



# JEANERETTE LANDMARK SOCIETY newsletter

VOLUME NO. 1, ISSUE NO. 6

APRIL 2005

## Our Mission

The Jeanerette Landmark Society is dedicated to the preservation of historic landmarks, promoting education and appreciation of history and improving the quality of life in the community of Jeanerette.

## JLS Graphic Design Changes

The new logo appearing on the masthead of this newsletter and the new newsletter format were created by our graphic designer, Amy McJunkins. It may replace the picture of the Hewes House and more accurately depict the broader mission of the Landmark Society. We are very pleased with Amy's design and are anxious to have your feedback on this change. E-mail headquarters at [heweshouse@yahoo.com](mailto:heweshouse@yahoo.com) with your opinion.

At present, Amy is donating her creative talent to further the goals of the JLS. You can learn more about Amy and her work by visiting her company web site at [www.odysseylc.us](http://www.odysseylc.us).

## A Letter From Loretta

August 10, 2004.

"Dear Mr. LeBlanc: Enclosed is a donation to the Jeanerette Landmark Society to help with the care and renovations of the old Hewes home on Main street in Jeanerette. I lived across the street from the home for years and I have fond memories of my old childhood neighborhood. I hope the dreams of renovations come true to all involved.

Sincerely, Loretta Beaulieu Richard."

In appreciation for Mrs. Richard's \$2000 donation and kind wishes, she was granted a Lifetime Membership by the Board of Directors.

## Hewes Project—DNR Grant Back On Track



The on again off again DNR Phase I grant for the Hewes House Project is back on track according to President Ray Allain. In fact, grant contract documents were received by the Society during the week of April 11, 2005. Allain credits Atchafalaya Basin Program Director Sandra Thompson for the initial support, and DNR Secretary Scott Angelle for taking a recent personal interest in the project. Robert Benoit of the Basin Program office, came to Jeanerette in late December 04,

to view the Hewes House and meet with Paul Allain, project architect, Ron LeBlanc, project manager, and Ray Allain, JLS president, at the Hewes House. Mr. Benoit was favorably impressed with the condition and care of the house and has been responsible for shepherding the grant through the agency's process. The grant is actually being made to the City of Jeanerette, which is sponsoring the project and will be providing the funds to the project through a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Landmark Society. Benoit advises that funding will be available in July or August of 2005, however, work can begin as soon as the grant contracts are signed, with funds on deposit in the Landmark Society accounts. Reimbursement from the grant funds will be available once the state sells bonds to fund Priority 5 projects.

## Primary Benefactor Continues Support

On Nov. 16, 2004 Mr. Robert E. Flowerree, Lifetime Member of the Jeanerette Landmark Society, honorary member of the JLS board, and a grandson of Mr. Harry Hewes, sent JLS an unsolicited donation from his private foundation, the Flowerree Foundation, along with the following message: "Dear Ray, enclosed is my check for \$25,000 to help in the

restoration of my grandfather's home—I'm pleased with the progress you all are making and I hope 05 is a good year for you. Best Regards, Bob".

Mr. Flowerree's promise of a donation of \$72,000 provided the inspiration for the formation of the Landmark Society and allowed the JLS to purchase his grandfather's house.

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## 2004 Annual JLS Membership Meeting— A Celebration of Success



The October 24, 2004 annual JLS membership meeting was the best ever. President Ray Allain set the tone for the 30 members in attendance by announcing that the JLS had raised nearly \$300,000 in cash and in-kind donations so far. Ray went on to say that beginning August 1, Rick and Mary Zolecki were living in and maintaining the Hewes House. A PowerPoint presentation, prepared by Mary Kay Allain, showed the positive influence the occupancy was having on the house and grounds. Mayor Arthur Verret praised the society for, "its efforts to save and restore the historic Harry Hewes home". A motion to re-elect the same board members who served last year was made by Mary Fay Freshly and seconded by Pat LeMaire. The motion carried unanimously and all board members accepted their office. During and after the meeting lavish refreshments were served by JLS volunteers. Then everyone was invited to the Hewes House for coffee and dessert and a tour of the house. When the JLS members arrived at the house they were greeted on the front porch with live music by Effron Savoy and Tommy Granger. Dancing, touring and visiting ensued and a good time was had by all. When the newly reelected board met at their first meeting

on November 15, 2004, a motion to reelect the same officers who served last year was made by Hugh Junca and seconded by Peter Patout and carried unanimously. They are: Ray Allain, President, Tommy Granger, Vice President, Peggy Parker, Secretary, and Jacques Larroque, Treasurer.

### JLS Now Has Headquarters and a Project Manager

The primary feature of the 2005 Operating and Capital budgets approved by the Board of Directors, is that the JLS has contracted with Ronald "Skipper" LeBlanc to serve full-time as its "Project Manager". Under the terms of the contract he has established a JLS "headquarters" from which to oversee repairs and improvements provided for in the 2005 Capital Budget. Ron will also continue to manage all other operations necessary to continue the general business of the JLS, as he has been doing under the guidance of president Ray Allain since March 16, 2004. Any questions or comments pertaining to the JLS can now be directed to JLS headquarters, which is presently located in Jeanerette at 1520 Main, (formerly the law office of Allain and

Bellefontaine). The phone number is (318) 577-7237 and the email address is HewesHouse@yahoo.com. Please take a few minutes to send an E-mail to the headquarters so that your E-mail address can be entered into our address book.

### Arc Of Iberia Donation Solves Interim Environmental Control Dilemma

One of the important upgrades which must be made to the Hewes House is in the area of environmental control. This includes proper heating and cooling as well as moisture and dust control. All things that are crucial to maintaining a comfortable environment inside the house during events hosted on the grounds, and having the control which will protect the house and historical artifacts to be stored and displayed in the house. At present there is no system other than a couple of old window unit air conditioners and gas space heaters. Since the Society does not have the money necessary for the full scale upgrade of this air system, an interim plan for the installation of temporary cooling and heating through special window units was devised. This plan would allow the short term use of the home for social events, while we were moving toward a full scale renovation and preservation project. Preliminary estimates for these units were in excess of six thousand dollars just for the first floor. When Paul Allain learned of our situation at the annual meeting in September, he asked Arc of Iberia if they would help us out by donating the window units they no longer needed. Thanks to Paul and Arc of Iberia, we now have the six thousand dollars worth of air conditioners needed for the first floor, plus three for the upstairs waiting to be installed at the Hewes House. These units will provide a temporary solution to the problem.



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# THE JEANERETTE ENTERPRISE



## Preserving heritage Hewes Home Placed On National Register

BY KARMA CHAMPAGNE  
THE JEANERETTE ENTERPRISE

Jeanerette's historic Harry B. Hewes home will now be included in the National Register of Historic Places.

Members of the Jeanerette Landmark Society just received confirmation from the state that the historic three story Victorian home met all requirements to be placed on the national register.

The home, located at the corner of Main and Henkle Streets, not only has a colorful history, but also stands as a reminder of the legacy of the once thriving cypress industry in Jeanerette and the many beautiful wooden frame cypress homes that lined its streets.

Built in or around 1897, the home has been the focal point of the first restoration project of the Jeanerette Landmark Society.

Ronald "Skipper" LeBlanc, project construction manager, said the designation of the home on the national register will open up other grant avenues for funding to help restore the home.

"In order to get further grants to preserve this landmark, it is important that we be identified on the national register," he said.

Jeanerette Landmark Society President Ray Allain said the home is worth restoring, not only because of its architectural beauty, but also because of its historical prominent occupants and owners, as well as the important role it has played in the cultural and economic history of the community.

The home was purchased in 1905 by Harry B. Hews and his wife, Nellie Bussey Hewes. Hewes had moved to Jeanerette in 1887 when he

purchased an interest in the Milmo and Stoke Lumber Company. He later co-founded and served as the director for the Jeanerette Lumber and Shingles Company, one of the largest and most successful lumber companies in the state. Cypress milling reached a peak in 1914 when Louisiana led the nation in lumber production. The home served as a residence of the Hewes family until 1953 when Harry Hewes died at the age of 87.

Hewes was a descendent of Joseph Hewes of North Carolina, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

According to Allain, the main goal of the Landmark Society is to preserve some of the historic landmarks before they become a distant memory.

The society was recently awarded \$72,000 through the Department of Natural Resources under the Atchafalaya Basin Program for restoration purposes.

LeBlanc said it is the hopes of the Landmark Society to restore the home and operate it as a tourist reception center and museum highlighting the cypress lumber industry.

The first floor would be used for civic gatherings, wedding receptions and other tourist related activities, while the second and third floor would be used to display pictures and artifacts of the lumber industry. Bed and breakfast accommodations would be offered on the rear grounds.

The first phase will include a face lift for the house with painting, electrical work, house leveling and foundation work, along with painting of the outside of the home and renovation to spruce up the grounds.

(cont'd on Page 4)

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"We are just trying to get the basic work completed so we can begin to generate operating funds," said LeBlanc.

House leveling and foundation work has already been completed and the group is ready to move forward with other renovations scheduled in the first phase.

Phase two would include the final renovation which would provide for the museum section and bed and breakfast accommodations.

Once the project is completed and museum established, Mayor Arthur Verret said the Hewes home will be an asset to the city in helping to draw visitors to the area.

"It's a move in the right direction to preserve our heritage. We have too many old buildings that were torn down in the past and these buildings have a lot to do with our heritage," said Verret.

"Harry Hewes was a pioneer in the cypress industry and this will be a tribute to him."

## JLS Architect Donates Fees

In a spirit of generosity and cooperation which has characterized Paul Allain's association as JLS's Project Architect, Paul informed the Board of Directors that he was donating all of his fees for professional services as Project Architect, amounting to \$14,013, through the end of 2004. Paul's donation will not only provide additional in-kind contributions which are eligible for matching grants, but it will also allow the Society to use more of the donations and dues that you contribute for the actual preservation of the house and grounds. His generosity has shortened the time before JLS members can begin reserving the first floor and grounds to host their special events, such as business meetings, wedding receptions, baby showers, suppers, and other events.

# Bed & Breakfast Feasibility Study



Last October, we asked Landmark Society member, and all around good sport, Roger Vendon, to spend at least one night in one of the two bedrooms on the second floor of the Hewes House. The invitation was part of a feasibility study for the future Bed & Breakfast accommodations planned in Phase two of the Landmark's restoration project. Both bedrooms had been cleaned up by Rick and Mary Zoleski when they started occupying the house in August, but for good measure Board Member Dana Bourgois brought bedding and furnishings from her own house, and together with Mary

restored the "Hewes' Bedroom" into what it may have looked like when the Hewes family lived there. Does the Hewes House have a future as a Bed & Breakfast? As Roger was leaving, after staying three nights instead of one, and a generous donation to the Landmark Society, he is quoted as saying: "I've found my home away from home! I'll be back!" Taking into account that Roger is also the president of Cypremort Point Incorporated, the prime real estate recreational leasing and development company in Acadiana and Southwest Louisiana, the answer seems obvious.

A special thanks to Mark Provost House Leveling Service for the extra time and effort his company donated to leveling the Hewes House exactly right. (Compare the picture above to the one on page 3 to see the new brick piers Mark installed.)

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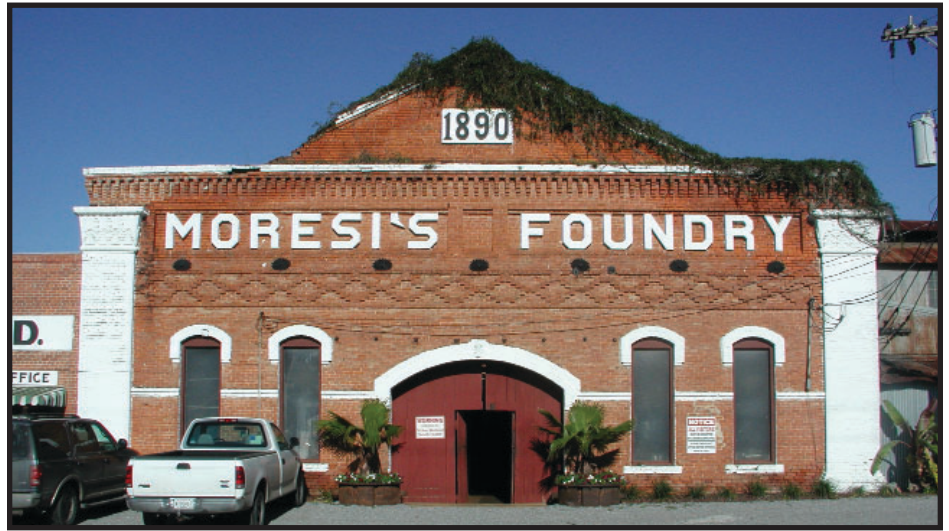


# Landmark Spotlight: Moresi's Foundry

BY RONALD "SKIPPER" LEBLANC  
JLS PROJECT MANAGER

The 55 by 150 foot brick building fronting East Main Street in Jeanerette bearing the name "Moresi's Foundry" for the last hundred and fifteen years was built by "The A. Moresi Co., Ltd.", a company established on July 3, 1852 by twenty three year old Antoine Moresi.

Antoine Moresi was Swiss. He received his education in metal working and engineering in Germany and was attracted to America for the work opportunities it presented. He first landed in New York City where he put his blacksmith skills to work. In two years he had learned enough about his adopted country to determine his education could best be put to use in Louisiana, building and maintain the machinery needed to harvest and process the bounty from the rich alluvial soil the Mississippi River deposited as it slowed down over its flood plains. When he reached the port of New Orleans in June 1852 he found the city in the middle of a yellow fever epidemic. He decided to embark immediately to the relative safety from epidemics the wilderness afforded, and landed in St. Martinville a week later. There he established "The A. Moresi Co., Ltd." on July 3, 1852 and worked as a blacksmith for a short time before moving to Charenton to work in another blacksmith shop. From there he took his company which was himself and his tools, to the Sorrel Plantation approximately halfway between Charenton and Jeanerette and ran a blacksmith shop from which he established his own wheelwright and machine shop to maintain the Sorrel Plantation sugar mill as well as fix machinery from neighboring sugar mills. When his improvements on broken sugar



producing machinery proved more effective than the original machinery, his company began building sugar mills from the ground up. Prior to 1879 his company came into possession of property to the East of Jeanerette, adjacent to the Bayou Teche which had clay suitable for making bricks. Antoine built a brick factory there and began operation in 1879. In 1884 he built and operated the first successful ice plant in the area on his property with bricks from his brick factory, and in 1890 used the bricks from his brick yard to build "Moresi's Foundry" on his property, where it stands to this day fronting East Main street in Jeanerette.

A foundry is defined as an establishment where metal is melted and poured, as well as a machine shop where power driven tools are used for making, finishing, or repairing machines or machine parts. Moresi's Foundry was the culmination of Antoine Moresi's intended purpose to provide a workplace for mechanical engineers like himself to maintain and develop the machinery needed to harvest the bounty from the Louisiana flood plain wilderness. Indeed this oasis of

technological design and manufacture proved to be an integral part in Louisiana's emergence from the wilderness. For without levees to contain the Mississippi flood water Louisiana would still look like the Amazon flood basin looks today. The money needed to build levees came from the sale of vast tracks of Louisiana swamp woodlands to lumber companies. Lumber companies like Jeanerette Lumber and Shingle, which Harry Hewes operated in Jeanerette, bought the woodlands because machines had been developed which made it possible to harvest and process the trees from the swamps, and foundries like Moresi's Foundry had been brought into existence to keep those machines in operation. Moresi's Foundry is still in operation and a contributing factor of not only Louisiana commerce but the international sugar industry. It is now owned by the Pierre Larroque family and under the direction of Engineer Jimmy Farmer. For more information on Moresi's Foundry's colorful past, vibrant present and exciting plans for the future, go to: <http://moresifoundry.com>.



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## JEANERETTE LANDMARK SOCIETY

### Honor Roll of Supporters

Ongoing support of the Landmark Society is realized through memberships and contributions. Memberships presently include 38 Lifetime Members who have donated \$1,000 or more and Annual Members who pay dues annually. We recognize with grateful appreciation these annual members whose dues are current:

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