

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

# Meet *The Ladies*

of the Beloit Federation of women. The Federation wrote its final chapter in October 2011, bringing over a century of community action to an end.



Headlines from the  
**Beloit Daily News**  
May 23, 1933  
It could have been  
yesterday!

### Upcoming Events:

Lincoln Day Dinner "Badger Boneyards"  
St. Pat's Gala to Remember!  
Weekly Quilting Classes

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Beloit, WI  
Permit No. 87

The Vision of the Beloit Historical Society is to  
make history a focal point of community pride  
and to serve as a constant reminder to the  
community of its great and diverse heritage.  
Visit our web site at [beloithistoricalsociety.com](http://beloithistoricalsociety.com)

Beloit Historical Society  
Confluence  
845 Hackett St.  
Beloit WI 53511  
Address Service Requested

## *The Ladies*

For 117 years the Beloit Federation of Women made Beloit a better place and left its mark in local and state history. We are honored to be trusted with preserving its memory and the actions of its members.

A group of ladies got together (17 May 1894) one hundred and seventeen years ago with the purpose of providing services to the Beloit community. Within a brief time they developed a mission statement, created a constitution and by-laws (19 November 1894) and organized themselves into a medley of committees, each designed to target the perceived and real needs of the general public.

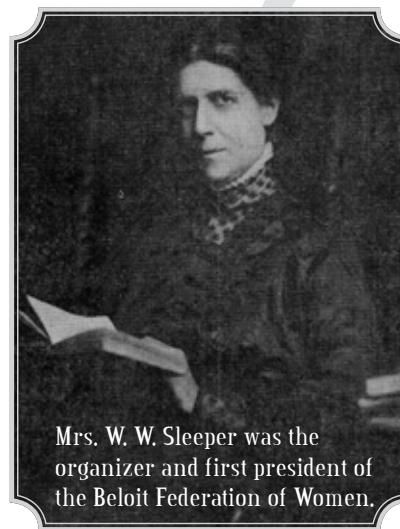
It was in the month of May 1894 that Mabel Sleeper of the West Side Monday Club (Founded 1893) thought it a good idea to form all the Beloit clubs into a City Federation of Women's Clubs based on the national model of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (Founded 1890). The Beloit Club was one of the first to join. Mabel served as the

club's first President. Of course the West Side Monday Club was a charter member as were the following clubs: The Arche, Fortnightly, Friendly Room Reading Circle, L.H. Musical, Saturday, Social Reading and the Tuesday.

Upon organization the club went to work on establishing a list of six objectives it saw as of paramount concern: Improvement in Public Schools, establishing training classes in domestic science, providing lecture courses following the University of Wisconsin Extension Plan, founding a permanent library free to the public, supporting free concerts and securing a permanent woman's club room in the center of the city. Of all the accomplishments this last objective eluded them: A wish that would remain unfulfilled for the life of the Federation.

In 1911 the City Federation of Women changed the name of the club. They renamed it the Beloit Federation of Women with the purpose of attracting individual members. This name change remained in effect for the duration of the club. The maneuver to eliminate the word City and replace it with the name Beloit proved quite successful in achieving their goal. In 1913 the club had 147 individual and club members. By 1930 the number rose to 400 with individuals outnumbering by far club memberships.

The Beloit Federation of Women tackled a variety of tasks. From 1894-1914 they introduced to the Beloit community kindergarten, encouraged the position of superintendent of schools with semi annual promotions, inaugurated sewing classes into the public school curriculum, developed three free traveling libraries and a regular one hour story-telling presentation to kids, sent boxes of reading materials to the soldiers in the field during the Spanish-American War (1898)



Mrs. W. W. Sleeper was the organizer and first president of the Beloit Federation of Women.

*Continued inside*

# *The Ladies continued*

and fought for a city policy of providing free garbage pick up to the citizens of Beloit. In 1908 a group of ladies from the club approached Robert M. La Follette, Senator from Wisconsin, imploring him to support up-coming legislation that would provide a method and treatment for tuberculosis. A delegation from the club contended at the state level for ratification of a State amendment allowing women to vote. Mabel Sleeper herself worked hard for the welfare of Indians.

In the 1920's the same theme of civic-mindedness can be seen through all of their actions. They were instrumental in forming the Parent/Teachers Association (PTA), still promoting and supporting a permanent library, leading the way to establishing the Municipal Hospital (1928) and having a direct hand in naming Beloit's oldest cemetery (Oakwood). In addition, these illustrious, savvy and intelligent women worked equally hard to beautify and maintain the city's parks and playgrounds. And in 1926 the club raised the annual dues from 25 cents to 50 cents per individual.

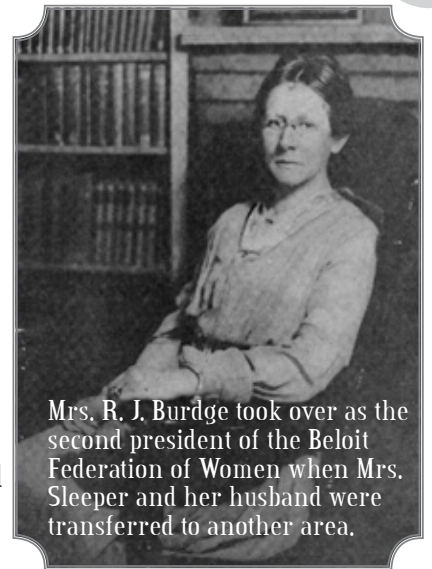
As time and success progressed throughout the ensuing years objectives changed. By the 1930's the Beloit Federation of Women established a new set of priorities which is reflected in the names of their various committees: American Home; Public Welfare; International Relations; Education; History & Landmarks; Radio; Legislation; Child Welfare. This new generation of members concerned themselves with the issues of the day as much as their predecessors and continued to contribute mightily to the well being of Beloit.

In the 1940's, along with other projects, the Women funded an infant respirator (\$495.00) for the Hospital on Olympian Avenue and a room with a shower (\$105.00) for transient women at the Salvation Army. It was during this decade that the Club celebrated its Golden Jubilee at the First Congregational Church. There were 300 in attendance. These were the years when the club decided to have monthly luncheons and programs; When Mrs. James Wooten turned over the Presidency to Mrs. Charles Urbon; When the Federation of Women joined the Council of Beloit Social Agencies and when it aided in the creation of the Beloit Junior Women's Club (1947).

With the same energy and dedication it displayed from its beginning, the Beloit Federation of Women undertook many projects throughout the 1950's & '60's. By the 1980's it dealt with environmental and energy concerns. There was one undertaking entitled Project Energy Independence highlighting energy conservation. On 26 October 1981 President Ann Hodges & Conservation Chairman Ethel Bridge shared the stage to accept an award the club had won from Westinghouse Electric Corporation.

And so it went with this illustrious club throughout the years and through its 100th birthday in 1994: Helping, funding, promoting, convincing, working for the betterment of this city of ours. Working until the membership dwindled to a few and no such projects were possible anymore without the numbers of dedicated people and the myriad committees. They also donated right to their end as a club in October 2011: Donating \$4400 to the Beloit Historical Society which seems somewhat appropriate since they had a direct hand in founding it in 1910 and donating an equal amount to the Beloit Public Library which they also had a direct hand in establishing.

Now the club known as the Beloit Federation of Women is history and we will preserve their recordings, booklets, memos and photographs and hope others will come to learn of them through our efforts to preserve their memory, their mark on this city of Beloit.



Mrs. R. J. Burdge took over as the second president of the Beloit Federation of Women when Mrs. Sleeper and her husband were transferred to another area.

**Beloit Historical Society**  
Founded 1910

**Officers**

Craig Mellem, President  
Nancy Alseth, Vice President  
Maggie Janke, Treasurer  
William Bolgrien, Secretary

**Board of Directors**

David Collins  
Teri Downing  
Terry Karow  
Sue Kurth  
Nancy Wallace

**Lincoln Center Staff:**

Paul Kerr,  
Executive Director  
Dwight Alton,  
Facilities Manager

**Newsletter Contributors:**

Paul Kerr, Dwight Alton,  
and Dick Gerhard; layout  
by Jen Scott.

Board meetings are the  
third Thursday of every  
month at 4 p.m. and are  
held at Lincoln Center, 845  
Hackett Street.

The Newsletter,  
Confluence, is published  
quarterly for the  
membership of the Beloit  
Historical Society to inform  
readers of Society activities  
as well as educate them on  
the history of Beloit. The  
Beloit Historical Society  
manages two sites, Lincoln  
Center Museum with main  
offices at 845 Hackett St. and  
Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead,  
2149 St. Lawrence Ave. For  
further information please call  
(608) 365-7835 or e-mail us at  
[Pkerr@beloithistoricalsociety.com](mailto:Pkerr@beloithistoricalsociety.com).  
Or see our web site at  
[beloithistoricalsociety.com](http://beloithistoricalsociety.com).

# Memorials

Memorials in memory of Jean Luebke were made to the Beloit Historical Society during the months of October & November. The Society had contributions from 75 people who gave a total of \$2,440.00. The Society sincerely appreciates the support of the David Luebke Family.



## DON'T MISS THE FUN IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH



Our **Quilting Classes** will run on Saturdays through February and March, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Cost is \$12 member, \$15 non-member. February classes are the 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th; March classes are the 3rd, 10th, 17th and 31st (we skip the 24th).

Two exciting events are coming up in February and March - the Lincoln Day Dinner with a program on Wisconsin cemeteries and the dearly departed who call them home, followed in March by the Gala Auction event which is held every other year. The Annual Lincoln Day Dinner is held at the Beloit Historical Society located at 845 Hackett St. and the Gala at 618 Fourth St. Both events are fund raisers.

## Lincoln Day Dinner Speaker Knows "Badger Boneyards"

**Author Dennis McCann** knows where the bodies are buried - and is ready to tell during Beloit Historical Society's annual **Lincoln Day Dinner set for Friday, Feb. 24 at Beloit Historical Society.**

From the ornate tombs of Milwaukee beer barons to displaced Chippewa graves and miniscule family plots, McCann's book "Badger Boneyards: The Eternal Rest of the Story" unearths the stories of Wisconsin. Football great John Heisman is buried here, as is the state's smallest man, a woman whose tombstone names her murderer, and the boy who would not tell a lie and paid the price.

Appetizers and wine will be served from 6-6:30 p.m. The buffet dinner will include two entrees. Cost for the entire evening is \$35 for members and \$40 for non members. Please use the form provided in this newsletter to make your reservation. Reservations, with payment, are due by Feb. 19.

McCann is a Wisconsin native and longtime explorer of the state's nooks, crannies, and its burial grounds. A University of Wisconsin-Madison journalism graduate, he joined the "Milwaukee Journal" (later the "Milwaukee Journal Sentinel") in 1983 as farm writer and state rover. His previous books include "The Wisconsin Story: 150 Stories/150 Years," "Dennis McCann Takes You for a Ride," and "Rough Stuff," a collection of his columns from "Wisconsin Golfer" magazine. Now a freelance writer, he spends most of his time with his wife, Barb, a retired teacher, at their home on Lake Superior in Bayfield.



## LINCOLN DINNER MENU

### Appetizers:

Fruit & Cheese  
Mini Chicken Cordon Bleu  
Prosciutto & Filo Triangles  
Mixed Nuts

### Entrees:

Beef Bourgiugnonne and Spaetzel  
Roasted Chicken Breast Au Jus

### Sides:

Garden Blend Wild Rice  
Manicotti Parma Rosa  
Garden Salad with Dressings  
Dinner Rolls and Butter

### Dessert:

Cherry Cheesecake

## Gala Auction Takes on St. Pat's Theme

The Gala Auction committee, chaired by board member Nancy Wallace, is busy putting together a range of "unique, one-of-a-kind items" for the St. Patrick's Day themed event.

"We want to make the auction a lot of fun, something no one wants to miss," said Wallace, adding, "This is an incredible opportunity to bid on, and purchase, the perfect gift or even a getaway for yourself."

Circle Friday, March 16 on your calendar for the auction, to be held at La Casa Grande, 618 Fourth St, Beloit. Social hour with time for viewing items for both the live and silent auctions will begin at 6 p.m. After dinner, the live auction is to begin with Rich Ranft of Beloit Auction as auctioneer.

Held every other year, the Gala is Beloit Historical Society's biggest fundraiser. For more information or to donate an item to the auction, contact Nancy at 608-363-0060 or [26e10@charter.net](mailto:26e10@charter.net).

### I'd like to attend the Lincoln Day Dinner

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, ST zip \_\_\_\_\_

Payment is included for:

A \_\_\_\_\_ tickets at \$35 per member = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_ tickets at \$40 per non-member = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Add together lines A and B for total = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please list names and addresses of any non-members.  
Use additional paper if more space is required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form with payment to Beloit Historical Society  
Lincoln Center, 845 Hackett St., Beloit, WI 53511 by Friday,  
Feb. 17. For those who wish to drop their reservations off,  
the Center is open 12-4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.

### I'd like to attend the Gala Auction

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, ST zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ tickets at \$50 per person = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

total = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Or buy your tickets securely online at  
**[beloithistoricalsociety.com](http://beloithistoricalsociety.com)!**

We accept MasterCard, Visa, and PayPal.

*Included with each ticket is admission to the live  
auction, dinner, a complementary drink, and a raffle  
ticket for an opportunity to win exciting prizes!*

If not purchasing online, please mail this form with pay-  
ment to Nancy Wallace (make checks out to Beloit Histori-  
cal Society), 825 Petunia Lane, Beloit, WI 53511 by Friday,  
March 9.

