



# ParkNotes

*a semiannual newsletter published by the Lafayette Park Conservancy*

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Spring 2018

## New Water Line in Park An Old Dream Comes True



Bringing water to the park by tying into existing lines above.

Part of the mounds of soil resulting from the excavation work at left.

One of the park gardeners' oldest dreams is about to come true. The City has run a new water line into the park from Mississippi Avenue with enough pressure to water Grotto Gardens and new garden areas added in the future. As it stands now, the tangle of hoses, sprinklers, timers and valves will get the job done but there are always problems. Hoses break, timers get out of sync and there are always dry spots where the sprinklers don't reach. The worst thing is that it takes a couple of days to complete one watering cycle if everything holds together.

The new line runs to five locations around the Cook Pavilion and the Grotto Lake. The Lafayette Park Conservancy will take it from there. New sprinklers will be connected to the lines to water everything in one day so the collection of hoses can be removed.

The number of wedding parties lining up on weekends to take pictures on the Grotto Bridge and around the lake and Cook Pavilion proves how well the gardeners have done to make this area so attractive. It also shows how important this area is to our park's reputation.

If you would like to help with the gardens, these are some of the gardeners you can speak with: Sue Pinker-Dodd, Carolyn Willmore, Marilyn Lane, Vicki Houghton and Mark Kalk.

## Lafayette Park Lecture Series

This autumn, the Lafayette Park Conservancy will host a series of three lectures about different aspects of the history of Lafayette Park and the Lafayette Square neighborhood. All the lectures will be held in the Kern Pavilion and begin at 3 p.m.

Sunday, September 9, 2018 **The Photos of Dr. William Swekosky: The Dentist who became the 'Pallbearer of Old St. Louis'**

Beginning in the 1930s local dentist Dr. William Swekosky began taking photos of old St. Louis buildings as they faced the wrecking ball. Dr. Swekosky was appalled by what he saw as the wholesale destruction of the oldest neighborhood in St. Louis—the riverfront district. His images and historical research provide a rare glimpse at St. Louis. The lecture will take a close look at a dozen of Dr. Swekosky's building photos and the fascinating stories they tell, including some lost buildings from Lafayette Square.

Sunday, October 14, 2018 **The Man Who Made St. Louis Beautiful: Max Kern**

The name of this lecture was the title of an article that ran in the Globe-Democrat newspaper on June 14, 1908. Kern was responsible for designing many of the parks in St. Louis, including Lafayette Park. He created the plan for Westmoreland and Portland Places. By the turn of the century, Max Kern was nearly forgotten. Recently, a renewed interest in German-American landscape gardeners has occurred. Discover the fascinating career of Max Kern.

Sunday, November 11, 2018 **Harriet Hosmer's Statue of Thomas Hart Benton, St. Louis' First Piece of Public Art**

This year makes the 150th anniversary of the dedication of the statue of Thomas Hart Benton in Lafayette Park. In 1860, the Missouri State Legislature commissioned a monument to the late Senator Benton. Benton had served Missouri in the United States Senate from 1821, when the state was admitted to the Union, until 1850. The commission was granted to Harriet Hosmer, an American living in Rome. Hear the story of how the Benton statue was eventually erected in Lafayette Park.

Presenters:

Carolyn Willmore became fascinated with the history of Lafayette Park when she became a resident of the Square. She is a founding member of the LPC, an avid gardener, a Master Gardener and member of the St. Louis Herb Society.

Andy Hahn is the director of the Campbell House Museum. Built in 1851, the first house in the elegant Lucas Place neighborhood, the Campbell House was the home of renowned fur trader Robert Campbell. Hahn is the LPC's vice president.

## Park Bonds Update

The installation of the irrigation system and replacing the cracked and broken concrete squares at the top of the stairs leading down to the boat landing are the last two park projects financed by the sale of park bonds.

Several years ago the voters approved a sale of bonds to improve the St. Louis park system. Forest Park got about half of the funds. The larger parks got large sums and the rest of the money was divided among the rest of the smaller parks based on their acreage. At just under 30 acres, Lafayette Park still received a significant allotment for capital improvements.

When the money became available, we were asked to suggest a list of projects. Repairing the perimeter sidewalks was one project. The Lafayette Avenue side and the entire Park & Mississippi Avenue entrance were replaced and the rest made level for the first time in decades. The beautiful railing on the restored Grotto Bridge was another project we recommended and so was resurfacing the pathways inside the park. Thanks are due to our aldermen who have been generous in support of the park. Alderman Coatar and his predecessor, Phyllis Young, both have provided funds needed to fill funding gaps and help move projects. along.



Repaired concrete pad near the lake in Lafayette Park.

**HELP  
WANTED**

Lafayette Park is looking for volunteer gardeners to work in the Grotto, Rock Garden and Washington statue area. Usual workdays are Thursday and Saturday mornings. Due to surgery and a pending move, we are also looking for lead gardeners. Call Carolyn at 314-664-0106 for more information. Check NextDoor for workdays.

## Park Gardening Report

On April 21st, St. Louis University provided volunteers to Lafayette Park as part of the "Showers of Service" program. Two groups of students worked in the park. Matt Negri's LSRC group worked in the Park House gardens and removed stumps near the mid-Lafayette gate.

The Lafayette Park Conservancy's group of students divided their time working in the Grotto, Washington Monument and Rock gardens. Bags and bags of sweet gum balls were removed, last year's decorative grasses were cut back and cannas were planted at the Rock Garden. The circle gardens around the Washington memorial were mulched as well as nearby young trees. Grotto flowerbeds and paths were cleared of leaves and weeds before mulching. Thanks to these St. Louis University students, Lafayette Park gardens are ready for spring planting. Thanks also to Vickie Houghton, Mark Kalk, Marilyn Lane, Sue Pinker-Dodd and Carolyn Willmore, the lead gardeners who work the whole growing season planting and maintaining these gardens.



SLU students mulching around Washington statue.



Lafayette Square resident Mark Kalk working in the greenhouse this winter.

Four Lafayette Square Master Gardeners spent Thursday mornings at the Forest Park greenhouse this winter growing plants for Lafayette Park. Many flats of plants were carpooled to the park in early May.

## Washington's Birthday

The Lafayette Park Conservancy held a reception for the Cornelia Greene Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution prior to their annual wreath laying. The 54th ceremony took place on a rainy day, so most of the ceremony was held in the Park House. Peggy Swing, Regent of the Cornelia Green Chapter, welcomed attendees and introduced honored guests: Debra Dollar, State Chair for the National Committee, and Regents Linda Miklovik, John Sappington Chapter; Jean Crews, Fort San Carlos Chapter; Susan Hauf, Olde Towne Fenton; Rachel Wilhelm, O'Fallon Chapter and Susan Bowman, State Regent. Rev. Dr. Darrel Curtis delivered the invocation. The Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard led a procession to Washington's Statue for the actual wreath laying. Mr. John Graves, Governor, Lewis and Clark Company, Jamestown Society, delivered the speech at the luncheon following the ceremony.



State Regent Susan Bowman laid a wreath at the Washington Statue.

Thanks again to St. Louis City Parks department for providing plants and maintenance help in Lafayette Park. Appreciation also goes to Flora Conservancy for providing more plants and help to beautify the park.

Check out their websites at:

[www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/parks/parks/](http://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/parks/parks/)

OR

[www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/parks/floraconservancy/](http://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/parks/floraconservancy/)

*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.

**We are always looking for  
volunteer gardeners to join  
our ranks.**

**Contact Carolyn at  
[cgwillmore@gmail.com](mailto:cgwillmore@gmail.com)**

*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)*



## Lafayette Park Conservancy

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Saint Louis, Missouri 63104

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

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