

BGHS News—November/December 2017

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

Our Historic Landmark Transitions from Fall to Winter



The Letourneau Home/Museum has undergone a seasonal transition: the red maple brightening up 698 Stratford Drive East, Bourbonnais, with early November brilliant fall colors (upper left); volunteers prepare the downstairs interior for painting by moving the museum artifacts (upper right--from left to right in the photograph are Ellen Liehr, Mary Ann Lambert, Judy Smead, and John Hassett); a "curb appealing" display of a Christmas facade on the home/museum (lower left); and Vice-President Gary Seiner checking the lights on the parlor Christmas tree (lower right).

December is filled with BGHS Activities

The BGHS offers an open invitation to its upcoming December events: 1) the *Les Artisans* holiday Arts and Craft show on Saturday December 2 from 9am-3pm at the Kankakee County Fairgrounds; 2) the December 7 monthly meeting at the home/museum at

7pm--come early for hot beverages and treats; and 3) the **Letourneau Home/Museum Christmas Open House on Sunday December 17 from 1-4pm** (enjoy tours, drinks, and Christmas treats). Anyone who registers as a new member at any of these events will receive a Bourbonnais Village Centennial Plate (1875-1975)--while quantities last--and no membership renewal until March 2019 (annual dues are \$10 individual, \$7 senior, \$7 full-time student, \$15 family, and \$15 business).

Rave Reviews for First *Fleur-de-Lis* Dinner Celebration



The first annual Fleur-de-lis Celebration Dinner on November 3 at the Kankakee Country Club was a great success. At top left, Vic Johnson accepts the first *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence from his daughter Laurel Soper. The award was presented in recognition of Vic's outstanding contribution in the preservation of French colonial, French-Canadian, and Belgian heritage in the Kankakee and Iroquois River Valley Corridor. At right, the Honorable Frederic Chole, French Deputy Consul General, addresses the attendees. Here are some of the comments I received after the dinner celebration:

- Lynn Ahlden-O'Brien--"What a terrific evening!";
- Laurel Soper--"The first *Fleur-de-Lis* celebration was a great success! The wine was divine, the entertainment superb; a class act all the way. It was an extra special night for my family, one we will always remember. Events like this take so much effort behind the scenes and this one went off without a hitch because of your hard work. Thank you!
- Wal Schuller--"Charles and I loved the whole evening - the service the country club provided, the beautiful speech you [Jim], Laurel, gave to present the first *fleur-de-lis* award; Jim's planning, organizing, spending all the time on mailings, etc., being our M.C., to engaging his 2 lovely grandchildren for the raffle and last, but certainly not least, the great French songs Brad Benoit sang (even Charles' French guests were singing along!) - it all contributed to a successful evening for our guests. This was a good start raising funds to make the relocation of the log school house a reality. I was happy to provide a small part of this with a raffle."

The BGHS raised just under \$7500 in donations and pledges for restoration of Bourbonnais Grove's first log school house (1837-48). **If you wish to make an end-of-the-year donation for this restoration, just send your check payable to Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society, PO Box 311, Bourbonnais, IL 60914 with memo on the check "Restoration of Log**

School". Please mark your calendars for the second annual Fleurs-de-lis Celebration Dinner. It is scheduled for *Friday September 28, 2018* at 5:30 pm at the Kankakee Country Club, and yes, I have asked Brad Benoit to perform for us again!

Next Membership Meeting on December 7

The main agenda item for our **final meeting of the year on December 7 at 7pm** will be the election of officers. One officer desperately needed is a **secretary**. The presentation at the beginning of the meeting will be by **Chris Shoup** who will show his image of an early French explorer to the Kankakee River area. The image is a painted concept that could be refined and recomposed digitally. Chris thinks it would be a striking centerpiece on a poster promoting the preservation of local French contributions (think WPA-era style); this poster could be sold and the profits could be made to benefit the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society. So, please come early to the meeting to partake of a hot beverage and cookies. The meeting will last only one hour.

Kudos to Our Volunteers

Kudos this month go to all those who participated in the organizing, preparing, and participating in the Fleur-de-lis Celebration Dinner--Charles Balesi, Wal Schuller, Lynn Ahlden-O'Brien, Sandie Ortiz, Laurel Soper, Ken and Judy Ponton, and Paul Schore; Laurel Soper for co-authoring *The Herald* November 21 article "Johnson receives BGHS Fleur-de-lis award"; members who answered my "all hands on deck" call to move the artifacts for the repainting--Mary Ann Lambert, Judy Smead, Ellen Liehr, and Ken Ponton; gardening help on November 18 by Steve Monts; and Norma Meier's for her "Hidden History--The Placid Richard House" *Les Journal du Village* column in *The Herald* on October 31.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season,
Jim