

# Tower Grove Heights Gazette

GRAND TO GUSTINE

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Volume 27, No. 4

Winter 2016

## Do You Feel Lucky? 100 Neediest Cases

BY **Ellen Wilson**

This is the thirteenth year of TGHNA supporting families in need through the 100 Neediest Cases Program. I cannot decide if being able to be involved with such a great group of people for so long is lucky or if the fact that we still have so many families in need is unlucky. It is always an excruciating decision to select families each year. We are given a group to choose from, but choosing one means not choosing an equally needy other one. Are they lucky to be selected or unlucky to be on the list? With the election and the recent trials of city living it is always nice to be reminded of how much I do have and of my responsibility to do what I can to help others. Once again, I ask you to join me to help two south St. Louis families get a moment's break and to help them feel lucky too.

Both families are doing what they can to care for themselves and their children, but they could use some help. Our goal is to provide a holiday morning gift surprise for the children and help each family with utility bills and food to try to give them a moment of relief that they can enjoy with their families.

If you would like to help, either donate a new unwrapped gift that fits one of the family members or general needs or donate cash (or check – made out to TGHNA) which will be used to buy gifts and help our adopted families pay for utilities. Drop your donations at the drop point and we take care of the rest. **Please be sure to include your full name with your donation to be sure I can acknowledge your generosity or identify if you wish to remain anonymous.** All gifts will be wrapped and distributed to the families.

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## Festive Containers Brighten Neighborhood

BY **Betty Greenjeans**

Who knows what kind of winter we're in store for this year, but St. Louis can be a gray place for three months out of the year. When the leaves fall, even the nicest homes on the most attractive streets can look bare and stark without the softness and color our gardens bring to our little landscapes. Consider brightening your porch with a winter arrangement that can take you into February and over the midwinter hump of blah.

**Consider brightening your porch with a winter arrangement that can take you into February and over the midwinter hump of blah.**

Building a seasonal planter for winter can be as simple as inserting boughs and branches into the existing soil of a container you were using to grow annuals all summer. There is no simpler arrangement to create. Fastest and easiest: Ring the top of a pot with an evergreen wreath, add some branches and voilà!

You can get more creative by shopping for different greens once Christmas tree lots start to pop up. Sometimes the trimmings from under the trees are free. Choose two or three different types for interest and texture. Boxwood adds a particular elegance.

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**JANUARY 24TH 2017**

**FEBRUARY 28TH 2017**

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# Festive Containers Brighten Neighborhood

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Add some bare twigs to your evergreen boughs. Red or yellow twig dogwood is a classic, but even plain branches can provide height and create more of a statement. You can spray paint the branches in a custom color that will really pop. Interesting features abound in roadside trees and shrubs like sumac with their fuzzy, red seed heads, or in the dried heads of thistles. Resist the urge to 'shop' in our city parks however!

For the holidays, lights, bows and balls can add a touch of sparkle and festivity. The greens and branches will look great for months. Products like Wilt-Pruf, an anti-desiccant, can extend the life of fresh greens indoors and out.

Alternatively, containers can be potted up with live evergreen plants for the season. The advantage here is that the material will stay fresh and green until spring. At that point you can transfer the plants to your garden. If you know there's a spot where you'd like to add an evergreen plant, picking it up on sale in the fall and enjoying it on the porch all winter is a real bonus.

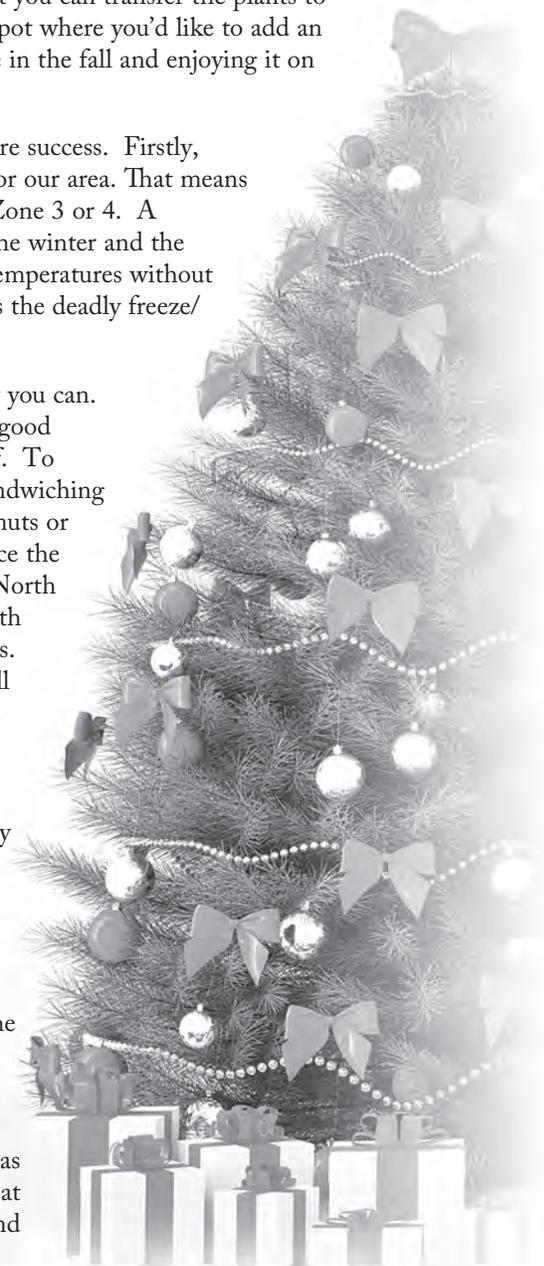
There are some guidelines to ensure success. Firstly, purchase plants that are very hardy for our area. That means selecting something that's hardy to Zone 3 or 4. A container is a rough place to spend the winter and the plant has to be able to survive cold temperatures without the protection of the earth, as well as the deadly freeze/thaw cycle.

Secondly, use the largest container you can. Bigger is better. Make sure there is good drainage and the pot is weatherproof. To improve insulation of the soil, try sandwiching two pots with a layer of packing peanuts or foam. Position the container to reduce the impact of fluctuating temperatures. North and east exposures are safer than south and west where the sun warms things. A container standing on concrete will cool faster than one standing on soil.

Since the plant is dormant, there aren't large requirements for sun or water. You may need to water lightly a few times if the weather is warm and the soil isn't frozen. It's fine for the container to be situated under a porch overhang for a few months. When spring arrives your plant can be moved to the garden as soon as the soil can be reasonably worked.

### Good Neighbor Tip

Your live Christmas tree needs as much water everyday as you do. Treat it like an important holiday guest and top up its drink often.



# From St. Louis to Havana

BY SC TRUCKEY

For our nine days in Cuba we used the services of Chino—a short and muscled, yet large-bellied cab driver whose bright green 1947 Cadillac limousine elicited honks and hoots and hollers everywhere we went. When it rained he passed back a wrench retrieved from his

**When it rained he passed back a wrench retrieved from his locked glove compartment so we could roll up the windows that no longer sported their cranks.**

locked glove compartment so we could roll up the windows that no longer sported their cranks. We giggled while struggling to complete the task with sheets of rain flowing in. Of course this was no notable feat for Chino, whose

decades as a cab driver in Cuba numbed his reaction to occurrences like these.

While I sat in the front seat of the 2-hour drive to Viñales from Havana, we spoke in hand gestures, smiles, winks, and broken Spanish. “Binyalay,” I kept hearing him say, “Binyalay.” It took me a few moments to realize “Viñales” to Cubans is pronounced with a “B” at the beginning and no “S” at the end. That became both my nickname as well as the destination.

Chino wore a white tank top and his hands were dirty, but he was charming, smart as any of the masters-educated people he drove in his cab, and drove that green machine with agility and confidence. From what we were told, cabs in Cuba were handed down to the next generation; it was nearly impossible to buy one outright. (We did, however, meet Alfonso—a Spaniard—who moved to Cuba for his Cuban girlfriend and bought a 1950s Chevy with fins for \$25,000.)

Our 1947 Caddy was equipped with a Mercedes engine yet retained its interior leather stitching and boasted the addition

*continued on page 13*



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# AUTUMN FEST REPRISE

by Marilyn Browning **A**nother year, and another great Autumn Fest! This year we celebrated our 11th Autumn Fest, starting at the home of Wes and Marilyn Browning on Juniata. We had unbelievable luck in the weather, a gorgeous crisp and cool sunny day as befits an autumnal party.

South Grand restaurants and Hodak's came through with flying colors in the generosity of their food donations. We had plenty for everyone, despite the crowd. The abundant and fabulous food at the first site was served up with plenty of delicious wines, beer, and soft drinks.

At the beautiful home of Sara Graham and Jake Tjaden, guests were served desserts from some of the talented bakers in our neighborhood. Hartford Coffee Company again generously donated the coffee, and it was the perfect accompaniment to the scrumptious sweets.

Finally, Metra Mitchell-Taylor and Nick Taylor hosted the party site at their gorgeous place (renovated by Nick himself, a co-owner of NTNG Construction, LLC.) The

*continued on next page*

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spread that they created in their backyard and house was a work of art. Fitting, since Metra is herself an artist-extraordinaire.

Once again our courteous pedicab drivers ferried attendees from one site to the next, to their homes or parked cars, and even took one of our bartenders to Gustine Market for an emergency replenishment of the beer supply!

Autumn Fest 2016 was a perfect way to usher in the cooler weather and the close of another Saint Louis summer. Thanks to all who helped us put on a great party, and thanks also to the many attendees who know a good time when they see it! I hope many of you made new friends and got to know old ones a little better.



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### And the following individuals:

Marilyn and Wes Browning  
Pat Edwards and John Papa  
Sara Graham and Jake Tjaden  
Maryanne Rogers  
Claudia Seifert  
Metra Mitchell-Taylor and Nick Taylor  
Rachel Witt  
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And all of the terrific volunteers!

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# Invisible Second Floor Living

by **Rich Iezzi** **L**esli Mash is a busy woman. During my interview, she was working with the window cleaners and a cable guy but assured me that she could do two (or more) things at once.

Lesli and her husband, Joe, purchased 3801 Wyoming in 2012 (sadly, Joe passed away shortly thereafter). The building was owned by fellow Tower Grove Heights resident, Susie Gudermuth. Susie purchased the building years ago from the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars).

The former VFW had an especially interesting basement where its meetings took place. Before men had "man caves," they had places like the VFW. There was a long bar featuring Anheuser Bush beer taps, and rifles were mounted on the back wall. Lesli says the VFW had "candle lights" behind the bar made from old sauerkraut cans. When Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association had its first meeting back in the late 1980s, it was held on the first floor of the old VFW.

Lesli said she was attracted to Tower Grove Heights because, "People are invested here." Interestingly, she used to go to The King and I restaurant on Grand back in the 1980s. 3801 Wyoming caught her eye because it had "much potential."

Lesli currently owns a custom frame shop but worked as an architect before that. As I toured Lesli's second floor living quarters, her architectural background came out over and over. The second floor was in its original condition when purchased and that was good and bad. Bad because it needed so much work but good because so much of it was "old things" and Lesli is an "old things" person.

**Lesli told me  
"nobody thinks  
I live up here"  
and therefore  
gets away with  
her "naked tree  
house shower"**

The upstairs seems enormous because you can't see it all. Lesli told me "nobody thinks I live up here" and therefore gets away with her "naked tree house shower" that looks onto Wyoming. Her living space is warm and comfortable with original woodwork, stained glass, pocket doors, quarter sawn pine flooring and her baby grand piano. Lesli recently stripped the large wood window seat that juts

out over Spring and is in the process of replacing the marble in the butler's pantry. Her kitchen has an 18-foot stainless steel counter with IKEA cabinets that she had to purchase from Kansas City before the St. Louis location opened. I loved the view over Spring and Wyoming streets from the second floor. Lesli's right – you're invisible up there.

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# Do You Feel Lucky? 100 Neediest Cases

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Choose one (or more) of the following:

**Family 1:** This husband and wife are doing everything they can to support their family. The wife lost her job but is trying to get another and although the husband is working full time it is not enough to cover everything. They manage asthma and diabetes and the medical bills are more than they can afford. They are working on improving their language skills to make themselves more marketable.

**Mother (41):** Size: L 10/12; Shoes (8.5)

**Father (45):** Size: L; Pants (32/32); Shoes (10)

**Girl (17):** Size: M; Pants (3); Shoes (8)

**Boy (12):** Size: M; Pants (30/32); Shoes (11)

**Girl (6):** Size T-6; Shoes (1)

**Special Requests:** winter clothes and gear for all; household cleaning, bath, and bedding (twin/queen)

**Mother:** Bath & Body; wallet. **Father:** Tool sets, work gloves, winter socks. **17yo:** Forever 21 clothes, purse; Bath & Body. **12 yo:** X-box 360 sports games, soccer ball. **6yo:** Monster High dolls, Peppa Pig, Barbie.

**Family 2:** This single mother is struggling to keep her family together. They have lived in a shelter and she was recently diagnosed with Chronic Heart Failure and Cardiomyopathy at only 31 years old. Her health prevents her from working and she receives disability.

**Mother (31):** Top: 1X; Pants 3X; Coat 2X; Shoes (11)

**Girl (5):** Size: 7/8T; Shoes (T-11)

**Girl (3):** Size 5/6T Shoes (T-9)

**Special Requests:** Household cleaning, bath, and bedding (twin/queen)

**Mother:** Bath & Body, Victoria Secret Cologne. **5yo:** American Doll, Barbie, hand held game. **3yo:** Education toys, dolls, games, big wheel

**Both families need the following:** Gift cards for any of the following: medicine; gas; food; cleaning supplies; personal hygiene products; or baby care products if appropriate. Consider: Walgreens; Target; Walmart; Schnucks; Shop N Save; Aldi; Ruler; BP; or other related store.

**Educational Items:** age appropriate books; family games; school supplies...

**Cash:** for gifts or utility bills which are paid directly by 100 Neediest Cases (checks to TGHNA)

There is always a need for volunteers to help wrap the gifts and this year **we will also need wrapping materials such as paper, tape, ribbon, name tags, bows...** If you want to help wrap or just stop by to see the process, contact Ellen.

**Due Date for Donations:** December 16

**Wrapping Party:** December 17 at 10:00 a.m. at Ellen's house

**Drop Point and Contact:** Ellen Wilson, 3617 Juniata St., 314-221-8418

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# 3709 Juniata – A Brief History

BY LIZ RAVEN  
MCQUINN

As my husband and I reluctantly prepared to move from 3709 Juniata for his job in the spring of 2015, I decided to step up the pace of my casual digging into the history of the home we'd lived in for so many years. I also hired Sherlock Homes (sherlockhomesstl.com) to see what she could come up with. In the process, I discovered that some very interesting characters had inhabited our then 111-year-old home.

A two-and-a-half story red brick home with a light-brown brick front, typical to the neighborhood, 3709 Juniata was one of four houses commissioned by George Zimmerer, designed by architect Ernst Priesler and constructed by Beckemeier & Schroeder in 1904 at a cost of about \$3,050 per house.

The first owner of record was Maude Quigley, Zimmerer's sister. Speculation is that she just held title to the house before it was sold in 1906 to Frederick C. Daab. Daab was treasurer of the Terminal Railroad Association, which built Union Station, among other St. Louis landmarks. He and his Argentinian-born wife, Marie Louise Ludorff, and their servant were the only occupants; to have just three people in a home this size at the time was fairly posh. A 1904 article in the St. Louis Republic announced Fred and Marie Louise's marriage, describing how Daab went to the post office to buy stamps when a clerk in his office was absent one day, thus meeting Ms. Ludorff, the postmistress, by chance. In 1910, the Daabs built the brick "auto shed" out back for \$500; it is still a functional garage, unique to the neighborhood.

In 1918, Frank and Emma Bloemker purchased 3709 from Marie Louise, who had moved to Alabama after Fred's death. Frank was an undertaker at his family's business, Bloemker Funeral Home, located on Grand. Sadly, their son died of influenza in 1928, and in their grief, they moved. The house was vacant at the time of the 1930 census.

George and Jennie Adolf bought the house in 1931, and applied for a permit to turn it into a two-family flat. George was a builder, and he likely built the full two-story brick addition on back at that time to give both tenants more room. You can still see an angled mark in the hardwood floor in the front entrance where a wall must have separated the upstairs and the downstairs flats, and also where a full bathroom must have been in the now unfinished basement. He additionally moved the location of the stairs to the third floor to create more floor space.

The Adolfs lived in one flat and rented out the other over the next three-plus decades. Early tenants included Arthur and Zella Bruce and son, who appear on the 1940 census. They paid \$32 per month rent. Arthur worked at the White Rose Gas Station for 10 cents per hour, eventually buying a Texaco at Chippewa and Gustine; in a family history, their granddaughter recounted that Zella would walk five miles to bring lunch to Arthur every day.

When we first moved to 3709, all anyone could tell us about the home's previous tenants was that a judge had lived there a long time. The Adolfs' son George Jr., who was listed as a 7-year-old living here with his parents and sister in the 1940 census, was a judge of the 22nd Judicial Circuit Court, and we believe he resided here many years. In 1983, he presided over a famous local case where John Ramo admitted blowing up rival mobster Jimmy Michael's car—and Jimmy Michael—as he drove down I-55 near Reavis Barracks.

After her husband's death, Jennie sold the property to a couple who converted it back into a single-family home. Unfortunately, the house eventually fell into disrepair. In 1992, it was purchased for \$30,000, flipped and sold to a young couple who owned it for about year before we purchased it in 1994. We spent the next 21 years working on the house, always believing that we were preserving a part of St. Louis history by doing so.

Our hearts will always be part of Tower Grove Heights, but we've left 3709 Juniata in good hands with the current owners. I'm sure there will be many more stories to tell for generations to come.

**We spent the next  
21 years working  
on the house,  
always believing  
that we were  
preserving a part  
of St. Louis history  
by doing so.**

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# What Color is Your Cap?



BY GRETA REITENBACH **S**omething is waiting to serve you, but you're trying to avoid it. It is trying to tell you something, and it is *right outside your door!*

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fireman can expect from the hydrant and the risk to nearby underground structures. All of this is communicated without a word and in an instant during an emergency.

We learned this and more when the Alley Kats, that large group of kids living on the 3800 blocks of Connecticut and Juniata, were recruited to paint the hydrants at Hartford and Spring. Tom Reitenbach successfully corralled the Alley Kats to meet with Mike Norris from the water district after school one October day. Mr. Norris supplied paint with all the necessary specifications. He also provided much needed guidance and supervision to 12 inexperienced painters. Now we get to enjoy our work when we pass by on the street.



**Mike Norris, St. Louis Water Dept., instructs the Alley Kats on the art of fire hydrant painting**

Thanks to the LeBlancs, Roithers, Clynes, Istvans, and Reitenbachs for lending hands and soiling a few shirts. All agreed it was tons of fun. The number one thing we learned? This hydrant super-paint does *not* come out of clothes.

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The Alley Kats put their brushes to work on the fire hydrants at Hartford and Spring

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Here's a shot of a hole cut into a new garage door in the 3800 block of Arsenal. Why the hole?

For years, stray cats have been living in this garage by crawling under the old, ill-fitting garage door. When the old door was replaced, the owner graciously cut a hole in the new door to allow the alley cats to re-claim their former home. Pretty nice.



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# Invisible Second Floor Living

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6



To get up there, you can use the elevator (perhaps the only private elevator in Tower Grove Heights?). I pictured a tiny space for one person but it was at least 3' by 4' – large enough to carry a

wheelchair. “Someday I’ll need it,” explained Lesli. The elevator services three floors including the basement and is currently used as a large dumb waiter.

There are plans to add parking in the rear and I was told that the existing brick structure on the alley was a former auto repair shop. Lesli said, “All the car repairs were done on the street and the tools were kept in the shop.”

When I asked if she had plans to redo other buildings, Lesli answered with, “No sane person would have done this project” and mentioned she’d love to take a year off.

Since meeting Lesli, I’ve been daydreaming about installing an elevator. Press a button and go from the basement to the second floor? But I’m sure the elevator project would have its ups and downs.

**BEHIND EVERY PROJECT IS A**



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# From St. Louis to Havana

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

of colorful strobe lights instead of domes, controlled by a simple switch on the dash. He played us Reggaeton from a flash drive inserted into the USB port of his CD console and laughed when his passengers hit their heads on the ceiling when we flew over large bumps.

His loyalty—to meeting us each day at the designated time and place; his resourcefulness—in finding a job that paid well and gave him the chance to meet people from all around the world, his talent—in keeping a car as old as my father running and clean and equipped to cart around nine full-grown Americans; was astounding. Chino—our cab driver—embodied the essence of Cuba.

Dizzy from the diesel and yet unfazed by seeing the pavement speed by through the half-dollar-sized holes in the steel floorboard, I looked over at Chino and smiled.

“Binyalay!” he shouted over the engine and the whir of Cuba whizzing past. “Binyalay,” I repeated.

###

*Truckey (a recently former TGH resident) legally traveled to Cuba in August of 2016 with a group of educators from The College School in Webster Groves who fell so much in love with the place they now want to work the trip into their curriculum...somehow.*



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# THE UNCLUTTERED HOME PART 3 – *The Uncluttered Closet*

BY MARILYN BROWNING

If your home is one of those in our neighborhood that hasn't been through extensive renovation, it's a given that your bedroom closets are on the wee side. I've seen many creative solutions to this problem, including a take-no-prisoners approach by a single couple who gave two bedrooms over to clothes storage. Let's assume, however, that you are not among the slaves to fashion who require acres of space. Nevertheless, you may have enough clothes and shoes that storing them in your tiny closet is difficult or impossible.

I'd like to propose something radical, which is that you aim to fit the clothing to the available storage, rather than the other way around. This requires a careful weeding of your belongings, and a couple of methods work well.

One method is called the turned hanger approach. Turn all your hangers backward, and each time you actually wear an item you turn the hanger back around. At the end of a month, see what is still hanging wrong way out. These are items that you own, but probably never wear as your first choice. Let them go.

Another method, similar to ripping off the bandage quickly, is the three pile approach. Take all your clothing in the closet and fling it on the bed. Do not dither; do not overthink this. Quickly put each item into one of these piles:



The first pile is the keep pile: I love this item. It fits right now and I wear it *frequently*. This stuff goes back in the closet.

The second pile is the maybe pile: I don't wear it but somebody gave it to me/ I paid good money for it/ it will fit me when I lose that weight/ any other half-baked reason for keeping something you don't wear. Put this pile in a box and tape it shut. Don't miss anything in the box after 30 days? Do not open the box. Donate it!

The third pile is the toss pile: This item doesn't fit me or my style. Put all the stuff in this pile that's still in good condition in bags and donate it. If it's torn, heavily stained, or otherwise unwearable, it goes in the trash. (In my case, I have a small stash of clothing that looks like it should be trashed that I wear when I paint, garden, do home repair, or wash the car.)

The average American wears on a regular basis about 20% of the clothing that he or she owns. You can probably assume that any of the clothing you get rid of will make no difference whatsoever in how you get dressed in the morning, other than the fact that you might actually be able to find what you like to wear.

Your uncluttered closet can save you time and energy in the morning. It can even save you money, since you won't buy things you already have. And how can that be bad?

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## REAL ESTATE NEWS

*Email me your real estate questions at:*

DeborahErvin@att.net

### Homes Sold in Tower Grove Heights this Quarter

| Type        | Address               | Sold Price | Bdrm | Bath | Sq Ft |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------|------|------|-------|
| Residential | 3710 Connecticut      | \$421,600  | 4    | 4    | 2,708 |
| Residential | 3716 Connecticut      | \$301,000  | 3    | 3    | 2,050 |
| Residential | 3812 Connecticut      | \$226,000  | 4    | 2    | 1,740 |
| Residential | 3835 Connecticut      | \$481,000  | 3    | 3    | 2,751 |
| Residential | 3664 Hartford         | \$430,000  | 4    | 4    | 2,700 |
| Multifamily | 3801 Hartford         | \$467,500  | 3    | 4    | 2,589 |
| Residential | 3821 Hartford         | \$380,000  | 5    | 3    | 2,263 |
| Residential | 3845 Hartford         | \$270,800  | 4    | 2    | 2,006 |
| Multifamily | 3889 Humphrey #1 & 2  | \$123,679  |      |      | 2,524 |
| Multifamily | 3855 Juniata          | \$ 234,000 |      |      | 2,318 |
| Residential | 3862 Juniata          | \$371,000  | 3    | 3    | 2,388 |
| Residential | 3880 Juniata          | \$155,000  | 3    | 2    | 2,730 |
| Residential | 3837 North Utah Place | \$215,000  |      |      | 2,400 |

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# HOUSE BEHIND THE HOUSE

BY GAZETTE GHOST WRITER



As you drive the alleys of TGHT's, you see some interesting things. One is them is the 'house behind the house' at 3716 Arsenal. It's not really attached to the main house except by a small doorway and looks like a standalone building. To add to the intrigue, it has a chimney---what the heck is it?

The current owner, Joseph Cotton, told me it was there when he bought the property in 1978. Joseph's mother shared the house for years and used the building in the rear as her bedroom. Sadly, Joseph's mother passed away a few years ago and now Joseph is sleeping in the 'back room', as he calls it. Joseph told me, "It's so convenient not to have stairs".

The property record only shows the house was built in 1910 but doesn't include anything on the added room. I tend to think it was an early kitchen but think of the possibilities: it could have been a smoke house or a kitchen or a small business or, in these modern times, a great man-cave space. I haven't seen this configuration anywhere else in the 'Heights'.

But I like the bedroom idea. How many of us second floor sleepers wouldn't enjoy the idea of grabbing our morning coffee without navigating the stairs?



photo Rich Iezzi

## Yea for the City tree trimmers!

Here's a photo of them in the 3600 block of Hartford, removing low hanging branches. Residents noticed that even with the new street lights, areas were still poorly lit because low hanging tree foliage blocked the new lights' illumination.



## 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 Heights a cleaner and safer place
- To better protect our property values
- To make the neighborhood a more interesting and fun place to live

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)

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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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