



# FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE NEWSLETTER

June 2018

Volume 28 No. 2

## **PRESENTING THE ANNUAL LECLAIRE PARK BAND CONCERT & ICE CREAM SOCIAL**



**SUNDAY, JUNE 24  
4 P.M.**

Featuring the fabulous  
Edwardsville Municipal Band!

Free Concession Stand hosted by  
Friends of LeClaire.

Bring your blankets or lawn chairs and settle  
in for a relaxing hour-long concert at  
LeClaire Park.

**Free Concert! Everyone Welcome!**

### **WE'RE HAVING A PARTY**

(SEE ABOVE)

### **PLEASE HELP US GET READY!**

Friends of LeClaire will hold another "Clean-Up Day" at LeClaire Park on Saturday, June 23rd in advance of the band concert.

If you can help, please bring trash bags, plus rakes, gardening gloves, trowels or your favorite gardening tool to the park by 9 a.m. so we can work while it's cool. Families are encouraged to participate too as it gives children a sense of ownership and pride in THEIR park. All help is greatly appreciated!

### **TROY ROAD: SIGNS OF CONSTRUCTION**

If you live in LeClaire or have traveled through the neighborhood recently, you are fully aware that construction on Troy Road has begun! The work will include Troy Road from the ball diamond to Franklin Ave. and Franklin Ave. west of Troy Road. The work will be done in phases using multiple contractors and no lengthy closures anticipated.

Because of the multiple contractors, there may be times over the next few months when it appears nothing is being done, but this is simply a change-over from one contractor to another. The first contractor is responsible for removing the asphalt surface from the street. They started May 21 and were expecting to be finished in about a week.

The next phase will be replacement of the storm sewers in the 700-800 blocks, an area that has experienced problems after heavy rains. After that the street will be repaved including new driveway aprons and replacement of at least one section of sidewalk on either side of the driveways.

As residents along Troy Road know, there are a number of "bumps" in the street that cause homes to give a shake when a semi-truck or other heavy vehicle runs over them. The contractors will fix these by digging deeper in those places and creating concrete footings so the bumps shouldn't return. Troy Road should be a quieter place to live.

Work is scheduled to be completed by August 15 so that all roadways are clear before the beginning of school.



*Signs of the time. LeClaire residents will see more of these than they'd like in the next few months, but the results will be worth the hassles. The man holding the stop sign didn't give his name, but said he's a former resident of LeClaire!*

### **THE UNVEILING ON EMERSON**

Edwardsville's Historic Preservation Commission held an event on June 2 at 1211 Emerson Avenue where they invited the public to come see what happens when aluminum siding is removed to reveal original wood siding. The owner of the house, Krause Properties, has plans to restore the house to its original siding. The unveiling hasn't happened as of this writing, but will be completed by the time most receive this newsletter.

Drive by and take a look! We'll let you know if any surprises are uncovered and publish before and after pictures in the next newsletter.

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

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

# MORE LECLAIRE NEWS

## INSCRIBED BRICKS AVAILABLE AT LECLAIRE PARK

The first batch of memorial bricks ordered during the past fall and winter have been installed at Leclaire 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 the FOL website or you can call 618-656-1294. Bricks are \$50 each and proceeds are used to make improvements at Leclaire Park. The bricks are placed in the sidewalk surrounding the Leclaire bandstand.

## RUN FOR BONIFEST WATER STATION

Members of Friends of Leclaire with more than a dozen representatives of the Edwardsville High School Student Council (shown below) provided water and a cheering section for runners near the two-mile mark of the Bonifest 5K run on Saturday, May 26. This annual event is always a lot of fun and the high school students represent their generation very well. Everyone is in good spirits as they cheer on runners. Some of the runners are extremely good and others have made it a personal challenge. We appreciate the latter all the more for their courage!



*Members of the EHS Student Council are always great volunteers, friendly, enthusiastic and they do a great job!*



*The Abraham Shupack Home at 1019 Ruskin (at left) and the Edward Klausing Home at 1211 Emerson Avenue (right.)*

## TWO LECLAIRE HOMES FEATURED

The Abraham Shupack house at 1019 Ruskin Ave. and the Edward Klausing home at 1211 Emerson Ave. (pictured above) were two of the houses featured in a series of *Edwardsville Intelligencer* articles from Edwardsville's Historic Preservation Commission. The annual series is published twice weekly (Wednesdays and Saturdays) during the month of May in recognition of National Historic Preservation Month. To read about these two Leclaire houses, visit HPC's facebook page (Edwardsville Historic Preservation Commission) or go to the Edwardsville Intelligencer's web site and search under "Shupack" or "Klausing." The Shupack house history was published on May 22 and the Klausing house article on May 31.

## LECLAIRE HOUSE RESEARCH

If you want to research your Leclaire house, local historian Cindy Reinhardt has resources that may save you time. Reinhardt, who has been studying Leclaire since 1994, provided information for the Leclaire housing survey a number of years ago. Call 618-656-1294 before starting your search. She can provide information from her indexes and a "how to" research worksheet that will help you get started.

## LECLAIRE PARKFEST VENDORS

Vendor applications will be available on the Friends of Leclaire web site beginning July 1. Artisans, crafters and not-for-profit organizations are encouraged to apply. The 2018 festival will be held on Sunday, October 21.

## 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 ~

Jun 8-9	FOL at Route 66 Festival
Jun 12	FOL Meeting, 7 p.m.
Jun 24	Band Concert & Ice Cream Social
Jul 10	FOL Meeting
Aug 14	FOL Meeting
Aug 18	FOL at Goshen Market
Sep 11	FOL Meeting
Sep 15	FOL at Goshen Market
Oct 9	FOL Meeting
Oct 13	FOL at Goshen Market
Oct 21	Leclaire Parkfest

# THE MAHLER HOME IN LECLAIRE

## 1103 Troy Road The George & Anna Mahler Home

When George and Anna Mahler retired from farming in 1905, they built a new house at 1103 Troy Road, only about a mile from their farmhouse. The Mahler farm was located on the south edge of Leclaire, on the west side of Troy Road. In 1905 it was purchased by a group of investors who divided it into building lots and called the new subdivision, appropriately, "Mahler Heights." It became a part of Edwardsville in 1934 at the same time that Leclaire was annexed.

In the *1894 Portrait and Biographical Record of Madison County*, George Mahler was described as one of Madison County's most progressive and enlightened farmers. A man who owned a "fine estate" that included "a commodious farm residence." When retiring to Leclaire, the Mahlers built another "commodious" residence on two of the five lots they purchased in Leclaire.

Architecturally the house at 1103 Troy Road has characteristics of a Queen Anne Victorian with a typical hipped roof and front cross gable. The stately home stands out for its size and architecture, an appropriate legacy for a couple who came from two prominent Madison County families.

George was born to Anthony and Martha Mahler in 1856 on a farm in Pin Oak Township. His wife, Mary Barnsback Mahler, the daughter of Jacob and Elizabeth Barnsback, was from an old Madison County family. George had a common school education, but his wife was college educated, unusual for a woman at that time. They were married in 1882 and had two daughters, Fannie and Bess, who moved with them to Leclaire. The new house on Troy Road was likely completed circa 1906 since the lots were purchased in late 1905 and city directories show the Mahlers residing there by 1907.

In 1909 the Mahler home was the site of their daughter Fannie's marriage to Charles Nash, a successful Edwardsville tailor. A lengthy description of the home and the special wedding decorations was published in the *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, and the guest list illustrated the prominence of the family as it included many old Edwardsville names.

In 1921 another announcement in the *Intelligencer* told readers that the Mahlers had sold their house to the William Duckles family and were moving in with their daughter and son-in-law on Hickory Street. It was only a temporary move. The Mahlers were building another new house on one of the adjoining lots they had purchased in 1905. Their new address

would be 216 Hale Avenue, right behind their house at 1103 Troy Road.

The house on Hale Avenue was described in a list of building activities in the April 22, 1922, edition of the *Intelligencer* as "Geo. Mahler, Hale avenue, five rooms, efficiency of seven and bath, finished in composition shingles, \$5,000; Built by Charles Theuer." This house once had elements of a vernacular Queen Anne style with a steep-pitched side gable roof and a shed dormer.

In 1925, Bess Mahler married Joseph Barnett who also descended from early Madison County families, the Barnetts and McKittricks, who had farms south of Edwardsville near Bess' maternal grandparents. Bess and Joseph, an auctioneer, established a home on Ruskin Avenue near her parents, but when George died in 1929, they moved in with her mother at 216 Hale Avenue. After Anna's death, the Barnetts purchased the house where they lived until the early 1950s.



In the meanwhile, beginning in 1921, William and Cora (Snell) Duckles, with their two daughters, Dorothy and Gladys, and William's mother, Emma, were enjoying the house at 1103 Troy Road. The Duckles family was originally from Macoupin County, but moved to Edwardsville a few years after their 1902 marriage. William successfully worked at a number of jobs over the years, most notably as a banker and an appraiser.

The house was nearly lost in a serious fire in 1926 that caused an estimated \$1,500 in damages. Cora Duckles was home at the time of the fire and, hearing noises, went to investigate. She found a fire fully engaged and called the Leclaire volunteer firefighters. The fire was so great that they needed the assistance of the Edwardsville Fire Department that was willing to come after being assured they would be paid (a common occurrence since Leclaire residents did not pay for Edwardsville fire service). The entire roof of the house was gone by the time the fire was out and there was significant water damage. The newspaper reported that many people, "including women," helped carry the Duckles family possessions from the house. This also was a common occurrence when there were fires. Neighbors and passersby helped move furnishings from the burning building, a dangerous proposition that would not be allowed by today's firefighters.

Cora Duckles passed away in 1949 and her husband William in 1958. The Troy Avenue house, repaired following the fire, was sold in the mid-1950s to the Henry Cover family who would live in the house for more than half a century.

# FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE - GET INVOLVED!

## NEW GARDEN AT LECLAIRE PARK

The lily garden near the restrooms at LeClaire Park has been expanded to include an area that was often bare ground due to dense shade and acidic soil. The brick-lined garden was designed by local landscaper Peggy Lambdin. Three azaleas



*The former lily garden has been expanded to include azaleas.*

have been planted and hostas, perennials and annuals will soon be added.

For many years the Reed family has maintained the lily garden and added plantings around the restrooms. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Also among recent plantings at the LeClaire Park were snapdragons, impatiens, coleus and other annuals. In addition, two dwarf hydrangeas and a bed of catalina have been planted at the LeClaire Park sign.

Friends' volunteers also planted lilies and butterfly bushes as well as the annual Arbor Day tree at the Children's Museum located in LeClaire.

## ROUTE 66 FESTIVAL - JUNE 8-9

Members of Friends of LeClaire will be in the History Tent at the annual Route 66 Festival at Edwardsville's City Park on June 8-9 sharing the history of the LeClaire National Historic District through pictures and literature. The festival begins Friday night at 5 p.m. with art vendors, food booths, the history tent, children's activities and live music.

The next morning activities kick off with a 10K run. The food booths and vendors reopen at 10 a.m. and music begins at 1 p.m. Narrated trolley tours featuring Edwardsville's Route 66 begin every half hour from 1:00-4:30 p.m. The car show begins at 4 p.m. and the always popular car cruise is at 6:30 p.m.

The art vendors, children's activities and history tent close at dusk but the music continues until midnight on both Friday and Saturday nights.

## FOL SOCIAL HOUR

Members of Friends of LeClaire recently held their first "Social Hour" at Recess Brewery. Attendees has a good time visiting with friends and neighbors. There will be another! Watch the FOL facebook page for announcements.

## A CENTURY AGO IN LECLAIRE

1918 was a pivotal year for America, and, like the rest of the country, LeClaire residents stepped up to the challenge.

The United States entered World War I in the spring of 1917 but it wasn't able to mobilize effectively until 1918. At the LeClaire factories, N. O. Nelson, a Civil War veteran, encourage his employees to enlist. Many did, and employee Guy Weeks is one who lost his life in the war.

Red Cross units were being formed all over the country. In LeClaire, led by Mrs. Nelson and her daughters, Julia and Charlotte, LeClaire women met at the school house to make bandages and collected handmade knitted items for the soldiers.

Residents also planted "Victory Gardens" of Irish potatoes, onions and peas in LeClaire as soon as it was safe after the winter thaw. By raising their own food, citizens made other food available for U. S. and allied soldiers.

In the fall, the great influenza epidemic of 1918 reached Madison County. It is unknown how many in LeClaire became ill or died from the disease, but in October-December, 1918, Madison County lost nearly 500 residents to influenza. Thirty died in Edwardsville which included LeClaire.

There was also good news in 1918. In November, WW I came to an end, and in December, the state of Illinois celebrated its centennial year.

## 2018 FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

The election of 2018 officers and trustees was delayed until May due to lack of a quorum in April, but they are now official. All of the FOL Board members are active participants in almost every aspect of work accomplished by the organization.

Bob Nickrent	President	Jim Milgrim	Treasurer	Al Pauli	Trustee
William Krause	Vice-President	Theresa Morrison	Trustee	Cindy Reinhardt	Trustee
Mike Reinhardt	Secretary				