

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

Building and Grounds Spring 2021 Improvements Begin



Photo by Daron Kinzinger



Photo by Jim Paul

Our historic landmark’s daffodils and tulips served as harbingers of spring this April. Several spring building and grounds activities are underway: 1) pest control service for the Letourneau Home/Museum was initiated on April 23 by Bisailon’s Rid All; 2) the boardwalk will be replaced by Zeedyk Remodeling; and 3) the first garden work session will be on Saturday May 15 from 9-11 am (please bring newspapers to put down before mulching).

BGHS Website has a New Look



Laurel Soper has masterfully recrafted our website so that the content is appealing and easy to navigate. The home page features (left to right) Carl Moran, George Godfrey, and Brad Delude. Please check out the following on our revamped website:

- New photographs, menus, and submenus;
- A “French Canadian Heritage Corridor” page with links under “French Roots”;

- A “Log Schoolhouse Restoration” page with easy access to “Donate Now” under “Museum Campus”;
- Easy access to pay dues under “For Members”;
- A “How can you help?” form under “For Members/Volunteer”;
- Board minutes, membership meeting minutes, and newsletters under “For Members”—but it is also for everyone who is curious; and
- Access to BGHS YouTube Channel and accompanying Local History Series narratives under “For Members/Resources”.

Thank you, Laurel for all your hard work on creating such an appealing website!

Mayor to be Sworn In with 1872 Bible from Letourneau Home/Museum



Mayor Paul Schore wishes to be sworn in on May 3 for his fourth term as mayor of the Village of Bourbonnais with the bible seen above. This Roman Catholic bible published in 1872 is on permanent display in the parlor of the Letourneau Home/Museum. There is a black and white picture of Pope Pius IX in the introduction. His papacy, from 1846 to 1878, was during the time when Bourbonnais Grove was incorporated as the Village of Bourbonnais in 1875. Even though there is no specific family identification with this bible, copies of it were surely in the homes of many local French-Canadians. BGHS Curator Malette Trudeau-Stevenson wrote: “I think using this bible for the swearing in ceremony would be a wonderful use” (April 27, 2021). Mayor Schore is of French-Canadian heritage, a member of the BGHS, and serves on the Log Schoolhouse Restoration Steering Committee. During his re-election campaign, the mayor stated, “There are a lot of things going on in the village. I want to see projects go through to fruition.” As the restoration of the BGHS log schoolhouse is one of those projects, Mayor Schore wants to see it become a reality.

Log Schoolhouse to Become a Permanent BGHS Exhibit

After discussing differing views about how the log schoolhouse will be incorporated into our historical society’s bylaws (see BGHS News—March/April 2021), the BGHS has decided to

use Kankakee County Historical Society’s model for its Taylor One Room Schoolhouse. During the April 1 Zoom BGHS membership meeting, Gary Seiner made a motion to “Establish the rebuilt log schoolhouse as a permanent BGHS exhibit with at least one representative on the Collections Committee who will address all log schoolhouse issues.” Dr. Charles Balesi seconded the motion, and the motion carried. I have asked Ken Ponton to serve as the log schoolhouse representative on the Collections Committee, and he said that “He would be honored to do so.”

Conference at Prairie du Rocher to Address Midwest Waterway Corridor

In the past few years, a question has arisen on how to create a public platform to present and network all the activities, reenactments, and historical societies that encompass a proposed *Colonial French and Immigrant French-Canadian Midwest Waterway Corridor from Michigan to Missouri*. A conference to address this issue will be held at Lisa’s Market Street Grill in Prairie du Rocher, Illinois on May 13-14.

Save the Dates for Upcoming 2021 BGHS Events

Please mark your calendars for these important BGHS sponsored upcoming events, assuming pandemic recovery continues to progress:

- July 4th Les Artisans Arts and Crafts Fair;
- Camp MOSH work days for Letourneau Home/Museum and gardens—July 18 to July 24;
- August 5th—deadline for nomination for 2021 *Fleur-de-Lis* Award of Excellence (nomination form is at bottom of BGHS webpage [Fleur-de-Lis Celebration | Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society \(bourbonnaishistory.org\)](https://www.bourbonnaishistory.org));
- Friday September 17, 2021—the *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner at the Kankakee Country Club; and
- December 4 Les Artisans Arts and Crafts Fair.

Next Zoom Membership Meeting on Thursday May 6

I invite you to please join our Zoom membership meeting at **7:00 pm on Thursday May 6** by emailing Laurel Soper at laurel.soper@gmail.com. She will then email you a link to the meeting at 6:50 pm on May 6. The agenda for the meeting includes:

- approval of April 1, 2021 membership meeting minutes (attached);
- website review before press release;
- Community Foundation of the Kankakee River Valley “Pass through Fund”;
- building and grounds improvements update; and
- discussion of BGHS bylaw and accession policy revisions.

Thank you to all our volunteers who keep our historical society vibrant. Best wishes,

Jim Paul, President of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society