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Meeting schedule 2006

Date	Place
January 24, 2006 5:30 pm	Board meeting, Vermilion Parish Library, Abbeville
March 28, 2006 5:30 pm	Board meeting, Gueydan Museum
April 25, 2006 5:30 pm	Membership meeting, Abbeville
May 23, 2006 5:30 pm	Board meeting, Vermilion Parish Library, Erath
July 25, 2006 5:30 pm	Board meeting, Vermilion Parish Library, Kaplan
September 26, 2006 5:30 pm	Board meeting, Vermilion Parish Library, Abbeville
November 14, 2006 5:30 pm	Board meeting, Vermilion Parish Library, Maurice

Christmas display at the Gueydan Museum



December 3, 2005—The Gueydan Museum hosted a reception



tonight, celebrating the opening of the Christmas season with a display of professionally decorated Christmas trees. For more information and to see pictures taken at the event, click [here](#).

Board meeting of October 25

October 25, 2005—The board of directors met tonight at the new library in Abbeville. After the reading of the minutes and the treasurer's report, Velta Bourgeois reported that she may have a lead to a company that could handle the courthouse as a miniature building. The prototype of the next building in the series, the Abbeville City Hall (formerly the Audrey Hotel) was displayed. The order has been placed and the shipment is expected shortly. The board then set the dates of the 2006 meetings.

After the business portion of the meeting was closed, the board enjoyed a PowerPoint® presentation of the history of the Fenwick Sanitarium (Palms Hospital), presented by Gary Theall. The first part of the presentation, including a biography of Dr. F. F. Young and the building and destruction by fire of the first sanitarium built on what is now the library property, was based on the writings of Ken Dupuy. The second part, from the burning of the first Fenwick building to the demolition of the second Fenwick building in 1965, was based on the writings of Beatrice Broussard McClellan.

Of special interest was the description of the grand opening of the second Fenwick building on January 28, 1907. The governor of Louisiana, Newton C. Blanchard, the mayor of New Orleans, Martin Behrman, and many other dignitaries were present and gave speeches. A special guest speaker was General Leon Jastremski, who as a teenager had lived in Abbeville and worked for the *Meridional* during the first four years of its existence, 1856 to 1860, along with the young E. I. Addison. Jastremski went on to become a Civil War hero, chairman of the Democratic Central Committee, mayor of Baton Rouge, founder of the United Confederate Veterans, and two-time candidate for governor. He was well received at the grand opening of the Fenwick when he said he had "come home." Gary Theall interrupted Mrs. McClellan's story to present a brief

biography of this fascinating former Abbevillian, who had lived in what Margaret Steen Villemez called "the old Steen home" on Main Street.

Mrs. McClellan's story continued with what she regarded as a very important part of the ceremony, the awarding of nurse's diplomas. Four diplomas were presented during the opening ceremonies, one to a girl from Crowley, two to girls from New Orleans, and one to Lucy James Carter of Hazelhurst, Mississippi. Theall again interrupted Mrs. McClellan's story at this point to show the audience the surprise that he had promised as part of this presentation. It was the recently acquired original nurse's diploma of Lucy James Carter that was awarded to her at the grand opening of the Fenwick on January 28, 1907. It bears the original signatures of all five of the Drs. Young and their brother-in-law Dr. C. J. Edwards. Theall said the diploma had returned to its home and will become part of the Society's archives. The presentation then returned to Mrs. McClellan's story, detailing the history of the Fenwick Sanitarium from the grand opening to its demolition in 1965.

The presentation had special meaning for the group because it was presented on the very grounds on which the two Fenwick Sanitarium buildings had stood.

September Meeting Postponed to October 25

September 24, 2005—The September 22 meeting of the Vermilion Historical Society was postponed because of Hurricane Rita. The meeting has been rescheduled for Tuesday, October 25, at 5:30 p.m. at the Vermilion Parish Library in Abbeville. The presentation will be "History of the Fenwick Sanitarium." It is appropriate that the presentation will be made on the very property on which the Fenwick (Palms Hospital) once stood, in fact on the very property on which thousands of Vermilionites were born.

The PowerPoint® presentation will combine the article written by Ken Dupuy on Dr. F. F. Young with the talk given by B. B. McClellan to the Abbeville Woman's Club in 1974, with lots of pictures. Also, I have promised to show a recently acquired surprise item connected with the 1907 grand opening of the Fenwick that no one will be able to guess. You will have to come to the meeting to see it.

A short board meeting will precede the presentation. If you love Abbeville and Vermilion Parish, come and join us. The meeting is open to the public and the admission is free.

July Board Meeting

July 26, 2005—The July board meeting of the Vermilion Historical Society was held at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 26, 2005, at the library in Kaplan. After the reading of the minutes and the financial report, Gary Theall reported that pursuant to the authority granted to him at the last meeting, he wrote a letter indicating that the VHS had gone on record as supporting the library tax, but that the policy of the *Abbeville Meridional* was not to publish letters on election issues shortly before the election. The managing editor indicated that if it were a news story rather than a letter to the editor, the newspaper would consider publishing it. Theall rewrote the report as a news story, and it was published on page one on a Sunday. The tax subsequently passed, so perhaps the VHS could claim credit for playing a small role in saving the libraries.

Velta Bourgeois then discussed the possibility of having the manufacturer of our miniature buildings reconsider its position that it could not manufacture a miniature courthouse because of the columns. The prototype that we received was unacceptable because the porch on the front of the courthouse had been enclosed in bricks, which changed the nature of the building drastically. Velta suggested that perhaps if the columns were moved back and the porch given less depth, an impression of a porch might be created that would be acceptable. The board considered the proposal, but did not feel that it was worth another \$700 to produce a second prototype that would possibly be unacceptable. Instead, a motion was passed to search for a different manufacturer that may better be capable of handling columns.

After the business portion of the meeting, Gary Theall presented a PowerPoint® presentation displaying the pictures and documents recently acquired by the Society. The contributors of the items were Kenneth Ramke, Doris Dominique, Hon. Byron Hebert, Heloise Broussard, Richard J. Guidry, Doris Dominique, Ruth Broussard, the late Wilmer Geoffroy, Kathleen Sellers Miller, and the late Robert Weill through his stepson, Frank "Kerk" Batson. Many of the items were of great interest to the audience, and provoked lively discussion. The items spanned a period of more than a century in time beginning with a letter written in French by a Cajun Confederate soldier to his mother in 1864. One of the items, a 1909 letter from the French Benevolent Society signed by its president, Louis Vallee, informing Felix Broussard, Sr., that he had been nominated as an honorary member, created a remarkable coincidence—of the dozen or so people in the

meeting room, one (Heloise Broussard) was a grandchild of Felix Broussard, Sr., and another (Joseph Vallee) was a grandchild of Louis Vallee.

Meeting dates changed

May 25, 2005—At the May 25 board meeting it was decided to change the meeting dates from the fourth Wednesday of every other month to the fourth Tuesday. The reason for the change is that three of the board members belong to another organization that meets on the fourth Wednesdays. No board member objected to the change. That means that the remaining three meetings of the year will take place on July 26, September 27, and November 22, 2005. The board also unanimously voted to go on record as supporting the library tax, and authorized Gary Theall to write a letter to the editors of the parish newspapers to express the sentiment of the board. After the meeting, Gary Theall and Ken Dupuy presented Part 2 of the PowerPoint® presentation of the stained glass windows of St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church in Abbeville, this time covering the seven windows on the east side of the church and the three windows in the front. The audience was enthusiastic and appreciative. A copy of the presentation will be given to Father William C. Blanda, pastor of St. Mary Magdalen, who was unable to attend because of a previously scheduled school board meeting.

Location of May 25 meeting moved

May 16, 2005—The location of the May 25 meeting of the board has been moved from Erath to the large meeting room at the Vermilion Parish Library (the new one) in Abbeville. After the business meeting, Gary Theall and Ken Dupuy will present Part 2 of the PowerPoint® presentation of the stained glass windows of St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church in Abbeville. Part 1 of the presentation was well attended, and we hope that the audience for Part 2 will be at least as large. The presentation is free and is open to the public.

New topic added

May 8, 2005—The next miniature building in our Model Village series will be the

Audrey Hotel (now the City Hall.) I had to go up on the roof to take pictures so the manufacturer would know what the top of the building looked like. While I was up there, I took pictures of the buildings of Abbeville in every direction. I put the result into a slideshow, which you can view by clicking [here](#). Move your mouse cursor over a building or street, stop, and a popup window will give you some information about the item under the cursor. There are 26 slides. Some of the views are spectacular. (Gary Theall.)

Notice of Annual Meeting

April 8, 2005—The annual meeting of the general membership of the Vermilion Historical Society will be held Wednesday, April 27, 2005, at 5:30 p.m. at the new Library in Abbeville. A board of directors will be elected by the members, and reports will be made on the affairs of the Society. After the business portion of the meeting, Gary Theall and Ken Dupuy will make a PowerPoint® presentation of the stained glass windows of St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church in Abbeville. The presenters will discuss the subject of each window, the people and events depicted in it, the symbolism portrayed, and the local families who donated the windows. The full color images of the windows will be dazzling. The meeting is free and is open to the public, but only members are allowed to vote during the business meeting.

Participation in the Carousel of Arts

April 8, 2005—The Carousel of Arts will be held in Abbeville from April 13 through April 17, 2005. Among the many presentations, displays, and performances will be a reprise of the PowerPoint® presentation made by Gary Theall and Ken Dupuy of the "History of the Bank of Abbeville." This presentation was first made in September of last year at a meeting of the board of directors. The presentation will cover not only the history of the bank, but the history of other businesses conducted on that piece of real estate in the heart of Abbeville in the past. The presentation will be made at the new Library in Abbeville, on Friday, April 15, at 5:30 p.m. The presentation is free and is open to the public.

Gueydan Museum hosts Mardi Gras 2005 exhibit

February 4, 2005—The Gueydan Museum held an open house on Friday, February 4, 2005, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. in connection with their Mardi Gras 2005 exhibit. The displays featured artistic Mardi Gras masks by artists such as James D. Thompson and Ric Rolston, as well as mannequins sporting gowns worn by previous Queens Amalie of the Krewe de la Chambre Royale. Refreshments were served, including King Cakes, salted pecans, sandwiches, soft drinks, and wine.

The exhibits were spectacular, and you can [get a glimpse of some of the items by clicking here.](#)

Board to meet on January 26

January 16, 2005—The regular bimonthly meeting of the Board of Directors will take place in the Young Adult reading room in the new library on St. Victor Street on January 26, 2005, at 5:30 p.m. This room is not as well equipped as the meeting rooms, but will serve our purposes. The meeting rooms were not available to us at that time.

Issues to be addressed are (1) a report on the sale of books and miniature buildings, (2) selecting the next building for the miniature building project, (3) a report on the possibility of moving the museum to the old library building, (4) a video presentation of Part 2 of the History of St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church, by Gary Theall and Kenneth Dupuy.

The meeting is open to the public but only the Board members may vote on motions.

January 11 marks two-year anniversary

January 8, 2005—This website began its existence on January 11, 2003. Since that time it has grown considerably in size. Hopefully it will continue to grow in the future. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from those who have either sought out or stumbled upon the website, and many of them have contributed stories, pictures, or other materials in addition to their kind words

of praise.

The Vermilion Historical Society thanks each and every one of you who has participated in making this website a success. To all of the local users and to all of the displaced Vermilionites all over the world for whom this website represents a taste of home, we promise to keep trying to make this site something you will want to return to again and again.

2005 Board meeting schedule announced

January 1, 2005—The regular meetings of the Board of Directors of the Vermilion Historical Society have been set for the following dates and places. All meetings start at 5:30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated. These are business meetings, but some presentations of historical topics are usually made. The public is invited to attend but not to vote on any issue. The annual meeting of the general membership is held in April on a date to be announced, and all members may vote on all issues.

This website was created and is maintained by [Gary E. Theall](#) on behalf of the Vermilion Historical Society.

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