

Traditions still kept, habits repeated

by Elmira Wilkey

"You can take a Frenchman out of France, but you can't take France out of a Frenchman."

Is this a spin, or the truth? For French, French-Canadian descendants, whose names continue to be represented in our area, there are traditions still kept, habits repeated in successive generations.

A recipe from a long ago grandmother, a way of looking at things, a great aunt's adept use of "French Buttons" (safety pins), a gesture, a phrase—any of these and more may linger in direct use or, occasional airing, as in old tales.

Off the top, asking around or through personal experience, one of the more common links to country/culture of origin is found in the food, in the cooking practices: "La Cuisine Quebécoise" of the French-Canadians. Add that to the inclination to gravitate toward comfort food, especially in certain seasons, and we have a winning combination. Neither does distance appear at a quick glance to break the attachment of the French-Canadians who settled here and have moved around the country. So it is that in a recent phone conversation, a cousin in California described the traditional French-Canadian food that her husband of this area's original La Plante lineage prepared at a recent holiday with two daughters assisting.

The food they collaborated on is a pie, known as a Tourtiere that is made up of flaky pastry (made from scratch or two 11 ounce packages of pie crust mix), filled with a pre-cooked mixture of ground pork, beef, bread crumbs, chopped onions seasoned with ground spices: cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, pepper and salt to taste. A wash of lightly beaten whole egg is brushed on the crimped edged top of the pie crust before baking. The La Plante family's tourtiere recipe makes four, four-inch pies that are enjoyed baked or eaten cold as picnic fare in other seasons.

For the holiday, the La Plantes follow the Canadian custom of moistened cut-out pastry maple leaves applied as decoration to the pies before baking. Otherwise, piercing with fork holes lets the steam escape.

A miniature variation of the tourtiere is commonly called French-Canadian Popovers. These have two sticks of butter and softened cream cheese added to the flour for the pastry. Meat is limited to crumbled pork to which boiled mashed potatoes, seasoned with a bay leaf, dried savory, thyme, cloves and a hint of dried mustard is added for filling the pastry before baking. Still other versions use allspice as a seasoning.

It is an encouraging and a happy circumstance that our area's French-Canadian footprint remains viable elsewhere about the country as well as here—and that's no spin.

The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting local history. Monthly meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month March through December. Museum hours are 1 to 4 p.m. on the first and third Sundays of each month, March through December or by appointment. Contact the BGHS at bourbonnaishistory.org, on Facebook at [facebook.com/bourbonnaishistory](https://www.facebook.com/bourbonnaishistory) or call 1-815-933-6452.



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Statewide program to increase library services for individuals with autism

Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White and The Autism Program of Illinois (TAP) are launching "Targeting Autism", an innovative program designed to create collective solutions to address the support needs of Illinois residents impacted by autism. This program will encourage libraries to work together with TAP, which is the largest statewide autism resource and service network in the nation. "Empowering libraries to

better serve those with autism requires this type of collaborative effort," said White. "Individuals with autism are often misunderstood and challenged to find welcoming, supportive environments to alleviate social isolation and help them achieve their full potential. I look forward to working with the autism community to expand available services at our libraries."

The "Targeting Autism" program will host two forums this year in Springfield. The first one

was held March 4 and 5 and the second forum will be held Sept. 3 and 4. The forums bring together national and regional autism experts and advocates to establish a strong network of libraries and community to improve the quality of life for all residents touched by autism.

"Secretary White has partnered with TAP in the past and we look forward to this opportunity to work together to provide services to help those who have or are caring for someone with

autism," said Russell Bonanno, TAP program manager. "We are honored to be able to play a role in this exciting and important initiative."

"Targeting Autism" is supported by a grant from The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). To find more information about the "Targeting Autism" program, visit the State Library's website at <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/libraries/targeting-autism.html>.

What's happening at KCC?

A course in aromatherapy will be offered by Kankakee Community College (KCC) in March.

"Aromatherapy for Healthcare Professionals" will meet 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Friday, March 20, 2015 at KCC's North Extension Center, 450 N. Kinzie Ave. in Bradley.

Join aromatherapy consultant Candice Chaffee to learn basic practices for using aromatherapy and essential oils. This seminar combines scientific data, practical clinical techniques and a holistic approach that honors body, mind and spirit.

Topics will include using essential oils for common health issues and how they act on viral and bacterial infections, pain, inflammation, digestion, hormones, emotional distress and other conditions. Drawing from 25-plus years of study and practice, Chaffee also will share how essential oils have been used in a various settings throughout history.

Cost is \$79, including materials, contact hours and lunch. Registration deadline is March 12.

This course does not award college credit. To register or for more information, call 1-815-802-8207; go to www.kcc.edu/comejoinus/; or visit Student

Services, located on the second floor of the KCC Workforce Development Center.

A seminar exploring conspiracy theories in American history will be offered at KCC, 6-7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 26.

The event will explore the major conspiracy theories in American history and share information about where these conspiracy theories came from, why they are popular and what they say about America and Americans in general.

The presenter will be Willie Dixon, who has a master's degree in history from Roosevelt University. Course fee is \$5. Registration deadline is March 18.

This course does not award college credit. To register or for more information, call 1-815-802-8207; go to www.kcc.edu/comejoinus/; or visit Student Services, located on the second floor of the KCC Workforce Development Center.

A course in record keeping for small business will be offered 7-9 p.m. Monday, March 30 at KCC's North Extension Center, 450 N. Kinzie Ave., in Bradley.

Participants will learn how to set up and use a manual bookkeeping system; the advantages of using computer software to track expenses;

basic record keeping requirements for payroll; setting up a filing system that works; and understanding basic terms that bankers and accountants use. Registration deadline is March 20.

Instructor is Susan Legris, C.P.A. Cost is \$40, including materials.

This course does not award college credit. To register or for more information, call 1-815-802-8207; go to www.kcc.edu/comejoinus/; or visit Student Services, located on the second floor of the KCC Workforce Development Center.

Kankakee Community College is an accredited two-year college which awards associate degrees and certificates of completion. KCC prepares students both to transfer to four-year colleges and to enter the workforce. The college also offers continuing education courses and certification training, literacy programs, English as a Second Language and GED preparation. The KCC mission is "Enhancing quality of life through learning".

The college has a Riverfront Campus in Kankakee, South Extension Center in Watseka, North Extension Center in Bradley and Manufacturing and Industrial Technology Center in Kankakee.

Miss Kankakee County visits Presence St. Mary's Hospital



Photo courtesy of Presence St. Mary's Hospital

Miss Kankakee County 2015 Natalie Swieca and Princess Mariah Sanders stopped in to brighten the day of Presence St. Mary's patients, staff and volunteers on Feb. 16. They met with Kathleen Rhine, the new regional president and CEO of the South Suburban Region, took a walk through the regional dialysis unit to enrich the day for patients receiving dialysis and visited the pediatric unit nurses and a few of the young patients. Annastyn Taznie (l. to r.) was happy to meet with Sanders and Swieca.