

SPRING 2020

The Towner Tattler

Dear Members,

For the last eight years I have had the pleasure of serving on our Historical Society's board of directors, the last five years as your president. During those years I have served with many dedicated individuals. All of us have had a common interest in preserving our Boone County heritage. I am confident that in future years others will continue to protect our history and the items that tell our story.

In the years that I served on the board many things have been accomplished. Every year we set new attendance records at Belvidere's Home Town Christmas. In 2019 we surpassed 2200 individuals at this event. There have been so many highlights during the last eight years. Our museum has been fortunate enough to have two large financial donations. With the help of Lori Pepper the Melvin and Mildred Banks estate allowed us to remodel our Natural History Room and to have Mildred's extensive photo collection cataloged and displayed. The Jim and Marilyn Turner Estate allowed us to remodel and open our Rotating Exhibit Hall. Several events during the last few years were very important anniversaries for Boone County. Some are reminders of very sad days and some are very happy days. The fiftieth anniversary of the Belvidere tornado and the anniversary of Judy Ford's Miss America 1969 win were two days that we remembered. The museum has made a much greater effort to reach out and include areas of Boone County, beyond the City of Belvidere into our museum functions. Our board could rest here and say they did well but that's not the way it works around here now. Our board is constantly looking towards the future. Asking; "What's next?" Constantly demanding perfection, pushing forward to make our Society the best it can possibly be. We keep working on these issues. One area that we do need to improve upon is to be more inclusive with our local population. We need to recognize the contributions of our local Hispanic residents that have done so much in Boone County. I think we fall short in this area.



I want to thank all of those individuals that I have served with. Getting to know each of you was my pleasure. During the last eight years we hired a new Executive Director, Anna Pivoras. Anna brought professionalism and direction to the museum. Anna, thanks for your insight and guidance when we really needed it. I will always be indebted to you and your staff.

Most of all I would like to thank you, the volunteers that put in countless hours manning the front desk, planning events and cleaning up afterwards. But some Individuals do need to be singled out. Teri Keegan has been involved with the District Board since its inception. Teri is often the first to arrive and the last to leave. Teri has always been very accommodating to our board even when disagreements arose. She has always been there to work out a plan to solve our joint problems. In addition I would especially like to thank Jerry and Carol Rowe. Many times they have opened their home for our summer parties, given lectures and never say "No" when asked to do more. The Turner family including Jim, Marilyn, Gary, Ann and Betty Wright have always helped when ever asked. Sadly, Jim, Marilyn and Betty are gone now, they will be missed greatly. In addition to these individuals, I would also like to personally thank Jack Wolf and John Wolf for their generosity of both time and treasure to the museum. Without dedicated individuals like these people, and rest of the many members of our organization, we would cease to exist. So, to all of our members; "I say thank-you."

Belvidere is not just where our house is located. My parents, my brothers, Elaine, I and our children made our history here. Belvidere will always be our home. All of you and those that came before you made your history here as well. It's our duty to protect those histories. So stay involved. Encourage your friends to get involved. Don't let anyone discourage your efforts.

As my term as your president ends I want to thank all of you for the confidence given to me and the honor to serve you. If I can be of any assistance in the future please let me know.

Sincerely,

Dale A. Drake

Welcome BCMH's new Curator, Chris Gardner!

Chris has lived in Boone County for 20 years. She has an art degree from Michigan State University. She has always been interested in, well, everything. Most recently she worked as a clerk in the Boone County Clerk & Recorder's office. She is responsible for duties relating to the archives, including accessioning and processing. She also coordinates the volunteers and assists patrons with research.



2020 Spring General Membership Meeting

When: March 3rd, 2020 at 6pm

**Where: Boone County Museum of
History, 314 S State St. Belvidere. IL**

- * Dinner and entertainment will be provided!
- * Please bring a side dish or dessert if you'd like.
- * All are welcome, bring guests!



Thank you K-B Farms, Inc. and Funderburg Family!



The Boone County Historical Society and Boone County Museum of History announce K-B Farms, Inc.'s donation of the 113 year old "Funderburg House" mansion, along with a \$1 million gift for long-term maintenance of the property. Over the coming months, The Funderburg House will undergo renovations and updates to eventually become a multipurpose historic house museum, rental facility, and community gathering space.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for our museum, as well as our community," says BCMH Executive Director Anna Pivoras. "We are so thankful for this generous gift from K-B Farms and the Funderburg family, and are looking forward to a bright future for the historic residence."

The 1906, 8,000 square ft, craftsman-style mansion was built by Belvidere native Katherine Rhinehart, daughter of Civil War General Allen C. Fuller. In the late 1930s, the property was purchased by Hugh K. and Alice Funderburg, owners of the Keene-Belvidere Canning Company, now known as K-B Farms. The property has been under their ownership ever since, and was transferred to the Historical Society in December.

The donation of the iconic Belvidere home at 605 N. State St., along with the generous monetary donation, will be the largest single donation in Boone County Historical Society's 83 year history.

Rob Funderburg, Chairman of K-B Farms says "The board of K-B Farms is excited by the opportunity to convert our grandparent's historic home from a private residence into a public asset. Since the time the house was built it has been enjoyed by two families, and now it will be enjoyed by many other families in the future."

"Through the efforts of many, an iconic Belvidere property will become a community asset and destination. Boone County and Belvidere are so very fortunate to have received this part of our community's history to care for and utilize. Assisting the Funderburg family, K-B Farms and the Boone County Historical Museum with this unique donation has been an honor and a blessing," says John Wolf, BCMH trustee.

A dedication ceremony for The Funderburg House was held on January 25th. Thank you to all who attended!

About K-B Farms, Inc. K-B Farms is a third generation family business whose roots go back to the Keene-Belvidere Canning Company which packed peas and corn from the early 1900's until it was sold in 1944. Since then the company focused on grain and dairy farming and later engaged in residential, commercial and industrial real estate investment. Throughout its history, K-B Farms has worked alongside other organizations to improve the quality of life in Boone County for all of its citizens.



Boone County Museum of History

314 S. State St.

Belvidere, IL 61008

www.bcmuseumofhistory.org

815.544.8391

Key Dates

3/3/20: Spring General Membership Meeting (All Welcome!) 6pm

3/17/20: Boone County Historical Society Meeting 5:30pm

3/18/20: Boone County Historical Museum District Meeting 4pm

3/31/20: WWI Exhibit opening 4-6pm at BCMH*

4/15/20: Boone County Historical Museum District Meeting 4pm

5/19/20: Boone County Historical Society Meeting 5:30pm

5/20/20: Boone County Historical Museum District Meeting 4pm

***EXHIBIT OPENING!**

Join us on March 31st 4-6pm for an open house celebrating our newest exhibit: WWI in Boone County. The exhibit features a reproduction of a war trench, our world class WWI propaganda poster collection, and artifacts used by Boone County soldiers. This will be the first exhibit in our 'Turner Farms' rotating exhibit gallery!