

FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE Newsletter



Nelson Memorial back home.

Vol. 17 No. 3

P.O. Box 644, Edwardsville, Illinois 62025

October 2007

LECLAIRE PARKFEST SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21 NOON – 5 PM

If the weather is good, the 16th annual Leclaire Parkfest promises to be the best yet! Old time music from the St. Louis Levee Band Trio and the Lodge Brothers will entertain us while we feast on a variety of delicious food, courtesy of many worthy non-profit organizations in the Edwardsville area. Crushed Grapes will again serve as hosts of the Wine and Beer Garden near the bandstand.

The St. Louis Levee Band Trio has been playing at the festival for many years. New this year is the Lodge Brothers Band who plays a mixture of music including old time fiddle tunes, traditional and contemporary American folk songs, bluegrass and a little Irish music too. They are sure to be a welcome addition to the festival.

Also new this year is a shuttle bus courtesy of Eden Village that will transport passengers from parking lots at Leclaire School and the Nelson Campus of LCCC. The shuttle will run in a continuous loop approximately every 20-25 minutes.

Edwardsville Parks and Recreation is bringing a washer tournament to the festival this year. Registration is between noon and 1 PM at Leclaire Park with play beginning at 1:15. Contact the Parks Department for details. Cash prizes will be awarded.

More information about the festival is on the flyer on the back of

this newsletter. If you need additional copies of the flyer for family or friends, it is available on our website, www.historic-leclaire.org. If you have questions about the festival call 656-1294 or send an email to friends@historic-leclaire.org.

PARKFEST VOLUNTEERS!

It's a lot of hard work to have this much fun, so we of course need help! Please call if you can assist in any way, for an hour, two hours or the entire afternoon. We have jobs that require brawn, brains, and some of both so don't think you won't all be welcome! We will also be at the park on Saturday morning just to give flower beds a last minute weeding, etc.

LECLAIRE PARKFEST GRAPHICS

Many have commented on the beautiful new Leclaire Parkfest logo seen on the back of our newsletter. It's printed here in black and white but is even more spectacular in burgundy and sage green as can be seen on flyers around town or on our website. Created by Sherrie Hickman of Creative Options Graphic Design, the purpose of the new graphic is to emphasize the music of the festival. By next year it will be on all of the festival signage. We are, once again, indebted to Sherrie for donating her professional talent to our neighborhood!

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

The Children's Museum was closed September 9-23 to create some new and exciting exhibits for children to enjoy. Stop by soon to see what's new. Fall programming includes a Science Series the first two Saturdays in October and November. For more information call 692-2094 or, visit their web site at www.childrensmuseum.net.

VINTAGE BASEBALL LECLAIRE FIELD

Saturday, October 20th at 1 PM

You can take a step back in time to see men playing baseball at the Leclaire ball diamond...1862 style! The St. Louis Unions will take on the New Baden Juniors in a nine inning game. Rules for an 1862 game dictate that this is a gentleman's game. No yelling at the referee is allowed! The players will be wearing vintage uniforms which do not include baseball gloves.

Sponsored by Edwardsville Parks and Recreation, the game will entertain the entire family. Concessions at the game will, of course, include a bake sale, just as might be seen in 1862, as well as kettle corn. Proceeds from the bake sale benefit the Children's Museum. The Parks Department will also have a historic display of photographs taken at Leclaire Field where sports enthusiasts have been playing ball for over a hundred years.

Game time: 1 PM Free Admission

BRIAN BUCKMINSTER BLAIN MEMORIAL

Friends of Leclaire members Bob and Mary Blain have designated Friends of Leclaire for memorials to their son, Brian, who was killed in an automobile accident August 30. Many Friends of Leclaire members joined the Blain family in a celebration of Brian's life at a memorial service in Leclaire Park. The memorial fund established by Bob and Mary will go towards improvements at Leclaire Park.

MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

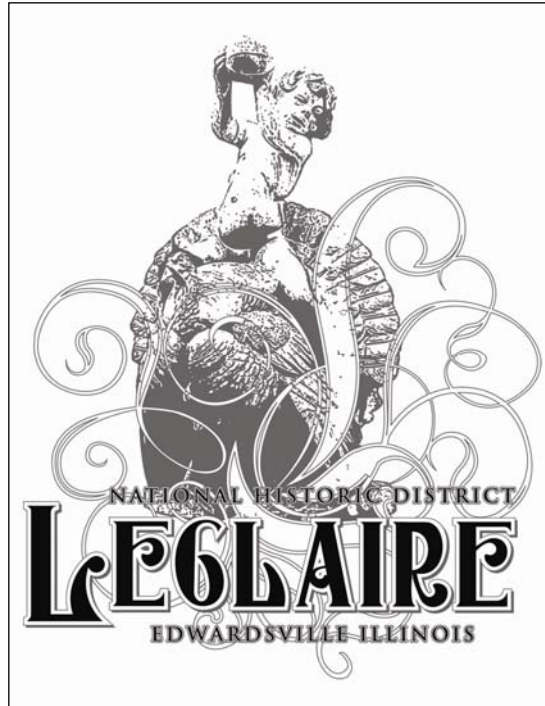
Leclaire Parkfest is almost here which means it's time for many to renew their memberships! Dues for Friends of Leclaire are used to promote the history and preservation of the historic Leclaire neighborhood. A complete membership list will be printed once per year in the March edition of the Friends of Leclaire newsletter. Members receive quarterly issues of the Leclaire newsletter and are eligible to attend the holiday social in December.

To join Friends of Leclaire or renew your membership, mail \$10 to: Friends of Leclaire, P.O. Box 644, Edwardsville, IL 62025. Please include your name, telephone number, e-mail and street addresses.

Friends of Leclaire meetings are held at 7:30 on the 2nd Tuesday of each month in the second floor conference room (Room 224) of Building N3 at the Historic Nelson Campus of LCCC in Leclaire. There are no meetings in August or January, and the location for the December meeting is announced in the December newsletter. The December meeting is a holiday social, usually held in the home of one of our members.

TURKEY-BOY ON A SHIRT!

Below is the beautiful new design created by Sherrie Hickman of Creative Options Graphic Design for our new Friends of Leclaire shirt. With four styles, two colors and a variety of sizes, there's sure to be something for everyone. Two styles of t-shirts (regular and women's) will sell for \$12 each, sweatshirts for \$20 and "hoodies" for \$25.



N. O. NELSON MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

By Mike Reinhardt.

The Journey

"To Unveil Fountain" May 24, 1924"
Edwardsville Intelligencer

"With weather today that is more favorable than any during the past week, exercises were to be held this afternoon at 3 o'clock at the Leclaire school for the unveiling of the N. O. Nelson memorial. The rains of the past week have interfered with the work and it was only through most careful planning that the fountain was finished...Many of the employes (sic) in the local plant, residents of Leclaire, employes (sic) from the St.

Louis office and residents of Edwardsville were assembled at the grounds early this afternoon."

Thus began "Turkey-boy's" journey with the unveiling by James E. Crawford, II of the monument honoring his great-grandfather. The memorial consists of a statue of a boy holding a shell from which water flows while he is astride a turkey, a reflecting pool with two frogs spouting water and a red granite tablet which on the opposite side has a bronze relief plaque and a water fountain. Since that Saturday afternoon the memorial has been moved three times from its original location north of the schoolhouse near where Holyoake and Hale used to intersect.

By the early 1960's there were no longer any classes in the Leclaire schoolhouse, the water fountain didn't work, and the monument was in a neglected state and being vandalized. In 1970 the Kiwanis Club of Edwardsville moved the memorial to the new N. O. Nelson School on West High Street. The pool was filled with rocks and landscaped.

In 1998 the City of Edwardsville received control of the Leclaire schoolhouse, which became the Children's Museum after renovations. Two years later the city bought the Nelson Memorial from the school district. It was removed from its location on High Street and placed in temporary storage at the old Nelson factory, near, but still far from its original location. It was necessary to once again move the monument when Lewis and Clark Community College, the new owners of the Nelson complex, began renovating the factory buildings. In 2001 the Edwardsville Historic Preservation Commission became involved. With their help and that of the city of Edwardsville, the monument was placed on the east side of the schoolhouse, very near its original location. Turkey-boy had returned home.

The Monument

Within twenty days of the death of N. O. Nelson in California on October 5, 1922, employees at the LeClaire factory met to propose that a memorial be built to honor the founder of their company and the village of LeClaire. It was suggested that employees give the equivalent of one day's pay toward the monument. Eventually \$1,591.20 was raised by the workers at Nelson's plants. The total cost was over \$7,000, of which \$6,590 went to the sculptor. The esteem in which Nelson was held is evident in the inscription on the bronze plaque, which bears a relief portrait of him.

*"In Memory of Nels O. Nelson
Original thinker, valiant worker,
devoted leader in the faith and
practice of service to his fellowmen,
pioneer of profit-sharing and
cooperation in America"*

The sculptor was Victor S. Holm, an instructor at Washington University School of Fine Arts in St. Louis. He was a "nationally known sculptor and a leader in St. Louis art circles for 26 years", according to his obituary in the November 11, 1935 St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Besides the Nelson monument, Holm is the creator of many sculptures and monuments, some of which are familiar sights in St. Louis. These include the bear outside Kiel Auditorium (only the one with the uplifted head on the west side, the other was by another artist, a former student of Holm's), the musicians memorial and fountain in Forest Park, the Spanish American war memorial at the Civil Courts building, the Robert Barnes bust at Barnes Hospital, the statue of Governor

Thomas Carlin in Carrolton and most impressively, the Missouri State Monument at the Vicksburg Civil War Battlefield, a huge monument that cost \$40,000 when it was built in 1917.

The architect of the monument was Gabriel Ferrand, who was also a member of the Washington University faculty. Ferrand was the consulting architect for the United Hebrew Temple on Skinker Boulevard in St. Louis. This beautiful building is now the headquarters of the Missouri Historical Society.

Both the sculptor and the architect attended the dedication and were scheduled speakers. Ferrand did not speak because of a cold and Holm's remarks were not recorded by the *Intelligencer*.

Why Turkey-Boy?

"What you see is what you see."

Frank Stella (artist)

Why did Holm choose a cherubic, smiling young boy holding a seashell riding a turkey to be the subject of his statue? One can search dictionaries of symbols and iconography for what the turkey, young boy, seashell, and water represent. Unfortunately the sculptor's words at the dedication weren't reported. L. D. Lawnin, Nelson's son-in-law, introduced Holm after his own speech. "I take pleasure in introducing the head of the School of Sculpture of Washington University, a man who has done much notable and original work in marble and bronze, Mr. Victor S. Holm." Despite such an eloquent introduction Holm's speech was not published. "The band rendered another selection. It was followed by brief remarks by Victor S. Holm, St. Louis sculptor, who spoke on some of the work incident to

the memorial." (*Edwardsville Intelligencer*, May 24, 1924)

Dick Norrish's explanation in the August 6, 1970 edition of the *Intelligencer* sums up the statue's meaning simply but reasonably. "Nelson adored children" said a long-time resident of LeClaire... This seems to be the reason sculptor Victor S. Holm chose a child for the sculpture.... The turkey? Earlier in this century the turkey was considered a figure of strength, according to one source and apparently the combination of child and turkey summed up the remarkable N. O. Nelson for sculptor Holm."

Perhaps Holm was echoing Benjamin Franklin's opinion of the turkey in a letter to his daughter concerning what should be the national bird. "For the Truth the turkey is in Comparison a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America... He is besides, though a little vain and silly, a Bird of Courage..."

What do you think? If any of our readers have a theory on what the statue means or has any information passed down from generation to generation on the statue, let us know.

Thanks to Kathryn Hopkins for her research and devotion to the monument. A special thanks for her efforts as chair of the Edwardsville Historic Preservation Commission to have the monument returned to LeClaire.

Thanks, as always, to Cindy and Mike Reinhardt for copy for this newsletter. We have a website, thanks to Steve Brockmeyer. Visit it at <http://historic-leclaire.org> Bob Blain, Editor



The Edwardsville Parks Department is installing beautiful new concrete fence around LeClaire Lake.



LECLAIRE PARKFEST

PRESENTED BY FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

SUNDAY • OCTOBER 21
 NOON - 5 PM • Held at LeClaire Park on Hale Avenue in Edwardsville, Illinois

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Noon - 2:30 pm **Old St. Louis Levee Band Trio**
 Dixieland Jazz

2:30 - 5 pm **The Lodge Brothers**
 Old Time Folk Music

FOOD

Beer & Wine Garden hosted by Crushed Grapes plus...
 Italian Beef, Brats, Walking Tacos, Funnel Cakes,
 Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Curly Fries, Kettle Korn, Nachos,
 Steak Kabobs, Lemon Shake-ups and MORE!

*Shuttle service available from the Nelson Campus
 of LCCC on Brown Street or from LeClaire School
 on Franklin Avenue.*



PROCEEDS GO TO LOCAL CHARITIES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

ARTS & CRAFTS

Browse a variety of crafts booths including jewelry, needlework,
 Groovyware tie-dyed clothing and MORE!

TROLLEY TOURS

Pleasant narrated trolley rides through the LeClaire National Historic
 District provides a glimpse into the past.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Crafts & activities center, face & hair painting, games and pony rides.

BOOK SALE

Thousands of used books. Something for everyone.
 Lots of bargains!

WASHER TOURNAMENT

Contact Edwardsville Parks & Recreation for advance registration.
 More info at www.cityofedwardsville.com under City
 Departments, choose Parks & Recreation. Or, call 618-692-7538.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Working honey bee hive, historic photographs & memorabilia,
 vintage tractors & farm equipment!

For information visit www.historic-leclaire.org

This festival made possible by a grant from the City of Edwardsville • Festival graphics by Creative Options Graphic Design, Inc.