

OUR PURPOSE

"The purpose of the West Baton Rouge Historical Association shall be to foster interest in history, particularly that of West Baton Rouge Parish, and to encourage and pursue research, collection, and preservation of materials illustrating past or present activities of the parish."



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SPRING

2023

NEWSLETTER ÉCOUTEZ



A PUBLICATION OF THE WEST BATON ROUGE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Christmas in July Card Party



SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for **Monday, July 24, 2023**, for the West Baton Rouge Historical Association's, *Christmas in July Card Party*. This event is one of the HA's annual fundraisers, and it is always a guaranteed fun time. Invite your friends out for a little healthy competition to play a game of cards, dominoes, rumikub, etc.

Players can enjoy a mimosa, a hearty lunch, and many door prizes. There will also be several drawings for additional prizes. Everyone will walk away a winner.



Blast from the Past

ages 6-12



SUMMER HISTORY CAMP

at the WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM

A BLUE DOG ADVENTURE

Two one-week sessions to choose from

JUNE 19 - 23 and **JUNE 26 - 30**

\$125 for WBR Parish residents and/or members of the WBRHA and \$150 for all other participants. For more information, call 225.336.2422 or visit www.WestBatonRougeMuseum.org



SUMMER HISTORY CAMP 2023

Please join the West Baton Rouge Museum staff and volunteers for a magical *Blast from the Past Summer History Camp*. During the last two weeks of June, 19-23 and 26-30, the museum will be taken over by a "Blue Dog Adventure". Campers will learn about famed Louisiana artist, George Rodrigue, and his iconic blue dog. They will also learn about Louisiana culture and historic pastimes. We cannot wait to see you at this immersive experience.

LES LETTRES



For those who don't already know me, my name is Brian Falcon. I'm a resident of Brusly and have been involved with the Museum as a volunteer since I was a teenager and, in the more recent past, as a member of the West Baton Rouge Historical Association board. I'm honored to lead the board as president this year.

2023 is looking bright for us. We have passed through the pandemic and its ensuing financial strains. With some belt tightening, we have maintained responsible stewardship of the funds with which have been entrusted.

Happily, we are on the downhill slope of the previous years' challenges. Our membership successfully lobbied the parish to renew millage in support of the Museum. Financial improvements in our investments will allow us more breathing room to fund the various events the Historical Association annually supports.

Speaking of annual events, we will hold the Card Party on July 24, 2023. As always, there will be refreshments and door prizes. Be on the lookout for a form to register your party and come have a great time!



SPRING 2023 ÉCOUTEZ letter

Our New President

WEST BATON ROUGE
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

BRIAN FALCON Board President

Your membership in our organization means that you care about the preservation of our parish's culture and history. I want my term to be marked with encouragement for you to promote the preservation of our historic resources. With each passing year, memories fade, buildings are lost and papers disintegrate. There are opportunities large and small to save our heritage. Write descriptions on the backs of your photos. Record your family memories. Take photos of endangered sites. Support preservation organizations and initiatives or start one even! Make connections between people who want to save something and people who can save something. Little history is big history in West Baton Rouge, and it's all worth our efforts to preserve.

Brian Falcon
WBRHA President



Spring 2023 Director's Letter

WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM

CULTURE CULTIVATED • LA CULTURE CULTIVÉE • LA KILTIR KILTIVÉ

ANGÉLIQUE BERGERON, PH.D. Executive Director



The West Baton Rouge Museum is gearing up for Spring and lots of great exhibits and programs. Join us for our Easter EGGStravaganza cosponsored by the West Baton Rouge Parish Library on April 2nd. In addition to the Easter Egg Hunt and all of the traditional festivities this occasion brings to our grounds, we will also have live music from the Old Time Jam in the Juke Joint and an exhibit reception inside the main building honoring our local student artists participating in the West Baton Rouge Parish Schools' Talented Art program.

Ben Peabody's *Art and Addiction* opens on April 15th with live music, refreshments, and a gallery talk with the artist. Peabody uses a vibrant palette, intricate detail, and a carnival themed back drop to create symbols, words, colors, and stories that hold deeper meaning. His artwork serves as a catalyst to evoke conversation and end the stigma of addiction. Look for lots of meaningful programs on addiction awareness, treatment, and recovery that will accompany this exhibit.

On April 21st, we are excited to welcome Dr. Nick Spitzer, host of NPR's American Routes, and American Bluesman Kenny Neal for a very special Historical Happy Hour. Kick off Baton Rouge Blues Fest weekend celebrating the rich musical heritage of West Baton Rouge and the surrounding communities with the voice recordings of blues legends from the local music scene interspersed with stories and strumming from our talented guest presenters.

Look for lots of new workshops coming this Spring with textile artist, Christy Benoit Castille. Sign up for one or both of her workshops including Beginner Shuttle Tatting on April 11th

and Needle Tatting on April 18th. We will also be offering woodworking workshops with Terry Landry on April 15 and 22 to build a footstool and May 13 and 20 to build a tool tote all with the use of antique hand tools. Be sure to check out other special guests demonstrating a variety of historic crafts and trades on the 1st Sunday of each month in a new series launched this year called Behind the Barn Doors. This series was inspired by visitors' curiosities about what takes place inside the big red building on the museum's campus and the museum's mission to keep traditional trades alive.

In May, look for a new Saturday workshop series, Exploration in African American Genealogy followed by a series in June, Exploration in Acadian Genealogy, both organized by WBRHA Board Member Debbie Doiron Martin. This program will be held at the West Baton Rouge Museum and offered in partnership with the West Baton Rouge Genealogical Society. Each session will feature a recognized guest speaker from the field and hands-on family tree building.

In June, we celebrate the art of George Rodrigue in an exhibit entitled *The River is the Road* which opens on June 17th... just in time for A Blue Dog Adventure at our 28th annual Blast from the Past Summer History Camp series. The history and culture Rodrigue captured on canvas will also serve as the inspiration for the museum's long running Teachers' Institute July 17 - 19 sponsored in part by the West Baton Rouge Historical Association.

Be sure to follow us on social media for the latest updates. *With all that we have going on, we hope to see you at the museum!*

Angélique Bergeron, PH.D.
Executive Director

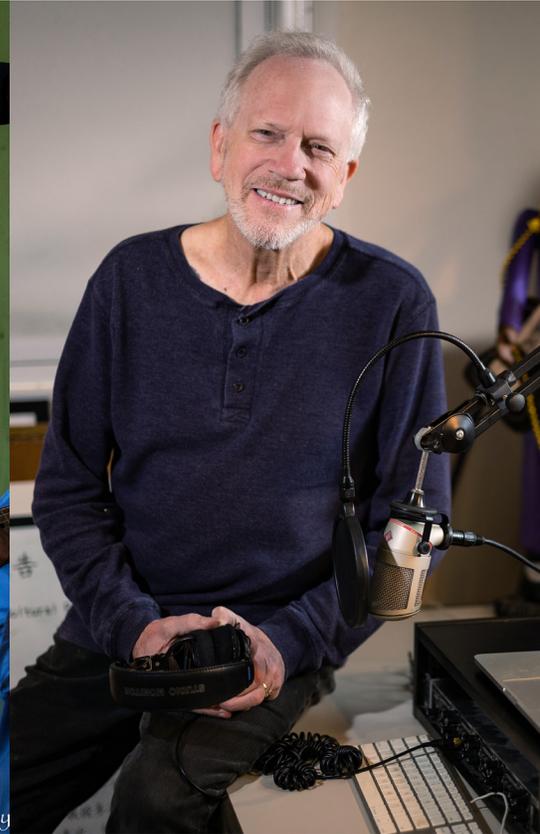
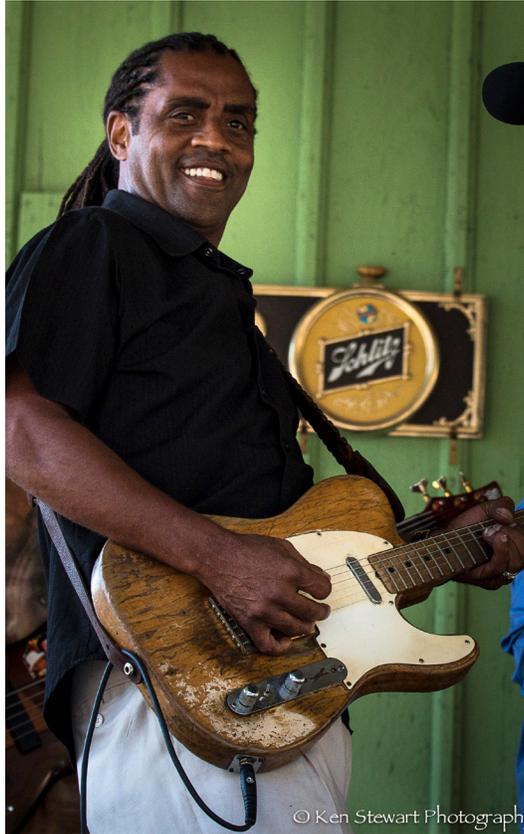
Historical Happy Hour welcomes Nick Spitzer of NPR's American Routes & American Bluesman Kenny Neal

WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM in collaboration with 89.3 WRKF, the NPR (National Public Radio) affiliate for Baton Rouge and southeast Louisiana is excited to announce a star-studded line up for the **April 21st** Historical Happy Hour event. Mark your calendars and get ready to give a round of applause for Nick Spitzer and Kenny Neal! Anyone wishing to immerse themselves in the rich history of local Blues culture will not want to miss this 6 - 8 PM evening under the moonlight.

As told by Tulane professor, anthropologist, American Routes and radio host and executive producer, and former state folklorist who helped to launch Baton Rouge Blues Fest in 1981, Dr. Nick Spitzer will share stories and sound clips from previous interviews aired on American Routes featuring the voices of legends in relation to the Baton Rouge scene.

As his website states, "If you want to experience the 'Real Deal', take time out to find Kenny Neal," the Grammy nominated and BMA (Blues Music Awards) winning artist and second-generation south Louisiana bluesman with West Baton Rouge Parish roots who will share the stage and add to the commentary with his own tales to tell with the help of his harmonica and guitar.

The drinks are on you. The history is on us! Be sure to bring your own lawn chairs and liquid refreshment to enjoy this **FREE** evening event under the stars in front of the West Baton Rouge Museum's Juke Joint on the museum grounds.



© Ken Stewart Photography

april 21st

Nick Spitzer
with Kenny Neal

may 19th

Ashley Orlando & The
Florida Street Blowhards

june 16th

Cajun Roots

Historical
Happy
Hour

New Explorations in Genealogy Workshop Series to be Held at West Baton Rouge Museum

Sign up for one of the following three-week interactive *Explorations in Genealogy* workshop series to be held at the West Baton Rouge Museum. Each session will feature notable guest speakers recognized in the field of genealogy and hands-on family tree building with the use of research tools. This series, sponsored in part by the West Baton Rouge Genealogical Society and spearheaded by West Baton Rouge Historical Association board member Debbie Doiron Martin is being offered free of charge. Space is limited to 10 participants. While it is not required, participants are encouraged to bring laptop computers.

To register, please call the West Baton Rouge Museum at (225)336-2422.

EXPLORATION IN AFRICAN AMERICAN-AMERICAN GENEALOGY

Explore challenges of African American genealogy research while engaging participants in their own family tree. Classes will meet from 10 AM – Noon on Saturdays, **May 6, 13, and 20, 2023**. Participants will be invited back on the afternoon of **Sunday, May 21** for a roundtable gathering to share their stories, research challenges, and family connections discovered amongst each other through this discussion and exploration of family history.

EXPLORATION IN ACADIAN GENEALOGY

Sign up for a three-week interactive series that will explore challenges faced by the Acadians, their trails and triumphs, while engaging participants in their own family tree. Classes will meet from 10 AM – Noon on Saturdays, **June 10, 17, and 24, 2023**. Participants will be invited back on the afternoon of **Sunday, June 25** for a roundtable gathering to share their stories, research challenges, and family connections discovered amongst each other through this discussion and exploration of family history.

DATES TO REMEMBER

TALENTED STUDENT ART RECEPTION
APRIL 2

ART & ADDICTION
APRIL 15 - JUNE 4

THE RIVER IS THE ROAD: PAINTINGS BY GEORGE RODRIGUE
OPENS JUNE 17



Curators' Corner

Talented Student Art Reception

The West Baton Rouge Museum will host the *Talented Art Student* Exhibition opening March 25th and running through April 9th. The exhibit features the works of Talented Art Students in West Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools. An exhibit reception will be held on April 2nd.

Art & Addiction

Through his journey of recovery, Baton Rouge based artist Ben Peabody has created a compelling series of work titled, *Art & Addiction*. The collection consists of over 40 fascinating pieces of detailed two- and three-dimensional works of art. A captivating carnival-like theme sets the mood for the exhibit and shows the mystifying hold that drugs and alcohol have on those who are addicted. This exhibit opens April 15th and will run through June 4, 2023.

The River is the Road: Paintings by George Rodrigue

Coinciding with the 10th anniversary of Rodrigue's death, *The River Is the Road: Paintings by George Rodrigue* will open June 17, 2023. This exhibit is the first of its kind and traces 45 years of the river in Rodrigue's paintings, exploring the unique ways Rodrigue used the river as a reference to his Cajun heritage, and ultimately as a metaphor for the journey of life. The exhibition, organized by the Life & Legacy Foundation, includes 45 original artworks, including paintings, pastels, and sculpture from the private collection of Wendy Rodrigue, the George Godfrey Rodrigue, Jr. Family Trust, and selected works borrowed from collectors. In addition, Wendy Rodrigue, widow of artist George Rodrigue, will host in-person tours for area schools during Fall 2023. We are extremely grateful for the exhibit and program sponsorship of Telich Custom Homes and Morgan Stanley.



FERIN JONES



LAUREN HAWTHORNE

Pics from Past Programs

Awesome Art Engagement Led by Ron's Retro Artists

This past winter and on into the spring, West Baton Rouge Museum has had the pleasure of hosting a number of programs accompanying the exhibit, *Ron's Retro: Honoring Ronald Kennedy with Pieces by Local Black Artists*. Interactive experiences ranged from a lunchtime lecture presented by Eileen Kennedy sharing stories of her late husband's

impact on art, education, and civil rights in the arts to creative workshops including painting classes with FeliciaNoelle and Pastor Darlene A. Moore, a sculpture workshop with Phillip Louis, a collage workshop with Randell Henry, and another visit by Pastor Moore leading exercises in the art of creative writing and spoken word.



With Much Appreciation for Eileen Kennedy and Family

When Mrs. Eileen Kennedy and her family took the stage at the exhibit opening celebration for *Ron's Retro: Honoring Ronald Kennedy with Pieces by Local Black Artists*, they turned the spotlight on to the staff of the West Baton Rouge Museum in a touching moment when Mrs. Kennedy

surprised all in attendance by presenting a generous donation to the museum in memory of late artist, art educator, and activist, Ronald Kennedy. West Baton Rouge Museum would like to thank the Kennedy family for this gift that we are honored to receive.



National History Day

The West Baton Rouge Museum is the regional host for the National History Day Program. On Thursday, February 16, our campus was full of students, teachers, and parents all here to take part in the competition. Students from both middle and high school compete in 1 of 5 categories for a chance to move on to the state competition at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans. Our numbers have risen from less than 40 students in 2022, to almost 80 students in 2023.

The big red barn was bustling with woodworking, blacksmithing, and tating demonstrations. Additionally, our galleries were open for students and adults to view the Ron's Retro exhibit. Our annual History Bee was extra exciting this year, with cash prizes available to the top 3 students. We loved having the campus full of life, and we're looking forward to an even bigger and better National History Day in 2024.



UPCOMING EVENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO . . .



JULY 17 - 19 2023

TEACHERS' INSTITUTE

The Art of George Rodrigue

Take part in a three-day summer professional development series, open to in-service K-12 teachers across all subject areas. Participants will receive classroom resource materials, a certificate of participation, and a \$100 stipend upon completion of all institute activities and assignments. Daily lunches are provided.

The Teachers' Institute is limited to 20 participants.

Register online at www.WestBatonRougeMuseum.org. Teachers' Institute is sponsored in part by the West Baton Rouge Historical Association, West Baton Rouge Parish School Board, Telich Custom Homes, and Morgan Stanley.

Join us for the
West Baton Rouge Parish
EGG-STRAVAGANZA

SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 2023
2 - 3 PM
at the
West Baton Rouge Museum

This event is FREE and sponsored by the WBRPL and WBRM. Refreshments will be available for purchase. The Talented Student Art Show will be on display. In the event of rain activities will move to the Port Allen Community Center.

845 N. Jefferson Avenue
Port Allen, LA 70767
www.WestBatonRougeMuseum.org

**BEHIND THE
BARN DOORS**
FIRST SUNDAYS AT 2PM

Join us on the first Sundays of the month in the big red barn for featured demonstrations and instructional workshops including Blacksmithing, Spinning and Weaving, and Woodworking.

For more information call 225.336.2422 or check our website www.WestBatonRougeMuseum.org

TATTING
Workshop

Beginner Shuttle Tatting
Tuesday, April 11, 2023
10 AM - Noon
FEE: \$30

Needle Tatting
Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10 AM - Noon
FEE: \$30

Space is Limited. Resister by calling WBRM at 225-336-2422.

Disclaimer: Participants should not have dexterity (arthritis or joint issues) problems with their fingers!



WEST
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WBR HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Monthly Programs

1ST FRIDAYS, 1PM: *Le Café Français*. GRATUIT

1ST SUNDAYS, 3PM: *Behind the Barn Doors*. FREE

2ND SUNDAYS, 3PM: *Old Time Jam*. FREE

3RD FRIDAYS, 6PM: *Historical Happy Hour*. FREE

3RD SUNDAYS, 3PM: *CFMA Cajun Jam*. FREE

LAST TUESDAYS, 6PM: *Yoga*. FREE