



FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

NEWSLETTER

March 2013

Volume 23 No. 1

FOL ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 12—7 PM

The 2012 Friends of Leclaire Annual Meeting will be held on Mar 12 at 7 pm at the LCCC Nelson Campus, Bldg N4 Room 201.

The most important order of business is the election of officers for the coming year. Please call 656-1294 if you are interested in serving as either a trustee or officer. Nominations will also be taken from the floor.

Friends of Leclaire members are

HOUSE HISTORY CONTEST

The results of research for the first winners of the House History Contest are included in this issue. In addition to the article, the homeowners also received a binder containing almost 30 pages of information and photographs about their home and it's original owners.

As a reminder, the contest is ongoing. A name is drawn quarterly before each newsletter. To enter the contest send an e-mail with your address to friends@historic-leclaire.org. The contest is for Leclaire homes of FOL members only. Good luck!

2012 PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

2012 was another busy year for the Friends of Leclaire. We had two major highlights, Leclaire Parkfest and a new website, as well as all our other activities.

Our 21st annual Leclaire Parkfest drew a large crowd and beautiful weather with a high of 78 degrees. More than 240 people took the trolley ride and learned the history of Leclaire. Once again, thank you to Cindy Reinhardt for coordinating the event. This is a huge task involving numerous phone calls, emails, meetings, etc. And thank you to all our volunteers who assisted before and after the event as well as on the day of Parkfest.

The other major accomplishment was our new website. If you haven't done so yet, go to www.historic-leclaire.org and view it. There is a wealth of information about Leclaire, Nelson, and the Friends and great photos throughout. The new site was implemented through the hard work of Will Krause. Thanks again go to him and Cindy for maintaining the site.

Our newsletter was changed to match the format of the website. We hope you like the new look. Thanks to Cindy and Bob Blain for publishing the quarterly newsletter. Also thank you to Jen Rutherford *Continued on page 2*



Hosts Will and Liz Krause welcomed Dr. Wayne Cox to their home for the FOL Holiday Social. Dr. Cox's family lived in the house from 1939-1952.

2ND ANNUAL LECLAIRE YARD SALE

Please call or e-mail FOL if you live in Leclaire and would like to participate in the neighborhood yard sale on May 18th. Advertising is done at no charge and includes any resident of Leclaire, whether or not they are members of Friends of Leclaire. Contact information is below.

YOU CAN BE A FOL VOLUNTEER!

WHAT'S YOUR SPECIALTY?

ENJOY TALKING WITH PEOPLE? HELP HOST THE FOL TABLE AT THE GOSHEN MARKET (3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH) OR AT THE ROUTE 66 FESTIVAL IN JUNE.

ENJOY GARDENING? ADOPT A BED AT LECLAIRE PARK.

WRITING? RESEARCH? PHOTOGRAPHY? YOU NAME THE HOBBY AND WE CAN USE YOUR HELP. CONTACT US AT THE ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER BELOW.

Friends of Leclaire ♦ P. O. Box 644 ♦ Edwardsville, IL 62025

www.historic-leclaire.org ♦ friends@historic-leclaire.org ♦ 618-656-1294

Friends of Leclaire Newsletter Published Quarterly

Writing and Editing
Cindy Reinhardt

Proofing
Bob Blain and Mike Reinhardt

Distribution
Jennifer Rutherford

Delivery to Leclaire homes
Bob & Mary Blain
James Grandone
Syvella Gregory
Edna Grench
Nicole Grimm
Will & Liz Krause
Kathy Krishnan
Carol Krumeich
Jim & Mary Ellen Milgrim
Diane Murbarger
Al & Kim Pauli
Mike & Cindy Reinhardt
Jen Rutherford
Elaine Shashack

Call 618-656-1294 or send an e-mail to friends@historic-leclaire.org with story ideas or comments on the newsletter. Your opinion counts with us!

JOIN FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE!

Show your support of FOL by joining the organization for just \$15 per year. Members need not live in Leclaire. Send a check payable to Friends of Leclaire to the address on page 1 along with your name, address, phone and e-mail address. Additional information is available on our web site.

for distributing the newsletter to our hardy volunteers who deliver it to the more than 400 houses in Leclaire no matter what the weather. A new feature was added to the newsletter. Cindy has volunteered to do the history of a house in Leclaire for members who win a quarterly drawing.

In 2012 the Friends initiated two new events. We had our 1st annual Leclaire Yard Sale on May 19. We bought yard signs and advertised on our website and in the newspaper. The event proved very popular (especially on Hale Avenue) and we plan to do it again this year.

This year the Friends provided a water station at Leclaire Park for the 500+ participants in the Bonifest 5k Run. Thanks go to our volunteers and the Edwardsville High School Student Council.

We had some new volunteers at our monthly community booth at the Goshen Market. I appreciate their help and also that of those who helped at the Edwardsville Municipal Band Concert and the Route 66 Festival in June.

With the record heat and drought it was a difficult year for the plants at Leclaire Park. Jim Milgrim and I did our best to keep the recent plantings alive, though we had to give up on the annuals as the long, hot summer dragged on. The Parks Department put a new border around the rose garden, which looks great. The city also gave the Nelson fountain (“turkey-boy”) behind the Children’s Museum a thorough cleaning.

I would also like to thank the City of Edwardsville and the Parks Department for their help with Parkfest and the maintenance of Leclaire Park. Unfortunately there is a certain amount of vandalism and

the persistent problem of moss on the lake (despite twelve sprayings) that makes their job even more difficult. Their efforts are appreciated.

A graphic for the Annual Leclaire Yard Sale. At the top, it says 'ANNUAL LECLAIRE' in a blue banner. Below that, 'YARD SALE' is written in large, bold, white letters on a dark blue background. Underneath, 'SATURDAY • 8-2' is written in white on a dark blue background. A green arrow points to the right, containing the text 'A GREAT FOL SUCCESS STORY!' in white. At the bottom, the website 'www.historic-leclaire.org' is written in blue.

Graphics for Leclaire Parkfest, Leclaire yard sale, stationery, and business cards, were donated by FOL member Sherrie Hickman of Creative Options Graphic Design.

Will and Liz Krause hosted a wonderful holiday party. Their home was decorated beautifully and there was plenty of good food. Everyone enjoyed themselves while celebrating the holidays and another year of Friends’ activities.

I am fortunate to have a great board to work with: Will Krause, Kathy Krishnan, Jim Milgrim, Syvella Gregory, Cindy Reinhardt, and Jen Rutherford. There are many other volunteers who have helped to accomplish the above activities. Your names are too numerous to list (and I might forget someone). Finally, thank you for being a member of the Friends of Leclaire. Your membership shows that you appreciate our efforts to accomplish the Friends’ mission of “...promoting and enhancing the history and heritage of the Leclaire National Historic District.”

Pres. Mike Reinhardt

ABOUT FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

Friends of Leclaire (FOL) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and enhancing the history and heritage of the Leclaire National Historic District. The organization promotes Leclaire’s heritage through advocacy, education, and community involvement.

FOL conducts business meetings at 7 PM on the second Tuesday of each month except in December when the regular meeting is replaced with a holiday social and January when it’s just too cold!

All members are welcome to attend meetings which are held in room 201 of Building N4 at the Historic N. O. Nelson Campus of Lewis & Clark Community College in Edwardsville.

COMING SOON ~

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mar 12 | FOL Annual Meeting |
| Apr 9 | FOL Business Meeting |
| May 14 | FOL Business Meeting |
| May 18 | Annual Leclaire Yard Sales |
| May 18 | FOL at Goshen Market |
| Jun 7-8 | FOL at Route 66 Festival |

Articles from the Past

Edwardsville Intelligencer - August 30, 1901

Pleasure reigned supreme at Leclaire hall Wednesday evening at the dancing party. It is doubtful if the assembly hall and its surroundings ever appeared to better advantage. The interior was decorated in green and pink, not only the lights, but the wainscoting was draped in those hues, forming a striking effect. On the outside the well kept grounds, flower beds and shrubbery under the light of the full moon completed an exquisite picture.

The party was given by Miss Irma Springer and Miss Rebecca Springer. About a hundred young folks were present and enjoyed the dancing. Elegant refreshments were served at 11.

A feature of this party was the music. This was provided by a colored musician from Alton, Miss Cordelia Jones. Miss Jones specialty is piano playing for dancing parties and she is an expert at it. Her time-marking is unexcelled and she is all the rage at the fashionable hops in Alton.

Notes: Leclaire Hall is today's Children's Museum at Edwardsville. Before 1935, it was one large room with portable walls to divide it into classrooms.

Edwardsville Intelligencer - August 30, 1901

Cars Will Run Soon

Electric cars will run to Edwardsville tomorrow according to one of the contractors who has been engaged on the line. The track work is complete as has been announced in Tuesday's paper, and the contractor said last night that the power cable had been advanced within two and one-half miles of this city, and if all went well he would reach town with it tonight. Trial trips have been made over the road as far as it is completed and it is in fair working shape.

Edwardsville Intelligencer - December 2, 1912

Joseph Schmidt Dies After Being Ill a Year

Joseph Schmidt, of Leclaire, passed away this morning after having suffered for almost a year. Since last January Mr. Schmidt had been unable to follow his occupation at the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing plant, and most of that time he had been living in a tent. His death was caused by tuberculosis.

Mr. Schmidt was born June 11, 1876, and had been a resident of Edwardsville practically all his life. When the N. O. Nelson plant was erected at Leclaire, he secured employment with the company and was with them continuously until last January, when his health failed him. Mr. Schmidt was a very industrious worker and for many years held the position of head painter at Leclaire. He married Miss Minnie Schulte of Alhambra about six years ago.

He is survived by his mother, and two sisters and by his wife and two small children. His father, the late William Schmidt, died about five years ago.

Notes: In 1912, doctors believed that fresh air was the best cure for tuberculosis, which explains why Mr. Schmidt lived in a tent during most of his last months of life. Although it did not cure him of the disease, it may have prevented the spread of the illness to his wife and children.

Joseph Schmidt built the house at 1025 Troy Road just a few years before his death. When his daughter Margaret married James Allen, her husband came to live in the house with his wife and mother-in-law. Margaret Schmidt Allen passed away at the age of 98 in July 2011 after spending literally a lifetime in her well-manicured home on Troy Road.

Story of the Charles Wilson Home

The home at 863 Madison Avenue in Leclaire was built for the Charles Wilson family in 1914. The architect and builder are not known at this time but a warranty deed from N. O. Nelson, filed August 14, 1914, lists a price of \$2,150.

It wasn't the first home in Leclaire for the Wilson family. In 1896 they purchased a house on Jefferson



863 Madison can be seen in the background of this photo depicting Edna Meyer and Raymond Stullkin (center of boat in foreground) circa 1915 at Leclaire Lake. (Photo courtesy of Loretta Stullkin)

Road whose back yard nearly touched a lot on Hale Avenue owned by Mrs. Wilson's sister, Josephine Miller. The Wilsons lived on Jefferson until 1904-05 when Charles took a job with the railroad in southern Missouri.

The Wilsons returned to Leclaire in 1914 where they built their new home at the northeast corner of Leclaire Lake at 863 Madison Avenue.

Continued from page 3

Charles Wilson was born in Cartersburg, IN in 1863. When a young man he moved to St. Louis where he married Amelia Hoblar in 1890. Amelia was a St. Louis native, five years his junior. They first moved to Edwardsville in 1892 when Charles obtained a position with N. O. Nelson Manufacturing in Leclaire.

The Wilsons were an amiable couple, active in their church and community. Charles was a deacon at First Baptist Church and a participating member of the Knights of Pythias Lodge.

The newspaper reported that Amelia was “of an unusually jovial disposition and took great pleasure in providing entertainments for the young people. She was a kind and indulgent mother and she had a large circle of friends in this city.”

Unfortunately the Wilson’s would not enjoy their new Madison Avenue home for long. After an illness of nearly a year, Charles died at home in 1922 at the age of 58. Amelia died of complications following pneumonia just six months later. She was 52 years old.

The Wilsons had seven children, three of whom survived to adulthood. Their three daughters, Mary, Pearl and Florence, inherited the home and would keep it in the family for decades to come.

After the death of their parents, the house was rented for a few years to nonfamily members. Mary Wilson, married to Ohioan Charles Clupper, moved to her husband’s home state after her marriage. Probably due to the distance from Edwardsville, she sold her share of the house to her sisters in 1927.

Florence Wilson was a nurse who lived and worked in St. Louis. For Pearl Wilson it was more practical to rent a room or live with a friend than to live in the house by herself. The rent collected for a house would far exceed the cost of her room.

Only Pearl remained in Edwardsville, although her sisters often visited. She was a kindergarten teacher at Leclaire School until her marriage to Edwardsville City Attorney, John Eeck in 1928. They purchased a house at 507 St. Louis Street and kept the Madison Avenue house as a rental. In the early 1930s they rented the house to John’s two spinster sisters, Minnie and Bertha Eeck, which was the beginning of a long stretch of family occupancy for the home.

Newspaper articles and city directories indicate that Pearl and her husband moved to the Madison Avenue house in 1940. In 1948 John W. Eeck died leaving Pearl and her son John, Jr. to share the home with Minnie and Bertha. John Eeck had been a successful attorney and the family owned other properties, so it is not likely there were financial difficulties, however within 6 months Pearl was advertising for boarders and later created a separate apartment on the second floor. This was at a time after WW II when Edwardsville as well as the entire country was experiencing a housing shortage.

Pearl and her son moved to Arizona in the early 1950s, possibly due to her son’s ill health. A hemophiliac, John Jr. died at the age of 39 in 1971. The Eeck sisters, with other tenants continued to occupy the house. In the early 1960s Florence Wilson retired from nursing and returned home. She lived in the apartment at 863a Madison and rented out 863 Madison. Like her sister Pearl, Florence was an avid gardener and member of the Gardening Club who won prizes for the gardens on the property, especially the daffodils. Again, it is clear Florence made a choice to share her home for reasons other than financial. Florence traveled extensively to South America, Europe, Scandinavia, Egypt and many other countries on numerous extended tours and cruises.



Pearl Wilson is shown above in 1928 with some of her students at Leclaire School. She married that summer so it was her last year of teaching. (Photo Courtesy of Dolores Rohrkaste)

After 68 years, the Wilson family sold the home in 1978 when Florence moved to Arizona where she lived the rest of her life with her sister. Florence and Pearl both died in Arizona. Florence passed away in 1988 at the age of 92; her sister Pearl in 1993 at the age of 99.

The house remained a two apartment flat until the 1980s when it again became a single family home. The attractive bungalow on Leclaire Lake is one of the nicest homes in Leclaire and the current owners are continuing the long tradition of gardening.

This house history was won by Tim and Valene Carter in the Friends of Leclaire House History Contest. Winners must be members of Friends of Leclaire and live in Leclaire.