



# FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE NEWSLETTER

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## 2020 LECLAIRE PARKFEST CANCELLED



For the first time in 29 years, Leclaire Parkfest has been cancelled. It was always thought, if it had to be cancelled, it would be because of rain. But, instead of the weather, it was a pandemic. No one would have forecast that a year ago.

The thing about Leclaire Parkfest, is that if it's very successful (and it always is), then it will be very crowded, which is not safe in a pandemic. And if the festival is not successful, then the vendors, most of them not-for-profits and individual crafters, would lose money. There was just no way to win this year.

That said, Parkfest will be back, and with an extra year of planning, it can be better than ever (theoretically!). FOL looks forward to seeing everyone again next year, on the third Sunday in October, for the postponed 29th Annual Leclaire Parkfest.

In the meanwhile, if anyone needs items normally purchased at the Friends of Leclaire booth at Parkfest, please contact us at 618-656-1294 for shirts, notecards, books, memorial bricks, etc.. If you normally renew your FOL membership at Leclaire Parkfest, you can instead send a check for \$20 to Friends of Leclaire, P. O. Box 644, Edwardsville, IL 62025.

### Leclaire Park Fishing Derby

For a short time on July 18, life seemed almost back to normal at Leclaire Park where the annual fishing derby was held. The Parks Department made some adjustments for safety and didn't do as much advertising as usual, but 50 boys and girls showed up to test their skills. All were socially distanced along the banks (except for children in the same household) and there was a goal for everyone to try to achieve including the first fish caught, the biggest, the most and the smallest.

The most caught was 87 in an hour and a half, with 48 each for second and third places. The largest was a 17 inch big mouth bass. The fastest was in less than a minute and the smallest only about 1.5 inches. The Parks Department is still compiling the list of participants and who won which prizes.

As for all those catfish stocked in the lake prior to the event, not one of the kids caught a catfish!



*Leclaire Lake was stocked with 1,000 pounds of catfish (roughly 700 fish) prior to the annual fishing derby. The fish came from Logan Hollow Fish Farm in Murphysboro, Illinois. (Photo courtesy of Edwardsville Intelligencer, taken by Tyler Pletsch)*

### Friends of Leclaire Hold Annual Meeting (Finally!)

At a socially distanced outdoor meeting in July, Friends of Leclaire was finally able to elect a new slate of officers for 2020. The slate of officers was presented by Andi Smith. FOL is grateful to those willing to serve another year on the board and welcomes new trustee Sue Betts. The board is grateful for the service of out-going trustee Theresa Morrison for her years as both a trustee and as the vendor coordinator for Leclaire Parkfest.

The 2020 FOL Board includes: President Mike Reinhardt; Vice-President William Krause; Secretary John Craig; Treasurer Jim Milgrim; and Trustees Sue Betts, Al Pauli, and Cindy Reinhardt.

Also at the meeting, cancellation of all previously planned 2020 events was confirmed, but the possibility of a COVID-19 friendly event later in the year was discussed. An announcement will be in the next newsletter and on the FOL Facebook page. The FOL Facebook page, at "Historic Leclaire", is a place to find history as well as community news.

# CURRENT NEWS

## Leclaire Park Gardening

Area residents may be tired of rain, but the gardens at Leclaire Park are loving it. All of the gardens are doing well, especially the rose garden where Mike Reinhardt planted peonias under the roses. A tree near that garden was removed last year, resulting in much needed sunlight for the garden.

The garden at the NE corner of the park on Madison Avenue has a combination of lilies, snapdragons and pansies that are doing well, and the new hostas in the garden near the restrooms are thriving. Although Mike does the lion's share of the work, there are other residents and Friends of Leclaire members who help with the work when they visit the park. All efforts are greatly appreciated.

The new sod placed last fall is also doing well with all the rain. As a result, the park is looking great. Area residents say the park has had more visitors than usual during COVID-19.



## Next FOL Meeting Sept 8

The next meeting of FOL will be on Sept 8 at 7 p.m. The August meeting has been cancelled. President Mike Reinhardt will send out an email reminder to members as usual. Since meeting indoors is still not a good idea, it will likely be held at Leclaire Park.



*Looking for a Leclaire shirt? We can do porch pick-up for the above. Just give us a call at 618-656-1294. FOL also has books on Leclaire history, notecards, prints, and more.*

## Leclaire Park Clean-Up Aug 15

A clean-up day has been scheduled for August 15 at 9 a.m. at Leclaire Park. Volunteers will meet at Leclaire Park to pull trash from along the edges of the lake, weed gardens and do other work to keep "our" park beautiful. Social distancing will be practiced! For more information, call 618-656-1294.



## Children's Museum Still Closed

Staff at the Children's Museum is eager to open again, but Phase Four guidelines state that museums with hands-on exhibits need to wait. Although disappointed, they recognize that the most important element of re-opening is safety.

In the meanwhile, they are taking advantage of the time to complete new exhibits and do a deep cleaning of all the spaces and the many items that children handle in the museum. When the museum is allowed to reopen, it will be better than ever, and that's saying a lot!



## Inscribed Bricks Available

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.

When the first memorial bricks were placed, nearly 20 years ago, FOL had to order them in large batches, but since changing companies, they can now be ordered and installed one at a time. There is a relatively quick turn around for orders today.

## 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. Membership is just \$20 annually. To join, send dues to Friends of Leclaire, P. O. Box 644, Edwardsville, IL 62025. For information, call 618-656-1294.

FOL normally conducts business meetings at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month except in December and January, but the schedule is currently "as announced" due to COVID.

All members are welcome to attend meetings which are normally held in Room 201 of Building N4 at the Historic N. O. Nelson Campus of Lewis & Clark Community College in Edwardsville. Alternative localtions will be announced during COVID.

The quarterly Friends of Leclaire Newsletter is written and edited by Cindy Reinhardt. Contact her at [cynreinhardt@yahoo.com](mailto:cynreinhardt@yahoo.com) with questions or feedback.

# THE TAKE FAMILY ON FRANKLIN AVENUE



## 204-206 Franklin - Twin Brick Bungalows in Leclaire

### 204-206 Franklin - Twin Bungalows

It is no coincidence that the two bungalows at 204 and 206 Franklin Avenue look alike. They were built at the same time, in 1925, for members of the same family. In the Sept. 26, 1925 edition of the *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, a list of new buildings under construction included a notice saying,

“Charles Bartlett and Sons have signed contracts for new homes. Two of the new places will be brick bungalows on adjoining lots on Franklin Avenue. Each will be of five rooms with all conveniences. One is being erected for Henry Take, Sr. (204 Franklin) and the other for his son-in-law, William Foehrkalb (206 Franklin).”

### 204 Franklin Avenue – Henry and Louise Take

Henry and Louise Take retired from farming in 1904. At that time they built a Victorian cottage at 141 Springer Avenue. Even though they were retired when they moved to town, they were still young enough to have five children still at home when they moved to Springer Avenue. With the move to Franklin Avenue, they were buying a smaller, modern home that they would enjoy alone. However, many of their children and grandchildren were nearby.

Henry W. Take was born in 1858 of German immigrant parents on a farm in Pin Oak Township. He was the only son in a family with six daughters. As was the custom for German families at that time, when his father died in 1880, Henry, the son, inherited the land while his sisters

each received a financial inheritance of about \$1,000 each. Henry’s mother was provided with a life estate until her death in 1893.

It should be mentioned that when Henry’s father immigrated, he was Wilhelm Taake, but over time the second “a” was dropped from their name. There was another Leclaire family on Ruskin named Taake who kept the original spelling.

In 1879, Henry married Louise Stahlhut. Born in 1858 on a farm in Fort Russell Township, Louise was the daughter of Frederick and Dorothea (Lindenberg) Stahlhut. Her parents, like Henry’s, were German immigrants. By the time Louise’s father died in 1904, her family had adopted the American practice of dividing estates among the daughters also. This isn’t to say that Henry and Louise had only inherited wealth.

They were also hard-working and ambitious, so added to the lands they inherited. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the *Edwardsville Intelligencer* often printed an annual column listing the businesses and individuals who had to pay the most in taxes, in other words, the most wealthy in the county. Henry’s name was always on the list.

Henry and Louise had eight children who survived to adulthood. Five of those children, Ida Take Meier, Clara Take Mick, Louise Take Voss, William

Take, and Hilda Take Foehrkalb, would eventually move to Leclaire, many of them after retiring from farming. They lived on Ruskin, Hale, Franklin and Troy Road, all on the western side of Leclaire.



*The family of Henry and Louise Take. Standing (left to right) Clara, Charlotte, William, Ida, and Louise (daughter). Seated, Henry Sr., Henry Jr., Ella, Hilda and Louise Stahlhut Take. Taken circa 1898.*

# FRANKLIN AVENUE HOUSES (CONT. FROM PAGE 3)

## 206 Franklin Avenue

### William and Hilda (Take) Foehrkalb

Hilda Take, born in 1898, was the youngest daughter of Henry and Louise Take and was only six-years-old when the family moved to town.

Her future husband, William "Bill" Foehrkalb, was born in Venice, Illinois in 1896. Like Hilda, his parents were descended from German immigrants. According to his World War I draft registration, he was tall and slender with dark hair and eyes. His occupation was listed as shoe salesman, which is a bit ironic because when he reported to Fort Grant near Rockford, Bill and another soldier couldn't be issued regulation shoes because the Army didn't stock size 12A. It's assumed the appropriate footwear was found before he shipped off to France.

After returning from service he found a career buying and selling furniture. For 40 years he managed furniture stores in Edwardsville and Collinsville, including Schwarz Furniture and Friedman Furniture.

Shortly after returning home from service, he began courting Hilda Take. They were a very social couple, attending parties with friends, plays in St. Louis and many functions at Eden Church. They married in 1922 and at first purchased a home on Springer near her parents, but in 1925, moved to Leclaire to the bungalow on Franklin next to her parents. A few years later, their only son, William, Jr. was born. By that time several of Hilda's sisters had moved to Leclaire so one can almost imagine the trips back and forth across the yards at family gatherings and parties.

### Tragedy Strikes

But then came 1933. The country was in the midst of the Great Depression so it was not a good time for anyone but it was especially tragic for the Take and Foehrkalb families. In early July, four-year-old William Foehrkalb Jr. slipped and fell on the back stairs of their home. It seemed to be a minor accident and he had no complaints, but then the boy became ill with a fever. On July 4, he died of blood poisoning (now known as sepsis) at Bethesda Hospital in St. Louis.

Living at 206 Hale Avenue, was another of Henry and Louise's children, their daughter Louise and her husband

William Voss. Their son, Nelson Voss, lived on the same block at 216 Hale Avenue. Nine days after little William Foehrkalb's death, Nelson Voss was murdered. On July 13, 1933, he was a substitute mail carrier for Pin Oak Township. He was murdered while on his route. (See the October 2013 *FOL Newsletter* for the story of Nelson Voss). The murder created a sensation that was reported all over the country.

When Henry Take died in March, 1934, the newspapers reported that he had been ill for nine months. They don't say whether his illness was related to the deaths of his grandsons, but it came on at the same time. He was 76 years old, a better-than-average lifespan for men at that time.

As was the custom at that time, all three had funeral services at their respective homes for the immediate family, followed by funeral services at Eden Church for the public.

Louise continued to live in the house on Franklin until her death in 1946 at the age of 87. She must have loved birthdays, because almost every year the newspaper reported a birthday party for Louise Take hosted by her family and friends.

Life went on for the Foehrkalbs, who were very involved with the community. Bill served a term as City Clerk, two terms as alderman, and, during WW II, he was the chief aircraft observer for Edwardville's Civilian Defense. As a couple, they played cards with friends and family, participated in church groups, and often took excursions to St. Louis.

In 1946, William was one of 69 veterans of World War I to develop Edwardsville's Last Man's Club, an organization of former soldiers that met each year on the day before George Washington's birthday for a meal, fellowship, and a toast to each of their departed comrades. He wasn't the last man, but came fairly close. He died in 1970 at the age of 74. The Last Man's Club disbanded in 1977 with just a few men left.

Hilda remained at their home at 206 Franklin until retiring to Eden Village a few years before her death in 1984.

The Take and Foehrkalb family homes in Leclaire left a lasting legacy. In addition to the homes already mentioned, Ida (Take) Meier and her husband Ed retired from farming to 1024 Ruskin Avenue; Clara (Take) Mick and her husband Theodore lived at 1005 Troy Road; and William Take and his wife Emily moved to 920 Ruskin Avenue.

## HAVE YOU SEEN THE FAIRY COTTAGES?



If you have children, or, if you're just young at heart, you might like to visit the fairy cottages along the bike trails near Leclaire. There have been as many as four, but since they are made of mostly natural materials, there are only three now. Take a walk on the MCT trails between the entrances on Longfellow and Franklin Avenues...and keep an eye out for fairies!

(Fairy houses near Leclaire)

