

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

Immediate action “To Do” list and respective news eletter page numbers: 1) Volunteer to sit at BGHS July 4 *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Fair entry table from 11am-1pm or 1-3pm (p. 1); 2) Pay annual BGHS dues for 2025 (p. 2); 3) Nominate someone for 2025 *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence by August 1 (p. 2); 4) Petition to save the Modoc Ferry from Ste. Genevieve to Prairie du Rocher (p. 2); 5) Publicize the Sesquicentennial French Heritage Weekend on September 27-28 at The Grove (pp 2-3); 6) Answer “Who am I?” (p. 3); and 7) Picnic at the Preserve (pp 5-6).

Next membership meeting is Thursday July 10 at 7 pm

Our next membership meeting will be on Thursday July 10 at 7 pm via Zoom. The Zoom meeting link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81752854027?pwd=v5uq3b11My1CaDmdhQUxPom2Y8HlrU.1> with meeting ID 81752854027 and Passcode 310530.

In memorium: Judith A. Ponton (1940-2025)



Our beloved Judy died on June 7. In 1986, after she finished the day teaching math at Bradley Bourbonnais Community High School, Judy was probably bringing dinner to share with her husband, Ken, who was working on the restoration of the recently moved Letourneau Home/Museum. As a lifetime member of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society, Judy included the BGHS among her many volunteer contributions to our community. We offer our deepest sympathy to Ken and the rest of Judy's family.

Help needed for July 4th *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Fair

The next *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Fair is on July 4th from 9 am to 3 pm at the Kankakee County Fairgrounds Exposition Hall, 213 W 4000 Rd S, Kankakee, IL. 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 the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society. **Urgent--volunteers needed at July 4 craft show for 11am-1pm and 1-3 pm.** Please click this link to volunteer for the BGHS craft show entry table from 11 am to 1 pm or 1-3 pm:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAE2BABFCC43-chaperoning1>

For other volunteer opportunities, click the links below:

Letourneau Home/Museum open house, second Saturday of every month March-December from 1-4 pm (2 chaperones needed) sign up link

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAE2BABFCC43-chaperoning>

Log schoolhouse open house, second Saturday of every month March-December from 1-4 pm (2 chaperones needed) sign up link

July 1 means it's time to pay your 2025 BGHS membership dues

The 2025 membership dues (individual--\$20, senior--\$10, family--\$30, business--\$50, business lifetime--\$500, and individual lifetime--\$300), are due on July 1. Individuals can pay at this link [Pay Dues \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](https://bourbonnaishistory.org/pay-dues) or mail checks to BGHS, PO Box 311, Bourbonnais, IL 60914.

August 1—deadline for nomination for 2025 *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence

Please make your nomination for this year's *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence by clicking <https://bourbonnaishistory.org/fleur-de-lis-celebration> The deadline for nominations is August 1.

Let's save the Modoc Ferry from Ste. Genevieve, MO to Prairie du Rocher, IL

Lisa Kahn, Director of the French Heritage Corridor, and I received this email on June 20 from Aaron Smith, Tourism Marketing Director for Ste. Genevieve, MO: "I'm reaching out again to strategize on saving the ferry. I made a Facebook post about the ferry shutting down and it went bananas with responses. That emboldened Terri Bryant to start a petition which she'll take back to Gov. Pritzker to promote him making a one-time budget appropriation for FY26 . . . I would love if you could share this petition with French Heritage Society Members, French Heritage Corridor Members, or anyone you think would be good to include in this push. . Right now, if the ferry doesn't receive \$25,000 in gap funding, it will shut down for a month or two. However, because of some additional federal funding available, the ferry will restart and use the Missouri funds as matching funds to run the ferry for another fiscal year. That will give us enough time to put a campaign together to help Senator Bryant's Appropriations Bill to finally make it into law."

So BGHS members and friends, let's help Illinois State Senator Terri Bryant by completing the petition. **Just click this link, and thank you for doing your part to preserve this vital river link between the Missouri and Illinois sites in the French Heritage Corridor:** <https://senatorbryant.com/save-the-modoc-ferry-petition/>

Sesquicentennial French Heritage Weekend (September 27-28) preparation progresses

Frank Koehler is making final arrangements for the reenactment part of the French Heritage Weekend at or near The Grove in Bourbonnais on the weekend of September 27-28. Currently, he has the following commitments for Saturday afternoon September 27: 1) performance by Theatiki Fife and Drum Corps, 2) Dr. Jim Healy portraying Louis Jolliet, 3) portrayal of Father Jacques Marquette, and 4) performance by Detroit's *La Compagnie* Musical Dance Troupe. The history pageant "Hooray Bourbonnais II/*Deux*" will take stage from 7-10 pm at The Grove. This history pageant will include singing, dancing, historical portrayals, and special appearances by George Godfrey (great grandson of Watcheke and Francis Xavier Bergeron) to give a Potawatomi perspective, Rod Miller to debate the legacy of Noel LeVasseur, Josué Savoie and Ken Lewellen to debate whether the excommunication of Fr. Charles Chiniquy

was justified (Josué will argue “no” and Ken will argue “yes”) , Ellen Stringer to provide a summary of her mother’s (Mary Ann Kirsch) investigative reporting of the 1980s Perry Farm commercialization or parkland controversy, Mike Monahan to talk about his grade school years (1947-54) at Notre Dame Convent/Academy, and Marcia Rabideau to reminisce about growing up in Bourbonnais.

I have attached the history pageant program to this news eletter for you to review. Please help publicize this special weekend and “share” the event once we put it on our social media.

Who am I?

In 1832, along with my French-Canadian spouse and our children, I moved from Bourbonnais Grove to Bureau County in north central Illinois along the Illinois River. My spouse and brother had earlier worked for the American Fur Company. Who am I?

Update on HB2361--Illinois French Heritage Month

After being unanimously approved by the Illinois House of Representatives on April 8, HB2361 which creates a French Heritage Month in Illinois, the bill moved to the Illinois Senate. This bill calls for March of every year to be observed by the whole state of Illinois as a month set apart to promote the study of French language and the culture of French-speaking people. The bill was sponsored in the House by Representatives Jackie Haas and Nicole La Ha. Senator Sally Turner sponsored the bill in the Senate. Unfortunately the bill was held back in the Senate and did not move forward this session. In light of that, State Representative Jackie Haas introduced a resolution (HR0394) to ensure that the state could still formally recognize French Heritage Month next year. Unfortunately, the resolution did not make it out of the Rules Committee. Representative Haas wrote in an email to Lisa Kahn, Director of the French Heritage Corridor, and me on June 4: “While this is disappointing, I will continue working on this legislation and plan to bring the resolution back during Veto session in the fall. I appreciate your continued support and advocacy, and I’ll keep you updated on next steps as we look ahead to the next legislative session.”

Two dates set for Kankakee County historical bus tours

Ken Lewellen chaired a meeting on June 24 with individuals representing the Kankakee County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Bourbonnais Township Park District (BTPD), Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee, Kankakee County Museum, and the BGHS. The purpose of the meeting was to organize historical bus tours of the county. Two tours were planned. The first will be on **Saturday October 25 from 9 am to 2 pm**--loading at Perry Farm’s Exploration Station, continuing to the Letourneau Home/Museum and 1837 log schoolhouse, French Heritage Museum, Kankakee County Museum, and ending at Exploration Station with tour of the Durham-Perry Farmstead. The second historical bus tour will be on **Thursday December 11 from 4-8 pm** with focus on the Gallery of Trees at the Kankakee County Museum. More details of that tour will be worked out. The BTPD will provide the buss for each tour and announce the tours in their seasonal mailer.

Kudos to all our volunteers



At left, Gary Seiner trims the lilac in front of the Letourneau Home/Museum. At center, Mary Ann Lambert weeds the garden next to her Invincible Hydrangea Garden (at right).

A big thank you to Daron Kinzinger for picking up our mail, chairing our Board of Directors, organizing publicity and Culver's fund raisers, drafting the bylaw restructuring of the BGHS, and creating the Landing Page for our website; Cindy McBarnes for chairing the log schoolhouse Education Committee, organizing the school visits, and serving as docent during those visits; Steve Monts for his ongoing detailed treasurer's work and help with the gardens; Gary Seiner for his expert and continuous detailed work as curator; Mary Ann Lambert for serving as assistant curator and helping continuously with the gardening; Ellen Stringer for organizing the craft show fundraisers; Log Schoolhouse Advisory Committee members Paul Schore, Laurie Cyr, Ken Ponton, Gary Seiner, Charles Balesi, Frank Koehler, Cindy McBarnes, Norm Strasma, Daron Kinzinger, Tyler Goodrich (who will also be missed as she assumes a new position in Kankakee County administration), and myself; Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee members: Mack Brza, Daron Kinzinger, Ken Lewellen, Max Michels, Rodney Miller, Doris O'Connor, Gary Seiner, Jorie Walters, and myself; Doris O'Connor for chairing the Membership Committee, assuming the BGHS officer position of Corresponding Secretary, and guiding the May 30 tour of the museum campus; Judy Smead for chaperoning the open house on Saturday June 14; Ken Lewellen, Frank Koehler, and Karen Duchene-Korup for chaperoning the May 30 special tour; and Pam Adams, Mary Ann Lambert, and Gary Seiner for gardening on June 14.

Special BGHS 2025 activities, some with links—save the dates:

Friday July 4 *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Show from 9 am to 3 pm,
<https://bourbonnaishistory.org/les-artisans-fair>

Thursday July 10 at 7 pm--Zoom membership meeting

August 1--nomination deadline for 2025 *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence,
<https://bourbonnaishistory.org/fleur-de-lis-celebration>

Thursday September 11 at 3:30 pm--Log Schoolhouse Advisory Committee meeting;

Tuesday September 16 from 5-8 pm--BGHS Culver's (Bourbonnais) Fund Raiser

Saturday September 27 from 7-9 pm at the Grove--Bourbonnais sesquicentennial history pageant
Hooray Bourbonnais II/*Deux*, <https://bourbonnaishistory.org/french-heritage-weekend>

Saturday-Sunday September 27-28, 2025--Bourbonnais sesquicentennial French Heritage
Weekend, <https://bourbonnaishistory.org/french-heritage-weekend>

Saturday October 25 from 9 am to 2 pm--History Bus Tour

Thursday November 13, 2025--Eight Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner,
<https://bourbonnaishistory.org/fleur-de-lis-celebration>

Saturday December 6 *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Show from 9 am to 3 pm,
<https://bourbonnaishistory.org/les-artisans-fair>

Thursday December 11 from 4-8 pm--History Bus Tour; and

Saturday December 13--BGHS Christmas Open House from 1-4 pm.

Picnic at the preserve



Pack your picnic and come to the arboretum of the Adrien M. Richard Heritage Preserve at 698 Stratford Drive East in Bourbonnais. The preserve offers two Village of Bourbonnais acres of gardens and shade for you to relax while enjoying the backdrop of our two 1837 Village of Bourbonnais and Kankakee County historic landmarks: the Letourneau Home/Museum and

log schoolhouse. Even though the buildings may not be open, you can still stroll the grounds, pick herbs in the community herb garden behind the Letourneau Home, take a few special photographs, and scan/read the QR code information on our new signs. BGHS volunteers, Master Gardeners, Camp MOSH students, and B&C Yards Plus help keep the gardens tidy for you to enjoy.



This native garden is cared for by Pam and Russ Perkins.

Thursday July 10 at 7 pm Zoom meeting agenda

- 7pm—Pledge of allegiance;
- Presentation based on July/August 2025 news eletter item “Who am I?”
- Approval of May 8, 2025 membership minutes (*attached*);
- Treasurer’s report;
- Corresponding Secretary report;
- Curator report
- Membership report
- Ways and Means:
 - Website update
 - Craft show update;
 - Remnant log pieces;
 - Hunt for History;
 - Ken Lewellen’s ideas for bus tours; and
 - Bourbonnais Public Library connection--storytelling and BGHS books
- Building and Grounds:
 - Current and future trees and shrubs work—Pete Gryzlak of B & S Yards Plus;
 - Florescent light replacement;
 - Electrician
 - Pest control--May 9
 - HVAC--June 9 in morning
 - Camp MOSH--July 23
 - Dropmore Scarlet honeysuckle
 - Trees and bushes around the Letourneau Home/Museum.
- Old Business
 - Restructuring of BGHS update and process--please review Article IV below which will be voted on at the meeting;
 - Tabled--Marker at Clancy Gernon Funeral Home parking lot; and
 - Friday May 30 tour
- New Business
 - **Next meeting August 7, 2025 at 7 pm**—Zoom only; and

- Should we have an open house on the weekend of September 27-28 French Heritage Weekend?

Proposed new bylaw Article IV below will provide BGHS restructuring

The last time that the bylaws of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society were approved was by membership at the March 4 and May 6, 2021 BGHS meetings; and by the Board of Directors and BGHS officers on June 2, 2021. Over the past four years, Daron and I have been working on new bylaw language that would restructure the BGHS. In the restructuring all current officers will join the current board members on the Board of Directors. The monthly meetings would combine board and membership issues. As many as 15 persons may be on the board. All BGHS members would be invited to the monthly board meetings and could participate in a “straw vote” on issues that would then be voted on by the board--at the same meeting. A more defined committee structure will developed. The membership approved the first three Articles of the bylaws (attached to the April/May News Eletter), drafted by Daron and me, at the May 8, 2025 membership meeting. The Article IV proposal for your review is below.

BOURBONNAIS GROVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CORPORATE BYLAWS

ARTICLE IV - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. General Powers. The affairs of the organization shall be managed by its board of directors. This shall include, but not be limited to, the power (1) to modify restrictions on the distribution of funds for purposes designated by donors if the restrictions become obsolete and (2) to determine investment policy, including the designation of a depository for the organization's funds.

Section 2. Number, Tenure and Qualifications. The number of directors shall be not less than seven and not more than 15, but an odd number of directors shall be elected. Directors shall be elected annually by the members at the annual meeting of the members. If the election of directors shall not be held at such meeting, such election shall be held as soon thereafter as conveniently possible. Each director shall hold office for a term of one (1) year, or until his or her successor shall have been duly elected and shall have qualified or until his or her death or until he or she shall resign. A Director shall be eligible to serve five (5) consecutive one-year terms. If a vacancy occurs in the office of director in the subsequent year that after being made public cannot be filled with a new, qualified director, an otherwise qualified director whose five (5) consecutive one-year terms have been used may be elected with a new eligible set of five (5) consecutive one-year terms.

Directors need not be residents of Illinois or members of the organization. The number of directors may be increased to any number or decreased to not fewer than three (3) from time to time by amendment of this Section.

Section 3. Annual Meeting. An annual meeting of the board of directors shall be held without other notice than these bylaws, immediately after, and at the same place as, the annual meeting of members.

Section 4. Other Regular Meetings. The board of directors may provide by resolution the time and place for the holding of additional regular meetings of the board without other notice than such resolution.

Section 5. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the board of directors may be called by or at the request of the president or any two directors. The person or persons authorized to call special meetings of the board may fix any place as the place for holding any special meeting of the board called by them.

Section 6. Notice. Notice of any special meeting of the board of directors shall be given at least two (2) days prior thereto by written notice to each director at the address shown for such director on the records of the organization. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail in a sealed envelope so addressed, with postage thereon prepaid. If notice shall be given by other means, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when the product is transferred to be sent. Notice of any special meeting of the board of directors may be waived in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice either before or after the time of the meeting. The attendance of a director at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the board need be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting, unless specifically required by law or by these bylaws.

Section 7. Quorum. At all meetings of the board of directors a majority of the total number of directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, provided that if less than a majority of the directors is present at said meeting, a majority of the directors present may adjourn the meeting to another time without further notice.

Section 8. Manner of Acting. The act of a majority of the directors present at a qualified meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the board of directors, unless the act of a greater number is required by statute, the articles of in organization or these bylaws.

Section 9. Action Without Meeting. Any action required to be taken at a meeting of the directors of the organization, or any other action which may be taken at a meeting of directors, may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, shall be signed by all the directors entitled to vote with respect to the subject matter thereof.

Section 10. Vacancies. Any vacancy occurring in the board of directors or any directorship to be filled by reason of any increase in the number of directors shall be filled by the board of directors. A director elected to fill a vacancy shall serve for the unexpired term of his or her predecessor.

Section 11. Compensation. Directors shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties if approved by the majority of the board of directors.

Have a great summer! My next news eletter will be the August/September issue to me sent at the end of August. Best wishes,

Jim Paul, President of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society