

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

**Registration is ongoing for the French Heritage Corridor Third Annual Conference
June 15-17 in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin**



I would like to personally invite you to attend in-person or virtually the Third Annual Conference of the French Heritage Corridor (FHC). Just click this link for conference registration and program [Join Us for the French Heritage Corridor 3rd Annual Conference - June 15-17, 2023 \(mailchi.mp\)](https://mailchi.mp). The conference will be held in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Not only are there many expert speakers during the conference; but also Mary Elise Antione, the Wisconsin ambassador to the FHC, will conduct tours of Prairie du Chien. What a wonderful opportunity to learn more about Midwest French heritage and culture! You may also click [French Heritage Corridor - French Heritage Society](#) to review the many upcoming 2023 events in the seven-state French Heritage Corridor, and new additions to the interactive map.

Kudos to our volunteers



Clockwise starting from upper left: preparing the gardens on May 13 for the *fleur-de-lis* (irises) are me, Ellen Liehr, Steve Monts, Judy Smead, (next) Steve Liehr, Steve M., Ellen L., and Judy S.; (next) our curator, Gary Seiner, working on a project; (next) Weigela japonica (left) and dropmore scarlet honeysuckle on the northwest corner of the Letourneau Home/Museum; and (final photographs) the *fleur-de-lis* showing off their blooms on May 17.

In addition to all the above photographed volunteers, the BGHS thanks: Laurel Soper for her updating of the BGHS website and Facebook postings; Daron Kinzinger for picking up our mail; Christine Michels for her ongoing Corresponding Secretary work; Steve Monts for his ongoing treasurer work; Gary Seiner and Mary Ann Lambert for their work as curator and assistant curator respectively; Ken Ponton for pruning the trees, Max Michels for mulching the hostas in the Letourneau Home gardens; Pam Perkins for grooming the Native Garden (behind the Letourneau Home); and Ken Ponton, Karen Duchene, and Gary Seiner for chaperoning the log schoolhouse and Letourneau Home/Museum open houses on Sundays May 7 and 21.

Alert: volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed for log schoolhouse and Letourneau Home/Museum open house on June 4--Please consider volunteering to chaperon for these open houses from 1-4 pm. The sign up is easy. For the Letourneau Home/Museum, just go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAE2BABFCC43-chaperoning> or for the log schoolhouse, go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAE2BABFCC43-chaperoning2>. Then go to June 4, to type your name in date(s) preferred. Information on "how to prepare to be a BGHS volunteer chaperon for open houses" is below.

How to prepare to be a BGHS volunteer/chaperon for open houses

For preparation to volunteer as a chaperon for open houses, you may visit the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society website which is www.bourbonnaishistory.org and open the Museum Campus window. You can then open Letourneau Museum and/or Log Schoolhouse pages, and find a link on each of those pages for "A self-guided tour of the house and gardens" or "A self-guided tour of the schoolhouse". Those links will open pages with "Letourneau House and Garden Self-guided Tour" (pdf) and "Log Schoolhouse Self-guided Tour" (pdf). You can then download/open the pdf's. There will be printed copies of these self-guided tours in the Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse for you and the visitors, but you might want to review the information beforehand so that you can be better informed and familiar with showing visitors how to access these pages on their mobile devices.

New IT director volunteer needed

Our longtime BGHS Information Technology Director, Laurel Soper, is resigning at the end of 2023. We thank her immensely for all her volunteer time. We need someone to step forward to keep our social media current. **Please email me if you are interested, and Laurel will teach you what to do.**

Would you like to join the Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee?

I have had no response to my last month's request below, so I will repeat this urgent matter. Since the pandemic, the Bourbonnais Township Park District's Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee (PFLHAC) has been stalled in reconvening on a regular basis. As the Perry

Farmhouse is closed in the evenings, I suggest that the meetings be held on evenings via Zoom which I will host. Individuals on the committee are Jorie Walters (chairperson), Daron Kinzinger, Gary Seiner, and myself. Anyone interested in joining this advisory committee may call the park district at (815) 933-9905 or send me an email. For more information about the Perry Farm's living history, click [Living History - Bourbonnais Township Park District \(btpd.org\)](http://Living History - Bourbonnais Township Park District (btpd.org)).

Two BGHS members recently offered unique insights into the past



At left, Dr. Charles Balesi speaks to a group near the reconstructed Fort Creve Cour (near East Peoria, Illinois) on May 5 about the history of the French fort in 1680. At right, Max Michaels addresses an audience at the French Heritage Museum on May 13 on the history of his Dutch father (also named Max) who was apprehended by the German army when he was 19 years old living in the Netherlands, and compelled to do forced labor in Germany during WWII. After he was liberated, he became a staff sergeant in the U.S. army.

Who am I?

I was a practicing physician in the Village of Bourbonnais. In 1890, I built a one and one-half story Queen Anne style with cross-gabled roof (a tower is embraced within the L-shaped plan) frame house at 277 East Marsile Street. I was also an instructor at St. Viator College for many years, choir director at Maternity BVM Church (when the organist was Professor Caudiose Martineau, music instructor at the college), and member of the village board. I died on the way home from a board meeting in 1921. My home was later acquired by the Harvey Senesac family in 1939 and was occupied by a member of the family until about 1972. It was then purchased by Eldon White who occupied and remodeled the home.

Next membership meeting is on June 22

Our next membership in-person or Zoom meeting will be on Thursday June 22 at 7 pm—zoom link
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83615770442?pwd=ZWoyMmMyWGpXUFdmcTRiMFpPNzIRQT09>.

If needed, the meeting Passcode is 707323 and ID 836 1377 0442. The meeting agenda is below.

Sixth Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner set for Tuesday October 17



The Sixth Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner will be on Tuesday October 17 from 5:30-9:00 pm at the Kankakee Country Club with open house of the log schoolhouse from 4-5:15 pm. This is the BGHS annual fund raiser for preservation of the log schoolhouse. You may click the following link to register for the dinner and nominate someone to receive the annual Fleur-de-Lis Award of Excellence (nomination deadline is August 1) [Fleur-de-Lis Celebration \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](https://bourbonnaishistory.org). The schedule for October 17 is as follows:

4:00-5:15 pm—Log schoolhouse open house

5:30-6:30 pm—Arrival at Kankakee Country Club, pick up name place cards with table number at welcome table; and enjoy social time with *hors d'œuvres*, cash bar, or complimentary wine at your table;

**6:30 pm--Welcome, Dr. Jim Paul, President Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society;
Presentation of Sixth Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence;**

6:45 pm—Blessing, French-Canadian dinner cuisine, Reserve *Perrin Côtes-du-Rhône* wine, non-alcoholic drink, and French dessert;

7:45 pm--Entertainment: Noel LeVasseur (portrayed by Jim Paul) will explain why the log schoolhouse closed in 1848;

8:15-9:00 pm—Concluding remarks--

- **Dr. Charles Bales, current BGHS Board Member;**
- **Honorable Consul General of France;**
- **Quebec Delegation Chicago Public & Governmental Affairs Officer;**
- **Lisa Kahn, French Heritage Society (Chicago Midwest Chapter) Co-Chair and Director of the French Heritage Corridor Initiative; and**
- **Mayor Paul Schore, Village of Bourbonnais.**

Kankakee County historic landmark designation for log schoolhouse draws near

On April 3, the Kankakee County Historic Preservation Commission approved the nomination of county historic landmark status for Bourbonnais Grove's first log schoolhouse (1837-48) which was later the home of French-Canadian families from 1848-2010. In June, the Village of Bourbonnais Board of Trustees will re-approve the nomination. The nomination will then be forwarded to the Kankakee County Planning, Zoning, and Agriculture Committee for approval, and then to the full Kankakee County Board. What a wonderful treasure we now enjoy and can use as a tangible artifact to teach and "touch" our community's pioneer history!

Mark your calendars for these BGHS 2023 events

- **June 1—annual BGHS membership dues deadline, click [Pay Dues \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](https://bourbonnaishistory.org);**

- Sundays June 4 and 18 from 1-4 pm—open houses at Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse;
- **Saturday June 17 at 1 pm—Melanie Holmes Book Signing *100 Things to do in Illinois Before You Die*, B.Harley Bradley House, Kankakee (see attached PDF)—Melanie has requested that all who plan to attend please RSVP as indicated on the attached PDF;**
- Mid-June—log schoolhouse landscaping to be completed;
- Sundays July 2 and 16 from 1-4 pm—open houses at Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse;
- Tuesday July 4—*Les Artisans* Arts and Crafts Fair;
- Tuesday August 1—deadline to submit nomination for annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence;
- Sundays August 6 and 20 from 1-4 pm—open houses at Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse;
- Sundays September 3 and 17 from 1-4 pm—open houses at Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse;
- Sundays October 1 and 15 from 1-4 pm—open houses at Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse;
- **Tuesday October 17 from 4-5:15 pm—open house at log schoolhouse**
- **Tuesday October 17 at 5:30 pm—Log Schoolhouse fundraiser *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner, Kankakee Country Club;**
- Sundays November 5 and 19 from 1-4 pm—open houses at Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse;
- Saturday December 2—*Les Artisans* Arts and Crafts Fair;
- Sunday December 3 from 1-4 pm—open house at Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse;
- Sunday December 17—Christmas Open House at the Letourneau Home/Museum and Log Schoolhouse from 1-4 pm.

Agenda for June 22, 2023 membership meeting

The next BGHS’s membership meeting (in-person and Zoom) is this Thursday June 22 at 7 pm. The minutes of the May 11, 2023 are attached. Here is the agenda for the meeting.

- Pledge of allegiance;
- Presentation based on June/July 2023 news eletter item “What am I today?”
- Approval of May 11, 2023 membership minutes (*attached*);
- Treasurer’s report;
- Corresponding Secretary report;
- Executive Vice-President report;
- Curator report;
- Membership report;
- Ways and Means:
 - Remnant log pieces;
 - Sign up for volunteering—open houses etc;
 - Craft show report;
 - *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner on October 17; and
 - Preparation for celebration of log schoolhouse’s village and county historic landmark designation.
- Building and Grounds:
 - Log schoolhouse landscaping;
 - Trees along NW corner of museum campus;
 - Small repairs—Angi?
 - Alarm system;
 - Levi Lawson’s Eagle Scout garden structure plan;
 - Camp MOSH;
 - Garden work sessions; and
- Old Business
 - Restructuring of BGHS update; and
 - New IT Director.

- **New Business**
 - Next meeting TBA;
 - Special BGHS 2023 dates: 6/17, and 10/17;
 - Chaperons needed for open houses of the Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse; and
 - Evening Zoom meetings for the Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee.

Have a wonderful beginning of summer! Best wishes,
Jim Paul, President of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society