

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

This April/May 2022 news eletter issue includes:

- Interact with George Letourneau in KCC’s LLI on May 6;
- Virtual registration information for Second Annual French Heritage Corridor (FHC) Conference
- FHC 2022 calendar of events;
- Log Schoolhouse planning continues;
- Kankakee Trinity Academy students and teacher visit Letourneau Home;
- Restructuring plan for BGHS moves forward;
- Who are we?
- Legris home to become VRBO;
- Agenda for next Zoom membership meeting on May 5;
- BGHS 2022 calendar of events; and
- Kudos to our volunteers and donors.

**As a contemporary friend of George Letourneau (1831-1906), you can make life-changing decisions with him during KCC’s Lifelong Learning Institute webinar on May 6**



Pictured: George Letourneau (1831-1906), 2022 spring daffodils and tulips in front of his home.

- **Will you follow Fr. Chiniquy or do you support Bishop O’Regen’s decision to excommunicate him?**
- **Will you vote “yes” or “no” on the April 13, 1875 referendum endorsing the incorporation of Bourbonnais Grove into the Village of Bourbonnais?**

These are two of the seven life-changing decisions that you will make as a French-Canadian friend of George Letourneau in the May 6—10-11:30 am—KCC Lifelong Learning course *Community Transformations Overseen by George R. Letourneau (1860-1906)*. You will also have an opportunity to question Letourneau, whom I will portray. You may attend in-person or virtually in this webinar. Click this link to enroll in person or virtual: [Community Transformations Overseen by George R. Letourneau - KCC Enrole](#). This course is Episode 3 in the series Local History 101 now available on the BGHS YouTube Channel at [Bourbonnais Grove - YouTube](#). Episode 1 is Potawatomi Peril (to 1838) and Episode 2 is Antebellum Abolitionists (1838-60),

## **French Heritage Corridor to hold its second conference on May 12-13**

Please click this link for the Second Annual French Heritage Corridor Conference in Lafayette, IN [20220315\\_FHCConference\\_Press\\_Release.docx - Google Drive](#). Although registration for in-person is full, virtual attendance is still available. Registration must be completed by opening the following link and submitting the digital registration information [Please Join Us for the French Heritage Corridor 2nd Annual Conference - May 12-13, 2022 \(mailchi.mp\)](#). In addition to the many presentations and visit to Fort Ouiatenon during this conference, the French Heritage Corridor website will be launched. I have attached the most recent draft of the French Heritage Corridor interactive map for you to review. If you want to open the map on your smart phone, please send it to your Dropbox so that the star links work properly. This map will be modified by the French Heritage Society tech team as the FHC website is created. A calendar of events for the corridor follows.

### **French Heritage Corridor Calendar of Events for 2022**

- May 6-9—Education Day 2022, Old Fort Wayne, Detroit, MI [Education Day – 2022 – Reenacting Schedule](#);
- May 7-8—Muster on the St. Mary’s, Old Fort Wayne, Detroit, MI [Muster on the St. Mary’s – Reenacting Schedule](#);
- May 10—*People of the Post*, a Zoom presentation featuring the book’s authors, a publication by French Colonial Studies--[POP Zoom Presentation | Center for French Colonial Studies](#);
- May 12-13—2<sup>nd</sup> Annual FHC Conference, Tippecanoe County Historical Society, Lafayette, Indiana [Please Join Us for the French Heritage Corridor 2nd Annual Conference - May 12-13, 2022 \(mailchi.mp\)](#);
- May 20—Celebrate Josephine Baker, French Heritage Society Chicago Chapter—[Celebrate Josephine Baker at the FHS Chicago Chapter Gala on May 20! \(mailchi.mp\)](#);
- May 21—*La Fete a Renault Rendezvous* Old Mines, MO [37th La Fete a Renault Rendezvous – Washington County Guide](#);
- June TBD—Moses Austin Heritage Festival—Old Mines, MO [Area Events - MINE AU BRETON HISTORICAL SOCIETY](#);
- June 4-5—52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fort de Chartres Rendezvous [52nd Annual FORT DE CHARTRES RENDEZVOUS, June 4 & 5, 2022 – Fort de Chartres](#);
- June 11—French Heritage Festival, Ste. Genevieve, MO [French Heritage Festival – Chamber of Commerce \(stegenchamber.org\)](#);
- June 12--Fort de Chartres Heritage Garden Special Event: The French Colonial Gardens Driving Tour <https://www.fdcjardin.com/2022/04/07/1863/>;
- Tentative date, Saturday June 25, 2022—Inauguration of Bourbonnais Grove’s first log schoolhouse at the Bourbonnais Friendship Festival [www.bourbonnaishistory.org](http://www.bourbonnaishistory.org);
- June 25—Honey Festival in Ste. Genevieve, MO <https://saintlouis.kidsoutandabout.com/content/honey-festival-and-market>;

- July 9 and 10—300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Prairie du Rocher (**FHC sponsored link TBD**);
- July 14—Bastille Day, St. Louis, MO Bastille Day — Chatillon-DeMenil Mansion;
- July 16, Bastille Day Festival at French Heritage Museum (Kankakee) [About Us | Kankakee County Historical Society \(kankakeecountymuseum.com\)](#);
- September 10—Ste. Genevieve Militia Encampment EVENTS | frenchcoloniallife;
- September 16—Fifth Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner (log schoolhouse fundraiser) [www.bourbonnaishistory.org](http://www.bourbonnaishistory.org);
- October 1-2—55<sup>th</sup> Feast of the Hunters Moon [Feast of the Hunters’ Moon – Tippecanoe County Historical Association \(feastofthehuntersmoon.org\)](#);
- October 1—*Fete de Automne*, Old Mines, MO OMAHS Annual Fête - Old Mines Area Historical Society, Inc. (weebly.com);
- October 15—*Nuit de Loup Garou* (Night of the Werewolf), Ste. Genevieve, Mo EVENTS | frenchcoloniallife;
- October 22—French Colonial Studies Conference Conference | Center for French Colonial Studies;
- November 5-6, 2022--Fort de Chartres Winter Rendezvous & Woodswalk <http://www.fortdechartres.us/events/> ;
- November 5—Pecanapalooza, Ste. Genevieve, MO EVENTS | frenchcoloniallife;
- November 25—*Allee Allumee*—Ste. Genevieve, MO EVENTS | frenchcoloniallife;
- December 2, 9, and 16—*Allee Allumee*—Ste. Genevieve, MO EVENTS | frenchcoloniallife;
- December 31—*Guignolee* Watch Party, Ste. Genevieve, MO EVENTS | frenchcoloniallife; and
- December 31, 2022--*La Guiannee* at Fort de Chartres <http://www.fortdechartres.us/events/>.

### Log schoolhouse reconstruction resumes



Pictured: (from left to right) Gary Seiner’s recent drawing of the log schoolhouse, pad of “outhouse” (utility building) with buried HVAC lines, and April 26 framing of outhouse.

Log Schoolhouse Advisory Committee member Laurie Cyr reported at the April 14 committee meeting that in the next few days, the pad will be poured for the fake outhouse (utility building). It will be coed and have a half moon on the door. She said also that before the end of the month, the wiring for HVAC will be done, and the decking for the log schoolhouse will be

completed. Next will be the placing of the 16 new logs onto the original logs, and the chinking process will be done. The onsite (next to the Letourneau Home/Museum) schoolhouse construction is still estimated to be completed in May or June 2022.

On April 4, I presented the log schoolhouse Historic Landmark Prequalification Form application to the Kankakee County Historic Preservation Commission. Mayor Schore remarked during the Advisory Committee meeting that the Village of Bourbonnais could use the forms for the log schoolhouse historic landmark process that were used to designate the Letourneau Home as a Village of Bourbonnais historic landmark.

### **Kankakee Trinity Academy high school students tour our historic landmark**



On Friday April 8, I offered a tour of the Letourneau Home/Museum and gardens to Rodney Miller's high school history class. They are currently studying local history. Rodney is fourth from the left in the photograph above. His students were very inquisitive and appreciative of this step back in time.

### **Restructuring plan for BGHS is moving forward**

Daron Kinzinger and I met on April 11 to hammer out several details regarding the restructuring of the BGHS. I have drafted bylaw language in which all current officers join the current board members on one Board of Directors. The board meetings would combine board and membership issues. A more defined committee structure will be included. Daron is editing the bylaw language draft. After he is done, we will submit it to the membership for approval. The transition would be with ease and a benefit to the society as we more efficiently pursue our mission and goals.

#### **Who are we?**

I am the medical surgeon son of George and Elodie Letourneau. My first wife was the daughter of Joseph and Julie Lesage, and she was born in the former log schoolhouse. Who are we?

## Legris home to become a vacation rental by owner (VRBO)



The Joseph Legris Home (at left) has been recently purchased and will be turned into a vacation rental. The history of the home will be publicized and become an integral part of the site's appeal. The home is located at 465 S. Main Street in Bourbonnais and dates back to 1857. After amassing a small fortune in the gold mines of California, Joseph Legris returned to Bourbonnais Grove, married Cleophil Sylvester, and built a small cabin in 1857. The home's present kitchen is the original log constructed dwelling. Mr. Legris added rooms to the home as his family grew. Legris and his sons opened two banks in Kankakee. Mr. Legris was a member of the village board, and spent his declining years in this home. We are grateful to Norma Meier for providing genealogical information on the Legris family to the new owners. The "Legris" name stone (at right above) will be donated to the Adrien M. Richard Heritage Preserve.

### Next membership meeting on May 5 will be Zoom only

The next membership meeting will be on May 5 at 7:00 pm (CST) will be **Zoom only**. Please click this link to join the meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85931531010?pwd=VHBlazB3c01oR2IxL3RUWTFGVXNmQT09>

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

- Pledge of allegiance;
- Presentation based on April/May 2022 news eletter item "Who am I?"
- Approval of April 7, 2022 membership minutes (*attached*);
- Treasurer's report;
- Corresponding Secretary report;
- Executive Vice-President Collection Committee report
- Membership Report;
- Ways and Means:
  - Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley "pass through" fund investment option; and
  - July 4 *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Show.
- Building and Grounds
  - Garden work session on Saturday May 14 from 9-11 am.

- Old Business
  - Chaperones are needed for June 5 and June 19 open houses of the Letourneau Home/Museum;
  - Interview participation in MBVM 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2022—connect to Kankakee County Historical Society’s request for personal memories; and
  - Bylaw, loan, and acquisition policy set for board approval.
- New Business
  - **Next meeting on June 9, 2022 if agreeable.**

### **Mark your calendars for these BGHS 2022 events**

- April 29-30—MBVM 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration (April 29, 6:30 pm concert at church; and April 30, Dueling and Dancing at Quality Inn, 6 pm) [175th Anniversary Celebration | Maternity BVM \(mbvmchurch.org\)](#);
- April 30, 3 pm at St. Rose of Lima Chaple—Andrew Mann presentation on architecture of French-Canadian churches in Canada and our area, followed by light dinner;
- Open houses at Letourneau Home/Museum—Sunday May 1 and May 15;
- May 6, 10-11:30 am, KCC Room D123 in-person or virtual attendance in webinar, Lifelong Learning Institute course: *Community Transformations Overseen by George R. Letourneau (1860-1906)*, Dr. Jim Paul presenter-- [Community Transformations Overseen by George R. Letourneau - KCC Enrole](#);
- Log Schoolhouse Advisory Committee Zoom meeting—3:30 pm on May 19;
- Next BGHS membership Zoom meeting—7:00 pm June 9;
- Tentative date, Saturday June 25, 2022—Inauguration of Bourbonnais Grove’s first log schoolhouse at the Bourbonnais Friendship Festival;
- July 4—*Les Artisans* Arts and Crafts Fair;
- August 20-21—MBVM 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration (August 20, 10:30 am – 3:00 pm Taste of MBVM, family, food, and fun on parish grounds; and August 21, History and Worship with 10 am mass celebrated by Bishop Hicks followed by tours of church grounds and St. Viator/ONU campus and reception with a French-Canadian flare—same link as April 29-30;
- Friday September 16—Fifth Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner; and
- Saturday December 3—*Les Artisans* Arts and Crafts Fair.

### **Kudos to our volunteers and donors**

The BGHS expresses special gratitude to our volunteers: Laurel Soper for her updating of the BGHS website and Face Book postings; Gary Seiner for his new drawing of the log schoolhouse; Daron Kinzinger for picking up our mail; Christine Michels and Steve Monts for their ongoing corresponding secretary and treasurer work respectively; Norma Meier for her genealogy work on the Joseph Legris family, and to Ken Ponton and Max Michels for cleaning the gardens around the Letourneau Home/Museum.

I wish you all a wonderful spring.

Jim Paul, President of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society