



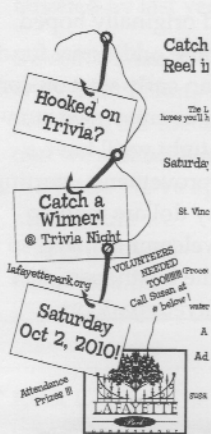
ParkNotes

a semiannual newsletter published by the Lafayette Park Conservancy

Issue 7

Fall 2010

Trivia Night Nets Big Catch



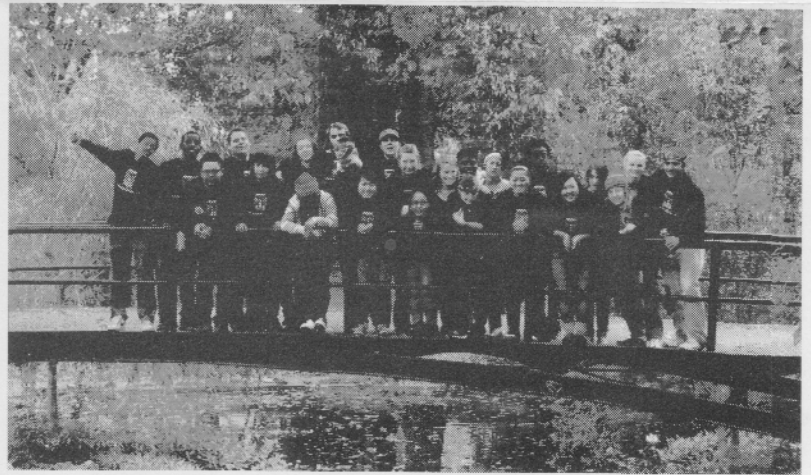
Have you answered all the questions? OK, then, put down your pencil and hold your breath while we announce the results. Tah-Da!, "Net" proceeds from our very first "Hooked On Trivia" night tipped the scales at just over \$5000. Talk about the big one that didn't get away! These funds will be used to support the Conservancy's mission of restoring and maintaining Lafayette Park.

With nearly 200 folks in attendance, the trivia night was one of our most successful fundraisers ever and, judging from your feedback, one of the best liked. Everyone seemed to have a good time and our volunteers, under the able leadership of Susan Sauer (thanks, Susan!) enjoyed putting it on, so trivia night will probably become an annual October event. If you have ideas for improvement or would like to help out as part of the event committee, please contact Susan Sauer or leave a voice message at our main number to give us your thoughts. We're looking forward to doing even better in 2011--you won't want to miss out!

Youths Bring Beauty To Park

Through the auspices of Operation Brightside, the tireless organization that does so much to help make St. Louis beautiful, two dozen enthusiastic and energetic young students from St. Paul, Minnesota descended on Lafayette Park on October 23. Under the supervision of experienced Flora Conservancy gardeners these tireless workers moved a mountain of mulch in the grotto, tamed the overgrown weedy wedge near the Park & Mississippi entrance, and helped clean up the rock garden for the winter season.

We very much enjoyed working with this group, who are all members of an organization called Students Today, Leaders Tomorrow. Their attitude and work ethic is exemplary and we welcome them back to Lafayette Park any time they are willing to come. Young people such as these make us more confident that the future of America is in good hands.



Water Returns To Lagoon

After nearly a year without water, the lagoon in the grotto is once again serving as a reflective foil for wedding parties and photographers. The numerous ducks who reside in the park love it too, as they make their daily treks back and forth from the main lake. City Parks Department removed the old drain that had caved in due to underlying erosion of the lagoon bed, excavated to create a better foundation, then rebuilt the drain with a much more solid structure that looks like it will last several decades. Thanks, City Parks! Everyone loves this area of the park for its picturesque views and magical atmosphere, and we're happy that the lagoon is back as the centerpiece of this wonderful park feature.



From the President....

I am continually amazed and inspired by the number of hours put in by volunteers, who work cheerfully (mostly!) and energetically to make Lafayette Park a place people are delighted to visit over and over again. The total number of volunteer hours put in each year is several thousand, or the equivalent of more than a couple of full-time employees. With municipal budgets tighter than ever before, it's a certainty that Lafayette Park could not be maintained and improved without its strong volunteer corps.

And I'm not just talking about gardening, either, important as that activity may be! It takes at least an equal amount of hours to run an organization like the Conservancy, what with meetings, mailings, writing articles, organizing and holding fundraisers, seeking grants, and a whole host of less than glamorous tasks that don't have the immediate feedback one gets from growing plants.

No matter how much we do, however, there is always something more that could be done, and always, it seems, a few skills we are lacking. One of those skills (actually a set of them) involves fundraising--especially grantseeking and soliciting large corporate and individual donations. If you have any desire, experience or interest in that area and would like to work on behalf of the Conservancy, please contact me at rbischoff@yahoo.com.

Bob Bischoff

Annual Meeting News

At the annual membership meeting held November 14 Treasurer Susan Sauer reported funds of more than \$140,000, of which approximately \$20,000 remained uncommitted. Membership Committee chair Susan Pinker-Dodd reported that the Conservancy now has 170 paid members. Committee chairs reported on the status of all active projects. Seven directors were elected to two year terms by the membership, with the total number of directors remaining at fourteen.

Carolyn Willmore gave an entertaining and informative lecture, including many unique images she has captured in PowerPoint, on the history and development of Lafayette Park. If you would like her to present to your group please contact her.

Carolyn's program was followed by a short board meeting to elect Conservancy officers. Kenneth Stone was elected treasurer, replacing Susan Sauer who was thanked for her dedicated and able service. The board also elected Tim Delahanty as a new director, bringing its total membership to fifteen.

Boathouse Funding Comes Through

The Lafayette Park Conservancy held its annual membership meeting on November 14th in the Boathouse, where members could easily see the sky through the large holes in its roof. The good news is that we now have funding totaling \$150,000 so that the roof replacement can go forward early in 2011. Extensive investigative and design work this summer showed that the entire roof structure--rafters, beams and decking--must be replaced, adding significantly to our original cost estimate.

In addition to the Conservancy's own funds, significant contributions came from alderman Kacie Starr Triplett's capital improvement funds, from the Lafayette Square Restoration Committee, from the Near Southside Improvement Corporation and from City Parks to make this project possible.

The roofing project has gone much slower than we had originally hoped, due both to the extent of the damage and the need to raise additional funds. We hesitate to make predictions, but we're hoping for an early start on construction and a handsome red tile roof for park patrons to enjoy next summer. Once the roof is on and the Boathouse is weather tight we'll have a party there to celebrate and begin planning further improvements, starting with the bathrooms and the windows. It will take many dollars more to improve the interior and make the boathouse a truly welcoming place, so if you're thinking of making a year-end contribution to the boathouse,, feel free to mail us a check or contribute online at www.lafayettepark.org.



Boathouse Holiday Cards Now Available

One of the more creative efforts by Lafayette Square residents to help fund sorely needed Boathouse improvements is this delightfully wintry holiday greeting card, with photo by Carolyn McAvoy and design by Tom Restoff. Attractively priced at \$15.00 for a pack of ten, these cards and envelopes are now available from several Lafayette Square businesses, including Looking Glass and Rue Lafayette. The inside of the card is left blank for you to write your own greeting. Please contact Carol Fisher at 314-664-5511 or carolfisher.stl@gmail.com for more information or to place an order if you have any trouble finding them.

What's Happening With...?

* **Trees.** Bad news is that our grant application to the state of Missouri to help fund high level pruning was denied. We will apply again next year. Good news is that skilled volunteers were able to complete some low-level pruning, especially to the trees near the Washington statue, and were able to remove one of the unsightly stumps at the fence on Lafayette. We have also had a recent donation sufficient to hire professionals for a day of high level pruning. City Forestry has been working in the park to complete the removal this winter of the remaining 25 trees targeted by last year's management plan.

* **Benton Statue.** Good news is we have contracted with conservators to begin repairing damage and polishing the metal in the spring. Bad news is that we still need an additional \$14,000 to pay for the work. We've applied for an NEA grant but are not sure we will get it. Additional funding ideas are more than welcome.

* **Rock Garden.** The irrigation system installed this summer works well, saving countless man-hours of labor and growing plants better than ever. We've applied for a grant to help fund a similar system for the grotto beds.

* **Pathways.** We are still seeking funds to match the \$75,000 Whitaker Foundation grant. The first phase is expected to cost \$215,000, so we still need \$140,000 before we can begin.

* **Revolutionary War Guns.** In the process of raising funds to construct a carriage for the second long gun similar to the one for the first.

* **1876 Music Stand.** We have drawings and cost estimates and are seeking funding, but this project must come after the boathouse, Benton and pathway improvements.

* **Cypress Trees.** A major water leak developed this fall under the cypress trees near the central park entrance on Mississippi. City Parks has involved the Water Division to help investigate the problem and identify a fix.

Is my banana tree a Missouri native? What does a cardinal flower look like?

Find the answers to these scintillating plant questions at:

www.grownative.org

OR

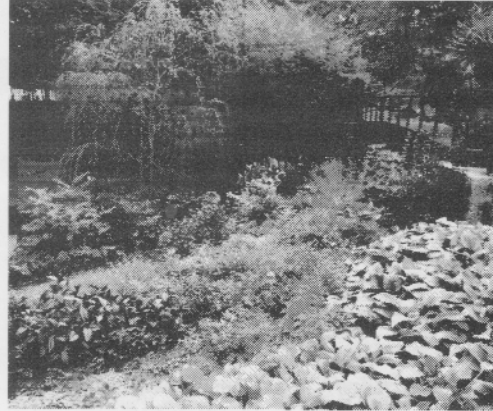
www.stlwildones.org

OR

www.plantsofmerit.org

Perennially Yours

Flora Conservancy volunteer gardeners were kept very busy this year planting and weeding to maintain Lafayette Park's beds of decorative flowers and other herbaceous plants. Even during the several extremely hot periods we experienced this summer these planted areas held up very well, displaying in all of their spectacular colors and forms for a pleasing design.



Perhaps our biggest project during the spring and summer months was the incorporation of many more hardy perennials into our bed designs. We plan to continue this effort as time goes on, with a view toward significantly reducing the many thousands of annuals we have been planting each year, along with the massive gardening effort that requires.

Perennials are more expensive and, until established, can be a bit more finicky, so bear with us while we transition. Many more perennials will be planted in 2011, in fact hundreds are now overwintering in the St. Louis Parks Department greenhouses in Forest Park. We are using Missouri natives or plants from the Plants of Merit program wherever we can to get the best possible results.

500 Pound Fish Caught In Lafayette Park

If you've been reading the Marquis newspaper you've probably seen stories about possible llama sightings in the park, but we have actual photos of a 500 pound green fish! The new fish was recently installed at the children's playground, replacing a similar size red fish that was donated for use in another City park.



Tan slides also replaced the multi-colored ones, which were donated together with the red fish, and sharp edges in the concrete curb were rounded off to improve safety.

Additional scheduled playground maintenance in-

cludes repainting swing set frames that are showing significant scratching and wear once the weather warms up in the spring, replacing the shade trees that were damaged by vandals, and bringing in several truckloads of wood chips to replenish the mulch under the swings.