



**OLMSTED  
PARKS**  
CONSERVANCY

# NATURE & NEIGHBORHOOD

Fall 2023



# HAYRIDE ON THE HILL



**FREE Public Event**  
**Oct. 15: Shawnee Park**  
**Nov. 5: Iroquois Park**

**2:30 - 5:30 pm**

**Guided Hayrides**

**Music**

**Games**

**Food & Beer For Sale**



**Presented  
by**



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*Cover: A young ghost frolics in Shawnee Park  
at last year's Hayride on the Hill.*

*Right: "Billy Idle" lounges in the shade after  
lunch in Iroquois Park. Read how goats can  
help manage ecosystems on page 6.*





Central Park

# GHOSTS & LEGENDS

## *of Louisville's Olmsted Parks*



Iroquois Park

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**Jesse Hendrix-Inman**  
*Director of Communications*

**A VISIT TO AN OLMSTED PARK IS ALWAYS** a treat, but tricks have been known to arise during the Halloween season. Mysterious experiences tied to the parks' long, intriguing histories have been reported by both visitors and experts.

David Dominé knows perhaps better than anyone the secrets that **Central Park** holds. A scholar of spirits, Dominé is the author of several books delving into the legends and supernatural residents of the Old Louisville neighborhood. In *True Ghost Stories and Eerie Legends from America's Most Haunted Neighborhood*, the story of "The Ghost of Central Park" explores the life of Alfred Victor DuPont, whose mansion stood near the current site of the Old Louisville Visitors Center. Everyone can agree that DuPont, fondly referred to as "Uncle Fred," met his untimely end in 1893, but the circumstances surrounding his death are shrouded in rumors.



Cherokee Park

Dominé's Victorian Ghost Walk tour brings the spirits of Old Louisville to life, including DuPont and his scorned mistress Maggie. Reviled as a murderess and suspected of carrying Uncle Fred's illegitimate child at the time of his death, Maggie's ghost coyly denies any involvement in Fred's demise. Perhaps someone heard gunfire at her home that night, and maybe a body was removed from the residence, but police didn't seem to be concerned with her!

Salacious lies and whispers followed Maggie for the rest of her life, but she maintains her innocence from beyond the grave. Of course, this story is only a script for a ghost tour...or is it? Either way, it is said that Uncle Fred's ghost returned to the site of the family house in Central Park to do penance for his womanizing ways, and he has haunted the park ever since.

Across town in **Iroquois Park**, the ghost of a headless woman is reported to roam the landscape. According to legend, her appearance is heralded by the sound of a dog barking, followed by a mysterious fog rolling in. William Lynwood Montell's book *Ghosts Across Kentucky* includes a retelling of an encounter with the headless woman. This particular sighting happened in a cemetery near the park. One might speculate that it was Marret Cemetery, which is a short distance from the North Overlook – especially for a levitating ghost.

In **Cherokee Park**, Enid Yandell's sculpture of Pan is rumored to leave its perch and wander the park during the full moon. It seems like something Pan would do, being the god of the wild, associated with fields, groves and woodlands. Phantom of the Ville at [Louisville Halloween](#) shared this story which may shed some *light* on the legend of Hogan's Fountain:

*"Now, at the stroke of Midnight, an eerie silence blankets the entire area with the exception of the soothing sounds of water continually streaming into the fountain which grew seemingly louder as I approached. Then, from approximately thirty feet away, I lifted my gaze to the top of the fountain and froze in my tracks. The great god Pan was gone!"*

*"As my eyes adjusted to the darkness, the illusion revealed itself. The stark white base of the statue stands out in the night's horizon, but the black bronze of the statue itself disappears into the blackness of the surrounding forest, giving the appearance of its absence. It would be easy for anyone driving by to believe that Pan had left his perch at a quick glance."*

Looking for more local ghost stories? Check out David Dominé's Louisville Historic Tours at [louisvillehistorictours.com](http://louisvillehistorictours.com). Tours meet at the Old Louisville Visitors Center in Central Park.



*Left: The 400-pound sculpture of Pan really did leave its pedestal during the renovation of Hogan's Fountain. On most nights, however, its absence is an optical illusion... probably. Photo by Wilson Ethington.*



# For the Love of GOATS

*Comparing methods of ecosystem management*

**Liz Winlock**  
*Project Manager*

**HAY THERE, PARK LOVERS! IF YOU WERE** hoofing it around Iroquois Park’s Summit Field in the last few months, you may have noticed something that made you think, *You’ve GOAT to be kidding me!*

Over the summer, Olmsted Parks Conservancy partnered with Kentucky State University (KYSU) to investigate different strategies for managing the prairie ecosystem at Summit Field. One tried-and-true way to manage plants is to ask animals to graze a specific area—so we brought in a herd of goats!

This may sound *udderly* strange to some folks, but goats are experts in their field (eating), are not bothered by brambles or poison ivy, and will eat all morning and

*Above: “Herd” at work, these goats spent the summer removing vines and invasive plants from the prairie at Summit’s Field in Iroquois Park.*

afternoon while sleeping through the heat. As an added bonus, their waste is good for the soil! In fact, researchers across the country who use grazing animals have seen plant biodiversity *double* and resilience to extreme drought improve in prairies that they’ve studied. Plus, using goats at Summit Field frees up our Team for Healthy Parks to do other work throughout the Olmsted Park system.

This has been a wonderful partnership for OPC, KYSU, and the goats. OPC aims to keep Summit Field open as a prairie, which requires removal of woody species like Bradford pear and control of invasive species like Japanese honeysuckle vines. The Kentucky State University Cooperative

Extension Program was created to develop research-based educational programs that address relevant needs affecting underserved and underrepresented audiences. This collaboration allows OPC to manage Summit Field with goat crews while also enabling KYSU to gather data they can share with farmers and land managers. Meanwhile, the goats get a shady field with all the food they could possibly eat—plus daily head scratches from their farmer and OPC staff.

The goats were hard at work in Iroquois Park through July and August, and the state of the prairie speaks to how much they accomplished. After working through almost all the 18 research plots KYSU laid out, the goats moved out so researchers could fly a drone over the area and collect data to measure the herd's effectiveness.

*Right: Liz poses with one of the goats at Summit Field. Below: It's easy to see the difference between an area where goats have grazed (right) and an area still choked with invasive plants (left).*

This fall, we'll be looking over the data, and in the coming spring we'll be anxious to see what grasses and forbs come back in these areas. Maybe when it comes to ecosystem management, goats will prove to be the *Greatest Of All Time!*

***If you would like to know more about this project (or lodge a complaint about the many goat puns in this article), contact Liz at [liz.winlock@olmstedparks.org](mailto:liz.winlock@olmstedparks.org).***



# Nature's Neighbors

# Yellowjackets



**Marshall Berry**  
*Natural Areas Technician*

*A yellowjacket on a flower. Photo © Michael Tatman via Canva.com.*

**THE END OF SUMMER TENDS TO BE** the hottest and driest time of the year, when most people yearn for the milder days of fall. I, too, look forward to this time of year, but for a very different reason: the yellowjackets are out in force.

Almost anyone I say that to will raise an eyebrow and call me crazy—to which I must agree. My love for yellowjackets is arguably unfounded and certainly unrequited, but they fascinate me. However, I'm not blinded by this love; I am well aware that yellowjackets are pesky and can be a literal pain to encounter. But love them or hate them, they are part of our environment, and it is worthwhile to try to understand them.

Generally, yellowjackets are smaller wasps, about half the size of a

common paper wasp (the ones you'll see outside buildings on chandelier-style nests). Yellowjackets sport handsome and striking yellow and black markings, making them easy to identify. Perhaps the best way to identify a yellowjacket, though, is to be stung by one. I promise, once you get stung, you will never forget what they look like.

There are several species of yellowjackets all over the world, but here in Kentucky the two primary species are the eastern yellowjacket (*Vespula maculifrons*) and the German yellowjacket (*Vespula germanica*). These species are almost identical in appearance, life cycle, and behavior; the primary difference is their nesting habits. Both species construct paper nests made from a pulp of chewed



wood and saliva, but *V. maculifrons* nests in the ground in small, abandoned animal dens, while *V. germanica* nests off the ground, typically in established structures such as abandoned cars and house walls.

The life cycle of a yellowjacket begins in the spring, when a queen that has overwintered emerges and begins to form a colony from scratch, raising the first group of workers by herself. Until the first offspring reach adulthood, the queen will do everything required for the nest to survive: laying eggs, foraging for food, raising larva, and defending the nest from potential threats.<sup>1</sup> After the workers emerge as adults, they take over the tasks of foraging, defending the nest, and expanding the nest while the queen continues to lay eggs.<sup>2</sup>

The worker wasps construct nests comprised of hundreds or thousands of hexagonal cells in which eggs are laid and young are raised to maturity. The nest generally reaches maturity and the workers are busiest in the late summer and early fall. Because the wasps are caring for young and preparing for new queens to hatch, they are extremely active and territorial, which is why most stings occur this time of year. With the advent of cold weather, the entire colony will die except for queens, which will leave the nests and over-



An eastern yellowjacket, *Vespula maculifrons*.  
Photo: [Judy Gallagher \(CC BY 2.0\)](#).



Yellowjackets guard the entrance to their underground nest. Photo: [Alabama Extension](#).

winter in leaf litter or decaying wood.<sup>3</sup>

A yellowjacket sting is not the most painful sting out there, ranking at a 2 out of 4 on the Schmidt pain index, but it is memorable. While getting stung once is manageable, a person who is stung once is likely to be stung several times because a wasp that stings will release an alarm pheromone that causes other wasps nearby to sting, too. At that point, it's best to quickly distance yourself from the area and pray.

If you are stung, antihistamines can help alleviate pain and itchiness, while an ice pack can help reduce swelling. If you are stung many times or are allergic to stings, you may develop hives or have

<sup>1</sup> Evans and Eberhard, *The Wasps* (1971).

<sup>2, 3</sup> Goodisman, Kovacs and Hoffman, "[The Significance of Multiple Mating in the Social Wasp \*Vespula Maculifrons\*](#)" (2007).

trouble breathing. If this happens, seek medical attention immediately.

So, how do we avoid getting stung? Well, the easiest way is to do just that: avoid the nests if you know where they are. Yellowjackets are very sensitive to vibrations, so look around your yard and landscaping before you mow or rustle around in the bushes. Also remember that when yellowjackets are most active, they are looking for food—including yours. Have you ever heard of someone being stung on the lip by a yellowjacket when they took a drink from their soda? The wasps *love* sugary drinks and will crawl into open cans when you're not looking. Cover food and drinks to prevent your picnic from taking a turn for the worse.

Because they are so hated, people often overlook the positive aspects of having yellowjackets around. They are fantastic hunters of several pest insects, so it can be advantageous to gardeners to have nests nearby if they treat the wasps with respect and keep a distance from the nest site.

Personally, I've spent many days watching yellowjackets up-close without getting stung. In the fall, I would calmly stoop over a nest, pick away leaves from the entrance, and watch the dance of wasps going in and out. I wouldn't necessarily recommend trying that yourself, but the point is things are often only as scary as your understanding of them. Expand your perception, be respectful, and stay curious. Who knows? You might become infatuated with yellowjackets, too.

# Meet the Team



## Major Waltman Project Director

**On Staff Since:** *October 2006*

**Favorite Olmsted Park:** *Cherokee*

**Hobbies:** *Cycling, birding,  
kayaking, and fishing*

As Project Director, Major oversees all capital improvements (projects like playgrounds, trails and other amenities) in the Olmsted Parks, as well as the day-to-day operations of the Team for Healthy Parks. He specializes in aquatic and terrestrial ecology, stream restoration, and water treatment, but can be found doing a variety of work, from leading guided hikes for OPC members to constructing a wildlife ramp in a pond. Major's vast knowledge and experience make him an integral member of the Olmsted team. His favorite part of his job is being able to work outdoors.

## Recipe:

# Crabapple Jelly

Mary Anne Fox

*Natural Areas Technician*

Looking for an easy way to celebrate the fall harvest? This is one of my favorite 3-ingredient jelly recipes, made extra simple due to the naturally high levels of pectin in the crabapples.

### Ingredients

- 3 cups water
- 3 pounds crabapples
- 3 cups cane sugar

### Directions

1. Wash and process crabapples by removing blossom ends and brown spots. Halve crabapples and weigh out 3 pounds.
2. Place crabapples in a large saucepan. Add water until fruit is barely covered, approximately 3 cups. (For an extra kick, you can add a couple chopped habaneros at this stage.)
3. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce to a simmer. Heat and simmer slowly to release juices. Once fruit has softened, reduce heat to a low simmer and gently mash and stir crabapples for about 20 minutes. Be careful not to overcook crabapples as this reduces the available pectin in the juice.
4. Strain the cooked fruit through a cheesecloth. You can allow a slow strain over several hours or overnight in a refrigerator. (A gentler strain makes a clearer jelly, but I like to give
5. Discard all leftover fruit pulp.
6. Now that the juice has been extracted, measure 4 cups of juice into a saucepan and add sugar. Stir to dissolve. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly until you reach the jelly stage.
7. Jelly stage is achieved at 220° F. I like to do a secondary freezer test to ensure my jelly is at a good consistency. Place a few plates in your freezer at the beginning of the jelly making process. Once your jelly is at temperature, place a spoonful of the hot jelly liquid onto the cold plate and wait approximately 30 seconds. Tilt the plate to the side and watch to see if the jelly runs down the plate or holds firm.
8. Once jelly forms, place in jars to cool and refrigerate. Can jelly at this stage if desired using proper canning techniques. (*Note: Jars and lids should be properly sterilized before use in canning.*)



*Crabapples ripening on the tree.*

the cloth an extra squeeze for extra flavor.)



# Bat

Order *Chiroptera*



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## OLMSTED PARKS CONSERVANCY

Olmsted Parks Conservancy's mission is to restore, enhance and forever protect Louisville's Olmsted-designed parks and parkways, connecting nature and neighborhood while strengthening the community's well-being.

**Address:** 1299 Trevilian Way  
Louisville, KY 40213

**Phone:** (502) 456-8125

**Email:** [info@olmstedparks.org](mailto:info@olmstedparks.org)

**Web:** [olmstedparks.org](http://olmstedparks.org)