

The Preservationist

Volume III, Issue II

Spring—Summer 2017

Points of Interest

- Dining Room Ceiling Laylights Unveiled
- Every Family has a History...What is Yours?
- Annual fleur-de-lis Celebration Dinner
- KCHPC Receives CLG Grant
- Herscher Historical Society

Kankakee County Historic Preservation Commissioners

Mardene Hinton, chair

John Adams, vice chair

Jane Johnson, secretary

Steven DePasquale

Michael Donahue

Shari Ebert

Terry Johnston

Ron Shank

Pat Wagner

Staff:

Michelle Sadler

Newsletter edited by:
Brenda Albers

Dining Room Ceiling Laylights Unveiled

It was a celebration of the late architect, Frank Lloyd Wright's 150th birthday (Saturday, June 10). An historic event in itself with several activities planned at Kankakee's B. Harley Bradley House and Stable. The highlight of the evening however, was the unveiling of the six interior dining room ceiling laylights / skylights.

The project was made possible through the generous donation of Karen Janik. Ms. Janik was honored at the event for her contribution. She explained to those attending that she and her husband have long been admirers of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture. They visited the B. Harley Bradley House & Stable a few years ago and that is when



they first learned that previous owners had sold the dining room ceiling laylights. They were replaced later by frosted glass panels due to the expense of reproductions. Through the years the Janiks discussed do-

minating funds to have one or two of the leaded panels replicated, but of course that would have left them incomplete. Unfortunately Mr. Janik later passed away and it was Ms. Janik's decision to honor his memory by donating funds to replace all six of the panels.

Jesse Mulligan, local artist/craftsman was commissioned to replicate the laylights using the original plans for the design.

According to Thomas A. Heinz in his book *Frank Lloyd Wright's Stained Glass & Lightscreens*,



The unveiling

cont. page 2

Dining Room Ceiling Laylights

(Continued from page 1)



Karen Janik, donor

The laylights have a reverse pattern relationship. The crossbars align with each orientation. This is a rudimentary method to establish a relationship between two panels. The triangular head detail and the horizontal accents to each side of it give an American Indian effect to the pattern, almost an abstracted eagle.

Each panel consists of 633 individual pieces and

it took over 300 man hours to complete. A beautiful gift for a beautiful house.

Kankakee is so fortunate that Wright In Kankakee a non-profit organization run predominately by volunteers has stepped up to open this house to the public.

The evening also included the volunteer-of-the-year award which was presented to Robert Bohlmann, re-



Laura Golowski, Wright In Kankakee's Operations Manager with Jesse Mulligan, artist.



Robert Bohlmann

tired architect and now volunteer director of Wright In Kankakee.



Every Family has a History...What is Yours?

in collaboration with Linda L. (Rieke) Willibey

A family history tells a story...

Hand-written diaries, journals, family Bibles, newspaper articles, letters or scrapbooks created by an ancestor and handed down over the generations can be invaluable. Not everyone is fortunate enough to have such a family treasure saved over the years.

Linda L (Rieke) Willibey recently put to rest three generations of her family's genealogy collection. It was never a thought to Linda that she would become involved in family genealogy or that she would inherit the collections from her grandmother and mother. Linda moved away from the Kankakee area for 20 years. She said that no matter where she was living in the world due to her husband's company assignments or what situations she was in, she was always comforted because she knew where her roots were. She always knew where she would be welcomed home.

In 1995 an opportunity came to return to Kankakee County. Linda found that her grandmother and mother were still working on their genealogy collections. She tells the story of going with her mother to one of the local cemeteries to look for a family relative and check some dates on a tombstone. Linda asked her mom, "Wouldn't it be easier if you had a list of these

names and dates in this cemetery to refer to?" That is when Linda and her mother began making a list of the names and dates and collecting obituaries for residents in two family cemeteries. Realizing that many of these people were already in



Rosella Emma (Lehnus) Riegel

her grandmother's and mother's family tree books, along with their obituaries, Linda began to recognize and appreciate the work of her grandmother and mother that was in the notebooks sitting on the shelf. Linda was hooked....she went on to research four more "cemeteries" two with family links, one cemetery linked to another cemetery and one as a favor to a friend.

Also connected with the research of these cemeteries, Lin-

da learned to decipher the old German script used in church records from Pilot and Salina townships. She found original German spellings of surnames and sometimes it was stated where these families lived in Germany before immigrating. It was always a bonus when their parents in Germany were also listed.

Linda's grandmother, Rosella Emma (Lehnus) Riegel was born to George F & Emma E (Wagner) Lehnus in 1906. Rosella was one of 16 Lehnus siblings. Fourteen children lived to adulthood and 12 of these married. The Lehnus family immigrated from Germany in 1854, settling in Pilot Township. The extended family grew every year through marriages. In the 1930s, soon after her marriage, Rosella began keeping a family tree book about her siblings. Emma's parents, were the Obrecht & Wagner families who settled in Salina township after immigrating from Germany in the 1840s.

Melba Rose (Riegel) Rieke was born to Ernest C & Rosella E (Lehnus) Riegel in 1931. Melba was one of 47 first cousins from the Lehnus and Riegel families. Since she was raised with a respect of family and ancestors, attention was given to the cemetery plots of family ancestors. Once a month the family went to both family and church cemeteries where they joined other families to mow the grass and clean around the tomb-

Every Family has a History...What is Yours?

Continued from page 3

stones.

Rosella's grandchildren remember the dining table on which she spread her genealogy family tree notebooks to work on. Linda has this same table and uses it for her genealogy work. Rosella and Melba collected genealogy data, wrote letters to relatives and talked to people at their family reunions. All that was collected through the years was inherited by Linda.

Linda and her husband Tom are moving to Arizona from this area at the beginning of August. To get ready for that move she has spent several months organizing and distributing the collections from those three generations. She has shared her family's genealogy collection of data with several organizations and is pleased that it will stay here in Kankakee County to help direct others through the research of their family lineage.

The many years that Rosella and Melba worked to collect not only family history but community history has now been shared with local historical societies in the form of loose paper



Melba Rose (Riegel) Rieke

filed obituaries, newspaper articles and family tree notebooks. Linda's cemetery research and deeper research into a couple of surnames in the Pilot and Salina Townships has also been shared. Today, the family genealogy data for Rosella and Melba is in a digital database to preserve.

A family genealogy collection and sharing of it is a personal form of county preservation. We thank Linda and her family as well as many other families who have shared their genealogy. Their work not only preserves their family history, but becomes valuable research material. It can and will be used to tell a story about the history of Kankakee County,

It is our hope that with each

generation there is a family member like Linda, her mother and her grandmother who recognizes the value of a collection and preserve it for generations to come.

With today's technology, it is now easier to organize and easier to share genealogy data.

A family history....tells a story.



Linda L. (Rieke) Willibey



Colony of New France (1543-1763)



Quebec



Belgium



The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society (BGHS) invites you to the

Annual *Fleur-de-lis* Celebration Dinner

AN AWARD OF EXCELLENCE WILL BE PRESENTED FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION IN THE
PRESERVATION OF COLONIAL FRENCH AND FRENCH-CANADIAN, BELGIAN HERITAGE
 IN THE KANKAKEE AND IROQUOIS RIVER VALLEYS CORRIDOR;
 IN THE PRESENCE OF THE HONORABLE ERIC MARQUIS,
 DELEGATE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC TO THE MIDWEST

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 3, 2017. 6:00 PM AT THE KANKAKEE COUNTRY CLUB.

SERVING A TRADITIONAL FRENCH-CANADIAN MENU FOLLOWED BY

AWARD CEREMONY AND ENTERTAINMENT

\$55 PER PERSON—BGHS MEMBER PRICE

\$65 PER PERSON—NON-MEMBER PRICE

CHECK PAYABLE TO "BOURBONNAIS GROVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY" AT: Bourbonnais Grove
 Historical Society, PO Box 311, 698 Stratford Drive East, Bourbonnais, IL 60914

For more information, contact Dr. James Paul (jpaul764@hotmail.com) phone 815-933-9202)
 or Dr. Charles Balesi (charlesbalesi@comcast.net) phone 847-436-0411

✕

PLEASE CIRCLE "YES" OR "NO"

YES, I/WE PLAN TO ATTEND—MY/OUR NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____, E-MAIL _____

AND WISH TO SIT AT TABLE WITH: _____

NO, I CANNOT ATTEND BUT WISH TO MAKE A DONATION OF \$ _____



**KANKAKEE
COUNTY
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
COMMISSION**

189 E. Court Street
Room 201
Kankakee, IL 60901

Phone: 815.937.2940
Ext. 5555

E-mail: msadler@k3county.net
www.k3countyhistoricpreservation.com

www.k3countyhistoricpreservation.com



Follow us on
FACEBOOK

Kankakee County
Historic Preservation
Commission

If you prefer not to receive
KCHPC newsletters notify us
at:
preservationist@comcast.net

KCHPC Receives Second CLG Grant

The Kankakee County Historic Preservation Commission has received a Certified Local Government Grant. The grant is federally funded through the Department of the Interior and administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

Last year, after completing a Preservation Plan for Kankakee County, the commission agreed the next step was to begin extensive surveys of the townships. This new project will include the unincorporated portions of Pilot Township, which encompasses 48 square miles. The incorporated limits of the Village of Herscher are excluded

from this survey.

The grant is a 70/30 matching grant that requires the historical research to be conducted by volunteers, supported by the collections and knowledgeable members of the Herscher Area Historical Society. The data compilation and report writing will be performed by Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) of Northbrook, IL.

After the data has been accumulated, the field survey work will be conducted by two-person teams, one WJE professional architectural history staff person and one volunteer.

The Commission seeks to:

- Write the historical context of Pilot Township.
- Identify historically and architecturally significant properties and/or sites 50 years of age.
- Identify the present condition, integrity, architectural style and features, construction date and obvious alterations and/or additions of the most historically significant properties.
- Produce recommendations of the most noteworthy properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or as a Local Landmark.

Herscher Historical Society by Pat Wagner

Robert Voss, president of the Herscher Area Historical Society (HAHS), is pleased to announce that Schreffler Funeral Homes LLC is generously donating the Herscher Funeral Home to the Herscher Area Historical Society. December 30, 2016, was the day that the Herscher Area Historical Society was deeded the property at 161 W. Myrtle (the Schreffler Funeral Home). Our sincere thanks to Tim Gernon, Bruce Schreffler, and Mike Hake-man for making this all possible.

Because of the overwhelming support by the community, the Historical Society Board has been looking for more space to exhibit and store items. This whole story would not have happened without the help of SueAnn O'Connor and

the HAHS Foundation Board. Our sincere thanks to SueAnn and the Foundation Board.

It is not every day that someone offers to donate a fine old historical home as this one. So, what does the Herscher Area Historical Society intend to do with the building? The home, built in 1899, was purchased in 1903 by Andrew T. Anderson, a local businessman, who served as the mayor of Herscher from 1899 to 1901 and 1925 to 1927. Andrew T. Anderson and his family lived in this house for many years; therefore, we will be



referring to this house as the "Anderson House."

Our intentions are to exhibit furniture and artifacts from the 1900 era. Do you have something from that time period that you are willing to donate or lend us that is related to the Herscher area? If so, please contact the Herscher Area Historical Society at 815-426-2627. This new location is a block west of the Main Street Museum.