



The Society Story

Newsletter of the LaSalle County Historical Society

October 2011



815-667-4861

Blacksmith Shop Renovations Planned

Major repairs to the LaSalle County Historical Society's 119-year old blacksmith shop are scheduled to begin in mid-October.

A contract has been awarded to Ottawa Masonry Inc. which will brace an outside bowed wall; remove, clean, and re-use existing stone; remove and replace windows; rebuild the wall, adding galvanized wire throughout; brace the roof; build interior and exterior scaffolding; and tuck point the remainder of the wall.

The entire work area will be barricaded for safety and the blacksmith shop will be closed to visitors during major construction.



Tom Hoyt demonstrates to visitors at Burgoo

Arnie Bandstra, a member of the board's Building and Grounds Committee, described the project.

"The walls are 18 inches thick and the stones were quarried locally. A unique aspect is that it started out as a blacksmith shop in 1892 and

was never anything else. So many of the old buildings are gone or have been converted into something else. It is certainly an historic building worthy of preservation," he said.

"The north wall leans nine inches and may be about to fall over. Before that happens we have to take pre-emptive measures. We'll preserve the appearance of the original building and use the same stones and windows when the wall is rebuilt," Bandstra added.



Blacksmith Tom at work with a school group

The blacksmith shop is a popular attraction during Burgoo and also for the thousands of school children who have visited the LCHS Museum Complex over the twenty years of the Fourth Grade Program.

If you would care to donate to the rebuilding effort, please contact the Museum office or any board member. Your contribution will be greatly appreciated.

Burgoo Volunteers Needed

Before - During - After

Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War

October 4, 1861: Lincoln observed an observation balloon and approved contract for the USS Monitor, an ironclad ship.

October 7, 1861: The Pony Express mail service to California, a financial failure, was discontinued.

October 24, 1861: Telegraph line to Sacramento, California completed.

October 25, 1861: Keel of USS Monitor laid at Greenpoint, Long Island.

October 29, 1861: Brigadier general W T Sherman leads union force of 12,000 soldiers and 72 vessels to Port Royal, South Carolina, completes occupation by Nov. 9. The port remains in Union hands for the remainder of the war and becomes a valuable coaling station for Union blockade ships.

October 30, 1861: A remnant of the Missouri legislature votes itself out of the Union and into the Confederacy making Missouri a state in two nations. General Winfield Scott retires.

Historic Miscellany

1848 - James Clark builds a granary and warehouse on the banks of the Illinois - Michigan Canal. The building becomes the LaSalle County Historical Society Museum in 1967.

1848 - The Illinois Michigan Canal, begun in 1836, is completed.

1907 - About 60 people meet in the Supervisor's Room of the courthouse and organize the LaSalle County Historical Society. Horace Hull of Ottawa is the first president.

1969 - the LaSalle County Historical Society attracts 4,000 people to its first Burgoo festival.

1969 - LaSalle County Historical Society wins the Award of Merit from the Illinois State Historical Society.

Burgoo traffic

The Burgoo Festival is only days away and we hope you are planning to attend this family friendly event.

IDOT has informed us that Exit 81 off of Interstate 80 will be closed from 9 am until approximately 1 pm. If you are coming from the east please use Exit 90 through Ottawa to US Route 6 and follow the signs to IL Route 178, or take Exit 93 and follow the southern route along IL Route 71 to IL Route 178 northbound. If you are coming from the west or south, Exit 57 from Interstate 39 will bring you to US Route 6.

Off-site parking is available at Celebrations 150 and JC Whitney on Route 6, and The Village (formerly Bennett Garden Center) just north of Rt 6 on IL Route 178. Shuttle busses will run from 9 am until 5 pm between these sites and the festival. A \$5 per-car fee pays for the bus.

New members

We welcome Gary & Lynn Gearhart, Elegant Home Gallery, Jay Allen, and First National Bank of Ottawa to our membership.

New board members

Gary Gearhart of LaSalle has taken over the unexpired term of Charles Stanley, and Tracy Haas of LaSalle will finish the unexpired term of Daphne Keenan. Welcome to the Board!

Raffle Prizes

We have gotten a good response to the raffle and have a number of wonderful prizes. Our latest prize is from the generous folks at Woodhaven Lakes - a three day-two night stay at the resort near Sublette with golf and boating included! In addition we have: Overnight stay at Grand Bear Lodge; Overnight stay at Starved Rock Lodge; Handmade basket by Leesa Tipton; Handmade pine bucket by Arnie Bandstra; Quilted table runner by Jean Hulslander; Weeta's Boutique, purse and jewelry set; Seasons Gone By, Utica, Welcome sign; Pat English/ Mary Kay Cosmetics - Gift Certificate and merchandise; August Hill Winery, Utica - bottle of wine; a doll; a baseball bank; a coffee carafe; a lighted Christmas tree and a vanity set.

Gift Certificates from: Canal Port Bar & Grill, Utica; The Chocolate Shoppe, Utica; Herman's Package Liquor, Ottawa; and Duffy's Tavern, Utica

Thanks also to Don & Virgene Lockas and Joe Ferrero for contributing prizes for the raffle.

The drawing will be held at 4 pm on Burgoo day and you do not need to be present to win.

Herb Garden Guide Available in Gift Shop

A pictorial guide to the LaSalle County Historical Society's settlers' herb garden is available in the gift shop.

The 16-page guide contains 29 color photos of all the herbs planted in the settler's garden beside the Aitken one-room school east of the main museum. Brief descriptions include the uses of the various plants in each of the four beds—dyes, culinary, fragrance, and medicinal.

Special thanks go to the Illinois Valley Herb Guild for their year-round maintenance of the garden and for their assistance in preparing this guide. The 8½ x 5½ booklet is for sale in the gift shop for \$5.00.

Burgoo Volunteers Needed



On Friday, October 7, the La Salle County Historical Society will host a reception and showing of "The Dinner Party" at Engle Lane Theater in Streator. Tickets to the event are \$15.00 each for general admission seating. Show time is 7:30 p.m. Before the show the board of the Historical Society will host a reception in the lobby of the theater for its members and friends who are in attendance. After the show tours of the theater will be available for those who wish to see the backstage and rehearsal area.

Engle Lane Theater is in its 54th consecutive year, making it Illinois' longest continuing community theater. On June 5, 2010 the theater took a direct hit from a tornado and had extensive damage done to the building. Most of the season was scrapped and the board worked hard to get the theater rebuilt and ready for the 2011 season. "The Dinner Party" is the last show of this season. The board of directors of Engle Lane has generously allowed the La Salle County Historical Society to sell the auditorium for the dress rehearsal of "The Dinner Party" as a fundraiser. This allows the society to help raise funds to do what we love to do, and that is to promote and preserve the history of La Salle County. It will also give people from other parts of La Salle County the opportunity to visit this wonderful theatrical venue.

"The Dinner Party" is a comedy set in a restaurant dining room by Neil Simon. The one act play opened on Broadway with John Ritter and Henry Winkler in two of the lead roles. The plot involves 3 couples (all divorced) who are invited to a dinner party, but they don't know by who or why.

To order tickets please contact any member of the board of directors of La Salle Co. Historical Society or call the museum (815-667-4861) or President David Reed (815-673-1652) to reserve seats.

Before - During - After

Calendar of Events - 2011

October 7, 2011 - *The Dinner Party*, Engel Lane Theatre, Streator, 7:30 pm

October 9, 2011 - 42nd Annual Burgoo Festival

Civil War Round Table - Wed. Oct. 19, Ottawa High Cafeteria 7:30 - Steve Dancey, speaker

LCHS Annual Meeting - Sunday, November 13, 1:00 at Celebrations 150, LaSalle

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Memorials

In Memory of Everett (Bud) Friestad from the Passwater family.

In Memory of Richard Dittmer from the Passwater family.

In Memory of Shirley Malcolm from the Passwater family.

Burgoo Volunteers Needed

In Memory of Vincent Werner, from J. Davis & Mary Small, John & Miriam Gleim, George & Nancy Maze, Stan & Laura Dziedzic, Dolores Passwater, Duane & Patricia Passwater, Malcolm Whipple, and Maxine Cole.

In Memory of Richard Clanin from Luceille Werner.

Before - During - After