

THE Lake Park Lion

A Homecoming for the Father of Milwaukee's Public Parks

By Ann Wollmer, LPF Administrator



Christian Wahl (1829-1901) was president of the Milwaukee County Park Commission from 1889-1899. During his tenure, he led the planning of a large portion of the Milwaukee County park system. He even played a key role in getting Frederick Law Olmsted to agree to come to Milwaukee

to design Lake, River(side) and Washington parks. According to journalist Ellis Baker Usher, "While President of the board of park commissioners, [Wahl] practically superintended the details of construction and beautifying of the city parks, and his deep personal interest gained to him the consistent designation of 'father of parks.'" He also wrote, "Lake Park was Christian Wahl's pride and glory: it was there he labored early and late, in season and out of season, to make it a model."

Wahl's passion for the parks is evident in his submission to the report "History of Milwaukee County from its First Settlement to the Year 1895." He wrote, "Today, no half way intelligent person can possibly deny the manifold advantages of properly made and properly kept parks in great cities... it would be difficult to exaggerate the refining and in every way admirable influences which beautiful and well-kept parks exert upon all classes of metropolitan inhabitants."

In honor of this forerunner after his death, a statue of Christian Wahl was commissioned and placed in front of the Lake Park

Pavilion on July 11, 1903. The pavilion and the statue were dedicated on the same day.

The dedication was a grand event, with speeches, a military band playing the "The Star-Spangled Banner," and the presentation by Wahl's widow of a collection of large palm trees to the park board. Again, to cite Usher, "More than one hundred of Milwaukee's representative people contributed to the fund by which this worthy memorial was procured for the park in which Mr. Wahl had taken so deep an interest, and the bust and its inscription constitute an enduring tribute to an honored citizen."

At some point, in the early 1920s, the statue was moved to the grassy area east of the lighthouse. In 1960, the statue was moved a second time, to a new location at North 48th Street and Hampton Avenue in Wahl Park, which had been named for him in 1956. In October 2020, Wahl Park was renamed Harriet Tubman Park, a

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Vanguard Sculpture Services staff have restored the bust. The original bust artwork was by Italian artist Gaetano Trentanove.

President's Column

By Anne Hamilton



I am grateful to the founders of Lake Park Friends for crafting a great mission statement: "The mission of Lake Park Friends is to promote the preservation and enjoyment of Lake Park, to sponsor educational, recreational, and cultural events in the park, and to raise funds for the restoration and enhancement of the park in the spirit of Frederick Law Olmsted." The mission is broad and flexible, while providing limits on the scope of our work.

The "educational, recreational and cultural" opportunities afforded by the park appear limitless. Yet the words "preservation" and "restoration" and the evocation of "the spirit of Frederick Law Olmsted" remind us that the history of Lake Park and the principles of Olmsted must play an important role in our decision making.

When I think of the "spirit of Frederick Law Olmsted," I focus on the importance he placed on access for all citizens to green spaces. Consistent with Olmsted's thinking, LPF works hard to ensure access to the park to all Milwaukeeans. This is why we do not charge for events, except our annual fundraiser; this is why we are concerned when parking is limited; and this is why we took the decision we did in the messy Pokémon controversy in 2016.

Olmsted's ideas on access, too, played a large role in shaping LPF's position on Ravine Road. For those of you who are not familiar with the position, please visit the Lake Park Friends website at <https://lakeparkfriends.org/ravine-road-update-lpf-board-passes-resolution/>.

Here we are thinking of access in two ways. The first is access from the lakefront, through the park, to city streets. The road was an essential element of Olmsted's design, connecting the lakefront, Lake Park, Newberry Boulevard and Riverside Park. The second has to do with access to the beauty of the road. Ravine Road was designed by Olmsted for "pleasure driving," and has been used by automobiles since its opening. Since the road is steep and curvy, its closure would make it difficult for those who are not physically fit to enjoy a beautiful part of the park.

The LPF board resolution calls for reopening Ravine Road to vehicular traffic, with some provisions for periodic closures. Our goal was to come up with a solution that recognizes Lake Park's historic significance and responds to community concerns about traffic and the need for occasional closure for special events.

We understand that opinions on the road are sharply divided. We look forward to working with the County and Milwaukee residents over the next few months to resolve the issues. We are confident that we can come up with a solution that addresses all concerns.

And, more than anything, we look forward to summer! The concerts, the beer garden, tennis, baseball, golf, movie nights, fireworks and long walks in the park. I look forward to seeing you! ■

Footbridge Punch List

Jan Uebelherr, VP, Communications



It was handy to have the footbridge open for the winter. Photo by Jim Rowen.

After years of planning and then actual restoration work, the Ravine Road Footbridge is open. It sure looks finished.

But that's not actually the case. Technically, there's a thing called a "punch list" – some points that remain unfinished or need tweaking or revision. The most obvious example is a spot at the base of the east side railing. It looks like it's crumbling or has been damaged, but in fact, a contractor needed to test in that area. Other punch list items include such things as vertical expansion joint repair and soffit extensions.

We're watching that punch list and will keep you informed.

As always, we thank Milwaukee County Parks – Director Guy Smith and Manager of Planning and Development Sarah Toom-esen especially – for their work on this big project. ■



The Park's Natural Areas

By Jeanne Prochnow, Co-chair, Nature Committee and Steve Morse, Tree Committee



While we are enjoying spring's much anticipated return to the park, over the past dormant season, the Nature Committee participated in two projects that will continue to enhance Lake Park. We concluded last year celebrating the large tree replanting project and began the new year by starting a formal assessment of the park's ravine trails, which will be discussed in the coming months (see *Comprehensive Trail Assessment Complete*, below).

The tree project, coordinated by Steve Morse, included the planting of 64 new trees and the replacement of two previously planted trees that had died. The especially large number of plantings this year was made possible in part by our Lake Park Friends Board, which dedicated last year's Cirque to trees; generous members and friends who contributed to this effort; and those who bought memorial and honor trees.

We are particularly grateful for the generosity of two local garden clubs, the Green Tree Garden Club and the Kettle Moraine Garden Club. Each club gave us a substantial grant of \$10,000 to help us replace some of the numerous large, lovely ash trees lost to the emerald ash borer and others lost to natural causes. Our need is great, since roughly one-third of the trees in our wonderful park were ash trees when the emerald ash borer became a killer of our trees. We expect to ultimately lose them all.

You can help us in our continuing efforts to enhance the beauty of Lake Park and to replace trees by donating to the tree fund. Donations can be made through our website at lakeparkfriends.org or checks can be sent to the office (please write "tree fund" in check memo). ■

Comprehensive Trail Assessment Complete

By Pete Coffaro, Nature Committee

Last September, Lake Park Friends engaged the services of Tim Malzhan of Trail Eyes, LLC, to assess maintenance needs of the five Lake Park ravine trails — South Lighthouse, North Lighthouse, Waterfall, Locust Street and North. All need targeted repairs and upgrades.

Malzhan's comprehensive assessment includes a systematic analysis of various sections of the trails to determine and prioritize maintenance and stewardship needs. The assessment culminated in a technical report that identifies current trail conditions and includes recommendations on needs with the highest priorities.

The assessment report is under review by the Lake Park Friends Board as well as Milwaukee County Parks, whose representatives were a key partner in the project.

If you are interested in getting involved with trail stewardship, please contact the LPF office by email at lakeparkfriends@sbcglobal.net. ■



This aerial map indicates Lake Park's five ravine trails.

Music's in the Air!

By Jan Uebelherr, VP, Communications

Get your picnic baskets out and dust off the folding chairs!

Lake Park Friends is proud to announce another stellar lineup of music at the Summer Stage. Kicking it all off for the 2023 season is a special performance by the Florentine Opera Summer Studio Ensemble on July 5.

The aptly named "Mozart in the Park," a production of the Florentine's Summer Studio Ensemble, is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 5, at the Summer Stage at the end of Lake Park Road near the playground.

The 45-minute program features four singers, a pianist, and props for brief scenes. The production features selections from Mozart's most famous operas, including "Cosi fan tutte," "The Marriage of Figaro," "The Magic Flute" and "Don Giovanni."

The prolific Mozart began writing music at the age of 5 and composed more than 600 works. He reportedly once said: "I am never happier than when I have something to compose, for that, after all, is my sole delight and passion."

We hope you'll join us to explore the delight and passion of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The 25th anniversary edition of Musical Mondays, produced by presenter Jeff Bentoff, features a diverse lineup for music lovers of all ages. The first Monday concert will be on July 10. Wonderful Wednesdays, arranged by our administrator, Ann Wollmer, is a series of family-friendly performances. The first Wednesday concert will be July 12.

The traveling beer garden returns to the park July 12-23. In addition, for concert evenings, the Park Pub truck will sell assorted draft and package beer along with hard seltzer, nonalcoholic beverages, chips and pre-bagged popcorn. The Musa Ice Cream truck will be parked at concerts, too. And we look forward to Mr. Nelson's BBQ, serving on all Mondays except July 17. ■

MUSIC in LAKE PARK
SHOWS AT LAKE PARK SUMMER STAGE (near playground) MILWAUKEE COUNTY LAKE PARK 2023 lakeparkfriends.org

MUSICAL MONDAYS / 6:30 - 8:00PM
For music lovers of all ages

JULY 10 BLACK COW
Jazzy side of Steely Dan

JULY 17 FEUFOLLET
Lively Southwest Louisiana cajun music

JULY 24 JAMIE BREIWKIQUINTET
(featuring ABIGAIL RICCARDS)
Great American songbook set to jazz

JULY 31 TOTY RAMOS SEXTET
Original jazz with a Latin tinge

AUG 7 R&B CADETS
Eclectic, upbeat Milwaukee super group

AUG 14 JIGJAM
Irish quartet blending bluegrass and Americana

AUG 21 BON BON VIVANT
New Orleans indie band with Big Easy sound

AUG 28 ROBBIE FULKS
Americana artist bringing a bluegrass twist

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS / 6:30 - 7:30PM
Family-friendly performances

JULY 12 MAIN STREET SONG & DANCE TROUPE
Disney-themed with teen performers

JULY 19 DUKE OTHERWISE
Guitarist / singer / tap dancer / wacky wordsmith

JULY 26 LITTLE MISS ANN
Kid's folk-rock musician with interactive songs

AUG 2 FOX AND BRANCH
Mix of old-time, original and family-folk music

AUG 9 SUSAN SALIDOR
Award-winning children's performer with Matt Yanny-Tillar

AUG 16 MS. JEN AND THE JELLYFISH
Songs from the Music for Aardvarks classes

Lake Park Friends presents concerts in cooperation with Milwaukee County Parks and with generous support from Colins Family Foundation, Potawatomi Hotel & Casino, WWSR Radio 91.7FM 88Nine, OhMilwaukee and member volunteers.

JOIN US FOR MOZART IN THE PARK

The Florentine Opera's
Summer Studio Ensemble

SUMMER TOUR

The Florentine Opera

JULY 5 AT 6:30 P.M. LAKE PARK SUMMER STAGE

The Traveling BEER GARDEN 2023

Greenfield Park
May 17 - 29

Froemming Park
May 31 - June 11

Cooper Park
June 14 - 25

Grant Park
June 28 - July 9

Lake Park
July 12 - 23

McCarty Park
July 26 - Aug 6

Doctors Park
Aug 9 - Aug 27

Sheridan Park
Aug 30 - Sept 4

HOURS
Mon - Fri: 5pm - 9pm
Sat, Sun & Holidays: 11am - 9pm

travelingbeergardens.com

RADIO MILWAUKEE MILWAUKEE COUNTY PARKS

New Irrigation System for Lake Park Golf Course

By Jon Canavan, Superintendent of Turf and Golf Operations for Milwaukee County Parks

My name is Jon Canavan. I am the Superintendent of Turf and Golf Operations for Milwaukee County Parks. My job is to oversee all the outdoor operations of the county's 13 golf courses.

I'm writing to share the great news that Lake Park Golf Course will be getting a brand-new, state-of-the-art automated irrigation system, with construction beginning sometime in July. The work will take four to six weeks, depending on weather delays.

You will see construction equipment on the course once the project starts. Thankfully, the installation company that we have selected has several years of experience! There will be times when some holes are closed to allow for installation, so thank you in advance for your understanding.

You may have noticed some trees have been taken down on the golf course. These were either dead or in such poor condition that they needed to be removed by our forestry team. There are still 10 dead ash trees and several other hardwood trees of poor quality that need to be pruned or removed. We will also be looking at any trees or bushes that negatively affect the turf quality of the putting greens.

We will be working with our forestry team this fall to replace the removed trees with trees that will add to the quality of the golf course, but do not hinder our ability to maintain healthy turf.

Thanks for your continued support of Milwaukee County Parks. ■



Irrigation piping is temporarily stored near the golf course storage shed.

The King of the Trees, the Mighty Oak

By Ben French, Propogator, Johnson's Nursery

Oaks are often referred to as the "king of the trees." In Wisconsin, they are high-value trees that have great influence on our ecosystems. It is the most abundant tree genus in Wisconsin, covering millions of acres of our state.

The acorn is a seed, a nutritive tissue loaded with protein, carbohydrates and fat. Acorns feed 100-plus species of wildlife. Many of these animals, from small ground mammals to birds, rely on nuts as a source of fall and winter sustenance.

The bark on mature oaks is furrowed and rigid, providing shelter for creatures across the food chain. As windswept seeds nestle into the bark, insects can hide while they feast, a benefit not afforded by smooth-barked trees.

The oak leaf's structure provides optimal positioning for birds while they feast on insects. And the leaves are nutritious to everyone, from tiny insects to large bears, and even humans.

Oaks benefit over 4,000 Wisconsin native insects, birds, fungi and mammals. Over 400 species of butterflies and moths alone rely on the oak for food and shelter. When there's even one oak tree planted in our manmade landscapes, everything benefits. ■



A young bur oak, planted last fall in the area south of the Indian Mound, as it is just beginning to leaf out. This tree was donated to the park by Radka Pelikanova of Landmark Landscape Design.

Projects in the Works

By Nat Blaz, Improvements Committee

Spring has sprung and so have improvements for the park! The Improvements Committee has been hard at work over the last year, planning and preparing for several exciting updates to the park this year:

- **Wolcott Statue repairs.** Over time, portions of the lead caulking have failed around the statue. The monument's granite base and bench were washed last fall (removing organic growth) and our mason recently completed work repairing failed joints around the monument.

- **ADA human/doggy drinking fountain.** You may have noticed that work has begun on placing an ADA accessible human/doggy drinking fountain (bubbler) next to the Warming House. It will be the same model as the one at the south end of Wahl Avenue.

- **Wayfinding signs.** LPF and Milwaukee County Parks have teamed up to create and install two wayfinding signs in the park. These map-style signs (similar to those on the Oak Leaf Trail) will identify major features within the park. Signs will be installed at the parking lot entrance by the playground as well as the parking lot near the golf course.

And, just begun, the Lake Park Friends Improvements Committee is working on getting quotes to **add four lights to the Ravine Road footbridge** in the style of the original lights. The electrical fixtures are already in place.



Concert attendees using the footbridge in 1905.

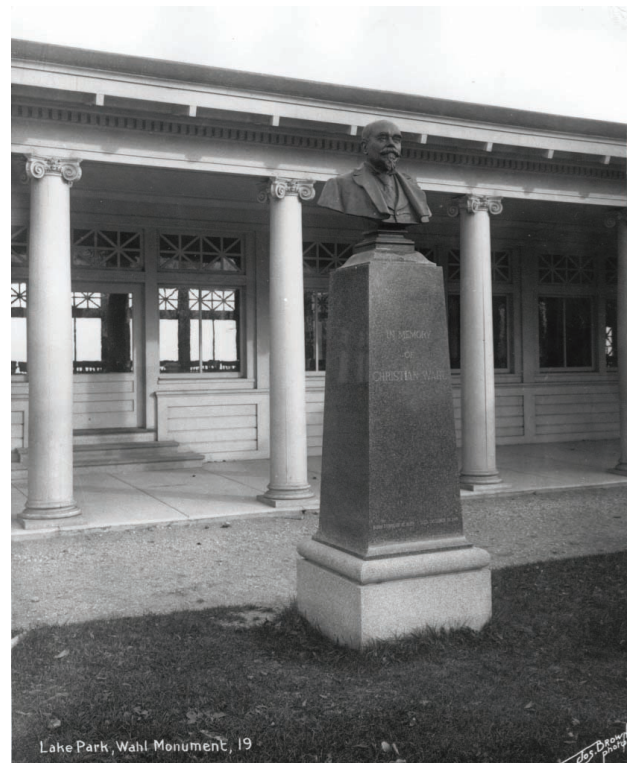
In addition to these wonderful projects, the team has engaged consultants to assist with restoring and improving the **waterfall feature**. The current waterfall is leaking water heavily and needs extensive repairs. The team is working on several proposals and ideas, including some that could improve runoff drainage to the lake. More to come! ■

Father of Parks - continued from page 1

change that raised the possibility of moving the bust back to Lake Park.

Lake Park Friends got to work and raised the necessary funds to coordinate the restoration of the bronze bust and the third and likely final move of the red granite plinth. Its placement will now be at the southern end of the park near the intersection of Belleview and Wahl avenues, with project completion around mid-July. A celebration ceremony and rededication of the statue will be forthcoming. ■

An undated photo of the statue taken at its second location at the "cannonade" area on the east side of the lighthouse. Note the cannon in the background and the lack of trees on the bluff!



A 1905 photo of the statue where it first stood in front of the Lake Park Pavilion. Photo by Joseph Brown.

2022 Conservator Award Recipient

By Brenda Wood, VP, Membership & Administration



Jim’s name has been added to the plaque that hangs in the Marcia Coles Community Room. He will be exhibiting his photos in the Occasional Artist Show & Sale on July 8 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the North Point Lighthouse Museum. A portion of the proceeds from the sale will benefit the museum. ■



This shadow appears to be an actual tree.

The 2022 Conservator of the Year Recipient is James Rowen. Jim posts wonderful, artistic and interesting photos of Lake Park on his Facebook page and tags the Lake Park Friends account.

No one has done more to showcase the beauty – both natural and manmade – of Lake Park. Through his photos, and social media, he has made the park accessible to all – very much in keeping with the spirit and principles of Frederick Law Olmsted.

His photos offer a different perspective and help people see things that they may not have caught on their own. Hopefully they may cause people to interact differently with the park in search of something discovered in one of his pictures.

In a reply comment to one of his posts, Jim wrote, “If you’re by yourself, as I was on that day, you’re more likely to slow down and look more closely – up, down, through natural frames and so on. I was glad to have noticed that reflection and worked to capture it because – I’ve learned to shoot what I can see on the spot rather than make a mental note of it for a return visit because 9 times out of 10, the image is gone even if I circle back in 5 minutes. All in all, this is why some of my best rambles through the park begin with no agenda and often extend far longer than I’d intended.”



The Lighthouse tower reflection as seen from one of its own windows.

Free Flick Fridays

By Cathy Jakicic, Recreation Committee

We'll be traveling back to the '80s on one Friday in June, July and August with a free outdoor movie on the big screen at the Lake Park Summer Stage as soon as the sun goes down!

Then we'll magically jump to the '90s with a showing of "Hocus Pocus" on the last Friday in September. Wear your Halloween costume for this one!

Bring lawn chairs, blankets, drinks and snacks. Popcorn will be provided. As the series title suggests, admission is free! ■

FREE FLICK FRIDAYS

June 30 - Ferris Bueller's Day Off
July 21 - Dirty Dancing
August 25 - Raiders of the Lost Ark
September 29 - Hocus Pocus

LAKE PARK SUMMER STAGE AT DUSK

LAKE PARK FRIENDS
 PROUDLY SUPPORTING LAKE PARK
 WWW.LAKEPARKFRIENDS.ORG

2023 Cirque du Lake Park is September 9 - SAVE THE DATE!

Our annual fundraising event will be held Saturday, September 9, 2023, from 6 to 9 p.m. We hope you will join us under the big tent outside Bartolotta's Lake Park Bistro for an evening of wine, music, hearty appetizers and a lively auction! The event will raise funds through sponsorships and a spectacular online auction.

Lake Park Friends, a 501(c)(3) organization, relies on the generosity and support of partners like you to execute our mission to preserve, restore and enhance Milwaukee's Lake Park. The educational, cultural and recreational events we present to the community are direct results of your support. ■

Mission Statement of Lake Park Friends

To promote the preservation and enjoyment of Lake Park, to sponsor educational, recreational and cultural events in the park, and to raise funds for the restoration and enhancement of the park in the spirit of Frederick Law Olmsted.

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