



# FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

## NEWSLETTER

June 2014

Volume 24 No. 2

### 2014 ELECTIONS

At the annual meeting in April, Friends of LeClaire elected the following members to the Board of Directors:

Mike Reinhardt, president  
William Krause, vice-president  
Ashley Mattingly, secretary  
Jim Milgrim, treasurer  
Syvella Gregory, trustee  
Cindy Reinhardt, trustee  
Jen Rutherford, trustee

After many years of service, Kathy Krishnan has retired as secretary of Friends of LeClaire. She is a founding member of the organization and is always one of the first to volunteer. We are grateful for her past work as secretary and look forward to seeing her at upcoming events as she continues to volunteer for Friends of LeClaire.

### MOVIES COMING TO LECLAIRE!

Two LeClaire homes, on Lake and Hale Avenues, have been selected as sites for an upcoming movie. Filming for *Marshall the Miracle Dog* is to begin around June 6th. Details about the movie experience in LeClaire will be included in the next FOL newsletter.

### NEW EXHIBITS AT CHILDREN'S MUSEUM



*Children from St. Theresa's School in Belleville enjoy the new Scott Credit Union and Hyten Dental Office exhibits during a May field trip.*

### SAVE THE DATE

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual LeClaire Parkfest will be on Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup> from noon to 5 p.m. Save the date and invite your family to "come home" for this annual party that celebrates our history while providing the opportunity for local non-profit organizations to raise funds that benefit the entire community. Contracts have already been signed and other arrangements completed for the festival. Vendor applications will be posted to the FOL web site beginning July 1.

### THANK YOU!

In recent months FOL volunteers have planted flowers and tended gardens at LeClaire Park, hosted a water station for the Bonifest 5K Run through LeClaire with help from the EHS Student Council, organized the annual LeClaire Yard Sales and worked the year's first FOL booth at the Goshen Market. Thank you! These activities make LeClaire and Edwardsville a better place to live! Thanks to all who volunteered! Call 656-1294 to become a volunteer.

## LECLAIRE PARK BAND CONCERT

### SUNDAY, JUNE 22 ♦ 4 P.M.

The Edwardsville Municipal Band has been playing concerts at LeClaire Park for over a hundred years, and this summer will be no different. In earlier times, young couples would rent boats and row out onto the water where they would enjoy the concert. Friends of LeClaire has heard stories from more than one senior resident of how younger siblings would quietly swim out to "rock the boat" during these concerts.

This year's free concert can be heard at LeClaire Park on Sunday June 22 at 4 p.m. Visitors are encouraged to bring their lawn chairs, a picnic blanket and perhaps an early picnic supper, then sit back and enjoy the music.

There will be no boats on LeClaire Lake this year, but the beauty of LeClaire Park will surround concert goers who are also encouraged to visit the FOL concession table.

## Friends of Leclaire Newsletter

Published Quarterly

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Kathy Krishnan

Carol Krumeich

Ashley Mattingly

Jim & Mary Ellen Milgrim

Diane Murbarger

Al & Kim Pauli

Mike & Cindy Reinhardt

Jen Rutherford

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### 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.

## LECLAIRE BICYCLES

The June edition of *Illinois Heritage*, a magazine published by the Illinois State Historical Society, will include an article on Leclaire bicycles. The N. O. Nelson factories here in Leclaire manufactured bicycles for two seasons in the late 1890s during the height of the country's bicycle craze.

In an 1896 article about the St. Louis Cycle Show, the *St. Louis Republic* described the Nelson exhibit as follows: "On entering the show one of the first displays that arrest the eye is that of the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Company... The company decided last year that they would come into the market in 1896 with an honest, high-grade wheel of the finest quality, which would take rank with any wheel made in the United States, and sell for as much as the best. At Leclaire, Ill., a special factory has been built which is now turning out hundreds of high-grade wheels of the large tube variety, barrel hubs, brittle steel cones, and bearings and frames of the most perfect weldings, high, low and medium."

In their display they have samples of their wheels on many colored pieces of carpet, each color corresponding to that of the bicycle resting upon it. They wish to convey the idea by this that they are ready at short notice to give any purchaser any colored wheel he or she may desire. The firm seems to favor dark green, however. One of the most attractive wheels in this exhibit is the ladies' wheel, called "Lady Leclaire," as stiff and rigid as a diamond frame machine. The display and the appearance of the wheels are certainly a cred-

it to the manufacturing possibilities of St. Louis. The Nelson Company is one of two factories in St. Louis which produce a high-grade wheel entirely from home labor and material."

In addition to the Lady Leclaire, Nelson manufactured tandem bicycles and several models of men's cycles including the Cosmopolitan and the Autocrat.

But the company didn't just sell bicycles, they also promoted bicycle races, rented bicycles and had a repair shop at the factories. They issued at least two catalogs

but none are known to be in existence and even national bicycle museums have been unable to locate a Leclaire bicycle. The Leclaire cycles were "safety" bikes, that is, they were not the high wheeled machines of the early 1890s, but had two tires of equal size.

Although the primary product of the Leclaire factories was plumbing goods, we are always learning of new and different products manufactured here in Leclaire. Bicycle sales were probably discontinued when increased competition made other products more lucrative.

## 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 and January. A holiday party is held in December.

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

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Jun 10      | FOL Meeting, 7 p.m.  |
| Jun 13-14   | FOL at Route 66 Festival   |
| Jun 21      | FOL at Goshen Market, 8-Noon   |
| Jun 22      | Leclaire Park Band Concert, 4 p.m.                                   |
| Jun 24 + 26 | Fishing Lessons Leclaire Lake<br>9 a.m.—11 a. m.*                    |
| Jun 28      | Fishing Derby at Leclaire Lake<br>10 a.m. - Noon; Registration 9:30* |
| Jul 8       | FOL Meeting, 7 p.m.  |

\*Edwardsville Parks & Recreation



# THE KELLY HOUSE - 1205 TROY ROAD

The beautiful brick home at 1205 Troy Road was sited in a recent LeClaire housing survey as a “bungalow-like house with exceptionally interesting design.” It was built for Frank Joseph Kelly who moved into the new home with his bride, Catherine Long Kelly, after their honeymoon in late 1926.

Frank was not a native of Edwardsville. He was born in Kankakee, Illinois, the second child of James and Mary Kelly. His father was a railroad man who moved to Frankfort, Indiana, when Frank was a boy. At about the age of 18, Frank also went to work for the railroad, the Clover Leaf Line which became the Nickel Plate Railroad.

He was transferred to Edwardsville sometime in 1921, after serving with the U. S. Combat Engineers in World War I. The following year a newspaper article described how the young signal supervisor had installed a radio at the Clover Leaf Depot so that daily concerts could entertain the operators as well as those waiting for trains.

Catherine was born in Edwardsville, one of eight children of Thomas and Johanna Long. Her father was a grocer and the family lived at 420 St. Louis Street. The Long household was one of the first in their area to have a telephone, so the children often were called on to provide a messenger service for the neighborhood. When a call came in for a neighbor, Catherine or one of her siblings would be sent to fetch them. These calls usually announced an important event such as the death of a relative or the birth of a child.

Catherine received her diploma from Edwardsville High school in 1919 from the stage of the Wildey Theatre where graduations were held before the construction of the new high school on West Street. An accident at the ceremony could have resulted in serious injury for her. Just before going on stage, her skirt was sucked into a large ventilating fan. The *Intelligencer* reported that, although the skirt was shredded, she remained “cool and calm” as she pulled herself away from the dangerous blades. Her mother was called and together they went next door to Dr. Fiegenbaum’s home (now Weber Funeral Home) where a dress was borrowed and she was back at the ceremony before anyone from the audience knew there was a problem.

Frank and Catherine were married on November 17, 1926, at St. Mary’s Catholic Church on Park Street, just a block from her childhood home. Catherine’s dress was described as

“French blue georgette over satin with bands of a darker shade of velvet and ornaments of coral, made with cape effect.” She wore a picture hat of blue velvet trimmed with the same shade of georgette and a large coral flower. The newspaper said she was “a young lady of attractive appearance.” Her groom was 30 years old, a tall, slender man with blue eyes and light brown hair who had made many friends since moving to Edwardsville.

The *Intelligencer* also reported that after a short honeymoon in Chicago, the couple “upon their return will reside on Troy Road, LeClaire, where the groom has erected and fitted up a handsome brick bungalow.”

The Kellys had one son, James, born in 1930. During his school years they were active in organizations related to his activities. Frank served as chairman of the Edwardsville Cub

Scouts executive board and Catherine was president of the Edwardsville P. T. A. James went on to a career in broadcasting, working with television and radio stations throughout Illinois.

Frank would work for the railroad for 49 years in various capacities before retiring in 1963. He spent most of his career at the Nickel Plate Depot a few blocks from his home.

Before her marriage Catherine worked as a secretary and stenographer at a law firm. She would return to that work in the late 1940s, establishing her own secretarial service with offices in St. Louis and Edwardsville. A company owned by a woman was unusual enough at the time to warrant a radio interview in 1948. She also served as secretary for St. Mary’s church and school for many years.

Catherine was a member of the Edwardsville Garden Club, which would indicate that the grounds at 1205 Troy Road were well tended then as they are today.

Catherine passed away in October 1969. Less than a year later, Frank sold the home on Troy Road to Forrest and Gloria Fernandes. Frank moved to an apartment on Quince Street which was his home until his death in 1977.

Forrest Fernandes was killed in an automobile accident in December, 1972, but Gloria and their children would enjoy the house for over forty years, making the current residents only the third family to own the home. Perhaps these new owners, like their predecessors, will continue the “tradition” of making it their home for many years to come.



# ARTICLES FROM THE PAST

*Note: By 1916, Leclaire's founder had become a resident of New Orleans who visited his home in Leclaire only a couple of times per year.*

**July 30, 1916**

***New Orleans States***

## **ORLEANS MILLIONAIRE IS TO CARE FOR 5 FRENCH TOTS ORPHANED BY WAR**

**Answers Appeal of Life;  
Other Philanthropies Credited to Nelson**

N. O. Nelson, New Orleans millionaire, will defray, for two years, expenses of five of the hundreds of thousands of French children whose fathers have fallen, sacrifices to wars in the gory trenches of Europe.

The names of two of Mr. Nelson's wards, along with an acknowledgement of a \$146 gift, which will supply them with the necessities of life for twenty-four months, are published in the July number of "Life," which publication has been instrumental in procuring American foster parents for approximately 250 of the unfortunate infants.

Two of the babies who have been assigned to the care of the New Orleans philanthropist are Nos. 48 and 62 in the list of 96 named in July "Life."

The American sponsors are placed in direct communication with their wards by the Orphelinat des Armes, in Paris. Mr. Nelson already has written letters to each of his beneficiaries.

Mr. Nelson says that his act is the result of his devotion to children. Outside

of forgetting his \$1,000,000 pass book balance, he says the hobby of his spare moments and the inspiration of his busy ones is children.

He admits that since his five grandchildren are just about to step over into manhood and womanhood, a feeling of lonesomeness has begun to creep over him.

"That's why I visited my big kindergarten in Bessemer, Ala., last Sunday," he said.

This school playroom for the children of Bessemer, with more than 100 enrolled, and another in Leclaire, Ill, are endowed by Mr. Nelson.

But this is not all. Mr. Nelson has from time to time employed from five to twenty industrial teachers to work among the poorer class of the country, teaching them useful trades, absolutely, as Mr. Nelson expresses it, "for the joy of seeing the needy stand on their feet."

This New Orleans philanthropist-child lover is the kind of man who works for the good of humanity solely. Not a person in New Orleans knows that Mr. Nelson has shipped carloads of rice and flour to the hunger-suffering children of Belgium, but the fact was leaked out when a *States* reporter questioned him recently.

Mr. Nelson is a native of Norway and lives with District Attorney Luxemburg at 1230 State street. His office is a small unimposing room on the second floor of the Metropolitan Bank building.

**August 27, 1901**

***Edwardsville Intelligencer***

## **Exciting Runaway**

Mrs. Wm Simon of Leclaire and her little daughter figured in an exciting runaway Sunday evening which might have resulted in the serious injury or death of either. Mrs. Simon had just taken her sister, Miss Genevieve Brinkman, home, and was returning to Leclaire. The horse she drove was a young one of good blood. Near the city park a boy came along on a pony and both horses instinctively began to race. The upshot was that the one attached to the runaway ran away. It dashed out Fillmore street at a fast gait, the lady trying to control its actions and hold the baby in at the same time. In the sharp turn at the corner of Wolf Street the two outer wheels crumbled under the strain and the rig went down, whirling over and over its occupants, who were entangled in the heap of leather and splintered wood which constituted the wreckage. A dozen men were sitting about the corner but seemed paralyzed at the incident and gazed at the wreck in stupefaction. Jake Heinrich and Henry Ruffian, driver for the Leland, who were on the Clover Leaf platform, ran over and assisted Mrs. Simon from the remains of the rig. Both she and the child miraculously escaped almost unscratched, and it was remembered afterward that after the exciting plunge and roll across the ground, the baby sat gravely upon the cinders and neither cried nor uttered a word, taking the matter with the utmost sangfroid.

## **SHARING LECLAIRE HISTORY**

FOL hosts a booth at the Goshen Market on the third Saturday of each month, May through October. The organization will also be at the history tent at the Route 66 Festival on June 13-14. Stop by to see us for answers about Leclaire history, to pick up literature about Leclaire and Edwardsville history, to purchase Leclaire merchandise or to tell us your Leclaire story.

Please call 656-1294 or send an e-mail to FOL at [friends@historic-leclaire.org](mailto:friends@historic-leclaire.org) if you have stories and/or pictures to share or if you can volunteer to work at a FOL event. If you are new to Leclaire or have not volunteered before, we'll pair you with one of our veteran volunteers.

## **HOUSE HISTORY CONTEST**

The house at 1205 Troy Road was chosen for this month's house history because the owners entered and won the FOL House History Contest. FOL members are encouraged to enter the contest to learn the history of their Leclaire home. With over 400 homes in Leclaire, entering the contest makes it more likely that your home will be chosen. To enter, send your name, address and phone number via e-mail to [friends@historic-leclaire.org](mailto:friends@historic-leclaire.org) with the subject line "House History Contest" or send a note with the same information to FOL at Box 644, Edwardsville, IL 62025. Winning addresses are drawn randomly, four times per year. You must be a member of Friends of Leclaire to enter the contest.