

FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE Newsletter



Vintage cars at Parkfest

Vol. 19 No. 4

P.O. Box 644, Edwardsville, Illinois 62025

December 2009

LECLAIRE PARKFEST 2009! WOW!

In what was officially the wettest October on record, Leclaire Parkfest managed to land on a beautiful sunny DRY day! Thousands attended the 18th annual festival on October 18th, giving Friends of Leclaire the opportunity to share the unique history of the Village of Leclaire.

FOL volunteers arrived early to cut tablecloths and set-up electrical lines, worked the FOL booth, and tackled one of the other tasks that needs to be done on “game day” to make the festival a success. We have a great Parkfest Committee!

PARKFEST COMMITTEE

Festival Coordinator: Cindy Reinhardt
Site Supervisors:
Al & Kim Pauli and Mike Reinhardt
Contracts: Janet Foehrkolb
FOL Booth Supervisor: Ginger McCall
School Flier Distribution: Kim Wolfford
Bandstand Decoration & Leclaire
History Display: Bob & Mary Blain
Tractor and Vintage Car Exhibit:
Mike Leitner

Several local businesses helped publicize the event: Sherrie Hickman of *Creative Options Graphic Design*, Jim Grandone of *Grandone Public Relations*, the staff of the *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, and *Annie's Frozen Custard*. Members of SIUE's Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity helped set-up and take-down.

Amber Ottwien Photography was our official photographer. Parkfest photos can be seen and downloaded from her website <http://ottweinphotography.zenfolio.com/p551835453>.

The Edwardsville Parks and Recreation Department and the Edwardsville Police Department gave us extraordinary support. And of course, the tourism grant from the City of Edwardsville made the festival possible.

Thanks to all who attended the Parkfest. Many vendors were earning money for charity including scholarships, eyeglasses, missionary trips, food baskets, scouting activities, and care packages for the military. A record number of new riders took the narrated trolley tour of Leclaire to learn about Leclaire's history.

Part of Leclaire's history a century ago was to invite folks from the city to come visit the country. For some events Leclaire's founder, N. O. Nelson would hire extra railroad cars to transport as many as 400 people to Leclaire from St. Louis. There were picnics and band concerts and other entertainment. Leclaire Parkfest offers many of the same things for visitors in the 21st century. We hope you had a chance to come to our party celebrating Leclaire. If not, we'll be back next year on the third Sunday in October.

HOLIDAY PARTY

Mike and Cindy Reinhardt will host the annual Friends of Leclaire holiday social at their home at 926 Holyoake Road in Leclaire from 7-9 PM on Tuesday, December 8th. The event is a potluck open house available to all members of Friends of Leclaire. Guests are asked to bring an appetizer or dessert. To RSVP, please call 656-1294 or send an e-mail to friends@historic-leclaire.org.

CITY ORDINANCE ON HISTORIC BUILDINGS

City ordinance 284.04 requires that any exterior changes to buildings that are landmarks or located in a historic district must be approved by the Edwardsville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). This includes every house in Leclaire.

Homeowners must fill out a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the city's Public Works Department. Along with the process comes the support and expertise of the HPC in preserving the historical integrity of these buildings.

There have been four COA's so far in Leclaire: one for replacing windows, one for a garage, another for windows and fencing, and the fourth for siding on the Children's museum. HPC attests that “All were positive experiences for the homeowner.” See the flier included in this newsletter for additional information.

WATERFALL BENEFIT CONCERT

Thanks to The Schwag band, the Stagger Inn, and all who attended and made contributions, the 10th Anniversary concert for Ben Blain, Erica and Melissa Holliday, and Connor McKinsey raised \$670 for maintenance of the Memorial Waterfall at Leclaire Lake.



Heather, Jimmy and Ben of The Schwag at the Stagger Inn

CELEBRATION KIDS!

The Children's Museum of Edwardsville will hold their annual Winter Celebration in December that showcases winter activities in countries around the world. The museum is in the old Leclaire School House at 722 Holyoake Road. Call the museum at 692-2094 for more information.

To join or renew your membership for just \$10 per year, mail a check to: Friends of Leclaire, P.O. Box 644, Edwardsville, IL 62025. Include your name, telephone number, e-mail and street addresses.

We meet at 7 PM on the second Tuesday of the month at the Nelson Campus of LCCC except in January, August and December. In December we have our holiday social, this year in Mike and Cindy Reinhardt's home at 926 Holyoake Road.

LECLAIRE PHOTOS NEEDED FOR NEW BOOK

Cindy Reinhardt is working on a new pictorial history of Leclaire. If you have photos of people or places in Leclaire, particularly between 1890 and 1934, please call her at 656-1294. The photos will be scanned so that your originals can be returned to you the same day. Photos of buildings, the park or streetscapes are desired, but also family portraits, casual snap shots, postcards or other images. This book will be a photographic record of the Village of Leclaire and the people who lived here.

WHO WAS EDMÉ JEAN LECLAIRE?

The Village of Leclaire was named for Frenchman Edmé Jean Leclaire, but why? FOL member Bob Blain recently translated from French Leclaire's 1850 pamphlet, *About Poverty and the Means to Use to End It*. It contains ideas like those that guided the design of our Leclaire such as provision for education, recreation, beauty, and an overall plan.

Bob also translated the 1878 *Biography of A Good Man: Leclaire, Buildings Painter* by Charles Robert. It makes clear why Nelson said in naming the village that history would count Leclaire as "one of its peaceful heroes." You can find both of these documents on the Friends of Leclaire website under the Leclaire Research tab. If you want a hard copy, Bob Blain can provide you one for \$5 to cover copying expenses. Call him at 656-5706.

DAFFODIL PLANTING

The Edwardsville Tree and Beautification Commission with assistance from Friends of Leclaire volunteers planted nearly 2000 daffodil bulbs in Leclaire in October. Mike Reinhardt, Bill Krause, Jim Milgrim and Eric Arth and sons, Nicholas and Tristin, planted 1600 bulbs around the Children's Museum. The remaining 400 bulbs were planted at the Leclaire Water Tower and on the berm in front of Leclaire Field. They'll have bragging rights when the blossoms appear next spring!

LECLAIRE WEB SITE GAINING USERS

The Friends of Leclaire web site has received almost 14,000 page hits so far this year. The site has historical information including recollections of former residents, old newspaper articles, photos, and previous newsletters with most photos in color. Thanks to Steve Brockmeyer for keeping the site current for us.

The article dated August 30, 1937 on the manufacture of toys in the Leclaire factories, referenced but omitted from the last newsletter, can also be found on the Leclaire web site.

LECLAIRE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Call Mike Reinhardt at 656-1294 to buy any of the following gift items: Illinois Heritage Magazine with Leclaire cover story \$4.

Nelson Memorial Fountain Turkey Boy sweatshirts & T-shirts \$12-\$25.

Leclaire Water Tower T-shirts \$5

Leclaire Centennial Posters \$8

Friends of Leclaire Gift Membership \$10.

The Historic Cooperative Village of Leclaire book \$16.

MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

Membership dues for Friends of Leclaire are used to promote the history and preserve the Leclaire neighborhood. Founded in 1890 as an experiment in cooperative living, Leclaire was designated a National Historic District in 1979. Send an e-mail to friends@historic-leclaire.org or call 656-1294 for more information. Members receive issues of the quarterly Leclaire newsletter and are eligible for that warm fuzzy feeling we all get when we know we are supporting a good cause!

MCT MULTI-MODAL FACILITY IN LECLAIRE

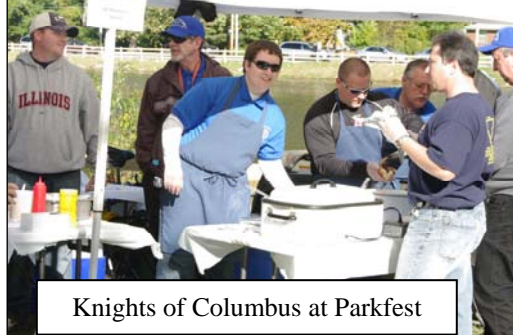
As anyone traveling Troy Road can attest, major construction is “underway” on the northern edge of Leclaire. Madison County Transit is building a lighted bike/pedestrian tunnel under Troy Road to connect to “park and ride” lots on both sides of the road. According to a recent press release, the project includes the construction of bus shelters on both sides of Troy Road that will complement the architectural style of the neighborhood. The facility will coordinate bike and bus transportation to the Nelson Campus of LCCC and the trailhead of the 13-mile Nickel Plate Bike Trail. Two-way traffic will be available at all times during the construction to be completed in late 2010 or early 2011.



Pat Gelzinnis of Bluff City Tours



We love those nuts.



Knights of Columbus at Parkfest

Photos Courtesy of Ottwein Photography



Some say it was the best attended Parkfest ever.

LECLAIRE HISTORY ARTICLES

The news article from September 10, 1890 featured in this issue may need some explanation for those unfamiliar with Leclaire history.

Groundbreaking for the new Village of Leclaire was in June 1890. Beginning at that time there were weekly articles in the Edwardsville Intelligencer under a column called Leclaire Laconics that documented the progress of what was called the Leclaire “suburb.”

At the end of this article is a list of employees at the new Cabinet Works. This is of interest to historians as well as genealogists since it tells where some of the early employees came from.

N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Company began in St. Louis and their headquarters remained there. Some of the “new” Leclaire employees were actually valued longtime employees of the company. Leclaire was just one of many Nelson Company facilities around the country. Leclaire was the only one that included a village.

There are many more articles on the web site than are published in the newsletter. New articles are added about every two months. Read more at www.historic-leclaire.org.

Edwardsville Intelligencer

December 20, 1920

BOYS WERE SAVED

Broke Through Ice on Leclaire Lake Yesterday Were in Water Over Five Feet in Depth Opposite Bath House

Two Leclaire boys were saved from drowning yesterday when Herman Schwenderman and Thomas Triggs came to their assistance. Schwenderman dived into the water breaking the ice and pulled George Moorman 8 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. George Moorman to safety. Lester Senn who had been the last to fall in was keeping above water and had not gone under the ice, as had the former. The Senn boy remained in the water about 15 minutes before he was rescued.

Both boys knew how to swim and had the presence of mi(n)d enough to use swimming methods to keep afloat. They talked to the men who were assisting them ashore. ...

They broke through the ice about half way from shore at a point opposite the girls bathing house.

The rescuers are both employes of the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing company. Schwenderman who is in the marble department is preparing for the Baptist ministry.

Today the boys are none the worse for their experience. They were taken to the Moorman home and were given every attention. The Senn boy who remained in the water for the greater length of time had a hard chill shortly after being taken from the water but today there have been no ill effects.

LECLAIRE LACONICS

Bulletin of Events at the N. O. Nelson Suburb

Half of the first story of the Bath Tub Works is up. The work done gives a good idea of the size of the building. Ground will next be broken for the Tinning Works. Both of these buildings are to be completed in the fore part of October.

The Cabinet Works have been running regularly since they were started up. Although everything is comparatively new, there has been no delay of any kind. Additional machinery is being added and the working force is increased as rapidly as circumstances permit.

The principal work in general improvements is road building and draining. A number of drives have been graded. The system of drainage is being extended into the residence tracts.

MINOR MENTION

Mr. N. O. Nelson was out from St. Louis today.

J. E. Falls spent Sunday with his family in St. Louis.

The coal, lumber and switching tracks have been put down.

George Newcomb, the timekeeper, spent Sunday in St. Louis.

J. E. Falls, the architect, has staked off several more residences.

Dwellings number 4 and 5 are being plastered. No. 6 will be ready in a few days.

John C. Young, formerly firemen of the Bethalto mills, is fireman of the new big boilers.

Russell Richards, a clerk in the St. Louis office, came out and spent Sunday with his parents.

F. M. Eggleston, of St. Louis, succeeds John Head, of Brighton, as foreman of the carpenters.

The waterworks and steam arrangements have proven, all around, an unqualified success.

The next move will be to buy sidewalks. For the present wooden walks will be put down.

The first shipment of goods manufactured was made yesterday. They were billed to San Francisco, Cal.

Master mechanic, W. A. Reid and wife were guests of Manager J. H. Neustadt and wife several days last week.

Denny Roper, of Alton, spent Sunday the guest of E. R. Fish. The two are classmates in Washington University.

A lumber shed to store hard wood for use in the Cabinet Works, will be erected shortly. Its dimensions will be about 40 by 150 feet.

E. R. Fish, the assistant architect, will return to St. Louis, Saturday, to be on hand at the beginning of the term of Washington University, where he will complete his course.

Frank Stillwell, former bookkeeper of the Edwardsville Mills, has been added to the office force. He is a first-rate young man in every respect. *The Intelligencer* is glad to see him where he is.

The electric lighting is near completion. The Club House and the dwellings which have been completed are being wired. The plant will be in running order the latter part of this week.

Bernard Walter and son, Louis and family, were out Sunday, guests of Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Wilson. The first two are

of the firm, B. Walter & Son, billiard and pool table manufacturers. They are father and brother of Mrs. Wilson.

The carpentry trade is usually unsteady during the winter. Good workman will have no difficulty in obtaining employment next winter. With the planning mill in operation, a force will be given work in the carpenter shop in finishing sash, doors and other mill work.

New workmen come and go every week. A good laborer or a good mechanic has no difficulty holding a job. A laborer however no matter if he is handy with tools, cannot hold a mechanic's place. When one gets into a position he is unsuited for he is soon found out and the result is embarrassing. It is much better for one who applies for a position to state unequivocally what his capabilities are. If he is a good laborer let him not represent himself as a good carpenter. Where 150 or more men are employed, and the work is distributed over a large territory there are loopholes to loose thousands of dollars. Some of the men who have worked on the grounds but quit, may return, but they will do so understanding more fully what is expected.

J. H. Neustadt is the fond parent of a four-year-old son, Harry, who has much of the paternal activity. Some weeks ago, a friend in the country sent the energetic manager a ram. Harry and the new acquisition soon were acquaintances, and Harry had a good deal of fun with the ram. Lately the ram, which has developed rapidly on the abundance of tin cans and pieces of railroad iron, has had a good deal of fun with Harry. Sunday is visitor's day in Leclaire. Last Sunday a bevy of ladies from the city were viewing the sights. The ram spied them. It had a wicked look in its eyes. The meeting was unfortunate for the ladies. The ram turned from the field of battle with a triumphant air.

THE CABINET WORKS FORCE

J. D. Wilson, the foreman, is a native of Jackson County, Iowa, and dates his birth 1857. He was connected with the A. W. Phelps Contracting Co., Omaha, Neb., and later with the Simmons Hardware Co., St. Louis. He has been with the N. O. Nelson Manf'g Co. eight years. He is a wide awake mechanic.

Frank Bean is a New Yorker, a native of St. Lawrence county, and has been with the company four years.

Peter Rutter (Rotter) was born in Germany and has been with the company six months.

Thoms Hickey is a St. Louisan and has been with the company three years.

Charles Grosch was born in St. Louis and has been with the company two months.

Jos. Degenhardt is a native of Germany and has a record with the company of six years.

Charles Hug is a native of Switzerland and has been with the company nearly two years.

Christ Meyer is a native of St. Louis and has been with the company a year and a half.

Otto Holzgrebe is a native of St. Louis. He has been with the company only a short time.

Charles Ritson is a native of Great Britain and has been with the company a year and a half.

Will Thomas hails from Carlinville, Macoupin County, and has been with the company one year.

Henry Thomas came here from Germany, and has been with the company two and a half years.

William Schulze and Geo. Lenz are new men, both natives of Edwardsville.