

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."



WINTER
2024

NEWSLETTER ÉCOUTEZ



A PUBLICATION OF THE WEST BATON ROUGE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Please join the **West Baton Rouge Historical Association** for its Annual Meeting on Monday, January 8, 2024, at 11:00 AM. If you haven't already, please consider updating your membership for the 2024 calendar year.
We thank you for your support.

MALAIKA'S MURAL

On Sunday, October 1, 2023, the West Baton Rouge Museum held an unveiling and dedication ceremony for the new Juke Joint mural by Malaika Favorite at SugarFest! Throughout the years, Malaika Favorite has been a featured artist for exhibits and events at the West Baton Rouge Museum. Selected for her vision, experience, and passion for painting on tin, Malaika's most recent project at the museum was the installation of a mural celebrating the rich Blues history of the parish on the exterior of the Juke Joint. This was made possible thanks to grant funds from the Make it Public Workshop from the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, Division of the Arts, Percent for Art Program and from the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area Foundation.

Malaika Favorite is an artist, poet, and native of Louisiana. Her work can be seen from Baton Rouge to New York City. Most recently, Malaika has teamed up with Walt Disney World Resort and Disneyland Resort to create new murals as part of Tiana's Bayou Adventure inspired by the animated film, "The Princess and the Frog" scheduled to open next year.



ANNUAL MEETING



NATIONAL HISTORY DAY

CALLING ALL HISTORY ENTHUSIASTS! On Saturday, March 9, 2024, the West Baton Rouge Museum will host the Baton Rouge Regional History Day Competition. We are inviting interested students to participate and are also looking for judges and volunteers to help facilitate the day.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the National History Day program with the theme, Turning Points in History. Participating students will create a project in one of 5 categories: exhibit, website, documentary, performance, and research paper. Students compete for the chance to represent their schools at the state competition, held at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, and the National Competition in Washington D.C.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL THE WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM AT (225) 336-2422

LES LETTRES



Hi all,

It's mid-November, and as I write this letter to our membership, I'm observing a long-awaited rain. Could any of us have known that 2023 would bring a drought, fires, record temperatures and a saltwater wedge up the Mississippi? As we contended with these crises, the Historical Association wrestled with predicaments of its own. Our usual SugarFest dinner costs escalated out of a feasible range. With similar fundraisers and a downturn in participation due to the pandemic, it was unknown how successful our card party would be. I'm happy to announce both fundraisers were resounding successes under the leadership of and with changes by several HA members and museum staff. I won't mention names, because I don't want to overlook someone. To all of you who managed, got the word out, volunteered on the day and lent support in any other ways, thank you all very much. Job well done!

The annual Ethel Claiborne Dameron Lecture was also a huge success. We had record numbers of attendees, and I would like to take this moment to extend a sincere thank you to Wendy Rodrigue for being our guest speaker and sharing stories about her late husband, George Rodrigue, his life, and his love of art.

In addition to our annual events, our board members facilitated valuable public outreach on a proposed geographic name change with the LA Department of Transportation and Development. What started as an important conversation about name and place identity has fostered a new connection with the department which may lead to future collaborations.

WINTER 2024 ÉCOUTEZ letter

Thank you for following our journey

WEST BATON ROUGE
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

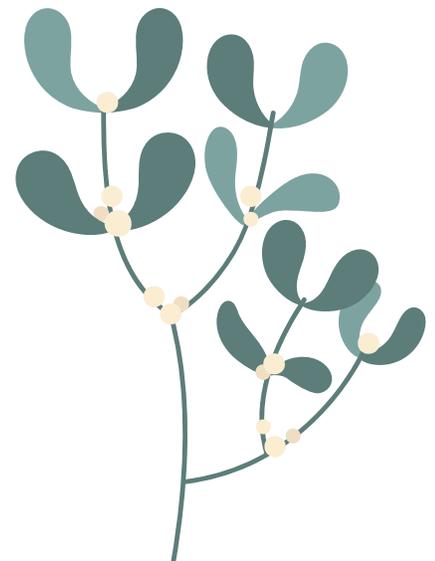
BRIAN FALCON Board President

In this copy of the Ecoutez, you will find a membership form. Please consider renewing your membership. Because of your contributions, we have been able to care for the collection while organizing events we can take pride in.

Finally, I would like to invite you to attend our Annual Meeting on January 8, 2024. It's a time to meet our members, install officers, and learn about all the things we worked on in 2023. The meeting is open to the public and members are allowed to vote. I hope we see you there!

2023 has been a long and rewarding year. I'm looking forward to seeing what 2024 has in store.

Brian Falcon
WBRHA President





Dear friends,

Happy New Year to all!

It's been a busier than usual fall at the West Baton Rouge Museum with our 28th annual SugarFest back in full force, as well as our annual Halloween program hosted with the WBRP Library, the Veterans on Parade hosted with the CVB, and our Holiday Open House with special guest Chris LeBlanc thanks to a partnership with the Baton Rouge Blues Festival and Foundation. We closed out the George Rodrigue exhibit with a week packed with school tours and our largest ever Ethel Claiborne Dameron lecture. Our staff did all of this while preparing for the American Alliance of Museum's reaccreditation site visit, which occurred the second week in December.

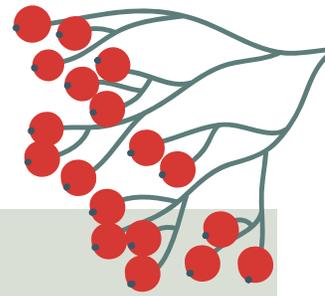
Coming in January, we're wrapping up the Small Wonders exhibit with a Bug Ball (January 7th). Visitors of all ages are invited to wear their wings and join us for a movie, music, crafts, treats, a scavenger hunt, story time, and bug yoga - all inspired by the exhibit, *Small Wonders: Insects in Focus*. We'll open two new photography exhibits in January: *The Diary of Tooky* and *Shutter and Sound*.

In February, we are honored to host the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities for their Institute on Louisiana Culture and History. This workshop provides reliable and accessible resources to K-12 teachers in alignment with the Louisiana Department of Education's new social studies standards.

In March, the West Baton Rouge Museum welcomes CODOFIL's annual Le Grand Pique-Nique hosted by Baton Rouge French Immersion schools. We will host the Baton Rouge regional competition for National History Day (March 9th). We will close out the month hosting our annual Easter program with the WBRP Library (March 24th) and the impressive local Talented Student Art exhibition (March 30th).

WINTER 2024

Director's Letter



WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM
CULTURE CULTIVATED • LA CULTURE CULTIVÉE • LA KILTIR KILTIVÉ

ANGÉLIQUE BERGERON, PH.D. Executive Director

Our monthly programs have taken off and will continue in 2024 with genealogy moved to a regular day - 2nd Saturdays, as well as the Children's Art Workshops with Ms. Shaun - 4th Saturdays. Speakers confirmed for the 2024 genealogy series include: Paul Bledsoe on *Captain Abraham Bird, Sr.: A forgotten Pioneer* (January 13th), Ja'el Gordon on *Honoring Black History* (February 10th), and Andrew Capone on *Italians in Louisiana* (March 9th).

Of course, we'll still host our Behind the Barn Doors (1st Sundays), le Café Français (1st Fridays), Old Time Jam (2nd Sundays), Cajun Jam (3rd Sundays), Yoga (last Tuesdays), and our Historical Happy Hours (3rd Fridays). We have an exciting slate of performers scheduled for the first quarter of 2024, including Ben Bell & The Stardust Boys (January 19th), Zia Tammami with Mike Esneault, Herman Jackson, and Harry Anderson (February 16th), and Chris Thomas King (March 15th).

With all that we have going on, we hope to see you at the Museum!

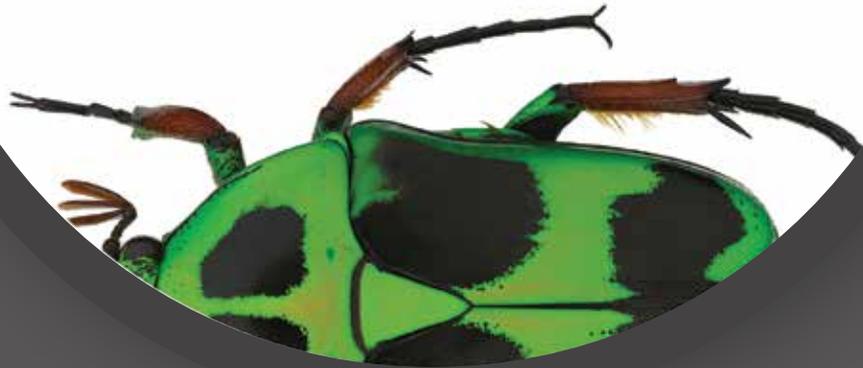
Angélique Bergeron, PH.D.
Executive Director





BUG BALL

JANUARY 7 • 2-4PM



On **Sunday, January 7, 2024**, the West Baton Rouge Museum will be **BUGGING OUT** at the exhibit, *Small Wonders: Insects in Focus*. We are so excited to celebrate these larger than life images! Please join us from 2 PM-4 PM for a very special **"Bug Ball"** that will take place throughout our campus. At this family friendly event, guests can expect crafts, a scavenger hunt, Bug yoga, refreshments and much more. Come to our ball dressed as your favorite creepy, crawly creature. And get ready to BUG all of your friends with your newfound insect knowledge!





BEHIND THE BARN DOORS

FIRST SUNDAYS AT 2PM

Join us on the first Sunday 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.

Exploration in Genealogy WORKSHOP SERIES

West Baton Rouge Museum is the host site for the workshop series, Exploration in Genealogy held the second Saturday of each month, January – November from 10:30 – Noon. Mark your calendars. The 2024 spring line up of speakers are not to be missed. They include Paul Bledsoe discussing *Captain Abraham Bird, Sr.: A forgotten Pioneer* on January 13, Ja’el Gordon speaking on *Honoring Black History* on February 10, and Andrew Capone sharing about *Italians in Louisiana* on March 9.

This series is hosted by the West Baton Rouge Genealogical Society, spearheaded by West Baton Rouge Historical Association board member, Debbie Doiron Martin, and sponsored by the West Baton Rouge Museum. Explorations in Genealogy began in 2023 and was met with great success. Each session was well attended and attracted seasoned genealogists as well as newcomers longing to learn about their own family histories.

This workshop is **FREE**, open to the public, and no registration is required.

UPCOMING EXHIBITS

DIARY OF TOOKY
JANUARY 6 - APRIL 6, 2024

SHUTTER & SOUND
JANUARY 27 - MARCH 17, 2024

TALENTED STUDENT ART
MARCH 30 - MAY 5, 2024

Curators’ Corner

Diary of Tooky: Hustle Series

“The ‘Hustle’ photo series was born on a rainy night in New Orleans at a neighbourhood dive bar in mid-city. I was seeking to find shelter from the dewy New Orleans weather. When I arrived, Lilly Lewis and Miss Joy Clark were getting ready to perform. The minute the first key was sounded out, I was instantly moved and began to capture the show. This by far has been one of the memorable nights I’ve had in New Orleans.”

– OLIVIA PISKADLO-JONES

Shutter and Sound

On January 27th, we will open *Shutter and Sound: The Jazz Photography of Bob Willoughby*.

Bob Willoughby (1927–2009) is perhaps best known for his candid photographs of famous Hollywood actors, but before taking photos on film sets, he captured many images of jazz musicians. Working in difficult lighting and crowded conditions, the images in *Shutter and Sound: The Jazz Photography of Bob Willoughby* are jazz improvisation made manifest: they give the viewer a sense of vibrant intimacy as he captured wistful singers, jamming musicians, and enthusiastic audience. This exhibit is from Exhibits USA and Mid America Arts Alliance.

Talented Student Art

The West Baton Rouge Museum will host the *Talented Art Student Exhibition* opening March 30th and running through May 5th. The exhibit features the works of Talented Art Students in West Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools.



FERIN JONES



LAUREN HAWTHORNE



We love our volunteers...

Blues After School | Junior Volunteers of the Year

When voting on our Junior Volunteer of the Year, we decided to do something a little different and extremely special this year. Instead of one person receiving this award, we decided to present it to an entire group. The next time you see any member of the Blues After School program, make sure to congratulate them for being picked for this awesome award.

Not only do these students spend four Fridays a month with us in the afternoons during the school year, they also perform at many of our events. They've worked hard to learn their instruments, and are joy to watch.

The Blues After School group has also become dedicated volunteers. We are so lucky to have found a group of people that will jump in to be counselors at Summer Camp, volunteer at SugarFest after their performance, and to man the activity stations at many of our other events.

To Chris, Jesse, Aylana, De'Anna, Charlie, Emma, Madison, Gerico, Landon, and Callie - thank you, thank you, thank you for all you do!



Debbie Martin Volunteer of the Year

Please join the West Baton Rouge Museum in extending a warm congratulations to our volunteer of the year, Debbie Martin. Over the years, Debbie has shared her time and talents with us, and we are so grateful to know her. From manning stations at many of our events to joining the West Baton Rouge Historical Association Board and becoming an active member on several committees, there is nothing she can't do.

This past year, Ms. Debbie has been a driving force behind our Explorations in Genealogies series. What was supposed to be two summer weekend series of Acadian Genealogy and African American Genealogy, was so wildly successful that it has officially turned it into a monthly program. Ms. Debbie works tirelessly to schedule renown experts in the field to cover a new topic every month, and she's actually already planned out most of 2024.

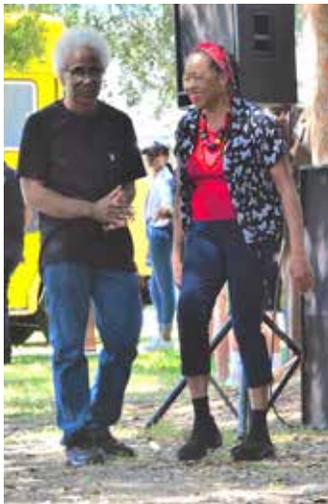
Volunteers like Ms. Debbie allow us to thrive in our community. We host so many annual, monthly, and one-time events that we often ask volunteers to take part in, and we are so lucky for their enthusiastic support. Thanks, Ms. Debbie! We are happy to have you and look forward to working with you next year!

Pics from Past Programs

SugarFest 2023

SugarFest this year was one for the books! The day brought blue skies and seasonally appropriate weather. About 4,000 guests from Louisiana, surrounding states, and other countries stopped by to enjoy food, music, historical demonstrations, crafts, games, and more. Our

annual "Cake Walk" and Sweets Contest were as competitive as ever, and provided sugary treats to the masses. We were also honored to have artist, Malaika Favorite in attendance to unveil and dedicate her lively mural spanning the south side of our Juke Joint.



Pics from Past Programs

Halloween

Our Merry-Not-Scary Halloween was a wonderful event this year. As always, we partnered with the West Baton Rouge Parish Library to bring tricks, treats, and lots of fun to our community. Returning this year were the Coalition of Black Women Engineers from LSU to make slime, and the Baton Rouge Astronomy Club to look at the stars. **Both were huge hits!**

We also welcomed a few new friends. Magician, Tim Spinoza of X-Treme Talent, had the kids hypnotized with his two incredible magical performances and special performances from the Ogden Park Witches Coven. Their rendition of the viral dance from Netflix's Wednesday inspired a few "Wednesdays" in the audience participate as well



Veterans on Parade

West Baton Rouge Museum was pleased to be a part of West Baton Rouge Parish's Veterans on Parade event again this year. Held annually the Sunday before Veterans Day in November, the local community pays tribute to all servicemen and woman for their dedication and sacrifice. Veterans not riding in the parade were provided shade covered seats on museum grounds to watch as floats and marching bands saluted them as they passed by. The museum also served as the last stop on the parade route where everyone filed in for a patriotic ceremony and reception honoring all members of the military past and present and this year's Grand Marshals, Parish President, Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot and Mr. Huey Gauthier. The audience was addressed by moving words from Parish President Elect, Jason Manola, Congressman Garrett Graves, Senator Caleb Kleinpeter, and Parish Councilman, Atley Walker as well as a tribute performed by the Brusly High School Band and the Dynamic Dancers led by Jasmine Broadway from Baton Rouge. Following, refreshments were served by volunteers. This event was sponsored in part by the West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau, the West Baton Rouge Parish Council, the West Baton Rouge Museum, and City of Port Allen Councilmembers Charlene Gordon and Garry Hubble. Special thanks to the students of Port Allen High School's JAG program and their leader, Dr. Kellie Green for volunteering to assist with parade lineup and to serve Coke products donated by Baton Rouge Coca-Cola Bottling Company.



A Week with Wendy Rodrigue

At the end of October, West Baton Rouge Museum said farewell to a stunning collection of original works created by late Louisiana artist, George Rodrigue and to his widow and founder of the Life & Legacy Foundation & Art Tour, Wendy Rodrigue. The exhibit, *The River is the Road: Paintings by George Rodrigue* was curated by the foundation to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the artist's passing.

Not only did Wendy Rodrigue visit the museum last summer for the exhibit's opening, Blast from the Past Summer Camp: A Blue Dog Adventure, and the annual Teachers Institute, she returned for the final week of the exhibit to provide meaningful tours to area school groups and community organizations. She also served as the 2023 guest speaker for the West Baton Rouge Historical Association's annual Ethel Claiborne Dameron Lecture Series on October 29, the final day of the exhibit.

Wendy shared insights into the artist's work and his life with pre-kindergarten students to senior citizens. Group tours were enjoyed by Belaire High School, Brusly High School, Brusly Middle, Port Allen Middle, MSA West, Westside Home School, St. Jude Pre-K, Port City Enterprise, and Phi Mu Alumni. We encourage you to visit Wendy's YouTube Channel to view "Unpacking a Rodrigue Adventure, Life & Legacy's Louisiana Tour 2023."

The WBRM and the WBRHA would like to thank Mike Telich Custom Homes, Morgan Stanley, and the Louisiana Lottery Corporation for sponsoring the exhibit and related programs and Wendy Rodrigue continuing to share George Rodrigue's legacy.



Pics from Past Programs

Holiday Open House 2023 Unwrapped

On Sunday, December 3, 2023, we welcomed visitors of all ages who enjoyed touring museum exhibits and celebrating the season with lagniappe activities offered in our gallery spaces and our six-acre campus.

The main building featured presenters from Louisiana Master Naturalists and Wild Ones who added an extra insight into the *Small Wonders: Insects in Focus* exhibit. Manship Theatre also had a table promoting their upcoming show along with a ticket give away for *The Christmas Spider*, a Ukrainian folk tale. Teaching artist, Kellie Rountree guided guests in a make-and-take jeweled ornament activity, and Louisiana book author, Elista Istre signed books and conducted a storytelling session for her latest project, *Josette & Friends Cook a Gumbo*. We also gathered around the Christmas tree to honor our 2023 Volunteer and Junior Volunteers of the year. The barn was a buzz with woodworking, blacksmithing and weaving demonstrations, and the historic Aillet House was the setting for tableau performances depicting 19th century holiday customs.

Museum festivities continued with performances by the museum's Blues After School program and by famed Baton Rouge Blues artist, Chris LeBlanc who led an Open Blues Jam sponsored by the Baton Rouge Blues Festival & Foundation. There was also lovely traditional holiday music performed by Mrs. Eileen Kennedy and the West Baton Rouge Oasis Jazz Band. From sipping on cider and savoring homemade gingerbread to shopping for unique stocking stuffers or saying "Hi" to Santa and finding mischievous elves who hid around the museum, a merry time was had by all!



Join us for the
West Baton Rouge Parish

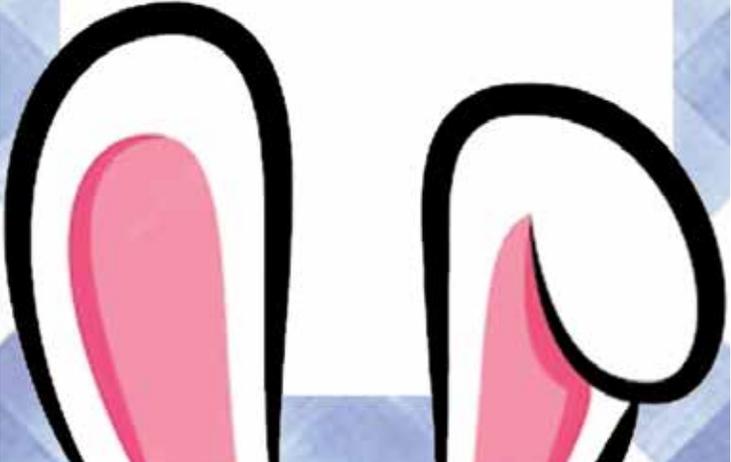
EGG-STRAVAGANZA

Sunday, March 24, 2024
2 - 3:30PM
at the
West Baton Rouge Museum




This event is FREE and hosted by the WBRPL and WBRM. Refreshments will be available for purchase. 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



Children's Drawing & Painting with Ms. Shaun

Saturday, January 27
 Saturday, February 24
 Saturday, March 23
 Saturday, April 27

10:30 AM - 12 PM

Blast from the Past

AGES 6-12

SUMMER HISTORY CAMP

Two one-week sessions to choose from
 • June 17-21
 • June 24 - 28
 Registration opens March 1

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

January 19 Ben Bell & The Stardust Boys

February 16 Zia Tammami

with musical accompaniment by Mike Esneault, Herman Jackson, Harry Anderson

March 15 Chris Thomas King

Historical Happy Hour




INSTITUTE FOR LOUISIANA CULTURE & HISTORY

REGIONAL AND SUMMER INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS

for Louisiana social studies K-12 educators

The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities' Institute for Louisiana Culture and History provides reliable, accessible Louisiana social studies resources to K-12 students and their teachers through workshops and free content at 64parishes.org.



2023-24 REGIONAL ONE-DAY WORKSHOPS

- November 4, 2023: Northeast Louisiana Delta African American Heritage Museum (Monroe)
- December 9, 2023: Louisiana State University-Shreveport
- January 20, 2024: McNeese State University (Lake Charles)
- February 24, 2024: West Baton Rouge Museum (Port Allen)

The Institute will provide a \$150 stipend to all regional workshop participants on completion of the one-day workshop. Applications will open August 15, 2023.

TOPIC AND GRADE LEVEL

18th-Century Louisiana 6th Grade Focus

18th-century Louisiana history is alignment with the Louisiana Department of Education's new 6th-grade social studies standards

TOPIC AND GRADE LEVEL

19th-Century Louisiana 7th Grade Focus

19th-century Louisiana history is alignment with LDOE's new 7th-grade social studies standards

2024 SUMMER INTENSIVE WORKSHOP

The Institute's three-day summer intensive workshop will take place in New Orleans at The Helis Foundation John Scott Center. Dates will be announced in early 2024.

The Institute will provide a \$250 stipend to all summer intensive workshop participants. Applications will open in early 2024.



WEST
BATON
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MUSEUM
ASSOCIATION



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NEWSLETTER ÉCOUTEZ



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WBR HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM

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Lorry Trotter
Sadie Payne Woods
Chris Kershaw, Ex-officio

Monthly Programs

- 1ST FRIDAYS, 1PM:** *Le Café Français*. GRATUIT
- 1ST SUNDAYS, 2PM:** *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