

30th Annual Leclaire Parkfest Continues Long-Standing Fall Tradition In Historic Edwardsville District

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EDWARDSVILLE - The 30th Annual Leclaire Parkfest will be held Sunday, October 16, from noon to 5 p.m. at Leclaire Park in Edwardsville, Illinois. The annual festival, a celebration of the Leclaire National Historic District, is a long-standing fall tradition.

The festival will kick-off this year with music by the Gaslight Squares, a St. Louis band with a special blend of Ragtime and Jazz.

New this year is a 1920s-themed children's parade. Participating children are asked to wear costumes or carry homemade signs to portray a 1920s-era Carrie Nation, a flapper, or a Gatsby character. They might also portray an activist marching for the woman's right to vote. The parade begins at the corner of Hale Avenue and Lake Drive at noon and will circle the entire park.

Trolley tours of the historic district will be back with tickets sold from the Friends of Leclaire booth for \$1 (children) and \$1.50 (adults). Due to COVID, walking tours were substituted for the trolley last year.

Strolling the grounds will be re-enactors portraying Leclaire founder, N. O. Nelson and his friend, Edward Everett Hale, for whom Hale Avenue is named. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the death of N. O. Nelson.

All the crowd favorites will be returning. There are three bands, two playing on Hale Avenue and a third across the lake on Madison Avenue. Following the Gaslight Squares who play from noon- 2:30 p.m., are the Lodge Brothers who will play American folk music until 5 p.m. Many of the songs they cover may have been played at Leclaire Park a century ago. Across the lake, Mike Keller and the Greater Good will play a variety of American music mid-afternoon.

There will be a variety of festival foods available as well as beer, wine and a festival cocktail offered by Recess Brewery. Visitors are encouraged to bring a hearty appetite.

The St. Andrews's Relay for Life Book Sale will offer thousands of used books at bargain prices, all to benefit the American Cancer Society. Vintage car enthusiasts can get up close with some classic vehicles on the Madison Avenue side of the park and if you love animals, there are pet adoptions and horses from the Mustang Sanctuary. There are also children's activity booths.

Dozens of crafters, artisans, and other organizations will offer a variety of incredible hand-crafted merchandise. Booth spaces were sold out again this year. Some of the non-profit organizations, like the Madison County Historical Society and Friends of Leclaire, offer gift memberships and t-shirts, books, and other merchandise.

Friends of Leclaire has been hosting this festival for 30 years with the help of sponsors who provide funding. Please thank these community-minded businesses when you get a

chance: Platinum Sponsors: The City of Edwardsville and Koerner Distributing; Gold Sponsors: CNB Bank and Trust, Creative Options Graphic Design, Krause Properties, and attorney Keith Short.

For information about Leclaire Parkfest, call 618-656-1294.