



FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

NEWSLETTER

April 2016

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LECLAIRE WATER STATION

RUN FOR BONIFEST 5K

FOL will host a water station Saturday, May 28, beginning at 8:00 a.m. at the corner of Lake and Hale for runners in the 17th Annual 5K Run for Bonifest. This is the fifth year for the water station and the fifth year that volunteers from the EHS Student Council will join us for the event. Last year FOL had so many volunteers there were enough for a large cheering section where runners were given “the wave” as they passed through the corridor of cheering fans. There were lots of smiles and laughter making it one of the most fun events of the year.

Join Friends of Leclaire on May 28 as they give a hearty Leclaire welcome, encouragement, and, of course, water, to runners as they pass Leclaire Park!



Some of the volunteers at the 2015 Run for Bonifest Water Station.

HOLIDAY THANK YOU!

Many thanks are due to Bob and Ellen Nickrent for coordinating the first FOL Luminaria event as well as hosting the FOL Holiday Social in December. For the Luminaria evening, bags with candles were placed around Leclaire Park so visitors could enjoy a candle-lit stroll. Positive feedback indicates that this event should be repeated, so watch for it in December 2016.

FOL WILL DONATE EARTH DAY TREE

Friends of Leclaire will donate a tree to be planted at the Children’s Museum as part of its Earth Day celebration on April 22. Trees were planted to line the streets of Leclaire before most houses were built and continue to contribute to the charm of the neighborhood.

GOSHEN MARKET RETURNS MAY 14

The 2016 season of the Land of Goshen Community Market in downtown Edwardsville begins May 14 and Friends of Leclaire will be there for the opening. FOL is normally at the market on the third Saturday of each month, but moves that date up a week in May because of the Leclaire Yard Sale on the third Saturday in May.

Two volunteers are needed to work the booth each month where they provide information about Leclaire (brochures available) and sell Friends of Leclaire merchandise. New volunteers are paired with seasoned volunteers and with two people at the booth, there is time to take turns shopping the market. Call Mike Reinhardt at 656-1294 if you are willing to volunteer during this year’s Goshen Market season.

FOL ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Friends of Leclaire will be held Tues., April 12 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.

FOL Board Meetings are held on the Second Tuesday of the month and are open to everyone. The Board typically receives a report from our alderman as well as a report from an HPC representative in addition to covering FOL activities.

ANNUAL LECLAIRE

YARD SALE

SATURDAY • 8-2

MAY 21, 2015

www.historic-leclaire.org

The Yard Sales Are Coming!

The Fifth Annual Leclaire Neighborhood Yard Sale will be held May 21 from 8 a.m. - 2 p. m. To participate, send a note or e-mail (address below) to FOL with your address and a list of items you will have for sale. The information will be used both to place signs on the day of the sale and for advertising the sales. FOL pays for a newspaper advertisement and promotes the sale on social media in the week prior to the sale. There is no need for participating households to contribute nor do individuals or households need to be members of FOL. For further information, please call 656-1294.

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

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FOL President's Annual Report

In 2015 the Friends of LeClaire were once again very active. The 24th LeClaire Parkfest, the annual celebration of our history and neighborhood, was held on another beautiful autumn day. When the group who normally helps with set-up and take-down wasn't available, our members showed up in force. Thank you to everyone who helped that day and in the planning stages which begin months ahead of the event. Cindy Reinhardt coordinated the event again and is the main reason everything runs so smoothly. We thank Krause Properties, Attorney Keith Short, and the Bank of Edwardsville for their financial sponsorships. The assistance of the Edwardsville Parks Department and the Police Department is greatly appreciated.

In addition to Parkfest the Friends of LeClaire participated in other community events. We had a monthly booth at the Goshen Market and an information table at the History Tent during the Route 66 Festival. With the assistance of the EHS Student Council, we again provided a water station at LeClaire during the Bonifest 5K. In May we held the LeClaire Neighborhood Yard Sale despite intermittent rain. However, weather did force us to cancel the annual Municipal Band Concert in LeClaire Park.

The wettest June on record delayed our major beautification project in the park, the painting of the large pavilion on the corner of Madison and Lake. I cannot adequately thank our dedicated volunteers, Mark Hartman, Lisa Skioldhanlin, Theresa Morrison and Jim Milgrim for their assistance. Also thanks to Will Krause, Kyle Suchomski, and Mark Hartman for their help in repairing the wall in the "beach" area. Scott Reed helped with the landscaping in the park. Will Krause and I spread three loads of mulch donated by Barbara Krause. The Friends also maintained the flower gardens in the park.

Thanks to Cindy for our excellent newsletter. In June, FOL member S. J. Morrison shared his family's history in LeClaire. The assistance of Jen, Audrey, Anna Rutherford and all our delivery people in the distribution of the newsletter, no matter what the weather, is appreciated.

And thank you to Will and Cindy for their work in maintaining our website, which is very popular.

We have 11 new trees in LeClaire Park. Two were planted by Girl and Boy Scout troops for the city's Arbor Day celebration. The Friends hosted a reception after the event. Three memorial trees were planted, two for Jack McCall and one for Ricky and Randy Kuhn.

Sherrie Hickman created a new design featuring the Nelson Factory complex for t-shirts, which sold very well. Cindy designed a framed poster with three photos and a history of LeClaire School for the Children's Museum.

In December Bob and Ellen Nickrent supervised the placement of 750 luminarias at LeClaire Park. Then we concluded our busy year with a much deserved holiday social at the Nickrent home.

Thank you to all our members. Several of you donated more than the annual \$15 membership and your generosity is considered a vote of confidence.

Finally, thank you to the board: Will Krause, Ashley Mattingly, Jim Milgrim, Syvella Gregory, Theresa Morrison and Cindy Reinhardt. Their hard work and enthusiasm never fail to amaze me. One member said recently that this is the best

board she has ever been on. I cannot agree more. Ashley recently moved and we wish her well. She did a great job as secretary. Syvella is retiring as trustee. She was a great asset to our board. Both were willing volunteers and could always be counted on.

The Friends of LeClaire was founded 25 years ago to research, preserve, and promote LeClaire and its history. Recently the sister of FOL member Lisa Skioldhanlin translated an article from a 1908 Norwegian/American newspaper. The article states that the planning and development of LeClaire was based on "voluntary cooperation". That spirit of cooperation continues in LeClaire with our volunteers and members who helped us achieve so much in this and previous years.

President Mike Reinhardt



Luminaria in LeClaire. Photo courtesy of Theresa Morrison.

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

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Apr 12 | 7 pm Annual Meeting |
| Apr 22 | Earth Day at Children's Museum |
| May 10 | 7 pm FOL Meeting |
| May 14 | 8 am-Noon FOL at Goshen Market |
| May 21 | 8 am-2 pm LeClaire Yard Sales |
| May 28 | 8 am Bonifest 5K Water Station |
| Jun 10-11 | FOL at Route 66 Festival |
| Jun 14 | 7 pm FOL meeting |
| Jun 18 | 8 am-Noon FOL at Goshen Market |

853 and 855 Holyoake Road

The Queen Anne Victorian homes at 853 and 855 Holyoake Road were both designed in 1899 by the same architect, C. D. Hill. The first owners moved in that same year. There are a very few early “twin” homes like these in LeClaire. Newspaper and magazine articles about the village in the 1890s often claimed there were “no two homes alike.” Beyond the architectural style, both of these homes were built for the children of immigrants and the early owners would become long-time employees of the N. O. Nelson Company.

Both houses now have siding covering the original clapboard and the beautiful Victorian trim on the porches is gone. These changes were made many years ago at a time when many homeowners considered Victorian “old fashioned.” Today there is a new appreciation for Victorian architecture.

853 Holyoake

The first owners of the home at 853 Holyoake were William and M. Rose Kennedy. Both were the children of Irish immigrants who settled in St. Louis. William’s family traveled first to New York State, where he was born, before the family continued west to Missouri when he was a young boy.

In St. Louis he met Rose Haley whom he married about 1891. The young couple moved to Edwardsville/LeClaire about 1894 when William was hired as a painter by the N. O. Nelson Company. By the time they moved into the Holyoake house, William was foreman of the varnish shop.



The two houses shown above, 855 Holyoake Road (left) and 853 Holyoake Road, were both designed by LeClaire architect C. D. Hill and built in 1899. The picture was taken circa 1911 and is reprinted here courtesy of the Madison County Historical Society.

They are known to have purchased larger Edwardsville houses on well-traveled thoroughfares which they turned into tourist inns.

Like the Buck family, none of the early residents of the house stayed as long as the Kennedy family, and during the late 1920s and 1930s the occupants were often renters. The owners and/or tenants in the house seemed to turn over every few years until it was purchased by the current owners who have been there for many years.

855 Holyoake

While the owner of 853 Holyoake stayed for a number of years followed by a series of occupants for only a few years at a time, the experience in the house next door was the opposite. The first owner stayed only a few years, but the second family to own the house stayed for almost 80 years.

This house was built for the William Semon family. William, the son of German immigrants, was born in Marietta, Ohio and his wife, the former Jessie Brinkmann, was a native of Edwardsville from a well-connected family. Her father was also a German immigrant, but her mother’s family, the Tindalls, arrived in Madison County in 1816 making them one of our pioneer families.

William & Jessie were married in 1897 and began married life in St. Louis before moving to LeClaire when William, a machinist, obtained a job at the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Co. After only three years on Holyoake Road, they sold the house and moved to a location on Schwarz Street where by 1910, the household included a servant.

The house was purchased in 1902 by Anton (Tony) Gerhardt and his wife Emma Kriege Gerhardt. Tony and Emma were both children of German immigrant parents. Tony worked as a machinist at the N. O. Nelson Company so was likely a co-worker of William Semon. By 1920 Tony Gerhardt had been promoted to a position as foreman of the machine shop.



Rose and William Kennedy. (Courtesy of Rochelle Kennedy.)

The Kennedy family had four young children when they moved into the Holyoake house, Mary (5), Frank (4), Lester (2) and baby Edith. Fourteen years later it takes little imagination to picture the crowding in this small house.

In 1913, the Kennedy family sold the house on Holyoake and moved into their new four-square home at 1203 Emerson.

Their Holyoake house was purchased by Henry M Buck and his wife, Etta, who lived in the house briefly, but didn’t remain for long.

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The Gerhardts had four children, Beulah, William, Charles and Alice, all born after they moved to the house on Holyoake Road. The first to leave home was Beulah who married Simon Kellerman III in 1920.

In late summer of 1928, William, also a machinist at N. O. Nelson Company, married Edwardsville native Gladys Farrar. They later moved to the Washington, D.C. area.

On Christmas day of the same year, Charles married Valerie Russell, a Leclaire girl who grew up at 907 Troy Road. Charles and Valerie lived with the Gerhardts for a short time before moving to a home on Bunn Avenue.

By the 1930 census, the house at 855 Holyoake had only four residents, Tony and Emma, their youngest daughter, Alice, and a lodger, Edwin Barnett. Taking in lodgers was a very common practice at that time and many Leclaire and Edwardsville households supplemented their income by taking in a boarder.



At left are Anton and Emma Kriege Gerhardt on their wedding day in 1902, the same year they bought the house at 855 Holyoake Road. Pictured circa 1907 in front of the house are Tony, Emma and their oldest children, Beulah (standing) and William (in chair).

(Courtesy of Marian Reynolds)

Articles From the Past - Unknown St. Louis Newspaper 30 Dec 1918

Obituary of Mrs. N. O. Nelson

Mrs. Almeria Posegate Nelson, 74 years old, wife of N. O. Nelson, St. Louis philanthropist and wealthy manufacturer, died last night at 8 o'clock at St. Luke's Hospital following an operation. Mrs. Nelson had been ill for more than seven weeks and had been confined to the hospital for one month.

Mrs. Nelson lived in the beautiful home in the center of Leclaire, an exclusive suburb south of Edwardsville, Ill., which was founded by her husband.

Mrs. Nelson is survived by her two daughters – Mrs. L. D. Lawnin and Mrs. Edward L. Burroughs, both of Leclaire – and five grandchildren. Lawnin is president of the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Company at Tenth and Chestnut streets. Mrs. Nelson married Nelson in April 1868, in St. Louis. She came from St. Joseph, Mo.

When Tony passed away in 1944 at the age of 70 the household dynamics changed again. Beulah, who after a divorce had been living at 820 Troy Road for a number of years, moved back to her childhood home on Holyoake. She became the breadwinner while Alice retired to take care of their mother, Emma. A granddaughter-in-law, Marian Reynolds, describes Emma Gerhardt as being a very petite woman with a very sweet disposition whom “everyone just naturally wanted to take care of.”

In the early 1950s Charles and Valerie moved back to Leclaire, buying a house at 859 Hale Avenue, a block from his mother and sisters. Their son Jack, like his grandfather and uncle, also worked as a machinist in the old Nelson factory buildings, but by then they were owned by Wagner Electric. When Wagner closed, he went into the service station business with Jack Minner. The two Jacks opened “Jacks’ Phillips 66” on old Route 66.

Emma “Gram” Gerhardt lived to be 91 years old, so was in the house on Holyoake Road for 70 years. Beulah and Alice continued to enjoy their childhood home until their deaths in the early 1980s.

The Nelsons also have a home in New Orleans, La. Nelson has been spending much of his time there. Learning of his wife's illness, he came to St. Louis last week.

Mrs. Nelson was deeply interested in the philanthropic enterprises of her husband. Nelson founded a home for consumptives in Indio, Cal., and a colony for Russians in Canada. Mrs. Nelson has been active in the social uplift of her husband's employees. When Nelson provided a summer resort for his girl employees at Leclaire, Mrs. Nelson was active in supplying entertainment.

The Nelsons have been active war workers. Nelson offered his plants to the Government, and Mrs. Nelson engaged in Red Cross work. Nelson led a movement to enlist men for the army when war was declared. He told his employees he would give them full pay as long as they were in Government service. He tried to enlist. He is 71 years old.

Mrs. Nelson has been very active in social and church affairs, and has been a generous contributor to charity. She was the originator of various social and uplift clubs in Edwardsville and Leclaire.