

# Tower Grove Heights Gazette

GRAND TO GUSTINE

ARSENAL TO UTAH PLACE

Volume 20, No. 4

Winter 2009

## Wonderful Moments

BY ELLEN WILSON  
**E**ach year as we begin to enter the holiday season, I find myself reflecting back on the past year. I am reminded of wonderful and not so wonderful moments that have happened over the year and while they both become a part of me, I find I rely on the good times to get through the rest. As our neighborhood embarks on the sixth year of supporting a south city family for the holidays, I am reminded that many people have to survive year after year, with few if any wonderful moments. That is why I get involved with this project. I want to do what I can to give a child and their parent at least one wonderful moment this year.

The TGHNA has again selected two families in need from the 100 Neediest

Cases and I hope you will join me in creating a wonderful moment for them. Each year, we try to select families that are doing their best to make ends meet and provide for their families, but just cannot seem to get their heads above water. The hope is to not only provide a holiday morning gift surprise, but also help them with bills and food to try to give them the step up they are looking for to get back on track.

There are several ways you can help. You can donate a new unwrapped gift that fits one of the family members, donate supplies or a gift certificate fitting one of the general need themes, or donate cash (or check – made out to TGHNA) which will be used to buy gifts and help our adopted families pay for utilities.

Donations of gift wrapping materials (holiday paper, ribbon, tape, name tags) are needed as well. Drop your donations at the drop point and we take care of the rest. All gifts will be wrapped and distributed to the families.

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## Are You Sold on Buying?

BY RICH IEZZI  
**I** must be in synch lately because every time I see a commercial, it's always the perfect time to buy something or realize a great opportunity. How about buying a house? "The time has never been better", confirms the realty world. Thinking about refinancing your home? Refinancing institutions claim that "Interest rates are at an all time low".

So is it really the time to buy? Or, with additional foreclosures and opportunities coming, should you sit it out for awhile? With that in mind, I asked four local realtors for their thoughts.

Realtor #1: "Some properties are better buys than others. Foreclosures are obviously good deals since lending institutions are looking to unload them instead of making a profit. Homes on the market now are there because they need to be sold due to job transfers, etc. It's a better time to buy now than it was three years ago. There will be more foreclosures in the next few years due to job lose. The rental and residential market have both taken a big pricing hit. Interest rates are incredibly low. Years ago, we were paying 17% interest and thrilled to refinance at 12%.



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is brought to you quarterly by:

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The Gazette is a non-profit publication published quarterly by the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association. For information concerning advertising rates and layout planning email Gary Kushinsky at [gazette-newbiz@towergroveheights.com](mailto:gazette-newbiz@towergroveheights.com)

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# Wonderful Moments ~ CONTINUED

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Single woman with a job that threatens to be eliminated at any point. She is raising two daughters, but the older one is considering leaving school to work. They receive minimal assistance, but they still struggle.

**Mother: (52)** size large top; size 11 pants; perfume; jewelry; bath/lotion set

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**Daughter: (7)** size 10/12 top; size 8 pants; dolls; Hannah Montana; Dora the Explorer; Strawberry Shortcake

**Special Requests:** towels, pots and pans; sheets and comforters (size twin and queen)

## Family 2:

Single woman caring for her children and grandchildren. She has medical issues and her oldest son has Cerebral Palsy and is in a wheelchair. She receives assistance for her grandchildren, but is finding it hard to find work.

**Mother: (47)** size XL top and dress; size 16 pants

**Son: (18)** size XL top; size 34-40 pants; clothes

**Daughter: (16)** size XL top; size 14-16 pants; perfume, finger nail kit; portable CD player

**Son: (8)** size 12-14 top; size 12-14 pants; wrestling; sports; cars; trucks

**Grand-daughter: (3)** size 5T top; size 5T pants; Dora the Explorer

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There is always a need for volunteers to help distribute flyers to the neighborhood and to wrap the gifts. If you are interested in helping to wrap or flyer, contact Ellen.

**DUE DATE FOR DONATIONS: DECEMBER 18th**

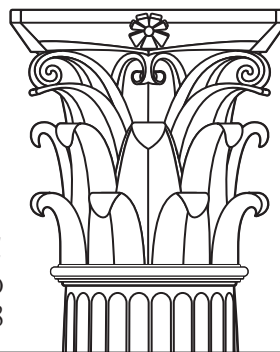
**Wrapping Party: December 19th at 10:00 a.m. at Ellen's house**

**Drop Point & Contact: Ellen Wilson, 3617 Juniata St., 314-771-1732**

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In spite of the chill in the air on the evening of October 10, the TGHNA Autumn Fest was a real treat for all in attendance. We would like to thank all participating restaurants for their generous donations.

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## Are You Sold on Buying?

~ CONTINUED ~

Realtor #2: "With the high rate of unemployment, foreclosures will continue. Some buyers that are receiving unemployment benefits might be forced to sell when their benefits run out. There are also some loans that were re-adjusted to keep buyers in their homes but many of these buyers will still face foreclosure. In my 30 years of real estate, interest rates have never been lower but eventually they will rise with the rate of inflation. Luckily, the Midwest didn't suffer as badly as the coasts.

Realtor #3: "For those who are ready and able to buy, now is an EXCELLENT opportunity. Concerning foreclosures, keep in mind that there are always foreclosures even in good economies. Foreclosures are often not the best opportunity to get a good value, however. Interest rates are still set low by the Federal Government but should be headed up soon. The multifamily market has taken the biggest price hit because many of these investors were over leveraged and counted on refinancing to raise cash. That game is over.

Realtor #4: "Yes, it's a good time to buy. Prices and interest rates are low and there's a lot to choose from BUT credit score requirements are high and pre-approval is a must. FHA and VA loans offer the best options. Foreclosures and short sales will be around for while and could continue to depress home prices. Don't forget about the 'low ball' offer for a place to start. Expensive homes (\$300-400k) have suffered the greatest loss in value because first time home buyers have scooped up less expensive properties leaving higher end houses sit. As a result, there are good deals right now on homes in the \$300-400k range."

All four realtors felt the \$8,000 tax credit would be extended and also recommended that buyers get with a lender for pre-approval and pick a realtor who's familiar with the buyer's areas of interest.

Recently, I've been looking at buildings with a friend who is interested in purchasing rental property. I forgot how much fun it is to look. Everything is out there. Some buildings that sold for \$160-170k two years ago are currently listed for half those amounts. It's a whole new ballgame.

Still don't know if it's time to buy? Don't feel bad. One of the realtors confessed that her crystal ball was cloudy. †

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## JACKSON PIANO

### IN TUNE WITH SAINT LOUIS

BY MARILYN BROWNING

Mention guilds and apprentices and many think of medieval times, but guilds and apprenticeships still exist. Ask Joe Jackson, owner of Jackson Pianos on Cherokee Street. Joe is a member of the Piano Technicians Guild, the trade association that maintains professional standards for piano service and technology.

Joe's path to becoming a piano technician began over a dozen years ago, when he first started tinkering with pianos to see how they worked. His interest led him to an apprenticeship, to numerous courses and workshops, and finally to 3138 Cherokee Street and his own "one-stop shop" for piano owners and would-be owners.

Jackson Pianos specializes in tuning, repairing, refurbishing, and sometimes completely rebuilding acoustic pianos. That's not all, however. Jackson Pianos also rents and sells used pianos, and because of their expertise, can guarantee the quality of the pianos they offer. They have clients all over the city and surrounding areas.

Offering this depth of piano service involves a whole team of people. There's his wife Morgan Cameron, a former professional ballet dancer and now ballet teacher at St. Louis Center of Creative Arts. She's been the office manager for Jackson Pianos since 2006. Kurt Smith schedules the appointments, processes the paperwork, and tracks the flow of work in and out of the shop. Kurt received a degree in English from Webster University, and has interests in music, animation, and dramatic verse. Gina Christopher is a pianist, piano teacher and tuner/technician. Gina has been tuning pianos for Jackson Pianos for the last couple of years. And now Joe has an apprentice of his own, Kris Edsen, with a background in sculpture, printmaking, and art history. Before becoming a piano technician Kris built six-string guitars for Collings Guitars. Now Joe is passing on some of the knowledge he's obtained through his own experience and education to Kris.



Joe was drawn to Cherokee Street, in part because of his memories of the area when it enjoyed better times, but also because of his belief in the potential for the area's revival. He and wife Morgan see themselves as part of a neighborhood dedicated to the arts. When the store first opened, they lived above it, but now live in nearby Dutchtown with daughter Isabel and newborn baby boy Clyve, close enough that Joe can walk to work.

Reflecting their belief in the neighborhood, Jackson Pianos has sponsored several events, including the Jackson Pianos Halloween Celebration and the Jackson Pianos Family Music Festival. Someone from Jackson Pianos is always present at neighborhood cleanups and meetings.

For those that want to learn more about pianos and music making in general, Jackson Pianos publishes their own newsletter, the Keynote Journal. It features such items as pianist profiles, background information on brands of pianos, frequently asked questions, and upcoming area music. You can pick up a copy at their shop on Cherokee, or browse it on their website at [www.jacksonpianos.com](http://www.jacksonpianos.com). The website is also a great place to see a sampling of their inventory of used pianos. Once you see the range of pianos available, you'll want to tickle the ivories in person at the shop. Already have a piano that could use a tuning or repair? Call them at 314-773-4341 or e-mail them at [service@jacksonpianos.com](mailto:service@jacksonpianos.com).

Future plans for the business include dance lessons taught by Morgan, piano lessons, and guitar lessons. Also on the drawing board: a second location for Jackson Pianos. There's no question that Jackson Pianos will continue helping St. Louis make beautiful music for some time to come.

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## RESIDENT PROFILE:



### Sister Act - Mary Witt and Kate Hartz

by  
Marilyn Browning

George Burns once said that happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city. Mary Witt and Kate Hartz may beg to differ. These two sisters and their respective husbands have been living across the street from one another on Hartford for more than twenty years, raising families and sharing activities and memories. It wasn't anything that either sister planned.

Mary and Kate grew up in Detroit, Michigan. Kate was still in high school when big sister Mary went off to Valparaiso University in Indiana to start her freshman year. Harry Witt taught speech and theatre at Kate's Detroit high school, and cast Kate as the lead in the high school play. Mary came home for the holidays, went



The Witts & The Hartzes

with the family to see Kate's opening night, and met (and flirted with) Harry. As was their custom, the family went back to see the next night's performance as well. Harry, seeing Mary again, concluded she was smitten with him, asked her out, and the rest, as they say, is history. After a long-distance courtship, during which Mary got a degree in education, Harry and Mary were finally wedded. The two arrived in Saint Louis in 1976. Harry was already working at Lutheran High School South, and Mary and Harry bought a house on Connecticut Street. Their two daughters, Sarah and Christine, were born while they lived there.

Kate, in the meantime, attended Valparaiso University herself, where she met Terry Hartz, who was getting his degree in civil engineering. They married and moved to Sioux City, Iowa, where they lived for 7 years, and Kate and Terry had their first child, Rachel. When Rachel was 18 months old, Terry lost his job. He traveled to Saint Louis to find another, while Kate stayed behind to sell the house in Sioux City.

It just so happened that Harry and Mary had recently moved into their fixer-upper on Hartford, a place with more room for a growing family. That extra room came in handy when Terry came to stay with them during his job hunt. It was a growing family indeed.

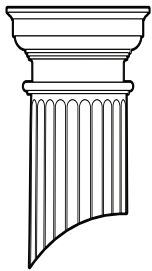
Ultimately, Terry found a job with an engineering/design company out in Ballwin, and Kate was able to sell their Sioux City home. Kate and Terry, with little Rachel in tow, commenced their Saint Louis house search. They looked at countless numbers of houses all over the city before they found the one that suited them best. And yes, it was across the street from Harry and Mary.

Back in the 80's and early 90's, Hartford Street had many young families, attracted by the affordable and spacious old houses. It was in many ways an ideal place for the sisters to raise their children. Kate and Terry, in addition to daughter Rachel, had a son, Matt. During those days, Mary and Kate ran the block Easter egg hunt, a duty inherited from the previous owners

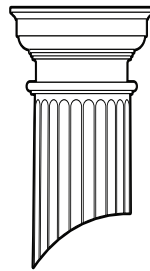
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# TOWER GROVE HEIGHTS *The Way It Was*

by Claudia Seifert



The February 1989 issue of the *Gazette* (Volume 1, no. 4) opened with a fund raising appeal on behalf of Tower Grove Park. John Karel, who still serves as the Park director, stated that renovation of park buildings was a priority. Alderman Geraldine Osborn noted that the upcoming March election included a proposition for an annual residential property fee that would go towards a special fund to pay the cost of repairing leaking or broken lateral sewer lines within the public right of way. Another article celebrated Tower Grove Heights becoming part of the Housing Conservation District in April 1988. This program helped to preserve quality housing and maintain minimum housing requirements.

Accomplishments of the Neighborhood Association, originally formed in November 1987, were outlined and they included the creation of the *Gazette*, block parties to help establish neighborhood relationships and monthly clean-up blitzes. Neighborhood activities featured in the *Gazette* included the 3800 block of Hartford hosting their third annual progressive dinner, Christmas caroling to collect cookies for the Grand-Oak Hill Community Center and the work of Lenita Moore and Susie Gudermuth in walking the neighborhood cleaning up trash. Susie is still at it to this day and continues to serve as a Block Captain for Utah Place. Other current members of the Neighborhood Association served as *Gazette* staff for this issue (Trish Heliker) and 1989 TGHNA officers (Jean Iezzi, President and Rich Iezzi, Vice-President).

†

## RESIDENT PROFILE: **Sister Act** ...continued

of the Hartz's home. Nearly every Friday night was pizza and game night, when the Witts and Hartzes got together. Thanksgiving was spent at one sister's house, Christmas at the other. At any given time, the kids were as likely to be at one house as the other. Then, just as now, Harry and Terry often went fishing together.

Fast forward to today. With only Matt still at home, life is a tad quieter. Kate Hartz works as a speech and language pathologist. Terry now works for the City of Saint Louis in their Building Division. Mary Witt is Dean of Students and Director of Curriculum at Andrews Academy in Creve Coeur. Harry teaches English and literature at Eureka High School in Eureka, Missouri. The families still do things together, though not as often as they did when all the kids lived at home. What do the two couples envision in the future, say, after retirement? Terry and Kate mention a lake home as a possibility, where Terry can indulge his love of fishing. And what do Mary and Harry think of this plan? "We've told them, 'You buy the place and we'll stay with you!'"

If the past is any indication, they should all get along just fine. ❄️



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		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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January						
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31						

February						
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28						

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# MOMS Club *of St. Louis City*



*A Great Resource for City  
Mothers and their Children*

- Georgiana Grant

When I moved to Tower Grove Heights in 2002, I noticed that the neighborhood was bursting at the seams with parents and young children. So, when I had my daughter Clio 3 years ago, I thought that meeting other moms would be effortless. I had just quit my full-time job and started working part-time, which meant I was home most days with a baby. I was surprised to find how lonely and, sometimes, boring this could be. I also found that being sleep deprived and constantly interrupted by a baby did not lend itself well to making new friends. Luckily, I discovered MOMS Club of St. Louis City.

MOMS Club of St. Louis City is part of a larger international, nonprofit, non-religious organization. MOMS stands for "moms offering moms support". The group offers a variety of weekly activities for mothers and their children (infant to school age) including in-home and playground play dates, library story hours, a book club, kid-oriented service projects, arts and crafts, outings to St. Louis attractions and a monthly MOMS Night Out. We also have a babysitting co-op. There is a yearly membership fee of \$20.00 per family, which goes toward administrative costs. Initially, I was hesitant to join because

*continued on next page*

## MOMS Club Newsletter

- CONTINUED -

the International group seemed to be designed only for stay-at-home mothers. I joined anyway and learned that the other members of the St. Louis City chapter all uniquely combine work-life and home-life. Some are teachers, some are artists, some are full-time stay at home moms, some are small business owners and some are students. What we all have in common is that we live in the city, enjoy meeting and socializing with other moms and like seeing our kids make new friends.

This year I am president of the St. Louis City chapter and would love to see more mothers from Tower Grove Heights become members. If you are interested, you may attend up to 3 activities before joining. Feel free to email me at [georgiana.grant@gmail.com](mailto:georgiana.grant@gmail.com) or call me at 664-4938. I would be happy to drop off a calendar or answer any questions you have. We also have a web site at [www.momsclubstl.webs.com](http://www.momsclubstl.webs.com). I hope to meet some more moms and children from the neighborhood soon!



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## Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association **CONTACT LIST**

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First Church of Divine Science on 3617 Wyoming Street

### - BOARD -

President: .....Mark Froese  
President-elect: .....David Bruns  
Past President: .....Robert Ashton  
Secretary: .....Claudia Seifert  
Treasurer: .....David Kim  
Asst. Secretary/Membership: .....Pauline Ashton


### - COMMITTEE CHAIRS -

Block Representatives: .....Tom Reitenbach  
New Business/Gazette Advertising: .....Gary Kushinsky  
Fund Raising/Events: .....OPEN  
Webmaster - towergroveheights.com: .....Robert Ashton

### - BLOCK REPRESENTATIVES -

3600/3700 Arsenal: .....Recruiting!  
3800 Arsenal: .....Recruiting!  
3600/3700 Hartford: .....Mark Abbott/ Sherri Craven  
3800 Hartford: .....Rich Iezzi  
3600/3700 Juniata: .....Lynne Casey  
3800 Juniata: .....Tom Reitenbach & Kim Cole  
3600/3700 Connecticut: .....Jodie Heliker  
3800 Connecticut: .....Virlene Reichert  
3600/3700 Wyoming: .....Gen Obata  
3800 Wyoming: .....Teresa Mithen  
3600/3700 Humphrey: .....Recruiting!  
3800 Humphrey: .....Erin L. O'Reilly/ Georgiana Grant  
3600/3700 Utah Place: .....Susie Gudermuth, Rich Seifert  
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[www.towergroveheights.com](http://www.towergroveheights.com)

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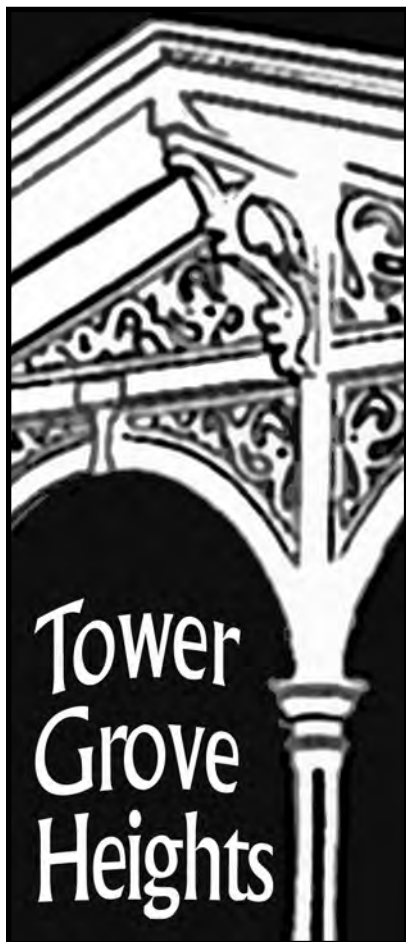
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[www.towergrovechurch.org](http://www.towergrovechurch.org)  
email: [info@towergrovechurch.org](mailto:info@towergrovechurch.org)



# Tower Grove Heights

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



## LIFE MEMBERS

Amelia Doll  
Diane Hurwitz  
Jama Dodson  
Jim Mooney  
John Papa  
Donald Hardin  
Cheryl Jones  
Mike Johnson  
Dave Langan  
Sara Langan  
Tod Martin  
Erin O'Reilly  
Jay Diamond  
Alice Mooney  
Bobbie Ohmer  
Steve Ohmer  
Virlene Reichert

Cathy Roche  
Lynn Shute  
Janis Brigulio  
Teresa Mithen  
Karl Steiger  
Patricia Edwards  
Karen Pensoneau  
David Kirby  
Robert Ashton  
Pauline Ashton  
Rich Iezzi  
Jean Iezzi  
Ross Hammond  
Marian Hammond  
Fredric Rissover  
Nels Moss  
Tom Tritschler

## 2009/2010 MEMBERS

Adam Collins	Eric Wilson	Jonathan Silva	Rebecca Bruns
Alan Einecker	Erich Schraer	Joyce Reese	Richard Seifert
Alma Sueme	Eileen Duhon	Judi Sharp	Rick Armstrong
Amy Phillips	Fran Armstrong	Karen DeMatteo	Rick Stein
Andrew Haberem	Francine Sprick	Kathleen Stomps	Robert Keel
Angie Reitenbach	Fred Goodyear	Kathryn Hartz	Robert Koehr
Anita Barker	Fred Hildenbrand	Kaye Hildenbrand	Robert Ritchie
Anne Orcutt	Gail MacCartney	Kevin Clavin	Robert Thayer
Benito Montoya	Gary Kushinsky	Leslie Ide	Sal Dinolfo
Betty Goodyear	Georgiana Grant	Linda Fick	Sarah Chilenski
Billie Sullivan	Glenna Powell	Lis Schraer	Sarah Shumacher
Carl Dothage	Greg Strauser	Liz Clyne	Sayawuth Chaiya
Cathy Studer	Harry Witt	Liz McQuinn	Scott Douglass
Chris Grant	Holly Wilson	Mabel Gudermuth	Sheila Smith
Chris Winter	Jack Winter	Mac Orcutt	Sherri Thompson
Claudia Seifert	James Lee	Margaret Wayne	Stacy Leimbach
Clio Grant	James Lynn	Marge Schmidt	Sue Clavin
Colette Price	James Zakibe	Marilyn Abbott	Susie Gudermuth
Curtis Lohman	Jan Clinite	Marilyn Browning	Suzanne Carron
Danielle MacCartney	Jane Keel	Mark Abbott	Terry Hartz
Daryl McQuinn	Jaynie Zakibe	Mark Froese	Thomas Sehr
Dave Campbell	Jeanine Clontz	Mark Thompson	Tim Barker
David Bruns	Jeff Clyne	Mary Witt	Tim Hays
David Chilenski	Jennifer Silva	Mel Duhon	Tom Reitenbach
David Murphy	Jesse Elgin	Mimi Roddy	Tricia Heilker
Debby Ervin	Jim McClaren	MJ Cannon	Veronica Campbell
Don Price	Joan Lohman	Nancy Adkisson	Virginia Ritchie
Donna Domian	Joe Domian	Neil Clontz	Wes Browning
Dorothy Collins	Joe Sueme	Norm Henenberg	Zachary MacCartney
Doug Peden	Joe Thele	Paul MacNeilage	Anonymous (14)
Emanuela Heller	Joe Wilson	Ray Adkisson	



## Tower Grove Heights NEEDS YOU!

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

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

Please indicate your membership level choice:

- \_\_\_ Individual (1 vote) \$10/year
- \_\_\_ Household (2 votes) \$15/year
- \_\_\_ Associate (non-voting) \$10/year
- \_\_\_ Lifetime (1 vote) \$100 single payment
- \_\_\_ Business (1 vote) \$25 /year  
(entitles member to a 10% discount on TGHNA Gazette Ads for one year)

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

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT:

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No, Include my name, address and contact information in the TGHNA Buzz Book

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No, Please add my email address to the Neighborhood Forum Email notification list

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

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