

THE LAFAYETTE PARK CONSERVANCY

PARK NOTES LITE - WINTER 2008

Welcome to the very first issue of ParkNotes Lite, an email-only publication of the Lafayette Park Conservancy. The Conservancy began publishing ParkNotes last fall in a semiannual printed version, but really wanted to publish quarterly. To provide you with more timely updates and still maintain a reasonable budget, we've decided to send out shorter email updates between print issues. You'll get the full ParkNotes in Spring and Fall quarters, the email ParkNotes Lite in Summer and Winter quarters. Please let us know what you think of our efforts and how we might improve.

PUBLICIZING OUR MISSION

ParkNotes is just one part of an increasingly important strategic goal for the Conservancy—that of increasing public awareness of and support for its activities. The Conservancy was formed in 2001 with a mission “to restore and preserve the historic legacy of Lafayette Park and to raise money for this purpose.”

But how does the Conservancy actually fulfill its mission? Its activities fall primarily into two categories. In the first, capital improvements, we propose, plan, coordinate, fund and implement projects to enhance park features or park infrastructure. These projects could include the Boathouse, statuary, the cannons, the lake, the music stand, the playground, the paths and other items.

The second, equally important type of Conservancy activity addresses ongoing issues—primarily park maintenance and patron education. Developing a strong core of volunteers, planting and maintaining flower beds and containers, dredging the lagoon, coordinating tree pruning and removal with City services, and giving guided tours all fall into the ongoing category.

WEBSITE EXPANSION

In addition to ParkNotes, a crucial piece of our strategy to build awareness and understanding of the Lafayette Park Conservancy and its mission is the expansion and frequent updating of our website, www.lafayettepark.org. I am very pleased to report that we have, over the last two weeks, completed a significant website overhaul and expansion.

While you will find improvements throughout the site, I especially want to direct your attention to the updated Park Events section where you can now find detailed

information about the April 26 Progressive Dinner and the June 13-14 Benton/Hosmer events, to the Current Projects section to which we continue to add more detailed project information, to the Organization section where you can find meeting schedules and minutes plus the names of all Conservancy leaders, and to the News section where all ParkNotes issues are archived for convenient retrieval.

Please take a good look at our newly revised and expanded website and give us any feedback you may have. We want to continue making our website more useful and informative for your needs.

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

ParkNotes and the website, while perhaps the most visible of our publicity efforts, are not the only media which the Conservancy will use to communicate its message. We have also set goals for providing a greater presence in the Marquis newspaper through monthly articles, posting public notices in the park when appropriate, and providing continual liaison to neighborhood organizations near the park. All of these initiatives are underway and we will continue to refine and improve them as time goes on.

SAVE THE DATES! JUNE 13-14 FOR BENTON/HOSMER EVENTS

The Conservancy committee working on Benton Restoration includes many talented folks who have planned some really impressive events, beginning with the kickoff reception of a Symposium on Harriet Hosmer's works on Friday, June 13 and continuing with the full Symposium on Saturday morning, June 14. That will be followed by an afternoon celebration at the Benton statue and an evening fundraiser Gala that will be held under decorated tents on Benton Place. You won't want to miss these events! More details are available on the website, and we'll be sending out information on ticket pricing and availability as the events draw near.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

At its January meeting the Board of Directors of the Conservancy approved a capital budget of \$112,000 for 2008, apportioned as \$50,000 to the Boathouse, \$50,000 to the Benton Statue, \$5,000 to Park House landscaping after the Gazebo construction, \$5,000 to the Playground, and \$2,000 to the Grotto. Some of these funds are already available in accounts dedicated to those projects, but much of the money must still be obtained through fundraising events such as the "Hats Off To Hattie" Gala for the Benton restoration or by obtaining grants from foundations.

The Conservancy actively seeks grant funding for capital improvement projects, and has applied for two large grants for the Benton restoration. One of these we didn't get, but the other is still pending a decision that will happen later this year. We have received

several small grants for landscaping projects over the last year, but when we look at the major projects ahead of us—the Boathouse, paving the paths, reconstructing the Music Stand—it’s painfully obvious that we need to greatly expand the Conservancy’s capital development capabilities. Toward that end we will be calling a meeting in the near future to brainstorm capital development strategies. All interested parties, whether Conservancy members or not, are invited to attend. If you feel you have ideas to contribute please drop me a note at rbischoff@yahoo.com or call me at 314.741.7468. We’ll be happy to include you on our meeting notification list.

PLEASE JOIN!

One of the most effective things the Conservancy can do to build mission momentum is to increase its membership. More members mean more contacts and greater impact as we apply for grants, expand our core of tireless volunteers who help maintain the park so beautifully, or simply talk up Lafayette Park and its events through word-of-mouth to bring more patrons to the park. If you would like to help Lafayette Park in its continuing drive to improve its appeal and usability, please give serious consideration to joining the Conservancy or renewing your membership. Membership forms are available on our website at www.lafayettepark.org, in every issue of the Marquis, or by calling us at 314.772.5724. We look forward to hearing from you.

ERRATA

A perspicacious reader has called to our attention an error in the Fall 2007 edition of ParkNotes. In the article “New Urns Highlight Grotto Bridge” we named John Davidson as the original \$12,000 donor. That is incorrect. Our generous benefactor was actually John Nicholson, whose name is prominently displayed on the first urn to be installed. We apologize for our mistake.