

# Tower Grove Heights Gazette

GRAND TO GUSTINE

ARSENAL TO UTAH PLACE

Volume 25, No. 4

Winter 2014

## Unity

BY  
ELLEN WILSON

Over the past eleven years that we have been participating in the 100 Neediest Cases program we have faced a national financial crisis that has emphasized the need to help those in economic danger. We have stepped up with amazing generosity to help those in need. This year, our city and neighborhood faces a new type of discord that has asked each of us to think about what is important about a neighborhood and how we think about each other. I would ask that regardless of your beliefs on the issues in Ferguson and Shaw that we still continue to help those who are struggling and act as a unified group so that together we can participate in an act of good out of compassion for our fellow humans and take a step forward in a positive direction.

With that in mind, we have selected two families to support this year. Both are south St. Louis City families who have had enormous setbacks due to health issues. Family #1 is a husband and wife with two children. They both work, but the husband was injured on a construction job and now have limited income. The wife has been diagnosed with a lung disease and the children are young. Family #2 is made up of a grandmother with terminal cancer who has little time left and moved in with her daughter who has a disabled son for the remainder of her time.

Both families are doing what they can to care for themselves and their children, but they could use some help. I hope you will join me again in supporting our neighbors. Our goal is to provide a holiday morning gift surprise for the children and help each family with bills and food to try to give them a moment of relief that they can enjoy with their families.

If you would like to join us, 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.** All gifts will be wrapped and distributed to the families. Choose one (or more) of the following:

### Family #1

**Mother (36):** Size: M 7/8; Shoes (8)

**Father (32):** Size: XL; Shoes (10.5)

**Girl (8):** Size: 8/10; Shoes (2);

**Boy (6):** Size: 5/6; Shoes (13-Toddler);

**Special** Baby doll (Baby Alive);

**Requests:** Monster High Girls; Make-up; All sports stuff; Ninja Turtles; bikes for both kids; vacuum cleaner; perfume; cologne; boots for Dad; towels/washcloths; pots and pans; coffee pot

### Family #2

**Grandmother (53):** Size: XL; Coat XXL; Shoes (7.5)

**Mother (34):** Size: XXL; Shoes (7);

**Boy (12):** Size: 10/12; Shoes (5);

**Special Requests:** Board games; Play station games; Marvel superhero DVDs; DVD player; winter outerwear and boots for all; XXL casual outfit for Mother; perfume; underwear/socks for all; Queen and Twin linens; pillows; towels and washcloths; pots and pans (frying pan, especially)

*Both families need the following....*

*continues on page 3.*

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# AUTUMN FEST in the Heights R E P R I S E

by Marilyn Browning

## *Both families need the following:*

**Health Care Items** - Consider: personal hygiene products, home cleaning supplies; a gift certificate to Walgreens or Target...

**Holiday Food Items** - Consider: gift certificate to Schnucks; Shop 'n Save; Aldi...

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

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

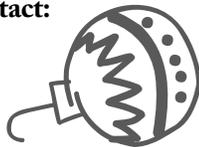
There is always a need for volunteers to help wrap the gifts including providing wrapping materials. If you want to help wrap or just stop by to see the process, contact Ellen.

**Due Date for Donations:** December 19

**Wrapping Party:** December 20 at 10:00 a.m. at Ellen's house

### **Drop Point and Contact:**

Ellen Wilson  
3617 Juniata St.  
314-221-8418



A horse-drawn carriage clip-clopping through the neighborhood, plenty of great food and drinks, and most importantly plenty of friends, both old and new, were features of this year's Autumn Fest on October 11th. David and Kara Bailey even had a big screen projection of the Cardinals game in their back yard! Despite some rainy weather leading up to the event, a dry day for Autumn Fest encouraged a crowd of people to attend a wonderful neighborhood celebration. Who knew that a house that I thought

could comfortably hold only 100 people could in fact hold 160?



Many thanks to a passel of volunteers that helped make this event possible, including our house guests Drew and Judy (little did they know what they were in for!) If you missed this year's Autumn Fest don't forget to mark it on your calendar for October 10th of 2015. Metra Mitchell, our incoming president, will be working with me as Autumn Fest co-chair, and I'm sure she'll do a fabulous job.



*continued on page 15*



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## SANTA'S LIST

Here's what some TGHT's residents  
want for Christmas . . .

CI-3600 Connecticut: A house that doesn't need cleaning

MB-3800 Juniata: Really, really wants a force-field around the vegetable garden that repels all pests.

CJ-3600 Connecticut: Immortality

ST-3800 Juniata: More demolition dumpsters to scrounge through for pine boards and chandeliers

TH-3800 Hartford: Someone to develop 3801 Hartford

CC-3600 Connecticut: Wants to join the 500 (horsepower) club

RI-3800 Hartford: Wants a 30 year olds body (!)

JM-3600 Wyoming: Wants a boss that doesn't text her at 6AM

JH-3800 Humphrey: A cupcake store on Grand!

BR-3600 Connecticut: Thanks, Santa but I've got everything I need

~ Santa

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# Message from the President



As we near the end of 2014, I have begun thinking about the past year. In my first article as president of the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association I talked a lot about building upon the strong sense of community in our neighborhood and using the association as a tool to build relationships and get people to know each other.

Looking back, I think we all have worked to make this happen, and had a lot of fun doing it. We've had many accomplishments in the past year and none of them would have happened without the efforts of the very passionate residents in Tower Grove Heights.

In case you're interested in what has taken place, here's a short list:

- **Large increase in neighborhood association membership**
- **Positive increase in engagement, meeting attendance, and participation**
- **Expanded collaboration with surrounding neighborhoods**
- **Increase in our online presence through growing Facebook community and establishment of a Twitter account**
- **Development of new communication roles**
- **Redesign of our website (towergroveheights.com)**
- **Successful Spring and Fall Clean-Up Events**
- **Seven "Heights Nights" events where we supported nearby businesses and got to know our neighbors**
- **Re-initiation of "Stoop Night" on Thursdays**
- **Founding of the Beer Wagon**
- **New customized street signs**
- **Record-breaking attendance for Autumn Fest**
- **Participation in the first-ever South Grand Fall Fest**
- **Reintroduction of the Block Captain program**
- **Ensuring every block in TGH is represented by a Block Captain**

Behind each of these successes are people who played a key role in making these accomplishments happen.

A special thank you to the following people for their essential efforts in 2014:

## Board Members

- Metra Mitchell Taylor (President-Elect)
- Rick Stein (Treasurer)
- Marilyn Browning (Secretary)
- Tricia Heliker (Membership Secretary)
- Jim Zakibe (Past-President)

## Communications

- Kelly Stout
- Tom Reitenbach
- Beth Rambauch-Phillips
- Debra Knox Deiermann

## Event Planners and Hosts

- Marilyn and Wes Browning
- Anita Barker
- Michael Bierman
- Metra Mitchell Taylor and Nick Taylor
- David and Kara Bailey
- Ellen Wilson

## To the following neighborhood partners, who played a key role in representing our interests, protecting our rights and building our business community:

- Jennifer Florida (former Alderperson)
- Megan-Ellyia Green (current Alderperson)
- Ed Slade (2nd District Police Liaison Officer)
- Rachel Witt (Executive Director, South Grand Community Improvement District)

## And to each of the Block Captains, and so many more who have volunteered their time and efforts.

## Tower Grove Heights Gazette

- Rich Iezzi
- Susan Newsham
- Tricia Heliker
- Metra Mitchell Taylor
- Debra Knox Deiermann
- Marilyn Browning
- Mark Froese

Thanks so much for all of your hard work! None of this would have happened without you and the wonderful people in this neighborhood.

I've never felt so connected to the community I live in. It's a part of me, and something I take great pride in. Thank you all for making this year so much fun! I'm looking forward to what 2015 will bring.

Thanks,  
Mike Newsham  
president@towergroveheights.com

# Tower Grove Heights Welcomes New Parenting Resources Center

By Susan Newsham

Our neighborhood is always changing - it's one of the many reasons that draw residents to this part of St. Louis. The latest change can be seen and heard on the sidewalks and backyards of the Heights - families on a walk with their kids, children congregating in the morning at their bus stop, and the sound of kids playing and laughing.

Just in my five years of living in the Heights, I've noticed an influx of new, young families. You hear news stories all of the time and chatter at the coffee shop about how the City needs to do a better job of showcasing how raising a family here is not only doable, but desirable. And while there is much to be said about the many ways the City can improve, some City dwellers are taking it upon themselves to give people just another reason to stay in the City once they become parents.

Enter Kate Schnetzer and Kathy Loughren. They are the two individuals who recently opened up the newest Tower Grove Heights business (albeit they're more of a service than a business) - Parenting Resources, located at the corner of Spring and Wyoming.

Kate and Kathy also noticed the trend of young people staying in the City to raise their families, but also realized that much of the parenting support was located outside of the City limits. Being City parents and experiencing this first-hand, they decided to fill the need by opening their own support center and found Tower Grove Heights to be the perfect location with such a diverse, progressive, and empowered population of young families.

So, what exactly does this resource center offer? Their goal is to provide engaging, parent-focused education, training, and enrichment



opportunities for families in the St. Louis area. The resource center is a place where mothers, fathers, children, and caregivers can be empowered by a wide array of services and a place where they can find support throughout their journey, from trying to conceive through their years of parenting.

Kate and Kathy have a unique take on their philosophy. "In my own journey in new motherhood, I realized so much was lacking in the way that we as society, that we as healthcare providers, that we as service providers were supporting new parents," said Kate. "I knew that we could create a space that provided evidence-based information for parents that supported many different parenting styles. I knew that we could create a space where parents of all walks of life could come and find connection, no matter their choices or beliefs. I knew that we could create a space where people could build their village, whatever their interests."

To back their philosophy, they offer a range of options for parents including classes with topics that range from Breastfeeding 101 and Newborn Care to Sibling Preparation Classes and Prenatal Yoga. They have a Childbirth Education program called Joyful and Informed Childbirth taught by a 17-year experienced doula, author, and well known community leader in the birth world. They also offer child enrichment and parenting workshops.

Tower Grove Heights is thrilled to welcome a new resource center to our community. They love getting to know their neighbors, so please stop in and say hi. For more information, visit their website at [www.parentingresources.org](http://www.parentingresources.org).

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# Gaeilge san Ardain... Irish in the Heights

by Dennis  
Corcoran

As a child, I thought the Irish language was a quaint way to speak English – you know, “top of the morning to you” *agus mar sin* (like that). It turns out, it is a quaint way to speak English *ach ní Gaeilge é ar fad* (but it isn't Irish at all).

Some time in my teens I realized there was a connection between language and soul, something related to but deeper than that which exists between language and culture. Years later I heard the Irish expression “*tír gan teanga, tír gan anam*” (a country without a language is a country without a soul) and I got it immediately. On a personal level it meant the chain connecting me with *mo mhuintir, mo shinsear*, and “my people” had been broken – our common tie, our language, our soul had been lost. That is when my quest to “re” acquire our common connection began.

Decades have passed and I am still not fluent – not as a native speaker would be. But I was awarded a *fáinne óir*, a gold ring, signifying fluency and a willingness to speak. More moving was the night three years ago when I sat on a New York theatre stage, flanked by two Irish actresses, when an audience member asked if I was fluent. I said “no” but no sooner had I finished the “o” of “no” they each blurted out, almost in unison, “Yes, he is!” I was humbled, embarrassed and proud all at the same time. I guess the truth lies somewhere in between.

This I know: fluency comes of practice, of use. No matter what the skill – piano, banjo, quilting, Russian, running – practice, use, makes us better.

I continue to read, write and translate Irish – all “quiet” skills. Not a sound need be uttered to continue growing in these fluencies. Spoken Irish (conversation) is another matter. In order to speak, one must, well, speak. In order to converse, there must be at least two who are willing and able to speak. And for all of that to feel natural, it would ideally occur in impromptu settings – meetings on the street or in a local shop or park – much like village life *sna Ghaeltachtaí* (in the Irish-speaking areas of Ireland).

To these ends, commencing on March 5, 2015 a beginning conversation Irish class will be on offer in our neighborhood. It will meet on eight consecutive Thursday evenings, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and will be open to all neighborhood residents and friends. The total cost is \$10 which will be used to cover all materials for the class. The pace will be slow enough so all can learn and speak at their own comfort level and fast enough so by the end of the course all will be amazed at the progress made – *bí cinnte de*, be sure of it!

Imagine ... by this time next year, Irish will be a living, spoken language on the streets of our neighborhood, taking its place among the many others which help to give our neighborhood its rich – and prized – diversity.

For more information or to register for class, email me (Dennis Corcoran) at [donncha@swbell.net](mailto:donncha@swbell.net); call me at 314-740-6514; or stop by 3887 Utah Place. *Beidh muid ag labhairt Gaeilge le chéile go luath!* We will be speaking Irish together soon!



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# A Place We Call Home

- Tricia Heliker



Thanks to the vision and outstanding workmanship of the builders in the very early 1900s, Tower Grove Heights has solid and sought after housing stock. And like much of the real estate market, the Heights is experiencing quick sales, sometimes for more than the asking price. According to Beth Braznell, president of St. Louis Association of Realtors, the average number of days on the market in TGH is 34, and average selling price to listing ratio is 98.6 %. I quizzed Beth on what features buyers are searching for when house hunting. No big surprise that tastefully renovated homes far surpasses the fixer-upper or those in need of a gut rehab. The appeal of old world charm enhanced by modern amenities was echoed by a recent buyer, Jenni, as her reason for choosing to purchase a home on Utah Place. So, does that mean buyers want a traditional floor plan, or are they longing for more open living spaces? It seems either/or would not be a deal breaker. When a house speaks to them, they buy. After a five-year search for the right home, a Hartford couple said they knew they had found the right house while waiting for the agent to get the door unlocked. Beth recounted a story of a couple who told her, upfront, they wanted an open floor plan with a dynamite kitchen. They ended up buying a traditional floor plan with a serviceable kitchen. As she framed it, "In the search for the ideal home, people's taste changes."

But it is not all about the housing. Buyers are scoping out the neighborhood. Not only are they checking out the proximity to work, public transit, schools, and recreation, they are also checking out the vibrancy of the neighborhood. They are picking up on the tone and the energy that is exuded by those living there. The exterior maintenance of homes and yards is a gauge of the pride and dedication current owners have for their home and their neighborhood. One new resident said the yard signs expressing sentiments like, seeking justice, showing LGBT pride, and expanding Medicare made her feel like the neighbors shared her values.

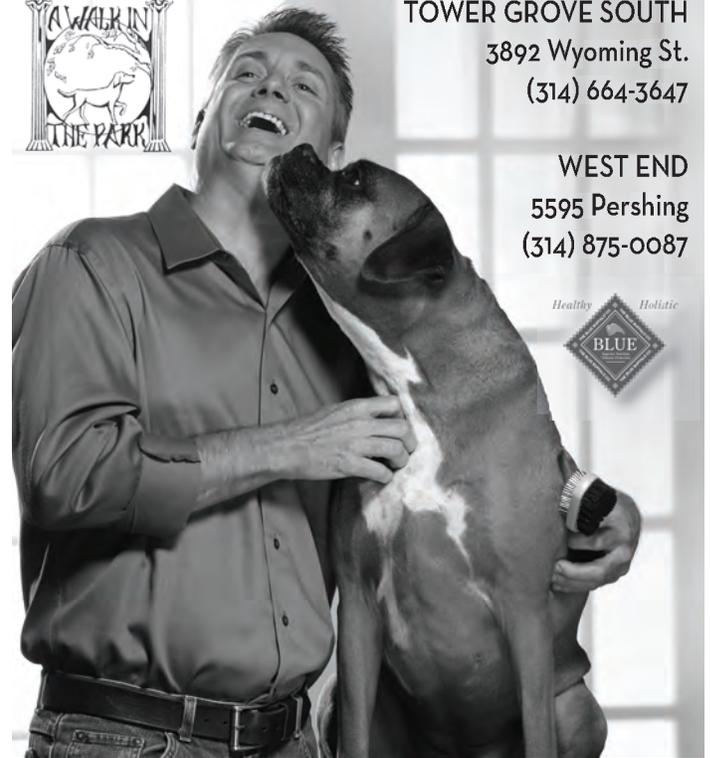
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# A Place We Call Home

*continued from page 9*

Something else mentioned by those interviewed was “walkability.” Coming from Manhattan, Mindy and Matt were looking for an urban lifestyle in St. Louis. To them that meant, “being able to do all daily errands on foot or by public transportation.” Walkability was about buying in the neighborhood with the maximum number of businesses a person could get to on foot. They wanted to duplicate as closely as possible NYC’s options with restaurants, boutiques, shops and services. To them, Tower Grove Heights offered those options. Realtors confirmed that walkability and bikeability are cited often by potential buyers. A by-product of all this walking is that it puts people on the streets and provides opportunities for getting to know others in the neighborhood. Jenni mentioned that, for her, seeing people out and about raised her sense of security and safety in the neighborhood and confirmed that she had made the right decision to buy in Tower Grove Heights.

A friendly atmosphere prevails in Tower Grove Heights. Total strangers, walking their dogs or strolling their kids, strike up conversations with homeowners raking their leaves. Often names are not even exchanged. It’s just a friendly reaching out from one neighbor to another. Emily happened onto a Hartford block party when, a week prior to moving into her recently purchased home, she dropped off a few things at her new home. “I was absolutely blown away by the open, friendly attitudes of our new neighbors. I think we’ve made more connections in our new neighborhood than we have in five years at our current house.” She called Tower Grove Heights “a small town and a big city all in one.” A similar phrase was used to describe the Heights in promotional brochures over 25 years ago. It’s great to know that the values promoted at the inception of the TGH Neighborhood Association are obvious to new buyers today.

I posed this question to several recent buyers in this neighborhood: “Is there something you discovered after moving here that confirmed you made the right decision?” Sherry, a mother of four boys, was surprised to find there were so many families with young children living on her street. Oh, and she added, “...that Gustine Market has such a great beer selection!” Metra and Nick discovered a time capsule, left by the previous owners, describing how much the former owners loved the neighborhood. What drew longtime residents to TGH years ago and what is drawing new buyers now might vary, but what stays the same is that it’s a very good place to call home.




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# A Grand Opening

**Metra Mitchell Taylor** It was no secret - I had been antsy anticipating the opening of Rooster South Grand. Each and every time I walked by the building, I would catch myself staring inside to gauge when the official opening would occur. When the landscaping began, I knew the opening was right around the corner. It surely was exciting when I received an invite requesting our attendance to the soft opening along with the Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood from the Baileys! I eagerly RSVP'd and attended the Rooster South Grand preview along with friends and neighbors.

The staff was quick to welcome everyone inside the large, brightly-lit space. Our server, Jessica Fields, was just splendid. Her admiration for her employer was obvious as I asked her questions about her new position. "At orientation, I was speaking with David Bailey and thought he was just one of the new employees like me - then I realized he was the owner!" Her upbeat energy, intense dark-red hair, and love for the menu won my heart. Another employee, Matthew Kanne, was all smiles and remarked, "It is wonderful to live and work in the same area." The teamwork was also evident at the busy opening as servers assisted each other as well as their patrons.

The second location of Dave Bailey's restaurant offers the same morning and lunch time bites as its counterpart downtown, but the new Rooster possesses more space and serves dinner. The massive 225-seat interior features two 40-foot community tables that extend the length of the dining room, floor-to-ceiling glass windows and boasts the biggest television screen on South Grand. Potentially, my favorite part of the décor was the art on the walls. Artwork by elementary school-age kids displays their interpretation of a rooster and the results are surprisingly contemporary! These quirky black-and-white portraits were painted by 4th grade art students at Ralph M. Captain Elementary School in Clayton. Their art teacher is Maryellen Picker, mother of Dave Bailey's spouse, Kara Bailey. The bold line variation creates dynamic movement in the forms and variety of shape makes each portrait unique.

After gawking over the space, conversing with employees and neighbors alike and taking endless amount of pictures - I finally ordered! A Goat Cheese, Mushroom, Basil, Oven-dried Tomato Crepe was my final selection. As a vegetarian of 15 years, I decided to add-in MATCH meat, a premium vegan meat alternative, to get my daily-dose of protein. Compared to livestock, poultry, and fish, MATCH requires far fewer environmental resources and is incredibly flavorful. Many of the meat items on the menu can be substituted with MATCH meat. In fact, according to Rooster, up to 75% of the items on the menu are created gluten-free and/or vegan!



Photographs taken during the soft opening of Rooster South Grand.

Everyone loves to see creative brunch cocktails on a menu. The "Pink Paloma" combines hibiscus-infused reposado tequila with fresh grapefruit and lime juices and organic agave syrup. The "Green with Envy" features green tea-infused vodka and apple, cucumber, lime and pineapple juices blended with spinach, mint and cilantro. Rooster's "Bloody Caesar" is a version of the classic Bloody Mary with its combination of pickle juice, clam juice and pink peppercorns. Those who are already acquainted with Rooster's brunch offerings from the downtown location will find old favorites like the kind that have earned the restaurant awards for Best Sunday Brunch, Best Bloody Mary, and Best Breakfast in RFT's Best of St Louis issues over the years.

Recently, neighbors made a concerted effort to support businesses on Grand and our group gathered at Rooster for dinner. I ordered a salad which was incredibly fancy for the house salad - mixed greens, frisée, lemon goat cheese, walnuts, granny smith apple (my first of the

*continued on page 15*



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# International Institute Moves

by Marilyn Browning

Ever since St. Elizabeth Academy at 3401 Arsenal closed their doors in 2013, there was a lot of speculation about who might buy the five building complex, and what they might do with it. That speculation ended in June of 2014, when the International Institute of St. Louis, currently located at 3654 S. Grand, closed on the purchase of the former academy and developed plans to renovate the buildings. So when the Institute will move, and what changes we'll see, were the new questions everyone asked.

To answer those questions, I spoke with Kate Howell, Vice President of Development and Communication at the International Institute. Kate started by giving me a little background on the Institute, which started as a tiny operation over a St. Louis bar in 1919 to assist in the resettlement of refugees from World War I. The Institute has been part of the resettlement and integration of nearly every new immigrant population in St. Louis since then, and now those immigrants and refugees come from every corner of the globe.

The Institute's move to St. Elizabeth Academy, like other moves they've made, was prompted by an increase in the population they serve, in the services they offer, and in the staff necessary to serve them. At their current South Grand location, the International Institute serves 7,500 immigrants and refugees a year, up (way up!) from the 3,500 a year they served when they first moved there in 1999. They offer everything from classes in English, computers, and citizenship; to job training and placement; to lending for housing, cars, and small business start-ups.

Before the Institute can move into the St. Elizabeth Academy buildings, they must finish some much-needed renovations. Every problem unearthed has represented a set-back in the

timetable for completion and an uptick in the cost. Everything has to be brought up to code: plumbing, electrical wiring, wheelchair access, and fire escapes, to name a few. Not surprisingly, the former girls' academy had plenty of restrooms for ladies, but one lone, very small, and out-of-the-way restroom labeled "Boys." The plan is that about 75 percent of the complex will be renovated before their move in January of 2015, with further renovation possible as money allows.

What changes will we see after the move? With five connected buildings and 131,000 square feet of total space, the Institute can finally have dedicated classrooms, so instead of sharing space with several classes, visual displays and equipment will have a permanent home. Postage-stamp-sized offices for staff will be replaced by larger and more functional spaces. Events that formerly took place in rented spaces in the neighborhood will be right on the premises, in the former gymnasium and cafeteria.

The former home economics space, with its modern kitchen equipment, will be ideal for orienting new immigrants to the use and care of American appliances, a far more efficient approach than the current in-home orientation. The sewing machines will be perfect for the sewing classes currently offered as part of the job training program.

Better accessibility will be another plus, since the new location is closer to the interstate and to major street intersections. As a bonus, there are 100 parking spaces on site.

Plenty of other ideas for using the buildings have been tossed around, Kate tells me, but will have to wait on more money. Wending our way back to the elevator through the narrow hallways lit by fluorescent tubes, however, another benefit of the new location occurs to her.

"Windows," she says, smiling. "Lots of windows."

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# The Real Deal on Humphrey Street

By Rich Iezzi

I've been looking forward to doing an article on 3804 Humphrey because I saw the building in its former life. I tried to buy it a couple of years ago but the owner turned down my offer. Susie Gudermuth suggested I get Berto Garcia involved and the Garcias eventually acquired the building. The Garcia crews have re-done 11 buildings in our area in the last 2 ½ years.

When I originally looked at the place, it had been untouched from 1908 when it was built. Sometimes that's a good thing – but not here. The original furnace boilers were still in service, making them four years older than the ones on the Titanic. All water supply lines were lead and the electric meters were still in their original meter box location inside the basement.

Looking at the finished product, I was amazed at the size of the building and the open spaces. The former 2-family flat was converted to a single home and all the clutter was removed. As soon as the front door is opened, you can see all the way to the rear of the house and it's a l-o-n-g way. At 2,700 square feet, there are lots of bonus rooms and surprises but the most impressive was the kitchen area, encompassing the entire rear of the building. Luckily, the original kitchen and rear bedroom were enormous so no other rooms were compromised to create the large space. I told Berto the area was big enough for Frisbee (tennis?). One of the bonus areas I liked was the coat rack room off the rear of the kitchen where the old back stairs used



to be. It's all part of the original footprint, even down to the basement.

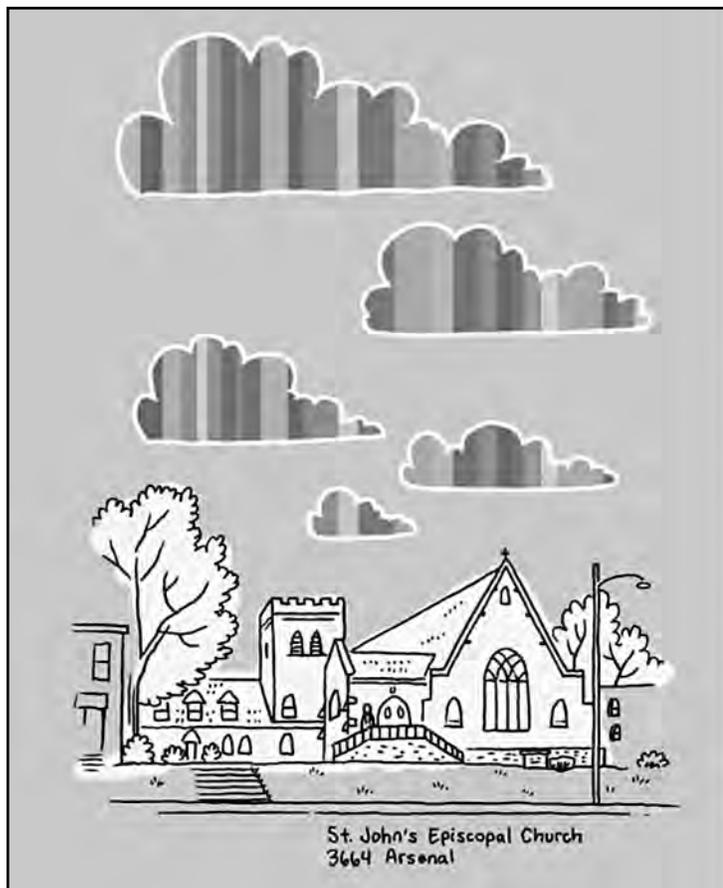
I loved the wood floors and asked Berto if they were the real deal. He confirmed, "Oh, they're the real deal. New three-quarter inch oak – sanded, stained and finished." There are other 'real deal' perks including full baseboard and cap throughout the house along with woodwork milled to match the original profile. Even the basement walls were meticulously brought up to speed.

As far as reusing materials from the building's former life, Berto pointed to the little portico staircase area on the second floor. "All we had to do was put a new cap on the newel post." The original windows were all saved including the Jefferson window to the second floor porch. I remarked that someone might have to show people how to use the Jefferson window but Berto replied, "People may not know or care how to use it but we had to save it because we liked it."

There was a lot of that sort of thinking involved. The front of the house has a Mansard roof with a '3rd floor' area you can access and walk around a bit but not much else. So I was surprised to see a disappearing staircase leading to the Mansard area and even more surprised to see the area completely dry walled and finished.

"We just couldn't leave it alone," explained Berto, and it's another unexpected surprise space with arched windows providing an excellent view.

Berto said the house was an enormous project but he and his crew enjoyed working on it. When I said I couldn't find a square inch of the property that hadn't been touched, Berto corrected me with, "We didn't touch the apple tree out back. We ate off that all summer"



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# AUTUMN FEST *in the Heights* R E P R I S E

MANY THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING RESTAURANTS FOR THEIR GENEROUS DONATIONS:

- Baida Restaurant
- Café Mochi
- Café Natasha
- Chimichanga Mexican Restaurant
- Hartford Coffee Company
- Hodak's
- Jimmy John's
- King and I Restaurant
- Mokabe's Coffee House
- Rooster
- The Vine

AND TO THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIRS:

- Judy Brady & Drew Browning
- Wes Browning
- Pat Edwards
- Kent Householder
- Metra Mitchell & Nick Taylor
- Mike Newsham
- John Papa
- Jim Zakibe

*In case you missed them, check out a few photos of the event on page 3!*

## A Grand Opening

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

season!), and an apple cider vinaigrette. Of course, I was thrilled to see my all-time favorite cocktail, French 75 offered in a lovely Champagne flute. For meat-eaters, Missouri grass-fed steak tartare as a starter might appeal, while a dozen entrees ranging from fried chicken to monkfish stew and a ground-beef burger are also options. The dinner menu has been described by Bailey on social media as "country French with a South City influence."

With unity and creativity, Rooster reflects the many diverse aspects of our neighborhood. The architecture merges the historical with the contemporary, the space has the ability to be open or intimate, and the menu ranges from daytime to evening selections. Balancing a little something for everyone, the new Rooster opening was GRAND!

## REAL ESTATE NEWS for Tower Grove Heights

Tower Grove Heights sold fewer houses this period (April 11 - October 24) in 2014 than we did in 2013 but for more money!

Total of 15 single family homes and multi-family properties in 2014 for average value of \$265,000 compared to 24 singles and multi homes in 2013 with an average cost of \$244,000. Wait and see how we did for the year in the Spring issue of the Gazette or call me for details.

Note, too, interest rates are still low on 30 year and 15 year fixed mortgages, dropping more in the last few weeks. No I am not dreaming!

*Send me a real estate question and answer may appear in the next issue of the Gazette.*

**DeborahErvin@att.net**

## 2014 Single Family Homes Sold in Tower Grove Heights

April 11 –  
October 24  
2014

Sold Date	Type	Price	Address	Beds/Baths	Days
10-20-14	Single	\$84,000	3841 Humphrey		1
08-26-14	Single	\$162,500	3826 Hartford	4/2	77
09-12-14	Single	\$193,000	3875 Wyoming	3/2	21
08-15-14	Single	\$206,500	3727 Hartford	3/1	12
10-02-14	Single	\$260,000	3654 Juniata	4/4	11
10-02-14	Single	\$275,000	3833 Hartford	5/3	27
08-28-14	Single	\$280,000	3646 Hartford	5/3	32
09-24-14	Single	\$289,000	3641 Juniata	3/3	47
08-13-14	Single	\$345,000	3652 Hartford	3/4	12
08-29-14	Single	\$357,000	3893 Utah	3/3	6
07-24-14	Single	\$370,000	3802 Juniata	5/4	26
10-17-14	Multi-family	\$182,000	3634 Wyoming		6
10-08-14	Multi-family	\$211,000	3841 Utah		4
10-23-14	Multi-family	\$251,000	3633-35 Connecticut		20
08-01-14	Multi-family	\$268,000	3634 Arsenal		72

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WIND BROTHERS REALTY

# John Karel, Tower Grove Park Director, Retires BY RICH IEZZI

**J**ohn Karel came to Tower Grove Park in October, 1987, after working as a consultant for the Missouri State Department of Natural Resources. At the time, Tower Grove Park in no way resembled what we see today. “When realtors showed houses on Arsenal and Magnolia, they downplayed the idea of living next to Tower Grove Park,” John revealed. People looked at the park as unsafe and unmaintained. Fewer than 500,000 people visited Tower Grove Park in 1987.

So what would attract a future director to the park in its then-deplorable condition? John explained, “I was struck by the beauty and integrity of Tower Grove Park. It was all still there.” Interestingly, the surrounding neighborhoods and South Grand Business District were also about to wake up after a long sleep.

But Tower Grove Park had some real problems. Along with its negative perception, the park didn’t even have working street lights and was completely darkened. Nighttime drivers approaching the park from Spring or Gustine must have thought they were headed into outer space.

John conceded that the lights were a problem but nowhere near the calamity that almost occurred in the 1960s. “We came extremely close to having a four-lane highway cut through Tower Grove Park to extend Morgan Ford.” OMG.

In the early days it was all about restoring the park’s image and tamping down safety concerns. A constituency of supporters was formed to work with the park, provide funding for projects and increase awareness. Out of that early network came the idea for “Friends of Tower Grove Park” in 1989. I laughed when John explained an early attempt at fundraising. “We needed \$10,000 that we didn’t have and Southwest Bank pledged \$5,000 if we could find a way to raise the rest.” “Five thousand

dollars?” I asked. “It was a lot of money to raise at the time,” confirmed John.

To my question, “Was it fun in the early days?” John’s answer mirrored what early Tower Grove Heights residents were experiencing at the time. “Back then, we went to bed at night wondering if we would succeed,” John confessed, and that was the same question area residents were asking about their neighborhoods.

A lot of us remember the setbacks to Tower Grove Park with the 2006 ‘reverse wind storm,’ the 2007 ice storm and the drought in 2012. I found it interesting that each of these was viewed as an opportunity to improve things. “After the 2006 storm we were declared a National Disaster Area and FEMA pumped in a ton of money enabling us to clean things up. The park had become overgrown and the storms provided the tough love that we needed at the time,” explained John.

Looking at the park today, it’s hard to imagine when it wasn’t spectacular. Tower Grove Park now draws over 2 ½ million visitors a year and landlords advertise their apartments as being “close to the park” – even when they’re two miles away.

John Karel may be retiring but his commitment to Tower Grove Park remains resolute. As I was leaving his park office, he showed me a large wall map of our area. “All these neighborhoods are still here and were built with the knowledge that they’d be in walking distance to Tower Grove Park.”

Thankfully, with the help of Park Director John Karel and others doing the heavy lifting, being close to the park is a good thing. Thanks, John, for 25 years of dedicated service to Tower Grove Park. We’ll miss you, but retire in peace.

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- ✓ 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: \_\_\_\_\_**

<p>_____ INDIVIDUAL (1 vote) \$10/year</p> <p>_____ HOUSEHOLD (2 votes) \$15/year</p> <p>_____ ASSOCIATE (non-voting) \$10/year</p> <p>_____ LIFETIME (1 vote) \$100 single payment</p> <p>_____ BUSINESS (1 vote) \$25 /year <small>(entitles member to a 10% discount on TGHNA Gazette Ads for one year)</small></p>	<p><i>Include my name, address and contact information in the TGHNA Buzz Book. . .</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ Yes _____ No</p> <p><i>Please add my email address to the Neighborhood Forum Email notification list. . .</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ Yes _____ No</p>
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