



FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

NEWSLETTER

October 2017

Volume 27 No. 3

Sunday • Noon - 5 PM
LeClaire Park
Edwardsville, Illinois

OCTOBER 15

2017

PROCEEDS GO TO LOCAL CHARITIES
AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

www.historic-leclaire.org



26TH ANNUAL

PRESENTED BY FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

Music

Old St. Louis Levee Band Trio
Dixieland Jazz • NOON - 2:30 pm

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

Mike Zanger & Friends
Americana • 1-3:30 pm

Food & Drink

A wide selection of delicious festival fare including a beer and wine garden hosted by Bin 51

Arts & Crafts

Browse a variety of craft booths featuring local artisans.

Trolley Tours

Narrated trolley rides through the LeClaire National Historic District.

Exhibits

Historic photos and memorabilia, vintage cars and tractors!

Children's Activities

Book Sale

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

Pet Adoption

Cuddly pets ready for adoption.

Parking available at LeClaire School, the Nelson Campus of LCCC or on streets within the LeClaire neighborhood. (no shuttle service).
Handicap parking available next to park.

Thank You to Our Sponsors

- **TheBANK of Edwardsville**
- **Krause Properties**
- **Attorney Keith Short**
- **Creative Options Graphic Design, Inc.**
- **Cassens - Dodge, Chrysler, Jeep, Ram**



LECLAIRE PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The Edwardsville Parks and Recreation Department has made many improvements at LeClaire Park this fall. The water level of the Lake was lowered in late summer so a stone wall could be installed along the Madison Avenue bank of the lake. There have been issues with the bank (and sidewalk) collapsing for many years, and this offers a permanent solution. While water levels were low, Friends of LeClaire volunteers were able to get out into the lake to recover 12 blocks from the wall surrounding the "beach" and 175 landscaping bricks. Most will be reinstalled before LeClaire Parkfest.

The long-planned for sidewalk, winding its way along the western bank near the playground, was installed this September and is as beautiful as anticipated. (See photo above.)

And finally, the old sycamore tree that gracefully bowed over the south end of the lake was removed last month. The old tree had died, but as one local resident observed, it probably had a tackle box full of fishing gear in its branches. It was a favorite fishing spot, where many fishermen cast too high and lost their lines in the tree.

MEMORIAL BRICKS AVAILABLE

Friends of LeClaire is again selling Memorial Bricks to be installed around the bandstand at LeClaire Park. Previously, bricks were sold about 15 years ago to help pay for sidewalks in the park. If you would like to honor a child, grandchild, friend or parents with an engraved brick at LeClaire Park, there is an application on our website and copies will be available at the Friends of LeClaire booth at LeClaire Parkfest. Bricks are \$50 each with proceeds being used for improvements at LeClaire Park. For additional information call 656-1294.

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

www.historic-leclaire.org ♦ friends@historic-leclaire.org ♦ 618-659-2108

RECENT NEWS

MARY BLAIN REMEMBERED

Founding member of Friends of Leclaire, Mary Blain, 66, passed away on Wednesday, Aug 30 in Creve Coeur, Missouri. She served as treasurer of the organization for many years and also volunteered her artistic talents. Many of the photographs people enjoy at the annual Leclaire Parkfest were put together by Mary for the Leclaire Centennial celebration in 1990. Every year she decorated the Leclaire bandstand to give Parkfest a festive atmosphere even before people arrived. Then she set up her photo booth, "Memories by Mary" and provided hundreds with souvenir pictures of Leclaire Parkfest.

But what will be remembered most about Mary Blain is her heart. She was full of kindness, compassion and joy, qualities that became evident to anyone who had the opportunity to know her. She will be sorely missed. Friends of Leclaire extend deepest sympathy to her husband Bob, daughter Kelly, grandson Daniel, and all of what Mary called her extended "phamily."

Hundreds of family and friends attended a celebration of Mary's life at Leclaire Park on Sunday, Sep 3. Suggested memorials were to Friends of Leclaire or Tapestry of Community Offerings (TOCO).



FOL FALL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

If it's time for Parkfest (and it is!), then for many it's also time to renew your membership in Friends of Leclaire. This convenient reminder is also a great opportunity to tell you that membership in Friends of Leclaire does not require a commitment of time. Your membership is a way of saying "We like what you do," but doesn't obligate you to attend meetings (unless you want to) or to volunteer (unless you want to). We appreciate the validation that comes with your membership.

FOL are dedicated to preserving and enhancing the public areas in Leclaire and educating the public about the unique history of the former Village of Leclaire. FOL has spent thousands of dollars over the years for trees, landscaping, picnic benches, and other improvements to Leclaire Park. They also plant and maintain flower beds in the park (except those maintained by the Edwardsville Garden Club). Their educational mission is conducted through community outreach, publications (this newsletter), a website, facebook pages, an annual festival, and continued research on the Leclaire National Historic District. Membership applications can be found on the FOL website: historic-leclaire.org or call 618-656-1294.



This year Andi Smith has made these sweet crocheted pumpkins which are FREE with every new or renewing FOL membership!

SAVE THE DATE!
LUMINARIA WALK
AT
LECLAIRE PARK
SUNDAY
DECEMBER 3
6 P.M. - 9 P.M.
TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS ANNUAL EVENT, CALL ROB NICKRENT AT 618-659-2108

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 p.m. 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 ~

- | | |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| Oct 7 | FOL at Goshen Market |
| Oct 10 | 7 pm FOL meeting |
| Oct 14 | Leclaire Park Clean-Up Day |
| Oct 15 | Noon - 5 pm Leclaire Parkfest |
| Nov 13 | 7 pm FOL meeting |
| Dec 3 | 6-9 pm Luminaria Walk |
| Dec 14 | 7 pm FOL Holiday Social |

NO MEETING IN JANUARY

516 EAST AVENUE - SWEDISH IMMIGRANT HOME

In early Leclaire photographs, a large house stands alone at the southeast corner of Leclaire Lake. The home at 516 East Avenue remains a standout in Leclaire today, although that was not the address for the house until 1927.

It was built by the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Company in 1914 and sold to the Hallquist family. Anders "Gustaf" Hallquist and his wife, Axelina Petersson Hallquist were Swedish immigrants who came to America in 1892 with five

Einar Hallquist married Alma Ammann, daughter of J. F. Ammann, the nationally known florist who brought Florist Mutual (now Hortica) to Edwardsville.

Ralph married Hilda Tuxhorn, the daughter of Albert and Edith Metcalf Tuxhorn. She grew up in the Metcalf House at 7 Logan Place behind the Leclaire factories. Part of Leclaire sits on land purchased from her grandfather, Andrew W. Metcalf.



516 East Avenue can be seen in the background of this 1915 photograph. (Courtesy of Madison County Historical Society)

young children, John, Margaret, Einar, Swen and Ralph. The oldest was 11 and the youngest an infant when they made the voyage. The family of seven made their way to St. Louis where they settled for a few years, before moving to Leclaire in 1897. Gustaf had been trained as a woodworker in Sweden, and he found work in the Cabinet Mill of the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Company.

The Hallquist family rented a house on Holyoake Road when they arrived, then purchased 827 Holyoake in 1902 where they lived until moving to the beautiful four-square house on the corner near Leclaire Lake. By the time they moved into their new home in 1915, there were two more children, Karene and Dora, but their older children were, by then, starting to move out to start families of their own.

Anders Gustaf Hallquist died of pneumonia in 1921. He was 62 years old. In his obituary it said, "Mr. Hallquist was of a rather quiet and unassuming disposition. He desired to take care of his business affairs and when not engaged at the bench gave attention to his house."

Mrs. Hallquist remained in the home until 1925 when she moved to St. Louis to live with her son Ralph. Most of the Hallquist children moved away after they married, but three retained close ties to Edwardsville.

Because of their marriages, both of the above families visited Edwardsville often even after moving away. Swen Hallquist married Margaret Whitford who was a descendant of the notable Leverett and Chapman families of Edwardsville. Margaret died in 1940, and Swen moved to northwestern Illinois in the late 1940s after he remarried.

Alexina Hallquist sold the house on East Avenue to Louis and Elvina Abenbrink a week after their Sep 4, 1925 wedding. The house at that time had an address of 1000 Madison Avenue, but soon was changed to 516 East Avenue.

Louis Abenbrink, a WW I veteran, was born in Hamel Township to Frederick and Johanna Abenbrink. His parents had both been married before and widowed when they found each other. Unfortunately Frederick died just before Louis was born in 1887. From this humble beginning, Louis worked his way up through the business world to the position of partner and president of the A & B Feed and Seed on St. Louis Street. The feed store was located where the Bank of Edwardsville's main offices are located today.

Elvina Weidner Abenbrink grew up on a farm in Pin Oak Township.

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Pictured above is the family of Henry and Elizabeth (Leu) Weidner, probably taken about 15 years before they moved to Leclaire. In back (left to right) are Mathilda, Elvina and Leo; In the front row: Elizabeth, Roy and Henry. Elvina and her mother later lived at 516 East Avenue. (Photo courtesy of Debbie Laverty)

516 EAST AVENUE (cont. from page 3)



The home at 516 East Avenue today. (Reinhardt)

In 1922 her father retired from farming, and the family moved to 407 Franklin Avenue. Her father accepted a position with the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Company, and the family settled into their new home just two blocks from Elvina's brother Leo and his family at 211 Franklin Avenue. After moving to town Elvina found employment as an operator for Illinois Bell Telephone. As was the custom, she became a homemaker after her marriage.

After the death of Elvina's father in 1940, her mother, Elizabeth Weidner, moved in with Louis and Elvina. In 1950, they sold the house at 516 East Avenue, and the three of them moved to a house at 507 Franklin Avenue which became their retirement home. Elizabeth Weidner died in 1957 and Louis Abenbrink in 1968. Elvina stayed in the Franklin Avenue house until her death in 1987.

One of the current occupants of 516 East Avenue has lived there since 1967, so she knew Mrs. Abenbrink as a neighbor (just across the alley). Mrs. Abenbrink told her they

moved from the house after they gave up on having children, but given the fact that they were in their 60s when they moved, that may not be the case. It's more likely that they moved because there were no bedrooms on the first floor of the house at 516 East Avenue. By 1950, Elvina's mother was in her 80s. A few years after the Abenbrinks moved to 507 Franklin, Mary Weidner, widow of Elvina's brother Leo, moved into a new house at 511 Franklin Avenue in 1956. Members of the Weidner family certainly left their mark on the 500 block of Franklin and East Avenues

There were three short-term residents of the East Avenue house between 1950 and 1967, but the house has been lovingly maintained for 50 years by two generations of the family occupying the house today.



Furnishings at 516 East Avenue today include two pieces of furniture purchased from the Abenbrink family. The checkerboard table shown here was made by Louis Abenbrink. (Reinhardt)

FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE ONLINE

"Historic Leclaire," the Friends of Leclaire Facebook page has notices of coming events plus many pictures of things going on in Leclaire (thank you, Theresa Morrison). There is also a "Leclaire Parkfest" Facebook page with notices about the festival. We encourage you to "Like" our pages on Facebook and "Share" when you see an event or photograph that you enjoy. Thanks!

Our website at <http://www.historic-leclaire.org/> was recently rebuilt by Will Krause. There you can find a lot of historical information including transcribed newspaper articles about Leclaire dating back to the 1890s when it all began. There are also memoirs of people who lived in Leclaire, past newsletters (each containing a Leclaire house history or other historical information) along with current news about the Leclaire neighborhood. The Friends of Leclaire website is a great source for teachers, students or others interested in local history. The website has current events, membership applications, vendor applications for Parkfest, memorial brick applications, and much more to explore.

PARKFEST SPONSORS

If you need services offered by any of the following who have generously agreed to sponsor Leclaire Parkfest, please give them a call: TheBank of Edwardsville, Cassens, Creative Options Graphic Design, Krause Properties, and Attorney Keith Short.

LECLAIRE PARK CONCERT

The last two years we have had a much larger crowd at the annual Leclaire Park Band Concert. It's amazing how many people show up for the golden combination of great music, good weather and free ice cream! Thank you to the Edwardsville Municipal Band for the music, to those who prayed for good weather, and to Friends of Leclaire who volunteered to work the Ice Cream Social.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to all those who took a turn at the Friends of Leclaire booth at the Goshen Market this summer, those who participated in Leclaire Park clean-up days and to the gardeners who helped keep the flower beds looking good, especially Mike Reinhardt who spends so many hours gardening at the park that there are probably people who think he works there.