

Dear Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society members and friends,

Bonne et Heureuse Annee! As we enjoy this winter, our historical society has big plans for 2025. **Our first membership meeting of the year will be on Thursday March 13 at 7 pm via Zoom.** I will send you the Zoom link before the meeting.



The BGHS celebrated *Joyeux Noel* on Saturday December 14 with an open house for the community. From left to right, me, Christine Michels, Doris O'Connor, Daron Kinzinger, Steve Monts, and in front Gary Seiner.

A look back at the BGHS highlights of 2024

1. Community connection with museum campus continues--e.g., Kankakee Trinity Academy, Grace Christian School, and Bishop MacNamara Grade School visits to the Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse, and BGHS participation in Village of Bourbonnais Sesquicentennial Steering Committee;
2. Ten fourth-grade classes from Liberty Intermediate School visit log schoolhouse in October;
3. Three separate families of Letourneau descendants visit the museum campus in September;
4. *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft shows net \$8120.30 funds raised for the general fund;
5. *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner and log schoolhouse donations to end 2024 with over \$2619 net funds raised for the log schoolhouse fund;
6. Two Culver's fundraisers net \$915 for the general fund;
7. *Fleur de Lis* Celebration Dinner attendees present Mayor Paul Schore with Award of Excellence;
8. Christmas open houses at Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse coincide with the Village of Bourbonnais's "Miracle at the Grove";
9. A nine-member Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee reforms in June for the first time since the pandemic;
10. Plans continue to restructure the BGHS so that members and board can meet together;
11. Visitors are delighted by the curation and artifact renewal at the Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse;
12. Over dozen new individuals become docents/tour guides for Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse;

13. The BGHS website has been updated with a new Landing Page;
14. Gardening and landscape renewal continues with BGHS volunteers and Master Gardeners; and
15. More BGHS members network with the French Heritage Corridor.

Here are more craft show and open house photographs



At left, *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Show organizer Ellen Stringer and Ken Lewellen greet patrons at the December 7 event. \$4617.05 net funds were raised in this craft show for the BGHS. Thank you, Ellen! At center, St. Nicholas or *Sinterklaas* (aka Max Michels) hugs his elf. At right, *Sinterklaas* offers moral support to Steve Monts and Christine Michels at the craft show greeting table.



BGHS members enjoying the December 14 *Joyeux Noel* open houses at the Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse are from left to right: Wal Schuller, Doris O'Connor, Bill Buck (standing), Steve Monts, Charles Balesi, Gary Seiner, and Christine Michels.

Officers and board of directors elected at December 5 meeting

The following individuals were elected or re-elected as 2025 BGHS officers and board members at the December 5, 2024 meeting:

BGHS Officers

Jim Paul-- president; Gary Seiner--vice-president; and Steve Monts--treasurer. Ken Ponton will serve on the board of directors and not as executive vice-president. The positions of secretary and corresponding secretary were not filled at this time.

Board of Directors

Charles Balesi, Mary Ann Lambert, Ken Lewellen, and Ken Ponton. The following current board members were not up for re-election in 2024 and will serve until reelection in December 2025: Jim Paul, Gary Seiner, Malette Trudeau-Stevenson, Josué Savoie, and Daron Kinzinger.

Kudos to all our volunteers

Kudos go to all those who made the above “highlights” possible: Daron Kinzinger for picking up our mail, chairing our Board of Directors, organizing publicity and Culver’s fund raiser, drafting the bylaw restructuring of the BGHS, and creating the Landing Page for our website; Cindy McBarnes for chairing the log schoolhouse Education Committee; Christine Michels for her ongoing Corresponding Secretary work; Steve Monts for his ongoing detailed treasurer’s work; Gary Seiner for his expert and detailed work as curator and decorating the Letourneau Home/Museum and log schoolhouse for Christmas; Mary Ann Lambert for serving as assistant curator; Ken Ponton for his oversight as executive vice-president and and volunteer work on the new sign foundation posts; Ellen Stringer for organizing the craft show fundraisers; Log Schoolhouse Advisory Committee members Mayor Paul Schore, Laurie Cyr, Ken Ponton, Gary Seiner, Charles Balesi, Frank Koehler, Cindy McBarnes, Norm Strasma, Daron Kinzinger, Tyler Goodrich, 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; and Doris O’Connor for chairing the Membership Committee and chaperoning the December 1 open house at the museum campuses.

Who am I?

On September 20, 1860, I accompanied on the Illinois Central train three nuns of the Congregation of Notre Dame. We arrived at the Kankakee train station--just a little over a year since it opened. As the pastor of Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary parish, I had invited the nuns to open a school for the community girls. Who am I?

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

- Thursday February 13 at 3:30 pm--Log Schoolhouse Advisory Committee meeting;
- Thursday February 20 at 7:15 pm Zoom Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee meeting;
- Thursday March 13 at 7 pm--BGHS Zoom membership meeting;

- April 23-26--Fifth Annual French Heritage Corridor Conference at Washington University, St. Louis, MO https://us8.campaign-archive.com/?e=test_email_&u=5d49c2a770212a80ceddc94d4&id=b6705d20dc
- Friday July 4 *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Show from 9 am to 3 pm, link TBD
- Saturday September 27 from 7-9 pm at the Grove--Bourbonnais sesquicentennial history pageant Hooray Bourbonnais II/*Deux*, link TBD
- Saturday-Sunday September 27-28, 2025--Bourbonnais sesquicentennial French Heritage Weekend, link TBD
- Thursday November 13, 2025--Eight Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner, link TBD
- Saturday December 6 *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Show from 9 am to 3 pm, link TBD; and
- Saturday December 13--BGHS Christmas Open House from 1-4 pm.

Thursday March 13 at 7 pm Zoom meeting agenda

- 7pm—Pledge of allegiance;
- Presentation based on January-March 2025 news eletter item “Who am I?”
- Approval of December 5, 2024 membership minutes (*attached*);
- Treasurer’s report;
- Corresponding Secretary report;
- Curator report
 - Letourneau photo book
- Membership report--thank you notes and/or certificates;
- Ways and Means:
 - Website update
 - Craft show update;
 - Remnant log pieces; and
 - Chaperones for open houses.
- Building and Grounds:
 - Current and future trees and shrubs work—Pete Gryzlak of B & S Yards Plus;
 - Florescent light replacement;
 - Electrician?
 - Pest control
 - HVAC
- Old Business
 - Restructuring of BGHS update and process; and
 - Marker at Clancy Gernon Funeral Home parking lot
- New Business
 - **Next meeting April 3, 2025 at 7 pm**—Zoom only--if agreeable;
 - Election of corresponding secretary;
 - New possible slogan for BGHS: Your History Starts Here
 - Assistance needed for Hooray Bourbonnais II *Deau*
 - Jim requested a videographer for the September 27, 2025 production of “Hooray Bourbonnais II/*Deux*--no one has volunteered to videotape the show, although an ONU person may be available--Daron will check;
 - Jim requested volunteers to present an onstage pro and con debate with rebuttal during the September 27, 2025 production of “Hooray Bourbonnais II/*Deux*”:
 - “Was Noel LeVasseur’s legacy positive or negative?” Jim will portray LeVasseur and present the positive view. Rodney Miller is thinking about presenting the negative view. Jim will send Rod the primary arguments for that view;

- “Was the Excommunication of Fr. Charles Chiniquy justified?” Ken L. has volunteered to present the pro “yes” view and Josué has volunteered to present the con “no” view. Jim sent each of them the primary arguments and resource book;
- “In the 1980s, should Durham-Perry Farmstead/Perry Farm Park be commercially developed or left in its natural state?” Volunteers to debate each view are needed.
- Special BGHS 2025 dates, some with links—**save the dates:**
 - Thursday April 3, 2025--BGHS membership meeting;
 - April 23-26--Fifth Annual French Heritage Corridor Conference at Washington University, St. Louis, MO link
 - Friday July 4 *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Show from 9 am to 3 pm;
 - Saturday September 27 from 7-9 pm at the Grove--Hooray Bourbonnais II/*Deux*;
 - Saturday-Sunday September 27-28, 2025--French Heritage Weekend, part of village’s 150th anniversary celebration;
 - Thursday November 13, 2025--Eight Annual *Fleur-de-Lis* Celebration Dinner;
 - Saturday December 6 *Les Artisans* Arts and Craft Show from 9 am to 3 pm; and
 - Saturday December 13--BGHS Christmas Open House from 1-4 pm.

Have a great winter! Best wishes,

Jim Paul, President of the Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society