



FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE NEWSLETTER

October 2015

Volume 25 No. 3

IMPROVEMENTS AT LECLAIRE PARK

Friends of Leclaire volunteers donated hundreds of hours this summer to making improvements at Leclaire Park. They painted the large picnic shelter on the Madison Avenue side of the park over the summer (This fall they repaired the wall at the “beach” where vandals had thrown more than twenty blocks from the top of the wall into the lake. Volunteers fished them out, scrubbed them down and put them back on the wall.

Flowers were planted in gardens throughout the park and mulch will be added later. In addition, memorials to Friends of Leclaire made it possible for FOL to purchase three trees, one in memory of Ricky Kuhn and two in memory of long-time Friends of Leclaire member and volunteer, Jack McCall. Meanwhile the Edwardsville Parks and Recreation Department does its usual excellent work in maintaining the park as well as the grounds at Leclaire Field and the Children’s Museum.

SAVE US A STAMP!

We are grateful to our members who renew their annual membership at Leclaire Parkfest! It saves us both printing and postage costs. Please consider a stop at the Friends of Leclaire table to update your membership. One of our fabulous volunteers will greet you with a smile and say “Thank you!”



Painters included Mark Hartman (pictured), Theresa Morrison, Mike Reinhardt, Lisa Skioldhanlin, and Jim Milgrim.

LECLAIRE PARKFEST Sunday, October 18 Noon – 5 p.m.

It’s Parkfest time again in Leclaire! We encourage you to gather families and friends to spend an entire afternoon listening to music, shopping, eating, viewing exhibits of vintage cars or historic photographs and taking a tour of Leclaire on the trolley. Some visitors even bring lawn chairs and settle in for a day along the lake surrounded by the wonderful sight, sounds, and aroma of the festival! See page four for additional details.

125 YEARS AGO

As we celebrate Leclaire’s 125th year, below are news stories from the *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, October 1890:

The foundations for houses No. 11, 16 and 17 have been completed and the carpentry work has been commenced.

A side walk will be built from Jefferson road to connect with the one the city will build on Buchanan street.

A co-assignment of American and English elm and hard and soft maple shade trees will arrive next week from the Bloomington nurseries.

Holyoake Road is open to traffic to the Troy Road.

A new steam pump with heavy pressure has been received for use in case of fire. The fire brigade will give it a test.

Poster Donated to Children’s Museum

In September Friends of Leclaire presented a poster telling the history of the 1895 Leclaire School House to members of the Children’s Museum’s Board of Directors. The poster also featured early photographs of the former School House courtesy of the Madison County Historical Society. The poster was designed by Cindy Reinhardt. Friends of Leclaire paid to have the poster printed and framed so that visitors to the Children’s Museum can now read about the history of their beautiful historic building.



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HELPFUL CITY NEWS



Kyle Suchomski, Will Krause, Mike Reinhardt and Mark Hartman clean up stones removed from the lake. Below is the rebuilt wall made possible by a morning of hard (often stinky) work. Thank you volunteers!



Half-Priced Trees!

Fall is an excellent time to plant trees and to encourage that activity the City of Edwardsville has a Tree Planting Program where the city will reimburse residents 50% of the purchase price of certain trees (up to \$75). For additional information or to participate in the program, go to <http://www.cityofedwardsville.com/> or inquire at the Public Works Office at 200 East Park Street.

COA's Needed

A reminder: The owners of properties in a National Historic District (all of Leclaire) need to submit a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) when making changes to the exterior of their property. Everyone is encouraged to avoid fines of up to \$750 by applying for a COA before starting work. If you need assistance with your project, the Historic Preservation Commission is available to assist with planning and provide general instructions on how to do the work at no charge to homeowners.

Large Trash Pick-Up

The next Large Trash Pick-up Day will be on November 10th for most of Leclaire. The clean-up service is being split to cover a two week period. Monday-Wednesday-Friday routes have large trash pick-up on Nov 2-4-6. Those with normal trash pick-up on Tuesday-Thursday routes will have large-trash items picked up on November 10th and 12th.

New Trash Receptacle Ordinance

The city has always had an ordinance requiring that residences move unsightly trash receptacles back to their stored locations in a garage or in the side or rear yards within 12 hours of pick up, but it was written in such a way that it was not enforceable. The ordinance has been recently revised so that residents throughout the city will face possible fines if their trash bins are put out more than 12 hours before pick-up or left out more than 12 hours after pick-up.

Vacant Housing Registration Program

A recent program requires that owners of properties that will be vacant for more than 30 days register with the city so that there is a maintenance schedule in place to assure regular mowing, etc. and as a protection for property owners since police will keep a more watchful eye on those properties in case there is vandalism or other problems. The registration program does not apply to "snow birds" or others simply on an extended vacation.

Sidewalks

There are a lot of "old wives tales" out there about sidewalk maintenance. State and local laws both require that homeowners keep their sidewalks clear of snow or debris (branches, overgrown edges, sweetgum balls, etc.). The current city ordinance requires that snow be clear within 24 hours after a snowfall.

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

Oct 10	FOL at Goshen Market
Oct 13	FOL Board Meeting, 7 pm
Oct 17	Leclaire Park Clean-Up, 9 am
Oct 18	Leclaire Parkfest
Nov 10	FOL Board Meeting, 7 pm
Dec 8	FOL Holiday Social, 7 pm
Jan 12	No FOL Meeting

113 FRANKLIN AVENUE

The simple home at 113 Franklin Avenue was built for newlyweds Fredrico (Fred) and Cecilia Casna in 1928. They first considered building a Sears House, but their friend and contractor, Ed Franks, said he could copy a design they liked for less money, so that's what they did. The house payments were \$6 per month.

Fred Casna was the son of immigrant parents from the Tyrol region of Italy. Paul and Rosa Margaret Casna were living in New Mexico when he was born. While he was still a baby, Fred was abducted by a Native American woman. Although he was almost immediately recovered, it was the final straw for Fred's mother who had seen enough of the Wild West. The family learned about coal mining opportunities in Illinois from Dominic Pizzini, another immigrant from their hometown, who assured them that work was available. The Casna family moved to Glen Carbon where the remainder of Fred's childhood was fortunately uneventful.

Cecilia Casna was the daughter of Otto and Mary Helmkamp who were second generation German immigrants. She spent her younger years near Prairietown before moving with her mother and sisters to Edwardsville. She married 25-year-old Fredrico Casna on April 9, 1927. Cecilia was 21. They didn't have money for wedding portraits so used a photo booth in town to take the pictures shown here.



Fredrico "Fred" and Cecilia Helmkamp Casna.

Courtesy of Marilyn Casna Sulc.

In the fall of 1928 they started building their home at 113 Franklin Avenue. At that time Franklin was a dead-end street to the west, and theirs was the last house on the north side of the street. A couple hundred yards west of their house were the railroad tracks.

In 1928, as you entered the house, there was a closet in the



The Casna House as it appeared circa 2000.

Courtesy of Marilyn Casna Sulc.

entryway and the living room to the left. Beyond the living room past a wide arched entry was the dining room. On the north wall of the dining room was a swinging butler's door that led to a large kitchen. There were two bedrooms with a bathroom in between on the east side of the house. The bedroom at the back, accessed from a hall that separated it from the kitchen, belonged to their only child, Marilyn, born in 1930. Her parents had the front bedroom with entry from the hall or the dining room.

Stairs to the basement were from the kitchen in the far NW corner of the house.

The second floor of the 1.5 story bungalow was not finished when they lived there, but her father did build a window seat in the dormer where Marilyn liked to sit and watch the trains. There was a railroad siding nearby so she could see passengers on the trains eating in the dining car from her perch in the attic.

What now looks like a parking place on the west side of the house, was once a driveway that went back to the garage and connected with the alley that ran west from Longfellow. The driveway and alley made a circular driveway of sorts.

Fred worked for the Illinois Power Company during the depression, but layoffs were regular. To increase his income, he started a large truck garden that was west and north of his house as well as across the street to the south. He didn't own all that land, but obtained permission to garden on railroad right-of-way. He sold the excess vegetables locally and at the produce market in St. Louis. He raised sweet potatoes, tomatoes, asparagus, cucumbers, corn and more. The cucumbers were made into pickles and Marilyn would help sell them at 5/10¢ or 2/nickel. Later he also raised chickens.

Cecilia was an excellent cook and part of every day's meal plan was soup prepared in a large blue granite pot. She later cooked for a number of local restaurants, including Cathcart's. In addition to being a good cook, she also played the piano very well, although only by ear, since she never learned to read music. She often used the piano at the Madison County



Marilyn Casna, 1938.

Nursing Home where she went to live in her last years.

Cecilia often told her daughter Marilyn the story of how the family might have lost the house during the Depression except for a fortuitous event in the fall of 1931. Marilyn was a baby, and her father was again laid off by the power company. They had no meat, so her mother asked her father to go rabbit hunting. She was feeling blue, but it was a nice day so she got a big box and took it outside on the sidewalk for Marilyn...an improvised playpen of sorts, and she began raking leaves out of the driveway. It was windy, so the leaves flew up as she raked and as they swirled about she thought she saw some money. Upon closer inspection, she found a \$10 bill.

Cecilia gathered up Marilyn and went into the house where she sat at the kitchen table just staring at that bill and turning it over and over...unable to believe their good fortune. The house payment was due, and they had no money. When Fred got home his wife asked if he had good luck, and he said, yes, he'd gotten two rabbits. She told him she was no longer in the mood for rabbit, she'd like to have steak. When he asked how they were going to pay for them she presented the \$10 bill. He jokingly accused her of "holding out on him" as she told him the story of the wind blowing the money into their driveway. There were no houses across the street at the time, so they had no idea where it might have come from. But Fred did go to the Tri-City Grocery at the corner of Schwarz and Troy Road and purchase steaks for supper, saving the rest of the money for their \$6 house payment.

There were many prayers of thanks that evening over their steak dinner at the Casna house. The following week, their luck held as Fred was called back to work.

The Casnas sold the house on Franklin in 1949 when they purchased the Stolte farmhouse at 118 McKinley (SW corner of McKinley and Longfellow). Frederick William Stolte had died and his widow, Caroline, offered to sell them the house. Fred knew her because Mr. Stolte had always plowed the Casna vegetable gardens with his tractor. The property had a barn and a house, both in poor condition. The barn was torn down and Fred completely renovated the house.

WHAT'S YOUR LECLAIRE STORY?

The house history in this issue offers a wonderful look at one family's life in Leclaire during the Great Depression. We are grateful for the participation of Marilyn Casna Sulc who was willing to be interviewed about her family and allowed us to copy her photographs. What a treasure! Please contact us if you have Leclaire stories or photographs to share!



This turkey (no slur intended) has decided to make Leclaire its new home. He's been "hanging out" all summer on Holyoake Road where he leaves "gifts" on the cars of residents!

Sunday • Noon - 5 PM
Leclaire Park
Edwardsville, Illinois

2015 OCTOBER 18

PROCEEDS GO TO LOCAL CHARITIES
AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

www.historic-leclaire.org



Music

Old St. Louis Levee Band Trio

Dixieland Jazz • NOON - 2:30 pm

The Lodge Brothers

Old Time Folk Music • 2:30 - 5 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

DAR 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.

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