cup soy sauce
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
1 tsp. oregano
1/2 tsp. basil
1 clove garlic, crushed
1/4 tsp. pepper

Combine all ingredients and pour over raw chicken pieces in a non-metal dish. Cover and refrigerate several hours, turning occasionally. Cook the chicken on the grill or in the oven. Use marinade to baste chicken while cooking.

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HISTORIAN'S CORNER:

“WHO WAS QUEEN ANNE AND WHY DID SHE BUILD HOUSES IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD ANYWAY?”

By Mark Abbott

When you ask most people in the Heights what style their house is, they will puff out their chests and say “Queen Anne.” But is it?

Queen Anne was queen of England early in the 18th century when America was still part of the British empire. Apparently though, she had no real interest in architecture nor did the architecture of her reign have any resemblance to the style that has come to bear her name. In fact, if anything, the “Queen Anne style” was a reaction to the “Renaissance style” popular in England in the early 1700’s.

What we now call the Queen Anne style was a fusion of English and American styles which came together around 1860, and was popular on both sides of Atlantic until shortly after the turn of the century. Depending upon whom you read, the Queen Anne style was an invention either of the British architect, Richard Norman Shaw, who actually coined the term, “Queen Anne,” or it originated with the American, J.J.Stevenson, who called his version, “Free Classic.” Both Shaw and Stevenson, however, were influenced not by the eighteenth century, but by the Middle Ages. Indeed, both were reacting against the neo-Gothic and neo-classical elements popular during Queen Anne’s reign.

The most common elements of Queen Anne were unplastered red brick exteriors (though some shingle houses are called Queen Anne) and the absence of classical

detail. The desired effect was a sense of irregular symmetry that was achieved through varying window treatments, dormers, extended chimneys, metalwork shutters, bay windows, and turrets. (See Figure 1) Inside, Queen Anne featured a rather plain square floor plan that encouraged a high degree of artistic freedom for the householder. Irregularity was admired and the interior was expected to be crowded with an eclectic mix of 18th and 19th century style furniture. (See Figure 2) Living rooms were supposed to exude a feeling of “cozy domesticity” and fireplaces were encouraged, even though by the 1870’s, most new houses in America had central heating with either steam heat or forced hot air. Another common Queen Anne feature after 1870 in America was the bathroom where tub and toilet were combined in one room—a practice that would remain uncommon in Europe for many years. While irregularity was the desired effect with the exterior and the interior of the house itself, Queen Anne landscaping was quite formal. It featured “old fashioned gardens” that were patterned after the gardens of the late 17th and early 18th centuries that had clipped hedges, topiary, and “old fashioned flowers.”

One reason the Queen Anne style became so pervasive and eventually so eclectic was because of pattern books. Pattern books were collections of architectural plans that either prospective homebuyers or builders could purchase for

costs ranging from a few cents up to \$40. Because of their availability and because they dispensed with the need of having an architect, pattern books became extremely popular in the last third of the 19th century. Since it had already proved its popularity, Queen Anne was the dominant style of the pattern books. Once buyers and builders had the plans in their possession, they could modify them to suit their whim. Consequently, “Queen Anne” became, for many architects, synonymous with “mongrelized” book plans. However, the commercialization of architecture made it possible to impose a certain amount of uniformity of style as well. Pattern books and popular architectural magazines, such as *The American Architect*, allowed buyers and builders to order pre-cut architectural details and thereby created a certain amount of consensus around what constituted Queen Anne.

So did Queen Anne build houses in the Heights? I say yes. Some people might argue that most houses in the Heights are too regular in design to be Queen Anne and should more properly be labeled four square (see figure 3) or C plan (vestibule and kitchen are the “tails” with the living room and dining room in the middle). I contend that the extensive use of dormers, the chimney design, varying window treatments, the extensive use of brick in the Heights—and the occasional turret—all make the Heights Queen Anne in character. So the next time some one from the county asks you what kind of architecture the Heights has, tell them Queen Anne. And when they ask you how you know this, just say that you talked to her last week.



Figure 1 Typical Queen Anne Houses

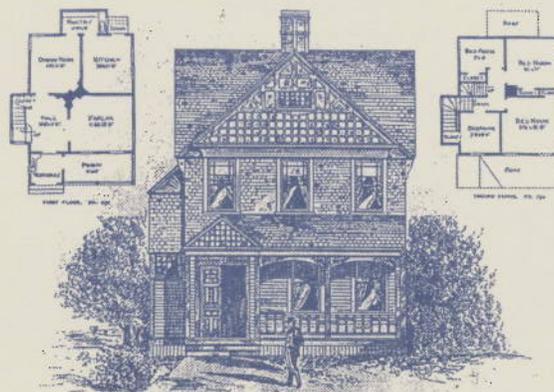


Figure 2 Typical Queen Anne House with Floor Plan



Figure 3 Typical Four-Square

Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood News

Thanks to Jeff & Janet Blunt, Elizabeth Braznell and Diane Hurwitz for orchestrating the first neighborhood plant sale earning \$225 for the neighborhood. The dark skies kept the band from playing, but it is promising to make a return visit.

Jeff Muse has agreed to chair an ad hoc tenant committee to promote a greater sense of community between homeowners and tenants.

We're starting to work on getting a new web site and putting the Gazette on line. Contact Sara Langan at slangan@stlnet.com if you are interested in helping.

Nominations for upcoming Awards are due

to the TGH Office by July 15. Nominate neighbors for: The Garden Award (front landscaping-3 signs given a year for top awards, many honorable mentions. Good Neighbor Award (someone who has helped out in any way) or Pride in Place Award (people who have made visible improvements to the front façade of their building).



The Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association Headquarters at 3735 Connecticut was donated by owner Diane Hurwitz. The building also houses the Tower Grove South Management Corporation, rescue kitties, stores the bikes for the Grand police and is a frequent stopping place for Neighborhood Stabilization Officer, Barb Potts, and Alderwoman Marge Vinning.

News from Tower Grove Park

By John Karel

Every community has a unique character of its own. For more than a century, Tower Grove Park has contributed to the community character in this area. It is, in addition to being a display of horticultural and architectural beauty, a gathering place where visitors enjoy picnics, music, and neighborhood events. The Park strives to maintain this tradition, and also make improvements for the future wellbeing of the Park. One big milestone now on display is the restoration of the Park's historic pavilions. Recently, generous donations helped raise enough money to match a state grant for restoration of the last four of our eleven 1870's pavilions. They have now all been restored. You will surely notice these improvements throughout the summer.

This summer will be a prime time to enjoy the Park, with blooming flowers, warm weather, and outdoor events. The Compton Heights Band Memorial Day Concert will mark the beginning of the concert season, which will continue on Monday evenings beginning June 21. The children's concert series at the Stupp Center will also take place at no charge every Thursday morning throughout the summer, starting June 24.



Our hot St. Louis weather makes the annual opening of the wading pool on June 14 a welcome event. Young children enjoy this summer pastime at no charge. There will be a Henry Shaw Birthday Celebration in July.

The Friends of Tower Grove Park are preparing for the second annual Tower Grove Park Balloon Race on September 4. This exciting event will be geared to the surrounding neighborhoods and promises to attract a large crowd for a day of fun in the Park.

See you in the Park!



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Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Founders

By Erin O'Reilly

Jean and Rich Iezzi are longtime TGH residents from the time before it was known as Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood. Being lovers of old houses and city living they bought their house on Hartford Street in 1978, rehabbed it themselves, moved into it in 1981, and started their family. Then in the mid 1980's they and other residents became concerned about the transience in the neighborhood.

Instead of joining the "flight" from the area, the Iezzi's and some other residents decided to join forces to address some of their concerns. Tom and Jan Booth, Ton Franey, Tricia Heliker, Dana Winter, Joyce Mellows, Susie Gudermuth and Tim Hayes, Lenita Moore, Don Hardin, Jan Nesser and Ben Chu along with the Iezzi's and others decided that the 14 block area encompassed by Arsenal, Grand, Utah, and Gustine would be associated and named the Tower Grove

Heights Neighborhood. The name was chosen based on evidence that it was the original name of the subdivision.

Nels Moss, a city attorney, wrote the by-laws and obtained the tax-exempt status for the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association. Joyce Mellows designed the TGH Logo and Jan Nesser put together the very sophisticated "Gazette", the neighborhood newsletter.

The Tower Grove Neighborhood Association's first formal meeting was an open house meeting in the spring of 1988 at the American Legion at Wyoming and Spring.

Lots of people came and it was "overwhelmingly successful" according to Jean. Although there was some reluctance to delineating the area from the Grand Oak Hill area, there was a lot of excitement about being a neighborhood contained within manageable boundaries!

All ages and types of residents joined the new TGHNA and worked and learned together how to protect and promote their neighborhood within the greater city and political areas. They learned that although they were contained by boundaries they couldn't be an island. Many residents spent lots of time at City Hall and came to be known for their

tenacity about neighborhood issues.

Jan Nesser and her husband, Ben Chu, became residents of the area when they bought their house from Ben's parents. They were both involved in the beginnings of TGHNA and both later served as presidents of the association. Jan put her experience as an artist and expertise with newspapers to work on the Gazette.

The first issue of the Gazette came out in August of 1988 and was circulated to everyone within the area. To raise money and to be self-supporting, the Gazette staff would hold fundraisers in the form of BBQ's and progressive dinners.

The Gazette's work was done in party style with lots of fun in addition to the work of publication! Half of the Gazette was devoted to neighborhood news, 20% to related news, and 20% to fun articles. Murray print shop did the printing free!

Jan also initiated the "Holiday in the Heights" with a holiday concert, caroling, food collection for the food pantries, and the holiday parlor tours. Both Jean and Jan described the beginnings of TGHNA as lots of fun and very uplifting, as well as a great learning experience!! We TGH residents have a lot to thank Jean and Jan for and a lot to live up to!!

A Burning Desire to Rehab

By Rich Iezzi

It all started as a nightmare: fire engine sirens pierced a quiet Tower Grove Heights night at 3 AM as smoke poured out of a vintage 1908 two family flat at 3876 Wyoming. When it was over, the downstairs tenant was left homeless and the carefully planned upstairs rehab was dashed.

That was February 17, 1994, six months after Laura and Jim Stadleman fell in love with the original charm of their building on Wyoming. They started with a great plan that permitted the former owner occupant to remain downstairs after their purchase. He paid Laura and Jim a modest rent while they rehabbed the upstairs unit. This left the building occupied and didn't require the long time owner to uproot.

Most of the upstairs drywall was hung and taped when the fire broke out on the first floor. Now the new owners had a good news/bad news situation. The entire building was unlivable but they received their insurance settlement covering their

loses. "We didn't intend to be subcontractors but that was the only way to make it work," Laura realized. Now they were overseeing a crew of worker bees in addition to doing their own work.

The plan was always to restore the original character and dignity of the building while bringing older systems up to speed. Both apartments were loaded with 'goodies' such as beamed ceilings, pocket doors, natural millwork and plate rails. As the woodwork was cleaned, a transition took place. The original 1908 patina glowed and new hardwood was matched with the existing floor to give a glimpse of what the apartments looked like new. The living space was the required hybrid of new bathrooms and kitchens and Old World charm. The downstairs job took longer and cost more than planned, (a prerequisite?) but produced a living space that radiated with golden oak floors, long leaf yellow pine woodwork and bright walls to replace the old wallpaper.

"We would have taken years to finish just the first floor," Laura confessed, but after only 4 months it was ready to rent. Suddenly, disaster struck again with the death of her husband, Jim. Now, left with

a house in the county and an unfinished second floor unit, the idea of rehabbing and moving into the upstairs unit became appealing. Reflecting back, Laura told me "there weren't

as many surprises after doing the downstairs but it was still a lot of work." This time she could put in her own touches: a skylight,

custom tile work and ceiling high cabinets for the kitchen, replacement windows throughout and a two story deck off the back.

When asked if she was happy as a two family owner/occupant, Laura said "where else can I have all this and still live for free? I wouldn't live anywhere else."

Laura has been bitten by the rehab bug since then and has two other two family flats in Tower Grove Heights. "Once it gets in your blood, you can't get it out," she explains.



Three Cheers for the Neighbors

by Rick Clinebell

I am sort of bored with writing about my interests and myself, so this article is about the role my neighbors have played in the off-the-wall botanical adventure that is my life. Briefly, my field research in botany has taken Don and I, over the past seven years, to various esoteric natural areas in Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Florida, Arizona, Colorado, Texas and continues thusly into the future.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, these trips leave behind a native wildflower garden, not to mention a room of tropical fish and several free-ranging "townhouse turtles" — Calpurnia, Cimmaron, and

Titania (all females) and our very lucky male, Caliban. It is our neighbors here on Hartford Street, as well as Don's son John, who have held down the fort in our absences. This article is a tribute to how lucky we all are here in Tower Grove Heights to have such wonderful neighbors.

Now, occasionally I get calls from buddies from graduate school days who are doing post-docs at exotic places like Berkeley or the University of Chicago and they say, "Why don't you get out of St. Louis when there are all these more exciting places to be?"

Well, where else can you find devoted neighbors that you can give the key to your house and say that occasionally, Caliban or Calpurnia fall upside down while trying to climb the walls or as an aftermath of amorous interludes, and while we're away,

could you please check on them and make sure they are not in this predicament. Or, where else can you find devoted neighbors that notice, in your absence, that the garden needs watering, and come over and do it, even though that person was not the one you asked to perform this task in your absence?

Well, Rick, where are these turtles? Well, they just kind of wander around the first floor, but these are their favorite hiding places. No, you don't have to dig earthworms for them, but just dice up a few strawberries or bananas (in the fridge) or some canned peaches (in the pantry), and give them a bath and watering in the sink a couple times a week and they'll be just fine.

And so I say, three cheers for the neighbors! Granted, it works both ways. A couple summers ago, I agreed to care for a neighbor's dogs. Okay. However, these dogs were a Great Dane and a Rottweiler. I had gone over to meet them a couple of times before Shirley's camping trip to get to know them a bit. Just in case, I bought a carton of "Bonz" for our first unchaperoned encounter. I was terrified. I thought they were going to break down the glass on the front door. Finally, I worked up the courage to open the door a few inches and throw in a couple of "Bonz". Meanwhile, Don was across the street, phone in hand, ready to call 911. Dakota and Max must have liked them "Bonz", as we had a great time together thereafter for the duration of Shirley's vacation.

Realizing I have gone over my 450-word limit a bit, I close with the thought of how lucky I am to have such wonderful neighbors, to live in a real neighborhood. And so I would say, well, Tower Grove Heights may not be Berkeley with all its academic razzle-dazzle, but my neighbors wrote the book on caring for free-ranging townhouse turtles, and frankly, when I lived in Berkeley, I had to board my parrots at the local pet store when I was in the field, and it cost a fortune!



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South Side Church Group Takes on Urban Sprawl

By Matthew Fernandes

Whenever the hot-button issue of urban sprawl is debated, one expects to hear the viewpoints of environmentalists, city boosters, county residents and developers. In recent years, a strong statement for city living has come from an unlikely South Side source - the church.

Fr. Mike Lydon, Pastor at St. Pius V, not only passionately cares about the well being of the city, he has been a leader in the effort to bring South St. Louis' teetering neighborhoods back to fruition.

Fr. Lydon is the president of Churches Committed to Community Concerns (C4). The group has existed since 1992 when it was founded by Fr. Rich Creason, former pastor at St. Pius. Due to the group's existence, many advances have been made in the areas of neighborhood renewal, elementary education, first-time homeowner's assistance and housing code law improvements.

Tower Grove Height's Kevin Jokisch serves alongside Fr. Lydon as lead organizer for C4.

C4 is one of three church-based groups that make up Metropolitan Congregations United, an organization committed to the "curbing of urban sprawl and promoting smart growth" in the region.

Urban sprawl is "the most important socio-economic problem of the decade confronting the region and the country," said Fr. Lydon. While population has increased 3%, land use has increased 125% in the last 25 years, according to Fr. Lydon.

Fr. Lydon believes that the current trend for businesses to locate in the far reaches of the region west of I-270 only increases the divide between races and classes.

"The people who need jobs can't get to them without automobiles. It's a transportation question and a tax equity question," said Fr. Lydon.

The latter question raised by Fr. Lydon involves the county's constant need for tax money to build infrastructure for new developments and the county's dominance of TIF funds which were originally earmarked for the inner city.

Aside from the group's concern with urban sprawl, Fr. Lydon describes C4 as an effort to "take congregational faith and implant it into the public arena." It is made

up of 20 Catholic and Protestant churches "taking social action on behalf of vulnerable or poor people threatened by crime or poverty."

Mirroring many of the accomplishments made by Tower Grove Heights this decade, C4 has:

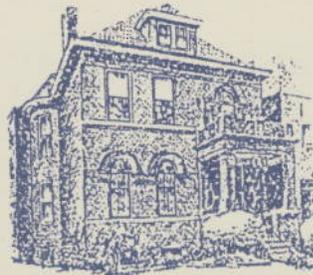
- fought against slumlords, successfully challenging the city to crack down on owners of derelict properties and establishing higher fines for chronic offenders of the housing code.

- founded the St. Louis Reinvestment Corporation which has assisted hundreds of St. Louis families in buying a home.

- shut down drug houses.
- renovated three south city elementary schools.

C4 was instrumental in landing a developer, Pyramid Construction Co., for the abandoned Sears site on Grand south of Gravois. Pyramid will build 30 new homes on the site by mid-2000. The group also collaborated with the St. Louis Reinvestment Corp. and convinced South Side National Bank to offer \$4 million in housing assistance to low-income prospective homeowners.

House by house, neighborhood by neighborhood, the people of C4 hope to repopulate St. Louis and help develop a quality of life that will for once make the city the envy of those isolated souls west of I-270.



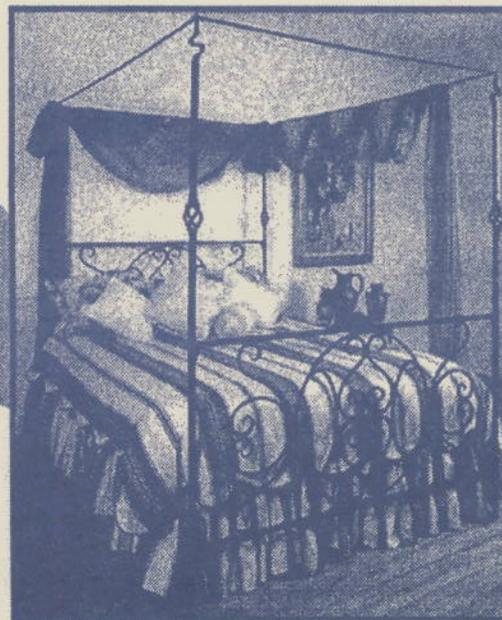
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Jay Rosloff

Many of you know that I've been spending the past several weeks limping around with a broken foot. This 99% unpleasant situation has gotten me thinking about what is important for making our old homes more, as they say, "accessible." Like most of you, I've little experience with physical disability, and sometimes (despite considering myself as liberal and enlightened as the next guy) wondered what all the complaining has been about.

Now I know.

A floor transition threshold 1/2" high can be frustrating or even positively life-threatening if you're on crutches. A set of

Letters to the Editor

Folks,

Just a note about the blurb in the Gazette about what people would like to see in the neighborhood. Stacy wished for a workout facility. There is actually a wonderful workout facility near to us. Concordia Turners is only a few minutes away on Gravois just east of Kingshighway.

There are three families I know of in Tower Grove Heights that are members. Concordia is a club; you pay an annual membership fee and are entitled to use the facilities and take any of the classes. They have two gyms, two handball courts, a large weight and exercise room, showers, sauna, outdoor pool, picnic area with horseshoe pits and volleyball area, and a lounge/restaurant/meeting room.

They offer classes for adults and children in gymnastics, karate, and aerobics. They even have bingo on Sundays, and numerous other activities. It is a very family oriented organization. Because it is a private club it depends heavily on volunteer work by the members to keep things functioning.

The phone number is 352-9388, or call me at 773-0409 and I will be glad to give you a tour.

Lew Campfield
3634 Hartford

stairs can be anything from frightening to flat-out imprisoning. A walker or a wheelchair is useless if the door is too narrow to accommodate it. I don't know what the official statistics are for incapacitating injuries, but every day for the last seven weeks I've run into at least one person who has worn a foot cast, and 100% of us homeowners are growing older and less steady. Let me make a few suggestions.

Grab bars in bathrooms should be MANDATORY. Their absence is more dangerous to adults than poor driving skills. I am not joking about this, folks. Even the Pope slipped and broke a hip!

The most important thing is to securely anchor them to the wall. They must be screwed to structural members. Plaster and lathe or drywall will not hold the weight of an adult. A poorly secured bar is of no more help than a lightweight towel bar. All you'll wind up with is a broken: (a) skull, (b) neck, (c) arm, (d) hip, (e) you get the picture, AND you or your heirs will be faced with a wall repair job.

If doing new construction or a major renovation that opens the walls, add at least 2"x10" plates between the studs at either 36" above the floor or sheath all the walls with 1/2" thick plywood before drywalling. A vertical grab bar should be positioned near the end of the bathtub to steady you as you climb in and out. A horizontal or slightly angled bar should be positioned across the long wall to assist you in raising and lowering yourself into the bath or for purchase if you slip while showering.

An additional grab is helpful to have next to the commode. While the least expensive bars are usually brushed chrome and kind of institutional looking, many attractive options and finishes are available for a price (even the most expensive cost less than medical bills, lost work, and suffering). By the way, take a moment to make sure your staircase railings and newel posts are sturdy and wobble free.

If you are doing major renovation work, install doors no less than 32" wide, try for 34", and 36" would be wonderful. As much as I love our old door hardware, short-throw levers are easier to use. Try opening your door while wearing a pair of shoes on your hands. If you can't, take a look at the lever option. Make sure the room is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair and that the person on the chair can maneuver out of the way of the door enough to open it. It is as easy to put wall switches about 36"-42" high as the typical 48", and wall sockets 18"

off the floor as 12". Fact: Nobody has EVER complained about having too many outlets.

While some people are happy with sponge baths, I prefer a good hosing off. A hand shower is a wonderful option in any case, but for the mobile-restricted it can be the difference between thorough personal hygiene and the other. A hand shower unit can be installed as an addition to a fixed showerhead or as an alternative. A further enhancement for those restricted to a sitting position is a bar and sliding bracket that allows you to adjust the height of the handset. It lets you sit and enjoy a hands-free shower. Again, there are products priced from little to a couple of mortgage payments.

Speaking of sitting in the shower, I've been using a plastic and metal stool from Rubbermaid. I'll give it a "good" rating. The problem is that it takes up much of the tub and is actually in the way of my climbing in and out. For long-term usage I'd get a seat that folds down from the wall (the models I've seen are stainless steel frames with redwood slats). An alternative to be considered is the installation of a "barrier free" shower unit. They are tub-sized shower pans with low thresholds suitable for wheelchairs. Some have seats molded in. Many folks have these installed with steam units for taking a good "schvitz," but that will require a shower door unit that will preclude wheelchair access. As always, acrylic walls and pan are more durable than other synthetics.

A pedestal sink is not really ADA compliant, but does allow a little more foot room than a vanity base. You should be warned that their tops must be well secured to the wall, as they are inherently unstable. A vanity base on the other hand does, however, provide a bit of storage at convenient height. The better ceramic valved faucets work very smoothly with almost no effort.

New windows are more energy efficient and can tilt in for cleaning.

Unfortunately, because they are meant to keep out all drafts, they can be very stiff to operate. Also, replacement windows rarely come with large handles. Consider a good tuning of your old wooden sash windows before calling it quits.

I'm pretty sure that a laundry on the bedroom floor of any dwelling would make life easier. At least getting it out of the basement would eliminate a lot of carrying up and down stairs. Front loading washing machines are easier to use. Remember that it is insane (and a violation of building code) to have a washer above the basement floor that is not sitting in a drained catchment pan.

Smooth floors (hardwood, vinyl) are easier to navigate than carpet or ceramic tile. The same goes for stairs. Carpeted stairs are actually dangerous due to the "soft" lip and shortened tread. Some people can benefit from application of rubber treads or nosings, but a pair of rubber soled slippers or shoes will do as well without running the risk of loose edges tripping one up. People with

(continued on page 12)

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Asst. Secretary: Stacy Leimbach
Treasurer: Patty Schneider
Past President: Mark Abbott

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Physical Improvements: Mark Abbott
Prom. & Marketing: Amanda Doyle
Publications: Sara Langan
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Doug Harding/ Robyn Schrager
Mary Dugan
3800 Utah Place
Susie Guderemuth
Veda Lynn

The ReHaber

(continued)

broken or uneven sidewalks should be flogged and driven from the city (or at least put on the 50-50 plan A.S.A.P.).

You can never have too much light (well, yes you can, but it is nearly impossible). New fluorescent bulbs can mean not having to change ceiling fixture bulbs for years on end. Make sure landscape and stairwell lights point down and do not result in a situation where glare can interfere with stair climbing.

I believe that some stair climbing could be eliminated entirely with an intercom system to the front door. I also believe you can never have enough telephones and telephone jacks. When you can't get to a telephone you just about guarantee that you'll need to.

So, my bi-pedal neighbors, I'll be thinking further on this matter (for at least the next few weeks until the cast is off) and looking for gadgets like the twenty-foot watering wand for houseplants and self-cleaning cat boxes. Feel free to stop me in the street and make additional suggestions - I won't run away from you.

Tower Grove Heights Needs You!

Look at the mailing label of this Gazette. If you are a member it will tell you when your membership is due for renewal. If you are not a member-join today and you will be mailed all 6 issues of the Gazette. Membership dues raise more funds for the neighborhood than any other activity. Please show your support for your association and your neighborhood by joining today!

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August 1999 Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association Calendar of Events

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	Festival of Nations	*	National Night Out	Carpenter Lib. "Storytime" Ages 2-7 10am	Carpenter Lib. "Olympic Brain Games" 2-3pm Grades 3-7		
8		9	10	11	12	13	14
		*	TGH Block Rep. Meeting 7pm Spring/Conn.	Carpenter Lib. "Storytime" Ages 2-7 10am	Carpenter Lib. "Olympic Brain Games" 2-3pm Grades 3-7		NHS Fast Track Home Buyer Training 776-3393
15	Botanical Garden Daylily Sale	16	17	18	19	20	21
		*		Carpenter Lib. "Storytime" Ages 2-7 10am	Carpenter Lib. "Olympic Brain Games" 2-3pm Grades 3-7		NHS Fast Track Home Buyer Training 776-3393
22	Botanical Garden Daylily Sale	23	24	25	26	27	28
		*	TGH General Meeting 7:15 1st Divine Science Church	Carpenter Lib. "Storytime" Ages 2-7 10am	Botanical Garden Japanese Exhibit on Begins		
29		30	31	* Tower Grove Park Compton Heights Concert Band Series 7:30pm Every Monday			
		*		Festival of Nations 5K Run. ... Call 772-4640			