



Oak Leaf

A Publication of the AFFTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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April 2022



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Insert: 4th of July Breakfast flyer

*From time to time, *The Oak Leaf* will feature some of the many treasures to be discovered in the Benoist Mansion known as Oakland House Museum. Watch for upcoming "Around the House" articles in future issues. We hope you enjoy them.

Around the House: Meet Victoria

The *Affton Historical Society* is thrilled to welcome a special new resident to the gracious *Benoist Mansion* known as *Oakland House Museum*. Meet *Victoria*, a lovely little lady who was donated to the Society by longtime member *Jerriann Blassie*.

Victoria was "born" in the latter part of the 1800's. She once belonged to *Margreta* and *Elsa Virginia Blitt*, who were born in 1890 and 1892. Margreta and Elsa Virginia were Jerriann's great-great-aunts, and were the third and fourth daughters of Elise and Carl Blitt. One of the older Blitt daughters, Caroline, made the dainty doll clothes for Victoria, and another older daughter, Anna, was Jerriann's great-great grandmother. The Blitt's owned a cigar store, which later became a tavern and restaurant, and the family lived in the apartment upstairs. The store was located at 39th and McRee on the edge of the Botanical Heights (formerly *McRee Town*) neighborhood in St. Louis.



Victoria, the newest resident at Oakland, was donated by member Jerriann Blassie.



This portrait of Margreta and Elsa Virginia Blitt hangs in the ladies' sitting room in the Benoist Mansion.

A lovely portrait of Margreta and Elsa Virginia hangs upstairs at Oakland in the ladies' sitting room. The portrait, made circa 1895, was entered into competition at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and won first place for Photography.

In addition to donating her treasures, over the years Jerriann has also given much time and talent to the Society. Some of her favorite memories are of helping with Christmas decorating, baking cookies at Santa House and serving as a Candy Lady at Bunny Hutch. Jerriann treasured her special friendships with *Nancy Herndon's mother, Adeline*, and with *Aggie Wunderlich*. She thought of them as mentors and sorely misses them both.

No Oakland 4th of July celebration would be complete without the Blassie's red, white and blue 1932 Chevrolet Fathom parked in the drive, and Jerriann once acted as a Society guest lecturer, delighting the membership with her miniature collection and sharing her expertise on the Miniature Museum of St. Louis.

Jerriann is grateful for the many hours that *Nancy Herndon-Ulrich* devoted to hand-stitching repairs to Victoria's petticoats, and for the beautiful new gown Nancy created for her. And, of course, she is especially grateful to the Affton Historical Society for providing Victoria such a lovely new home.

Welcome, Victoria! You're a real doll!

AHS Membership Meetings

Spring - Sunday, April 24, 2022

Pot Luck Luncheon 12:30 p.m.

Bring your favorite dish - Drinks and desserts provided

Meeting 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Program: Phil Herndon - "Secrets of a Benoist Couch"

Fall - Sunday, October 23, 2022

Pot Luck Luncheon 12:30 p.m.

Bring your favorite dish - Drinks and desserts provided

Meeting 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Program: NiNi Harris - Oldest St. Louis

Open Houses for 2022

Beautiful Oakland House Museum will be open to the public on the following Sundays from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Free to members \$10.00 for the general public

May 15 ~ June 19 ~ July 17

August 21 ~ September 18 ~ October 16

2022 Open Luncheons

Tuesday, April 26

Thursday, August 11

Tuesday, May 10

Wednesday, September 21

Thursday, June 23

Thursday, October 13

Wednesday, July 27

Thursday, November 3

These luncheons are open to everyone and provide a wonderful opportunity to meet up with friends, celebrate a special event or just treat yourself. The menu varies with the season and includes salad, entree, dessert and coffee or tea.

Oakland House tours, given by a docent in period dress, are at 11:00 a.m., followed by lunch, which is served at noon. The cost is \$22.00 per person and includes the tour. Please make your reservations 2 weeks in advance by calling:

Jean McDaniel at (314) 821-7166

Private Luncheons can be booked for groups of 15-56.
Call Jean at (314) 821-7166 to reserve
a date for your next gathering.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND:

AHS Independence Day Breakfast Buffet ~ Monday, July 4, 2022 ~ 8:00 a.m - 11:00 a.m.

For only \$21.00 per person (\$8.00 for children 10 and under) you will receive:



A Delicious Homemade Country Style Breakfast Buffet

Patriotic Music ~ Tours of Oakland House

50/50 Raffle ~ Entertainment



Please return the enclosed Reservation Form with your RSVP & payment by **Thursday, June 30** to:

Affton Historical Society, Box 28855, St. Louis, MO 63123

For information, call Nancy at (314) 814-4983

Ladies of Oakland Meetings: The Ladies of Oakland meet at 1:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday, from April through November. Refreshments are served, and there is always an interesting speaker or other entertainment.

April 19, 2022 - 1:00 p.m.

Molly Butterworth - "Trains & Trolleys"

May 17, 2022 - 1:00 p.m.

Ethel Cobb - "Minnie Pearl"

June 21, 2022 - 12:00 noon

Salad Luncheon (note earlier time)

Bring your favorite salad or finger food

Dan Fuller - "Noteworthy & Notorious Women"

July 19, 2022 - 1:00 p.m.

Richard Thompson - Magician & Mind Reader

August 16, 2022 - 1:00 p.m.

Barnes Bradshaw

"The Life & Tragic Death of Elijah Lovejoy"

September 20, 2022 - 1:00 p.m.

"The Civil War Comes to St. Louis:

The Camp Jackson Affair" - Barnes Bradshaw

October 18, 2022 - 1:00 p.m.

Doug Schneider - "Haunted Places in St. Louis"

November 15, 2022 - 1:00 p.m.

Barbara Kay - "Amelia Earhart"

Food Pantry Donations Needed!

Every month, the Ladies of Oakland collect food to donate to the Affton Christian Food Pantry. Please consider bringing a donation to every Ladies meeting to help families in need throughout the Affton community.

THANK YOU!



**Ladies of Oakland
Annual Afternoon Tea**

Guest Speaker Linda Spall

will portray Kate Chopin

Thursday, September 29

1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

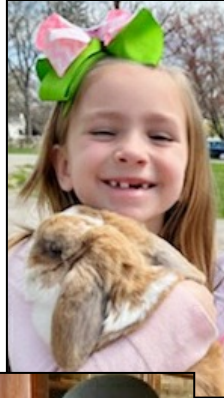
\$35.00 per person

Details in the July Oak Leaf

Bits & Pieces



A whopping 571 people passed through the doors of the lovely Benoist mansion this Easter season for the *Affton Historical Society's 26th Annual Bunny Hutch*. Although the weather was a bit chilly, and quite windy, we made it through the 4-day event with **no rain**. The Craft Ladies secured a spot in the main parlor and sent many excited youngsters outside, with their new trinkets and toys, to greet both a *small* "live" bunny and a *very tall* Easter Bunny. The Story Lady entertained and amazed, offering attendees a welcome chance to "sit a spell" on our lovely stone veranda. Bunny bags, sweet treats and an Easter egg hunt rounded out the fun-filled day of festive springtime activities. Many thanks to all our dedicated volunteers who help make this special and much-anticipated event possible.



Attendees of the 2022 *Café du Matin Morning Coffee* were fascinated to hear from author *Valerie Battle Kienzle* who presented her book, *Ready to Wear - A History of the Footwear and Garment Industries in St. Louis*. Forty-one guests attended the coffee, and the Ladies of Oakland realized an overall profit of \$706.00. Thank you so much to Morning Coffee Committee members *Pam Danklef* (Chair), *Rosie Miller*, *Barb Cook*, *Dot Huebener*, *Lucy Johnson*, *Nancy Herndon-Ulrich* and *Suzan Slater* who donated the food and organized the event. Also, many thanks to support helper *Mary Jane Autry* and to photographer *Dianne Isbell*.



The 2022 winner of the \$1000 Affton Historical Society Ladies of Oakland Scholarship is *Abagale Berger*. Abagale will graduate from Affton High School in May with a weighted GPA well over 4.00. In the fall, she plans to attend Washington University in St. Louis to major in English Literature as part of their pre-law program.



Congratulations, Abagale!
Best Wishes in your future academic pursuits!

??? History Question ???

History Question for January:

The Benoist family plot in Calvary Cemetery is unusual - what is its shape?

Answer: The Benoist plot is circular, covering 6,000 square feet in Calvary Cemetery.

History Question for April:

What did that plot in Section #17 cost in 1867?

If you think you know the answer, contact Nancy Herndon-Ulrich at (314) 814-4983 or historidc2n@aol.com

The ninth annual Give STL Day will take place Thursday, May 5th from midnight to midnight. Sponsored by the St. Louis Community Foundation, **Give STL Day** is a 24-hour online giving event to benefit local nonprofits, and thus the whole community. **The main giving event is scheduled for May 5th, but early donations can be made anytime from April 5 through May 4.** Imagine the impact we can have when the St. Louis region comes together in support of local nonprofit organizations.

The Affton Historical Society will again be listed as a registered nonprofit organization for **Give STL Day 2022**. Please show your support for AHS, as well as for other community nonprofits, by going to **GiveSTLDay.org** from now until May 5th to contribute. Especially in these difficult times, this is an easy and effective way to support the Society – and the entire St. Louis region.



Executive Board

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Vice President

Mary Jane Autry
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Tracy Coleman
Recording Secretary

Darryl Eaves
Corresponding Secretary

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Ladies of Oakland

2022 Board of Directors

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Rosie Miller
Event Coordinator

Mary Kirschman
Publicity Chair

Patti Behlmann
Oak Leaf Editor

*The Board meets at
Oakland House at 7:00 p.m.
on the 2nd Thursday
of each month from
January through November.*

Members are welcome!



Please check your personal information in the 2022 AHS Membership & Ladies of Oakland Book to make sure that it is complete and correct.

For any additions or corrections, Contact: Pam Danklef at (314) 842-0149, (314) 503-6401 or jpdanklef@aol.com

Members with e-mail addresses: If you have an e-mail address and are not receiving monthly e-mail updates on "Oakland House Museum Happenings," please contact Pam Danklef at (314) 842-0149, (314) 503-6401 or jpdanklef@aol.com.

When contacting Pam Danklef at (314) 842-0149, (314) 503-6401 or jpdanklef@aol.com with a new address, please be sure to include your new phone number as well.

This is especially true for those of you who move to retirement communities (Laclede Groves, Cardinal Ritter, etc.) where you receive a new phone number.

Shutterbugs Dianne Isbell and Nancy Herndon-Ulrich provided photos for this issue. Thank You!



Membership Directory Updates

Please welcome the following new members and add their contact information to your 2022 Membership Directory:

MERTENS, David & LaVENTURE, Barbara 314-821-0748 5322 Kenrick Manor Court, St. Louis, MO 63119 Dmerte4465@yahoo.com

WELLS, Mary 314-631-1258 6328 Sheppard Drive, St. Louis, MO 63123 jandm6328@gmail.com

And please make the following changes or updates:

BARRY, Bert (add phone # & email) 314-540-7480 bertbarryoakland@gmail.com

FOLEY, Maureen (new address) 9916 Reavis Road, St. Louis, MO 63123

HIEMENZ, Chris (remove Susan)

LANSER, Jane (correct cell #) 314-640-6716

LEVINE, Karen (add cell #) 314-716-3209

ZERA, Ed & Sue (add home #) 314-845-8097 zeus1986@sbcglobal.net (add email)

AFFTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 2022 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

AHS Annual Membership runs from January 1 through December 31 of each year. If your address label is YELLOW, your 2022 dues have not been paid. To continue to receive The Oak Leaf, you must pay your 2022 dues. Use the form below to RENEW TODAY!

If you have questions about membership status, contact Pam at (314) 503-6401, (314) 842-0149 or jpdanklef@aol.com.

Date _____ Amount Enclosed \$ _____ CHECK CASH (circle one)

Please mail this form with your check made payable to:

New Member? [] Yes [] No Renewing Member? [] Yes [] No

Affton Historical Society P.O. Box 28855, Affton, MO 63123

Any changes in membership information? [] Yes [] No

PLEASE PRINT -

Name _____ E-mail address _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Publication Preference (circle one)

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ HOME CELL BOTH

Memberships Available:

- [] Individual \$25 [] George I. Barnett Level \$101 - \$150 [] Clemence Benoist Faris Level \$501 - \$1,000 [] Couple \$45 [] Kate Chopin Level \$151 - \$250 [] Sarah Wilson Benoist Level \$1,001 - \$2,500 [] Father de Smet Level \$46 - \$100 [] Robert Brookings Level \$251 - \$500 [] Louis Auguste Benoist Level \$2,501 +

To keep up to date with Benoist Mansion - Oakland House Museum Happenings, be sure to visit us at: www.oaklandhousemuseum.org

