

# Tower Grove Heights Gazette

GRAND TO GUSTINE

ARSENAL TO UTAH PLACE

Volume 30 No. 5

Fall 2019

## What's New at the Gazette?

By Barbara  
Gilchrist,  
Co-Editor

**R**ich Iezzi has, for six years, been the editor and almost everything else for the Gazette. He sold ads, wrote articles, and cajoled other people into writing articles. He made sure four issues got printed and distributed every one of the six years. Our neighborhood owes him a big Thank You! Rich decided, after the Summer, 2019, issue, that he wants to pursue other interests. (Is that a pipe organ I hear?) Tricia Heliker and I agreed to be co-editors and this is our inaugural issue. My focus is on the administrative duties and interacting with writers while Tricia will focus on layout and design. Both of us will continue to write articles from time to time. Debra Knox Deiermann continues as our copy editor. Kristen Carothers will oversee the advertising. Mike Miller will be our utility player, helping wherever is needed. (Mike is new to the neighborhood; he and his wife recently moved to 36/3700 Utah.)

### "We want input and participation by as many people as possible."

We recognize and thank Tom Reitenbach who is our Gazette distribution coordinator and has been for many years. We also thank the Block Captains and designated deliverers who make sure every house and apartment receives a copy. All told, over 1500 issues are printed and distributed each quarter. Many people who have written before, and others who are contributing for the first time, submitted articles for this issue. Tricia and I are very grateful to each of you. We hope to include regular features on gardening and yard maintenance tips, information from our Neighborhood Improvement Specialist/NSO, housing sales, reports from the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association committees, and news from the Tower Grove Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation (TGNCDC). If you have a topic you would

*continued on page 4*

## URBAN MATTER Chooses South Grand

By Tricia Heliker &  
Barbara Gilchrist

Mary Hennesy and her wife, Amy Schafer, have owned and operated Urban Matter since the fall of 2014 in a destination location in Dutch Town. About two years ago they contemplated adding furniture to their wide variety of merchandise that includes women's and children's clothing, jewelry, kid's books, educational toys, handbags, pillows, ceramics, oils and colognes, wallets, and greeting cards. (Not a complete list by any means.) Display space was limited at their boutique on Virginia and that prompted them to begin their search for a new location. Many possibilities were considered before choosing the former Avon store on the corner of Grand and Connecticut.

Besides doubling their floor space, they now have a kitchen area and the capacity to hold special events. Their intention is to host a series of pop-up shops featuring a specific maker and the product that person supplies to the store. Mary primarily runs the retail business and Amy has a workspace in the store basement where she makes leather products such as handbags and wallets.

They have refreshed and opened up this corner shop to what is now an airy and welcoming space. The old charm, like the blue and white tile floor, remains and works well with the artfully arranged merchandise. The large windows and high ceilings enhance the shopping experience and room to browse encourages customers to linger. Mary loves merchandising and curating and has always wanted to own such a store. She saw a need for a retail offering of unique local products. About 50% of their products offered for sale are local (defined as from Missouri). She garners her products from many sources but never from "big buyer" markets. She describes their items as "thoughtfully curated gifts."

Mary and Amy are looking forward to the added foot traffic created by the restaurants and other stores on South Grand, and reconnecting with their already strong customer base in this area. They are open Tues.-Sat. from 11-7 and Sundays from 11-4. Be sure to welcome a new neighbor and explore a delightful addition to South Grand.

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# *Tower Grove Heights Gazette*

Published quarterly

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## Cupid's Arrow

By Tricia Heliker

This is the final column in the Cupid series. When I started gathering the how-we-met stories from Tower Grove Heights residents, I had no idea they would be so diverse, so interesting, and so delightful. It dawned on me those words aptly describe the people who live here in the Heights.

Couple #12 - In his own words: I was working downtown and the company I worked for was sponsoring a program promoting taking the bus. I decided to participate and the first afternoon I took the bus I noticed a very attractive lady with short salt and pepper hair boarding the bus several stops after mine. The second day she sat next to me as the bus was more crowded and had no empty seats. I attempted a conversation, but even with my silky-smooth style, it went nowhere. In the ensuing days, weeks, months, I noticed if there were any empty seats, she would take them, but if not, she would sit next to me. At times, I would even place my briefcase next to me to save that seat, just in case. I mentioned her to my friends, but since we had not exchanged names, I referred to her as Bus Woman. I was crushed when for a six-month period she disappeared (due to a foot problem, I later learned). I exalted when she reappeared and the cat and mouse game continued. Soon after she mentioned she was planning a trip to Machu Pichu, Bi-State (now Metro) announced it was discontinuing our bus route. On the last day of the route, I mentioned to her that I was sorry I wouldn't be able to hear about her trip. She handed me her business card and said if I were interested, I could give her a call after her trip and she would fill me in. She is still beautiful but now has long silver hair. Bus Woman is now my wife.

In her own words: I gave him my business card, said "call me," and then asked how I'd know it was him. Instead of telling me his name, he said he would say "that guy from the bus." We have now been married ten years and celebrated by taking a ride on the bus. Sometimes the stars align, and good things happen.

Couple #13 - My husband and I met in Kindergarten! We have actually known each other longer than we can remember. We attended a Catholic school in Perryville, Mo., and continued through our senior year as classmates. We weren't high school sweethearts (although he admits to having a crush on her). We reconnected on the softball fields one summer when we were both home from college. We started dating even though I was at Saint Louis University and he was attending Missouri State in Springfield. After college, he moved to St. Louis. We lived for a time in a loft downtown and then moved to TGH.

Couple #14 - About 25 years ago she was involved in a benefit to raise funds for inoculating the world's children. This involved keeping someone from the team walking a track continuously. Her group of personal and work friends had set up tents with food and sleeping bags. They were in it for the long haul. He was there to photograph the event. At one point he saw a woman walking towards him on the track eating an apple and waving a rubber chicken in her other hand. After snapping a photo of her he accompanied her around the track. They chatted for a few laps and then he left for a preplanned concert. He did return after the concert to take a group picture of the team and hang out with the group until nightfall. It was then that she cordially invited him into her tent to spend the night. Mind you, they were not alone in the tent. This was more of a slumber party for the team. The next morning she handed him her business card with her personal phone number on it. He took this as a positive sign and was intrigued. She then invited him for breakfast at her home which was close by. They enjoyed their breakfast on a blanket outdoors. A few days later, he called to tell her there was not much of a chance that this could go anywhere. First off, she didn't have a touch tone phone and he needed to be able to get his messages and, secondly, she had two cats and that was not working for him. A day or two later she called to tell him that even though she had a rotary phone, she was equipped for a touch tone at any time she wanted to switch over. If that wasn't enough of a nudge from Cupid, within a few months both cats died. (He assured me there was no foul play involved.) With those two hurdles out of the way, the relationship picked up steam and they are still rounding the track together.

Couple #15 - This couple met when he was a senior in high school and she was a junior.



# Cupid's Arrow

They went to private schools that were across the street from each other in Indianapolis. She was a friend of the younger sister of a girl he was dating at the time. There was one date and then it took a second accidental meeting months later before the dating really caught on. By the middle of her freshman year of college they were engaged and married the following May. At one point, while finishing their bachelor's degrees they lived in her old high school that had been converted to apartments. Their apartment was the chapel of the former Saint Agnes Academy and their bedroom was the former altar. There were several moves while finishing degrees for the two of them before they landed in St. Louis for a job opportunity in 1987. Two years later they found their home in TGH where they will celebrate their 47th wedding anniversary.

## What to do with all those tomatoes!

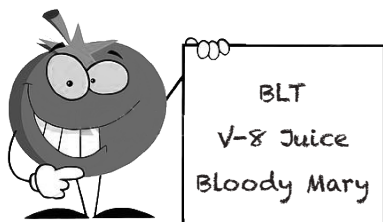
By Peggy Hoelting

**W**e did it! Mother Nature has blessed us with a bountiful crop of early tomatoes. The weather has cooperated with consistent rain and moderate temperatures.

The Cherokee Purples are magnificent! Whether you are growing your own or buying them at the farmers' market, it is peak tomato-eating season.

Has someone else noticed those big, beautiful, ripening tomatoes in your garden? Squirrels, birds and other critters will take small bites out of your prized fruit. Your best defense is to pick tomatoes as soon as you see any hint of color at the bottom. Tomatoes that have started the ripening process on the vine, will fully ripen indoors. Keep them on the counter, out of the sun. Inspect them each day to see how they are progressing. To speed up the ripening process, place tomatoes in a paper bag. This will trap the ethylene gas needed to ripen. To ripen even faster, throw a banana into the bag.

Now that your counter is full of ripening tomatoes, you need to decide how to eat them. Just when you thought avocado toast couldn't get any better, add a thick slice of tomato. For a simple salad, mix sliced tomato, fresh mozzarella or burrata cheese and basil. Drizzle with reduced balsamic vinegar and olive oil. Let's not forget the almighty BLT, the queen of the summer sandwich. Fresh sourdough bread "battered" with mayo, pan fried in the skillet, topped with crispy bacon, lettuce, a thick slice of tomato and avocado. To make your own V8 juice, sauté chopped onions, carrots, celery and tomato. After cooking, blend with cucumber, Worcestershire, tabasco, honey and fresh parsley. This homemade V8 juice makes a fine morning pick-me-up and a delicious Bloody Mary mix.



to 2 hours. These delicious flavor bombs will add in-depth flavor to soups, salads, skillet meals and more.

They freeze well, too. For the tomato plants growing in your garden, the season has only just begun. No matter how ugly they get, don't give up on them – they will bounce back. When the weather gets really hot in the summer, tomato plants take a break in producing fruit. Once the temperatures drop back into the 80s, they start

**"No matter how ugly they get, don't give up on them -- they will bounce back."**

producing again. This will create a lull in your harvest. Be patient, you will get another round of fruit. A few years ago, I conducted a rough experiment. Each day I noted how many tomatoes I harvested, and

what variety each was. I harvested 35% of my tomato crop in July thru August. In September I picked 25% of the total and to my surprise, in October, I recorded a whopping 40% of the seasons harvest. To keep your tomatoes producing, keep water consistent and fertilize every other week. As the weather gets cooler and a frost is predicted, pick all green tomatoes that show a slight white "star" at the bottom. Most of these will ripen just fine.

Are you sorry you didn't plant any tomatoes this year? Luckily, we have the Farmers' Market in Tower Grove Park to fill your needs. Fall is a great time to start planning your garden for next year. Choose your space, build and fill your raised beds. Get ready for your dilemma: "What to do with all those tomatoes!"

Peggy Hoelting is a garden coach and consultant. For more ideas and recipes, check out her garden blog at [www.gardeneditstl.com](http://www.gardeneditstl.com).



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# I'm just Katie from the Block Captain Promotion Department

By Katie Wolf

Hi, Tower Grove Heights! This is your friendly neighborhood NSO/NIS (Neighborhood Improvement Specialist), Katie Wolf. I have been asked to provide an article for the Gazette. Hopefully I will be able to provide an article for each Gazette, and hopefully they will be informative. Fingers Crossed!

**"I always look at the folks on my block like siblings and the folks living behind me like cousins."**

Before I start, I would like to invite your suggestions for future articles. If you have an idea regarding something you would like me to

cover in an article - PLEASE feel free to either respond to the Gazette team or email me at [wolfk@stlouis-mo.gov](mailto:wolfk@stlouis-mo.gov). I would be happy to consider your request.

It only seems natural that a good starting point for an NSO/NIS article is how to utilize and help your Block Captains. I am not even asking you to BE a Block Captain! Just to have Block Captain awareness.

Every Block in Tower Grove Heights has a Block Captain-100%. You can find the list on the Tower Grove Heights website. Do you know your Block Captain? Have you joined him or her in an activity to welcome newcomers/better your block? Do you bake cookies? (asking for a friend).

This summer the Block Captains participated in a survey. One response that presented in a variety of ways was that Block Captains love their neighbors, love helping and welcoming people, and they would love help in building block community.

How would you be able to help? The ways are limitless. Simply contacting your Block Captain and offering to help would let them know that they are recognized and not alone. I always find that bouncing ideas off of someone is productive. Perhaps you can be a sounding board.

Perhaps you can walk the alley with/for your Block Captain and help make a list of houses on your block (and the one behind you) that have security cameras or motion detector lights. Do you notice any gaps that could be covered? Any neighbors in that gap who might need assistance in affording/installing a motion detecting light or camera?

What other block issues can you audit? You are just establishing a baseline. The fixing can come later. Are there vacant/for sale properties on your block? Is there someone aging in place on your block who needs a little extra support? Someone with an illness who might need a mow? Recurring dumping?

Does your side of the block want to partner with the residents of the block behind you? I always look at the folks on my block like siblings and the folks living behind me like cousins. Is it time to organize a "block reunion" and join forces to better your shared alley? These are often the people you need when you are looking for camera/light support.

As I stated, the possibilities for block betterment are endless. No

two blocks need/ have the same objectives. I just ask that you start with your Block Captain. They may have already started the project you want to start or have contacts for the person you wish to reach out to. And give them a little shout out if you see them. Not after 11p.m. because that's a noise violation. But any other time would be great. And thanks again for your interest in your neighborhood. It shows.

*TGS-TGH Block Captains meet on second Mondays (Jan-Nov), 6:30 p.m. at 4111 Connecticut 63116 (Oak Hill Presbyterian Church). Everyone is welcome to attend the meetings to discuss neighborhood safety and quality of life issues. Current Block Captains are listed on the website, [www.towergroveheights.com](http://www.towergroveheights.com). Questions? Contact: [blockreps@towergroveheights.com](mailto:blockreps@towergroveheights.com).*

## What's New at the Gazette?

*continued from page 1*

like included in future issues, or if you want to write something, please let us know at [gazette@towergroveheights.com](mailto:gazette@towergroveheights.com). We want input and participation by as many people as possible. Thanks, also, to our advertisers who help make the Gazette financially possible. Please patronize these businesses and let them know you saw an ad in the Gazette!

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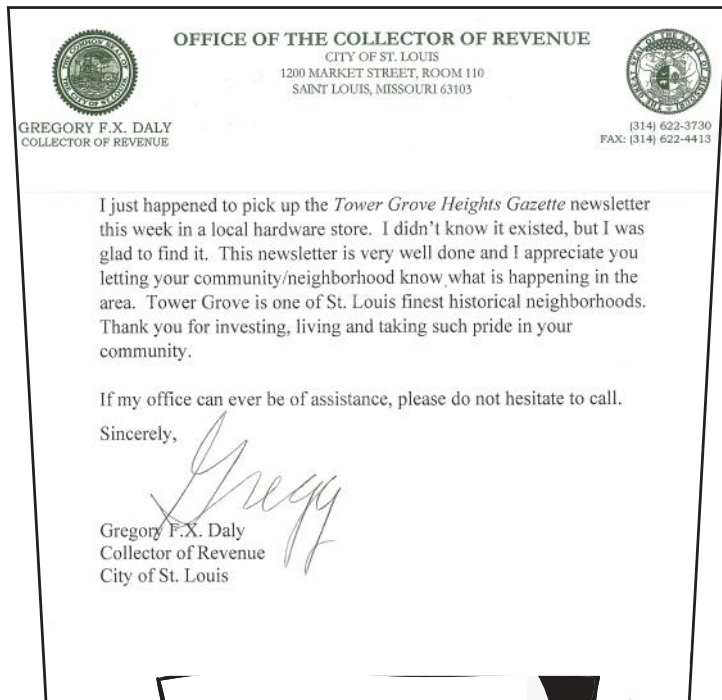
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## Letters to the Editor



*"Loved the recent Gazette! Every article was interesting and hit on different topics. I really enjoyed it."*  
Cathy Vogel



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# Tower Grove Pride 2019

By Barbara  
Gilchrist

**T**ower Grove Pride was held in our neighborhood on Saturday, June 29, marking the seventh year as an alternative to Pride St. Louis, which has moved downtown. Last year, the Tower Grove Pride event moved from the sidewalks of South Grand to Tower Grove Park and that was repeated this year.



The event is described as “[a] festival [that] continues ... a tradition of Pride events in Tower Grove Park and South Grand, a historic “gayborhood” and one of the major centers of LGBTQ+ life and culture in St. Louis. The event is a thank you to our neighborhoods for being places where LGBTQ+ people can live and express themselves freely and openly.”

Organizers estimate that over 30,000 people participated in the event this year. There

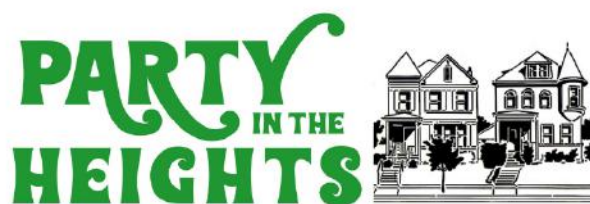
were approximately 280 booths, 100 of which were nonprofits. Another 100 were local artists and crafters. The rest were local businesses, sponsors, promotional booths, and services. There was live entertainment and an area for kids. It was a typically hot and humid late June day in St. Louis, but the park location offered shaded areas for people to get out of the sun. Everyone seemed to enjoy the day.

Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association has sponsored a booth at this event since its

inception. Debra Knox Deiermann organized our participation again this year and spent the entire day at the event. There were several other volunteers: Andrea Thein, Barb McDonald, Ryan Barry, Ann Stanley, and Barbara Gilchrist all took shifts in the

booth. We always try to have something that will attract people to the booth. This year, Debra gathered books from the collection she and Barbara have and set them out as a way to encourage conversation with passersby. A donation of \$1.00 for hardbacks and \$0.50 for paperbacks was suggested.

We raised \$32.00! Several of the people who stopped by our booth are new to St. Louis. We had great fun telling them about our wonderful neighborhood.



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# The Tower People

By Rich  
Iezzi

**M**arie Keath and Tom Ganim purchased their home at 3806 Hartford in April of 2018. When I asked what the attraction was,

I heard many of the same things buyers have said for the past 100 years. Tom told me, "It was the house but also the neighborhood and the park. We love it here."

Marie said they weren't really looking to purchase anything for a while but the house was an impulse buy that seemed to speak to them. "I called Tom and told him I found an interesting house – with a tower and a lion." There's a cast concrete lion on the front porch that probably weighs 300 lbs. When Marie first showed me the house, I walked right past her so I could get close to the bare plaster walls. Tom and Marie had just removed all the old wallpaper and the walls were down to their original skin. I just had to touch them.

Interestingly, you never see painted walls after removing the original wallpaper because wallpaper was always applied to the new plaster during construction. The common paint roller wasn't even invented until 1940.

Tom and Marie are an outwardly normal looking couple who like working on houses. Tom is a psychotherapist and Marie is presently a real estate agent after working as a German teacher and being a construction project manager. Tom explained that they wanted a change from their day jobs.

Change is what they got. One of the first projects was switching the kitchen and dining room after the previous owners used the

dining room for the kitchen. A favorite part of the new kitchen is Tom's use of solid oak 1 1/4" thick strips glued together to form the countertops. I also loved the solid white oak floor. While working on their kitchen, Marie revealed that they cooked outside from July to November. "We had our meals on the front porch," she explained. After completing their kitchen

project, they spent six months working on their flipper house on The Hill. "We really got behind," they added.

I knew they were still working on the flipper house because Tom refused to shave his beard until they sold the house. I called it his flipper beard. Then one day, the beard was gone and they were back to working on the Hartford house.

One of the attractions to the Hartford house was knowing they could do a lot of the work themselves. Unlike watching major

projects completed in 20 minutes on HGTV, DIY work is quite different. "We don't really have a place to store anything because we're working everywhere," Tom revealed. That sort of limits Marie's hobby of "buying good junk." She loves old Magic Chef stoves and uses one in her kitchen but a spare stove sits in the entry with no place to go. Another cool thing they bought was a period 1889 gas lamp rescued from the original construction of Hwy 44. It's 12' high, weighs a ton and is installed and electrified in their backyard.



You can't look at 3806 Hartford without noticing the east tower (it's not a turret because it touches the ground, making it a tower). The tower makes a wide house so much wider and provides an interesting nook. Tom and Marie assured me that their Christmas tree will always go there.

Talking to Tom and Marie, I'm reminded how adaptable our old Tower Grove Heights' houses are and that new buyers continue to be attracted to them – especially if they're looking for a tower and a lion.



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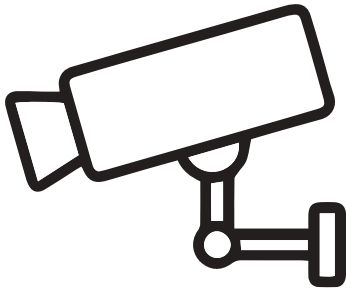
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# Safety Committee Update

By Barbara  
Gilchrist

**R**yan Barry, Chair of the TGHNA Safety Committee, reports that ten Arlo cameras have been installed at various locations in Tower Grove Heights. These are the cameras that run on solar powered batteries and are triggered by movement. Much has been learned about the functionality of these cameras as they have been installed. For example, the ones located at intersections need to be directly wired into a power source rather than being battery powered. There is so much vehicle and pedestrian activity at intersections that the batteries are quickly exhausted. As a result, some of the cameras have been placed in alleys where there have been car and garage break-ins.



In addition, one Axis camera has been installed at a business on Gustine. This is a higher capacity, and more expensive, camera that records constantly. It requires a higher level of internet speed that businesses typically have. At least one more Axis camera will be added at this location and additional ones will be installed at a business on Spring Ave.

Thanks to all the residents who have agreed to participate in this initiative. The locations of the cameras have been provided to the

Second District Police. Residents who have their own security cameras are urged to register them with the Second District in case footage is needed in relation to nearby crime.

The Safety Committee is considering two other projects. One is to remind homeowners that 4-inch (minimum) house numbers must be posted in the alley on garages or fences. The other is a clean-up initiative at the Schnucks at Grand and Gravois.

The Safety Committee meets on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m., upstairs at the Gelateria, 3197 South Grand. Everyone is welcome at these meetings.



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# President's Message

By Ann Stanley

**B**y the time this issue of the Gazette hits your doorstep, kids will be back in school, the sun will be rising later and setting earlier and we will be replacing our summer flowers with colorful mums and asters.



But it's not only the seasons that change. Change has been taking place in and around the Heights all year. Last Spring, residents were bemoaning the number of vacant storefronts along South Grand and according to some accounts, the number got as high as ten. Happily, that number has changed in recent months as we welcome six new business to the district.

The summer months brought changes to ADA

access along Arsenal and neighborhood connections to Tower Grove Park, fulfilling a long-time goal of past Park Director, John Karel.

We have seen changes in our sense of security as the Tower Grove Heights Safety Committee continues to roll out its camera initiative. And finally, we have seen changes in the people that we meet each day as old friends move away and new neighbors move in.

There is one more change on the horizon and that is in the composition of the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association Executive Board. Come next January, Ryan Barry, the current President-Elect, will move into the role of President. Rick Stein plans to run again to serve as Treasurer but there will be three vacancies to fill. At our October 22 meeting, we will accept nominations for President-Elect, Secretary and Membership Secretary with a vote for new officers at our November 26 meeting.

For over 30 years, Tower Grove Heights has been served by a volunteer board composed of newcomers like me as well as long-time residents. Serving on the board does entail a few meetings each month but it also includes getting to know more about what's happening in the neighborhood, the 15th Ward and the city.

If you are interested in becoming more involved with the neighborhood, please consider running for a board position. More information about the duties of board members is listed in the Bylaws on our website: [www.towergroveheights.com](http://www.towergroveheights.com).

According to the Bylaws, the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association purposes are:

- to enhance the lives of people in the area;
- to develop a sense of community pride by being part of and contributing to the Neighborhood;

- to serve as a medium through which Neighborhood residents may participate in decision making that affects the life of the community and its citizens;
- to provide an effective means through which area residents can work together to maintain and improve the living standards, social conditions, and promote the well-being of the residents; and
- to foster and encourage measures conducive to improvement of the area housing stock by strict application of existing zoning regulations.

## Excitement Times Five

A flurry of activity took place on South Grand in August.

1. **URBAN MATTER** opened at the corner of Connecticut and Grand in the longtime location of the Avon Store. (More about that in our cover story.)
2. **ALTA CALLE** brought Mexican food to South Grand in the space vacated by Mekong.
3. **GROWACTIVE** set up shop on Hartford in the renovated Canvas space, or as many of the longtime residents refer to it, the old Post Office.
4. **THE GARDEN DISTRICT** slipped into the Bali space before we knew Bali was gone.
5. And, by the time this reaches you, **ECLECTICA** will have opened in the previous Rocket Century digs.

It's pretty exciting to be able to explore these new businesses just a short walk from home. Shopping local just got even better. Be sure to drop in and let the proprietors know we welcome them into our neighborhood.



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## Night Animals in the Heights

By Rich  
lezzi

Everyone knows we have bunny rabbits and squirrels in our neighborhood during the day but what about at night? Everything changes when it gets dark. That's when the night animals come out.

We know there are night animals because any food we put out in the evening is completely gone by morning. Our biggest disappearing act involved an entire turkey carcass. By morning, nothing was there. If you sit on your porch at night, you can see bats swooping as soon as it gets dark. Then around 10 p.m., opossums start lumbering around, looking for food. We have to make sure there's nothing inviting in our trash can next to our back steps. Otherwise, opossums use the steps for access, then jump in the trashcan where they stay trapped until morning. Silly opossums.

Late one night, my wife, Jean, reached out to pet what she thought was our outside cat but oops – it was an opossum. On another occasion, Jean noticed strange looking "scat" in our upstairs porch litter box. A couple of weeks later, she saw a hole in a screen and realized raccoons had been making contributions. Raccoons and opossums are interesting creatures but they can be expensive. A friend paid over \$400 to have a mama raccoon and her babies cut out of the walls and ceilings of his house. Years ago, I tried to use a large Havahart® trap to relocate a troublesome raccoon. Big mistake – the raccoon squeezed right out of the trap. Impressive.



It might be creepy to think night animals are crawling around your residence while you sleep but it's what they do. And how about that meatloaf you're tired of looking at? Put it out at night and sleep well knowing you're making the night animals happy.

## Sounds odd, smells good, tastes great.

### Green Tomato Pie

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 tbsp. vinegar   | 1/2 tsp ground cloves |
| 2 tbsp. water     | 1 cup raisins         |
| 1 cup sugar       | 3-4 green tomatoes    |
| Pinch of salt     | peeled and chopped    |
| 2 tbsp. flour     | 1 pie shell           |
| 1 tsp. cinnamon   | butter                |
| 3/4 tsp. allspice |                       |

Squeeze liquid from tomatoes; add vinegar and water to Tomatoes. Sift sugar with salt, flour and spices. Mix in Tomatoes and add raisins. Pour into pie shell; dot with Butter. Bake at 450 degrees for 15 minutes; reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake 30 minutes.

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## A Membership Hat Trick

By Jean  
Iezzi  
TGHNA Membership Secretary

For the third year in a row, Hartford has won the second most prestigious honor in St. Louis, right behind the Stanley Cup. Smashing its closest rival, Utah, Hartford claimed victory with 86 members over Utah's 71. Even better, the "Most Members" sign at Hartford and Spring doesn't have to be moved to a new street.

Overall, we have 355 members out of a total of about 1,200 residents giving a participation rate of almost 30%. The "Most Members" award is announced each year in the fall Gazette so there's plenty of time for competing blocks to plan their strategy.

Membership information can be found in this newsletter or on the website, [www.towergroveheights.com](http://www.towergroveheights.com). Not sure you're a member? Email Jean Iezzi at [sra.jiezzi@yahoo.com](mailto:sra.jiezzi@yahoo.com) to find out.

Thanks to all our members for supporting the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association.



## 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 make the Heights a cleaner and safer place  
To have a liaison with City Hall and other agencies  
To better protect our property values  
To make TGH a more interesting, fun place to live

### 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

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# Michael Dauphin Speaks at TGHNA Meeting

By Nigel Holloway

A lot of residents are probably shocked by the steep rate of increase in their property taxes in recent years. I know I was when I received the Change of Assessment notice from the city in May. So, when Michael Dauphin, the city's assessor, addressed the meeting of the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association on June 25, it must have seemed a little like Daniel entering the lion's den. Nobody was mauled in the process, but attendees were not shy in expressing their surprise at the jump in their property taxes. The reason for the increase is that real estate prices have risen throughout St Louis (not to mention much of the U.S.) as a result of the long recovery from the Great Recession in 2008. House values in Tower Grove Heights have risen, on average, by 16.4% since the last assessment in 2017, according to Dauphin. That's three times faster than the 5.3% increase for the city as a whole. In fact, two-family parcels in our neighborhood have rocketed up 31.1%, almost six times faster than for St Louis overall.

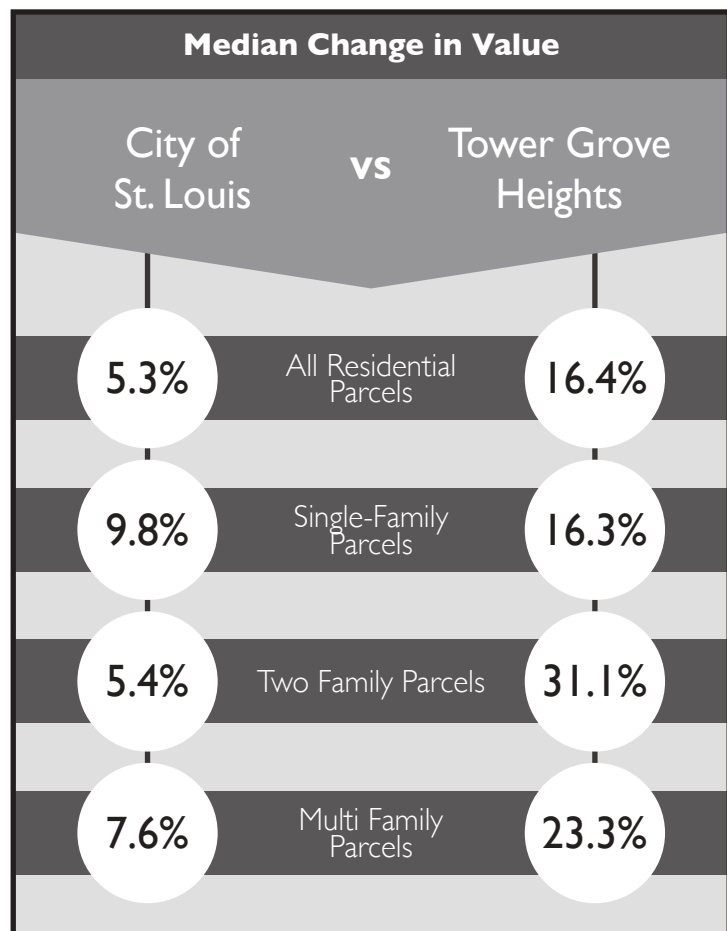
It's good to know that a home in the Heights is a sought-after asset. It reflects the fact that ours is a terrific neighborhood. But this is meager consolation for residents with limited means, who may struggle to find the money to pay for the increased taxes.

Dauphin was straightforward about the fact that the assessment of property values is made under fairly strict and rigid guidelines that necessarily remove as much subjectivity as possible from the process. His department has 20 appraisers who assess 140,000 parcels in the city. Their work is audited by the Missouri State Tax Commission and is not under pressure from city hall to increase value assessments even higher, Dauphin said. He pointed out that about 60% of the

revenue received in taxes by the city is spent on the district's public schools and 19% "goes to the city," as he put it, to pay officials' salaries and run the services provided by City Hall.

The other point to note is that the actual level of property tax is the assessed value divided by 100 and multiplied by the tax rate. Dauphin's office determines the assessed value, while the tax rate is set by the taxing authorities in City Hall. Residents had until July 8 to appeal their assessed value. Dauphin's department isn't hearing any appeals after that date unless there has been a clerical error. If a homeowner wants to complain about the level of property taxes, then our elected city representatives are the ones to go to.

Once residents have gotten over the shock, the next question is whether we are getting value for money. If real estate taxes have gone up by, say, 50% in five years, have city services improved commensurately? And then there is another question for homeowners: how much longer can these price trends continue? The U.S. economic recovery has lasted a record 10 years. If, and when there is a recession, it is bound to have an impact on house prices. "We need to worry about a bubble," said Dauphin.



## REAL ESTATE NEWS

E-Mail your real estate questions to: [jfloridastl@gmail.com](mailto:jfloridastl@gmail.com)

### Homes Sold in Tower Grove Heights this quarter

| Type | Address              | Sold Price | Year Built |
|------|----------------------|------------|------------|
| Res. | 3705 Humphrey St.    | \$200,000  | 1905       |
| Res. | 3822 Connecticut St. | \$227,300  | 1905       |
| Res. | 3830 Connecticut St. | \$237,000  | 1907       |
| Res. | 3722 Juniata St.     | \$253,000  | 1905       |
| Res. | 3865 Juniata St.     | \$270,000  | 1901       |
| Res. | 3859 Juniata St.     | \$290,000  | 1901       |
| Res. | 3829 Humphrey St.    | \$341,000  | 1908       |
| Res. | 3828 Wyoming St.     | \$365,500  | 1908       |
| Res. | 3711 Wyoming St.     | \$375,000  | 1907       |
| Res. | 3644 Hartford St.    | \$385,000  | 1902       |
| Res. | 3862 Humphrey St.    | \$399,900  | 1909       |
| Res. | 3847 Connecticut St. | \$402,000  | 1906       |
| Res. | 3701 Juniata St.     | \$430,000  | 1904       |
| Res. | 3853 Wyoming St.     | \$432,000  | 1908       |
| Res. | 3887 Utah Place      | \$450,000  | 1909       |
| Res. | 3874 Utah Place      | \$500,000  | 1906       |
| Res. | 3611 Utah Place      | \$525,000  | 1905       |







*Congrats to Debra Knox Deiermann and Barbara Gilchrist who were awarded an Honorable Mention by the judges of the Post-Dispatch annual Great Garden Contest. Consider entering your flower garden in next year's contest. One photo is all that is required to participate.*

## TGNCDC Makes a Splash at 3800 Gravois with Mixed Use Development

By Sean Spencer

We probably paid too much and we probably spent too much renovating. This is typical for Community Development Corporations working to create positive change through historic buildings updates in areas of need. Located in an area of focus from our framework and vision plan, 3800 Gravois Avenue in Tower Grove South once housed a corner market, one of dozens along the long neglected former Route 66 that was the main thoroughfare to downtown St. Louis before interstate expansion. There were years of calls for service against the store. The negative issues resulting from the operation of the market spilled over into the residential part of the neighborhood. With 1.2 million already invested in affordable residential projects in close proximity (see [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qa\\_dsWnJ9SM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qa_dsWnJ9SM)), TGNCDC identified the opportunity to invest directly on Gravois Avenue.

TGNCDC approached the owner and negotiated a deal to purchase the property. As with most historic buildings in the area, deferred maintenance was deteriorating the building and we set out to make the needed updates. We completed the work in late June 2019.

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Commercial districts can be a catalyst for future investment, improved quality of life, amenities to attract more residents, convenience and they make our city stand out from other areas in the region. On the other hand, neglected commercial districts with unappealing and abandoned storefronts, poor signage, and lack of services detract from investment, decrease the quality of life of residents and devalue neighborhoods. We hope the 3800 Gravois Avenue project inspires others to see the possibilities along Gravois, especially between South Grand and Chippewa, and that it jump-starts more renovations. Sustained economic development can start with one building but more need to follow. At this highly dense location in Tower Grove South that is surrounded with a strong residential market, new Aldi location and the nearby thriving South Grand commercial district, larger and faster strides at elevating Gravois should be made in coming years. Thanks to PNC bank for assisting us with this community development project.



# *Tower Grove Heights*

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