

Finding Matt the Cat



by Mindy Rouff

When I met Matt the Cat at his homecoming party at Rooster South Grand, he popped his fluffy orange head out of his carrier and let out a string of “meows.” I assume he was recounting his recent adventure, crossing Tower Grove Park and living on the streets for nine weeks, but I had a tough time catching the finer points of his saga because I don’t speak cat. He then said, “Have your people call my people. I’ll give you an exclusive.” Although he sounded a little Hollywood (1980s Hollywood, actually), can you blame him for thinking he has “people”? After all, the day after Matt was found, he was celebrated by Alderwoman Green in Resolution 187. St. Louis Public Radio and the *Riverfront Times* did great pieces on him. He’s had drinks named in his honor, a song written for him, and while he was missing, he had neighbors all over Tower Grove South searching for him. Even though Matt doesn’t have “people” in the Hollywood sense, his story is very much about people: his person, Maire Murphy, who was desperate to find him, Maire’s neighbors who committed themselves to getting Matt home, and a volunteer organization that exists to reunite lost pets with their families.

If I were a newly famous cat and it turned out I didn’t have assistants and spokespeople, I would want Maire (pronounced Moira) to be my person. Maire has been managing Matt’s fame like a professional. She organized the party at Rooster to thank the community for searching for Matt, and she has started to use Matt’s fame to help other cats. At Matt’s Rooster bash, Maire raised \$50 in donations for Tenth Life Cat Rescue and in a recent post to Matt’s Facebook page, she shared a Go Fund Me campaign for a needy cat.

Before Maire was Matt the Cat’s agent, she was an indefatigable one woman search and rescue crew. She improved her chances of seeing Matt again by researching best practices for finding lost pets. (Before Matt ever set a naughty paw outside, Maire had already tilted the odds of finding him in her favor by microchipping him and outfitting him with a tagged collar.) I recommend checking out missingpetpartnership.org and petfinder.com (a great site in general). Pets escape from even the most loving, responsible homes and petfinder.com recommends keeping their blog “Top 10 Tips for Finding Lost Cats” handy. In the interest of helping others, I’ll share some of the steps Maire took to find Matt. When Maire realized Matt was missing, after combing streets and alleys, she filed a lost pet report with STL Lost Pets (stllostpets.org), a website maintained by several animal welfare groups. By filing a lost pet report, Maire would’ve been notified if a cat matching Matt’s description showed up at a member shelter. She also checked shelters, in person. Combining both physical searches and social media use, Maire posted on the Hartford St, Tower Grove South, and Tower Grove Heights Facebook pages. She relied on Nextdoor.com to reach neighborhoods where she hadn’t put up flyers. Speaking of flyers, Maire made the most eye-catching lost pet



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Finding Matt the Cat

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

flyers that TGS had ever seen. The big, close up, color photo on a bright yellow background was no accident. As with every element of her search, she'd done her homework, and these flyers were designed for both drivers and pedestrians to notice.

If you lost a pet and never found it, this doesn't mean you did the wrong things. There is some element of luck involved, but you can improve your odds of a reunion by enlisting the help of your neighbors. Here is where the Tower Grove South/Shaw community really shined. Maire received, by her own estimate, "over 150 texts, calls, photos and messages online" about possible Matt sightings. Some, skilled in the art of cat wrangling, held onto orange cats for Maire to inspect. As the days wore on and the temperature plummeted, Maire asked for help putting flyers on front porches, and neighbors, many of whom she had never met, obliged, tromping through freshly fallen snow on a bitterly cold day. She asked people to do one block; they offered to do two.

**"When you see
a dog or cat
on the street,
don't think stray,
think lost."**

Almost as important as this physical assistance, countless strangers offered emotional support. Maire said that people would call to say simply, "Don't give up hope." Others shared personal stories of reunions with lost pets and these kept her going. The other thing that kept Maire searching: the knowledge that lost indoor cats rarely venture far from home. Again, her extensive "missing cat" research probably helped save Matt's life. Escaped indoor cats usually stay near home, silently hiding in fear of predators. (Matt was found in the Shaw neighborhood—far for a fluffy orange feline, but only a ½ mile from his Tower Grove South home.) One stranger who offered Maire physical assistance and emotional support: Tina Roe of Missouri Lost & Found Paws. Someone on the TGS Facebook put Maire in touch with Tina Roe who is known for having a microchip scanner. Maire described Tina as "phenomenal," and clearly, Tina's also a member of a fantastic volunteer group. Missouri Lost & Found Paws is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit sponsored by All Paws Rescue. Tina told me her motto is "When you see a dog or cat on the street, don't think stray, think lost." Two ways they assist in pet/human reunions is by using their Facebook page as a lost and found bulletin board, which Maire described as "very well managed," and by helping create and hang flyers. If your pet is missing, make use of Missouri Lost & Found Paws, and if you've ever loved a pet like family, donate to them at molostfoundpaws.blogspot.com or on the Missouri Lost & Found Paws Facebook page (specify Mo Lost & Found Paws in the memo area). Do it in Matt the Cat's honor!

Check out the Summer issue of The Gazette for a scoop on Matt the Cat's story that you won't read anywhere else.



HAPPENINGS ON



BY MARILYN BROWNING

This year, South Grand Community Improvement District (CID) is offering up an even dozen events for our entertainment and edification. To start off spring on South Grand, Shake 38 presents Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* in Ritz Park on April 20th at 5pm and 6pm.

Thursday, May 19th, celebrate International Dine Around on South Grand, with delectable offerings from our diverse restaurants. Friday, May 20th, view the Missouri Coalition for the Environment and St. Louis Earth Day documentary in Ritz Park at 8:00pm. May winds up with a lecture in Ritz Park from the Michael Allen Preservation Society on Thursday May 26th at 8:00pm. This lecture marks the beginning of a new series of events this year dubbed Arts in the Park-- a medley of dance, poetry, improv and lectures. Consider it a chance to feed your head the way South Grand restaurants feed your body.

June, July and August see the return of Music and Movie nights in Ritz Park on the third Friday of the month. South Grand CID Executive Director Rachel Witt will let us know soon which movies made the final cut, but I know *Twister*, the epic tornado movie, is under consideration. Needless to say, with a meteorologist in the house that one gets our vote!

Three more Arts in the Park presentations will be presented in Ritz Park the 4th Thursday of June, July and August. At 7pm June 23rd, poetry lovers should gather in the park for poetry readings sponsored by River Styx, the award-winning Saint Louis journal

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of earth
– a mountain.
Enough pails
of water
– a beer.”**

– South City Proverb

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your local tavern.***

Hunt In The Heights

We invite you to hunt in The Heights for answers to the questions below! Email your answers to HuntInTheHeights@gmail.com. Those who answer all the questions correctly will be entered into a raffle to win a \$15 gift card to Hartford Coffee Company! Submissions must be submitted by March 20, 2016. All ages welcome to participate!

Question #1: At which business on South Grand can you purchase “Super Green” cold pressed juice?

Question #2: List two items advertised in neon at the corner of Wyoming and Spring.

Question #3: Which Tower Grove Heights block currently has the street sign boasting “Most Members?”

Bonus Question (for one extra entry into to the raffle!): Near which intersection is there a pink elephant?

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HAPPENINGS ON SOUTH GRAND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

of poetry, fiction, essays, interviews, and art. At 7pm Thursday July 28th, expect great entertainment from the Improv Shop, Saint Louis's comedy club that specializes in long form improvisation. Their performances come with a guarantee that you'll never see the same show twice! Still in the planning stages, enjoy a local dance troupe performance at 7pm on Thursday, August 25th.

Saturday, September 17th stroll on down to South Grand for the 3rd annual Fall Fest, a celebration of the many great restaurants, services and shops on South Grand with plenty of fun activities for everyone. The year winds up in December with the ever-popular Grinchmas. As always, for a small donation supporting Shriners Hospitals, you can have your child's picture taken with the Grinch.

Can't keep all these events in your head? No worries. This year Rachel Witt will be mailing an official calendar of South Grand events to your home as a handy reminder of how much there is to see and do in our own neighborhood.

Beautification on South Grand is also on the agenda starting this spring. Ritz Park will have some additional landscaping to soften some of those hard concrete edges. And speaking of hard edges, wood will be attached to the tops of the concrete benches for our sitting comfort! Businesses get in on the act, with a new awning for Salon Saint Louis, a facelift for the building with Brasilia in it, a new patio for Jimmy John's, and renovation to the building on the southeast corner of South Grand and Humphrey. Those are just a few of the many ways South Grand continues to look better and better. For those that can't read enough about renovations around South Grand, take a look at Tricia Heliker's *Just Off Grand* article in this issue!



"I couldn't keep on doing this job without the enthusiasm and support of our great business people and the surrounding community."

Rachel Witt,
South Grand CID
Executive Director





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When you're working to achieve your financial objectives, you will encounter obstacles — some of which can't be easily anticipated. Nonetheless, you need to be aware that these challenges are out there — and plan for them. For starters, to avoid dipping into long-term investments to pay for short-term emergencies, such as a major car repair, consider establishing an emergency fund containing six to 12 months' worth of living expenses, held in a liquid account. In looking at the bigger picture, if you were ever temporarily disabled, the loss of income could be devastating. To protect yourself, consider disability insurance. And to guard your family's future should anything happen to you, you'll need life insurance. And if you ever need an extended stay in a nursing home, the cost could mount to hundreds of thousands of dollars. You may want to "transfer the risk" to an insurance company. As an investor, you can take positive steps to prepare for the unexpected — and those steps should lead you in the right direction as you move toward your important goals.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.



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WORST NIGHT EVER

BY RICH IEZZI **M**y wife, Jean, and I were living the perfect life on Hartford Street. I remember quoting George Bailey from the movie, "It's a Wonderful Life" when I told Jean, "I know what I'm going to do tomorrow and the day after that." Then we got the call from son-in-law Chris. Chris and daughter Carolyn lived in an enormous two-family flat on Connecticut Street. They occupied the second floor of their "Connecticut Castle" and had an ideal tenant on the first. Life was good. But the call would change all that, too.

**Life was good.
But the call would
change all that, too.**

Chris called on Sunday, November 8 at 9:27 p.m. saying, "Hey Rich, our house is on fire." It was more of a question – "how could our house be on fire?" Jean and I showed up at the same time the fire department arrived. I unlocked the side gate and took the fire guys up the back stairs. We all stood in the pristine living room right below where the fire appeared to be but saw and heard nothing. Meanwhile, the fire was silently building in the Mansard portion of the roof right above us. Somehow a fireplace ember caused the ignition. I heard the firefighters talk about tearing into the ceiling to look for the fire and thought, "Oh come on guys, don't make such a mess." The only access to the Mansard was a hatch in a closet blocked by clothes. Seeing that, the firefighters went back outside.

There wasn't much urgency – at first. Daughter Carolyn went outside barefoot to see what the fuss was about. But, for whatever reason, when the fire hoses were connected to the nearest fire hydrant, there was either no pressure or low pressure. Then the Mansard exploded in flames. For me, the worst part wasn't watching the dormer windows collapse into the building but watching daughter Carolyn break down in tears. She and Chris loved their Castle.

With neighbors lining the street, Chris and Carolyn became just another family helplessly watching everything they owned going up in flames. After the fire was extinguished, we had to deal with the water damage. At 1,000 gallons of fire hose water a minute, that water had to go somewhere. We watched as a two-inch deep waterfall came down the front oak stairs. Not good. Then we noticed a firefighter coming our way. He was carrying what looked to be a pillow – it was one of their three cats. But was it dead or alive? Good news, their Paddy was found alive. Next came Dukkie, also alive. But no Gaga. For the next 3 days, I quickly learned the importance of pets while we searched for their Gaga.

There was heartache that night but also a lot of love. Two neighbors came forward to offer spare rooms to Chris and Carolyn, no questions asked. During the next few days, neighbors were generous with condolences and gift cards. The night of the fire, neighbor Ruby supplied a coat and shoes for Carolyn. By 2 a.m., kids had taken up residence on our third floor.

continued on next page

WORST NIGHT EVER

When the fire was finally out, I told Chris that we'd mop up the water and everything would be OK (I actually went home to get a mop). It's not like that. The fire captain took us into the apartment for a look. Gas and electric service had been shut off so everything was dark and wet. Instead of water on the floor, there was a one foot thick mixture of insulation, drywall, plaster, clothing and destroyed furniture.

While no lives were lost, the missing Gaga kitty remained a heartache. We frantically searched everywhere. After three days, I got another call from Chris. "They found Gaga." Long pause. "She's OK." She had burrowed in the living room couch—the room worst affected by the fire.

After a fire, things get a lot worse before they get better. We were informed that every inch of the pristine woodwork that we'd stripped, stained and installed had to come out as they were "taking her down to the studs" for mold remediation. All six fireplace mantles also had to be removed. Incredibly, the ten-foot tall walnut dining room mantle received no damage, not even a drop of water. "It helps when there's a carving of Jesus in it," explained Carolyn.

As with most events, this was a learning experience. Here are a few tips:

- Carry a lot of insurance on everything you own. There's no way to absorb a loss like this one.
- If you're a landlord, insist that your tenants carry renter's insurance.
- Don't be in a hurry – insurance claims take a l-o-n-g time to work out.

Hopefully the Connecticut Castle will begin to rise from its ashes over the next several months and Chris and Carolyn will once again be ensconced on its second floor. That will be a happy day.



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From the President

BY STEVE GREGALI **F**irst, let me start by saying that I am a better speaker than a writer. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Stephen Gregali (aka Gregali), the new President of the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association. I live on the 3800 block of Hartford Street (Lower Hartford) with my lovely wife, Jennifer Florida, and I have been there a little over five years. Jennifer has been in the neighborhood for nearly 24 years.

I have lived in the City of St. Louis all my life; I have never strayed from it

I have lived in the City of St. Louis all my life; I have never strayed from it. I grew up in a few neighborhoods in the Dutch Town area. I have lived in the Fox Park, Princeton Heights, Bevo and South Hampton neighborhoods. I had the privilege to serve as the Alderman of the 14th Ward from April 1995 until August 2010. I then served in the City Administration from August 2010 until September 2014 as a Special Assistant to the Mayor. I am still working for the City in the Department of Finance Supply Division. There is a boat load of knowledge and experience floating around in my head that I want to continue to share in order to build and rebuild our neighborhood and our City.

Tower Grove Heights is the best neighborhood that I have lived in – I'm not just saying that, I mean it and, that's why I decided to serve our community when asked. We have the best amenities that any neighborhood could ask for. We are blessed to have one of the best urban parks in America and we are right smack dab in the middle of a vibrant business and entertainment community. We are one of the most walkable communities in the City and residents are able to get anywhere by almost any mode of transportation. We are the hub of the biking community.

We, the board of TGH Neighborhood Association, have been working to make our neighborhood an even better place to live, work, play and raise a family. Communication is one key element that we have been working on and we are excited to be making improvements to our website, www.towergroveheights.com, as we progress through the year. Not everyone is into social media or the web but we do a good job and you should venture in if you haven't already. We will continue to reach and engage people by all means of communication.

Moving forward, all we ask of you as our members and residents, is to participate in any capacity that you can – whether it is joining us at a Heights Night, volunteering to serve on one of our new committees: Social, Communications, and Safety (we don't ask much and the more the merrier); participating in one of the many community events around the area; becoming a Block Captain; joining the safety group; contributing to our annual 100 Neediest Cases project; attending TGHNA meetings; or just bringing a friend or neighbor to join us. A little of your time is all that we ask. TGH has so much to offer and we want you to share in its splendor.

I want to thank each and every one of the past officers for serving our community. For without your commitment, who knows what TGH would be? You have all served the community to keep and make it the best.

Again, I look forward to serving you in the best way that I can. Please feel free to ask me anything – I enjoy helping to find answers. Contact me at president@towergroveheights.com.

FAST FORWARD

BY TRICIA HELIKER **A**nyone who has done rehab, be it a whole house renovation or just a couple of rooms, knows it can be physically, emotionally and often financially taxing. There are some who thrive on it and others who say, "Never again!" For some, who have it in their blood, there will always be the next one. This is not the first rehab for the current owners of 3801 Hartford. They have done projects in Clayton, U. City, Ladue, and within the past year, one on Utah and one on Wyoming....both in the 3800 block. I was chatting with Sergey about what they had planned for the house. It was obvious he was excited about what lay ahead. You could hear it in his voice. Then he commented, "It'll be fun." Ah, that's the key for a good repeat rehabber. Ya' gotta love it!



Ya' gotta love it!

The action took off in December. Chimneys came down, roof repairs were made, and shingles applied in a matter of days. A house that had been obscured for years by two large trees reclaimed the NW corner of Spring and Hartford as, limb by limb, those trees were removed. Empty dumpsters rotated with packed containers until all the clutter, debris, crumbling plaster and warped floors had been hauled away. Workers respectfully salvaged family photos and preserved those architectural elements that could be restored. It was unfathomable that a two-story back porch, which was crumbling on its own, would require such hard labor to remove it completely. And then came the garage – a unique structure in that it is actually two garages under one roof. The smaller side opens to the alley and the other onto Spring Ave. It was obvious to all, neglect had taken its toll. The rafters were rotting, causing the dormers to sink. But, undaunted, the crew kept what they could and replaced what they couldn't save.

Great weather in early January pushed this project forward without delays. January leading into February boasted temperatures reaching into the sixties under sunny skies. Outdoor work that might have been postponed until spring was quickly completed without frostbite. As for interior, potential buyers will be interested to know it will be a 3-bedroom, office, 3½-bath, with mudroom and pantry. Although the footprint of this house is not large, every effort is being made to utilize the space while maintaining an expansiveness.

By the time this article hits the streets, winter should be behind us and 3801 Hartford will be receiving the finishing touches. Those who are curious about the progress, the details, and the pictures of this rehab need only to type in the address on the Facebook search bar. That's right, **3801 Hartford** has its own Facebook page.

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A WALK IN THE PARK

Just Off Grand

BY TRICIA HELIKER Many of the buildings on South Grand have an interesting and varied tenant history. Although the now-vacant property at 3609 Juniata is 10 to 20 years newer than most of the original South Grand business buildings, it has been home to a variety of establishments including a barber shop, a beauty shop, a tavern, a delicatessen, and a dry cleaners, just to name a few.

...it has been home to a variety of establishments including a barber shop, a beauty shop, a tavern, a delicatessen, and a dry cleaners, just to name a few.

Most recently it was the Double Bogey Bar followed by Verve hair salon. When it was constructed in 1927, just two years before the stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression, contractors Huger and Bueckler followed plans by architect O.J. Krieg for a symmetrical design with two store fronts flanking a central entry and a grand staircase leading to the upper level. That set-up is about to change.

Purchase of this building by Victor Pham, owner of Café Mochi, has set in motion plans for another chapter in the life of the building with the detailed façade. Architectural drawings for a new restaurant that will occupy both floors have been completed. The building has been stripped of interior walls constructed by previous tenants and the staircase is now accessible from both sides of the first floor. To take the restaurant from the drawing board to Grand Opening will require time. But barring any major obstacles, this new eatery to be known as V.P. Square, will be open for business in the summer of 2016.

The first thing potential patrons want to know about a new restaurant is what type of food the menu will feature. Until decisions are final in the kitchen, that will remain under wraps. What is clear is that there will be a strong lunch menu for midday diners and quick service for carry-out customers.

Evening diners will find ample seating on both floors with a slightly different décor on each level. The second story will also be available for larger groups and private parties. A full bar, windows on three sides, and a spacious dining area will make the upper level a welcome addition to South Grand.

Look to your next Gazette for more on the fare, décor, and completion date.



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SOLD ON THE CITY

BY
**ABIGAIL
MILLER**

When Chris Grus was in his 20s, he started to hear the city calling. It was a clear voice, but it wasn't anything particularly mystical, instead a wise older friend and longtime Tower Grove South resident. It wasn't until years later, after Chris had grown to Chris and Lisa Grus of Premier Realty Exclusive, that the call of the city was answered. Based in the county at the time, the realtor duo was finding success selling homes in the city to others and decided to make the jump themselves. The looming reconstruction of the highway and the threat of longer commutes was the final signal that walkable Tower Grove South was the next destination.

They took the city bait in 2007 and followed in the footsteps of others before, latching on to incredible architecture and square footage – and a ten-month remodel. To top it off, they hadn't just answered the call to live in the city. Just before they closed on their home on Utah, they closed on an office building at the corner of Oak Hill and Humphrey.



Officially sold on the neighborhood personally, it is no surprise they continue to find success selling others on it as well. In fact, the whole team at Premier Realty has drunk the city Kool-Aid (which tastes a lot like a cold draft from Civil Life). Of their team, five of the seven live in The Heights. The other two are city-based in nearby neighborhoods.

Fortunately, the team doesn't have to work too hard to fire off what makes the city so irresistible to themselves and to potential buyers.

Lisa insists St. Louis is a well-kept secret, “especially from St. Louisans!”

Lisa insists St. Louis is a well-kept secret, “especially from St. Louisans!” And, of course, we all know she's right. When they're not gushing about architecture, great neighbors, and their four-block commute to work, they're selling homes and even developing a few properties. They're a good pair to be developing since they know their city-bound customers well. They know wood floors and original details take precedence over “county finishes” and carpeted floors. It's no wonder they're about to be featured in the April issue of *St. Louis Magazine* for receiving the Five Star Professional award for their sixth consecutive award.

So thank you, Chris and Lisa Grus, for helping so many of our new neighbors find their home in our neighborhood. And thanks for being among the committed and kind neighbors who make Tower Grove Heights the wonderful place that it is.

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THE *NEW* TOWER GROVE SOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Did you know that there's a new neighborhood association in town? It's the Tower Grove South Neighborhood Association, serving our vast neighborhood from Kingshighway to Grand and Arsenal to Chippewa. The neighborhood has been without an association for some time, but with the help of some very active and involved neighbors, the Tower Grove Neighborhoods CDC, Nancy Thompson of SLACO, and the St. Louis University Law Clinic, the TGSNA became official in July.

**Our neighbors
will make the
Tower Grove South
Neighborhood
Association
whatever it will be.**

What is the Tower Grove South Neighborhood Association? The most straightforward answer is that we are an organization with the objectives of facilitating communication between neighbors, safeguarding the general welfare of our residents, and working toward the improvement of our neighborhood. We aim to inform, engage, and connect our neighbors. The task at hand is determining the best way to meet these objectives.

Being brand new is something we consider to be a benefit and an amazing opportunity. While we don't have the name recognition, logistic capability, budget, or experience of long-established organizations, we do have the flexibility to grow into our mission. We don't have ways in which to be set. We don't know what can and cannot be done, so we can try it. We don't know exactly where we're going, so we'll listen to everyone to help determine that course.

We aim to be as representative as possible, and Tower Grove South provides a lot to represent. We are diverse in every way: culturally, economically, politically, commercially, architecturally, and so on. We are a neighborhood of neighborhoods: Tower Grove Heights, the Wedge, Oak Hill, South Grand, Morgan Ford, and everything in between. These are a lot of neighbors to bring to the table, and our main focus since beginning in July has been figuring out how to bring everyone in. We chose to elect our Directors by quadrant as a first step towards being broadly representative, but of course there is still much work to do to that end. Reaching out to our significant immigrant population, accommodating neighbors for whom the standard evening meeting doesn't work due to work or childcare concerns, engaging people who think a neighborhood association is "not for them," and just making ourselves generally recognizable as a group are some of the steps we intend to take to increase our inclusivity.

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Initially our activities will be fairly limited. With minimal human and financial capital, we are happy when we can successfully just bring some neighbors together. Whether it's getting together and staying informed at our monthly meetings (every third Wednesday, 6:30 at Oak Hill Presbyterian), playing some human foosball, or revitalizing the triangle at Tholozan and Roger, these small things help to engage community members and provide momentum for the group to grow.

As we grow, we can provide more opportunities to bring neighbors together, and our neighbors can help us determine how we can best serve the neighborhood. We need input and ideas from everyone, and we need everyone to help turn those ideas into plans and actions. Everyone's voice is important. Our neighbors will make the Tower Grove South Neighborhood Association whatever it will be. So please join us!

Our meetings are on the third Wednesday of every month at Oak Hill Presbyterian Church (4111 Connecticut at Oak Hill) at 6:30 p.m. You can find more information at TGSNA.org or stay updated via Facebook (facebook.com/TGSNA).

Nick Finley, President, TGS





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The Kids of TGH Tell It Like It Is

BY SARAH C
TRUCKEY

I've always been intrigued by the large gaggle of kids living on the 3800 block on Juniata and Connecticut. They're imaginative and loud and resourceful and spunky and cute, and they make me want to be nine years old again. And since we usually hear from adults why they like living in Tower Grove Heights, I thought it was time we took to the alley to see what the next generation thinks of our little paradise. With some help from their parents, the kids told me what they love about the neighborhood.

- "I like Tower Grove Park, the King and I, and our nice neighbors." – *Lydia, 7*
- "We get to go into each other's backyards whenever we want to. We play instruments together, we play sports, we look for treasure and we trade Pokemon. We get to ride our bikes in the alley and to the park and to Gustine Market. And we like to eat Doritos." – *Henry, 6*
- "It is soooooo beautiful and I get to see Greta, Rudy, Otto and Naida." – *Sam, 4*
- "I like that we can go by ourselves to see if our friends can play." – *Otto*
- "I LOVE THE ALLEY! And Rosie." – *Gus, 6*
- "I like the swing in our backyard and running through the neighbors' front yards." – *Timmy, 5*
- "I like it that we all live so close together." – *Naida*
- "The best thing about living in the neighborhood is how close together everything is: you can do a lot of things and not have to use your car. We can easily walk to Hartford Coffee, so that's a good thing if we're running low on food." – *Milo, 7*
- "When we have an idea, there is always someone to do it with." – *Greta*
- "Everything." – *Charlie, 7 1/2*



And some words from their parents...

"We are blessed to have such wonderful neighbors and such a great group of kids for our son to grow up with."

– *Kimberly Thoma*

"One of the things we are planning to do this spring/summer with the kids is an alley beautification project. We are going to clean up the weeds and clean up the alley where some of our elderly neighbors live, and create some fun 'spaces' for the summer. And we hope to start an urban garden on a concrete slab behind our house (and solicit donations and help from our TGH neighbors, stay tuned!)." – *Sherry LeBlanc*

continued on next page

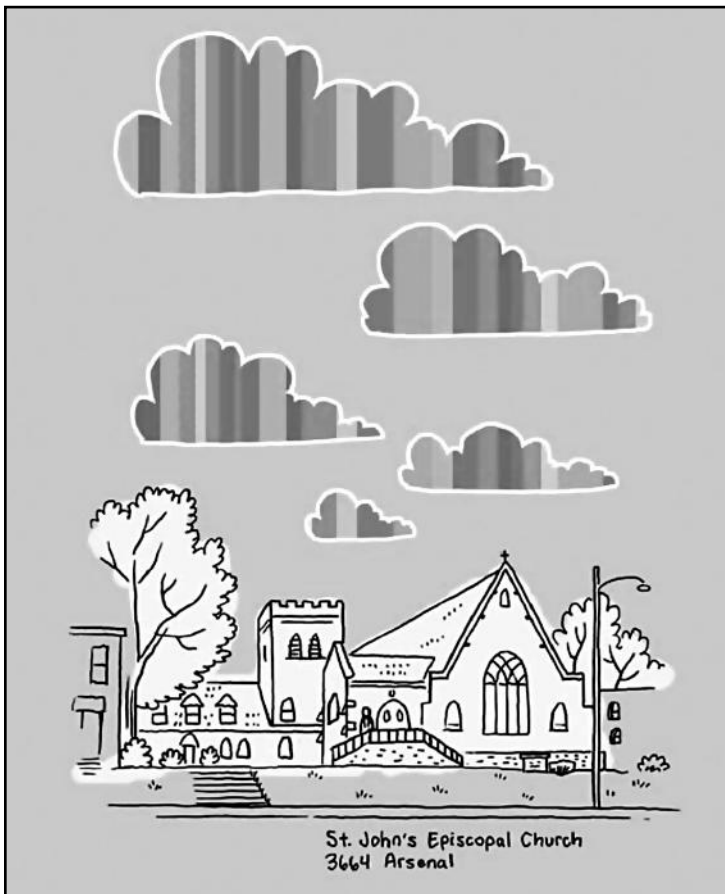
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Kids of TGH Tell It Like It Is

CONTINUED

According to *Tom Reitenbach*, the long list of things they like to do includes:

- Walks to Gustine Market for candy;
- Sports in the alley where there is room to catch, throw and run;
- Movie nights projected on the back of the house;
- Touring the neighborhood with their mobile pet museum – an assortment of caged critters in a wagon;
- Lemonade and terrarium stands on Spring;
- The 4th of July bike parade;
- Group concerts for the parents;
- Building tiny towns with random bits found in the alley (this gets interesting); *and*
- Trips to Tower Grove Creamery and Gelateria.

REAL ESTATE NEWS

Email me your real estate questions at: DeborahErvin@att.net

Homes Sold in Tower Grove Heights

Type	Address	Sold \$	Bdrm	Bath	Sq Ft
Res	3865 Connecticut	140,000	4	2	2,512
Res	3843 Connecticut	207,000	3	2	1,584
Res	3825 Connecticut	236,000	4	3	2,181
Res	3729 Connecticut	264,000	3	3	2,184
Res	3884 Connecticut	281,000	3	3	2,500
Res	3732 Connecticut	299,900	3	3	2,050
Res	3847 Connecticut	344,500	4	3	2,442
Res	3814 Connecticut	359,900	3	4	2,610
Multi	3710 Connecticut	125,000			2,708
Multi	3726 Connecticut	156,000			
Multi	3735 Connecticut	225,000			3,645
Res	3818 Hartford	122,500	3	2	1,634
Res	3859 Hartford	181,500	4	1	2,100
Res	3845 Hartford	250,000	3	2	1,630
Res	3836 Hartford	365,000	4	3	2,552
Res	3844 Hartford	375,000	4	4	2,592
Res	3711 Humphrey	233,000	4	3	
Res	3807 Humphrey	253,000	4	2	1,728
Res	3671 Humphrey	282,500	3	2	2,400
Res	3865 Humphrey	299,800	4	3	2,256
Res	3666 Humphrey	316,000	4	3	2,232
Res	3830 Humphrey	356,500	4	4	3,390
Res	3822 Humphrey	430,000	4	4	3,503
Multi	3845 Humphrey	230,000			2,740

Type	Address	Sold \$	Bdrm	Bath	Sq Ft
Res	3827 Juniata	149,900	3	1	1,612
Res	3841 Juniata	210,000	3	2	1,612
Res	3865 Juniata	242,000	4	2	1,923
Res	3827 Juniata	260,000	3	3	2,100
Res	3868 Juniata	273,500	4	2	2,107
Res	3625 Juniata	288,000	5	2	2,179
Res	3709 Juniata	325,000	4	3	2,708
Res	3708 Juniata	332,000	4	4	2,142
Multi	3862 Juniata	120,000			2,388
Multi	3875 Juniata	180,000			2,808
Multi	3849 Juniata	335,000			5,256
Res	3636 Utah	260,000	5	3	3,098
Res	3841 Utah	429,900	4	3	2,992
Multi	3885 Utah	325,000			3,082
Res	3877 Wyoming	210,000	3	2	1,564
Res	3831 Wyoming	364,000	3	3	
Res	3724 Wyoming	365,000	4	3	2,500
Res	3808 Wyoming	365,000	3	3	2,900
Res	3806 Wyoming	373,000	4	3	3,183
Multi	3836 Wyoming	150,000			2,148
Multi	3847 Wyoming	152,000			2,450
Multi	3829 Wyoming	159,000			2,250
Multi	3636 Wyoming	215,000			2,650
Multi	3812 Wyoming	222,000			2,800

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TEACHING TO GIVE BACK



by **Ellen Wilson** In this, our twelfth year of supporting south St. Louis families, we had a first. As we were wrapping gifts and marveling at how great the neighbors were again this year there was a knock at the door. On the porch were five kids from down the street. They introduced themselves as the Alley Cats and said they had some money to donate. I said thanks and that it was very generous of them to which they replied "We wanted to." When I opened the envelope back inside, I found the following note:

"We are a group of kids who play in the alley behind our houses. Just recently, we came up with the idea to sell terrariums and we made money. Included in here is \$41 from that terrarium sale, and a birthday bowl we did for my dad. My mom told us that you're collecting and we decided to donate." From The Alley Cats

They introduced themselves as the Alley Cats and said they had some money to donate.

They were so excited to be able to donate what they had worked hard to make and collect, it made me tear up to think what an impact this action had on them. While I have always maintained that I get more out of this project than anyone, I

hope this act of kindness by these kids stays with them and helps them include service and giving back throughout their lives. Hey Alley Cats – YOU ROCK!!!

For those unable to stop by the wrapping party here is an overview of how we divided the gifts this year. Both families received household supplies including air freshener and laundry soap as well as linens of all sorts including sheets, pillows, and towels. Family #1 also received clothes for all members of the family, dishes, sports balls of all sorts, athletic shoes and socks, art supplies, family games, dolls, and books. Family #2 received winter coats and scarves, books, picture frames, cooking supplies, dolls, puzzles, lunch box, clothes for all family members, and lots and lots of diapers.

The cash donations were significant this year with each family getting over \$230 in retail and grocery gift cards as well as \$1,000 each to go toward utilities to be paid directly through the 100 Neediest Cases program.

Each year this project is supported by the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association which has an ever changing leadership. This year we had several members and leaders who took on a larger role in helping to get the word out and collecting gifts. Past-president, Kelly Stout, and the Board helped to select our families, and provided financial support for the flyers. Thanks to Tom Reitenbach for setting up the PayPal donation option on the TGHNA website. Rick Stein, TGHNA Treasurer, kept the money in order and editor, Rich Iezzi, helped to keep the deadline of the Gazette and provided space for the articles.

2015 Donors – Again, I did my best to get everyone's name who participated in any way this year and again, I am sure, I missed a few. Please know I value and appreciate everyone who helped in any way.

Anonymous

Marilyn and Mark Abbott

Alley Cats: Greta, Naida, Rudy, and Otto Reitenbach;

Frank, Rosie, and Oscar Clyne; and Jens Istvan

Pauline and Robert Ashton

Beth Austin

Ruth and Bruce Brooks

Marilyn and Wesley Browning

The Burkhardt/Buchanan Family

Lisa Carpenter

Suzanne Carron and Scott Douglass

Barb Ceresia

Ellen Connors

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Debra Knox Deiermann and Barbara Gilchrist

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Denise Missall

Erin O'Reilly and Jay Diamond

Mac and Anne Orcutt

Christian Peper

Angie and Tom Reitenbach

Cynthia Rodriguez

Ella Rothgangle and Chris Nahm

Liz and Erich Schraer

James Sinclair and Eric Brown

Susan and Gary

Rick Stein

Emogene and Joseph Trossauer

Kathleen and Michael Tustanowsky

Rebecca and Stuart Voboril

Catherine and Kurt Vogel

Erica and Stephen Westbrook

D
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S

This year the fliers went out with the Gazettes so the block captains did double duty and I thank them for that extra effort.

We had a fun time wrapping this year (although we missed you Pauline!!) with one new face. Denise Missall, Anne Orcutt, and Ellen Connors organized everything and made the gifts look amazing. We had two full car loads to get everything there. Anne Orcutt donated the use of her car so between us we got everything to the center in one trip.

As always, thank you to everyone in the neighborhood who contributed in any way!! Have a great year.