



ParkNotes

A semiannual newsletter published by the Lafayette Park Conservancy

Issue 24

Spring 2019

Springtime in Lafayette Park



Resident Carolyn Willmore was walking the park and snapped these photos of springtime this year. Thankfully she was there on one of our rain-free days.

On Friday, April 5, Lafayette Park Conservancy held its first annual Arbor Day tree planting. Although Arbor Day is celebrated nationally on the fourth Friday of April, Missouri celebrates it on the first Friday.



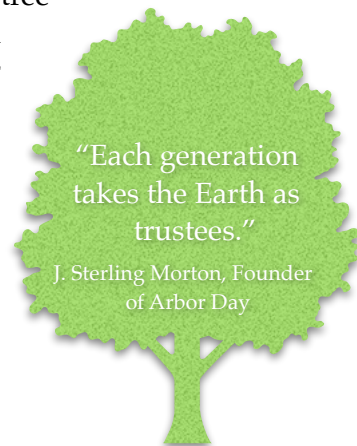
Ian Lawson, Ward Buckner, Larry and Sue Dodd, Carolyn Willmore, Lisette Odell and Marilyn Lane gather around the recently planted Arbor Day tree.

The Conservancy planted a tulip poplar tree in the southwest quadrant of the Park. The tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is one of the largest native trees in the eastern United States. It is known for its high canopy, rapid and straight growth, and its unique, sweet smelling flowers. The Conservancy wishes to thank Urban Forestry for helping plant our Arbor Day tree.

Both the site and the choice of tree were made in accordance with the Lafayette Park Tree Master Plan, a planting guide for re-foresting the park. A \$10,000 T.R.I.M. grant from the Missouri Conservation Department paid for this master plan. Linda Pallman secured the grant on behalf of the Conservancy.

"Each generation takes the Earth as trustees."

J. Sterling Morton, Founder of Arbor Day



President's Message: Taking Care of the Park

Once again we are stepping up to help maintain the park. The Parks Division has 108 parks to take care of and their budget and staff are limited so we are helping in two new ways. We are opening, closing and stocking the restrooms with soap, towels and tissue. The park is more crowded than ever with visitors and the LPC spent a lot of time and effort to get good restrooms in the park. So this is a good way for us to help. We are convinced that some light maintenance on a regular weekly basis will make a significant improvement in the park's appearance. The park tender position, when filled, will clear debris away from the park entrances, the playground and Grotto, do some trimming and other things to make the park neater.

Our current projects are continuing too. Reforestation of the park continued with a spring planting of 20 trees, a contract to install an irrigation system for our beautiful Grotto Gardens is signed and we are waiting for the foundry to deliver the new parts we ordered for the 1868 Fence. The Band Stand Committee is hard at work and we're installing new lights and flags.

St. Louis has a strong tradition of individuals and associations stepping up to help their neighborhood parks. The Friends of Tower Grove Park has contributed so much to revive that splendid park. The Lafayette Park Conservancy was created to follow their example and help revive our park.

Waterfowl History in the Park

Al and Ethel Bell would take corn to the park every evening, rain or shine. For over 20 years, this wonderful couple, who lived on Park Avenue came to the park every day to feed the ducks and geese. Some folks may also remember Willy, the ornery male swan who nonetheless looked regal while floating on the lake. When Al Bell passed away in Oct. of 2000, Ethel continued to go to the park every day. A kind neighbor, Sam Coleman, lent a hand, carrying the food down to the lake and keeping her company. About a year later, Ethel also passed away. The Bells were long time supporters of Lafayette Square and were missed by many in the neighborhood. At an LSRC membership meeting we put in place funding to continue care for the ducks as a tribute to the Bells.



Care of the waterfowl continues to this day. Domestic ducks, like the Pekins, are unable to fly and depend on us to provide them with food. Several kind neighbors now take on the daily feeding of the ducks and swans. They are fed grains, lettuce and poultry pellets everyday. When the ducks and swans have a run in with a fishhook or fishing line, the "Swan Swat Team" assembles, puts on their waders and takes care of any ill or injured birds.

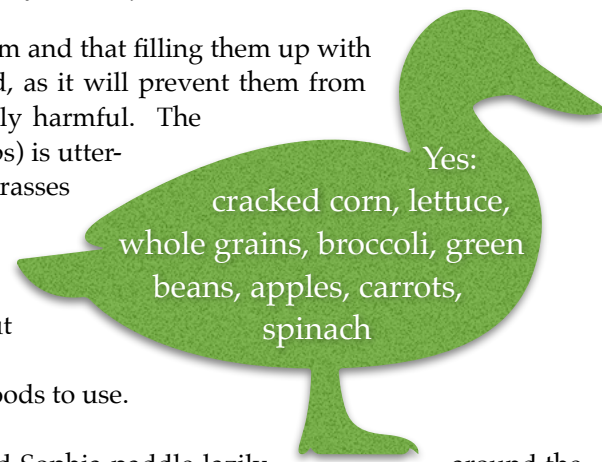


No
sugary,
starchy,

fatty, junky, or
fast food!!

Please note a diet that mimics their natural foods is best for them and that filling them up with food that is not part of their natural diet should be avoided, as it will prevent them from getting the nutrition they need as well as being potentially harmful. The food humans frequently feed them (such as bread and chips) is utterly unsuitable. Particularly in the winter months when grasses or other plant vegetation is scarce, greens such as dark green lettuce, spinach, chopped/shredded carrots, celery and alfalfa sprouts and other vegetables and greens make a great supplement. Any vegetables need to be cut up into small pieces. Remember, birds don't have teeth!

Berries, tomatoes and frozen or canned corn are other easy foods to use.



Yes:

cracked corn, lettuce,
whole grains, broccoli, green
beans, apples, carrots,
spinach

There are currently three Mute swans that grace the main lake. Sue, Sammi, and Sophia paddle lazily around the lake bringing back a picture from the neighborhood's past. Every spring they build impressive nests with sticks and lay several eggs, but since there aren't any breeding pairs, eggs aren't fertilized and they don't hatch. For about a month the girls sit on the eggs and sometimes move the nests around. They leave the nests in the evening to feed and drink. Contrary to what some folks think, the waterfowl don't enjoy being chased by dogs or people. They also don't enjoy dodging sticks and rocks that are thrown at them. Share the lake with our lovely waterfowl and they will reward you with grace and beauty.

Vintage Base Ball in Lafayette Park

Vintage Base Ball is alive and well in Lafayette Park. Recently, the St. Louis Perfectos took the field against the St. Louis Brown Stockings. The Perfectos' home field is located in the northwest corner of Lafayette Park. You can find their home game schedule at lafayettepark.org/events-calendar.

Our park is also home field to the Lafayette Square Cyclone Vintage Base Ball team. Search for them on [Facebook](#) to see their schedule of games.

Did you know Saint Louis Cardinals were called the Perfectos in 1899? The name lasted for only one year. When new owners purchased the National League team, they changed the name of the team to the Perfectos and the color of the jerseys from brown to red. The red color proved to be very popular. Fans and sports writers started calling the team the Cardinals, the shade of red used for the letter P logo. In 1900, the team's name was officially changed to the Saint Louis Cardinals.



Two members of the Perfectos Team.

Volunteer Gardening in the Grotto



City Parks Department staff helped volunteers with spring cleanup.

Saint Louis University's Showers of Service program sent 30 students from Kappa Alpha Theta sorority to Lafayette Park on April 6 to help get our gardens ready for spring plantings. These hard working volunteers spent 4 hours raking, pruning, planting and mulching. We thank them for their service. They were fantastic. Our neighborhood volunteers were also out in force: Vicki Houghton and Floyd Welch (rock garden); Marilyn Lane (Washington Monument); Mike Jones (tree mulching); and Larry Dodd, Sue Pinker-Dodd, Mark Kalk, and Carolyn Willmore (grotto). Earlier in the month, Michael Bushur and his friend Peter helped remove piles of leaves and plant phlox in the grotto garden.



Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority raking leaves in the Grotto.

Volunteers from the Flora Conservancy of Forest Park and greenhouse staff spent a rainy morning in late April dividing plants, digging out rogue trees and wild onions and mulching. The Lafayette Park Conservancy and the Flora Conservancy of Forest Park joined forces years ago forming the Flora Conservancy of Lafayette Park. One benefit is use of the greenhouse adjacent to the baseball fields in Forest Park. Marilyn Lane, Carolyn Willmore and Mark Kalk have been busy growing annuals for Lafayette Park at the greenhouse. Lafayette Park is a city park, but other than routine maintenance, the amazing plantings are the results of volunteer labor and fundraising. Members of the Lafayette Square community under the leadership of the Lafayette Park Conservancy work together to accomplish this goal. You, too, can be a part of this process. Contact Carolyn at cgwillmore@gmail.com.

President's Day Celebration



The Lafayette Park Conservancy President's Day reception was held in the Kern Pavilion, a larger venue than the Park House. This was a fortuitous move because the event was well attended. A cake commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Washington Statue in Lafayette Park. Connie Hawley, past regent of the Cornelia Greene Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, cut the cake.



*Connie Hawley,
Daughters of the American Revolution.*

Since the day was very cold, most of the wreath laying ceremony was held in the Kern Pavilion. The Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard presented the colors. After State Daughters of the American Revolution members led the group in various pledges, the group processed to the Washington Statue where a wreath was laid.

The group then moved to the Revolutionary War Monument where The Missouri Commandery, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States laid a wreath. The guns, salvaged from the sunken H.M.S. *Acteon*, were given to Lafayette Park in 1897.



On the left are members of the Sons of the American Revolution processing to the Revolutionary War Monument.

*Below is a part of the wreath laying ceremony near the guns of the HMS *Acteon* warship.*





We are celebrating the 50th anniversary of our Lafayette Square Restoration Committee (LSRC) house tour events this year. Lafayette Park is an integral part of the neighborhood and the house touring experience. Please consider using the form below or a copy of it to help with our efforts at park maintenance and beatification. You may also visit www.lafayettepark.org to pay through PayPal.

Join the Lafayette Park Conservancy!

Decades of deferred maintenance have tarnished the magnificence of historic Lafayette Park, but with your help we can and will restore its shine. The Lafayette Park Conservancy, organized in 2001, has as its mission the restoring, beautifying and improving of Lafayette Park. The Conservancy, together with the Lafayette Square Restoration Committee and the St. Louis Parks Department, created a comprehensive Master Plan in 2003 for the development of Lafayette Park, and it is that plan that continues to guide our actions.

If you agree that restoring important park features and structures, together with some sensitive upgrading of park infrastructure (lighting, paths, benches, etc.) are worthwhile civic efforts that can open the park to additional use and a wider circle of park patrons, please consider joining the Lafayette Park Conservancy. Your membership not only provides crucial funds for operation, park maintenance and improvement projects, but even more importantly demonstrates widespread community support as we seek more significant funding from grant providers.

I want to begin/renew my membership to the LPC!

Name(s) _____

Address _____

E-mail address _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

Friend - \$35 (*One named member*)

Family - \$50 (*Two named members*)

Botanist - \$75 (*Two named members*)

Historian - \$150 (*Two named members*)

Preservationist - \$300 (*Two named members*)

Benton Society - \$500 (*Two named members*)

Lafayette Society - \$1000 (*Two named members*)

Please return with check payable to:
Lafayette Park Conservancy
 2023 Lafayette Ave., St. Louis, MO 63104

Or you can pay on-line using PayPal.
 Visit www.lafayettepark.org for more information.
Memberships are valid for one year from date of joining.

The LPC is a 501(c)(3). Memberships are tax-deductible.

Gather in the Park for the LPC Fall 2019 Lecture Series

The Lafayette Park Conservancy is proud to announce the second annual Fall Lecture Series. The 2018 series was a great success with outstanding presentations, food, drinks and fellowship. All talks will be on Sunday afternoons at 3:00 p.m. in the Kern Lakeside Pavilion. Save these dates for the 2019 series:



Schmaider's Beer Garden in St. Louis.

September 8, 2019 'Brewers of Lafayette Square' by Cameron Collins

Cameron is co-author of 'St. Louis Brews: The History of Brewing in the Gateway City' and writer of the Distilled History blog found at www.distilledhistory.com

October 13, 2019 'The Celebration of Death and Mourning in Victorian St. Louis'

Get in the mood for Halloween. This presentation is done by the Mourning Society of St. Louis. You can find information about the Society on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/mourning-society-of-st-louis) by searching for Mourning Society of St. Louis.

November 10, 2019 'Washington Statue: 150 Years in Lafayette Park' by Esley Hamilton

Esley is a historic preservationist and co-author of the book 'St. Louis Parks', which can be found on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

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"

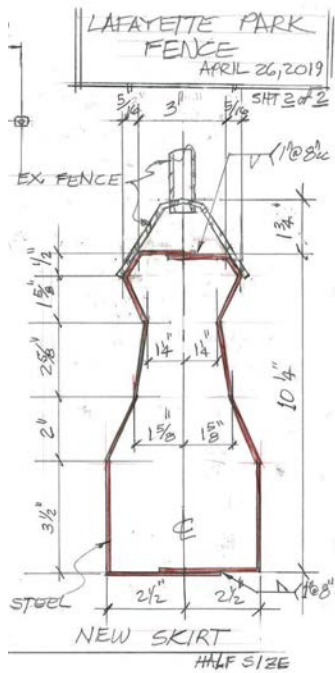
"The Guns of Lafayette Park: St. Louis' Monument to the Revolutionary War"

"The Fascinating History of Lafayette Park"

"The Man Who Made St. Louis Beautiful"

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

Lafayette Park Fence Restoration



Engineer's drawing of the new fence skirt.

After fits and starts, work is progressing on the restoration of a section of Lafayette Park's historic 1869 iron fence.

A few years ago, the Conservancy undertook the restoration of six "test" sections of the fence in front of the Park House at Lafayette and Mississippi avenues. Much was learned in the process of working on these sections and the Conservancy's Fence Committee is now confident that solutions have been found to the technical challenges to complete the project—which include creating new taller posts to match the original design and replicating the now missing skirt or base plate that ran along the bottom of the fence.

Expect to see the six test sections removed in early summer and a single test section erected with new posts and prototype of the new skirt. If all goes smoothly the remaining five sections at Lafayette and Mississippi will be re-erected later in the summer. The fence restoration project is anticipated to take years and cost in excess of \$1,000,000.

The 4,100-foot-long iron fence with its large stone gate posts and massive iron gates is the signature feature of Lafayette Park. In fact, the fence spear point design was chosen as the symbol of the neighborhood and the Lafayette Square Restoration Committee. This year is the 150th anniversary of the erection of the fence around the park. An architectural competition was won by Francis Tunica

for the design of the fence and the firm of P. J. Pauley and Brother won the contract to build the fence.

In the late 1970s the condition of the fence had deteriorated to the point that the Parks Department thought it was necessary to take it down and re-erect it using new fence posts cast from a mold of an original post. The 11-inch high base plate was not reinstalled, apparently because so much of it was missing or beyond repair.

Reforestation Efforts in the Park

Time passes and even trees have a limited life span. Trees die due to old age, disease and storm damage. Parks are not like forests, trees do not re-propagate themselves. Walking through the park you will see a significant number of old growth trees that were storm damaged or were susceptible to disease have recently been removed. It is expected that over the next two years an additional 30 trees will be removed due to the latter cause alone. There is also a backlog of nearly 80 trees that were removed in the past and not replaced. Due to budget constraints, the city has limited resources to provide replacement trees. Without intervention, our park will gradually turn into a place barren of the magnificent green canopy that trees provide. That's why one of the goals of the Lafayette Park Conservancy is the reforestation of our beautiful park. To this end, a survey and masterplan based upon historical documents were prepared to guide the reforestation effort.

The Conservancy has committed to planting a minimum of ten large canopy trees each year. In addition, it is establishing a memorial program whereby individuals fund the planting of a shade tree in honor of an individual or family. A second program is being developed to plant groups of flowering trees in areas designated by the masterplan with a marker identifying the donor. The Conservancy will water and mulch each tree in the early years of its life. Memorial trees are guaranteed for one year and will be replaced at no cost.

For more information or to donate for tree replacement contact:

Jerry Ferrell 310-403-8671 or email at jerald.ferrell@icloud.com.

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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2023 Lafayette Avenue

Saint Louis, Missouri 63104

www.lafayettepark.org

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