

# Tower Grove Heights Gazette

Grand to Gustine

Arsenal to Utah Place

August 26, 1995

Volume 7, Number 6 <sup>1</sup>



## NATIONAL NIGHT OUT



By Tim & Ellen Reed-Fox

For a while on the evening of Tuesday, August 1, it looked like National Night Out in Tower Grove Heights would become National Night Rained-Out. The sky turned black around 5:30 that afternoon, and a short thunderstorm passed through. But by the time the festivities were to begin at 7:00, the rain had stopped and citizens of Tower Grove Heights began to venture out to celebrate their community.

National Night Out is just that - a nationwide event in which city dwellers go out onto the streets to meet neighbors, enjoy food and drink, and generally have a good time. According to Carol Rulo, Public Safety Coordinator for St. Louis' Neighborhood Stabilization Team, National Night Out was started twelve years ago in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania.

"It was originally a small movement to encourage people to turn on their porchlights and converse with their neighbors," Rulo said. "Now there are thousands of parties held across the country every year on the first Tuesday in August."

In 1987, St. Louis was voted the number one National Night Out city for its innovative crime prevention programs. This year, Rulo reports, over four hundred parties were held in the St. Louis area in spite of the rain, and others were held the following weekend.

We took a walking tour of Tower Grove Heights on August 1 to see what people in our neighborhood were doing to celebrate National Night Out.

The most active street during this year's event was the 3800 block of Humphrey. Cars parked across both ends of the street - at Gustine and Spring - shut off traffic to allow people to meet, mix, and mingle. On the street, balloons, bikes, and balls competed with festive chalk drawings for attention.

One particularly interesting piece of sidewalk art featured a large, color drawing of planet Earth, with an arrow stating "You are Here" pointed right at the middle of the U.S.A. Behind the Earth peered a big, smiling sun. When we finally got one of the many kids running around to slow down to talk to us, we asked her who had drawn the big Earth.

"I don't know," she said, "some older person. But we did all this." Stepping back from planet Earth revealed that the whole street was covered with colorful designs, words, and scribbles. The children of the neighborhood were enjoying the freedom to turn their street into a giant canvas. And unlike graffiti of the spraypaint variety, a good rain was all that was needed to clear the palette for another day.

Pam Hendry of the 3800 block of Humphrey reported that everyone was enjoying National Night Out, but the children seemed to be having the most fun. Like many of the party goers, she had been out since the celebration began at 7:00.

Down the street, the Nicolette family chose to be a bit further from the action - probably because they had their three-week-old, Lauren, in tow. Lauren slept through all of the excitement, but her big brothers

Anthony and Kyle, one on a bike and the other on roller blades, were having a good time. "We've lived here for about eleven years," Mike Nicolette said. "I think this is a really positive thing for the neighborhood. Anything you can do to get people out is good."

Getting people out is only one of the objectives of National Night Out. But Carol Rulo pointed out that it can have other benefits as well. National Night Out can be an organizing tool for neighborhood groups, and community solidarity is a key way to combat crime. Another major message of National Night Out is the need for well-lighted porches and walkways.

"In fact, this year's theme was "Light up the Night, St. Louis," Rulo said, adding that three "best block party" prizes for would be given in the city - one in the north, one in the south, and one in the central corridor. The prize? Porchlights and floodlights for every house on the street.

The rain did put a damper on the parties in Tower Grove Heights, but we met some of our neighbors and finally managed to get a new light-bulb for our front porch. We also decided that National Night Out should happen more than once a year. In fact, every night we should feel comfortable meeting on the streets and enjoying the company of those around us.

If your block did not participate in National Night Out this year, and you would like to participate next year, contact the Neighborhood Stabilization Office at 622-4628.

**Tower Grove Heights - Hard Hat Party!!! (see Page 10)**

**The Tower Grove Heights Gazette**

**Publications Chairperson:**

Don Hardin

**Editor:** The Staff

**Graphics Editor:** Michele Kerr

**Staff:** Marilyn Abbott, Gretchen Arnold, Tom Booth, Elizabeth Braznell, Benjamin Chu, Richard Clinebell, Tim Fox, Stephanie Gavin, Don Hardin, Jodie Heliker, Tricia Heliker, Rich Iezzi, Michele Kerr, Donna Mayes, Terry Mayes, Margie Meyer, Victoria Miles, Janice Nesser, Erin O'Reilly, Ellen Reed-Fox, Fredrick Rissover, Jay Rosloff

**Graphic Artists:** Michele Kerr, Janice Nesser, Tina Adams

**Database Manager:** Tom Booth

**Business Manager:** Marilyn Abbott

**Circulation Coordinator:** Needed!

**Typesetting:** Margie Meyer, David Nitzche, Don Hardin

The Gazette is a non-profit publication that is published bi-monthly by the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association. For information concerning advertising call Donna Mayes at 664-5449. Your letters and comments are always welcome at the Gazette. Mail them to:

The Gazette/TGHNA 3203 S. Grand Blvd., Suite 103 St. Louis MO 63118

\*\*\*\*\*IN THIS ISSUE\*\*\*\*\*

Those of us who live in Tower Grove Heights appreciate the things that make city living enjoyable and rich. Those who live outside of the city can't seem to see anything but the negative images too often presented in the media. Well in this issue of our media we present the positive things that we all know about, and also some suggestions on how to maintain and enrich our area. Susie Gudermuth offers her formula for preserving our property values and promote city living. In a reprinted column from the Post Dispatch, Don MacPherson discusses the positives of city living, and Jim Heine's letter to the editor (St. Louis Post Dispatch) will get you excited afresh to be living here. Tim and Ellen Reed-Fox describe the National Night Out activities that took place in our neighborhood, and Ellen explains the First Annual Tower Grove Heights Grand Garden Awards. These and more tell the story of what city living is all about. Read on and become reinvigorated about city life and Tower Grove Heights.

**ON GRAND**

**By Marilyn Abbott**

Artifice Gallery opened on May 1st at the corner of Arsenal and Grand. This beautiful and interesting shop is hardly recognizable as the former home of the Kingsway Diner! The Artifice Gallery is owned by Kathryn Brucker and her husband, David Hutchinson, who are residents of the nearby Shaw neighborhood. Kathryn has a degree in Interior Design with 14 years experience in commercial practice. In addition to the gallery/ shop, Kathryn and her associates offer both commercial and residential design services through the Brucker Design Group.

The items on display at Artifice are described as an "eclectic array of art that works", and I cannot say it any better than that! You will find unique and beautiful jewelry, purses, glassware, lamps and much more. All of the works are produced by individual artists and most are priced between \$20 and \$300. Kathryn views Artifice as a shop offering art that can be used and enjoyed in everyday life. Be sure to stop in to see the wonderful works on display. I am sure you'll be delighted by our newest neighbor "On Grand".

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## MEET MARGE VINING

By Erin O'Reilly

Marge Vining is our new Democratic alderperson for the 15th Ward. She is a lifelong resident of St. Louis city and has lived in the 15th Ward for 36 years. She has been heavily involved in city politics for the past 8-9 years when she started working for the city of St. Louis; however, she has been involved in community affairs for many years and was one of the founders of the Grand Oak Hill community center and the Fanning Community School.

She is also involved in women's organizations statewide and says this has added to her political expertise which she will put to work for the 15th Ward. She acknowledges that it was a tight race for alderperson and is glad that she was chosen by the voters.

Marge thinks this area's priorities are safety, security, and housing and this will be the main focus of her work. She wants to be involved in dispelling the crime, drugs and absentee slum landlords. Her wish list includes: 2 block captains for each block, everyone's porch lights on at night, telephone networks among neighbors to report problems, more porch sitting and outdoor activities, cleaner alleys, more block homes, block watch units and mobile patrols in the area, and perimeter lighting for Tower Grove Park.

She reports that she is glad to live in such a diverse neighborhood that has many good resources such as the several community groups, schools and churches, community school, the many businesses, and the housing rehab. Neighborhood people should be sure and utilize the resources available. If anyone has questions about resources they should call her or their neighborhood organization.

She reports that 300 new dumpsters are here now and that she is taking applications for the 50/50 tree planting and sidewalk repair programs. She also hopes to get the streetlights replaced with brighter bulbs soon. Also, there are plans for a youth center at Alfred and Hartford streets.

Most of her time is taken up by meetings with individuals and groups; city meetings and phone calls. So far she is proud to say that she has returned phone calls within 24 hours. She has been assigned to the housing committee and hopes to get involved with other committees as well.

Community members can be assured that although she might have a different style than her predecessor, she has similar goals and that there will be a continuity of services in the 15th Ward. She is glad for Geraldine Osborn's support and looks forward to "helping people help themselves". I can add that she is very accomodating as she came to my house for this interview so we could talk while my toddler was taking his nap.

### PRESCHOOL NOW REGISTERING STUDENTS

Neighborhood Preschool is now accepting two through five year olds for the September 1995 school year. NPS is a parent-run coop in the Shaw neighborhood serving the near south side. For more information, call 664.2654 or 771.5373.

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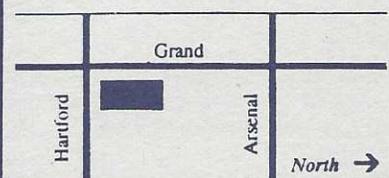


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By Susie Guder-  
muth



## CITY LIVING



This Gazette issue is focusing on City Living, real estate, and property values. The recent St. Louis Post-Dispatch article on declining property values jolted many of us. Even those of us who love and are committed to City Living, and who, also, know that much of what was included in that article was inaccurate. In our area and many other areas within our city boundaries, property values are increasing, probably at a rate greater than in outlying metropolitan areas.

The article by Donald C. MacPherson, President of the St. Louis Association of Realtors, in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 2, 1995, and reprinted in this issue provides an objective appraisal of urban property values and city living. Also included in this issue is a reprinted "Letter to the People" in a recent issue of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch by Jim Heine, who lives on Fairview and owns a two-family flat in Tower Grove Heights.

What can you as a resident do to preserve property values and to promote city living? Here are a few tips.

1. Be informed. If you must sell your home, and, of course, there are times when home owners must sell their homes for compelling reason, talk to at least 3 real estate agents. Avoid those who hang signs on your door. Good real estate agents don't advertise with cheap flyers soliciting your home.

Ask each real estate agent with whom you talk to give you a written market analysis which includes comparable sales in the neighborhood. Don't let the agent use only comparable sales from your street, especially if you feel your home has something extra and you think it should bring a higher sales price than the 3 most recent sales on your street.

Insist that they include sales from the broader neighborhood. It is perfectly legitimate to use these sales for comparison. This information will also be valuable to your buyer when his/her lender is looking for comparable values. This is the beginning of setting up the sale. Be an active participant.

If the houses on your street have sold fast at their asking prices, they probably were priced too cheap. Fast sales can be nice, but most likely, they mean the seller did not realize his/her full profit. The realtor benefited from a quick sale, the seller lost money, and the neighborhood lost

value. If your house is not selling at any price, perhaps you should examine your realtor and, also, your house and your motivation as a seller.

If you see an underpriced house on your block, don't panic. Buy it if you can. Don't let the bargain go to someone who may not appreciate it and may not improve the neighborhood.

2. Talk to your neighbors about housing values. Yes, there are some seriously undervalued/underpriced houses in our neighborhood, but this is not the trend. Finished houses are in demand, both for purchase and for rental. Good rentals in our neighborhood are going at good prices. One bedrooms at \$500/month and two-bedrooms at \$600 to \$700 per month. Larger units and houses are renting at even higher prices. Good houses are selling at almost \$70 per square foot. They should be selling at even higher prices, and neighborhood residents are working on this. Even at \$80 per square foot, our improved houses are bargains compared to other desirable neighborhoods.

Many of the people who love our neighborhood are newcomers to St. Louis. When they discover our charm and our bargain prices, they think they have hit pay dirt. Someday, we will find this same level of appreciation in old-time St. Louisans.

3. Recognize what you have. Everyone is looking for small town utopia. We live in one of the best small towns in America. I know of few other places where residents are a 5 to 10 minute walk from a major grocery store, specialty food shops, cleaners, public library, hardware store, wonderful restaurants, and a National Historic Landmark Park. We have neighborhood watch, an active neighborhood association, fire protec-

tion, fine police force, with officers with whom we are often on a first name basis,

and effective strategies for problem solving. We are lucky.

The May 15, 1995 issue of Newsweek has as its cover title, "Bye-Bye Suburban Dream". The supporting articles lament the problems of suburbanization. One article offers fifteen ways to fix the suburbs. All of these fixes are already in place in Tower Grove Heights.

Tower Grove Heights reminds me of the small town in which I grew up in the 1940's and 50's sans the National Historic Landmark Park. Only two other cities have a national historic landmark park - New York City and Boston. Unfortunately, my first hometown has been ruined by urban sprawl and Walmart.

4. Reinvest in your neighborhood. Buy that undervalued property on your block, improve it and sell it or rent it. Many people are doing just that. Kim and Suzanne Golemb, recent residents in our neighborhood, are purchasing a two-family on Utah. Last year they bought a converted two-family on Utah only three weeks after moving from California and renting a nearby flat. Laura Stadelman has moved to the 3800 block of Wyoming from South County. She has two, two-family flats on Wyoming. Others who have invested are Lenita Moore, who owns and manages two, two-family flats on Utah, Mabel Guder-muth (possibly one of our oldest investors) who owns and manages two, two-family flats in the neighborhood, Gary and Cindy Trenholm who are investing in property on Fairview, just two blocks south of Tower Grove Heights, and of course, Rich and Jean Iezzi, who are old hands at reinvestment. Others are making similar investments.

*(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)*



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**(CONT. FROM PAGE 4)**

Still other residents are looking and have plans to buy as soon as the houses they want become available.

5. Join your neighborhood association.

The TGHNA offers many advantages. One of the first things informed buyers and renters ask is, "Do you have a strong neighborhood association?" They know it is an avenue for problem solving, identity, and access to city services. Strengthen our neighborhood association with your membership and support.

6. Help make our neighborhood more attractive. Try to make your house the best looking house on the block, your street the best looking street in the neighborhood. Start competing for the best looking house and street. We compete in the Christmas lighting contest, compete with the same enthusiasm for the best looking house and garden and the best looking street. Paint your house, have your brick walls cleaned, keep your lawn mowed and trimmed, participate in the 50/50 sidewalk and tree program, and pick up litter on your street. All of these things say our neighborhood has class and is moving forward.

Urban living is an exciting adventure. Do your part and enjoy the benefits of your effort.

**COOKIES FOR COPS -  
ALIVE AND WELL**

**By Jean lezzi**

Cookies for Cops has been a successful program in the Tower Grove Heights neighborhood for years. Residents in Tower Grove Heights have donated goodies to be given to the Third District Police Department and to the two fire houses which protect Tower Grove Heights. This has been done to show appreciation to the people who help make Tower Grove Heights a wonderful place to live. These donations are distributed on holidays.

In recent months, donations for this worthwhile effort have been down. On the 4th of July, only six people contributed to the cause. These goodies, which included cookies, muffins, fruit, gum and candy were given to a very appreciative group of firefighters at the Magnolia firehouse.

Cookies for Cops will continue but no more phone calls will be made to residents. Instead, a list of the next collection dates will be printed in the

Gazette and distributed at the General Meetings. Put these dates on your calendar as a reminder to contribute to the Cookies for Cops cause.

Goodies should be taken to 3809 Hartford (Jean lezzi's home). Have the donation wrapped/bagged and marked with your name and address. A card of appreciation with the names and addresses of each contributor is always sent with the treats. Call before dropping off the donations (772-4987) or if no one is home to collect the goodies, leave items on the front porch.

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## DON'T WORRY, BE HEALTHY

by Tom Booth

Everywhere I look these days, I seem to see one or another plan for losing weight. On the sides of buses and on every cable TV channel the message seems to say to the consumer, "I know you've tried every way to lose weight, but it's no use. Our plan offers the sure fire method for you." I can't help wondering why it is still such a mystery. It seems clear to me that "We ARE fat because we EAT fat."

People try fad diets and they never seem to work because you can't live on these diets for long. They don't supply the well-rounded nutritional needs your body craves and most often are just no fun. If you can't enjoy your food you won't continue to eat it.

According to medical specialists, most people who engage in radical weight loss programs eventually put back on all the weight they've lost, and they tax their hearts and digestive organs in the process, sometimes causing irreparable damage. If you want to lose weight and keep it off, the most important dietary change you can make is to greatly reduce fats in your diet. Fats are

most abundant in meats, seafood and dairy products, cooking oils, baked goods, nuts and seeds, and salad

dressings. Fats have over twice the calories (9 per gram) of protein and carbohydrates (4 per gram), and turn into fat cells in the body. Saturated fats, in particular, which are most concentrated in animal-based foods like meat, seafood, and dairy products, add to your weight and also to your risk of heart disease as well.

To reduce your body fat, it is suggested that you reduce your dietary fat intake to 300 calories a day or 33 grams. If you don't want to count calories, just greatly reduce your intake of animal-based foods overall, substitute fish or chicken for red meats, and use non-fat dairy products. Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and beans. And begin to think of them as not just a little side dish you can include in your meal, but really your main entree itself.

If you look for healthy foods and prepare them in an attractive and tasty way, you'll find that it doesn't have to be an ordeal to eat healthy. You'll begin to actually enjoy eating healthy foods and discover that your fat cells have simply disappeared.

## HOLY FAMILY PRESCHOOL OPENS REGISTRATION FOR FALL

Holy Family Preschool and Child-care Program at 4125 Humphrey is registering students for the coming Fall semester. Holy Family's qualified staff offer a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children age 2 to 5. For more information, call 776.2558.

## MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPER

Carolyn Iezzi, of the 38XX block of Hartford has begun a private enterprise this Summer which most of us could use at one time or another: a mother's helper. Unlike a babysitter, Carolyn will watch your child, 18 months and up, at her own home under the watchful eye of her mother, Jean Iezzi.

For anyone in the area who has a child and can't find time to get things done around the house, Carolyn's services can come in handy. Carolyn, who is 10 1/2 years old, has been certified through the St. Louis Children's Hospital babysitters' club and can provide references.

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**FROM THE CAPITOL**

**By Rep. Pat Dougherty**

The Missouri General Assembly passed two measures this session that will address the growing concern of more crimes being committed by juveniles and to address crime prevention.

The first bill, a major juvenile justice reform package, allows the courts to prosecute juveniles 12 years of age and above as adults if their prosecution is in the best interest of society based on certain criteria. Courts are required to hold certification hearings to treat juveniles of any age as adults if they are accused of violent crimes such as murder, forcible sodomy, rape, robbery, assault and distribution of drugs or in cases where the juvenile has committed two or more prior felony offenses. Once a juvenile has been certified as an adult, s/he may automatically be tried as an adult for subsequent offenses.

The legislation also creates a new dual sentencing arrangement for juveniles. A judge may send a child certified as an adult to the Missouri Division of Youth Services for treatment first if the judge believes this is the best option for the juvenile and for society, but if that treatment is not effective, the juvenile can then be sent to adult prison.

Another provision of the package opens the records of juveniles guilty of felonies to the public. Additionally, juvenile officers are allowed to share the records of juveniles certified as adults with the victim, witnesses, school officials, parents, guardians, social workers and prosecutors.

Parents will be held more accountable for a son or daughter who is convicted as an adult in the measure. In such a case, the parents are required to participate in counseling and other treatments that are necessary to carry out the juvenile code.

The bill also gives Missouri's Juvenile/Family Courts important tools to treat juvenile offenders uniformly and track and assess their progress. The state courts administrator will

develop guidelines to evaluate juvenile court services, create training and continuing education standards for juvenile court employees and outline criteria for judges to consider when deciding how long a child will be detained before the case is addressed.

Other provisions of the new law allows photographs and fingerprints of juvenile offenders to be taken; sets up tax credits for corporations and individuals that help young people through education, job and violence prevention programs; and permits school districts to suspend students for up to 180 days if they are convicted as adults on felony charges.

*(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)*



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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The following is a reprint of a letter written by one of our own neighbors, Mr. James Heine, in response to an article in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

The Editors  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch  
900 N. Tucker Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63101

### Gentlemen:

I want to add my voice to those that have already expressed concern over the recent series of Post-Dispatch stories about the decline of housing values in St. Louis.

My first thought after reading Ms. Brown's story of 4 June was this: "Well, if the Post wanted to kill a year's worth of work by any number of neighborhood organizations, this is certainly the perfect way to do it."

Despite the general tenor of Ms. Brown's story, as well as the slant of several Post-Dispatch stories that preceded it, the city remains a good place to live. I admit we have problems, but I, like many others, still believe the advantages and opportunities of city living far outweigh any real or perceived disadvantages.

I believe this is a point the Post-Dispatch has consistently failed to acknowledge.

The Post, of course, is not alone in this shortcoming. On any given evening, the image of St. Louis that emerges from a review of the six o'clock news is one of guns and drugs, mayhem and dysfunction.

Wake up, please! There is a lot more to city life.

Consider the following:

\* **Housing.** The city offers an

impressive selection of affordable housing. If you have no desire to be house poor or if you believe there are better things to do with your hard-earned money than sink it into an overpriced, overtaxed faux chateau out in the land of clouds and dragons (Thank you, Ms. Viets, for that appellation), then take a look at what's available in the city. I bet you will be surprised. You might also discover that saving for your child's college education or for that great vacation trip is a whole lot easier.

And you may even get to know

## Wake up please! There is a lot more to city life.

your neighbors.

\* **Convenience.** I live in Tower Grove South. I am 10 minutes from Grand Center, Union Station, the Central West End, and Forest Park. I am 15 minutes from downtown and Clayton. My grocery store is within walking distance, as is the South Grand business district, Tower Grove Park, and the Missouri Botanical Garden.

All this, I believe, certainly adds to the quality of my life, even if it cannot be outlined on a multicolored map.

Or consider this: On mornings when both the weather and the roads are a mess, I can ignore the traffic reports, have my second cup of coffee, and finish reading the Post--and

still arrive at work before eight o'clock, after having walked out my front door at seven forty-five.

Try that when the commute is 20 miles door-to-door.

\* **Public services.** Living in St. Louis is not akin to residing atop a refuse heap. We clean our streets, pick up our garbage, and maintain our parks. Could we do a better job? Probably. Yet we do very well with the resources available.

\* **Public safety.** I have lived in St. Louis since 1981. I can report that I have not been assaulted, mugged, or robbed. My home has never been burglarized or my car stolen. In general, those statements apply to my friends and neighbors as well as to me.

Yes, crime is a problem in some neighborhoods and an issue that concerns us all, but we also have a strong civic antidote to crime: active neighborhood organizations, concerned city officials, and one of the best police departments in the metropolitan area.

\* **Schools.** The perception is *far* worse than the reality. Everything in the St. Louis public schools is not perfect, but neither is life perfect in suburban schools. Problems exist there, too.

Could the schools be better? Yes. But on balance, they are doing quite well, thank you.

If you insist on private education, you can choose from a multitude of Catholic and Lutheran schools in the city.

As a resident of St. Louis, I do not ask that the Post-Dispatch sweep the city's problems under a rug. I only ask that the Post's coverage of the city be a little more well-balanced and even-handed and that it offer a wider perspective on city living.

I believe the entire metropolitan area would benefit from that kind of approach.

*Sincerely yours, James H. Heine*

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# BLOCK CAPTAINS' MEETING

By Tom and Janet Booth

The August block captains' meeting was held on August 8 at Sara Langan's house in the 36xx block of Juniata. The meeting began with a discussion of the availability of crime statistics in the Tower Grove Heights area. Joe Thele said he would be able to supply block captains with maps of their blocks from city hall. It was suggested that residents target particular houses for criminal or housing conditions in order to remedy a problem building.

The Hard Hat Party scheduled for Thursday September 7 at The King and I restaurant, and the Hard Hat Tour scheduled for September 9, were announced and flyers were passed out for the block captains to hand out on their blocks. The party and tour

were expected to serve a number of purposes:

- invite residents to become new members
- attract new people to the area
- encourage current residents to join the organization
- remind current residents what a fabulous area it is to live in
- encourage neighbors to keep working on their homes
- communicate a positive image to outsiders

Two police officers from the 3rd District came to the meeting with Barb Potts, of the city's Neighborhood Stabilization Office, and encouraged the block captains to introduce themselves to police officers when we see them on the street, and to tell them of our concerns about problems houses.



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# TOWER GROVE HEIGHTS HARD HAT TOUR

On Saturday, September 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood will sponsor Tower Grove Heights Under Construction, a tour of single and multi-family homes currently undergoing renovation in the neighborhood. The purpose of the tour, which is being promoted to financial institutions, developers, investors, home buyers and the press, is to demonstrate that Tower Grove Heights is a desirable place to live, and an attractive area to invest in real estate. Projects in all stages of the renovation process will be on view, from a recently demolished four-family awaiting rehab to a completely renovated, elegant two and a half story home featuring a modern kitchen, three and a half baths, three fireplaces, all new systems, and a two car garage.

In conjunction with Tower Grove Heights Under Construction, there will be a cocktail reception on Thursday, September 7 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the King and I restaurant, 3157 South Grand. The purpose of the reception is twofold: to kick off the tour and to recognize the contributions of former Alderwoman Geraldine Osborne and Joe Curtis, Vice Chairman of Commerce Bank, both of whom have been instrumental in facilitating past and current renovation projects in Tower Grove Heights neighborhood. The reception will include an appetizer buffet and cash bar.

Admission for the cocktail reception and tour is \$10 for the general public and \$5 for Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association members. For reservations or information, please call Suzanne Golemb at 314.664.7140.

Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association wishes to thank Commerce Bank for providing partial financial support for this event.

## LOCAL CHURCHES PLAN TO TRANSFORM CITY NEIGHBORHOODS

At a public meeting July 15 at the Gateway Institute of Technology at 5101 McRee, 63 area church congregations invited a number of political leaders to discuss how best to reinvest in our communities. The public meeting served as a platform from which the St. Louis Reinvestment Corporation was introduced.

Its mission statement that their mission is to "transform and serve its neighborhoods by building relationships and providing opportunities that empower individuals to create wealth and stabilize their communities."

A key element of the corporation is the Housing Lending Program which "helps prepare and train individuals

in home purchase, provides access to financing, takes him/her through the loan process, and provides a support system to aid in payment issues and home maintenance." They hope to make home purchase loans, refinancing loans, rehab loans, and small rental property owner-occupant loans.

In a related program, the "Micro Enterprise Lending Program", the organization intends to provide training, financial support and mentorship to individuals for small business development. This program will include loans under \$20,000, and "training and support to aid the individual in preparing their business plan and start-up needs".

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# THE MAGIC OF CITY LIVING



By Donald C. MacPherson, President, St. Louis Association of Realtors

*(reprinted from the July 2, 1995 issue of the Post-Dispatch)*

In recent weeks there has been some discussion about the value of city living and concerns over the possible dropping value of city residential property. Looking at this issue objectively, it is readily apparent that the fears outweigh the reality.

At the heart of the issue lie two major concerns that homeowners have: 1) protecting the investment value of their home and property and 2) the fear of crime.

When discussing the value of property, it is essential to realize that if one area is experiencing a decline it does not necessarily follow that all areas are having the same problem. Information gathered from several city realtors indicates that many parts of the city are experiencing not only healthy stability, but the average sale price of homes is consistently moving upward.

Areas such as Lafayette Square, Compton Heights, Flora Place, Soudard, Tower Grove Heights St. Louis Hills and the Central West End are prime examples of this trend. These

areas and others have continued to increase in value during a time when the economy has been down and property values have dropped elsewhere.

In other areas, neighborhood associations and housing corporations are working to preserve property values. Some parts of the North Side are experiencing an improvement in housing prices, as is the area east of Jefferson Avenue on the South Side.

In the southeast area near Carondelet Park, the Bellerive Neighborhood Association is working with committees to combat crime and to enhance property values. In that area, assessed values have remained stable, and along the north side of Carondelet Park home values rose 3.4 percent.

Hearsay and second-hand information about families moving out because of sounds of gunshots in the night do not give an accurate picture of what living in the city is really like. Isolated instances of crime in otherwise stable neighborhoods get blown out of proportion because they happened in a "city" neighborhood.

Crime can occur at any location and certainly the suburbs have not been immune. An article printed by

the Post-Dispatch on June 4, 1995, said "Crime is dropping. For example, in the Third District, which covers southeastern St.

Louis, reports of crime dropped 4 percent last year. Figures through March show that the decline is continuing."

Throughout the city there are many tightly knit neighborhoods with low crime rates. These may border problem areas, but a strong network of concerned residents working in cooperation with local law enforcement officials helps keep these neighborhoods free of crime.

Keeping areas free of crime and stabilizing property values are important in attracting people to city living. Just as important is the availability of financing.

Financing options such as the city's \$10 million Federal National Mortgage Association program is one way the city has to encourage families to buy homes in the city. Also available through the Federal Housing Authority (FHA), the 203K loan enables individuals to obtain a single loan for the purchase and rehabilitation of homes. These loans also are available for investment property, and up to 85 percent can be financed with low down payments. For information on 203K loans and city living, call Darlene Rich of the Grand Oak Hill Community Corp. at 865.5530.

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## TAKE A LESSON FROM THE SQUARE

The following commentary appeared in the Lafayette Square Marquis (their newsletter) earlier this year. The excerpts below seemed to offer some important suggestions for our own neighborhood.

We marketed the houses. Not real estate dealers. No dealer wanted to touch the Square.

An hour after I ventured into the Square. April 18, 1970, I had been dragged through four houses. Then a list of houses for sale was thrust into my hands. I was called again a few days later, "Are you having any luck?" Well, I had already bought a house. And one of the four houses I had seen was being bought by Bill and Dean Keyes.

Technically, most of the houses on the list were not for sale, but the owner might have mentioned to someone that he'd like to sell and move to the country, in a word, "get out". That got him on the "list". The list method was kept up for many years until several real estate people discovered us. Kirby Greene was the first of them to take a sincere interest in the Square and trained many young restorers to market it in a professional way.

Before that, all marketing was done grass-roots style. At one of our first meetings, someone suggested we place an ad for homes for sale. Imagine: paying to advertise your neighbors' homes without their knowledge! My phone number was chosen because I was a housewife working on my house while the children were in school. People called, picked up a list and negotiated their own bargains. One caller, a dee-jay just moved to St. Louis from California wise cracked (almost like Jack Carney) on the phone about whether we had any ramshackle houses for sale cheap. I didn't answer very enthusiastically because I thought I was talking to some kind of nut.

The caller WAS Jack Carney! A few days later, Jerry Ferrell followed up on him only to find that he had

already chosen a house in the West End. Bill and Dean Keyes and Jerry continued to pursue him, so that he became one of our biggest fans and gave us many a free plug on KMOX.

Don Daniels, when he became president, also believed in do-it-yourself real estating.

Our strategy was to think cautiously and pessimistically but to do all our talking optimistically. No one breathed a word to prospective buyers that this area was really a red light district. In the meantime, we began to restrict the livelihood of those nice little gray-haired, piano-legged ladies who plied their trade along Mississippi and Lafayette Avenues.

But two brothels for younger entrepreneurs remained into the 80's and were more difficult to dislodge. We enlisted the help of the vice squad. That worked fine, until, enter the media: one front page headline (on a Monday when news was slow) read "Vice Lifts its ugly head in Lafayette Square". Just the type of advertising we had tried to avoid!

Another thing we didn't talk about: the fires. Weekend entertainment. Insurance fires - not hard to spot because the owners usually carried out all the TV's the day before. And if there weren't insurance fires, fires

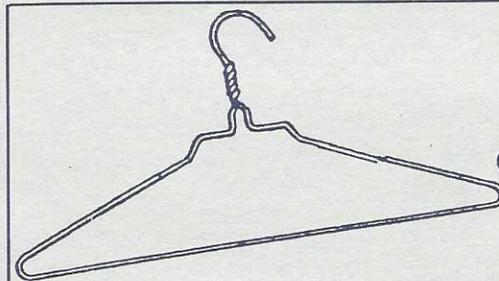
still proliferated because the owners had heard that their properties would bring in more cash as VACANT LAND (sell it to the government!) than as land with buildings on it. Every teenager knew how to make a molotov cocktail, so all night Friday and all day Saturday we would hear the fire trucks screaming through the Square.

Result? We couldn't get insurance. Hank Johnson to the rescue! He was the first and only agent in 1971 who was willing to put faith in these old houses.

Who would loan money on a house in such a neighborhood? Nobody! That same Dennis Mertz volunteered each Friday afternoon to buttonhole St. Louis bankers. He armed himself with a chart of all the monies being invested in each house and a bookfull of before and after pictures. That and the tours, with plenty of complimentary tickets strewn about, wet the palate of some very gracious loan officers at Mercantile Bank.

All this was an adventure, but it wasn't easy. When restoration-minded realtors finally began marketing our houses, a tremendous load was lifted from the shoulders of the first restorationists.

(CONTINUE ON PAGE 13)



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(CONT. FROM PAGE 12)

Eventually, real estate companies were doing all the marketing. That was a glorious time because housing prices kept going higher and higher. All of us early restorers began counting on our fingers how much our houses would be worth if we really wanted to sell.--

Real estate people work hard. I know, because I've been on the selling end many times. They can't sell a house for a high or even a normal price if there is anything negative about it or the area. It's still up to us, the residents, to do everything possible to improve every aspect of our neighborhood. So look up and down your street and alley. What needs to be improved and what can you do about it? Talk positive, but above all, do something about the problems.

If you had to sell your house, you'd want the market to be brisk. You'd want a good price for all your hard work. Well, don't sit back and wait for that market to appear out of the blue. YOU are the one in partnership with the realtors, who has to market the Square. And believe me, once you've helped eliminate the problems, you won't ever want to sell out and leave the Square! *Ruth Kamphoefner*

## COMPTON HEIGHTS TO FEATURE JANSSEN ARCHITECTURE DURING OCTOBER HOUSE TOUR

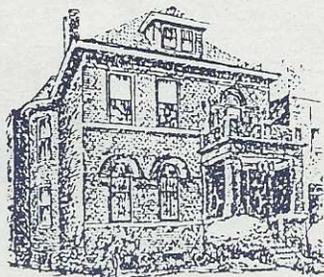
The 1995 Compton Heights house tour will focus on the work of architect Ernest Janssen. Janssen was a German educated, award winning, turn of the century, Missouri architect. In Compton Heights, he designed 14 homes and carriage houses, as well as the entrance pillars to the neighborhood on Grand Boulevard.

Ten homes, including more than half of Janssen's Compton Heights works, will be open to the public on Saturday and Sunday October 7 and 8, 1995. Ticket prices will be \$12 in advance, and \$15 on the day of the tour. All proceeds go to Compton Heights Association for improvement and preservation of the Compton

Heights Area. Homes will be open from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. on both days. Refreshments will be available.

Included on the tour will be Janssen's most lavish south side residential work at 3400 Russell, the Charles Stockstrom House, also known as the "Magic Chef House". The meticulous resoration by the second owners of the home is nearing completion. The Stockstrom family is credited with design and leadership in the invention of the gas kitchen stove. Kitchens around the world were revolutionized by this invention, and the Stockstrom companies became the largest stove companies in the world - Magic Chef, Quick Meal and American Stove. Also on tour will be the elegant home built for Louis Stockstrom (brother of Charles) at 3263 Hawthorne Boulevard. Several homes on the tour will show early Magic Chef stoves. Compton Heights is a small neighborhood of about 240 homes which prides itself in continuing efforts to preserve examples of magnificent architecture. The house tour provides Compton Heights Association with an opportunity to share the "magic" of this prestigious south St. Louis neighborhood. Call Shelley Donaho at 664-3400 for information.

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**Secretary:** Diane Hurwitz  
**Asst. Secretary:** Donna Mayes  
**Treasurer:** Suzanne Golemb  
**Past President:** Margie Meyer

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**Block Captains:** Sara Langan  
**Fundraising:**

**Neighborhood Imp:**  
**Promo. & Marketing:**

Susie Gudermuth  
**Publications:** Don Hardin

**BLOCK CAPTAINS**

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Diane Hurwitz (3640)

**3800 Arsenal**

Elliott Blevins (3850)

Fredric Rissover (3850)

**3600/3700 Hartford**

Marilyn Abbott (3648)

Carol Hoffmeister (3656)

**3800 Hartford**

Donna Mayes (3825)

Bill Wright (3836)

Tom Booth (3807)

**3600/3700 Juniata**

Sara Langan (3639)

Connie Bender (3665)

Tina Gunter (3705)

**3800 Juniata**

Shauna Feely (3871)

Tod Flak (3850A)

**3600/3700 Connecticut**

Chris & Rich Jamison (3625)

Micky Coriell (3618)

**3800 Connecticut**

Margie Meyer (3860A)

**3600/3700 Wyoming**

Paddy McPhillips (3668)

Janet Golitko

**3800 Wyoming**

Linda & Peter Fick (3879)

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Stafford Gavin (3651)

**3800 Humphrey**

LeAnne Lis (3800)

Marcia Recks

Robert Reed

**3600/3700 Utah Place**

Judy Newman (3729)

Michele Kerr (3636)

**3800 Utah Place**

Susie Gudermuth (3834)

Veda Lynn (3855)

**(CONT. FROM PAGE 7)**

The "Youth Opportunities & Violence Prevention Act" that I sponsored is also a part of this bill. It promotes public/private partnerships and investments at the community level aimed at successful strategies for employment, education, role model/mentor and non-violent resolution programming for young people. Businesses and individuals who invest in local community or non-profit prevention/opportunity programs will be eligible for tax credits. The goal is to make a difference early in a young person's/teenager's life to better help them succeed and not become part of the juvenile justice system.

**TOWER GROVE  
HEIGHTS GRAND  
GARDEN AWARDS**

By Ellen Reed-Fox

Lush, lavish, and dripping with color! The gardens that adorn the houses of Tower Grove Heights are a visual pleasure that we all enjoy. To reward all the green (and red and yellow and purple and blue) thumbs in the neighborhood, the First Annual Tower Grove Heights Grand Garden Award winners were announced. According to Jean Iezzi, one of the competition organizers, the neighborhood association had been discussing a way to recognize the beautiful gardens in our area for some time, and this year talk was turned into action. The competition, which was judged by block captains and the Executive Board, was limited to gardens visible from the street. Jean told me that the judges were looking for eye-catching displays that stood out as you passed

Tower Grove Heights Gazette  
3203 South Grand Blvd., Suite 103  
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The new law took effect immediately upon the governor's approval in June.

The second measure (HB 345) will permit public school districts to suspend students who carry a firearm on school property for at least one year. The length of the sentence will be decided by the chief officers of the school district on a case-by-case basis. School districts will still be allowed to offer alternative education programs to suspended students.

This legislation has been signed into law by the governor and will take effect Monday, August 28.

by. The following winners had a sign placed in front of their home as recognition of this special honor:

**3644 Arsenal**

**3879 Hartford**

**3734 Hartford**

**3726 Hartford**

**Hartford Arms (Spring,  
between Hartford and  
Juniata)**

**3806 Juniata**

**3726 Juniata**

**3625 Connecticut**

**3612 Humphrey**

The winners will also be recognized at the next Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association meeting on August 29. Be sure to keep your eyes open for the winning homes and all of the beautiful gardens that grace our neighborhood.