

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

Holiday vendors await you at BGHS's July 4th *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Fair



The Les Artisans Arts and Craft Fair will open on July 4th at 9am at the Kankakee County Fairgrounds Exposition Hall, 213 W 4000 Rd S, Kankakee, IL. The craft show will continue until 3 pm. A \$1 entry fee per person is suggested. This event will be a great way for you and your family and friends to begin the holiday and also raise funds for your local Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society.

Kudos to our volunteers



Doris O'Connor (at left) gave a tour of the Letourneau Home to Mariann Hart on June 18; Gary Seiner groomed the Letourneau Home/Museum sign; and Steve Monts set up soaker hoses to water the new landscape plantings around the log schoolhouse.

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, chairing our Board of Directors, and giving impromptu tours of the museum campus; 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 gardening and handy man activities; Pam and Russ Perkins for grooming and watering the Native Garden (behind the Letourneau Home); and Ken Ponton, Judy Smead, Doris O'Connor, and Gary Seiner for chaperoning the log schoolhouse and Letourneau Home/Museum open houses on Sundays June 4 and 18. I would also like to thank all of our members and friends who attended

either in-person or virtually the Third Annual French Heritage Corridor Conference in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, on June 15-17.

French Heritage Corridor website includes more user friendly activities



You may click [French Heritage Corridor - French Heritage Society](#) to review the new look of the website including many upcoming 2023 events in the seven-state corridor, updated interactive map, and interactive modules. The revamped website was launched at the FHC annual conference mentioned above. Enjoy this new portal for engaging our French cultural heritage.

Alert: volunteers needed

Although at least one BGHS member has agreed to volunteer to be present at the BGHS table during the *Les Artisans Arts and Craft Fair* on July 4th, one or two more volunteers per two-hour time slot would be desirable. I have volunteered for 9-11 am, Steve Monts for 11-1, and Bonnie Bergeron for 1-3 pm. You can send me an email if you would like to join us jpaul764@hotmail.com.

Volunteers are needed for log schoolhouse and Letourneau Home/Museum open houses from August to December. The volunteer 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 the date you prefer and type in your name. Information on “how to prepare to be a BGHS volunteer chaperon for open houses” is below.

Two more volunteers are needed for BGHS service, one to make monthly website and Facebook postings; and the other to chair the BGHS membership committee. Both volunteer positions will commence in 2024.

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 Letourneau artifact is on display in our museum



When you enter the Letourneau Home/Museum meeting and display room, look up and you will see on top of the display case this 1930 hooked rug, hand-woven by Eva Letourneau Legris. Eva was the daughter of Mary and Philippe Letourneau and granddaughter of Elodie and George Letourneau. We thank Jean Legris-Pekoc (Eva's granddaughter) and family for this wonderful gift. We also thank Gary Seiner, our curator, for finding a great place to display this donation.

Will Mortagne au Perche become a French sister city to the Village of Bourbonnais?



For several years, Dr. Charles Balesi has advised Mayor Paul Schore on the benefits of creating a French and Canadian sister city for the Village of Bourbonnais. For the past five years, the village has considered the towns of Mortagne au Perche in France and Boucherville in Quebec Province, Canada. Recently two Rotary Club of Bradley-Bourbonnais members, Frank and Jean Koehler, traveled to Normandy and the nearby town of Mortange au Perche (see map and photograph of the town above). They continued the sister city dialogue.

After the French Revolution (1789-1799), the town of Mortagne au Perch became part of the Orne department in Normandy. Before 1799, it was part of the French province of Perche. Please read Bonnie Bergeron's article of January 2015 "Percheron Horses, French-Canadians Favored Breed" (see the horse pictured above) by clicking [The Herald Articles \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](http://TheHeraldArticles(bourbonnaishistory.org)). She wrote "Percheron horses originated and were named after the location where they were first bred, which is in the northern part of France in the Huisne River Valley of the province of Perch. The horses were first bred in the 17th century for war horses and to pull stage coaches. Eventually, Arabian blood was added to the breed."

In a recent presentation to the Rotary Club of Bradley-Bourbonnais, Frank Koehler stated "The Town of Boucherville was founded in . . . 1667 by French Minister Pierre Boucher, who was born in Mortagne au Perche in 1622. Between 1632 and 1763, 327 families left Mortagne au Perche to settle in New France." Frank and Jean Koehler have proposed an agreement which creates a sister city relationship between the Rotary Club of Bradley-Bourbonnais and the Rotary Club of Mortagne au Perche in order to begin an exchange of information, formal visits, sharing expenses, and pursuing projects grants. I will keep you informed as to the progress of this agreement.

BGHS members enjoy Melanie Holmes's new book and the history of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin



In the photograph at left at the B. Harley Bradley House in Kankakee, (from left to right) Jeff Jarvis, Cindy Simmons, Mary Ann Lambert, Melanie Holmes, and Elmira Wilkey pose with Melanie during her book signing *100 Things to Do in Illinois Before You Die*—which features the French-Canadian Heritage Corridor. In the center photograph, Dr. Charles Balesi speaks about the historical significance of the Strange Powers House in Prairie du Chien. In the photograph at right, (from left to right) the Honorable Yannick Tagand (Consul General of France in the Midwest), myself, Charles Balesi, Waltraud Schuller, and Josue Savoie pose in the historic Ravoux House in Prairie du Chien.

Kankakee County historic landmark designation for log schoolhouse draws near

On August 8 at 9 am, the Kankakee County Board will have an opportunity to approve the nomination of county historic landmark status for Bourbonnais Grove's first log schoolhouse (1837-48). The log schoolhouse later became the home of French-Canadian families from 1848-2010. What a wonderful treasure we now enjoy and can use as a tangible artifact to teach and "touch" our community's pioneer history!

**The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society invites you to attend the Sixth Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner at the Kankakee County Club, 211 Cobb Boulevard, Kankakee, IL 60901
On Tuesday October 17, 2023**



An open house of the log schoolhouse from 4-5:15 pm will precede the *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner on Tuesday October 17 from 5:30-9:00 pm at the Kankakee Country Club. To make a reservation for the celebration dinner online, you may use the following link to “Make a Reservation” and also nominate—by August 1, 2023—an outstanding local history volunteer for the annual Fleur-de-Lis Award of Excellence [Fleur-de-Lis Celebration \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](http://bourbonnaishistory.org). After making your reservation, please email jpaul764@hotmail.com with the names of all your dinner party guests and who you would like to sit with at the dinner (tables of eight persons). See below for reservations by mail. All proceeds go toward the preservation of Bourbonnais Grove’s first log schoolhouse (1837-48). Dinner cost: BGHS members--\$55 per person; non-members \$65 per person. The BGHS is a 501c3 organization.

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 Yannick Tagand, Consul General of France in the Midwest;**
- **Madame Jeanne Lamy-Belzil, Public & Governmental Affairs Officer, Delegation of Quebec to Chicago;**
- **Lisa Kahn, Director of the French Heritage Corridor initiative and Co-Chair, French Heritage Society Chicago-Midwest Chapter; and**
- **Mayor Paul Schore, Village of Bourbonnais.**

If making reservation by mail, please print, cut and return the information below.

Please send check (payable to “BGHS”) with information below to Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society, PO Box 311, Bourbonnais, IL, 60914 **by September 20, 2023.**

- Name: _____ Member: Yes No
- Postal address: _____
- Telephone number: _____
- Email: _____
- ___ I will attend with a party of ___ and would like to sit with _____
- Find enclosed my check of \$_____
- ___ I am unable to attend but find enclosed my donation of \$_____

A block of rooms have been reserved at the Hilton Garden Inn (455 Riverstone Parkway, Kankakee, IL 60901, 815 932-4444) under the name “Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society” for overnight guests on October 17th. Please make your own independent reservations.

Mark your calendars for these BGHS 2023 events

- July 1—beginning of time for payment of annual 2023 BGHS membership dues;
- 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;
- Friday July 14 from 5:30-7:30 pm—Bastille Day Celebration at French Heritage Museum;
- Saturday July 15 at 11 am—Andrew Mann will speak about the Quebec Rebellion from 1837-38 at the French Heritage Museum;
- **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;
- **Wednesday September 20—deadline for *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner reservations;**
- 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.

Who am I? (No one knew the answer to this question, so you have another opportunity)

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.

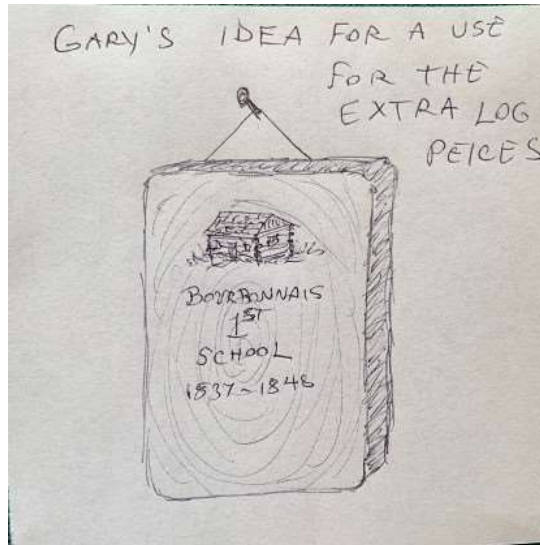
Next BGHS membership meeting is on July 6

Our next membership in-person or Zoom meeting will be on Thursday July 6 at 7 pm—
zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86215429246?pwd=NmZKbkxzNGswemJMWGJJU1JOVjFoUT09> with zoom meeting ID 862 1542 9246 and Passcode 269926. Here is the meeting agenda:

- Pledge of allegiance;
- Presentation based on June/July and July/August 2023 news eletter item “What am I today?” and Elmira Wilkey speaks about the Sister Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary coming to Bourbonnais Grove in 1850;
- Approval of June 22, 2023 membership minutes (*attached*);
- Treasurer’s report;
- Corresponding Secretary report;
- Executive Vice-President report;
- Curator report;

- Membership report;
- Ways and Means:
 - Remnant log pieces—Gary;s design;



- Sign up for volunteering—open houses etc;
- Craft show report;
- *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner on October 17;
- Culver’s fundraiser;
- New group Facebook page [Bourbonnais History Dossier | Facebook](#); and
- Preparation for celebration of log schoolhouse’s village and county historic landmark designation.
- Building and Grounds:
 - Log schoolhouse landscaping;
 - Trees/shrubs 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;
 - Volunteer to chair Membership Committee; and
 - Volunteer for website and Facebook postings.
- New Business
 - Next meeting TBA;
 - Special BGHS 2023 dates: 8/1, 9/20, 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 summer! Best wishes,
 Jim Paul, President of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society