

# ***FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE Newsletter***



Jane Schoeber, Beverly Schultz, Julie Hamilton

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## **BAND CONCERT SCHEDULED JUNE 21 TRY, TRY AGAIN.....**

The Annual Leclaire Park Band Concert *might* be held Father's Day, June 21. It no longer seems prudent to announce a firm date since the concert has been rained out more often than not in recent years, but we will try again! At the risk of jinxing the weather, we have scheduled the concert for 4 PM on Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, Father's Day. So, bring the family with your lawn chairs and blankets and perhaps a picnic supper and you might be able to enjoy a wonderful afternoon concert by the Edwardsville Municipal Band.

## **LECLAIRE PARK WORK DAY**

Gardening volunteers will meet at the Leclaire Park at 9 AM on Saturday, June 20th to freshen the flower beds before the annual band concert scheduled on Sunday. If you are willing to help, call Mike Reinhardt at 656-1294 or just come by the park that morning with your gardening tools.

## **CHILDREN'S MUSEUM**

The Children's Museum in Leclaire at 722 Holyoake Road has summer camps scheduled this year for both older and younger children. The camps have a variety of activities for any interest and are reasonably priced too. Call 692-2094 or visit their web site [www.childrens-museum.net](http://www.childrens-museum.net).

## **ANNUAL MEETING 2009 ELECTION**

The annual meeting of Friends of Leclaire was held on April 7. The following officers were elected for the coming year:

President	Mike Reinhardt
Vice-President	Edna Grench
Secretary	Kathy Krishnan
Treasurer	Cindy Reinhardt
Trustee	William Krause
Trustee	Jim Milgrim
Trustee	Jennifer Rutherford

## **GARDEN CLUB PREPARES GAZEBO**

Jane Schoeber, Beverly Schultz (Club chair), Julie Hamilton, and Alison Lamonthe (not pictured above) of the Edwardsville - Glen Carbon Garden Club mulched around the Leclaire Gazebo April 16 preparing for spring blossoms. Thank you for all who now delight in the flowers.

## **MAYORAL FORUM A SUCCESS**

March 18<sup>th</sup> Friends of Leclaire hosted a lively well attended forum between mayoral candidates Gary Niebur and Wesley Tippit. Thanks to School Superintendent Ed Hightower, Principal Cornelia Smith and staff at Leclaire School, and FOL forum team: Bill Krause, moderator; Liz Rose, timer; Ginger McCall, question screener; organizers Cindy and Mike Reinhardt. In April, Gary Niebur was reelected Mayor of Edwardsville.

## **LECLAIRE REMEMBERED BY CARROLL FAMILY**

The family of Wilma Carroll designated Friends of Leclaire for memorials after her death earlier this spring. A former member of Friends of Leclaire, Wilma Carroll and her husband Leo moved to their home on Madison Avenue shortly after their marriage in 1951 where she lived for over 50 years. Mr. Carroll passed away in 1987.

The park was right across the street from their house and became well loved by the Carroll family. According to neighbor Marie Long, Mrs. Carroll was a wonderful neighbor, a good friend, and a homemaker dedicated to her children and active in their lives. She especially enjoyed watching her athletic sons and grandchildren participate in local sports.

Friends of Leclaire are grateful to the Carroll family for choosing Leclaire Park for Mrs. Carroll's memorial. Her family will work with the Parks Department and Friends of Leclaire to choose an appropriate memorial for her to be placed in the park later this year.

## **THE SECRET IS OUT!**

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, on the best picnic spots in the metropolitan area, puts Leclaire Park at number 7, describing it as "A quaint historic spot in a picturesque city."

## IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMERTIME

### NEIGHBORHOOD GAMES IN LECLAIRE 1942-1949

By Ed Moorman

The biggest children's sports activity on Holyoake Road from 1942 to 1949 was some variation of baseball, often played, not on a baseball field but on the street or in a back yard.

When you played on the street, you just strolled to the side when a car drove by; in those days it was not frequent. The best interruption was the iceman. There is nothing more refreshing than sucking on a little chip of clear ice on a hot day.

When the neighborhood baseball game took place at Leclaire park, which was (and still is) the baseball field next to the old Leclaire School, now the Children's Museum, the game was usually baseball or softball on a genuine squared off diamond.

Every game started with two boys "choking the bat". One boy, and it usually but not always was a boy, tossed a bat to the other, who caught it with one hand, knob up. Then the first boy grabbed the bat just above the boy's hand gripping the bat, and each boy grabbed the bat higher up until they reached the top. You were allowed to grab the knob at the end of the bat with your fingertips, a grip called "chicken claws".

Whoever finished with his hand at the top of the bat got to choose first, and the two boys chose up sides to get two competitive teams. Every day you were on a new team, so while the games were very competitive you did not have an ongoing allegiance to a particular team.

No adults, no umpires, no scorekeeper – the entire game was self-supervised. There was no such thing as Little League. Most games did not have called balls and strikes. A swing and a miss was a "strike" and any other pitch just didn't count. There were no walks. Some innings went on for so long, however, that

there could be an argument about the number of outs.

"That was three outs!" somebody would declare.

"No, it wasn't. Name 'em," was the challenge.

"Okay, Bobby struck out, Jimmy flew to center, and Judy grounded to short."

"Oh -- well -- okay – three outs."

The game on the street or in the back yard could be softball, or corkball, or games we called "Three-Flies - Six Grounders" and "Indian Ball". These games featured "Chips on windows". When the ballgame started, somebody would call out "Chips on windows!" which meant that all the kids in the game were agreeing that if a nearby window got broken, everybody shared equally ("chipped in") on the cost of a new pane of glass. Somebody's dad probably had to install the window at no extra charge.

One playground baseball game was called "In-For-Nips", also sometimes called "One-A-Cat" or "Move-Up". Four players started at bat, with everyone else – and it could be dozens – in the field. If somebody made an out, he went to the outfield and the catcher became a batter part of the offense. Each player in the field moved from right field to center, then left, and on to third base, shortstop, second, first base, pitch, and then catch, and then finally up to bat. You could stay up to bat so long as you did not make an out. If you were forced out on the bases, you were still out and moved on to the defense. Two strikes were "out", and a foul tip, called a "nipper", was a strike. There was really no way to keep score – we just played and played and played.

Girls did occasionally get in these ball games, but on the playground the girls – or boys no older than five – played hopscotch or used the "Giant Strides", a variation of the old maypole with a center pole with chains attached to large handles that would swing around-and-around the pole. Little kids used the swings and the see-saws, but bigger kids would

not just swing. They had to add a feature like leaping from the top of the swing or standing on one end of the see-saw and then leaping off to dislodge the other person or cause him to plummet to the ground.

In the fall of 1944, I was in the second grade at the old Leclaire School. That year the World Series stayed in St. Louis as both the St. Louis Browns and the St. Louis Cardinals won their respective leagues. Even though the Cardinals usually had more fans, the underdog Browns attracted a lot of support in this, their only trip ever to the World Series. On the school playground, all the Cardinal fans and all the Brownie fans climbed on one end or the other of the see-saw, just to see which side could weigh down the other.

Every evening when the ball games ended we played "Kick the tin can" in somebody's front yard until dark. This is a variation of hide-and-seek except the person who was "IT" would try to guard the "tin can" which was a discarded food tin from the trash which was placed on the front walk. The "IT" person would spot the person hiding and run to the can before somebody else ran in and kicked the can, which would free all the people who had already been caught.

In addition to ballgames, outdoor play included tree climbing. The tall sweet-gum tree in the front yard at 930 Holyoake Road was one of my favorites, as were the patch of buckeye trees across the street. You could swim or ice-skate at Leclaire Lake depending on the weather.

At least once each summer, we would build a soap-box car. This was usually a community project, but just kids – no adults. Wheels and axles from a battered red wagon would be fixed to a board. You would nail a box on the front and a seat on the rear. You would wrap clothes line around an abandoned steering wheel and tie it to the front axle so the thing could be steered – sort of.

On rainy days, kids could actually read books inside (*Tom Sawyer, Tom*

Swift, the Oz books, *The Hardy Boys*, whatever) or listen to the radio (no TV existed). Our favorite radio shows were *Sky King*, *Terry and the Pirates*, *Superman*, *Captain Midnight* and *Tom Mix*. Everybody listened to Cardinals baseball games on the radio. Kids played checkers, Monopoly, or other board games.

In the back yards and the school yards all year round, in good weather and bad, we all played marbles. You became very familiar with your favorite marbles. I believe that if you were to show me today a marble that I owned when I was nine years old, I could identify it.

Girls – but not boys – would play jacks. Boys – but not girls – would play mumblety-peg with a pocket knife. Every boy carried a pocket knife everywhere. Imagine! Leclaire School was so tough that every boy carried a knife!

## RIZZOLI FAMILY IN LECLAIRE

It was not unusual for relatives to live as neighbors in Leclaire, but the Rizzoli family is one that occupied at least six different houses in the historic neighborhood, beginning in Leclaire's earliest days. The patriarch of the family, Giuseppe Mario Rizzoli, was born in the Tirol region of Italy in 1856. He married Clementina Giulia Erspamer in January of 1883. Six months later the couple immigrated to the United States going first to Ohio, then Wisconsin and finally to Edwardsville where Clemenina's brother and family resided. The year was 1891 and the Village of Leclaire had just celebrated its first anniversary.

Giuseppe, who became "Joseph" in America, was a skilled cabinetmaker who found a job at N. O. Nelson Manufacturing and a home in Leclaire. It's unknown at this time which house they first occupied, but early newspaper accounts confirm it was in Leclaire. In January, 1893 they purchased the house at the corner of Hale Avenue and Jefferson Road.



Van Hyning/Joseph Rizzoli, Sr. House  
754 Hale Avenue

This house at 754 Hale was previously owned by the Anthony Oather Van Hyning family. A. O. Van Hyning, a man who also moved to Leclaire to be near family and live and work in Leclaire, passed away in 1892. And although circumstances dictated that the Van Hynings would only enjoy their Hale Avenue house for a year, the Rizzoli family would call it home for almost 40 years.

Joseph would work for N. O. Nelson for 15 years before striking out with others to form the Edwardsville Planing Mill where he and his sons, also cabinet makers or wood workers, would find employment. His sons, Joseph, Jr., Daliso, and Leo would also work for N. O. Nelson for a time.

The first of Joseph and Clementina's children to build a house in Leclaire was their daughter Emma and her husband, Erwin Sehnert. The Sehnert house, built in 1909, is located at 716 Hale Avenue across from the ball diamond, and only a few doors down from her parent's home. Architecturally, it is one of the most interesting houses in Leclaire. Mrs. Sehnert would live in the house until 1951.

On July 12, 1924, the *Edwardsville Intelligencer* on the building activity for the first half of 1924 included this

notice: "Joseph Rizzoli, Jr. has a five room frame bungalow on the Jefferson Road, Leclaire." Joseph Rizzoli, Jr. and his wife, Catherine built their bungalow at 513 Jefferson directly behind his parents' house. In less than a decade they would move to California, but the house will bear their name. Soon after they built their house on Jefferson, Joseph's brother, Daliso Rizzoli

moved to 1024 Longfellow, at the corner of Hale and Longfellow, where he lived with his family until the 1960's. Given the vintage of the house and the fact that we know he



Joseph Rizzoli, Jr. House 513 Jefferson Road

occupied the home in 1925, it is likely that he was the first owner of the home.

Finally, the next generation, Daliso Rizzoli's son, George, lived at 811 Holyoake Road for a short time in the



Home of Emma Rizzoli Sehnert  
Sehnert House; 716 Hale Avenue

early 1950s before moving to a house on Franklin Avenue a short distance from LeClaire.

The Rizzoli family is typical of LeClaire. They were a hard working immigrant family who loved their new country, sending one daughter to serve as a nurse overseas in WWI and losing a grandson, Charles Rizzoli, in WW II. The importance of family is demonstrated in the location of their homes, all within 3 blocks of each other in the Village of LeClaire.

If you know a LeClaire family story, please let us know: [friends@historic-leclaire.org](mailto:friends@historic-leclaire.org) or call 656-1294.

## MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

Membership dues for Friends of LeClaire are used to promote and preserve the historic LeClaire neighborhood. Founded in 1890 as an experiment in cooperative living, LeClaire was designated a National Historic District in 1979. Walking tour brochures, books, DVDs and other materials on the history of the neighborhood are available. Send an e-mail to [friends@historic-leclaire.org](mailto:friends@historic-leclaire.org) or call 656-1294 for additional information. Members receive quarterly issues of the LeClaire newsletter.

Interested in joining Friends of LeClaire? Renew your membership or join 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.

The Friends of LeClaire web site has many LeClaire photos, memoirs, newsletters, transcribed newspaper articles from a hundred years ago, and links to research materials and other historic sites in Edwardsville. [www.historic-leclaire.org](http://www.historic-leclaire.org)

Thanks again to Cindy Reinhardt for articles for the newsletter.

Bob Blain Editor



Daliso Rizzoli House 1024 Longfellow Avenue

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please contact FOL President Mike Reinhardt if you are willing to work the FOL booth at the Goshen Market or assist with gardening at LeClaire Park. Also if someone is willing to transcribe articles for the web site, that help would also be welcomed. Call 656-1294. P.S. To the person who volunteered to transcribe last year...I've lost your number! Please call back! Cindy Reinhardt.

## ARTICLES FROM THE PAST....

Wednesday, September 2, 1903  
*Edwardsville Intelligencer*

It is said that N. O. Nelson has offered to donate to the Civic Improvement League Playground Association in St. Louis a bath house at the corner of Tenth and Biddle Streets, and to equip it for the use of children and grown people.

January 26, 1903  
*Edwardsville Intelligencer*

In the fall of a gigantic block of marble at LeClaire Saturday afternoon, a railroad car was cut squarely in two and three workmen escaped injury by prompt recognition of the disaster when it was impending. The accident was at the marble mills. The travelling crane had grappled a huge block weighing about 20,000 pounds and swung it out over a car. The block was some ten or twelve feet in the air when it was noticed that the heavy timbering supporting the tackle

block was giving way. John Feldworth, who was managing the machine above, and Ray Crossman and Sam Nix, who were working with it below, jumped out of the way just as it came down. The block alighted on the car and cut it in two as if it had been cardboard.

April 4, 1903

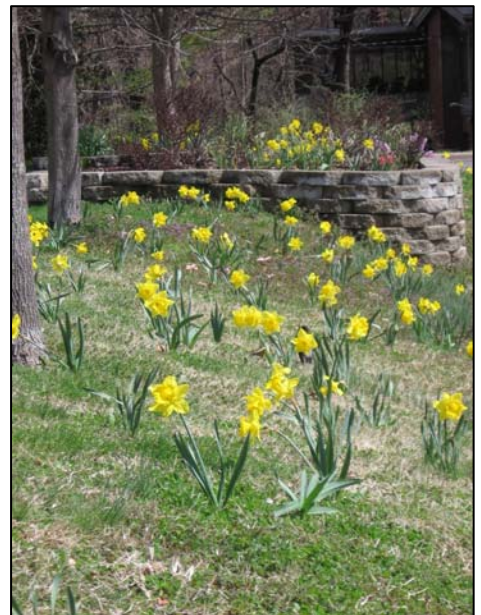
*Edwardsville Intelligencer*

The LeClaire Industrial School wishes to enroll a number of boys from Edwardsville and LeClaire, the students to pay their tuition either in cash or by working after school hours under the direction of the principal, Ross. M. House. The boys are taking contracts from local patrons for gardening, lawn mowing and other work of that nature.

January 7, 1896

*Edwardsville Intelligencer*

The cabinet shops of LeClaire are turning out a set of elaborate bar fixtures for the new saloon of Louis May, to be opened next month, west of the court square. The bar is to be 16 feet long, of oak and mahogany, and is made from designs of M. M. Flannagan, superintendent of the shops.



Daffodils planted at LeClaire Lake last fall by Edwardsville Beautification & Tree Commission.