

Lafayette Genealogical Society

Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2017

The monthly meeting of the Lafayette Genealogical Society was held on Thursday, April 20, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of the South Regional Library, 1601 Johnston Street. The meeting was called to order by President Brenda Fuselier. After a few words of welcome, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by a moment of silence to honor our ancestors and our armed forces. There were no guests attending, however, member Carolyn Peron brought her husband this evening. He was warmly welcomed by everyone.

The March minutes are on our website. Herb Scheuermann motioned that we dispense with the reading of the minutes. Richard Foreman seconded the motion. A vote was taken, the motion passed. Members who cannot attend the meetings can keep up with society activity by reading the minutes on-line.

Warren LeBlanc was called upon to give the Treasurer's Report. The April report is listed below:

Beginning Balance	\$4,247.46
Dues Collected	560.00
Books Sold/Donations	
Supplements Sold	
Acadiana Project	
Banquet	
Publication Expense	
Speaker Meals	
Banquet Expense	
Office Expense	
Other Expense/Rental	
Library Book Project	
Ending Balance	\$4,807.46

New Members for 2017:	27
Members with dues unpaid:	60

There was no discussion on the treasurer's report and Pete Lavergne motioned that we accept the report. It was also seconded by Richard Foreman. A vote was taken and the treasurer's report was accepted.

President Fuselier again brought up the idea of changing the day and time of our meetings, possibly to a Saturday, to accommodate members who can no longer drive at night. Several suggestions were made such as changing the time of the regular meetings to 6:00 instead of 6:30 especially in the winter months when daylight savings is not in effect. Shirley LeBlanc suggested that at 5:30 in the winter months is already dark. Any changes of time would have to be seasonal. Henry Peterson said that changing to a Saturday may interfere with Genealogy 101 and we would lose members to other activities. Pete Lavergne commented that when you join an organization you know what the rules are and we should not try to accommodate everyone. It was also brought up that we are not getting any younger members. Most people don't become interested until their parents die. We could try different time to see if we can interest more people. Another person brought up that many of the area genealogy groups have gone to one meeting a month. Another comment was that our meetings should start at 6:00 pm and not go past 7:30. John Love suggested that we table the discussion and that this should be handled by the executive committee and brought up as resolutions. The discussion was then ended.

More volunteers are needed on Tuesday morning at the downtown library to assist those people who are new to genealogy and need our expertise. Please show up if you can starting at 9:30 am

This concluded the business part of the meeting.

At this time President Fuselier introduced our guest speaker for the evening, Dianne Dempsy Legnon. She is a highly respected and award winning educator in the parish of Lafayette. She had as her guest, her sister-in-law, Bobbie Richard.

Ma. Legnon is a reading specialist and a school librarian. Some of her many honors include winning the Teacher of the Year and Librarian of the Year 2006. She belongs to a writing group and acts as a teacher consultant for the Louisiana Writers Project at UL.

Dianne published her first novel in 2012 and has just recently published her second. She is a Louisiana native, having grown up in the Ville Platte-Opelousas area of the state. Her full name is Dianne Marie Fontenot Dempsy Legnon. She uses Dempsy in honor of her first husband, Jim Dempsy, who died about 20 years ago. Like so many family members, she relies on her sister who is the family genealogist. She heard many of the family stories from her paternal grandfather who kept the family history alive by his storytelling



Dianne Legnon speaks to Lafayette Genealogical Society

Her first novel *Belair Cove, A Novel of Life, Love and Loss in a Prairie Cajun Village* is in some ways a retelling of her grandparents story in that they both had previous spouses who died and it allowed them to marry and raise a large family. The people of Belair Cove keep very much to themselves and she is not sure they are too happy with her for putting them on the map, so to say. But she did, and she took the stories that she heard and painted a lovely picture of life in a small Louisiana town where everyone cares about each other. It is a way of life that we may not have much longer.

She told everyone in attendance that we all have a story to tell. We should start by writing what we know, even if it is only a page at a time. Eventually a story will come out. Her parents were her primary source and sometimes getting the story took a lot of patience and wasn't easy to hear.

Such was the case with her second novel *A Louisiana SOLDIER: Willis A. Fontenot*. It is her father's story about life abroad in World War II and his experiences. He was in a special secret force which used chemical weapons. His group would send out mortars which sometimes contained a white smoke to provide cover for advancing foot soldiers. He was not at D-Day because his ship was bombed and they had to transfer to another, but his section was awarded a star for heroism for spending 315 consecutive days in battle.

After her father was diagnosed with bone cancer, he decided to tell his story and it took two years but it was worth the peace he felt afterwards. She said he had been carrying around this sadness his entire life and it was helpful to him to get it out.

At this time Dianne is writing a letter to her grand daughter Lucy. Who knows, maybe there is a book or short story there. She then took questions from the audience.



Dianne Legnon visits with society members after meeting

Before we adjourned, Shirley LeBlanc took the time to promote the program she is preparing for next months' meeting. She will be telling Catherine Richard Martin's story of Lagnaipe – Reminiscences of Jefferson Street and invited everyone to come and share a part of Lafayette's history.

Richard Foreman then motioned that we adjourn. It was seconded by Brenda Thibodeaux. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Pellerin
Secretary