

Tower Grove Heights Gazette

Volume 12, No. 2

Grand to Gustine

Arsenal to Utah Place

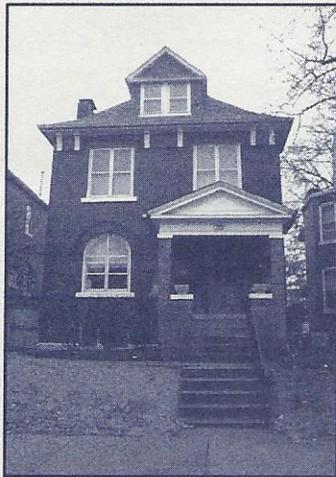
March 2001

Grand South Grand Spring House and Garden Tour

By Rich Iezzi

“Grand past, Grand present” is the theme for the eighth annual Grand South Grand House and Garden tour scheduled for April 21st and 22nd.

This is one of the most popular events in our area and draws more than 1000 people to the five neighborhoods near Tower Grove Park and the South Grand Business District. The five neighborhoods are working together once again to stage St. Louis’ largest house tour. The tour features 12 unique and beautiful residences from the following neighborhoods: Tower Grove Heights, Tower Grove East, Shaw, Compton Hill Reservoir Square and Compton Heights.



3822 Connecticut

Tower Grove Heights will feature three houses on the tour. Specifically, Jan Nesser and Ben Chu’s home at 3822 Connecticut, Tim and Debbie Akin’s town home in our beloved Hartford Arms and Kim Cole’s home at 3879 Juniata.

Proceeds to be Donated

The purpose of the annual house tour has always been to attract new owners and renters to our area and show off the work that the Tower Grove Neighborhoods have accomplished. Since the tour is a charitable event, any proceeds beyond the cost of the tour will be donated to the All Shaw Neighborhood Choir. This organization unites neighborhood children and families through music appreciation and education.

House Tour History

Years ago, the neighborhoods that now comprise the Grand South Grand House tour held their own tours. These separate tours placed a burden on individual neighborhoods, requiring them to showcase 10 to 12 homes every year. The tours also tended to compete against each other and saturated the house tour market. There just weren’t enough good days in spring to share. In 1993, the neighborhoods with geographic proximity to Tower Grove Park began teaming up to promote the entire South Grand area while showcasing the distinctive architecture of the five neighborhoods.

The house tour committee is comprised of members of the five neighborhoods and has planned this year’s tour over the last year. Jean Iezzi represents Tower Grove Heights. The homes were selected from recommendations from neighborhood residents with the goal of showing individual tastes and decoration. We appreciate the

time dedicated by the house tour committee as well as the owners of the homes on tour. We all have a good time at the tours but there is a lot of hard work behind this event.

Tour and Ticket Information

The tour hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on April 21 and 22. Advance tickets are \$12 and can be purchased by calling 314-773-4844 (MasterCard and Visa). Advance tickets will also be available at Botanicals on the Park, Botanicals West, Kenary Park Florist & Gifts and Gringo Jones.

Tickets will be \$15 on the days of tour and may be purchased at the ticket booth. Discounts are available for groups of 20 or more and group tour planning information is available by request. Children 12 and under are free.

The ticket booth and tour starting point are at the Water Tower Park (NE corner of South Grand and Russell). Because the tour is self-paced, the tickets will be valid for both days. Free shuttle busses will be provided from the ticket booth to the homes. However, bicycling, walking or driving are all options. Entertainment will be offered in many homes and don’t forget to visit the South Grand Business District for coffee or breakfast before the tour, then dinner and some great shopping after the tour.



3161 Spring

sure that your home is wearing its best curb appeal. Remember your first visit to the Heights? First impressions are lasting so please try to eliminate every speck of litter so we can sparkle and leave some parking spaces near the tour homes. House captains and tour volunteers are needed and will receive free tour tickets for their time. Working the tour is always a great way to have fun and meet new friends so call Jean at 772-4987 or 772-5982 to sign up. See you there!



3879 Juniata

entertainment will be offered in many homes and don’t forget to visit the South Grand Business District for coffee or breakfast before the tour, then dinner and some great shopping after the tour.

As always, your help is needed. Tower Grove Heights will also be on display so make

The Tower Grove Heights Gazette

Founding Editor: Janice Nesser
Publications Chairperson/Editor: Tod A. Martin
Business Manager: position vacant
Production Manager: Tod A. Martin

Staff: Mark Abbott, Tim Akin, Debbie Akin, Audrey Anderson, Elizabeth Braznell, Richard Clinebell, Matthew Fernandes, Jennifer Florida, Don Hardin, Rich Iezzi, Sara Langan, Brian Marston, Jill Nissen, Erin O'Reilly, Michael Renner, Suzanne Rhodenbaugh, Tom Rhodenbaugh, Jay Rosloff, Patty Schneider, Joe Thele, Terry Winkelman

The Gazette is a non-profit publication published bi-monthly by the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association. For information concerning advertising rates and layout planning call Tod Martin at 314-771-6292.

Your letters and comments are always welcome at the Gazette. Mail them to: The Gazette/TGHNA, 3735 Connecticut, St. Louis, MO 63116 or email Gazette@towergroveheights.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. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Happenings in Tower Grove Heights

March 6th - Vote in *Primary* for Mayor, Comptroller, Alderperson

March 27th - TGHNA General Meeting, 7:15p.m., 3617 Wyoming

April 3rd - Vote for Mayor, Comptroller, Alderperson

April 21st & 22nd - Grand South Grand House Tour. Questions? Call 772-5982.

April 24th - TGHNA General Meeting, 7:15p.m., 3617 Wyoming

April 28th - 20th Annual Operation Brightside Blitz. Join your neighbors in cleaning up your block. Questions? Call Blitz Hotline 781-4556

DINOQUEST



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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

SLACO'S 6th ANNUAL ST. LOUIS NEIGHBORHOODS CONFERENCE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER ON SATURDAY, MARCH 31, 2001!

The St. Louis Neighborhoods Conference is a great place to meet other neighborhood activists and learn about neighborhood successes from around the city. If you're committed to improving the City of St. Louis' neighborhoods, this conference is for you!

WHEN? MARCH 31, 9 am – 4:30 pm

WHERE? St. Louis Community College at Forest Park, 5600 Oakland

HOW MUCH? \$10 (includes continental breakfast, lunch and closing reception)

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

- 8:30 am: Registration
- 9 am: Keynote Address, by Dr. Benjamin Carson (www.drben Carson.com), a world-renowned pediatric neurosurgeon and founder of Carson Scholars Fund. Using his inspiring life story as a backdrop, Dr. Carson will discuss the importance of a broad-based support network for successful community building.
- 10:15 am: Workshop Session #1 (7 concurrent break-out sessions. Topics include housing, economic development, New American issues, youth & school issues, organizational effectiveness, crime prevention & neighborhood safety, and environmental issues.)
- 11:15 am: Workshop Session #2 (7 concurrent break-out sessions.)
- 12:30 pm: Lunch
- 1:40 pm: Workshop Session #3 (7 concurrent break-out sessions.)
- 2:50 pm: Town Hall Forum: "The State of Missouri's Urban Agenda", with comments from Gov. Bob Holden (not yet confirmed), State Treasurer Nancy Farmer, 4th District State Sen. Patrick Dougherty, and 5th District State Sen. Paula Carter (not yet confirmed)
- 4:15 pm: Reception

FOR MORE INFORMATION or TO REQUEST A CONFERENCE BROCHURE: Contact SLACO (St. Louis Association of Community Organizations) at 314-533-9104, slaco1@aol.com, or <http://stlouis.missouri.org/slaco>.
TO REGISTER BY PHONE: Call 314-644-9175

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Roving Restaurant Review

By Tim & Deb Akin

The "New" Chase Park Plaza Hotel has been open for a while now but we just got around to trying **eau** (pronounced "o") recently. If you call for reservations you will be asked if you want to dine in the Café or the Bistro. The Café is more casual dining and is located in what was the Steeplechase in the Chase's previous life. It is adjacent to the pool and has a very large bar area if you prefer just drinks. The Bistro is more formal but is still "no jackets required." It occupies the area that was once the Sea Chase, the Tack Room and Hunt Club. We wanted to experience the fine dining available at **eau** so we chose the Bistro for this visit.

The menu is organized by small and large plate offerings. The small plates can be combined like Spanish tapas to make a meal of many flavors and tastes. The small plate menu can also be treated like the more usual appetizer menu. We selected the Stone Crab and Sticky Rice Cakes with Cucumber-Ginger Relish and Green Horseradish Emulsion. It was an unusual twist to the traditional crab



cakes. Our friends from Boston enjoyed the cakes very much. The rice gave them a very light texture and a Sushi like quality. I got brave and tried the Yellowtail Carpaccio and Crab Cevinche with Arugula-Rice Paper Salad and a Peppery Dijon Dressing. Yellowtail is one of two fish flown to St. Louis the same day it is caught. In this dish it is served uncooked a la Sushi. I enjoyed this very much but would not suggest it unless you love Sushi.

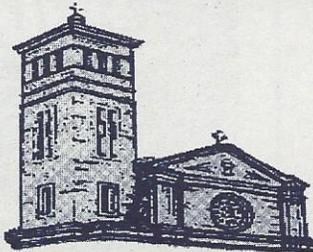
We selected several offerings from the large plate menu. Brian and I selected the fish sampler. It is the chef's Choice

of three fish and flavors. Each fish selection is prepared in a different style and a unique side dish. It was great. Deb tried the Smoked Shrimp and Sea Scallops with Spicy Sausage, Fennel and Red Pepper Soffritto Stick Rice and Tarragon-Tartar Emulsion. She enjoyed that as well. Our friend Patti tried the less adventurous but equally tasty Roasted Natural Chicken and Lemon Sage Butter with Parsnip-whipped Red Potatoes and Madeira-Peppercorn Sauce.

If you haven't noticed by now, **eau's** specialty is seafood. Since we enjoy seafood, this restaurant had lots to offer us. There are several other meat dishes on the large plates menu including Grilled Beef Tenderloin, Pan-roasted Alma Farms Pork Loin, and Grilled Ribeye if seafood is not your thing. The small plate menu has a few salad offerings that are vegetarian but the pickings are rather slim.

The **eau** Bistro and Café are located in the Chase Park Plaza Hotel at 212 N. Kingshighway. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served in the Café. Dinner and Sunday brunch are served in the Bistro. Call 454-9000 for more information.

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of South Side National Bank

Community Leader in the Redevelopment of Gravois Plaza
Southtown Coalition Leader
Block Captain
St. Pius Vth School Board

**... and Jennifer intends to continue to work FULL
TIME at ...**

Creating a United 15th Ward

Building Better Neighborhood Relationships

Energizing the Morgan Ford, Grand, and Gravois Business Districts

Continuing Community Investments

Jennifer Florida

15th Ward Alderwoman ****March 6th****



Jennifer Florida
Proven Leader, Dedicated Servant

Dear Neighbor:

I've lived in St. Louis nearly 20 years. I am 39 and have been married to Mark Florida for 16 years. We have 4 children ages: 15, 13, 9 & 7 who are 5th generation city residents. I graduated from Illinois State University with a degree in Criminal Justice in 1983 and currently work as a substitute teacher and as a corporate art services consultant.

I have been involved in community work for many years and have been a leader for the redevelopment of Gravois Plaza, the Southtown site at Kingshighway and Chippewa, and South Side National Bank.

*I want to be your **full-time** representative to the Board of Aldermen to **continue to work** at insuring and promoting the health, safety and welfare of all of our neighborhoods. I will return phone calls and respond to needs for service. I want to step up our efforts at making the 15th ward a great place to continue to live, shop and do business.*

Please seriously consider voting for me on Tuesday, March 6th.

*Thank you,
Jennifer Florida*

Visit Jennifer during her office hours, 11am-1pm, Mon. through Sat., 3801 Wyoming.

For a ride to the polls or an absentee ballot, call Jennifer at home at 776-2890.

E-mail Jennifer at ElectJennFlorida@aol.com

Punch 11

Paid For by Citizens to Elect Jennifer Florida, Opal Jones - Treasurer, 773-4634, Ross Hammond - Campaign Manager

A Corner on the Market

By Rich Iezzi

Dave McCreery's renovation of the southwest corner of Grand and Arsenal is a lot bigger than it looks. All you see is the exterior framework when you're zipping down Grand Avenue but you get perspective as you walk next to the building. When you go through the angled entrance, the interior opens up like Meramec Caverns. Right now it's a wide-open space 84 feet long, 32 feet wide with 17½ foot ceilings. Even though it's still being constructed, I liked what I saw.

Dave McCreery, President of the South Grand Business District and owner of this building, knows what he wants and is willing to sacrifice time and money to achieve it. Take the exterior brick columns, for example. How many times did we drive by on a Saturday or Sunday and see Dave's bricklayers working to get the pattern just right? When you see them up close, the columns are actually composed of 5 or 6 different courses of brick to produce the vertical 'X' pattern. Dave had to lay the whole thing out on his computer to make it work and told me it almost drove him nuts. Limestone capstones complete the columns to cover sins from previous owners.

The interior space is bigger than I thought and surprisingly uncluttered for

such a large project. The ceiling is so high that it extends over MoKaBee's all the way to the west wall, giving a balcony appearance. Dave is considering adding wrought iron railings to the 'balcony' to



be able to use this space and even creating more balconies on the north wall. The floor looks like the original terrazzo and Dave told me there was a Velvet Freeze



there years ago.

Dave has been involved with this building for ten years first as a partnership then

sole owner when he bought out his partner five years ago. His approach to the project is to create a key asset that will lend itself to the area's residential and commercial property. When I asked what

the space will be used for, Dave raised his hands and said, "Who knows?" To the do-you-have-a-deadline question and Dave said, "Yes, we passed it." Actually, he hopes that the "corner" will go on the market in Spring.

The location is extremely visible. We're used to looking at its solid north brick wall as we go down Grand but that is about to change. 25 new windows will allow us to look right into the building as we walk or drive by. The architectural work is being done by Klitzing/Welsch and Associates who occupy the

building's second floor.

I was about to leave when Dave said he had one more thing to show me. It was my favorite, the basement. It didn't look like a basement or smell like one and its ceilings were plastered. It's larger than the upstairs because it goes under MoKaBee's and also ten feet of Domino's Pizza. There used to be a formal entrance down from street level via a staircase on the north side. The stairs are still there along with their white glazed brick walls.

When I asked Dave if he's had fun, he said the

best part is still to come. I agree – I can't wait to get back in there when it's all finished.

Where the Money Goes

By Patty Schneider

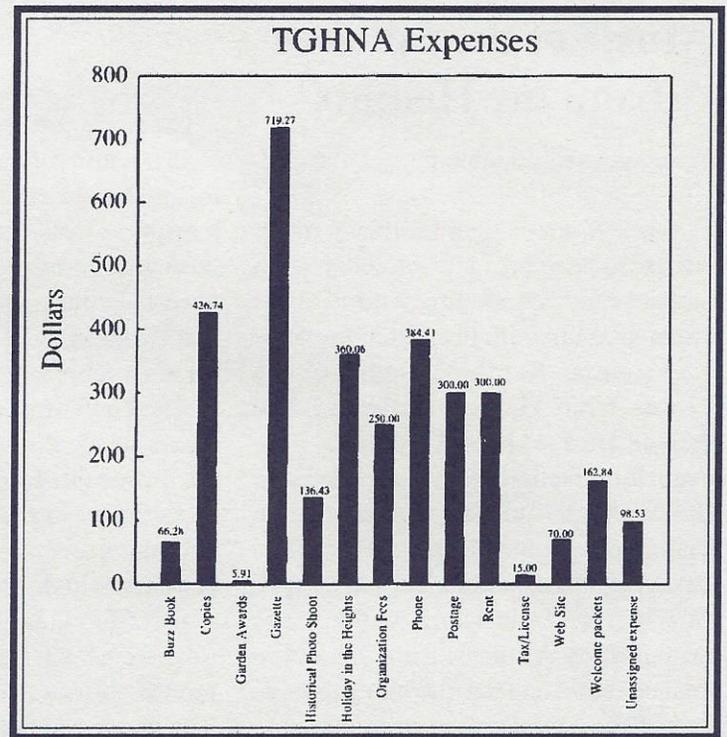
The W2's and 1099's are out. It is the time of year to evaluate your income and expenditures. The Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association is no different from the average person. With the beginning of each New Year and new presidency, the budget is reviewed. The following is a summary of the income and expenditures for the last year: 1/1/00 to 12/31/00.

The Association has two main sources of income: membership and fund-raisers. Last year, membership dues of \$1143.00 provided 36% of the total revenue for the year. Most of the money to support the organization was raised via fund-raisers. Four major fund-raisers accounted for \$1983.45 or 63% of the revenue. Those fund-raisers ranged from a plant sale and income from working the concession stands at Cardinal Games to the Art of City Living and Christmas Cards. The goal of Art of City Living was more about promoting the neighborhood and city living than raising large amounts of money. The final results for the Card Sale were not completed prior to the end of the year. The most successful of the fund-raisers was the concessions at Cardinal games. This involved our neighbor's time but no initial outlay of money. Plus, it was fun to do.

Where the money goes is more complex. The Association's biggest expense is the Gazette. The ads sold in the gazette cover 4/5 of the operating expenses; thus, it is subsidized by the general association money. The next biggest expenses are rent of the church for the meetings, copies of flyers for the meetings and surveys taken about the "median issue," the TGHNA information phone line (772-5982) and the Holiday in the Heights Party. Some new expenses this year were the Association's decisions to join SLACO and to license a web-site name

(www.towergroveheights.com).

As I am fond of short Texans with big ears who like to explain things with graphs, here's one for you. It was my pleasure to serve the association as Treasurer for the past two years. It is time to pass the books on to the new treasurer, Jodie Heliker.



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Music of the Spheres from the Heights

By Suzanne Rhodenbaugh

Mark Votapek is one of our many Artists on Arsenal. He's a cellist with the St. Louis Symphony, who in April will be playing with his father, the classical pianist Ralph Votapek, in the "Notes from Home" Series at The Sheldon Theatre, 3648 Washington Boulevard (around the corner from The Fox). The Votapeks will be playing Bach, Rachmaninoff and Kodaly in a performance at The Sheldon Tuesday, April 17, 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$5.00. Come out and enjoy the music from this distinguished father and his distinguished son, One of Our Own!

TheCommonSpace.org

The Common Space is a new progressive, monthly, online magazine dedicated to grassroots civics and culture in St. Louis. You can find it at www.thecommonspace.org. Tower Grove Heights residents Amanda Doyle and Brian Marston are the site's co-editor and webmaster.

The content is a mixed bag, from reviews of local books to essays written by former St. Louisans; from writings by activists in the field to previews of upcoming events; toss in some media criticism, historical photography and words from kids and you have an eclectic mix of 13 original articles every month. Stories from previous issues are also archived on the site.

The goal of The Common Space is to stimulate both conversation and action. The articles reflect the ideals of advocacy journalism, with writers allowed (and encouraged) to express a point of view.

The volunteer staff of The Common Space hopes to use the Web site as a springboard for opening a physical common space to house an archive of St. Louis publications and recordings and to serve as classrooms, performance space, an art gallery, and a shared meeting place for groups that don't have an office. They would also like to sponsor a speakers series and offer a civics program for high school students.

Be sure to drop by the Web site in March to catch up on the antics of local wrestler Diamond Back Dingo, to read Walter Gunn's reflections on Grand South Grand, and to find out the details of the only two weddings ever rejected by Simply Beautiful 24-Hour Wedding Chapel, in South St. Louis.

A-Line Computers

By Brian H. Marston

A-Line Computers, located at 3238 South Grand, opened in September. It offers upgrades and repairs of personal computers, new custom-built computer systems, and refurbished and used equipment. Students receive a 10% discount on all computer equipment at the store.

The owner, Paul Ferrante, was drawn to Grand South Grand by the inexpensive rent. By day, he works for SLM Electronics. He hopes to grow his business from a moonlighting sideline into a full-time operation.

A-Line Computers is open Wednesday through Friday from 4:30p.m. to 8:30p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from 12:00p.m. to 6p.m. The phone number for the store is 762-0969.

If you're in the market for a computer system or upgrade, support our neighborhood business district and pay a visit to A-Line Computers.



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Learn More About Your Neighborhood: Become a Block Captain

By Jill Nissen

Have you ever wanted to learn more about what is going on in our neighborhood? Would you like an opportunity to meet new or different neighbors? Have you been a slug all winter long and now crave a little exercise? Then, consider becoming a Block Captain for the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association.

Block Captains serve as points of contact between neighborhood residents and the Neighborhood Association. They distribute monthly fliers reminding residents of upcoming Neighborhood Association general meetings, thus offering Block Captains an opportunity to cast off their sedentary behavior and at least walk up and down their block every four weeks. Last year, Block Captains assisted with the Holiday in the Heights potluck, which offered a wonderful opportunity to meet old and new neighbors in a very informal setting. The year before, they helped organize a yard sale with proceeds benefiting the Association. On occasion, Block Captains are called upon to assist with more timely matters. A recent example was the effort to gather petition signatures in opposition to the demolition of residential property on the 36/3700 block of Hartford.

Residents are asked to bring their concerns to their respective Block Captains, who then address those issues at monthly meetings attended by the entire group of Block Captains. The Neighborhood Association President and the Neighborhood Stabilization Officer also attend these meetings. The meetings offer a small forum in which ideas and concerns are expressed, and solutions to problems can be worked out. It's a wonderful opportunity to listen and be heard.

So, *why* am I extolling the virtues of being a Block Captain? We need more of them! The Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association is comprised of 14 blocks, bounded by Arsenal, Utah, Grand and Gustine. Some of the blocks

have two or more Block Captains, which is the ideal situation. On those blocks, the Captains can switch off with one another in attending the meetings and distributing fliers. No single person has responsibility for doing Block Captain activities every month. The same is not true of blocks that have only one Block Captain. Being a Block Captain doesn't require much effort, yet it helps tremendously to share that minimal effort with someone else. If you live on one of the blocks listed below, please consider becoming a Block Captain. All of these blocks have only one Captain at present, and could really use a second person to help:

36/3700 Arsenal
36/3700 Connecticut
36/3700 Wyoming
3800 Wyoming
36/3700 Humphrey
3800 Humphrey
36/3700 Utah
3800 Utah

If you're interested in becoming a Block Captain, or just want to learn more about what we do, please feel free to attend our monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of the month. Meetings are held at the Neighborhood Association office located at the northeast corner of Spring and Connecticut.

On a related note, I am stepping down as Chairperson of the Block Captain's group, as of April. Anyone interested in taking over leadership of the group should contact myself or Michael Renner, President of the Association. I can be reached by email at jnissen@stlcp.edu or by phone at 577-6337. No prior experience as a Block Captain is necessary!

P.S. *URGENT*: We are urgently in need of a Block Captain for the 36/3700 block of Wyoming. We presently have no one in this position. If you're even marginally interested in taking over this position, or can suggest others who might be themselves, please contact Jill Nissen as soon as possible. Thanks!

Take Me Out to the Ballgame

By Patty Schneider

As the Cardinals begin Spring Training, SportService begins to train the fund-raiser groups to run the concession stands. Last year, several of your neighbors in the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood answered that call and assisted with the concession stand fund-raiser. This was the most successful fund-raiser last year, and the association has signed up to participate again this year. The neighborhood association receives 9% of the total stand profit for night games and 12% for weekend day games. The benefit of this type of fund-raiser is that nothing but time is needed.

Volunteering at the concession stand is a good way to meet your neighbors while helping the association raise money for the events, Gazette and other activities. In order to make this more successful this year, at least 10-12 volunteers per date are needed. The more, the merrier, the quicker people get their food, the more food we sell, the more money we make.

The time commitment is minimal. For each game, 1/2 of the group needs to be at the stadium 3 hours before game time and the remaining 1/2 of the group 2 hours before game time. This is to prepare the stand and food.

Volunteers need to be at least 21 years old or older. SportService requires that volunteers attend a 3-hour training session. The training session covers alcohol handling, use of the cash registers, and how to make the food. If you volunteered last year and attended the training session you need not attend this year.

The dates for this year's games are:
June 22, 2001 (Friday)
July 13, 2001 (Friday)
July 25, 2001 (Wed. day game)
September 28, 2001 (Friday)

The Training Sessions are offered 2-3 times a month starting on March 22, 2001. If you are interested in volunteering for the concession stand fund-raiser; please contact Patty Schneider at 762-9919 for more information.

Virginia, Sandy, and Gina – Three Generations in Tower Grove Heights

By Erin O'Reilly

Virginia Richardson (nee Russell) and her daughter and son-in-law, Sandy and Henry Osborne, are our next door neighbors. Virginia tells me that her father was a Russell who came from Virginia, settled in Kentucky, and was from a family of coal miners. She thinks that she could be related to the Russells who settled here in the 1800's and owned and worked much of the property in this area! However, Virginia and her husband didn't come to St. Louis until 1955. Then in 1974, after her husband passed away, Virginia and one of her two daughters, Sandy, bought a two family flat on Humphrey for \$10,000. It was a house that was maintained but not updated and so it was affordable. Sandy says she was glad that it was not renovated because the renovations during those years might have meant dark paneling, wall-to-wall carpet, heavy blinds, etc.

Virginia retired in 1985 from Comfort Printing after 25 years in the accounting department there. Lots of people in the neighborhood have known her as "Grandma" over the years. Her two daughters have given her five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren who stay in close touch and visit often. She is active in the Grand Oak Hill Senior Center.

Sandy is a Psychiatric nurse at For-

est Park Hospital. She met her husband, Henry, on the Psych unit (he worked there). Henry is a tall and colorful man in more ways than one. Originally from Alton, IL., he came to St. Louis for school – undergrad at SLU and grad school at Wash. U. – and like so many of us, just stayed in town. He is a man of many talents – cooking, gardening, painting, poetry, bird feeding and watching, and water gun fighting (an expert)! He and my son, Jesse, have some pretty wet water fights each summer. Henry and Sandy had their kitchen gutted and remodeled in recent years to accommodate Henry's love of cooking and the neighbors have enjoyed some very delicious meals there. Sandy has also redone one of the bedrooms which should be featured in House and Garden or some such magazine. Currently, they are remodeling their bathroom. They have 3 dogs and a cat that they pamper. You can often see them walking the dogs. Their yard has several gardens – where most yards have some dead space, their's utilizes every inch for gardening – and they compete against each other for who has the prettiest flowers! Even the dogs "toilet area" is pretty – it's completely covered by vines (for privacy), is mulched, and has sweet smelling honeysuckle planted around it!

Sandy's two grown children, Gary and Gina, were raised in this neighbor-

hood. They both still live in the St. Louis area and visit often. Gina and Gary sold newspapers by cart as was the custom in those days. The newspaper distribution site was next to the L and H Bar up on Spring street (the back of the old Cleaver Bakery that Susie Gudermuth is rehabbing). Gina stayed in the media business. She got a degree in communications from SIUE and worked at Olympia Broadcasting in the CWE for a while. Five years ago, she and a partner started "Big River Radio" where Gina is the Executive Director. Their office is above what used to be Paramount on Grand. When I asked what the company does, Gina tells me that they "make funny every day." Specifically, they compose and sell comedy (jokes, punch lines, vignettes...) to 160 radio stations across the nation. (Now you all know where to go for your humor products!) Gina really has to keep up on the happenings around the world so she can use it to "make funny"!

Gary, Sandy's son, lives in Rock Hill but he is out of the country often, so his dog, car, and other things are often over at the Humphrey address. He is a network systems engineer for Lucent Technology. One of his hobbies is making beer, and we have enjoyed some of his craft on several occasions!

Virginia, Sandy and Henry always remember our son, Jesse's, birthday, and present us with all sorts of gifts on many occasions. They invite us over from time to time to share meals with them in their lovely kitchen (Henry feels sorry for my husband, Jay, because I only cook vegetarian), and they give our dog bones since they know he won't get any from us! Whenever we go away on a trip, they watch over our home and take Eamon, our dog, for walks. Those are our neighbors – three generations of a special family and their loved ones who make Tower Grove Heights their home.

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Commerce Bank

By Brian H. Marston
<webguy@fatdays.com>

Short History of Tower Grove Bank

Tower Grove Bank and Trust opened in 1911 in the building where the King and I is now. The building still says "Tower Grove Bank" above the door. In 1937, the bank moved into a gorgeous building at its current location. There are pictures of the original facade and lobby hanging on the wall in one of the rooms on the first floor (make a right from the entrance on Grand).

In 1954/1955, less than 20 years after it opened, the bank was remodeled. The exterior was transformed into a modernist box with sections of aluminum siding. Over the years, the bank has expanded two or three times by building on additions or incorporating neighboring buildings.

At one time, Tower Grove Bank had 40 teller windows and was the fifth largest bank in the city.

The Bank's Current Situation

According to Francis Fanara, a group manager for Commerce Bank who is in charge of nine branches, business is still very good at the Tower Grove branch where he has worked for 23 years. It's Commerce's third largest branch in the St. Louis area. However, because of changes that have occurred in the banking industry, the bank has a lot of space it doesn't need.

Branch banking was not allowed in Missouri until the 1970's. Up until then, every bank had to have its own HR department, operations center, etc. In 1981, 250 people worked at the Tower Grove branch. Today, about 25 people work at the branch and another 20 work at the student loan center in the same building. Commerce is planning to move the student loan center and other centralized operations to the vacant Central Hardware site at Mason and Olive in Creve Coeur. The new facility probably won't be ready until June or July.

Plans

Commerce Bank's goal is to build a facility that will be more efficient for the bank and more convenient for customers. They are committed to building a substantial structure that the bank and the neighborhood can be proud of.

They've been talking about it for three and a half years, but they don't have a definite plan. They've looked at various options including tearing the bank down and building a new one, removing the later additions from the building, and leasing extra space in the current building to other tenants.

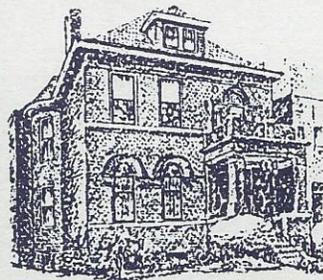
Mr. Fanara said that the plan that Commerce currently favors calls for building a new 8,000 square-foot building, twice as large as most new banks, to accommodate the heavy volume of business that the branch does. They're hoping the new building will reduce their occupancy costs by 80%. The current plan would fit the bank and all of its parking in the space bounded by Grand, Juniata, Hartford, and the western edge of the existing parking lot. The bank

wants to keep all of its frontage on Grand, but it won't need the land behind the new building. They will most likely sell the land that the current parking lot sits on rather than developing it themselves.

There won't be any parking in front of the new building, but there may be some parking on the side. The drive up and teller lines will be located in the back of the bank, and the layout will be reconfigured so that people won't have to walk in front of the drive up lanes to enter the bank from the parking lot.

Commerce doesn't really like any of the drawings that have been done, and nothing is finalized, but they're currently leaning toward a one-story building designed to look like a two-story building.

Orchestrating the move will be very tricky because the bank will need to continue operating during the construction. Construction won't start for nine months to a year at best. The student loan department will probably relocate in August at the earliest.



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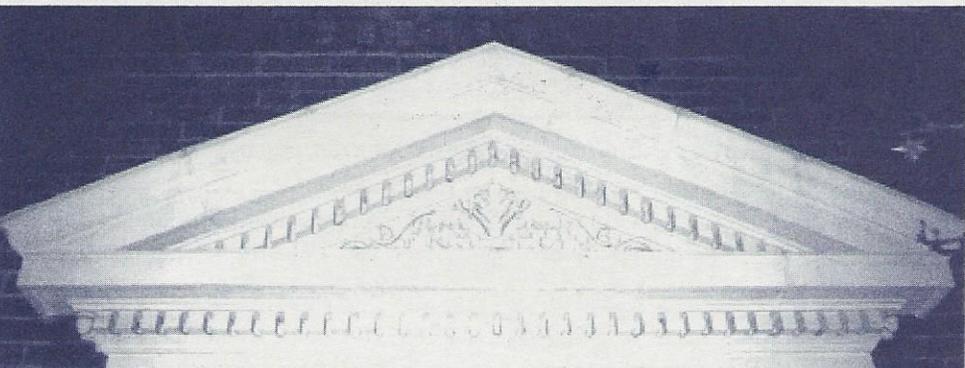
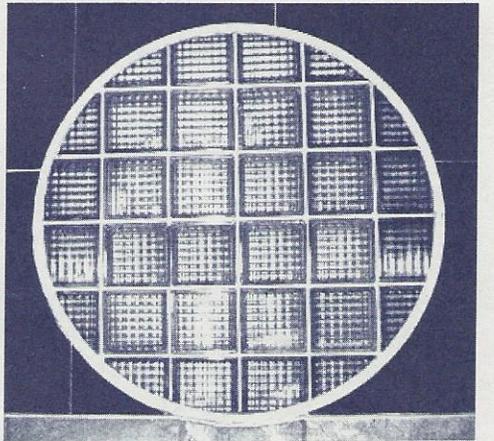
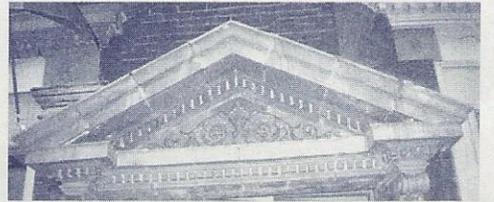
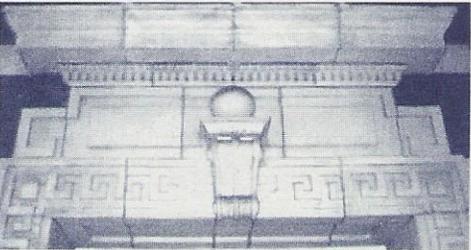
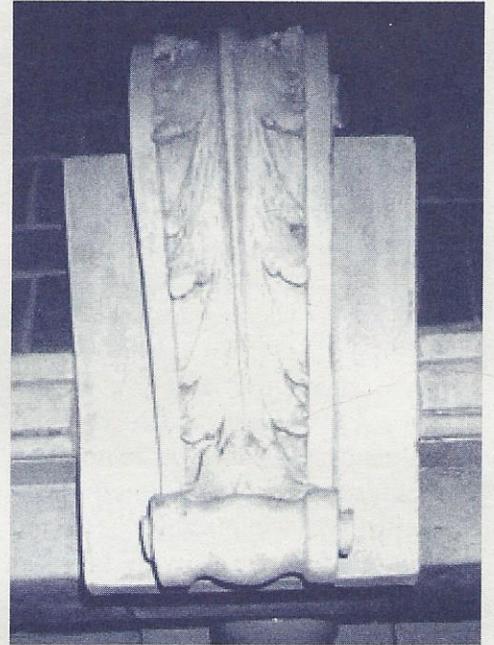
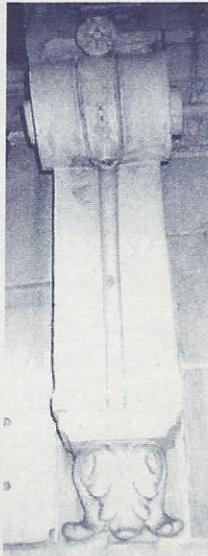
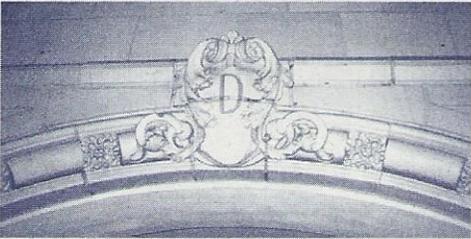
Grand South Grand: A Treasure Hunt

By Don Hardin



We all know how convenient and eclectic Grand South Grand is, but did you ever notice how great the architecture is?

I found these "treasures" on Grand South Grand. Go on your own treasure hunt and see if you can find these or other treasures.



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- 3880 Hartford
- 3882 Hartford
- 3886 Hartford
- 3888 Hartford
- 3892 Hartford
- 3815 Juniata
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Seen at Holiday in the Heights

Photographs Courtesy of Tom Rhodenbaugh



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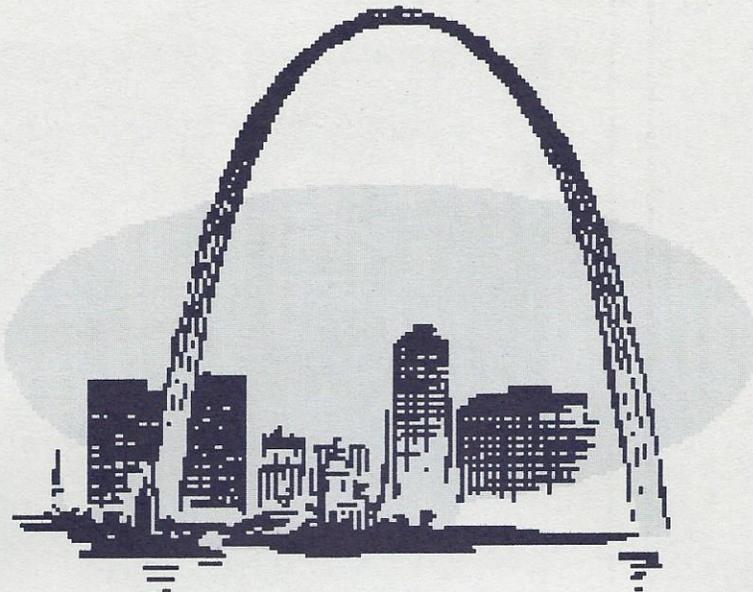
Restoring the Riverfront Trail

By Rick Clinebell

As reported last time, the backyard prairie jungle here at 3820 Hartford Street was receiving some negative fan mail from two City departments regarding the height attained by some of the prairie wildflowers in late summer and early fall. It reminds me of that Mad magazine piece I read as a kid where Annette Funicello says to Frankie Avalon, "I'm tired of these teeny-bopper beach movies and I'm going back to the part of show business where I'm appreciated," to which Frankie replies, "But Annette, you're too old for the Mickey Mouse Club!"

And so, just when things were getting out of hand here, a place for the ten-foot tall golden glows and aggressively rhizomatous ashy sunflowers materialized, in the form of the opportunity to transplant them to the Riverfront Trail, where native plants are being restored along the Mississippi River from the Arch to the Chain of Rocks Bridge. I think they'll be happier "down by the riverside" anyway, and whodathunk after years of not being able to get from the back door to the dumpster without whacking a path through dense vegetation that I'd end up with a job where I actually need this stuff?

One of the largest meadows along the Trail slated for conversion to prairie is near the Martin Luther King bridge, a mile or so south of Prairie Street, just north of where Grand Avenue turns into Hall Street. It will be great to have some tough, aggressive natives there, as we may not be able to plow the area for seeding (erosion concerns), but rather set plants into the area, which is now Eurasian fescue grass. It should be terrific, and it will be very nice to have a backyard flower garden that is four feet tall instead of ten feet tall, as it was in 2000.



Appreciated or not, the plants are worth a fortune if we were to use our grant moneys for trail restoration to buy plants and seeds commercially. It's hard to buy a plant for less than four bucks, and a pound of wildflower seed for much less than \$100.00, so it will be nice to be able to do this so inexpensively by producing all the plants and seed mixes in house.

plants grown from seeds collected locally, one is assured of having stock which is genetically adapted to St. Louis' climate, rainfall patterns and soil types. We hope this will translate to beautiful wildflower vistas for all the critters and human visitors to the Riverfront Trail and will convert this trashed area to something like Lewis and Clark must have seen, almost two hundred years ago.

What's even nicer is that so far, I have been able to protect the Trail from the wholesale dumping of alien strains of native plants by commercial vendors in the trade, as is common in roadside and highway restorations, often with disappointing results. By alien strains, I mean plants and seeds originating far from St. Louis (as in anywhere between the Atlantic Ocean and the Rocky Mountains, and perhaps beyond), even though the plant species may be the same as the species that grow here. By using seeds collected locally, and

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Pavilions and Statues of Tower Grove Park

By Don Hardin

Odds and Ends

Congratulations to Susie Gudermuth and her company, Tower Grove Heights Homes. Susie received a Homer Award for her work in rehabbing 3717 North Utah. The Homer Award from the Home Builders' Association of Greater St. Louis recognizes excellence and design in workmanship.

Did you see the TGHNA Holiday Cards? They had an old (late 1800's/early 1900's) photograph of a snowy Tower Grove Park with a horse and buggy passing by the Turkish Pavilion. We received such a positive response to the cards, that we will be repeating the fund-raiser next year. We are in need of photographs or artwork depicting Winter or the Holidays in Tower Grove Heights or Tower Grove Park. So, as the fresh snow falls, head out and capture images that show off our area. Once you have photos or artwork that would be suitable for a Holiday Card, contact Tod Martin at 771-6292. We'll need to start making the cards by October 1st. Good Luck!

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 Q Z P K R F J X T A P C H P H A K W W U
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If you are interested in advertising, call Tod Martin at (314)771-6292 or write to Gazette@towergroveheights.com for information on rates and layout planning.

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