

THE TALL TALE OF ST. LOUIS

(THE HISTORY OF THE ST. LOUIS TIP TOPPERS)

The concept of a tall club was developed by a taller-than-average Southern California gal named Kae Sumner, who ironically was the artist who drew the Seven Dwarves for Walt Disney Studios. In 1938, Kae approached a Los Angeles Times columnist with an idea for an article about the problems associated with being tall. In the context of the article, Kae invited other tall folks to contact her to discuss the problems that faced their small percentage of society.

On May 1, 1938, the first meeting of the first tall club ever known to exist was held in Kae's home. This group became known as the California Tip Toppers, and their first tall awareness success story was the development of the king sized bed.

Publicity was no stranger to this organization. As the club grew, its existence became known throughout the U.S., and in February 1941, Arthur Miller caught the "Tall Club" fever and founded the St. Louis Tip Toppers. The first meeting was held at the home of Frances Smentowski and was attended by six tall folks interested in forming a tall club. Ads were run in many neighborhood newspapers and by their second meeting, they had a total of **nineteen charter members**:

Jack Battles, 6' 9-1/2"	Hildegard Richter, 6' 1/4"
Lillian Betz, 6' 0"	Frances (Smentowski) Blase, 6' 0"
Leonard Cole, 6' 4"	Dalton Trout, 6' 6-3/8"
Mary Catherine (Kunkel) Deuthmann, 6' 1/2"	Al Tyrey, 6' 4-1/4"
Marie (Kobermann) Hahn, 6' 1/2"	Rosemary (Boedeker) Tyrey, 6' 0"
Bernard Harte, 6' 6"	Francis Weiss, 6' 4-3/4"
Robert Heinson, 6' 5-3/4"	Lois (Bryan) Weiss, 6' 1/4"
Mildred Jedick, 6' 1/4"	Marguerite Wenck, 6' 1/2"
Art Kaune, 6' 6-3/4"	Doris (Hill) Wilson, 6' 0"
Arthur Miller, 6' 7"	

As the St. Louis Tip Toppers grew older and stronger, several notable events took place. They began producing a Club newsletter entitled "Tips On Toppers," which remains the title of the newsletter today. The Club chose **gold and black** as the official colors and "**Stardust**" as the official song. The first marriage between two members was on April 25, 1942, between Fran Weiss and Lois Bryan. Since this date, hundreds of marriages have taken place among St. Louis members. Our club's T-shirt slogan, "**Kiss Someone TALL, It's Worth the Climb**", was designed by Mark Rethemeyer in 1980, and is the best selling T-shirt in our club's history, as well as being one of the most widely recognized T-shirts in Tall Clubs International (TCI) today.

In July 1947, the St. Louis Tip Toppers attended the first National Convention of Tall Clubs. It was at this convention that the American Affiliation of Tall Clubs (AATC) was formed, with the St. Louis Tip Toppers as one of the organization's 15 charter members. In 1966, the AATC voted to change its name to Tall Clubs International (TCI), which is the name of the organization today.

During the years 1941-2001, the St. Louis Tip Toppers have held eleven national offices, sponsored three national conventions and our individual members have won a total of 45 national awards!

The St. Louis Tip Toppers held the following AATC/TCI offices:

1952 Executive Committee

Term of office: September 1951 - August 1952

Marie (Kobermann) Hahn/Jeanette Stratton	President
Joan Siemer/Irene Kunnemann	Vice President
Evelyn (Scott) Harding	Corresponding Secretary
Joan Siemer	Recording Secretary
Jeanette Stratton/Geraldine Sudholt	Finance Officer

Alternate Executive Club

1982	Ruth (Hermann) Urbantke	President
1983	Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer	President
1985	Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer	President
1987	Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer	President
1988	Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer	President
1994	Nancy Whitener	President
1995	Nancy Whitener	President
1998	Nancy Whitener	President
1999	Nancy Whitener	President

1989 Executive Board

Term of office: September 1989 - August 1990

Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer	President
Mark Rethemeyer	Vice President, Membership
Rita Maddock	Vice President, Publicity
Ruth (Hermann) Urbantke	Finance Officer
Nancy Whitener	Miss Tall International® Coordinator
Paul Herche	Foreign Correspondent
Susan (Chase) Ivey	Secretary
Dan O'Neal	Editor

In addition to holding an annual "weekend" celebration with party themes ranging from "Discover America St. Louis Style" to "Send In the Clowns" and "Saturday Night Live," **the St. Louis Tip Toppers have sponsored the following AATC/TCI Conventions:**

1951 Convention: "St. Louis for Fun In '51"

Held at the Statler Hotel in St. Louis, MO, the convention took place July 12-15 with approximately 300 people in attendance. Marie (Kobermann) Hahn chaired this convention.

1973 Convention: "St. Louis Spree In '73"

Held at the Marriott Hotel in St. Louis, MO, the convention took place July 9-14 with approximately 200 people in attendance. Don Harris chaired this convention.

1986 Convention: "Missouri Magic"

Held at the Henry VIII Inn and Lodge in St. Louis, MO, the convention took place July 4-13 with 408 full and part-time attendees. Mark Rethemeyer chaired this convention.

At these and other conventions over the years, the St. Louis Tip Toppers have been proud to accept several awards and distinctions. At the national Queen's Pageant, the following St. Louis Tip Toppers queens were named **Miss Congeniality:**

- 1975 Terri (Tarr) Schweitzer, 6' 0"
- 1976 Ruth (Ruxlow) Green, 5' 11-1/2"
- 1981 Suzette (Rust) Allinger, 6' 0"
- 1985 Nancy Whitener, 6' 1-1/4"
- 1995 Edy (Little) Puers, 5'10-1/2"

Also at the national Queen's Pageant, the following St. Louis Tip Toppers Queens advanced to the "**top five**" of the competition:

1948 Mary Ellen (Kurland) Schroeder, 6' 0" 2nd Runner Up
1951 Claire (Froehlich) Purdy, 6' 0" 4th Runner Up
1952 Rose Marie Kellenberger, 6' 0" 3rd Runner Up
1968 Chris Finlay, 5' 11-1/2" 1st Runner Up
1973 Mary Lou (Lawler) Farrow, 5' 11" 1st Runner Up
1981 Suzette (Rust) Allinger, 6' 0" 3rd Runner Up
1983 Mariellen (Parker) Jacob, 6' 1/2" 2nd Runner Up
1990 Roberta (Holler) Mueller, 6' 1-1/2" Miss Tall International®
1992 Margaret (Ryan) DeBonis, 5' 10" 2nd Runner Up
1993 Carolyn (Ponciroli) Wolf, 5' 11-1/4" 2nd Runner Up
1995 Edy (Little) Puers, 5' 10-1/2" 1st Runner Up
1997 Jaynie (Cheney) Tatro, 5' 11-1/2" 1st Runner Up
1998 Laura Shaw, 6' 2" 3rd Runner Up
2004 Bethany Boogerd, 6' 1" 1st Runner Up

The St. Louis Tip Toppers received the following club convention awards:

1985 Publicity Award, Rita Maddock
1986 TCI Volleyball Champions: Mark Rethemeyer, Co- Captain; Ken Koehn, Co-Captain; Paul Fichtinger; Rick Gillette; Eric Hamilton; Ruth (Hermann) Urbantke; Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer; Nancy Whitener
1987 Publicity Award, Rita Maddock
1988 Publicity Award, Rita Maddock
1990 Publicity Award, Roy Ivey
1994 Publicity Award, Kathy (Montgomery) Woltman
1998 Publicity Award, Don Schuh
1999 Publicity Award, Sue (Stewart) Schutz

Individual members of the St. Louis Tip Toppers received the following Tall Clubs International awards:

1986 TCI Man of the Year: Mark Rethemeyer

Mark has the double honor of being the first St. Louisian to receive this award as well as, to date, being the youngest TCI recipient.

1988 TCI Woman of the Year: Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer

Debbie has the double honor of being the first St. Louisian to receive this award as well as, to date, being the youngest TCI recipient.

1989 TCI Woman of the Year: Rita Maddock

Rita has the honor of being the second St. Louisian to receive this award.

1994 TCI Man of the Year: John Ott

John has the honor of being the second St. Louisian to receive this award.

1987 TCI Certificate of Recognition: Rita Maddock

Rita received this award in recognition of her contribution to publicity as it pertained to advertising the TCI toll-free number.

1993 TCI Special Merit Award: Pat (Hofer) Ott

Pat was presented this honor for her many years of outstanding server as the official Miss Tall International® travel agent.

2000 TCI Woman Of The Year*: Nancy Whitener

Nancy has the honor of being the third St. Louisan to receive this award.

2011 TCI Woman Of The Year*: Roberta Mueller

Roberta has the honor of being the fourth St. Louisan to receive this award.

***Award renamed "Kae Sumner Einfeldt Lifetime Achievement Award" in July 1997**

TCI Merit Awards:

1974 Don Harris	1990 Rebecca (Grups) Pelton
1974 Kathy (Fogler) Sorrell	1991 Patricia Hughes
1976 Ken Koehn	1991 Roberta (Holler) Mueller
1978 Vern Sandeen	1992 Roy Ivey
1979 Rita Maddock	1992 Margaret (Ryan) DeBonis
1980 Mark Rethemeyer	1996 Kathy (Montgomery) Woltman
1981 Ruth (Hermann) Urbantke	1997 Leigh (Spanberger) Schuh
1982 Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer	1997 Sue (Stewart) Schutz
1984 Dan O'Neal	1998 Carl Eisterhold
1984 Kelly (Fett) Smith	1998 Dean Braun
1985 Jill (Emmons) Gansmann	1999 Laura Shaw
1985 John Ott	2000 Roberta (Holler) Mueller
1986 Rita Maddock	2001 P.J. Link
1986 Nancy Whitener	2002 Geralyn (Tonnie) Oldham
1987 Bill Hansen	2002 Liz Danter
1988 Susan (Chase) Ivey	2010 Leigh (Spanberger) Schuh
1988 Patricia (Hofer) Ott	2010 Steve Lubbes

TCI Scholarship Winners:

These bright young students were not members at the time of their TCI Scholarship awards, but we look forward to welcoming them into the Tip Toppers when they meet the age requirements!

1994	John K. Tsai, 6'4"	Parkway Central High School Northwest University Honors Program for Medical Education
2001	Nick Werner, 6'4"	Oakville High School University of Notre Dame (Aerospace Engineering)
2002	Andrew W. Rhodes, 6'4"	Lindbergh High School University of Missouri-Columbia (Engineering undergraduate; law graduate)

* Secondary scholarship awarded in 2002 with funds donated by Fred Heater in memory of his spouse, Sharon Heater.

The St. Louis Tip Toppers have received the following Proclamations over the years:

April 7, 1984	Tall Day, St. Louis City and County
July 4-13, 1986	Tall Awareness Days, St. Louis City and County
July 6-13, 1986	Tall Awareness Week in the State of Missouri
May 13-15, 1988	Tall Awareness Days, St. Louis City and County
May 5-7, 1989	Tall Awareness Days, St. Louis City and County
May 4-6, 1990	Tall Awareness Days, St. Louis County
May 5, 1990	Miss Tall International® Day, St. Louis County
February 1991	Tall Awareness Month in the State of Missouri
February 23, 1991	Letter of congratulation from President George H.W. Bush on our 50th Anniversary celebration
May 1991	Tall Awareness Month, St. Louis County
May 4, 1991	Miss Tall International® Day, St. Louis County
February 24, 2001	St. Louis Tip Toppers Day, City of St. Louis
February 18-24, 2001	Tall Awareness Week, St. Louis County

The St. Louis Tip Toppers created an **"Outstanding New Member"** award in 1992 to recognize new members who go beyond the call of duty to make a difference:

1992 Sue (Stewart) Schutz
1993 Dan Ververloh, Jr.
1994 Carmen & Steve Compas
1995 Dean Braun
1996 Jaynie (Cheney) Tatro
1998 Deb Neubauer
2001 Simone Williams

The St. Louis Tip Toppers amended the Constitution and Bylaws to include an **"Outstanding Member"** award in 2001 to recognize members in good standing for over 18 months who go beyond the call of duty to make a difference:

2001 Rich Raiskin
2003 Monica Vogel

The members of the St. Louis Tip Toppers, past and present, are very proud of those persons who have won national acclaim. They are also proud of those persons who have stepped in and have volunteered their time, energy and creativity to this organization. In particular, we would like to say a special thank you to the following **club presidents:**

1941 Arthur Miller	1979 Vern Sandeen
1942 Bernard Kramer	1980 Mark Rethemeyer
1943 John Rohde	1981 Mark Rethemeyer
1944 Rosemary (Buffa) Birner	1982 Ruth (Hermann) Urbantke
1945 John Roberts	1983 Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer
1946 Jeanette Stratton	1984 Dan O'Neal
1947 Bill Randolph	1985 Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer
1948 Arthur Miller	1986 Jill (Emmons) Gansmann
1949 Hermann Siener	1987 Nancy Whitener
1950 Ed Bolte	1988 John Ott
1951 Bill Kaintz	1989 Nancy Whitener
1952 John Combest	1990 Dan O'Neal
1953 Fran Weiss	1991 Nancy Whitener
1954 Norval Harding	1992 Jerry DeBonis
1955 George Barton	1993 Nancy Whitener
1956 Rosalie (Droppelman) Heuing	1994 Leigh (Spanberger) Schuh
1957 Roy Gleiforst	1995 Nancy Whitener
1958 Jim Nation	1996 Sue (Stewart) Schutz
1959 Bill Ahrens	1997 Steve Compas
1960 Bob Johnson	1998 Nancy Whitener
1961 Leo Parker	1999 Dean Braun
1962 Dick Macy	2000 Liz Danter
1963 Joe Yokly	2001 Liz Danter
1964 George Zonnis	2002 Jerry DeBonis
1965 Vern Sandeen	2003 Jerry DeBonis
1966 Vern Sandeen	2004 Nancy Whitener
1967 Fred Burk	2005 Steve Lubbes
1968 John Gay	2006 Rich Raiskin
1969 John Gay	2007 Colette Deeb
1970 Fred Burk	2008 Colette Deeb
1971 Jerry Bentrup	2009 Rich Raiskin
1972 Bob Sorrell	2010 Monica Vogel
1973 Rich Bentrup	2011 Monica Vogel
1974 Don Harris	
1975 Vern Sandeen	
1976 Vern Sandeen	
1977 Ken Koehn	
1978 Barb Oligschlaeger	
1978 Joan Graves	

We would also like to recognize those women who have served as Miss Tall St. Louis:

1947 Mary (Froehlich) Powers	1981 Suzette (Rust) Allinger
1948 Mary Ellen (Kurland) Schroeder	1982 Barb Meyer
1949 Doris (Abernathy) McDermott	1983 Mariellen (Parker) Jacob
1950 Lucille Poderski	1984 Rita Maddock
1951 Clara (Froehlich) Purdy	1985 Nancy Whitener
1951 Vera (Irwin) Gregory	1986 Carla (Sokol) Gettemeier
1952 Rose Marie Kellenberger	1987 Mary (Guelker) Brewer
1953 <i>No Queen</i>	1988 Patricia Hughes
1954 Rosalie (Droppelman) Heuing	1989 Rebecca (Grups) Pelton
1955 Virginia (Franke) Barton	1990 Roberta (Holler) Mueller *
1956 Delores (Waters) Bender	1990 Linda (Hill) Horgan
1957 Jean Wildermuth	1991 Gloria (Eigelberger, Smith) Monroe
1958 Helen Dierkes	1992 Margaret (Ryan) DeBonis
1959 Jane Willenkamp	1993 Carolyn (Ponciroli) Wolf
1960 June (Ruth) Wise	1994 Kathy Hempel
1961 Kathy (Hannibal) Garamella	1995 Edy (Little) Puers
1962 Dottie (Goodson) Baker	1996 Lynn (Frank) Kalkbrenner
1963 Mary Ellen (Boeninghausen) Morrison	1997 Jaynie (Cheney) Tatro
1964 Kathy (Boehm) Ringe	1998 Laura Shaw
1965 Rita (Schlitt) Ploeger	1999 Amy Romich
1966 Sue (Whipple) McMullin	2000 Jeannie Harty
1967 Susan (Young) Burk	2000 Deb Neubauer
1968 Chris Finlay	2001 Andrea Sudbrock
1969 Barb (Wunderle) Lienhart	2001 Kelly Smith
1970 Nancy Seibel	2002 <i>No Queen</i>
1971 Linda Carpenter	2003 Stacey L. Hood
1972 Karen (White) Wiesemann	2004 Bethany Boogerd
1973 Mary Lou (Lawler) Farrow	2005 Bethany Boogerd
1974 Mary Jean Murdock	2006 Amy Smith
1975 Terri (Tarr) Schweitzer	2007 <i>No Queen</i>
1976 Ruth (Ruxlow) Green	2008 <i>No Queen</i>
1977 Kate Christman	2009 <i>No Queen</i>
1978 Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer	2010 <i>No Queen</i>
1979 Barb (Tuley) Taliana	2011 <i>No Queen</i>
1980 Ruth (Hermann) Urbantke	

* (Crowned Miss Tall International®)

*Compiled by Debbie (Herzog) Rethemeyer
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