

FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE Newsletter



Zoe Burnside-Weaver enjoys her pony ride.

Vol. 18 No. 4

P.O. Box 644, Edwardsville, Illinois 62025

December 2008

HOLIDAY PARTY

Friends of Leclaire will celebrate the holidays with their annual open house at 7 PM on Tuesday, December 9th at the historic Leclaire home, 1203 Emerson Avenue in Leclaire (corner of Emerson and Franklin). All current Friends of Leclaire members are invited to attend the potluck social.

Attendees are asked to bring an appetizer or dessert to share. Friends of Leclaire is grateful for the invitation from new Friends of Leclaire members, William Kraus and Liz Rose who have also provided a history of their home for this newsletter. If you need directions or have any questions regarding the social call them at 618-540-5950.

PARKFEST 2008



SIUE's Alpha Phi Omega generously donated their time to assist vendors in setting up for Leclaire

Parkfest. Thanks to them, set-up went smoothly and the park grounds were protected from vehicle traffic.



The Old St. Louis Levee Band Trio entertains visitors.

Once again Friends of Leclaire served as hosts to residents and visitors to our neighborhood for the 17th annual Leclaire Parkfest on Sunday, October 19th. Beautiful weather, more vendors, more visitors and more volunteers combined to make it one of our best festivals...it's a hard combination to beat!

For all those who volunteered at the FOL

booth, helped with set-up, worked on park clean-up and plantings, we are very grateful for the donation of your time and talents. And for our "team" that is there every year, knowing what is needed and stepping up to take care of "their" tasks, thanks again for being there for Leclaire.

The City of Edwardsville provided a tourism grant and the assistance of Edwardsville Parks and Recreation and the Edwardsville Police Department were invaluable. Last, but not least, we must thank those that live near the park for putting up with the disruption that comes when a festival is dropped into the heart of their normally quiet neighborhood.

Leclaire Parkfest, a wonderful family event, is also our best way of building awareness of the unique history of the Leclaire National Historic District.



Kettle Korn: A long-time vendor; old friends are the best!

ARTICLES FROM THE PAST....

Edwardsville Intelligencer

December 30, 1904

A Christmas party took place at the Leclaire hall Monday night. The little folks had theirs on Friday night, but Monday night the older pupils, the students at the industrial college, had a tree and distribution of presents. The latter were unique. Everyone was remembered, but it was stipulated that the presents must cost between a nickel and a dime. N.O.Nelson received a loaf of bread, the superintendent, W. H. Tanner, was handed a pair of fake spectacles, and the rest of the gifts were in a similar vein.

Edwardsville Intelligencer

September 7, 1903

WINTER SCHOOL AT LECLAIRE.

A night school will be conducted in Leclaire this winter. The opening session will be tonight, September 7, at 7:30 o'clock sharp. All will be welcome regardless of age, sex or residence. There will be no expense, pupils providing their own books and stationery. The only requirements will be a desire to learn and punctual attendance. Dr. J. W. Caldwell will teach and others will be added as needed. Everyone is invited for Monday night. The industrial school will open tomorrow. The conditions and terms are similar to the night school, except that it will be half study and half work. Those interested are invited to call at any time on Dr. Caldwell, W. R. Raymond or N. O. Nelson.

Edwardsville Intelligencer

January 21, 1903

MARBLE MILLS AT LECLAIRE WORKS VISITED BY FIRE

A loss of several thousand dollars was sustained in a fire at Leclaire this morning and the manufacturing plants there were threatened for a time. Leclaire is the industrial suburbs established by N. O. Nelson and directly adjoins Edwardsville on the southeast. The alarm was given a few minutes before 1 o'clock, and was taken up at once by the Edwardsville

headquarters, from which two hose teams were hurried out to assist the Leclaire workers. The blaze for a time seemed of great proportions and occasioned the report that the cabinet mill was burning.

The fire started in the marble mills south of the power house. In a few minutes the buildings were covered with fire and although a number of powerful streams were turned on them and surrounding buildings saved, little was left of the mills but the traveling cranes. Until the wreckage can be cleared away and the machinery examined the extent of the loss cannot be determined. Louis D. Lawnin telephones the Intelligencer from St. Louis that it will at the least amount to several thousand dollars.

The marble mills were among the busiest industries at Leclaire. The first was erected three years ago and the second one last year. They were rushed with orders and ran almost continually day and night. Last night was one of the first in months in which the saws were silent. The company will rebuild the mills at once, rushing them to completion, as the loss, even temporarily of their work, will prove a great inconvenience.

Edwardsville Intelligencer

July 15, 1904

Mr. and Mrs. N. O. Nelson are entertaining a distinguished foreigner in the person of Frau Melanie Glaser, an art connoisseur, of Prague. Frau Glaser is the accredited representative of the Imperial Austrian Government to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, and has the distinction of being the first woman to hold a commission of that character. Her duties are to observe the art exhibits and gather data and material for practical use. She arrived in Leclaire yesterday morning and will remain over today. Since the fair opened the Nelson home has entertained many foreign notables, including people of rank and nobility from

Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary and France.

EARLY LECLAIRE PHOTOS



Three early Leclaire photos were donated recently to Friends of Leclaire by Elizabeth "Dolly" Stolte. Mrs. Stolte's grandfather was William Shaw who lived at 407 Jefferson and worked as a factory superintendent. Her aunt was Mildred Shaw Briggs who was a teacher at the Leclaire kindergarten for over 20 years. We are very grateful for the donation of these photos that present three different slices of life in Leclaire. The photographs show a Leclaire street scene, workers in one of the factories and three men in a boat at Leclaire Lake. If anyone can identify the men pictured, please call 656-1294.





Rachel Kubicek is brave enough to wave to the Parkfest crowd.

REPAIRS TO LECLAIRE SCHOOL HOUSE

Work is being done to make repairs at the old LeClaire school house. The six large windows on the south and west sides of the building are having rotted upper sashes replaced. The new sashes are an exact replication produced by contractors Miller and Maack. The vintage poured glass is being saved, but the new upper windows will have tempered glass which is safer as well as more energy efficient.

The contractors are also installing drain tiles at each downspout to channel roof water away from the building. Front window wells, where the original clay tile work has disintegrated beyond repair, will be closed off with pressure treated plywood until permanent repairs are made at a later date. The city is working to obtain grants for further repairs to the building. As those of us living in LeClaire are aware, in a historic building there is always something that needs attention.

LECLAIRE SHIRTS AVAILABLE

Need a holiday gift? LeClaire t-shirts, sweatshirts and hoodies featuring the Nelson Memorial Fountain are available for sale. Call Mike Reinhardt at 656-1294 for information.

PARKFEST COMMITTEE

Coordinator: Cindy Reinhardt
 Site Supervisors: Al & Kim Pauli and Mike Reinhardt
 FOL Booth: Ginger McCall
 Advertising Distribution
 School fliers: Kim Woolford
 Signs: Jill Dorsey
 Publicity: Jim Grandone
 Graphic Design: Sherrie Hickman
 Contracts: Janet Foehrkolb
 Photo Display: Bob & Mary Blain

WINTER CONCERTS

Edwardsville Parks & Recreation has announced the remaining concerts and dates for this season's Winter Concert Series in the LeClaire Room at the N. O. Nelson Campus of LCCC on Troy Road. The concerts are all on Friday evenings at 7 PM. From 6-8 weeks prior to the concert, tickets will be available at the Parks Department office in City Hall and at the Edwardsville Public Library. There is a \$7 donation per ticket suggested.

- December 12: Great Rivers Choral Society & Upper Alton Handbell Choir (tickets on sale now)
- January 30: Original Boneheads aka St. Louis Trombone Quartet (tickets on sale Dec 1)
- February 13: Kim Massie, blues vocalist (tickets on sale January 1)
- February 27: Arda: St. Louis Symphony Orchestra ensemble (tickets on sale January 16)
- March 13: SIUE Jazz featuring Brett Stamps (tickets on sale Feb 1)

LECLAIRE GOES TO SIUE

Cindy Reinhardt gave a presentation on LeClaire for SIUE's Dialogues with Senior Citizens offered through the Office of Educational Outreach. Mike Reinhardt assisted. There were 24 attendees from the Edwardsville area. In November, She gave a walking tour of LeClaire to 17 students in Professor Bob Koepke's Public Administration course on "Enhancing Urban Life".



Ward 5 Alderman John Twombly and J.D. found a good lunch.

CELEBRATE AT THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM!

A program of "Winter Celebrations" will be at the Children's Museum from December 5th through January 3rd. For just \$5 per person children will take a "tour" of nine countries where they will see demonstrations, play games and make crafts representing the winter celebrations of the different cultures.

The Children's Museum, located at 922 Holyoake Road in historic LeClaire, also has a place for children to mail letters to Santa in their new post office exhibit. Museum hours are 10 AM - 4 PM on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday. For more information call 692-2094.



Ellen Nore told visitors about the Col. Benjamin Stephenson House

MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

Membership dues for Friends of LeClaire are used to promote the history and preservation of the historic LeClaire neighborhood. Founded in 1890 as an experiment in cooperative living, LeClaire was designated a National Historic District in 1979. Walking tour brochures, books, DVDs and other materials on the history of the neighborhood are available.

Send an e-mail to friends@historic-leclaire.org or call 656-1294 for additional information. Members receive quarterly issues of the LeClaire newsletter and are eligible for that warm fuzzy feeling we all get when we know we are supporting a good cause!

Interested in joining Friends of LeClaire? Renew your membership or join Friends of LeClaire for just \$10 per year by mailing a check to: Friends of LeClaire, P.O. Box 644, Edwardsville, IL 62025. Please include your name, telephone number, e-mail and street addresses.

TREES IN LECLAIRE

“A consignment of American and English elm and hard and soft maple shade trees will arrive next week from the Bloomington nurseries (for LeClaire).” (October 15, 1890, *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, LeClaire Laconics)

Trees have been an integral part of the LeClaire neighborhood since its founding. Unfortunately storms in recent years have been hard on some of the mature trees planted during Nelson’s time but they are still a prominent feature of the neighborhood.

Although ornamental trees are beautiful in the spring they are short lived. Residents are encouraged to consider replacing lost trees with hardwoods that will provide beauty and shade for generations to come.

The National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State

Foresters and the USDA Forest Service has named Edwardsville a “Tree City USA” community for the past six years to honor its commitment to community forestry. That is a designation that LeClaire might have earned over a hundred years ago if the award had existed then!

1203 Emerson Avenue: A Timeline By William Krause



The two-story traditional foursquare, that sits on the corner of Emerson and Franklin, was the realization and achievement of William J. Kennedy, who by 1912 was a foreman at the N. O. Nelson Factory. Kennedy himself had been a longtime employee of the company, originally purchasing a home at 853 Holyoake Rd in the late fall of 1899. Over a decade later on May 24, 1913, Kennedy purchased the plot of land that would ultimately become home for himself and his wife, Rose. The home sat on a larger lot in what was at the time open, spacious land. William and Rose would live in this house until William’s death, August 7, 1930.

After William’s passing, Rose decided to make the move to the larger, neighboring city of St. Louis, Missouri. It was in those years that the home was rented to several various tenants until on March 31, 1937, Rose sold her home to Lester William Kennedy of Highland, Indiana. Lester, keeping the same trend as Rose, rented the house for some years. Finally, in the June summer of 1939,

the home would pass to a new owner, this time one that would be more lasting.

Jessie H. Cox was the purchaser, a resident of Edwardsville and wife to local prominent optometrist Dr. Wayne B. Cox. The Cox’s would own the home for more than 30 years; yet, only resided on Emerson for 12. Dr. Cox was well known within the Edwardsville community, having an office on North Main Street where he would welcome patients from 8:30 in the morning till 5:00 at night.

It was around 1953, that the Cox’s moved to a newer subdivision in Edwardsville. The home remained in the Cox’s possession, but was rented out for others. It came to be in 1966, that new renters, Albert and Elizabeth Knox would take up residence on Emerson Avenue. Albert, who was the manager of the Edwardsville Intelligencer, lived here with his wife for six years, until the winter of 1973, when Dr. Cox lastly sold his original home that Mrs. Cox purchased so many years before.

Robert and Elizabeth Ziegler purchased the then aging and deteriorating home on January 9, 1973. Elizabeth would spend close to 30 years living in LeClaire as a teacher at LeClaire Elementary, through a remarriage to George Edwards, and the raising of her family. She spent a great deal of time and love restoring the older home to a new found luster that had been lost through the years.

Elizabeth and her husband, bound for retirement, sold their beloved home around 2001 to Irma August. Irma would live on Emerson only for three years, finding the house too large for just herself. Around 2005, Ron and Jeannie Carter bought the home only to sell it to, its current owners, William Krause and Elizabeth Rose in July of 2008.

Thanks always to Cindy Reinhardt for copy, to all our distributors, and to Ann’s Copy Co.
Bob Blain, Editor