



FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE NEWSLETTER

June 2021

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WELCOME BACK PARKFEST!



It's back! The 29th Annual Leclaire Parkfest, after being postponed for a year due to COVID, will take place on Sunday, October 17 from Noon - 5 p.m. at Leclaire Park.

Details, as they become available, will be in the next newsletter, as well as on the Leclaire Parkfest Facebook page and on the Friends of Leclaire website. Due to the uncertainty regarding COVID, planning is running later than usual but will be up to speed within the next month.

Vendor applications will be posted to the FOL website by July 1. For information about the festival or to volunteer, please call 618-656-1294.

NEW FOL BOARD ELECTED

A new Board of Directors was elected at the FOL Annual Meeting in April. With some new faces as well as long-time volunteers, it should be another good year despite continued restrictions on activities. The board now consists of the following:

President: Elizabeth Krause

Vice-President: Albert Pauli

Treasurer: James Milgrim

Secretary: John Craig

Trustees: Sue Betts, William Krause
and Cindy Reinhardt

FOL is grateful for the work of Mike Reinhardt who served on the FOL Board for 20 years, 12 of those as president. He will continue to volunteer for the organization.

NICKEL PLATE STATION DEDICATED

After a wait of nearly 30 years, restoration of the Nickel Plate Station in Leclaire has finally been completed due to the efforts of the City of Edwardsville and a long list of donors and volunteers who made it possible. On April 30, 2021, the historic Nickel Plate Station was dedicated.

The station is now part of the Edwardsville Children's Museum and will be used for expanded programming beginning July 1. It will eventually serve a dual purpose as a children's museum and visitor information center after exhibits are completed.

This issue of the FOL Newsletter explores the station's early history, as well as stories from the station during its first fifty years.



Master of ceremonies, Alderman SJ Morrison at the Nickel Plate Station dedication. (Reinhardt)

FOL NEWSLETTER RECOGNIZED

The *Friends of Leclaire Newsletter* was awarded a Certificate of Merit by the Illinois State Historical Society at their Best of Illinois History celebration held via Zoom on April 23. A quarterly publication, it has been published by the Friends of Leclaire (FOL) since 1990.

The newsletter was founded by Bob Blain 31 years ago to build awareness of organization activities and to inform residents of the history of the Leclaire National Historic District. In the early years it was one sheet of paper with content on both sides, but soon grew to be a four-page newsletter with additional stories of Leclaire. In the late 1990s, Cindy Reinhardt began writing articles for the newsletter and in 2012, when a new layout made it easier to write and edit at the same time, Reinhardt became editor. The newsletters are hand-delivered by volunteers to every home in Leclaire and mailed to members living outside the historic district.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM REOPENING JUNE 26



EDWARDSVILLE
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

The Grand Re-Opening of the Edwardsville Children's Museum will be held June 26 following a ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 25 from 4-6 p.m. . The reopening was previously announced for June 12th, but unfortunately the museum's air-conditioning system failed and has to be replaced. Although post-poned, we're sure it will be worth the wait. Let the fun begin!!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT BY MIKE REINHARDT

In last year's Annual Report, written in April, I said, "2020 will be the 130th birthday of the founding of Leclaire, the 29th birthday of the Friends of Leclaire, and our 29th Parkfest." Things changed quickly.

Normally, in this report, I thank our Parkfest volunteers and those that helped with other activities throughout the year. However, after some preliminary planning, Parkfest was cancelled due to the pandemic. We always thought that FOL might need to cancel Leclaire Parkfest because of weather some day, but no one would have forecast that a pandemic would sideline the festival.

Despite the pandemic, we did have some events and activities. On March 8, the Sunday before the shutdown, Cindy gave a presentation on N. O. Nelson and Leclaire to the Norwegian Society of St. Louis. They loved hearing the story of a fellow Norwegian.

As usual, we published four issues of our now "award-winning" newsletter (see story). Our newsletters are read and shared by people throughout Edwardsville and beyond.

FOL held three park clean-ups and six meetings while remaining socially distanced and masked. Starting in July, our monthly meetings were held in Leclaire Park. FOL decorated the bandstand for Halloween and again at Christmas. Plans were made for a luminaria in December, but as the pandemic worsened, it was cancelled. Some of our members took to so-

cial media via our Facebook page to celebrate the holidays with postings of holiday decorations or bell ringing on Christmas Eve.

FOL gardening volunteers worked on flower beds in Leclaire Park and at the Children's Museum. A tree was donated to the Children's Museum. Following a tradition of making improvements to Leclaire Park, a new turtle spring rider was purchased for the park's playground.

FOL also donated \$1,500 toward restoration of the Nickel Plate Station. Thanks to a generous donation from Will and Liz Krause, a "Welcome to Historic Leclaire" sign was placed at the corner of South Plum and Franklin. FOL paid for the installation. 24 memorial bricks were sold and installed at Leclaire Park.

FOL members were very good at sending in renewals, and despite the pandemic, we have seven new members. Thank you for your trust in FOL and our future.

After 12 years as president and 20 on the Friends of Leclaire board, I have decided to retire. Now, to paraphrase Candide, "I must tend to my garden," though I plan to still help with the gardens at the park.

The Friends of Leclaire has always had a devoted and involved membership inspired by their love for the neighborhood and its history. It has been an honor to serve as your president.

RECENT NEWS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, GINGER!

A founding member of Friends of Leclaire, Ginger McCall, was joined by family and friends for a 90th birthday celebration at Leclaire Park in May.

It was good to see everyone again and especially on such a joyful occasion. Happy birthday, Ginger!



LECLAIRE HOUSE FEATURED IN SERIES

The home at 1219 Emerson Avenue, currently being restored, was featured in the "This Old House" series published annually in the *Edwardsville Intelligencer* for National Historic Preservation Month. If interested in reading about the Abert family, the article can be read here:

<https://www.theintelligencer.com/news/article/This-Old-House-At-home-in-Leclaire-16165404.php>



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. Summer meetings will be held outdoors at Leclaire Park.

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 locations will be announced during COVID.

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