

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

**Membership meeting on Thursday April 4 at 7 pm**

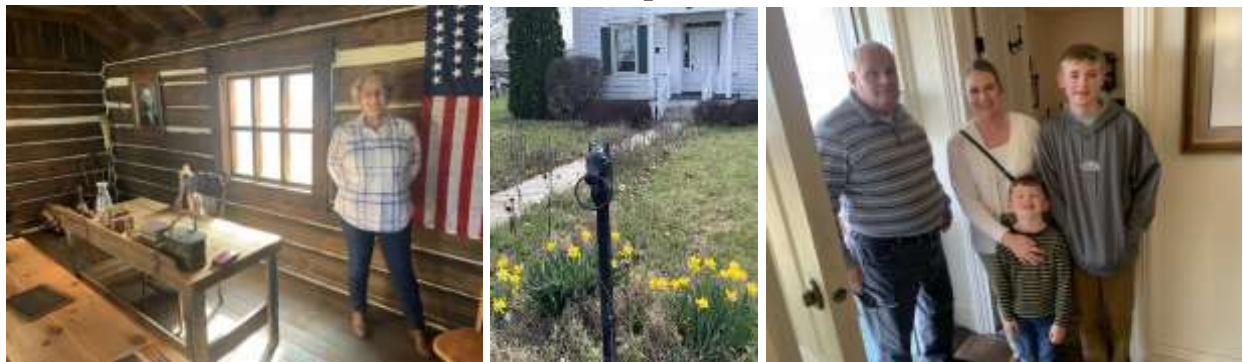
Our next membership meeting of 2024 will be on Thursday April 4 at 7 pm, both Zoom and in-person. Here is the zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81276216731?pwd=QXJrcTRjanZDNGZ4QlE1UUJzRVBNQT09>

with zoom meeting ID 81278216731 and Passcode 261001. The agenda is below and it contains

**Save the dates for the following BGHS-related events**

**Two volunteers chaperone Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse  
at March 3 open houses**



At left, volunteer Michelle (Marcotte) Baldwin awaits visitors to the log schoolhouse and at right (from l-r) volunteer Ken Lewellen begins his tour of the Letourneau Home/Museum for Peggy Heck and her sons Jack and Connor.

A big BGHS “thank you” to our volunteers pictured above and to Doris O’Connor who volunteered as open house chaperone on March 17. Kudos also to the following volunteers:

- Josue Savoie for updating of the BGHS website postings;
- Daron Kinzinger for picking up our mail, chairing our Board of Directors, and hosting log schoolhouse volunteer meeting on April 11;
- Christine Michels for her ongoing Corresponding Secretary work;
- Steve Monts for his ongoing detailed treasurer’s work;
- Gary Seiner and Mary Ann Lambert for their work as curator and assistant curator respectively;
- Ken Ponton for his oversight as executive vice-president and sponsoring Illinois History Day as a resolution for passage in the Illinois state legislature;
- Ellen Stringer for organizing the craft show fundraisers;
- Cindy McBarnes for chairing the log schoolhouse Education Committee;
- Log Schoolhouse Advisory Committee members: Mayor Paul Schore, Laurie Cyr, Ken Ponton, Gary Seiner, Charles Balesi, Frank Koehler, Cindy McBarnes, Norm Strasma, Daron Kinzinger, and myself;

- Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee members: Jorie Walters, Doris O'Connor, Max Michels, Mack Brza, Daron Kinzinger, Gary Seiner, and myself; and
- Doris O'Connor for chairing the Membership Committee.

### **Open house volunteers are needed and first-timers will be mentored**

As the open houses of the Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse continue on the first and third Sundays of every month from 1-4 pm, the BGHS needs volunteers for both sites. Chaperons greet visitors, hand out self-guided tour information at the door, and oversee artifacts. **If you have not volunteered before as an open house chaperon, no worries, a mentor will be present to train you—as well as open and close the sites—on the date you sign up for.** The sign up process is rather easy. **Just click one or more of the links below for an opportunity to chaperon and then click “Sign Up” for the date(s) you prefer. If both slots are filled for your site and date choice, just send me an email, and you can still come on your preferred date.**



Log schoolhouse open house volunteer chaperon link:

[Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society: Chaperoning Log Schoolhouse Open House--Meet and Greet, Hand Out Self-Guided Tours, Oversee Artifacts \(signupgenius.com\).](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAE2BABFCC43-chaperoning1)

Letourneau Home/Museum open house volunteer chaperon link:

[Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society: Chaperoning Letourneau Home/Museum Open House--Meet and Greet, Hand Out Self-Guided Tours, Oversee Artifacts \(signupgenius.com\).](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAE2BABFCC43-chaperoning1)

Also, if you would like to volunteer as a BGHS table greeter at one of our two *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Fairs on July 4 and/or December 7, please open this link for dates and times: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAE2BABFCC43-chaperoning1>.

### **Who are we?**

Vic Johnson wrote that Henry F. Tower, at the age of 92, reported in a 1929 interview with local historian Burt Burroughs that he attended the Bourbonnais Grove log school in 1847 at the age of 11 with two of Noel LeVasseur's children. We are those two children. One of us was born in 1838 and the other in 1840. **Who are we?** Tower also recalled that his teacher, Mr. Starr, boarded at Thomas and Margaret Durham's home.

## Save the date *September 24* for Seventh Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner

Please save the date Tuesday September 24 from 5:30 – 9 pm for our Seventh Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner at the Kankakee Country Club. The price for *hors d'ouvres*, wine, and French dinner this year will be \$65 each for members and \$75 each for non-members. An open house of the log schoolhouse from 4-5:15 pm will precede the *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner. To make a reservation for the celebration dinner online, you may use the following link to “Make a Reservation” [Fleur-de-Lis Celebration \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](http://Fleur-de-Lis Celebration (bourbonnaishistory.org)). After making your reservation, please email [bourbonnais.grove@gmail.com](mailto:bourbonnais.grove@gmail.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). 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; and**

**8:15-9:00 pm—Concluding Remarks.**

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 August 23, 2024.**

- 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 will be 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 September 24<sup>th</sup>. Please make your own independent reservations.

### **Can Illinois History Day soon become a reality?**

Ken Ponton has encouraged State Representative Jackie Haas and State Senator Patrick Joyce to propose an Illinois legislative resolution that will create an Illinois History Day. In her *Daily Journal* article of March 13 “History is his story: Ponton at 47 years on historical societies, advocating state holiday”, reporter Taylor Leddin-McMaster wrote: “House Joint Resolution 0058, which would establish History Day in the state of Illinois, cleared committee on March 6 and is now waiting on a bipartisan vote. Ponton said a decision should be made before the end of the spring session, which concludes on May 31.” Thank you Ken, State Representative Haas, and State Senator Joyce for your work on this resolution.

## Kankakee Trinity Academy students and teacher visit museum campus



Kankakee Trinity Academy High School’s history class toured the Letourneau Home/Museum and Bourbonnais Grove’s first log schoolhouse (1837-48) on March 21. Teacher Rodney Miller (sixth from the left in the photograph) not only brought his students to the BGHS museum campus, but also has taken them to many other historical sites in the community as they study local history.

## BGHS members meet French Ambassador to the U.S. at conference on March 25

After attending the conference entitled “Francophone Heritage in Chicago and Illinois: A Tool for Economic Development” on March 25, several BGHS members met Laurent Bili, the Ambassador of France to the United States. Ambassador Bili made opening remarks before the panel discussion moderated by Lisa Kahn, Chicago-Midwest French Heritage Society Co-Chair and Director of the French Heritage Corridor Initiative.



From left to right, BGHS members pose with the French Ambassador to the U.S.: Frank Koehler, Ambassador Bili, Jean Koehler, Lynn Ahlden, the ambassador, and Norm Strasma.

## Thursday April 4 Zoom and in-person meeting agenda

- 7pm—Pledge of allegiance;
- Presentation based on April/May 2024 news eletter item “Who are We?”
- Approval of March 7, 2024 membership minutes (*attached*);

- Treasurer’s report (*attached*);
- Corresponding Secretary report;
- Executive Vice-President report;
- Curator report;
- Membership report;
- Ways and Means:
  - Craft show;
  - Website update;
  - Remnant log pieces;
  - Can we engage the community more in our museum campus with the iNaturalist app?



- Log schoolhouse history booklet; and
- Chaperons and “openers/closers” needed for open houses of the Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse and craft show. At the Letourneau Home/Museum, Ken Lewellen has volunteered for 4/7 and 5/6; Priscilla Dwyer has volunteered for 7/21--At the Log Schoolhouse, Cindy McBarnes has volunteered for 4/7).
- Building and Grounds:
  - Levi Lawson’s Eagle Scout garden structure plan.
- Old Business
  - Restructuring of BGHS update.
- New Business
  - Next meeting May 2 at 7 pm—Zoom and in-person;
  - Special BGHS 2024 dates with links—**save the dates:**
    - Thursday April 4 at 7 pm—BGHS membership meeting;
    - Tuesday April 9 at 3:30 pm—Log Schoolhouse Advisory Committee meeting;
    - Thursday April 11 at 4 pm—log schoolhouse volunteers meeting;
    - Thursday April 18 at 7 pm—Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee meeting, Zoom only—link  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89707536373?pwd=UVpxL1ErQkJrRHMrMFUrVGVVHY2RjUT09> with  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89707536373?pwd=UVpxL1ErQkJrRHMrMFUrVGVVHY2RjUT09> with Meeting ID 89707536373 and Passcode 905306;
    - May 17-19—YOUR INVITATION TO THE Fourth Annual French Heritage Corridor Conference “What’s Cooking: Creating Collaboration in the French Heritage Corridor”, River Raisin National Battlefield Park, 333 N. Dixie Hwy, Monroe, MI, [French Heritage Corridor 4th Annual Conference - May 17-19, 2024 \(mailchi.mp\)](#);
    - Saturday June 15—possible first Illinois History Day;
    - Thursday July 4 from 9am – 3pm—*Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Fair [Les Artisans Fair \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](#)
    - August 1—deadline for nomination for annual Fleur-de-Lis Award of Excellence [Fleur-de-Lis Celebration \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](#)
    - August 30—reservation deadline for annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner [Fleur-de-Lis Celebration \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](#)
    - Tuesday September 24, beginning at 5:30pm—*Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner [Fleur-de-Lis Celebration \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](#)
    - Saturday December 7 from 9am – 3 pm—*Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Fair [Les Artisans Fair \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](#)

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