

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

Next membership meeting will be in-person and Zoom tomorrow—Thursday December 1 at 7 pm

Our membership meeting this Thursday December 1 at 7:00 pm (CST) will be in person at the Letourneau Home/Museum and Zoom. Please click this link to if you wish to join the meeting via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84025394447?pwd=SVRtWURXWDR0SGpWZERaNnRoVTZNdz0>

9. If you need the Meeting ID, it is 840 2539 4447 and the Passcode is 615918. The complete agenda for the meeting is at the end of this news eletter. Highlights of the agenda include: Eagle Scout project presentation by Levi Lawson; BGHS sponsorship of Jim Healy’s performance of Louis Joliet “Solid Path through Water”; identifying volunteers for BGHS table at December 3 craft fair and Christmas open houses at Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse on Sunday December 18 from 1-4 pm; decision on joining the Chocolate Tour on Saturday February 4, 2023 from 12-5 pm; approval of the new curator (see below); and election of officers and board members (we still need a secretary nominee), and the board members up for re-election to a two-year term—Charles Balesi, Carl Moran, and Roberta Renville.

Check out all the original holiday creations this Saturday at the BGHS

Les Artisans Arts and Craft Fair



BGHS craft fair organizer Ellen Stringer has assembled a full venue of holiday crafters at this Saturday’s (December 3) craft fair at the Kankakee County Fair Grounds. The event begins at 9:00 am and ends at 3:00 pm. This craft fair and the one on July 4th are the two main fund raisers for the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society.

The afterglow of the log schoolhouse inauguration on November 15 continues

In her weekly column “A Taylor-Made Life” in the November 19, 2022 issue of the *Daily Journal*, Taylor Leddin-McMaster opened with “This week was a monumental one for the village of Bourbonnais.” She stated, “In my almost two years with the Journal, I’ve been following along with the work of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society, and their passion and dedication to preserving the area’s history makes my work enjoyable.” She congratulated the BGHS and the Village of Bourbonnais for the inauguration ceremony of the log schoolhouse and the village’s breaking “. . .ground on its upcoming Community Campus.” Ms. Leddin-

McMaster concluded her column, “It’s safe to say there are some exciting things in store for the village’s future, and I can’t wait to see where it goes from here. Felicitations!” Here is the link for the whole column: https://www.daily-journal.com/life/a-taylor-made-life-welcome-to-bourbonnais/article_591cbae8-6759-11ed-ab2e-c70277835185.html.

On the same page as Ms. Leddin-McMaster’s column, Tiffany Blanchette provided photographs and captions for “5 photos from BGHS’s log schoolhouse inauguration”. Here is the link: https://www.daily-journal.com/5-photos-from-bghs-log-schoolhouse-inauguration/article_80cea714-675d-11ed-8130-dbc306ff83c.html. Two of Ms. Blanchette’s five photographs follow:



Ken Ponton, BGHS executive vice-president, leads a tour of the log schoolhouse and Lisa Kahn, co-chair of the French Heritage Society Chicago Chapter and Director of the French Heritage Corridor Initiative, presents a plaque recognizing the log schoolhouse as an official French Heritage Corridor site.

Please search “Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society” on Facebook to see more photographs of the log schoolhouse inauguration—posted by our webmaster, Laurel Soper. Here are a few more:



Clockwise from top left: during moving-in day (November 14, 2022), Ken Ponton, Max Michels, and Mayor Paul Schore carry the student benches; Cindy McBarnes and Gary Seiner set out the artifacts; Ken Ponton (with drill in hand), aided by Max Michels, puts pegs in the wall; Laurie Cyr sets out artifacts; Charles Balesi “drinks” from the water pail; and the mayor, Laurie, and Charles relax after all is in place for tomorrow’s inauguration.



The log schoolhouse sugar cookies and cake were enjoyed by all who attended the Tuesday November 15 inauguration.

The Tuesday November 15 afternoon inauguration activities included emcee Laurie Cyr (Village of Bourbonnais Assistant Administrator) introducing Mayor Paul Schore who offered a Land Acknowledgment expressing gratitude to the Native Americans who lived here. He then stated his pleasure in seeing the log schoolhouse restored to its historic place in our community. General Consul of France to Chicago, Yannick Tagand, spoke about the role the restored log schoolhouse will play with students today and the significance of the pioneer French-Canadian families who lived in the former schoolhouse after 1848. I then explained how the log schoolhouse has already become an historic landmark for the Village of Bourbonnais and the procedure by which it will become a Kankakee County historic landmark. Lisa Kahn presented the plaque mentioned above. As a spokesperson for the Kanakee County Historical Society, Ken Ponton presented the KCHS gift of the framed portrait of George Washington. As members of Asbury Methodist Church, Steve and Ellen Liehr presented their church's gift of a framed sketch of a Methodist circuit rider. Then several individuals spoke about their families who had lived in the log schoolhouse: Jean Legris-Pekoc, Fred Rivard, and Michelle Marcotte-Baldwin.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony took place next along with the serving of cake and cookies. Those in the audience then enjoyed self-guided tours of the Letourneau Home/Museum, gardens, and log schoolhouse.

77 guests attend Fifth Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner: \$1500 raised in annual campaign for log schoolhouse preservation in 2022



I was so honored to receive the 2022 *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence from the BGHS. At left, my family accepted the award with me (from left to right) my son-in-law Andy Bradley, grandson Raylan Bradley, granddaughter Cayla Bradley, me, my daughter Christina Bradley, and Norma Meier who introduced the award and

presented it to me. In the photograph at right, General Consul of France to Chicago, Yannick Tagand, addressed the guests.

November 15 was a big day for the BGHS and the Village of Bourbonnais: the afternoon log schoolhouse festivities at the Adrien M. Richard Heritage Preserve, followed by Charles Balesi taking out of town guests to the French Heritage Museum, and then the evening *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner at the Kankakee Country Club. The French cuisine dinner with appetizers, wine, and dessert was paid for by the guests' registration. After the dinner, I portrayed Thomas Durham (1784-1854) who spoke about his role in building the log schoolhouse in 1837. He answered questions from each table.

Dr. Charles Bales then took over as emcee and after his remarks, introduced the following who addressed the guests: Consul General of France to Chicago Yannick Tagand; Jeanne Lamy-Belzil, Quebec Delegation to Chicago Public and Governmental Affairs Officer; Lisa Kahn; and Mayor Paul Schore. **In the near future, more photographs of the *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner will be posted on the Facebook pages of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society.**

While the annual celebration dinner at the country club is not a big fund raiser *per se*, it does provide a catalyst for the BGHS to:

- Solicit annual donations to the log schoolhouse preservation fund;
- Present the annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence;
- Socialize and enjoy a delicious French cuisine;
- Network with community members who share the BGHS vision and values; and
- Publicize the BGHS mission and values.

As the celebration dinner paid for itself in registration payments and pledges, donations above the cost of the dinner registration, plus donations from individuals who did not attend the dinner, tallies up to over \$1500 for the 2022 calendar year to date.

Gary Seiner volunteers to serve as curator

Our Vice-President Gary Seiner recently told me that he is willing to serve as BGHS curator. Gary is a very detail oriented person, as his artwork illustrates. Thank you, Gary.

Kudos to our volunteers

The BGHS thanks all our volunteers: Max Michels for spreading the mulch on both sides of the boardwalk leading to the log schoolhouse and for assisting with moving in of the log schoolhouse artifacts on November 14; Laurel Soper for her updating of the BGHS website and Facebook postings; Daron Kinzinger for picking up our mail and overseeing the pruning of the river birch tree; Christine Michels for her ongoing Corresponding Secretary work; Steve Monts for his ongoing treasurer work; Gary Seiner for chaperoning the open house at the Letourneau Home/Museum on November 6 and 20, and decorating the Letourneau Home/Museum for Christmas; all the members of the BGHS Log Schoolhouse Advisory Committee members for planning the November 15 festivities—Charles Balesi, Laurie Cyr, Steve Depasquale, Frank Koehler, Cindy McBarnes, Steve Monts, Ken Ponton, Mayor Paul Schore, Gary Seiner, and

Norm Strasma; to all the BGHS members who served food and drinks, and supervised the tours on November 15—Ellen Liehr, Jean Legris-Pekoc, Mary Ann Lambert, Dodie Richard, Judy Smead, Max Michels, Steve Monts, Steve Liehr, Steve Depasquale, and Cindy McBarnes; and to Charles Balesi for conducting the November 15 tours of the French Heritage Museum, to Charles Balesi and Wal Schuller for organizing the *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner; and to Phil Stickney and Mary Ann Lambert for taking photographs during the log schoolhouse inauguration and the *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner respectively.

Who am I?

In 1836, I became Will County's first school commissioner. That is when I met Thomas Durham. I am a Methodist minister and I encouraged Durham to build a log schoolhouse which would some day become a meeting and worship site for Methodists who were served by the missionary circuit riders. Who am I?

Mark your calendars for these BGHS 2022 events

- Saturday December 3—*Les Artisans* Arts and Crafts Fair; and
- Sunday December 18—Christmas Open House at the Letourneau Home/Museum and Log Schoolhouse from 1-4 pm.

French Heritage Corridor website [French Heritage Corridor - French Heritage Society](#) includes new sites on the interactive map plus these events

- **December 2:** *Allée Allumée*; [Ste. Genevieve, MO](#)
- **December 9:** *Allée Allumée*; [Ste. Genevieve, MO](#)
- **December 10:** [Christmas at Fort Crawford, Prairie du Chien, WI](#)
- **December 16:** *Allée Allumée*; [Ste. Genevieve, MO](#)
- **December 31:** *Guignolée* [Watch Party, Ste. Genevieve, MO](#)
- **December 31:** *La Guianée* [at Fort de Chartres, Prairie du Rocher, IL](#)

December 1 membership meeting will be in-person and Zoom with agenda below

- Pledge of allegiance;
- Levi Lawson, candidate for Eagle Scout status, explains his project;
- Presentation based on November/December 2022 news eletter item “Who am I?”
- Approval of November 10, 2022 membership minutes (*attached*);
- Treasurer's report;
- Corresponding Secretary report;
- Executive Vice-President report;
- Collection Committee report—approval of new curator;
- Membership Report;
- Ways and Means:
 - *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner report; and
 - Craft show report—volunteers needed for BGHS table.
- Building and Grounds
- Old Business

- Restructuring of BGHS update.
- New Business
 - Next meeting on March 9, 2023;
 - Chaperons needed for December 4 open house of the Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse, and chaperone for log schoolhouse for December 18;
 - Join the Chocolate Tour?
 - Sponsorship of Jim Healy’s performance of Louis Joliet “Solid Path through Water”;
 - Election of officers and board members;
 - Artifact donations from Jean Legris-Pekoc and Dennis Shoup (wooden nickels);
 - Illinois Heritage Association will dissolve at end of year—Patricia Miller’s request;
 - Death of Austin Johnson—landscape designer for BGHS; and
 - Log schoolhouse inauguration congratulatory notes.

Happy holidays and best wishes,

Jim Paul, President of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society