

Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society
December 6, 2018

Attendance: Dr. Jim Paul, Laurel Soper, Norma Meier, Michelle Meier, Tim Arseneau, Mimi Raich, Gary Seiner, Mary Ann Lambert, Dr. Charles Balesi, Sandi Sandeno, and Daron Kinzinger.

Call to Order: Meeting began by President Dr. Jim Paul at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Presentation: Christmas traditions. Dr. Paul began his presentation with “Lo Saturnalia!” (Ancient Roman for today’s greeting “Merry Christmas!”). Dr. Paul explained the significance of the week-long celebration that began on December 17 with drinking, eating, and presenting gifts of pottery figurines, edible treats, and festive candles. He went on to explain how the 4th century Christian officials phased out the Saturnalia festival with a rival festival to mark Jesus’s birth on December 25 (although current theologians place his birth in the spring). Dr. Paul talked about St. Nicholas of Myra and the story of the gold coins falling into the stockings hanging to dry on the fireplace. He explained how Martin Luther brought a pine tree into his home and lit candles on it to represent the starry sky when Jesus was born, and how Prince Albert brought the custom to England in the 1840s. Christmas became a legal holiday in the New World in the 1680s. Clement Clark Moore’s 1823 poem “Night before Christmas” gave birth to the “right jolly old elf”. By 1831, the south accepted Christmas as a holiday. By 1842, it was a holiday in the north although French-Canadians may have still worked on Christmas because New Year’s Day was a greater holiday for them. By 1870, Christmas had become a national holiday in the U.S. Table-top Christmas trees were in style until the late 19th century. Then, taller Christmas trees that stood on the floor became popular.

Approval of Minutes: Tim Arseneau made a motion to accept minutes of the November 1, 2018 meeting. Gary Seiner seconded. Motion carried.

Treasure: Tim Arseneau

Mr. Arseneau is waiting for the December bank statements for the three BGHS accounts at HomeStar bank, so he did not offer an account balance. Dr. Paul stated that there should be \$7009.33 in the Log Schoolhouse account. Laurel Soper made a motion to pay the bills. Norma Meier seconded. Motion carried. Dr. Paul mentioned that there must be an audit of the treasurer’s books as one treasurer leaves office and another assumes office.

Membership:

Dr. Paul mentioned that there is a mistake regarding Scott Suryk on the membership list. He has paid for lifetime membership. Montreal resident Pierre Fortin paid his membership online so as to remedy the Canadian dollar bank check conversion.

Ways and Means:

Ellen Stringer reported on last weekend’s *Les Artisans Arts and Crafts Fair*. She was pleased with the good coverage in the *Daily Journal* and *The Herald*. She estimated that the BGHS will raise about \$2300 from this December 1st fair. A French Heritage Day and Sister City possible joint event was discussed. Ms. Soper mentioned that Ellen Stringer, Michelle Meier, and she will work the Chocolate Tour event at the Letourneau Home/Museum on February 2 from 12-5 pm. Dr. Paul said that he would also assist. He has created a new log schoolhouse donation handout which he displayed.

Building and Grounds:

Dr. Paul raised the issue of Fast Signs either repainting the image of George Letourneau on the welcome sign or repainting the whole sign. Since Ken Ponton has recently repainted the sign, Tim Arseneau made a motion to repaint the Letourneau image only. Dr. Balesi seconded the

motion. Motion carried. Norma Meier stated that she would assist in replacing the bathroom door knob. Regarding the refrigerator, a motion was made by Gary Seiner to review the best price which coincides with the largest cubic feet size and purchase the corresponding refrigerator (maximum \$250). Sandi Sandeno seconded the motion. Motion carried. Regarding the mice problem, Mr. Arseneau made a motion that Mr. Seiner place decon out to remedy the problem. Ms. Sandeno seconded the motion. Motion carried. Dr. Paul reported on the daylily garden renovation project grant application by BGHS students. Mr. Seiner made a motion to approve the project. Mary Ann Lambert seconded the motion. Motion carried. Other issues discussed were the Van Meter Cemetery, CLEO (online app to identify artifacts and sites using GPS), and the Christmas Open House on December 16 from 1-4 pm.

New Business:

Officers for 2019 were nominated: Dr. Paul (president), Gary Seiner (vice-president), Marcia Rabideau (executive vice-president) Faith Quigley (secretary), Laurel Soper (corresponding secretary), John Hassett (treasurer), Robert Renville (board trustee), Dr. Balesi (board trustee), and Carl Moran (board trustee). No other individuals were nominated. Dr. Paul asked for a voice vote. The nominees were unanimously approved. Dr. Paul said that the house has a better smell partially due to the Bed, Bath and Beyond tool to purify air. Also, there may be a spring seminar at Kankakee Community College base on Annie Proulx's *Barkskins*.

Old Business:

Dr. Paul thanked Wal Schuler and Lynn Alden for updating the Village of Bourbonnais mailing list. Ms. Soper agreed to contact Jim Beedle about the millstone acquisition. Dr. Paul will write a list of BGHS accomplishments for 2018. Everyone thanked Laurel Soper and Norma Meier for bringing Christmas treats to the meeting. Ms. Sandeno recommended a Lincoln Log donation (per log) for the log schoolhouse restoration. Dr. Paul said that he would create this option.

Adjournment:

Dr. Balesi made motion to adjourn at 8:11 pm. Mr. Arseneau seconded. Motion carried.