



# ParkNotes

a semiannual newsletter published by the Lafayette Park Conservancy

Issue 6

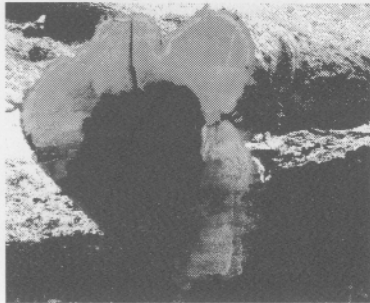
Spring 2010

## Trees Come Down!

This winter and spring twenty-five trees were toppled in Lafayette park, many of them old and dear friends we will sorely miss. The Forestry Division handled their removal, guided by a comprehensive evaluation of the park's 760+ trees. That study was commissioned by the Conservancy and funded in 2009 with the help of a T.R.I.M. (Tree Resource Improvement and Maintenance) grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation. The MDC pays 75% of the total cost for approved projects, providing an effective 3-to-1 match of Conservancy funds.

Tree maintenance addresses several important concerns: tree health, aesthetics and public safety. Any one of these concerns can prompt action such as pruning, pest control or removal. The massive

study of the park's trees was performed by a certified arborist and urban forester. His recommendations were sent to City Forestry, which added



*Hollow tree recently cut down*

an additional layer of hazard assessment to confirm which trees needed to be removed rather than simply pruned.

The Conservancy has applied for another T.R.I.M. grant in 2010. If approved, this grant will help fund the expensive high-level pruning of our large trees, train volunteers to perform easier low-level pruning, and begin development of a planting plan to delineate the locations, species and sizes of new trees to be planted. Tree Committee members are to be commended for taking on this important work, which will establish a solid foundation for the future health and development of the park's magnificent living infrastructure.

## Washington's Birthday Bash

Biting cold weather did not deter the Cornelia Greene Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution from celebrating Washington's Birthday in Lafayette Park. Its wreath-laying ceremony at the Washington statue has been a yearly tradition since 1963.



*Colonial Color Guard, by Carolyn Willmore*

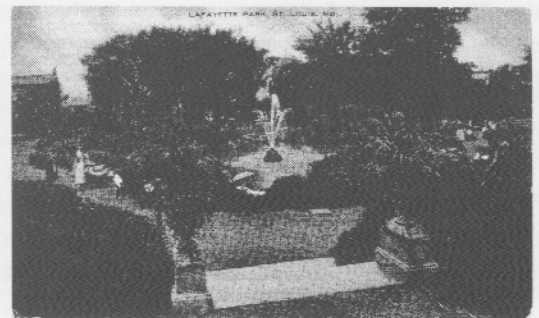
The Conservancy hosted a reception before the ceremony, much of which took place in the Park House because of the cold weather. Period costumes of the Colonial Guard of the Sons of the American Revolution added color to the event. Pamela Davis, Regent of the Cornelia Green Chapter, welcomed attendees and introduced honored guests, including

many DAR dignitaries. McGraw

Millhaven of KTRS Radio gave a warm and humorous talk, and Rev. Aaron Ban of Lafayette Park United Methodist Church provided the invocation and ending benediction. Everyone enjoyed George's birthday cake and is looking forward to a repeat celebration next year.

## Guided Tours Begin June 13

Would you like to know where this popular water feature was in Lafayette Park? To find out, join LPC docents for a fascinating walking tour of Lafayette Park. The first tour will be Sunday, June 13 at 2:00 p.m. Meet your guide in front of the Park House at Mississippi and Lafayette. The tour will last one hour and is limited to 25 people at \$5.00 per person. Docent-led tours can be arranged at special times for interested groups, or we can bring the "Fascinating History of Lafayette Park," a PowerPoint presentation, to your meeting place. To register for June 13 or arrange a private tour or program, just call (314) 772-5724 and choose option 5. Or visit the LPC website at [www.lafayettepark.org](http://www.lafayettepark.org).



## From the President...

Ah, seductive Spring, here at last! Folks are everywhere in and around Lafayette Park—jogging, fishing, trysting, playing on swings, marrying, cheering or performing 1860s baseball (see [www.stlouisperfectos.org](http://www.stlouisperfectos.org)), gardening, feeding and watching the waterfowl (swans, ducks, geese), picnicking, taking photos or creating paintings, walking pets or simply sitting to watch to enjoy the views. We surely owe a large debt indeed to that greatest of all landscaping artists and gardeners, Maximilian Kern, who as Lafayette Park's first superintendent originally designed and created in the 1860s virtually everything we see today, I wonder if he knew how much pleasure it would bring to so many people over the next 150 years.

As summer rolls in we enjoy the Lafayette Square House and Garden Tour, the Saturday Summer Concerts, Movies in the Park, more baseball, and the Gateway Cup bicycle races. (Event info at [www.lafayettesquare.org](http://www.lafayettesquare.org)) Lafayette Park! A wondrous place, always changing, always beautiful, always restful. It's a love affair that can last forever if we but take proper care of its many charms!

— Bob Bischoff

## What's Happening With...?

**Lagoon in the Grotto.** Normally filled by overflow from the large lake, the lagoon developed a serious leak and sinkhole near its drain last fall and will no longer retain water. The Parks Division has studied the situation and plans to begin repairs after July 1, in its next fiscal year.

**Benton Statue.** The Conservancy is contracting with Russell-Marti, who restored the statuary in Forest Park, to conserve this massive bronze statue. Plantings around the monument have been removed in anticipation of the conservation work.

**HMS Actaeon Ship's Guns.** The first of these three artillery pieces was handsomely restored in 2009. Its companions are awaiting funding, which the Guns Committee is currently seeking. If you would like to help, please give us a call. Designated donations can also be made through our website, at [www.lafayettepark.org](http://www.lafayettepark.org).

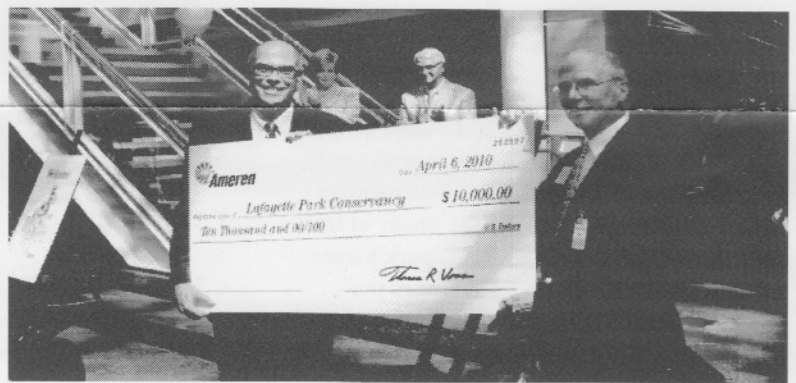
**1876 Music Stand.** We have schematic construction documents and a cost estimate in hand for this project, and are currently seeking a committee chair to prepare a complete presentation packet for seeking potential funders for this \$500,000 project. If you'd like to be that person, please contact Bob Bischoff at [rbischoff@yahoo.com](mailto:rbischoff@yahoo.com).

## Test Your Wits On October 2

Although previous Galas in the Grotto provided Gloriously Good times, many Conservancy members have petitioned for more affordable fundraising events that might promote broader participation. In response, we brought you the Boathouse Boogey Halloween Dance in 2009, and we're planning a yet-to-be-catchily-named trivia night for 2010. The date will be October 2, so start recruiting your own crack trivia team now. Be prepared to show everyone just how much useless information you have mastered. Be advised—most of the questions will *not* be about Lafayette Park or the Lafayette Square neighborhood, so cast your expertise net widely!

## LPC Project Funding Increases

It's been said that if you just keep toiling away in the vineyard your labours will eventually bear fruit. That certainly seems to be true for Conservancy efforts to fund restoration projects in Lafayette Park. This past year has yielded abundant funding from foundations, organizations and individual contributors, letting us make progress on several urgent projects simultaneously. We would like to recognize our foundation and organization donors here, and sincerely hope that we haven't forgotten anyone. Kudos also to our ever-increasing membership and individual donors who generously opened their pocketbooks to provide matching and unrestricted donations!



### 2010 Funding

**Whitaker Foundation** is providing \$75,000 in matching funds for restoring park pathways. A very big thank-you to Whitaker! Now we just need to raise the match, but their generous lead donation "paves" our way!

**Kacie Starr Triplett**, City of St. Louis Alderman, is providing \$37,000 from discretionary capital improvement city funds to help replace the boathouse roof and tuckpoint the structure. Many thanks, Kacie!

**Ameren** made an unrestricted donation of \$10,000 to kick off their "Block Party" and signify their commitment to the neighborhood and the park, which is just a few blocks from their headquarters. Thanks, Ameren!

**Flora Conservancy** is providing \$3,000 in matching funds to help pay for irrigating the Rock Garden on the west side of the park. Thank you!

### 2009 Funding

**St. Louis Master Gardeners** granted \$500 toward Rock Garden irrigation. **Missouri Department of Conservation** granted \$7900 to help fund tree management plan and inventory.

**Lafayette Square Restoration Committee** gave \$15,500 to help fund restoration of the first ship's gun, pathway restoration, and park maintenance.

**Regional Business Council** provided \$10,000 to fund purchase and installation of a new park bench and landscaping near the grotto lagoon.



## Boathouse Gets Dry

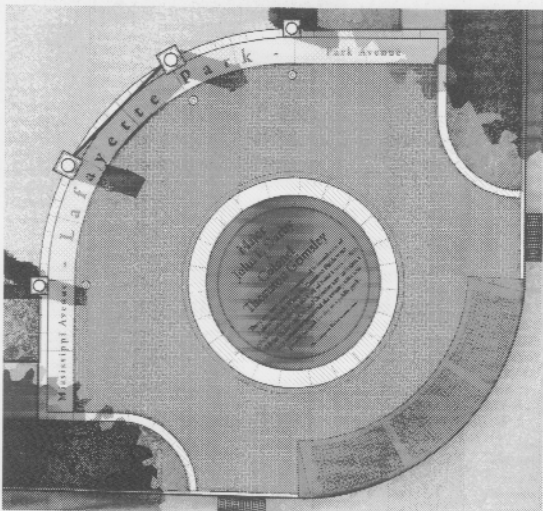
Although we have yet to receive final bids for construction work, we believe we finally have enough funds to restore the boathouse roof to its original Spanish tile configuration. The interior ceiling has already been removed, returning the interior to its original look of exposed rafters and deck planks.

The bad news is that removing the ceiling allowed us to see just how much deck and rafter damage has occurred due to serious leaks in the nearly gone composition roof. Our construction bids will therefore encompass replacing the entire roof structure, along with tuck-pointing exterior walls. Once the boathouse structure has been made weathertight we will be able to turn our attentions to interior improvements in subsequent phases.

We hope to have bids in hand shortly, so that the roof work can be completed during the warm summer months of July, August and September.

## Pathways Taking Shape

The Whitaker Foundation has responded favorably to our request for funds, and we are pleased to announce that they have granted us \$75,000, to be matched by a similar amount that we must raise. Phase I of the Pathways Restoration Project will cost \$215,000 in total, for resurfacing the most deteriorated pathways (around the Washington statue, for example), providing some permanent flower bed edging, and constructing a new ADA-compliant pathway across the grotto bridge.



Our next highest priority is repaving the four corner entrances with designs similar to the one shown here, for a warmer welcome at these main entries to the park. If you see fit to fund one, we will see that your contribution is properly memorialized with a really spiffy looking brass plaque!

## Rock Garden Gets Soaked

The Rock Garden in the western side of the park continues to improve by leaps and bounds. This beautifully arranged garden of perennials and shrubs edges both sides of a flagstone path and provides meandering vistas that are very pleasing to the eye, ear and even the nose, for some of the plants are fragrant.



For many years the Rock Garden was managed almost exclusively by its most faithful attendant and designer, Rebecca Wright, with watering assistance from Greg Plattner and occasional help in spring and fall by small groups of

volunteers. We are happy to say that Rebecca has finally been able to expand her team to include a few additional gardeners who share her passion for this unique garden, and that additional help is paying off in the number of compliments we receive on its beauty.

Of all the gardening chores required to maintain the Rock Garden, watering consumes by far the most time and effort. Because of this we sought grants and matching donations and were gratified by the overwhelmingly generous response we received. So much so, that we can now announce the imminent installation of an automatic underground irrigation system, to be installed in late spring or early summer of 2010. Long may it live to bring us those gorgeous flowers!

## Where Do Those Plants Come From?

If you've ever attended an LPC plant sale (and if you haven't, please *do* so June 5-6 on Lafayette Avenue near Mississippi—we'll be there from 10 to 5 each day), you've probably asked yourself where all those terrifically healthy, good looking plants come from. The answer is that they are propagated with love during the winter in the City's greenhouses in Forest Park, under the extremely able supervision of Master Gardeners Susan Pinker-Dodd, Carolyn Willmore and Mark Kalk, with enthusiastic assistance from a cadre of other Conservancy gardeners. Together, these folks devote hundreds of hours to making new plants when they can't garden outdoors. Our group grew several thousand plants this winter, most of which have already been or will soon be transplanted to their summer homes in Lafayette Park.

A couple of years back, our Master Gardeners decided they had become sufficiently skilled propagators that they would try to also grow a few plants for sale, to help fund Conservancy gardeners' efforts to beautify the park. That effort has exploded into what is now our third annual plant sale, and you will be amazed at the quality of what they are offering. The variety, vigor and size of these plants is much greater than can be found at many specialty nurseries. Shop early for best selection—they sell out fast!