Dr. Michael Nassaney, Professor of Anthropology at Western Michigan University, will present a keynote address about the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project for the History Center's Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 28.

The evening begins with a brief business meeting at 7:00 p.m., followed by the program. Admission to the evening is free and the public is welcome to attend. Light refreshments will follow the program.

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project is an ongoing, joint initiative of the City of Niles and Western Michigan University to excavate, interpret, and preserve the material remains of Fort St. Joseph, a mission, garrison, and trading post. Founded by the French in 1691, it was ceded to England in 1760 and remained a British post through the American Revolution. Spanish forces from St. Louis captured Fort St. Joseph in 1781 and occupied it for a single day. Along with the United States flag, the banners of France, England and Spain have flown over the post, giving Niles the sobriquet “Land of Four Flags.”

Dr. Nassaney has served as the Project's principal investigator since the digs began in 1998. Dr. Nassaney's program will examine Fort St. Joseph's history and the findings of recent field schools that have contributed to our understanding of the people who lived there 250 years ago.

Field work has revealed the fort's location on the St. Joseph River just upstream of downtown Niles and has uncovered building foundations, fireplace hearths, and tens of thousands of artifacts ranging from beads to musket parts to bale seals.

The Project hosts the Fort St. Joseph Archaeology Open House near the end of each field school - usually in August but this year on June 27-28 - to invite the public to see the progress and meet the archaeologists. Students show off their findings and historical reenactors present a variety of 18th century crafts and activities. This year’s Open House theme is “Taking Shelter from the Storm,” and will focus on the structures in use at the fort, including houses, wigwams, soldier's tents and make-shift structures employed by voyageurs.

The Annual Meeting will also include the presentation of the fifth annual Frank J. Ward Memorial History Award. The History Award is presented annually to honor an individual, organization or business that advances the cause of local history through research, writing, historic preservation or programming. The award is named for Frank Junior Ward, a long-time member and benefactor of the History Center at Courthouse Square.
Berrien County Historical Association Board and Staff

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BCHA Mission Statement

The mission of the BCHA is to collect, preserve and interpret the history of Berrien County through exhibits, tours, publications, and educational and community outreach programs for public benefit.

Learn more about the BCHA by visiting www.berrienhistory.org

Director’s Comments

By Kathy Cyr

Dear Friends,

Spring at last! Well, the calendar indicated spring has arrived, but looking out the windows of the Sheriff’s Residence indicates otherwise. The only consolation for this forecasted 1-2 inches of snow is that we know it cannot last long!

Looking back to November and December 2014, the staff would like to express their heartfelt appreciation for your contributions to the Annual Appeal. Your generous support netted the History Center over $4,500 to continue our mission of collecting, preserving and interpreting the history of Berrien County through exhibits, tours, publications, and educational and community outreach programs. Again, thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2014 Annual Appeal.

Looking ahead to our upcoming programs and special events, please mark your calendars and plan to attend the following:

April 28: Annual Meeting of the Berrien County Historical Association at 7 p.m. at the 1839 Courthouse featuring Dr. Michael Nassaney, Professor of Anthropology, Western Michigan University, speaking about the Fort St. Joseph Archeological Project. Free admission. The fifth annual Frank J. Ward Memorial History Award will be awarded to a Buchanan resident.

May 8: Springing into the 1830’s Pioneer Days for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. Sessions run 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-2:30 p.m.

June 7: Tour & Train Ride featuring Eden Springs Park and its history at the House of David. 12:30 p.m. $20 per person.

June 25 and the following five Thursdays (through July 30): Thursdays at Courthouse Square. 6:30 p.m. Underwritten by AEP Indiana Michigan Power and the Berrien Springs/Eau Claire Rotary Club. The June 25 and July 30 programs are also co-sponsored with the Berrien Springs Community Library. Free admission.

July 19: Downton Abbey Tea at Point O’ Woods golf club and Deer Path Garden Walk. 4 p.m. Per person cost to be determined.

September 12-19: Southern Hospitality Tour. Join us for this 8-day tour of the Carolinas. $1699 per person.

October 16 and 17: Haunted St. Joseph Walking Tour, with the Heritage Museum and Cultural Center. 5-7 p.m. $5 per person.

October 29: Signature Event featuring Neill Hartley portraying Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his Arsenal for Democracy speech.

The History Center’s programs and special events are now listed in the Berrien County Parks’ newsletters and brochures.

Kathy A. Cyr

Executive Director
Thursdays at Courthouse Square ~
Our popular summer program series returns in June!

We’re thrilled about this summer’s line-up of history programs. We have some dynamic speakers coming to the History Center with fascinating topics on state and local history.

The series begins on June 25 and runs every Thursday through July 30. All programs start at 6:30 p.m. and are free of charge thanks to grants from Indiana-Michigan Power Company and the Berrien Springs/Eau Claire Rotary Club.

June 25: **Fatal Crossing: The Mysterious Disappearance of NWA Flight 2501.** Michigan author and founder of the Michigan Shipwreck Research Association Valerie van Heest will share the dramatic true story told in her newest publication of a DC-4 with 58 occupants that disappeared over Lake Michigan in 1950. Weaving past and present together, van Heest vividly recreates the last few hours of the flight and reveals that the answers to history’s mysteries are often found in unexpected places. Co-sponsored with the Berrien Springs Community Library.

July 2: **The Worthy Virgins: Mary Purnell and her City of David.** Author Julieanna Frost presents a program based on her new book. In this first biography of Mary Purnell, Frost examines one of Michigan’s most misunderstood religious leaders of the 20th century. Mary Purnell, along with her husband Benjamin, founded the House of David commune in Benton Harbor. After his death she had to overcome numerous challenges to create her own colony, Mary’s City of David. This fascinating story of a charismatic woman will introduce the importance of Mary Purnell to a new generation.

July 9: History Center curator Bob Myers will present **Lost on the Lakes: Shipwrecks of Berrien County.** From schooners to steamers, the remains of scores of ships litter the bottom of Lake Michigan off Berrien County’s shore. Discover the dramatic history of these ship, the communities they served and their tragic fates.

July 16: **Mollie Kruck,** curator at the Heritage Museum and Cultural Center in St. Joseph will present a program on their newest exhibit, **Sports in Southwest Michigan.** She will discuss how the popularity of organized sports evolved following the Civil War, highlighting events that have taken place in Berrien County. This includes the 1946 Auto Specialties Company baseball team, boxing legend Jack Dempsey, the Senior PGA Championship, as well as the valued role that Southwestern Michigan schools play in the area’s sports history.

July 23: Local archaeologist **Bill Mangold** will present **History under your Feet: 10,000 Years of People in Southwest Michigan.** Emphasizing archeological discoveries in the Berrien Springs area, Mr. Mangold will discuss the various cultures living in the region, how they existed in the environment at the time, and how this data is analyzed. Attendees may bring local artifacts of their own and have them identified.

July 30: **Gib Young** of Huntington, Ind., will portray **Theodore Roosevelt circa 1915.** Mr. Young is a professional TR interpreter and has performed in hundreds of venues including Mount Rushmore, The JFK Library, and The Smithsonian Museum of American History. Enjoy visiting with the former US President as he recounts his life as the 26th President of the United States while residing in the White House. Co-Sponsored with the Berrien Springs Community Library.
Curator’s Corner

Recent Donations to the Museum Collections

Watervliet Area archival materials . . . . . . . . . . . . John Case

Lee County Historical & Genealogical Society . . . New Buffalo photographs

William Pschigoda . . . . . . . World War I soldier photograph

Donald F. & Martha Ryman . . . Chair from the House of David

The Marguerite Photo Shop: Images of New Buffalo

The Lee County [Illinois] Historical and Genealogical Society recently donated a collection of hundreds of New Buffalo photographs and original negatives to the History Center. The images came from The Marguerite Photo Shop of New Buffalo, and all seem to date from the early 1920s. One picture shows an auto license plate dated 1925. It’s an outstanding collection, but also a little mysterious - who owned the Marguerite Photo Shop? Research so far has failed to reveal the photographer’s name or what years the studio operated. We’d love to hear from any of our members who can tell us about the Marguerite.

The Siegmund Brothers Hardware store, owned by Ferdinand and Matthias Siegmund.

The Pere Marquette Railroad roundhouse.

The Schmidt Drug Store at the corner of Whittaker Street and present-day Red Arrow Highway.
Enjoy Our Local History!

Greetings from Three Oaks ($25.95)  Quantity: $Total:
Greetings from Benton Harbor ($27.95)  Quantity: $Total:
Greetings from St. Joseph ($27.95)  Quantity: $Total:
Greetings from Berrien Springs ($21.95)  Quantity: $Total:
Greetings from Buchanan ($24.95)  Quantity: $Total:
The Story of Buchanan ($14.95)  Quantity: $Total:
The Heyday of Hinchman ($18.95)  Quantity: $Total:
Historical Sketches of Berrien County ($23.95)  Quantity: $Total:
Autotram: Clark's Aluminum Railcar ($16.95)  Quantity: $Total:
Locomotives Along the Lakeshore ($24.95)  Quantity: $Total:
Twin City Trolleys ($8.95)  Quantity: $Total:

SPECIAL: Greetings from Buchanan & Story of Buchanan Quantity: $Total: $29.95
Get both for $29.95!

Discounts (Library 20%    BCHA Members 10%)
State sales tax (6% for Michigan orders only)
Shipping ($4.95 for 1st book, $1.00 each additional book

Subtotal: $_____

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Save on shipping and pick up your books from the History Center Store!

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Make check/money order payable to: Berrien County Historical Assn., PO Box 261, Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Credit Card Orders (Visa, MC, Discover)
Card No.: ____________________________
Exp. Date: ____________________________
Name on Card: ____________________________
Signature: ____________________________
Downton Abbey Tea ~ July 19

It’s a cultural phenomenon and we want you to experience it with us. At 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 19, we’re hosting a Downton Abbey Tea at Point O’Woods Country Club and at Deer Path Gardens, the home and grounds of Glenn and Margaret Poole, both in Benton Township. We’re still finalizing plans for the event - more to come in the next Docket - but we’re looking forward to an English tea that is proper enough to merit even Mr. Carson’s approval.

Every week, millions of viewers tune in to watch Downton Abbey. In case you’ve been living on a desert island for the past five years, the PBS series, set in the fictional Yorkshire country estate of Downton Abbey, depicts the lives of the aristocratic Crawley family and their servants in the post-Edwardian era.

Despite its fictional characters and plots, Downton Abbey contains a great deal of real history. The series incorporates many factual events into its storylines, including the sinking of the RMS Titanic; the outbreak of the First World War; the Spanish influenza pandemic of 1918-1919; the Marconi scandal; the formation of the Irish Free State; the Teapot Dome scandal in the United States; and the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch in Germany.

Southern Hospitality Tour, September 12 - 19

Our Southern Hospitality Tour this fall takes us to the Carolinas. We’ll spend a day at the fabulous Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina, tour the Carl Sandburg Home in Flat Rock, and spend the rest of the week in Charleston, South Carolina.

We’ve lined up some great activities for our visit to Charleston. We’ll take a carriage ride through the downtown historic district; sail on a tour boat out to Fort Sumter; enjoy a visit to Drayton Hall (a 1730s rice plantation house) with a special Madeira wine tasting; go on an eco-tour of the barrier islands with a professional naturalist, complete with an evening picnic dinner; tour Middleton Place Plantation; walk the deck of WW II aircraft carrier USS Yorktown at the Patriot’s Point Naval & Maritime Museum; take in The Producers at the historic Dock Street Theater; and more.

The tour includes dinner at some of the Carolinas’ best restaurants, too. All dinners and breakfasts are included, and some lunches as well. Lodging will be at Hampton Inns or at Comfort Suites. Transportation will be aboard Cardinal Motorcoach.

All the arrangements are set for our Southern Hospitality Tour and you should receive one of our tour booklets in the mail very soon. For more information, call Curator Bob Myers at (269) 471-1202, or email him at rmyers@berrienhistory.org.
Tours & Trains: Eden Springs at the House of David

Relive the past with a special tour of the Israelite House of David’s Eden Springs Amusement Park on Sunday, June 7, beginning at 12:30 p.m. The History Center at Courthouse Square is partnering with Mary’s City of David and Eden Springs Park to sponsor an afternoon event rediscovering the park and its history.

Ron Taylor, secretary of Mary’s City of David, will open the City of David Museum and gift shop and present a short history of Eden Springs Park. Volunteers at Eden Springs will provide train rides around the park and a guided tour of the park grounds. Tickets are $20 per person.

Plans for the event are in progress. Look for news releases as we approach the date, or call us at (269) 471-1202 to have your name put on our email list for special notices about upcoming events.

Benjamin and Mary Purnell arrived in Benton Harbor in 1903 and established the Israelite House of David as a communal religious order and created an amusement park to earn revenue for the colony. A miniature train, pulled by locomotives that the Israelites built themselves, numbered among the park’s most popular attractions. Miniature race cars, a zoo, a bowling alley, musical bands and other features made the park a huge success.

Eden Springs closed in the early 1970s when the aging members of the House of David could no longer operate it. A crew of dedicated volunteers is gradually restoring the now privately owned park and has the miniature trains running on weekends in the summer. They are restoring old buildings and a huge fountain in the park, along with the grounds.

An Evening with FDR

Mark your calendar for our annual Signature Event as we welcome President Franklin D. Roosevelt on Thursday, October 29. Neill Hartley, an actor/historian with American Historical Theatre in Philadelphia, will portray the President who led America through the Great Depression and World War II.

Neill is a professional actor, director and educator. He has principal roles in The Sixth Sense, First Freedom (PBS documentary) and in two seasons of the Netflix series House of Cards. He often works in industrial and voice-over projects, and in national commercials.

A veteran stage actor, Neill has appeared with many regional theater companies including The Arden, InterAct, and the Philadelphia Shakespeare Festival. He shared a “Best Ensemble” Philadelphia Barrymore Award for Batboy, The Musical for 1812 Productions. Neill is the artistic director of Acting Without Boundaries, a theater company for young adults with physical disabilities.

Neill is an assistant professor of voice and speech at The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and has acted as a speech/dialect coach for several professional theater productions. He holds an MFA in Acting from Temple University.
Continuing and Upcoming Events

Ongoing: New From You! Exhibit at the History Center. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Mondays - Fridays.

March 26: Panel discussion, World War II and the Home Front. 2:00 p.m.


April 28: History Center Annual Meeting. 7:00 p.m.

June 7: Tours & Trains: Eden Springs at the House of David. 12:30 p.m. $20 per person.


July 2: Thursdays at Courthouse Square. Author Julianna Frost presents The Worthy Virgins: Mary Purnell and the City of David. 6:30 p.m.

July 9: Thursdays at Courthouse Square. “Lost on the Lakes: Shipwrecks of Berrien County.” 6:30 p.m.

July 16: Thursdays at Courthouse Square. Mollie Kruck presents “Sports in Southwest Michigan.” 6:30 p.m.

July 19: “Downton Abbey Tea & Garden Walk,” at Point O’ Woods Country Club and Deer Path Gardens, Benton Township. 4:00 p.m.; price TBD.

July 23: Thursdays at Courthouse Square. “History under your Feet: 10,000 Years of People in Southwest Michigan,” presented by Bill Mangold. 6:30 p.m.

July 30. Thursdays at Courthouse Square. Actor/historian Gib Young portrays Theodore Roosevelt, presented with the Berrien Springs Community Library. 6:30 p.m.


September 12-19: “Southern Hospitality Tour” bus tour to Charleston, South Carolina.

October 16-17: Haunted St. Joseph Walking Tour. 5 - 7 p.m.

October 29: Signature Event 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center. An Evening with FDR.

December 3: Kindle the Christmas Spirit, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.