



Parks & Recreation

500 W Markham - Room 108
Little Rock, AR 72201
501.371.4770

City In A Park Newsletter

December, 2012

www.lrpr.org

Message From The Director



Truman Tolefree – Director,
Little Rock Parks & Recreation

The calendar says December, but the temperature outside says April. That is the way that it goes with the weather in Little Rock. What that means is that you can still get out and enjoy one of our 60 parks located around the city.

This is also the time of year to celebrate all of the wonderful things that we are blessed with in our lives. I am truly blessed to work with what I feel is the best Parks & Recreation staff in the country.

We truly believe in the philosophy that “Life is to be lived, not tolerated”. With that, we believe that a vibrant and growing parks and recreation department will provide the citizens of Little Rock with the capacity to live life to the fullest.

Our department has opportunities for people in all walks of life. Take your dog for a walk at the Murray Park , play softball at Interstate Park, ride your bike along the Arkansas River trail, play pickleball at the Jim Dailey Fitness and Aquatics Center. Whatever it is that you want to do, Little Rock Parks & Recreation has a spot for you.

All you have to do is get out and enjoy your “City in a Park”.



Stay in touch with Little Rock Parks & Recreation on many of your favorite social media platforms.

- www.lrpr.org
- www.facebook.com/lrparksrec
- www.twitter.com/lrparksrec

YouTube is coming soon.



Stay In Touch With LRPR

Main Office	371-4770
Parks Administration.....	371-4470
Public Relations	371-4470
Park Operations	371-6851
Little Rock Marathon	918-5321
Therapeutic Recreation	570-1131
Youth Athletics.....	371-6855
Adult Athletics	371-6859
Senior Programs.....	371-6854
Summer Playground Program.....	371-6858
Dunbar Community Center.....	376-1084
Stephens Community Center	603-9974
Southwest Community Center	918-3975
Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatic Center.....	664-6976
MacArthur Museum	376-4602
Hindman Golf Course	565-6450
War Memorial Golf Course.....	663-0854
Rebsamen Golf Course.....	666-7965
Rebsamen Tennis Center.....	664-0736
Pavilion Reservations	371-4770
Ballpark Reservations	372-3285

For other information, please visit www.lrpr.org

Former Director Breckling Passes



Former Little Rock Parks & Recreation Director Julius Breckling passed away on October 22. Mr. Breckling led the department for 35 years and Julius Breckling Riverfront Park was named in his honor upon retirement, for his service to the city.

“He truly was a visionary,” said current director Truman Tolefree. “I have many fond memories of working with Mr. Breckling, and he in fact is responsible for me working with the department, as he hired me some 35 years ago.”

Breckling retired from the department in 1991. More than 30 parks were added to Little Rock Parks & Recreation under his leadership.

Breckling also was a long supporter of a plan to develop a network of trails along the Arkansas River. And when the Two Rivers Park Bridge over the Little Maumelle River opened in 2011, Pulaski County Judge Buddy Villines gave credit to Breckling for his vision for the bridge and interconnected river crossings and parks.

Julius "Sunny" Peter-Herman Breckling was born March 7, 1929, to the late Martha Weigle Breckling and Julius Breckling Sr. in Hot Springs.

Breckling graduated from Lakeside High School and then Oklahoma State University in 1951. He was a member of First Lutheran Church, Garvan Woodland Gardens, the board of the Hot Springs Housing Authority and Fifty for the Future.



Inaugural Color Run A Success

More than 7,000 participants took part in the inaugural Little Rock “Color Run” on November 11. The five-kilometer race in downtown Little Rock was a huge hit with the participants as well as the race organizers.



“This was a lot of fun,” said Little Rock Marathon Executive Director Gina Marchese Pharis, who worked with the “Color Run” organizers. “Linda Sue Sanders, our volunteer coordinator,

provided more than 300 volunteers, who were phenomenal. This event doesn’t happen without Linda Sue and our volunteers. These are some of the same volunteers who help with the Mud Run in October and the Marathon weekend in March. They are the reason that we are successful.”

Pharis was pleased with the results of the event.



“This is something that we will look to

continue in the future. We receive a portion of the proceeds and they will be donated to Little Rock Parks and Recreation.”

Did You Know? Little Rock Parks & Recreation has received nearly 80,000 volunteer hours in 2012. The estimated value of the work done by these volunteers is over \$1,760,000.

Claude Johnson Retiring After 38 Years

“Working for the city, especially for 38 years, you become a servant of the city,” said Claude Johnson, who is retiring after a long career working with Little Rock Parks & Recreation. “When you really put the time and energy into this, you see results. I may not be working here, but I will find some means of continuing to be a role model to the youth in the city.”

Mr. Johnson began working part-time at Dunbar Community Center in 1972, while still a junior at Philander Smith College.



In 1974, he began full-time as the Recreation Manager at Granite Mountain Community Center.

“While I was at Granite Mountain, there were these two young men who were always into something,” Johnson said while reminiscing about strong memories. “I saw great potential in them, for whatever reason. One day, they were playing dice. I offered one of them a part-time job. Eventually he came to work and stayed with us until he graduated college. Before starting to work with us, he had no intention of going to school.”

Today, both of those young men, who were always in trouble, are now high school principals in Central Arkansas.

He then made the move to manage Dunbar Community Center in 1977, a position he would hold for 20 years.

In 1997, Mr. Johnson moved to be the Recreation Supervisor for the Adult Center and in 2004 was promoted to Recreation Supervisor overseeing all community centers.

“I have seen three generations of families come through our programs. Today, they will come up to me and say ‘Mr. Johnson, you were tough on us back then, but I have three kids now, and I see exactly what you were talking about.’ They come up and say thank you.”

Mr. Johnson cited the recently retired Charles Humphrey as someone he “stood side-by-side” with in working to bring the youth of the city together through the programs that were offered at the community centers.

“Back then, there was very little relationship between the different communities within the city. The programs that we offered at the community centers really helped to bring the youth together through the different activities and competitions.

These competitions really bridged the gap and brought all of these separate communities together as one that it is today.”

Larry Stagers and Eddie Cole were also very important men in Mr. Johnson’s career.

“Larry is the one that hired me 40 years ago at Dunbar as a play leader. He really opened the door for me in the very beginning.

I always looked up to Eddie Cole. He was very precise and detail oriented. Every I needed to be dotted and every T crossed. I really appreciated this and think that it really helped me in my career.”

He intends to spend time with his grandson, play golf and continue to work with the youth in the community.

Mr. Johnson summed up his career by saying “when you can really put in the time, you can make a difference. I think I have done that, and want to continue to do that.”

The generations of youth that Mr. Johnson has mentored and influenced would agree.

Mr. Johnson you have put in the time and you have made a difference.

Therapeutic Recreation In Holiday Spirit

The Therapeutic Recreation division of Little Rock Parks & Recreation has been busy this holiday season.

For Thanksgiving, the group had a large “family-style lunch”. Each participant brought all of the ingredients and a recipe for a dish to the Ottenheimer Community Center. They then prepared all of the dishes together and then had a large luncheon featuring all of the homemade dishes.



The group was then enlisted to decorate the Little Rock Parks & Recreation offices for the holiday season – including decorating a Christmas tree and preparing and hanging wreaths on all of the office doors in the department’s City Hall offices.



The group has also prepared a Christmas program, which will be performed on Thursday, December 13.

For more information, contact the Therapeutic Recreation staff at 501-570-1131.



Active & Aging Celebrates 90th Birthdays For Members At ELR Senior Center

On November 16, the East Little Rock Senior Center hosted a celebration of “Nine decades of life”.

The celebration was to honor four members of the center who have reached their 90th birthday.

The four beautiful women honored were Ms. Hattie Brewer (90), Ms. Thelma Jones (91), Ms. Theresa Cole (91) and Ms. Georgia Fisher (93).

All four were surrounded by family and friends who shared in a luncheon and music at the center.

Each of the women was praised by family and friends for a lifetime of giving back to the community and improving the lives of others around them.



91-year old Thelma Jones (center) is pictured with family and friends, along with Little Rock Parks & Recreation Director Truman Tolefree and Evelyn Tenpenny, Activity Supervisor for the East Little Rock Senior Center

End of the Year Gardening Tip

Plants that bloom in the spring—your azaleas, dogwoods, camellias, etc. have their flower buds already set now, so Leave Them Be!—If you look closely you can see that the flower buds are there, so if you do any pruning now, you will lose the flowers set for next spring. The leaves are falling naturally, so just rake up the old foliage and dispose of them. Remove leaf litter from the ground, or bag leaves for curbside pick-up during winter to remove disease spores or insect eggs from your landscape. Good sanitation practices will not only reduce problems later, but it will enhance your home’s curb appeal and be more eye-pleasing for you and passersby. So hey, get off the couch and get your family together outdoors for fresh air and exercise.

Adult Softball For 2012 Concludes

The 2012 LRPR Adult Softball season is now complete. Four different “City Champions” were crowned during the year.

In early August, the summer season concluded with the “Buschwhackers” and the “Bad Girlz” earning the Summer Softball “City Championships”.

The Buschwhackers were led to an undefeated regular season and post-season tournament by Tournament MVP, Paul McGuire. This was the eighth-consecutive City Championship for the team from the 30-over league that plays during the regular season at Reservoir Park. The Buschwhackers defeated B&B Reloaded in the championship game.

The Bad Girlz lost just once on the season, and had Teniell Casey named the MVP of the City Championship Tournament. The Bad Girlz defeated J.W.P. in the championship game of the tournament. These same teams met in last year’s championship game, with J.W.P. taking the title in 2011.

In early November the fall season came to an end. The “Tavern” and “M.E. Softball” picked up the “City Champions” title in men’s and co-ed.



The Tavern finished the fall campaign with a record of 16-1, including a 35-22 win over

Airmasters in the

championship game of the post-season tournament. Brian Talkington led the Tavern in the tournament and garnered MVP honors.

M.E. Softball won 18 of 19 games for the season and defeated Just Us 18-5 in the championship game. Nadia Atkins and Manny Reynolds shared MVP honors for their play in the tournament.



You can visit www.facebook.com/lrparksrec to see a brief photo album of the Fall “City Championship”.

Youth Basketball Sign-ups Continue

Registration for the 2013 Youth Basketball League sponsored by Little Rock Parks & Recreation is going on now. The last day to register will be January 25, 2013. To register, visit one of the Community Centers

Dunbar Community Center

1001 West 16th Street
501-376-1084

Stephens Community Center

3700 West 18th Street
501-603-9974

Southwest Community Center

6401 Baseline Road, Suite A
501-918-3975

There are five different age groups for the league, including 6-7 Co-Ed; 8-9 Boys; 10-11 Boys, 9-11 Girls and 12-14 Co-Ed. The cost of the league is just \$20 per participant.

Currently, each Community Center is conducting a “Skills & Drills” program for youth between the ages of 6-14, teaching the fundamentals of basketball and preparing them for the beginning of the youth basketball league.

To participate in the “Skills & Drills” program, the participant must be registered to play in the league. Days and times of the program vary. Contact a specific Community Center for their information.

Youth Football Concludes With Champions Crowned



LRPR Youth Football
9-10 Division Champions
Stephens Titans

LRPR Youth Football
6-8 Division Champions
Southwest Buccaneers



October Facility of the Month – East Little Rock Senior Center

The East Little Rock Senior Center is the home to a very popular and active part of the Active and Aging program within Little Rock Parks & Recreation. The center hosts a number of activities each year and provide a location for the active and aging in our community to gather and enjoy each others fellowship.



October Park of the Month – Richland Park

Richland Park, located east of the airport is the Little Rock Parks & Recreation Park of the Month for October. Richland Park recently received upgrades, including a new playground and signage at the entrance to the park.



Dog of the Week



Pictured left is a 9-month old Doberman, named Olive, who visits Murray Park 3-5 days per week and is owned by Drew McGilvray

Staff Earns Master Gardner Distinction

Kevin Pride and Brad Klein, both on the Riverfront Park Maintenance crew have earned the designation of Master Gardner, after completing the 2012 class of the Master Gardner Program training course offered by the University of Arkansas and the Pulaski County Co-Operative Extension Service.

To obtain this designation, Pride and Klein both completed 40 hours of classwork and 40 hours of hands-on service and work in the field.

The Master Gardner program began in central Arkansas 1989, and is the highest standard to be achieved in the gardening industry. The program provides a consistent baseline of education on the care and maintenance of all types of plants, flowers, lawns, etc.

Pride and Klein join two other members of the LRPR staff who are Master Gardeners. Phoebe Stevens earned the designation in 1990 as part of the second-ever class. Marilyn Mason is also a Master Gardner. Ernie Moix, the newest member of the Landscape crew in LRPR, is a certified Arkansas Nursreyman, another high level distinction in the nursery/gardening field.

LRPR “Parklets”

◆ **Training Partnership In The Works:** The staff with the Jim Dailey Fitness & Aquatic Center is working with the Little Rock Marathon to create a partnership to provide a complete training program for marathon participants and those who wish to be. Look for more information to come.

◆ **Seniors Craft Sales:** Are you looking for a unique and stylish gift this holiday season? The LRPR Active & Aging program has participants who are creating beautiful pieces of artwork that are for sale to the public. Contact the director of the program for more information at 501-371-6854.

L I T T L E R O C K



Parks & Recreation
WWW.LRPR.ORG / 501.371.6854

A City In A Park