



# ParkNotes

*A semiannual newsletter published by the Lafayette Park Conservancy*

Issue 26

Spring 2020

## Signs of the Times. . .



### Event Updates

LPC Arbor Day tree planting cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns

LPC Washington Statue fundraiser will be rescheduled at a later time

The LSRC 2020 spring house tour is cancelled

The Lafayette Square Arts Council 2020 Concert Series has not been finalized. It is dependent upon COVID-19 regulations concerning the size of gatherings, social distancing, etc. To reduce chance of infection, there will be no raffle at concerts this year.

### Some COVID-19 Information Resources

Centers for Disease Control and  
Prevention

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

World Health Organization

[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

National Alliance on  
Mental Illness

[www.nami.org/covid-19-guide](http://www.nami.org/covid-19-guide)

Please stay safe and check on  
neighbors, friends and family.





## President's Message: The Lafayette Park Jigsaw Puzzle

Renewing Lafayette Park is like finishing a giant jigsaw puzzle, many of the pieces are in place and the general picture is clear but there still are a lot of pieces missing. Fortunately, more pieces fall into place each year. The Park's gardeners are hard at work despite the pandemic. An example is the renewal and expansion of the grotto gardens this spring. The plants on the slope behind the Cook Pavilion have lost the shade of the giant hackberry which was removed last year. A lot of work will be needed to preserve this landscape now that it has gone from shady to very sunny. A few more spaces for benches have been landscaped and over 50 trees have been planted both inside and outside the park.



The Cook Pavilion will get some long overdue attention this summer. The landscaping is being improved now. Paint on the wooden pavilion superstructure between the columns and the roof will be removed to reveal the elaborate detail hidden by thick layers of old paint. Then the pavilion will be re-painted.

The pandemic has slowed down the Fence Project too. Our contractor has all the parts to rework the test section. When he gets the papers from City Hall he will fit it into his schedule. Repairing the crumpled section on Lafayette near Missouri is on his list too.

We have the straight edged pieces of the puzzle in place and are now working on those tricky interior pieces all with the same background color! I have hopes that this is going to be another good year for the park.



*Fence section crumpled by a fallen tree near Lafayette and Missouri that will be replaced.*



## Gardens Are Springing Up!

The Grotto is getting a facelift this spring thanks to the efforts of Michael Bushur and his band of garden volunteers. The northwest side of the bridge was cleared of weeds and planted with native perennials. On the northeast side of the Grotto pond, we have planted the two previously bare sections. The area west of the bench will be a “wildflower” garden featuring native plants and pollinator-friendly cultivars. We planted the area east of the bench with sedges for erosion control, interspersed with flowering plants. In total, we have planted over 900 perennials this spring. You’ll notice the plants are currently quite small. That is because we chose to use landscape plugs, a type of starter plant. These plugs cost about one fifth as much as using quart sized plants from even the lowest priced nurseries. They will establish better than larger plants, and by next year will actually grow larger than if we used traditional nursery plants. Special thanks to the volunteers who made this project possible: Peter Lambert, Chris Palmero, Geoff Bullard, David Adams, Larry Dodd.

The lawn in front of the Cook Pavilion had been covered in weeds rather than actual grass. After Larry Dodd tilled the area, Eric Williams seeded the lawn with tall fescue grass. In addition to tending the grass seed, Eric removed the Japanese barberry shrubs (now considered invasive in Missouri). He will lead the replanting of New Jersey tea shrubs. The loss of the hackberry tree turned the garden area around the Cook Pavilion from a shade to a sun garden. Knock out roses, Russian sage bushes and perennial hibiscus were planted on the lake side of the hill. Sedum plants scrapped off during removal of the hackberry tree were replaced. Time will tell how the hostas, ferns and other shade plants adjust to increased sunlight.

Signs placed along the Grotto paths inform park visitors that the Lafayette Park Conservancy maintains these gardens.

### Plants Used Include:

Amsonia (bluestar)  
 Aster  
 Baptisia  
 Carex amphibola (creek sedge)  
 Echinacea (coneflower)  
 Lobelia cardinalis (red cardinal flower)  
 Rudbeckia (black-eyed Susan)  
 Ruellia humilis (wild petunia)  
 Tiarella cordifolia (foamflower)  
 Heliopsis (oxeye sunflower)  
 Mertensia virginica (Virginia bluebells)  
 Monarda (bee balm)  
 Solidago (goldenrod)



Volunteers  
 planting new  
 plants in the  
 Grotto area.





More gardening  
efforts by many  
volunteers.  
Thank You!





## Our Trees Continue to Grow

Starting in mid-February, 55 new trees were added to Lafayette Park. The trees had enough size to them that they had to be rolled, rather than lifted into their holes. The results have been pleasing. A recent survey found that almost all of the trees are leafing out. The inventory includes 12 white oaks, 10 pagoda dogwoods, 6 flowering cherry (including several memorial trees), 6 tulip poplars, 4 redbud, 3 little leaf linden, 3 red maple, 3 hackberry, 3 cucumber magnolia, 3 black gum, 2 London plane and a serviceberry. Earlier, 12 trees were planted along Mississippi Avenue and 4 magnolias at the Lafayette and Missouri entrance. Trees have been planted with location and species as much in keeping with the Lafayette Park Tree Master Plan of 2016 as possible.

The Lafayette Park Conservancy is working on a method to provide emergency watering in case of a drought this summer. A service has been contracted to water if needed at \$400 a visit. Another option is for volunteers to adopt-a-tree and water it once a week. 5 gallon buckets and location of water taps would be provided. To volunteer, contact Mike Jones at [brational@gmail.com](mailto:brational@gmail.com).

Thanks are due to our 7th Ward Alderman Jack Coatar for his financial support of this project and to Alan Jankowski and the St Louis Parks Department, Forestry division. Thanks also go to Jerry Ferrell and Mike Jones who organized



*Forestry Department workers plant trees behind Benton statue.*

## Autumn 2020 Lecture Series

All lectures held in the Kern Pavilion at 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 13, Melanie Fathman presents "Churches of Victorian St. Louis"

Sunday, October 11, Christopher Gordon presents "Fire, Pestilence, and Death: St. Louis, 1849"

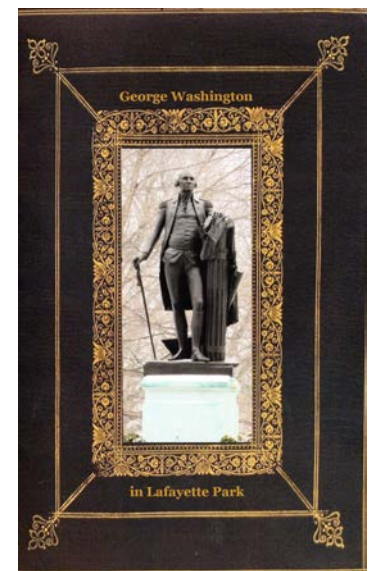
Sunday Nov. 8, Annual Meeting and Mike Jones presents "History of Lafayette Park's Iron Fence"

The constantly changing SARS-CoV-2 virus situation may affect these lectures. Check our website at [www.lafayettepark.org](http://www.lafayettepark.org) to be sure these presentations are still being held.

### 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](http://www.lafayettepark.org)



## Presidents' Day 2020

Lafayette Park Conservancy held its annual President's Day Reception before the DAR wreath-laying event. The first LPC reception 16 years ago was held in the Park House to provide refreshments and a warm place to await the ceremony that often falls on the coldest, wettest or iciest day of the year. Because the number of attendees outgrew the Park House, the reception moved to the Kern Pavilion a few years ago. To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Washington statue, three lucky attendees received a copy of LPC's "George Washington in Lafayette

Park." The Cornelia Greene Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution celebrated Washington's Birthday by laying a wreath in front of Washington's Statue. This was the 56th year for the event. The Eastern Missouri Continental Color Guard served as honor guard. Following the ceremony, The Missouri Chapter of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States laid a wreath at the Revolutionary War Monument. MOLLUS donated the 3 guns from the sunken HMS Acteon to Lafayette Park in 1897.



*Doug Niermeyer, MO MOLLUS, lays wreath at Revolutionary War Monument*



*Wreath laid by Joan Magee, State Vice Regent and Marilyn Hartnett, Regent, both of the Caroline Close Stark Chapter*

## Thanks to Alderman Coatar

Thanks to Alderman Jack Coatar, Lafayette Park has a new drinking fountain that is accessible to people and their four-legged friends. The fountain is located on the east side of the main lake between the playground and Cook Pavilion.

The Parks Department replaced the old swing sets with the help of Alderman Coatar. The new equipment has 2 swings for children, 2 swings for babies and 2 new dual swings for babies and parents. The area was filled with special mulch engineered especially for play areas.



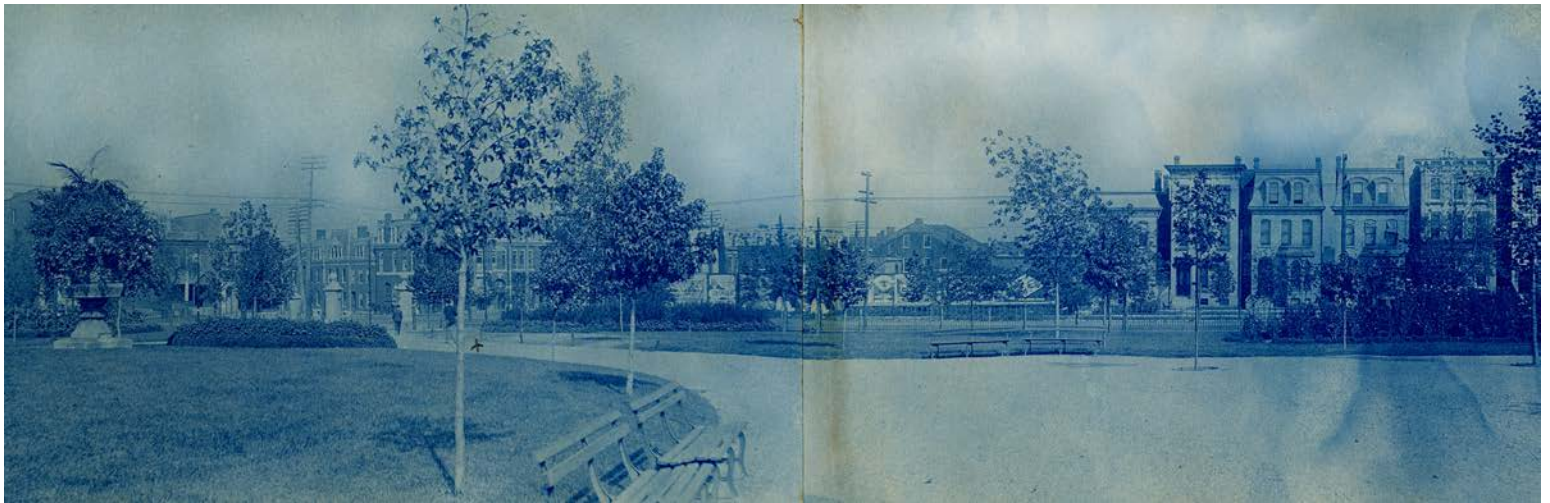


## Lafayette Park After The 1896 Tornado

The Great Cyclone of 1896 destroyed almost every large tree in Lafayette Park. It was a devastating blow not only to the park landscape but also to one man in particular—Leonard Hunt. Hunt, a Norwegian immigrant, was the superintendent of Lafayette Park for 33 years, from 1872 until his retirement in 1905. After 24 years of careful cultivation it was a major challenge for Hunt to oversee the restoration of the park following the cyclone.

This photo of northeast entrance (Park and Mississippi avenues) to the park is from an album of 54 panoramic photos. It illustrates the results of that restoration, showing some of the hundreds of new trees that were planted. The process used to create this photo is a cyanotype—the same process used to create blueprints which accounts for the blue tint.

Hunt was the last superintendent of the park as the position was eliminated when control of Lafayette Park passed from an independent Board of Improvement to the city Parks Department.



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](mailto:secretary@lafayettepark.org)

*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](http://www.lafayettepark.org)*



Follow the LPC on Facebook.



## Lafayette Park Conservancy

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Saint Louis, Missouri 63104

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