

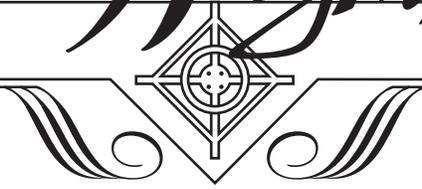
Tower Grove Heights Gazette

GRAND TO GUSTINE

ARSENAL TO UTAH PLACE

Volume 20, No. 1

Spring 2009



Riding St. Louis' Riverfront Trail

BY TIMOTHY E. BARKER If I told you that you could spend a mere three hours without a car traveling from your home in Tower Grove Heights and see firsthand a range of sights representative of St. Louis' essential geographic, botanical, industrial and transportation history, would you believe me? What if I added that in this remarkable adventure you'd likely see wild turkeys, coal scuttles, industrial scenes from what look like the set of the movie "Brazil," magnifi-

cent stone towers one would expect in castles along the Rhine, and river scenes that haven't changed since Mark Twain described them in *Life on the Mississippi*, published in 1883? If you are interested in St. Louis' rich history and are looking for opportunities for exercise as well, we have a terrific local resource in the Riverfront Trail.

Established in the summer of 1999 by Trailnet in concert with St. Louis City, the Riverfront Trail is an eleven mile, 2-lane asphalt-paved bike path between downtown



and the old Chain of Rocks Bridge. When my wife, Anita, and I ride it (most weekends during good weather), we typically rack the bikes and park at Trailnet's designated car lot beneath the massive Laclede Gas and Light power plant (built when that company was best known for powering the area's network of streetlamps). Alternatively, it's possible to use bike lanes on Grand and Russell to add about eleven miles (and one challenging incline!) to the total trip and eliminate the car altogether.

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2008's 100 NEEDIEST FAMILY

BY ELLEN WILSON

Wrapping Up - *From the Ashes*

Although the economy has forced people to tighten their belts this year, our neighborhood rose like a phoenix to support our adopted families for the holidays. In a year when every segment of society seems to be affected by economic distress those on the brink seem to have the farthest to fall. We were able to adopt two families again this year and, I hope, made a huge difference in their holiday season and upcoming year. Initially it was unclear how many donations we would receive this year so we scaled back the plans for gifts. We ensured that each family member received at least a few gifts and then planned to give the rest of the donation in utility support. We provided the families with \$100 gift certificates to each Schnuck's and Target in place of gift baskets this year with the thought that the families might like to select what they needed themselves. Family 1 received new towels and sheets for the family as well as individual gifts such as a beautiful scarf for the Grandmother, work and dress clothes for the Father, and toys and clothes for all the kids. Family 2 also received towels and sheets for the family, clothes for all the kids, and individual toys including a CD player for the oldest boy and dolls and puzzles for the youngest girl. As the deadline for gifts got closer, the monetary gifts increased and we were able to pay over \$600.00 in utilities for each family. We felt this larger donation for utilities might be more helpful this year than more gifts for each family member and might allow the families several months of relief.

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Mark Froese, kocojim

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

Your letters and comments are always welcome at the Gazette.
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The Gazette/TGHNA

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Riding St. Louis' Riverfront Trail

CONTINUED

The trail is marked with mileposts that are helpful to amateur riders like me who need to know how much energy to conserve to complete the trip. We like to break up our ride with a snack and rest at the mid-span of the Chain of Rocks Bridge, so it's 11.5 miles out and the same back. Heading north, the trail has



three parts, each with its own distinct character and qualities. First, you will experience the city's gritty industrial history as you weave (on the very well built and defined path) through rail branch lines, along steel scrap handlers, under grain elevators and coal depots, and beneath two of the six downtown Mississippi bridges (McKinley and Merchant's) that factored so significantly in St. Louis' transportation history. The McKinley Bridge has recently been renovated with a very ample bike lane that makes a side trip across to learn about neighboring Venice, Illinois' history and a look at the unusual "Salute to Steel" sculpture easy and worthwhile.

The industrial first phase of the ride transitions to the second "levee phase" about one-half mile north of a very significant historical site, the Mary Meachum Freedom Trail. At this place on a spring morning in 1855, several African American slaves, assisted by Meachum (the widow of a well-known local black minister), sought their freedom in an attempted crossing to Illinois. Some were wounded but escaped, possibly dying from their injuries later – no one knows for certain. Meachum and the others were severely punished. Today, volunteers from Grace Hill and AmeriCorps, man a rest stop, garden and interpretive center at this spot. If open, it's a good place for a water stop, mechanical assistance, and a chat with the young and generally knowledgeable volunteers. We learned, for example, that the eerie blood-red plume one sees in the water along the shore here is a non-toxic /

non-permanent marker required of a local plant by the EPA.



The 2.5 mile levee phase offers a wide range of experiences. The path here is straight and flat, so your attention can rest with the many steeples and water towers visible to the west or the sycamores and cotton wood

trees that line the majestic river to the east. If you get an early enough start, you're likely to see examples of wild turkeys feeding during the summer and an occasional eagle during the winter. If the river is low, you'll notice expansive sand bars to the east on Mosenthein and Gabaret Islands. An elderly relative tells me that "Mosenthein Beach" was a popular day vacation spot back in her youth.

Continuing north, the levee ends where the path dives under the Alton & St. Louis rail lines and snakes along the Maline Creek tributary, eventually paralleling Riverview Boulevard. There is another well-placed rest stop with a water fountain and shade trees along this stretch. Note the odd column of inverted concrete mixer shells lining the hillside of the old Lafarge Concrete Plant opposite Riverview – a precursor of artist Bob Cassilly's imminent fantasy project, "Cementland."

The home-stretch of the northbound adventure includes a climb through the wooded bluff on the north side of Riverview, above St. Louis' first and largest (Bissell) water treatment plant. The incline offers the best exercise, followed immediately by an exhilarating

continued on page 4

2008's 100 NEEDIEST FAMILY WRAPPING UP - *From the Ashes*

C O N T I N U E D

As always this is an enormous group effort with many volunteers and supporters. The TGHNA Board once again supported the effort by sanctioning the event and with printing costs. Mark Froese makes space in the Gazette and helps to get the word out. Jan Clinite keeps the donations in order and gets the money where it needs to go. As always the biggest help are all the people who donate gifts, gift certificates, or monetary donations.

It seems that the weather conspires against us when it comes to delivering the presents as once again this year we had to contend with snow and ice, but Pauline Ashton and Ann Orcutt not only got everything wrapped beautifully, but also got the gifts to the shelter safely.

Thanks to all who donated and helped make 2008 an amazing year in a difficult time. ☀



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Riding St. Louis' Riverfront Trail



CONTINUED



and well-earned downhill coast! This stretch of urban forest features mature oaks, hickories and sycamores, and it presents an interesting contrast to otherwise open sky riding. There are controlled crossings at both points across Riverview, and these are the only places where you'll need to worry about automobiles.

With so much enjoyable scenery and fascinating history along the way, one really would assume for this trip it's more about the journey than the destination. However, with a terminal feature like that afforded by the views atop the Chain of Rocks Bridge, you'll certainly feel rewarded for all your hard work pedaling. This impressive warren truss, mile-long bridge functioned from 1936 as the historic Route 66 Mississippi River crossing bypass route for more than thirty years. It closed to traffic in 1968 but reopened in 1999 after a four-million dollar renovation

as the world's second longest bicycle / pedestrian span. The views south from the deck are remarkable. My business partner (who has traveled extensively) thought the photo attached to this article was a scene from the St. Lawrence Seaway! On the horizon are the St. Louis and Clayton skylines, in the middle-ground the river forks around Mosenthein Island (thought by some to be the inspiration for Huck and Jim's hideout in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*), and in the foreground are the short rapids that make up the "chain of rocks" and two castle-like intake towers built in 1898 and 1913. One of the treats of riding the trail regularly is that this vista changes with the rise and fall of the river – it's a different painting every week!

If you were not aware of the St. Louis Riverfront Trail, I hope these reflections inspire a visit. If so, consider these further practical recommendations. First, unfortunately the trail did suffer damage during this past summer's flooding. You should call Trailnet (314-416-9930) or visit their website www.trailnet.org to check the status of repairs. Second, though we've never experienced firsthand any problems, the parking lot at the west side of the Chain of Rocks Bridge is notorious for its vulnerability to vandals. We've also seen broken car glass on the ground at the Lenore K. Sullivan / Biddle Street lot. Never leave anything of value in plain sight in your car while you walk or ride the trail. Anita and I also learned the hard lesson (as inexperienced cyclists) that brisk southerly winds that propel one on a bicycle northward tend to conspire against progress and create delays on the return leg! Take plenty of water, curious friends and family (all of our kids have shared the trail with us at least once), a cell phone in case you have mechanical or other trouble, and your spirit of adventure, and you'll likely leave the Riverfront Trail with a renewed appreciation for the history and wonders of this great city. 🍄



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VOLUNTEERISM

another

Jewel in The Crown

that is Tower Grove Heights

BY **JOHN PAPA** **T**he holiday season provides an annual reminder to step back from the daily grind and those things which offer distractions (4th place Cardinals, last place Rams and Blues) and recognize how much others mean to us, and how much others do for us to make our neighborhood better. Extending the holiday season just a bit longer, my article this issue, will focus on the sparkling jewel of volunteerism easily mined in Tower Grove Heights.

We work to support ourselves and our families. We support public institutions and the arts to enjoy peaceful walks in the park or rousing concerts with fireworks. Our community is more vibrant and desirable because of these contributions that certainly provide a return on our investment of time, effort and money. Yet our neighborhood would be deficient in quality and character, were it not for the efforts of those who quietly labor tedious hours, without expectation of compensation or recognition. These are true jewels in the crown that is Tower Grove Heights.

It is believed Nebraska attained statehood before local retiree, Gary Kushinsky, was raised on a farm outside Omaha in the village of Plattsmouth. In that bucolic setting he not only developed a love for horses, but he, regrettably, became devoted to the Nebraska Cornhuskers football team.

After a career manufacturing cabinets and storage units for major telecommunication companies Western Electric, Lucent Technologies and AT&T in Omaha, Gary and his partner of now 14 years, Mark Froese, relocated to St. Louis and the Heights. Since early 2002, they have been very active in the neighborhood, establishing a home on Utah Place, managing a rental unit on McDonald Avenue, and getting involved in community affairs.

It was Mark's job with a paint manufacturer that brought them to St. Louis, and it keeps him very busy at least five days a week. According to reliable reports, Mark's schedule is in stark contrast to Gary's, who reportedly "has more time on his hands than anybody else does." Such available spare time has been a blessing to our neighborhood generally, and the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association in particular.

The quality and utility of the Gazette is a collaboration of the efforts of Gary and Mark. Armed with the tenacity of a bull dog and a sales pitch and voice tone that mimics fingernails on a blackboard, Gary has singlehandedly secured so many advertisers for the Gazette that the publication pays for itself. Mark works on the Gazette layout with the help of his son in Wisconsin.

When the idea of an Autumn Fest was first discussed several years ago, Gary made the visionary suggestion to include a horse drawn carriage as part of the event. Since the inaugural festival, Gary has worked tirelessly to keep this bit of nostalgia as part of the program. The last few years two teams of horses and carriages graced our streets, and last year super salesman Gary convinced two local businesses to sponsor the complimentary rides - a handsome addition to the Autumn Fest bottom line.

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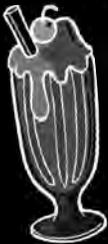
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FOR COFFEE LOVERS

BY
Marilyn
Browning

What's in a name? In this case three women: **Mo** Costello, her sister **Kathy** Carmody, and friend, **Becky** Brown. They started MoKaBe's Coffee House in December of 1992 in Kirkwood, Missouri, serving coffee, hosting musicians and poetry readings, and selling books. By the time the initial lease ran out, they'd come to realize that the coffee house was a great concept, but in the wrong setting. The search was on for new digs in a more urban, diverse location. With only six weeks to decide, Mo and Kathy signed a lease for the property at 3606 Arsenal at Grand. By July of 1994, they had opened their doors to local coffee lovers. The poetry readings and books were gone, but the coffee house now had a small food prep area. With a Panini grille, microwave oven, and toaster, they could offer a limited food menu.

MoKaBe's has evolved over the years, expanding its food and beverage offerings based on suggestions from employees and customers. "If it were up to me, we'd still be offering just two kinds of sandwiches and quesadillas," Mo says, laughing.

One of those menu expansions took place when an employee, Patrice, suggested that they offer a Sunday brunch. The food was prepared off-site and set up by Patrice on the pool table. Patrice has since moved on, and the pool table moved out when the full kitchen was added. Brunch, however, remains a major weekly event, drawing anywhere from 150 to 220 customers, 9am to 1pm on Sundays. Brunch is all-you-can-eat vegetarian fare, but with bacon (Mo-"It doesn't make sense but it works.")

There have been other changes. Becky Brown left some time ago. Twin sister Kathy now has a full-time job as a social worker, but pitches in on Sundays to do the brunch dishes. Other family members are now also part of the team: Mo's two daughters, Kelly and

Reeny, son John, and brother Terry. ("If we had titles, Terry'd be the kitchen boss, but nobody here has a title.") Granddaughter Mariah has been making appearances, almost from birth.

MoKaBe's now includes large smoking and non-smoking areas, a second floor where serious laptop users congregate, and sidewalk seating when the weather is kind. They still host the occasional musician and feature art exhibits that change monthly.

They offer breakfast, lunch, and dinner--vegan, vegetarian, and meat-eater food--and an ever-growing list of hot and cold drinks.

As I'm leaving, Mo makes a gesture that includes the tables; the counter; the staff; a steady stream of visitors; and a couple of family members strolling through. "In case I forgot to mention it," Mo says, "I'm living my dream here."



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RESIDENT PROFILE:

Kurt & Vicky Cummiskey

by
Mike Prejna

In the course of its nearly hundred years, the storefront building at the corner of Connecticut St. and S. Spring Ave., has been, at one time or another, a boarding house, an A&P market and a Baptist church. Stretching across two lots, the venerable two-story brick structure anchors the end of the 3800 block with its distinctive upper window details, eave brackets and asymmetrical-spiked roofline.

Not so long ago the building's unique beauty lay mostly hidden behind haphazard vinyl siding and general disrepair. Fortunately, Tower Grove Heights' residents Kurt and Vicky Cummiskey, who lived just down the block, saw its potential and took up the cause to restore its dignity. The young couple bought the property in 2004 and by late 2006 had finished transforming it into bright, new offices for Kurt's law practice.

"For awhile I ran my law office from my house down the street, meeting clients at the St. Louis Bread Company and doing a lot of stuff by telephone." Kurt explains. The first floor was one huge space the Cummiskeys partitioned into airy rooms and corridors. Now Kurt not only has his own desk in his own office, there's a conference room, kitchen and reception area, as well as offices for three other lawyers, who lease space in the building.

The siding that once covered the floor-to-ceiling storefront windows stretching across the building's façade was peeled away, allowing shade-diffused daylight to flood inside again. Original paintings by local artist Tricia Heleker hang throughout on the crisp, white walls.

While Kurt's law practice keeps him extremely busy, he still managed to get



his hands dirty on this project, doing a lot of the clean-up and grunt work himself. Still, the transformation was slow going. "We moved along at a

continued on next page

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The Cummiskeys

steady pace, but even if you moved fast, it would take awhile to get a building this big straightened out," he confesses.

Kurt first discovered the charms of Tower Grove Heights in the late 1990s, when he was a recent law school graduate living in Columbia. Back then, he'd come to St. Louis to visit a couple of college friends who rented an apartment on Juniata; the Black Thorn Pub at the corner of Wyoming and Spring St. was a frequent destination. Eventually, Kurt relocated to an apartment in St. Louis, and around 2000, decided it was time to buy a house. He knew just where to look.

"This seemed like a place that you could get a nice size house, in a nice neighborhood, for a reasonable price," he explains. He found a little fixer-upper at the west end of Connecticut's 3800 block. "I got lucky when I bought my house; it needed some work and cleaning up, but I was able to do most of the updates."

Not long after moving here, Kurt met Vicky at the wedding of a mutual friend. Nature, as they say, took its course; soon they celebrated their own nuptials and settled into a life together in Tower Grove Heights.

The Cummiskeys look forward to starting a family very soon, but in the meantime they enjoy taking full advantage of city life. One of the things they really like about living in this neighborhood is its close proximity to area restaurants, both on Grand Blvd. and downtown.

"St. Louis is a good food city; there are a lot of restaurants within a relatively small geographic region, so we like to try new or different places," Kurt explains. "Vicky is a big fan of the fried chicken at Hodak's [corner of Gravois and McNair]; let's just say I've gained weight since we got married," he admits with a laugh. To keep battling the bulge, Kurt walks the perimeter of nearby Tower Grove Park several days a week.

They also like to attend the Missouri Botanical Garden's free Wednesday evening concerts in the summer. And when they can take a long enough break from work (Vicky is in sales), they enjoy traveling to cities such as Hong Kong, where Vicky is from, and Chicago.

Since renovating the commercial building, the Cummiskeys have made Kurt's first

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MokaBe's

coffee house

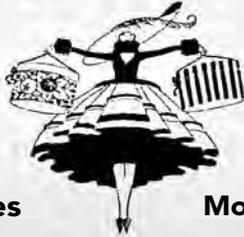
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CONTINUED

Gary has a particular fondness for things Southwest, whether margaritas on a Mexican beach or a plate of pollo at Chimichanga's on Grand. Several years ago he involved a score of neighbors to display a Luminaria on a cold, crisp night before Christmas. He worked for weeks in preparation and then most of a day and night in execution. The result was a remarkable display which illuminated both blocks of Utah Place and seven blocks of Spring Avenue, and which brought many neighbors together to commemorate the meaning of the season.

Any story about local volunteers around the holidays must recognize the annual dedication of Heights resident Ellen Wilson. Ellen is a full time professor at St. Charles Community College, who welcomed a healthy and happy son named West to her home on Juanita this past year.

Ellen moved into the City in 2001, and for the last four years she has been the moving force behind the neighborhood efforts to help families in the 100 Neediest Families program reported in the Post Dispatch. Inspiration came from a co-worker who had spearheaded a drive in her neighborhood. Ellen's many responsibilities at the college and at home with a new baby did not interfere with her drive to help others in need. With the aid of friends and neighbors, especially Pauline Ashton and Anne Orcutt, she organized the task of sponsoring two families during the most hectic time of the year. Distributing flyers to all Heights residences, collecting donations in kind and in cash, braving the stores to purchase necessities personal to the families involved, wrapping scores of gifts and delivering them to very grateful people, she has repeatedly succeeded despite daunting odds, year after year.

Ellen has observed, volunteering is infectious, "The more times we adopt from 100 Neediest Families, the more people have become involved."

Neither Gary nor Ellen have ever asked or expected anything for their admirable efforts. They are the personification of unselfishness, and they deserve their place in the crown we know as Tower Grove Heights. Many thanks to them and to all the volunteers who make this a great place to live. 🌻

REHABBING WITH RICH

A **BIG** **BATHROOM** FOR A **City Boy** BY RICH IEZZI

This is an article about a rehab but also the rehabber. Don Hardin moved into Tower Grove Heights in 1984 and has been an important part of the neighborhood ever since. He was an editor of the Gazette for six years and served as a past President of the TGHTNA. He's been a friend to anyone who's known him and has hosted legendary neighborhood parties featuring his Chateau Blanc (White Castle) appetizers. He also stood in the street with other neighbors comforting my wife Jean many years ago after her cat was killed and drove me to the ER when I was trying to die from pneumonia in 1988. Don lives in the 3800 block of Hartford with his partner Bob.

Don and Bob's first improvement was a new kitchen that added a coveted first floor half bath. Maybe this started the ball rolling on a new second floor bathroom because six months later, the new project was underway.

Don and Bob were thinking big, real big. They wanted a second floor bathroom big enough to contain a Jacuzzi with space left over. Fortunately, when our Tower Groves homes were built, the average family size was almost five requiring at least four bedrooms. With bedrooms to burn, one of them could easily provide the additional bathroom space.

Work was commissioned on the second floor project but there was a tiny problem--Don and Bob couldn't live in the house during the work. Luckily, Bob owned a condo in O'Fallon, Mo. and that became their temporary residence. Don's neighbors worried that Don, a city boy, would be tempted by the song of the county Siren but hoped the long commute would keep him in

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RESIDENT PROFILE:
... continued

The Cummiskeys

house a rental property and moved into a spacious flat close to the law office. While Vicky's job takes her outside the city, Kurt can commute by foot ... a fact he finds not only very convenient, but a sign of what's drawing young families like theirs to the city.

"With the high price of cars and, for awhile there, gas, I think more and more people want to be closer to work, and within walking distance of things like entertainment and shopping. Tower Grove Heights has gotten nicer and continues to be on an upswing."

Kurt and Vicky are doing their part to keep it going that way. They recently purchased and began renovating the little Gustine Market between Juniata and Hartford, and though they're not sure yet what incarnation the old building will take, you can bet the Cummiskeys will make it shine again. 🌸



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Special Events

Monday · Tuesday · Friday: Book Club Nights
Book Clubs may be scheduled during open hours until 9 pm.
Please provide at least one week's notice. Subject to availability.

Monday: SLU Night
SLU students showing ID receive 10% off scoops.
(Applies only to ice cream - may not be applied to specialty cones, smoothies, sundaes, shakes, or other menu or retail items.)

Wednesday: Charitable Events Night
A Charitable Organization-501(3) c may schedule an event for a Wednesday night, 7-10 pm. The organization will receive 20% of CASH sales for the evening. Please arrange at least two weeks in advance.

Thursday: Acoustic Open Mic Night
Come on in with your instrument/musical voice. Acoustic only, please. 7-10 pm. Please arrange at least one week in advance.

Birthday Parties
Birthday Parties can be scheduled any time during the day until 4:30 pm. Up to 10 children or adults. Please arrange at least one week in advance.

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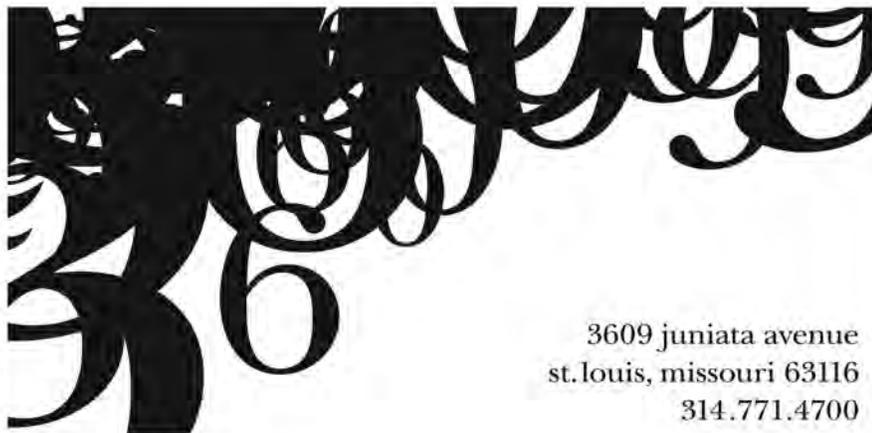
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REHABBING WITH RICH

A **BIG BATHROOM** continued
FOR A **CityBoy** BY RICH IEZZI

their fold. "I lucked out by having good weather and I got used to the 40 minute drive", Don explained, but never considered moving 'out there'.

Don was happy with his contractor. "He said it would take four weeks and that's what it took", beamed Don. When I visited the work site, it seemed like a contradiction. The rest of the house was in a finished state but the bathroom and rear of the house were down to studs and brick. Don told me that at one point you could see into the third floor from the first floor. There was a valiant attempt to keep the rest of the house clean but Don said they still find the dreaded plaster dust on picture frames, etc.

Walking down the finished second floor hall, nothing looks different. The bathroom location is unchanged and I even recognized the old transom. But the door I thought went to the rear bedroom now contained a stacked washer and dryer (not fair!) and the new bathroom comfortably extends back five additional feet. Thinking the rear bedroom was completely erased, I was surprised to see a walk-in closet installed in the left over space.

I'm happy Don got his dream bathroom after 24 years but I'm also selfishly hoping it will keep him on Hartford instead of moving 'out there'. 🍷



Memories of Chain of Rocks Amusement Park



Chain of Rocks Memorabilia: Pennant kocojm, photo credit at flickr.com

South City residents probably don't make it to North County very often, but most long-time St. Louisans are familiar with the Mississippi River's "chain of rocks" and the infamous old Chain of Rocks Bridge, site of a controversial murder case and now a walking park for the fitness minded.

Long before there was a new Chain of Rocks bridge, when the old bridge was the only connection between North County St. Louis and Granite City, Illinois, another monument loomed high in the hills of the park overlooking the river and its "chain of rocks"--the Chain of Rocks Amusement Park, also known as Fun Fair Park and Riverview Park, depending on who you ask.

To access the park, one would have to drive up a dimly-lit winding road, a circuitous route that eventually led to the top of a mountain-

ous hill. Finally, leafy trees and brush would give way to blazing carnival lights, carousel music and a crowd of noisy and uproariously happy children. The world was suddenly transformed into a child's paradise.

During the 1960s, Chain of Rocks Amusement Park was the destination of choice for the traditional school picnic. Every spring, hundreds of students flooded the park to enjoy its array of rides and novelties: a carousel, tilta whirl, fun house and ski lift, for starters. There was something for every age, the boats for youngsters not yet the required 4 feet tall, the "Mad Mouse" roller coaster for adventurous teens, a haunted house for thrill seekers and the ubiquitous cotton candy, elephant ears and caramel corn, enjoyed by children and adults alike.

But the crown jewel of the park was undoubtedly the double ferris wheel. The state-of-the-art ferris wheel towered high above the city, massive double circles of steel emblazoned with flashing yellow and red lights that forever remind me of the care-free days of childhood. Sitting atop the highest point of the park overlooking the river, the ferris wheel allowed magnificent views of the city and a sense of being on top of the world, for those who dared to look, that is.

I was fortunate to enjoy the park's attractions early. My father was a school administrator, so I was an enthusiastic tag along. As my parents were prone to motion sickness and were a requisite for my participation, I was only allowed to enjoy the boat ride and the ferris wheel. I'll never forget the sight of my

continued on page 16

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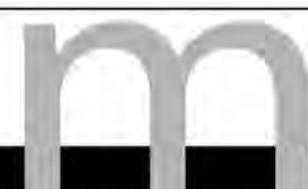
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Memories of Chain of Rocks Amusement Park

- CONTINUED -

father sitting next to me, nervously biting his tongue as we rode the ferris wheel for the first time and it rose to its greatest height. Seeing my big, strong father experience fear created a sense of insecurity in me for the first time. I learned that parents get scared, too. It was terrifying, exhilarating and sombering.

Come summer, after school had closed, the park offered another attraction: an Olympic-sized swimming pool, one of the few public swimming pools open at the time. Here, I learned how to swim, my dad patiently explaining and demonstrating the dog paddle technique. I would repeatedly jump off the diving board, paddling furiously around the pool until the lifeguard admonished me to stop for fear I would become exhausted and drown.

kocojim, photo credit at flickr.com

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By the early 1970s, the park began to succumb to the effects of a changing neighborhood: unsavory characters made it their hangout, and some unfortunate soul was rumored to have been murdered in the funhouse. The swimming pool closed, and the park became a hangout for drug addicts and others up to no good. The park closed its doors in 1977, and the "carnies" as the workers are fondly called, moved on to another park in another town.

Today, houses occupy the space once owned by the park, all traces of its past now erased. But if you happen to be cruising on Riverview Drive late at night and look up at the highest point on the hill, you can almost see the faint outline of a ferris wheel that once stood tall and proud, reminding us of the passage of time, the transitions in life, and bringing us back to small childhood pleasures. ⚙️

FEATURED ADVERTISER

GELATERIA DEL LEONE

THE KING OF ICE CREAMS

BY
Patrick Bost



A small amount of gelato is big on taste as it melts in your mouth, covering many more taste buds and filling your mouth with its delicious flavor. This is why it is served in small bowls with small spoons.

Having already opened a successful gelateria on Washington Ave in 2006, owners Chris and Dana Shearman wanted to bring the gelato/coffee shop experience to the area where they live. South Grand seemed like an ideal location in terms of complimenting the existing businesses and enhancing the offerings to visitors and residents of the area. A sound business plan and a sustainable business would support and further the development of the thriving South Grand Business District, a formula for success. So, the summer of 2007 found them starting the renovations of

continued on page 19

There is something so special about Italian ice cream, or Gelato, that its presentation is as important as its preparation. No waxed paper tubs here. Just gleaming stainless steel trays of carefully placed selections of hand-made gelato displayed in specially made coolers imported from Italy for the very purpose. One taste and you'll understand why gelato reigns over traditional ice creams and custards. It's not only the ingredients, but also the preparation that sets it apart. At Gelateria Del Leone, 3917 S. Grand, the gelato is handmade on location with natural ingredients by Cal, the master Gelateria. Each flavor requires a unique set of ingredients carefully prepared on its way to perfection. One essential difference between gelatos and traditional ice creams is the amount of milk to cream. Here, more milk and less cream, means less fat and therefore more taste. Typical ice creams are made with 12-20% butter fat while gelato contains merely 3-7%. Gelato is whipped less and therefore has little or no air which increases its density. It is also served at 7-10 degrees, not deep frozen to form cement. The result is a taste sensation.

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GELATERIA DEL LEONE

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the former real estate office which occupied the space of the building they acquired at 3197 S. Grand. As with most urban renovations, it was a process of stripping away decades of rehabs in an attempt to restore the space to its original details and charm as much as possible. The original floors have been uncovered and refinished. A magnificent tin ceiling also recovered and restored, as well as light fixtures and wood trimmings throughout create the atmosphere for a casual and comfortable environment for people to hang-out. Majestic terra cotta lion heads frame the exterior of the building and tie the structure to Tower Grove Park and other architecturally significant buildings in the area and so gave inspiration for the name of the gelateria.

This spring look for local musicians entertaining acoustically on Sunday evenings, or enjoy the quiet remove of the back patio with an impressive fountain and lots of seating. The patio is pet-friendly and accessible from both Grand and Wyoming streets.

The shop at 3197 S. Grand is open to everyone if only to sip on one of the espresso coffees while perusing the internet on the free WiFi. You can stay for hours. Bring a group. There is a small lunch menu offered from 11am to 4pm if you happen to have lost time. Experience handmade gelato: Ice cream's refined cousin, at Gelateria Del Leone. Hours are 7am to 11pm, everyday. 🍦



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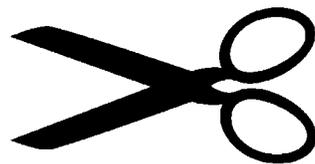
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Area Events & Activities



Friends of Tower Grove Park 2009 Lecture Series:

Feb. 1: Mapping St. Louis in the Era of Henry Shaw By Emily Miller Troxell, Missouri Historical Society;

March 8: The Transformation of the St. Louis Waterfront in the Nineteenth Century By Andrew Hurley, University of Missouri - St. Louis

April 5: Insights into the Inspiration and Poignancy of the Music of the 1840s By Adrianna String Quartet, University of Missouri - St. Louis

All Lectures will be held at the Stupp Center; 3 PM; FREE; For more info call: 314-771-4424.

St. Louis Symphony Chamber Concert Series: February 10 & April 7

Piper Palm House; Doors open at 6:30 PM, concert begins at 7 PM; FREE; Space is limited and no reservations will be taken. Seating is on a first come, first served basis.

Mardi Gras Events:

See www.stlmardigras.org for more info on these and other events. Lumiere Place Grand Parade: Downtown to Soulard, **Feb. 21**; 16th Annual Beggin' Pet Parade: **Feb. 15**

Operation Brightside Project Blitz: April 18

See <http://stlouis.missouri.org/501c/brightside/blitzop.html> for more information.

* * *

If you have events that you would like to see listed here in our Calendar, please submit items to our website at www.TowerGroveHeights.com.

The deadline for submittals for our next (summer) issue is *April 15, 2009*. The Tower Grove Heights Gazette is published quarterly, early in the months of February, May, August, and November.

Monthly Neighborhood Meeting: Meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of every month, with the exception of December. They begin at 7:15 at 3617 Wyoming, in the basement (enter through the door facing the parking lot) of The First Church of Divine Science. Stay to hang out with your neighbors & learn about everything happening in the neighborhood.



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 the neighborhood a more interesting and fun place to live

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