



FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

NEWSLETTER

March 2015

Volume 25 No. 1

FOL Spring Calendar

The Friends of Leclaire Spring calendar is full and we're hoping you'll consider joining us for some of these coming events as a volunteer or participant.

MEET YOUR ALDERMAN



Campus of Lewis and Clark Community College. Room 110 is a first floor classroom just east of the Leclaire Room.

This time of year Friends of Leclaire normally hosts a forum of candidates running for mayor or alderman, but incumbent Ward 5 Alderman William Krause is running unopposed. In lieu of a debate, residents will be given the opportunity to hear what is going on in Ward 5 and other areas of the city, to ask questions about how city government works, and to address concerns for our neighborhood.

Due to the "Meet Your Alderman" event, the March Board meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. instead of the usual 7 p.m.

ST. BONIFEST 5K WATER STATION

FOL will again host a water station Saturday, May 23, at 8:30 a.m. at the corner of Lake and Hale for runners in the Bonifest 5K Race. Call 656-1294 to volunteer, or just come to Leclaire Park to cheer on the runners!

All residents of Leclaire are invited to "Meet Your Alderman" on Tuesday, March 10, at 7 p.m. in Room 110 of Building N4 at the Historic N. O. Nelson

ARBOR DAY

AT LECLAIRE PARK

Residents and admirers of Leclaire Park are invited to join FOL and Edwardsville's Beautification and Tree Commission as we celebrate Arbor Day on Saturday, April 25, beginning at 10 a.m. with a tree planting involving local Scout troops.

Following the 10 a.m. tree planting, there will be a general park clean-up and volunteers will paint the gazebo on the east side of the park. For more information call 656-1294.

FOL ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Friends of Leclaire will be held Tuesday, April 14, at 7 p. m. in Room 201 of Building N4 at the Historic N. O. Nelson Campus of LCCC in Leclaire.

Members of Friends of Leclaire are encouraged to contact Kathy Krishnan at 656-8375 if they are interested in serving on the board of Friends of Leclaire which consists of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and three trustees. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the annual meeting.

EDWARDSVILLE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM GRAND RE-OPENING FEBRUARY 28

After being closed for nearly two months, the Children's Museum in the former Leclaire School House will hold a "Grand Re-Opening" February 28 with an afternoon of special activities including the unveiling of several new exhibits. The new exhibits include a YMCA Fitness Studio, an interactive recycling center, a Dairy Queen ice cream parlor, and, in the near future, a florist shop where creative kids can design their own creations.

The Edwardsville Children's Museum is located in the historic Leclaire School House shown at right.



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

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

HOUSE HISTORY CONTEST

Members of Friends of Leclaire are invited to enter our contest to have their home history researched. The winner of the House History Contest is given a history of their home, supporting documentation and, when available, early photographs of their house and its original owners.

With over 400 homes in Leclaire, the contest gives members a better chance of having their home chosen for the quarterly newsletter's house history. Contestants must be members of Friends of Leclaire.

To enter, send a letter or e-mail to Friends of Leclaire (addresses on page 1). E-mails should have the subject line "House History Contest."

Membership dues in FOL are just \$15 annually. Applications are available on the FOL web site or call 656-1294 for information.

FOL NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly
Editor: Cindy Reinhardt

Please 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!

Correction: In the December newsletter, the caption on page 2 should have read Oscar and RUBY Allen Bardelmeier. Alice Bardelmeier was Oscar's sister.

A N N U A L L E C L A I R E

YARD SALE SATURDAY • 8-2

MAY 16, 2015

www.historic-leclaire.org

The Fourth Annual Leclaire Neighborhood Yard Sale will be held on May 16th from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Please send a note or e-mail (address on page 1) so FOL can advertise all of the sales. Your notice to FOL is like a "Want Ad" listing your address and a list of items you will be selling. FOL will list larger items and categories in a large newspaper advertisement and include your address and merchandise on a list of sales posted to our web site and Facebook page.

FOL also needs to know where sales are located so that signs are placed properly throughout the neighborhood on sale day. For example, if there are no sales on Ruskin, we won't put up signs directing the public to Ruskin Avenue.

FOL pays for all advertising for this event. There is no need for participating households to contribute nor do they need to be members of FOL. For further information, please call 656-1294.

FOL PARTIED AT THE PAULI'S!

The Pauli home on Lake Avenue was packed with guests for the December Holiday Party as FOL members gathered to eat, (drink!) and visit with neighbors and friends. Thank you, Al and Kim, for being such wonderful hosts!

NO MORE SKATING

After more than a century of skating on Leclaire Lake each winter, the City has banned ice skating. Due to climate changes there have been very few days when skating was permitted in recent years, but it is still the official end of an era. Skating on Leclaire Lake is now just a memory.

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

- Mar 10 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting
- Mar 10 7 p.m. Meet Your Alderman
- Apr 14 7 p.m. FOL Annual Meeting
- Apr 25 10 a.m. Arbor Day at Leclaire Park
- May 9 FOL at Goshen Market
- May 12 7 p.m. Board Meeting
- May 16 Leclaire Yard Sales
- May 23 8:30 a.m. Bonifest 5K Water Station
- Jun 9 7 p.m. Board Meeting
- Jun 12-13 FOL at Route 66 Festival

THE FRIEDHOFF HOUSE - 909 HALE AVENUE



909 Hale Avenue.

to marry Miss Edna Caroline Brockmeier, the only daughter of a prosperous Edwardsville area farmer.

Edna met Irwin four years early when she attended a play in Pin Oak Township and was introduced to the leading man, Irwin Friedhoff. It might seem strange that two Edwardsville natives didn't know each other, but they lived on farms on opposite sides of town, attended rural schools near where they lived and were members of different churches. Plus, she was two years older than he was, so according to the newspaper, their paths didn't cross until that day in 1918.

Irwin, the son of William and Ida Friedhoff, was born in 1898 in Pin Oak Township. Described as an industrious young man, he took part-time jobs as an auction cashier, a musician, and finally in 1919 at the Post Office. It's probably no coincidence that they didn't marry until shortly after he became a full



Irwin Friedhoff with his violin.

Edna Caroline Brockmeier, daughter of Gustav and Dina Brockmeier, grew up southwest of Edwardsville near an area known as Peters. Born in 1896, she had only two brothers, but a very large extended family, many living along the bluffs in the same area as her parents. The newspaper described Edna as a "charming and popular young lady."

By the time Irwin and Edna married on June 8, 1922, they

In April 1922, an article in the *Edwardsville Intelligencer* announced that Charles Grebel and Sons were building a 6-room house with bath for Irwin Friedhoff on Hale Avenue at a cost of \$6,000. Irwin had good reason for building a home. He was engaged

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time employee of the Post Office. But he continued his work as a musician, playing with the Edwardsville Municipal Band as well as with his own orchestra, "Friedhoff's Jolly Four," which provided music for local dances and parties nearly every weekend. He was the third generation of his family to play the violin and, according to a news article in 1926, the violin he played was a 1721 Stradivarius his grandfather brought from Germany when the family immigrated to America. It was his prize possession.

were slightly older than most newlyweds of their time. He was 24 and Edna 26 which meant they could afford a nicer home than the average couple starting married life. And they were also smart enough to outwit their friends who planned to host a "shivaree" at the house after the wedding. Before the ceremony Irwin locked everything up tight (unusual for those times) and the newlyweds stayed away until after dark so they could sneak in through the back door without being seen. One can only imagine the disappointment of their many friends. After a short honeymoon to Nokomis, Illinois, they returned to begin life at their new house on Hale Avenue.

Almost exactly two years after their marriage, on June 3, 1924, the newspapers reported that "Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Friedhoff of LeClaire are rejoicing over the arrival of an eight-pound baby daughter at their home this morning." Home births were the norm in those days as was the custom of "laying out" family members who died.

Three years later, on December 21, 1927, after battling bronchitis followed by an "inflammation of the lungs," Irwin Friedhoff died at home. He was only 29 years old. His coffin was placed in the parlor in front of the fireplace and was soon surrounded by over a hundred floral tributes. The Friedhoffs were a popular couple from large families. The newspapers reported that a thousand people attended the Christmas Day funeral from Immanuel M. E. Church. His fellow Post Office employees attended as a unit, as did the Edwardsville Municipal Band which led the procession to Valley View Cemetery. It was called "one of the largest funerals Edwardsville had ever seen."

With a mortgage on the property, the house at 909 Hale Avenue was sold at public auction, but stayed in the family as it was purchased by Edna's parents. Although they still had possession of the home, it was rented out and Edna, with her daughter Ruth, moved in with her parents who had a home at 227 S. Kansas Street. This made it possible for Edna to work while her mother took care of Ruth. Edna became a very successful professional woman, working for law firms and later the City of Edwardsville. After Irwin's death, she remained a widow until 1961 when she married Walter Arth.



Irwin and Edna Friedhoff on their wedding day.

ARTICLES FROM THE PAST

Note: In 1902 trains ran down the center of the Troy Road. The family in this story, Charles and Anna Sommershauser, lived at 803 Troy Road in Leclaire for only a few years before moving back to St. Louis. Articles are typed exactly as published.

July 4, 1902

Edwardsville Intelligencer Child Has Miraculous Escape

A tiny blue-eyed girl of two years strayed from her home out into Troy road last night. With one hand she dragged after her a little toy wagon and she crossed the road with her plaything, oblivious of the danger. Between two shining rails there were scattered some bits of bright green grass which took the child's eye. There was a rumble farther down the road, but the little girl paid no attention; her eyes were fixed on the pretty bits of glass.

She did not know that a man was feverishly twisting a brake handle, and she did not know when the noisy monster passed over her; the first thing she remembered afterward waking up in her

mother's arms.

Annabell Somershausen, daughter of Charles Somershausen, an employe of the brass factory at Leclaire, was stricken down by an electric car last night. The family live in a new house on the west side of the Troy road, at Leclaire. The place has no fence and the child strayed out onto the track and ran directly in front of the express car. It was too late to stop and she was knocked down and went under, the entire car passing over her. Being so small she remained in the center of the track and missed the wheels. Dr. E. C. Ferguson found that she was badly bruised about the arms, back and legs, but has no injuries otherwise.

May 26, 1910

Edwardsville Intelligencer

The population of Edwardsville is right now a good guessing point. The government census has been completed and the school census is to come, but neither one can be used as a basis on account of the divisions in which the work was done. It is estimated that the population now is between 6,800 and 7,000,

including Leclaire. The figures inside the corporate limits will probably not run over 5,700 because while other communities have extended their limits in the last ten years to take in accretions in the way of natural growth, Edwardsville has the same old lines. In one direction one can travel three-quarters of a mile through thickly settled territory after leaving the city limits.

May 26, 1910

Edwardsville Intelligencer

The Leclaire Blues base ball club has a dancing party scheduled for Saturday evening of this week, May 28, at Turner Hall. The Lindbeck Orchestra has been engaged for the affair, and it is announced that dancing will begin at 8:30. The admission will be fifty cents a couple, ladies free. As the weather is still admirable for social affairs of the kind, a large attendance is anticipated.

Note: The Lindbeck Orchestra was led by Carl Lindbeck who lived on 840 Hale Avenue in Leclaire. The popular orchestra played at venues all over Madison County for several decades.

Continued from page 3

In 1928 Irwin's parents bought the house from the Brockmeiers, then sold it to Edna in 1930. In 1931, the Friedhoffs moved into the house on Hale as renters until they purchased their own retirement home in Edwardsville. Edna remained with her parents on Kansas Street using her former home for rental income. In 1940 she rented it to the daughter of a family friend, Mildred Bollman Robinson, and her husband George. The Robinsons lived there until 1943 when the house was purchased by Mildred's parents, retiring Pin Oak Township farmers, Theodore and Lydia (Spitze) Bollman.

For Theodore "Tea" Bollman, retirement to Leclaire was almost like coming home. He was raised on a farm just south of Leclaire. The family home sat roughly where the Montclair Fire Station is now located. And the Leclaire neighborhood had more than a dozen relatives or former neighbors of both Theodore and Lydia. While living at their home on Hale Avenue, the Bollmans stayed connected to their Pin Oak neighbors by hosting the Pin

Oak Home Bureau and many family celebrations. Theodore Bollman died in late July 1959. Lydia followed him less than a month later.

Although the home at 909 Hale Avenue witnessed the tragic young death of its original owner, Irwin Friedhoff, over the years it held more joy than sorrow. The excitement of the Friedhoff's marriage, the birth of their daughter, social functions and family celebrations all made it a welcoming home.

There have been a number of owners since the Bollman estate sold the house in 1960 and fortunately the majority proved to be good caretakers. Six weeks before completion of the home in 1922, the news article announcing construction of the house said it was a 6-room stucco. Since then it has generally been listed as 5 rooms, and with siding installed in the early 1970s, the stucco, if there, is no longer visible, but the house retains its character.

This beautiful Leclaire bungalow overlooking Leclaire Park was recently identified as a Sears Winona kit home..

Thank you to Betty Keller, granddaughter of Irwin and Edna, for allowing us to copy Friedhoff family photographs.



Theodore and Lydia Spitze Bollman on their 50th anniversary in 1951.