



ParkNotes

A semiannual newsletter published by the Lafayette Park Conservancy

Issue 25

Winter 2019

If a Tree Falls in the Park. . .



Sadly because of its location this Hackberry tree has been condemned and will be removed. It is located at the top of the gazebo hillside.

Breaking news!

The century old hackberry tree behind the Cook Pavilion lost a huge limb in October. The split had been discovered earlier in the year. In an effort to save the tree, the Lafayette Park Conservancy allocated funds to chain and bolt the limb. Unfortunately, the limb was too heavy and the trunk split off, covering the gardens and paths on the west side of the bridge. The bridge was not damaged. Luckily this happened at night when the park was empty.

Hopes of saving the tree were dashed when the City Forestry Department determined the tree was a danger to people and property. The tree is scheduled for removal in December. This beautiful tree shaded the Grotto garden and will be sorely missed. Plantings around the gazebo will have to be changed to reflect the fact that it is now a sunny garden.



Resident Ward Buckner examines the massive Hackberry limb.

Hackberry Tree
Celtis occidentalis

The Hackberry tree is considered, by the Arbor Day organization, to be a tough tree that can grow to over 100 feet tall. They grow in a wide range of conditions including low water. With its height it provides good shade, growing in a fashion similar to an Elm, but without the disease problems.

President's Message: Welcome to the Holiday House Tour!

As you walk around the neighborhood, we hope you will take time to walk through the park.

Lafayette Park is a splendid example of the urban parks built immediately after the Civil War. Nearly two miles of pathways connect important statues, monuments, pavilions, lakes and gardens. Parks such as ours provided landscaped recreational spaces in the centers of increasingly densely populated cities.

Maintenance of aging infrastructure is a problem for old parks. The Lafayette Park Conservancy was founded to address these issues in Lafayette Park. Our projects range from large to small, from reconstructing the nearly mile long perimeter fence to adding benches with other projects, such as reforestation, in the middle.

The 1970s reconstruction of the 1868 fence left it with a failed anchoring system and standing a foot shorter than it was in 1868. We found a way to bring it back to its original, taller, design. The last major component, a 15 foot structural base girder, has just been delivered and we are working with a local contractor to build a test section. By this time next year you will see a taller, more stately fence being installed, section by section, down Lafayette Avenue.

The park's tree inventory is constantly changing. About 15 trees die each year. The replacement rate has not kept up with the losses. The Conservancy, in cooperation with the Forestry Division of St. Louis, has established procedures for adding trees according to a master plan which will diversify the inventory. Private individuals have bought trees, too. Alderman Coatar has been a generous contributor to the effort. Many thanks to Sqwires Restaurant for donating 25% of their recent 'Thursday Fried Chicken Dinner' sales to the Conservancy. We sincerely appreciate their support.

There is still a lot to do. Our generous members, friends and donors have helped us with our projects. There is much left to do. Fixing the pieces which make up the park is a slow process. Please follow our progress on our Lafayette Park Conservancy Facebook page.

Thank you for your interest in the neighborhood and the park. Enjoy your Holiday Tour.



Grotto Garden Gets Wet



Jack Brier, Volunteer Chair of Flora Conservancy of Forest Park presenting a check to Carolyn Willmore of Lafayette Park Conservancy for \$7000 to help with the Grotto Garden irrigation system.

The long awaited Grotto Garden irrigation system was installed in August and has replaced a tangle of hoses, timers and sprayers. Allen Outdoor Solutions installed the multi-zoned system with a central programmable timer. The system adjusts automatically to rainy or drought conditions.

The Flora Conservancy of Forest Park (FCFP) donated \$7,000 to the Lafayette Park Conservancy to help pay for the new irrigation system. In 2007, FCFP partnered with Lafayette Park to form the Flora Conservancy of Lafayette Park. One benefit was being able to use the greenhouse in Forest Park during winter time to propagate plants for our park. FCFP volunteers and greenhouse staff also work with Lafayette Park volunteers several times during the summer to help with park gardening projects.



Flora Conservancy of Forest Park volunteers working alongside Lafayette Park Conservancy volunteers around the Washington Statue.

Autumn 2019 Lecture Series



Cameron Collins with slide of the cover of his new book during his lecture presentation.

The Mourning Society of St. Louis brought a collection of 19th century mourning items to October's lecture. "Death, Mourning and Memory" recalled the long period of mourning during the Victorian Era, especially for women.

See their website at: www.mourningsociety.com



Katherine Kozemczak, John Avery and Edna Dieterle of the Mourning Society after their presentation.



Esley Hamilton discussing the Washington statue at the LPC Autumn Lecture Series.

In November Esley Hamilton presented "Houdon's Statue of George Washington in Lafayette Park" which covered the scope of Houdon's work, why bronze copies were made of his statue of Washington, and how one copy ended up in Lafayette Park. An enthusiastic crowd of Revolutionary War and art historians as well as Lafayette Square neighbors attended.

More for History Buffs:

To celebrate Washington's long history in Lafayette Park, the Lafayette Park Conservancy published "George Washington in Lafayette Park." Companion publications "Thomas Hart Benton in Lafayette Park" and "The Guns of Lafayette Park" are also available at www.lafayettepark.org

Lafayette Park Conservancy Membership –November 2019**LAFAYETTE SOCIETY (\$1,000)**

Kara & Tony Krawat
Mrs. & Mr. B. Franklin Rassieur, Jr.

BENTON SOCIETY (\$500)

Melanie & Anthony Fathman
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Ward Buckner
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Tony Malench
Katherine Miller
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Sharon & Richard Stockmann
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Lafayette Park Conservancy Annual Meeting



Richard Strelinger presenting Ward Buckner with the Missouri Society, Sons of the Revolution, Historic Preservation Award.

A brief annual meeting of the Lafayette Park Conservancy preceded the Lecture Series presentation on the Washington statue. Half of the members of the Board of Directors were elected for another two-year term. Susan Pinker-Dodd and Rob Forrest were thanked for serving on the Board for many years. Three new Board members were elected: Michael Bushur, Mike Jones and Kieran Lindsey. All three are active supporters of the Conservancy. Michael is a lead gardener in the Grotto. Mike and Kieran served on the Advisory Board and write blogs about Lafayette Park. Mike is a Lafayette Square archivist and volunteer gardener. Kieran, an urban wildlife biologist, writes about the Birds of Lafayette Park. Follow them at www.lafayettepark.org and our Facebook page.

After the annual meeting, Richard Strelinger presented Ward Buckner with the Missouri Society, Sons of the Revolution, Historic Preservation Award.

Do you need a program for your organization?
The LPC offers the following presentations:

“Dr. William Swecosky: The Dentist Who Became the Pallbearer of Old St. Louis”

“Harriet Hosmer's Statue of Thomas Hart Benton: St. Louis' First Piece of Public Art”

“The Guns of Lafayette Park: St. Louis' Monument to the Revolutionary War”

“The Fascinating History of Lafayette Park”

“The Man Who Made St. Louis Beautiful”

For information, contact the Lafayette Park Conservancy at:
secretary@lafayettepark.org

Winner, Winner, Chicken Dinner



To celebrate the Lafayette Square restaurant Sqwires' 18th Anniversary, Bethany Budde decided to do something for Lafayette Park. She donated 25% of the sales from a recent Family Fried Chicken Dinner to the Lafayette Park Conservancy. Great food. Great Cause. Winner. Winner.

Bethany Budde presenting a \$400 check to LPC President Ward Buckner.

Trees in the Park

The Lafayette Park Conservancy (LPC) has been active this fall in efforts to return Lafayette Park to its former glory by sponsoring and encouraging the planting of trees, shrubs and plants. To further these efforts, the LPC met with the Parks Department to discuss ongoing improvement efforts. As a result, a number of actions were taken or committed to including removal of tree stumps this October, replacement of 9 trees that were planted last fall but died, planting of 10 new shade trees along the park's pathways, and 10 street trees on the park side of Mississippi Ave. The plantings are expected to occur either early Winter or early Spring. This continues the ongoing effort to reforest our park; the focal point of Lafayette Square.

Location of trees for planting is controlled by the Lafayette Park Tree Master Plan that was prepared several years ago. The LPC recently authorized the update of the Plan that has been significantly outdated by the loss of Ash trees and trees reaching the end of their natural life. This update should be completed by the Spring of 2020 and will be used to guide future activities in the park.

Last Spring, the Friends of the Trees sponsored by the LPC held a workday cutting volunteer trees that did not conform to the Master Plan. Removal of debris was performed by the City Parks Department. We held a second cleanup on November 2 to continue brush and tree removal. People both residing within and outside the neighborhood participated and a big thanks is due to them for their contribution to the upkeep and maintenance of our beautiful park.

Finally, the LPC approved a new approach to planting flowering trees in strategic locations at park entrances and around the lake. As identified on the Master Plan, each planting area is comprised of three to four trees and designed to add color to the park during the Spring. Due to the significant loss of large shade trees, resources have not been available to plant these areas. The LPC therefore identified eight clusters that are designated as memorials and funded by donors. The donation amount will be \$500 for each cluster and will include an in-ground stone inscribed with the appropriate inscription. One area at the Waverly /Lafayette entrance has been planted and will greatly enhance that entrance this Spring. Persons interested should contact Jerald Ferrell 314-403-8671.

The mission of the Lafayette Park Conservancy is to restore and preserve the historic legacy of Lafayette Park, the first developed urban park in the Louisiana Purchase Territory, and to raise funds for those purposes.

I want to begin or renew my membership to the Lafayette Park Conservancy

Membership Level:

- \$35 - Friend (one named member)
- \$50 - Family (two named members)
- \$75 - Botanist (two named members)
- \$150 - Historian (two named members)
- \$300 - Preservationist (two named members)
- \$500 - Benton Society (two named members)
- \$1,000 - Lafayette Society (two named members)
- My company will match my gift (include a matching form from your employer)
- In addition to my membership, or instead of, I'd like to make a special donation of \$ _____ toward restoration of the Park fence.
- In addition to my membership, or instead of, I'd like to make a special donation of \$ _____ toward restoration of the 1876 Bandstand.

Memberships are valid for one year from date of joining and are tax-deductible to the extent allowable under IRS regulations. The LPC is a 501(c)3 organization.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State &

Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please return with check or money order payable to:

Lafayette Park Conservancy, 2023 Lafayette Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63104

Or make a donation online using PayPal at: www.lafayettepark.org



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Follow the LPC on Facebook.



Lafayette Park Conservancy

2023 Lafayette Avenue
Saint Louis, Missouri 63104

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