



# ParkNotes

*a semiannual newsletter published by the Lafayette Park Conservancy*

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## Raising the Roof

The boathouse finally has a new roof! Not just any old roof, but a historic replica of its original Spanish tile roof. In 2005, Mary Ann Goodson and John Herlihy co-chaired the LSRC Parlor tour. A preview event raised around \$35,000 for a new boathouse roof. By 2009, the old composition roof was totally worn out and the Lafayette Park Conservancy (LPC) set a goal to put a new roof on the building, a first step in saving the one hundred year old structure.



*South side of the Boathouse showing the new clay tiled roof. Photo by Carolyn Willmore*



*New rafters going up have eave ends cut to match the original blueprint design.*

*Photo by Carolyn Willmore*

Using the original blue prints as a guide, architectural plans were drawn. The project escalated from replacing the shingles to replacing the entire roof sub-structure including rafters and iron tie rods. A historic photograph proved the original roof used clay tiles. The LPC pulled together funding for the project with generous support from Alderman Tracie Starr Triplett, Alderman Phyllis Young, Ameren UE, The Near Southside Improvement Corporation and the St. Louis Park's Department.

Along with the original dedicated roof funds from the LSRC and the LPC funds, the projected cost of \$162,000 was raised. By the end of 2011, the St. Louis Board of Public Service selected Raineri Construction as the contractor.

Although the roof is finished, one item remains to complete Phase One of the Boathouse Project. A furnace and air conditioning system will be installed in the southeast electrical room. The unit will be raised off the ground, optimizing storage space. The brick room inside the main room that currently houses the furnace will be demolished, increasing the useable space in the facility. Called a boathouse because it is near the main lake, it was built as a pavilion and tool shed long after the swan boats of the late 1800s had disappeared from the park. Originally

designed to be open in the summer and closed in the winter, it was modified in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to an enclosure that could be heated and cooled.

Phase One is just that, a first step in rehabbing the building. It does not address the issues of updating restrooms, installing lighting, upgrading windows and doors or adding a catering kitchen. That said, it is a very elegant beginning.

## From the President...

by Carolyn Willmore

My first official duty was rededicating the restored statue of Senator Thomas Hart Benton. The ceremony was staged in front of the statue; the reception was held in the boathouse. At that time, the roof was pocked with holes and was in dire need of replacement. A tent had to be erected inside the building to keep chunks of ceiling from falling into the cake and punch.

Today, the boathouse sports a new red Spanish tile roof. The Lafayette Park Conservancy was able to fund this historic restoration with the help of Alderman Kacie Starr Triplett, Alderman Phyllis Young, Ameren, the Lafayette Square Restoration Committee, the Near Southside Improvement Corporation and the St. Louis Parks Department. The city selected Raineri Construction as the contractor.

Phase One of the Boathouse Restoration only addressed replacing the roof and its substructure. A new furnace and air conditioner will also be installed in the southwest electrical room. The brick furnace room will be removed, creating more usable space in the main room. Future phases will update lighting, bathrooms and windows.

The Grotto Bridge was structurally repaired thanks to a generous grant from the Whitaker Foundation. Alderman Phyllis Young funded the new ADA compliant paths connecting the bridge to existing park paths. Delahanty Construction was the contractor the project. The Bridge and Pathway project is part of the original Whitaker Phase One Pathway Grant. To complete Phase One, the damaged paths in the southeast quadrant of the park must be repaired, and edging installed around the Washington plantings.

Park trees were pruned to remove dangerous limbs from their canopy. Several dead trees were removed. A Tree Resource Improvement & Maintenance (T.R.I.M.) Grant funded the work. This the second T.R.I.M. grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation awarded to the Lafayette Park Conservancy in the last three years. Many thanks go to Linda Pallman and Skip Kincaid for preparing the grant.



*View of new pathway heading off of the north end of the bridge.*

## Bridge Restoration

Thanks to a \$75,000 grant from the Whitaker Foundation, the Grotto Bridge was structurally restored this spring. The Foundation graciously amended the original Phase 1 Pathways Grant when engineering inspection revealed how badly deteriorated and dangerous the bridge had become. The amended grant required bridge repairs and installation of ADA compliant paths connecting the bridge to the park's existing pathway system. Our own neighbor Tim Delahanty's Construction business did the work on the bridge and the City of St. Louis worked on the paths. The pathways are new and extend from each end of the bridge to existing pathways.



Engineering inspection showed the steel supports and expansion joints were either missing or rusted through. The main arches over the lagoon were a major concern and needed to be reinforced. New arches were made by bending 6 inch I-beams to match the curve of the old arches. These arches were welded under the existing arches to support the decking of the bridge. New footings with embedded bolts for attachment plates were poured to support the arches.

A work platform made of two 32' by 8" beams was built to span the lagoon and facilitate work underneath the bridge. Lead paint was discovered and removed by a licensed lead renovator before new steel support could be attached to the cement expansion joints.

The most dramatic event involved the new arches. It required four men plus a hoist attached to the bridge rails to lift and aligned the 6 arch sections. The end sections of the curved steel beams were attached to the new abutments. Areas in the bridge deck over the expansion joints were cut out and filled with epoxy cement.

Alderwoman Phyllis Young came to the aid of the project by providing city paving to connect the repaired bridge to the existing pathways. Paving to ADA standards was completed on May 4, 2012. City inspection was completed and the permit closed and finalized on May 6, 2012.

## The LPC Isn't Trivial About Fun

"Wow, I didn't think I was that trivial" exclaimed Wile E. Coyote as he ran circles around his tablemates and aced all the questions on TV Cartoons. He and other neighborhood and regional non-fictional participants enjoyed a fun filled evening as 100 TV and movie related questions were asked and mostly correctly answered. The winning score was in the 90's and the winning table decorations were created by the Gilligan's Island crew in full costume during this three hour tour, oh I mean fundraiser. Bidding became fierce for the Sqwires bar-b-que, a private tour of historic Bellefontaine Cemetery and neighborhood themed pillows, and of course, Cardinal's Baseball tickets in the Hollywood themed Silent Auction. Local businesses, such as Park Avenue Coffee, Sqwires, Looking Glass Designs and generous neighbors and friends donated items for the auction and attendance prizes.

Approximately \$5000 was raised at the Lafayette Park Conservancy's "Hooray for Hollywood" Trivia Night on March 10, 2010. This money will be used to continue to restore our gracious green space, Lafayette Park. The LPC plans to host it's Third Annual Trivia Night in the Spring of 2013. The next event will be a Plant and Antique Sale during the June Lafayette Square House Tour. As always, if you want to become involved or support the LPC's efforts check out our website at [www.lafayettepark.org](http://www.lafayettepark.org).



*Members of the Gilligan's Island team who won first place.*

## Other Project Updates

- The LPC is seeking funds to finish Phase One of the Pathways Project in which we will repair the paths in the SE corner and add edging to the circle areas around the Washington statue.
- The Boathouse still needs wiring and lights replaced; the interior needs painting and the exterior restrooms need updating.
- The Grotto area needs an irrigation system, it's too hot in summer for volunteers to keep up with the plants' needs.

Don't miss the July 21st Movie in the Park presented as a partnership between the LPC and the Lafayette Square Arts Council. Details will be announced.

## Take the Mystery out of History

The LPC has two PowerPoint presentations of interest to St. Louis area organizations: "The Fascinating History of Lafayette Park" and "The Man Who Made St. Louis Beautiful."

"The Fascinating History of Lafayette Park" relates how 30 acres of the old St. Louis Common became a Victorian strolling park praised as one of the most effective pieces of landscape architecture in the United States, shows its destruction by the Great Cyclone of 1896, and ends with Lafayette Park today. The Conservancy also offers guided tours of Lafayette Park. The park has many award winning gardens and historic monuments.

"The Man Who Made St. Louis Beautiful" comes from the title of a 1908 Globe-Democrat article about the German-American landscape artist who "was the original designer of Lafayette and Forest Parks, who laid out Westmoreland and Portland Places, and whose work yet delights the eye at Compton Heights Reservoir, Benton, Hyde and other parks..." Few people remembered his name in 1908. By 2011, he was nearly forgotten. This program rediscovers his life and works.

The program fee for a not-for-profit group is \$50. All proceeds go to the Lafayette Park Conservancy to fund park restoration and improvements.

Contact LPC Carolyn Willmore ([cgwillmore@gmail.com](mailto:cgwillmore@gmail.com)) to arrange one of these programs for your group.

Contact Kathy Marks-Petitet ([info@parkavenuemansion.com](mailto:info@parkavenuemansion.com)) to arrange a tour of the park.

## Fruitful & Fulfilling Park Workday

In May we had a workday in the park that brought volunteers from the Flora Conservancy, John Burroughs School, Master Gardeners and neighborhood folks. We really got a lot done. The Washington stature area was weeded and planted, urns were filled with plants, the Cook Memorial garden was weeded, the gazebo hillside was weeded, grassy areas were trimmed and we ate doughnuts! If you are an interested gardener, come by the park and volunteer, it's good therapy.



*John Burroughs School students helping in the Park.*

## Join the Conservancy!

I/we want to join/renew at the following membership level.

- \$35 - Friend
- \$50 - Family
- \$75 - Botanist
- \$150 - Historian
- \$300 - Preservationist
- \$500 - Benton Society
- \$1000 - Lafayette Society

Name(s):

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Address:

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Phone:

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Email:

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Memberships are valid for one year. The Lafayette Park Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. If your contribution is eligible for a matching gift, please include your company's matching form. Return with your check or money order to:

Lafayette Park Conservancy, 2023 Lafayette Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63104

Or use our website: [www.lafayettepark.org](http://www.lafayettepark.org) to make your contribution.

I'm also interested in Lafayette Park Conservancy volunteer opportunities.

Does your employer have a matching grant program? Please provide us with the details.

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