

FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE Newsletter



Progress on South Section of Jay Hoffman Center at Nelson

Vol. 17 No. 2

P.O. Box 644, Edwardsville, Illinois 62025

August 2007

LECLAIRE PARKFEST 16! ON OCT. 21

Vendors can now sign up for the 16th Annual Leclaire Parkfest. Non-profit organizations interested in raising funds and/or public awareness of their organization are invited to join the fun at Leclaire Parkfest on Sunday, October 21st from noon to 5 PM at Leclaire Park. The cost for a space at the festival is just \$25. Also eligible for booth space are artists and craftsmen selling their wares. Vendor applications are available on the Friends of Leclaire web site (www.historic-leclaire.org) or by calling festival coordinator Cindy Reinhardt at 656-1294.

Leclaire Parkfest is a fall festival enjoyed by residents of Edwardsville as well as guests from the surrounding area. The festival this year will feature music from the St. Louis Levee Band Trio (Dixieland Jazz) as well as the Lodge Brothers who perform old time folk music. Also at the festival will be food booths hosted by local non-profit organizations, crafts, pony rides and activities for kids, and narrated trolley tours of the Leclaire National Historic District.

Friends of Leclaire was fortunate to receive funding from the City of Edwardsville for this year's festival. But, we will be forever grateful to our past sponsors who made it possible for the festival to make it to its 16th year!

FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE WEBSITE!

A drum roll please! Friends of Leclaire is proud to announce a new web site for the organization. Visit <http://www.historic-leclaire.org> to view the new site created by member Steve Brockmeyer. Our email address is friends@historic-leclaire.org.

We're still in the building process, but plans are to include a calendar of events, Leclaire Parkfest vendor applications, maps, future newsletters, an archive of historic articles from Leclaire newsletters, house histories, lists of places to look for Leclaire historical information, coloring book pages about Leclaire for parents to print for their kids and more! It looks great already. We are also looking for content. If you have Leclaire pictures or a house history to share, let us know!

OFFICERS ELECTED AT ANNUAL MEETING

The following officers were elected at the annual meeting this spring:

President: Mike Reinhardt
Vice President: Edna Grench
Secretary: Kathy Krishnan
Treasurer: Cindy Reinhardt
Trustee: James Milgrim
Trustee: Jennifer Rutherford
Trustee: Micky Slattery

Many thanks to you all for taking on these new responsibilities.

LECLAIRE GREEN THUMBS

Congratulations to Sandy Mahs at 1113 Troy Road (corner of Franklin and Troy Road) and to Tom and Valene Carter at 863 Madison Avenue (corner of Lake and Madison) for receiving Green Thumb Awards this spring. Green Thumb Awards are by Edwardsville's Beautification and Tree Commission. Your beautiful homes and landscaping are wonderful assets to our neighborhood.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM NEWS

The Children's Museum is blazing into fall in full gear! To prepare for bigger crowds during cooler weather, they will be closed to the public September 9-22 for cleaning and maintenance. They will also use that time to install new and exciting educational exhibits.

Their second annual Disco Ball will be held Saturday, September 22, from 7:00 to 11:00 p.m. at the K.C. Hall in Edwardsville. Advanced tickets are needed and available at the museum. Fall programming will include a Science Series held the first two Saturdays in October and November. This fun, educational series will kick off with Astronomy Day on October 6. For more information, visit their Web site at www.childrens-museum.net.

MUSIC AT LECLAIRE PARK

The annual Edwardsville Municipal Band Concert was held June 24th at Leclaire Park. It was well attended considering the threat of rain that continued until well after the musicians began to play. As usual an excellent program was enjoyed by all.

The Friends of Leclaire concession stand realized a profit of about \$50 thanks to volunteers Mike and Cindy Reinhardt, Jim Milgrim, Jen Rutherford, John Twombly, and S. J. Morrison.

NELSON CAMPUS HOFFMAN CENTER DEDICATION DEC 5

Extraordinary progress continues with Phase III of the Historic Nelson Campus construction on Brown Street. The classroom space in the recently named Hoffman Center will be completed in time for fall classes which start August 20th. Shortly after, the new Troy Road campus entrance will be completed.

The landscaping design for the campus center has been completed with the work scheduled to begin this

fall. The campus center, just outside the Leclaire Room will feature a fountain as well as walkways and plantings. Additional landscaping throughout the campus will be completed as funds become available.

The Leclaire Room will be available for public events and meetings. Although it won't be completed until December, the room is already being scheduled for events. A dedication ceremony for the Hoffman Center is planned for December 5th at 2 PM. The public is invited to attend.



Coping and Marble Shop becoming part of South Section of Jay Hoffman Center at Nelson Campus of LCCC.

LECLAIRE PARK BEAUTIFICATION

Thanks to hard working volunteers the flower beds were in great shape for the June Municipal Band Concert at Leclaire Park. Mike Reinhardt and Edna Grench worked on the beds the day before the concert. In addition, Mike spent several days working to improve the beds by adding mulch and additional planting. A "Little Henry" bush with white flowers was purchased for the center of the lily bed to give some height and fullness. The Ketchum Garden on the old "beach" received some TLC and is looking much nicer. A note from the Ketchum family expressed their gratitude to the Leclaire gardeners as the family was unable to come this spring due to illness.

In May Micky Slattery chose a replacement rose and, with fresh mulch, the rose garden is looking

better than it has in quite some time. The Edwardsville Garden Club did a nice job with the bed around the bandstand.

We hope to get an Adopt-A-Bed program going by next year. If you'd like to volunteer to take care of one of the beds in Leclaire Park, please call 656-1294.

WASHER TOURNAMENT AT PARKFEST

The City of Edwardsville Parks and Recreation Department is currently seeking washers enthusiasts to participate in the Parkfest Washers Tournament to be held in conjunction with Leclaire Parkfest on Sunday, October, 21, 2007.

This double elimination tournament is limited to the first 32 teams that apply. The fee is \$20 per team in advance or \$25 the day of the event. Teams must consist of two players. Prizes TBA. For more

information about the Parkfest Washers Tournament including a team registration form, visit www.cityofedwardsville.com under City Departments and choose Parks & Recreation. Or, call the park office at 618-692-7538 for a registration form.

VINTAGE BASEBALL AT LECLARE FIELD OCT 20

A Vintage baseball game will be played on the afternoon of October 20 at Leclaire Field between the New Baden Juniors and the St. Louis Unions. The game will be played by traditional 1860 vintage baseball rules. This means the players play without baseball gloves and by gentleman's rules. There is no profanity, no yelling at the umpires or opposing teams, and a fly ball can be caught after it bounces once and still be an out. These are just a few rules that most spectators will find unusual.

During the game the Children's Museum plans a bake sale. There will also be kettle popcorn.

Recreation Supervisor for the Parks Department, Deanna Obernuefemann, is collecting photos of baseball teams from Edwardsville and surrounding areas that would have played at Leclaire field. She has also found an original photo of the field that will be on display. The Parks Department plans to post historical facts regarding changes in baseball throughout the park for baseball enthusiasts to enjoy. Additional details regarding the event will be in the October newsletter.

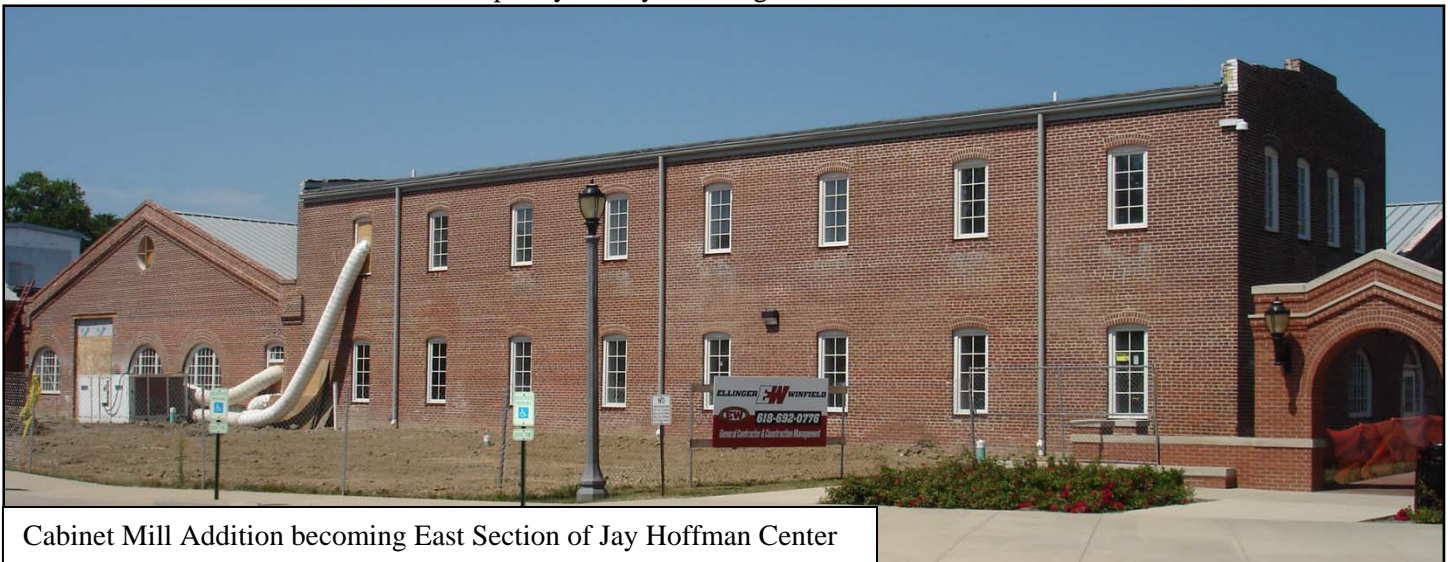
MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

Membership dues, \$10 per year, for Friends of Leclaire are used to promote the history and preservation of the historic Leclaire neighborhood. A complete membership list will be printed once per year in the March edition of the Friends of Leclaire newsletter. Members receive quarterly issues of the Leclaire newsletter and are eligible to attend the holiday social in December.

Interested in joining Friends of Leclaire? Renew your membership or join Friends of Leclaire for just \$10 per year by mailing a check to:

Friends of Leclaire, P.O. Box 644, Edwardsville, IL 62025. Please include your name, telephone number, e-mail and street addresses.

Friends of Leclaire meetings are held at 7:30 on the 2nd Tuesday of each month in the second floor conference room (Room 224) of Building N3 at the Historic Nelson Campus of LCCC in Leclaire. There are no meetings in August or January, and the location for the December meeting is announced in the December newsletter. The December meeting is a holiday social, usually held in the home of one of our members.



Cabinet Mill Addition becoming East Section of Jay Hoffman Center

REPORT FROM YOUR ALDERMAN

Note: Most of the Leclaire neighborhood is included in Ward Five which is served by Alderman John Twombly. All residents north of Franklin Avenue live in Ward 5. Leclaire residents who live south of Franklin are in Ward 6.

It has been a pleasure to serve as your alderman for the past three years, and much work lies ahead. Your input has been critical in shaping the three future priorities for our ward:

1. Listening to resident's concerns: Each year we have had a ward-wide forum at Columbus School in which all 1,100 residents of the ward receive invitations. This year's forum will be on September 20th at

7:00 PM. I plan to continue having a forum each year. If you have a concern and you cannot make the forum, you can always contact me at twomblyfamily@sbcglobal.net or 692-1463.

2. Protecting property values: This is achieved through city-wide property maintenance enforcement by a building code inspector. More than 60 properties in the ward have been upgraded as a result of this program. Enacting residential occupancy permit restrictions would ensure property interiors are up to code as well, keeping slumlords away.

3. Investing in older neighborhoods: We are fortunate because the mayor and city council support improving our older neighborhoods. Past investments

include dredging Leclaire Lake and erecting street banners that celebrate Leclaire's national landmark status. The most recent example is the complete renovation of the alley between the 700 block of Hale and Sherman.

For 2008, look for sidewalk renovation on both sides of Hale and Holyoake between Troy Road and Jefferson. In addition, we have identified dead or injured trees that stand on city right-of-way between the street and sidewalk. The dead trees will be cut and the injured trees will be trimmed by this fall.

I hope to see you at the forum in September. Edwardsville and its historic Leclaire neighborhood has always been a great place, and together we can make it even better.

HISTORICAL ARTICLES

N. O. NELSON MANUFACTURING NEWSLETTER

Below is an excerpt from the July 1907 edition of Sanitary Progress, a quarterly newsletter published by the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Company, which included plants in several states. The company had its origins in St. Louis, Missouri. All the Nelson sites participated in profit-sharing, but Leclaire was unique in that its manufacturing plant included a co-operative village.

We are now building houses in Leclaire at the rate of one per week. They are all wanted. Most of them are sold in advance. The new owner will pay for it at from \$3.00 to \$5.00 a week. It is his from the time he moves in and pays his first weekly installment, just as much as if he had paid for the whole of it. Should he ever want to leave it, he can sell or rent it much better than he could elsewhere, because there are people of his own sort waiting to get it. The population is increasing rapidly, but it is all assimilated around the well established Leclaire nucleus and spirit. Every family which moves into Leclaire begins immediately to imitate the neighbors and the neighborhood . .

The public grounds and roads and parking along the roads are all kept in condition by the company. The private yards and homes are well kept by the owners and occupants. The new-comers want to keep in line. Leclaire has proven that it is natural for people to like out-door beauty and comeliness. It is exceedingly rare to find a badly kept yard in Leclaire. No one is ever asked to do anything about his place. It is left entirely to the family taste in such things. It does not require a college education or art classes to instill the love of natural beauty.

The inhabitants can incorporate as a town whenever they like, but I have never heard the idea suggested, and as long as the company, which is made

up of these inhabitants and others, attend to the business right and don't interfere with people's individual affairs, it can probably keep its job.

Think of what we miss – no saloons, no town taxes, no mayor, no political boss, no boodlers [peddlers of stolen goods: Ed.]. The water is the best in the world and all you want for \$5.00 a year. The town is full of trees and the trees are full of birds which are never shot at and birds' nests that are never robbed. The public grounds are full of flowers which are never touched and there are no signs on the grass or anywhere else.

From the *Edwardsville Intelligencer*
January 21, 1903

MARBLE MILLS AT LECLAIRE WORKS VISITED BY FIRE EARLY TODAY

A loss of several thousand dollars was sustained in a fire at Leclaire this morning and the manufacturing plants there were threatened for a time. Leclaire is the industrial suburb established by N. O. Nelson and directly adjoins Edwardsville on the southeast.

The alarm was given a few minutes before 1 o'clock, and was taken up at once by the Edwardsville headquarters, from which two hose teams were hurried out to assist the Leclaire workers. The blaze for a time seemed of great proportions and occasioned the report that the cabinet mill was burning.

The fire started in the marble mills south of the power house. In a few minutes the buildings were covered with fire and although a number of powerful streams were turned on them and surrounding buildings saved, little was left of the mills but the traveling cranes. Until the wreckage can be cleared away and the machinery examined the extent of the loss cannot be determined. Louis D. Lawnin telephones the

Intelligencer from St. Louis that it will, at the least, amount to several thousand dollars.

The marble mills were among the busiest industries at Leclaire. The first was erected three years ago and the second one last year. They were rushed with orders and ran almost continually day and night. Last night was one of the first in months in which the saws were silent. The company will rebuild the mills at once, rushing them to completion, as the loss, even temporarily of their work, will prove a great inconvenience.

N. O. NELSON INTERVIEW

From the *Kansas City Star*, 1897:

“Do you receive applications from people who wish to become citizens of Leclaire?”

“Yes, we get a great number. Any one is welcome, but of course only a certain number can be employed and preference is given to the people of St. Louis and Edwardsville. When Nellie Bly's article about Leclaire was published we received over 600 letters from persons who wished to join the community.”

Thanks again, Cindy Reinhardt for the copy. Without it, there would be no newsletter.

For anyone who would like to enroll, this fall I will be teaching at the Nelson Campus, SOCI 131-Introduction to Sociology, Section W1 MWF, 9-9:50 AM. Classes start August 20. I am retired from SIUE, but it is hard to refuse a request to teach, especially at the Nelson Campus.

Bob Blain, Editor