



Confluence

Where Past Meets Present

Volume 27 Issue 5

BELOIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sept./Oct. 2020

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Fairbanks-Morse "War Gang" - 1917

WW I helped women to develop courage and self-reliance. Many had to assume male roles such as working in the farms, shops and offices when the men were away at war. The independence that many women gained during the war years helped the suffrage movement gain followers and momentum.

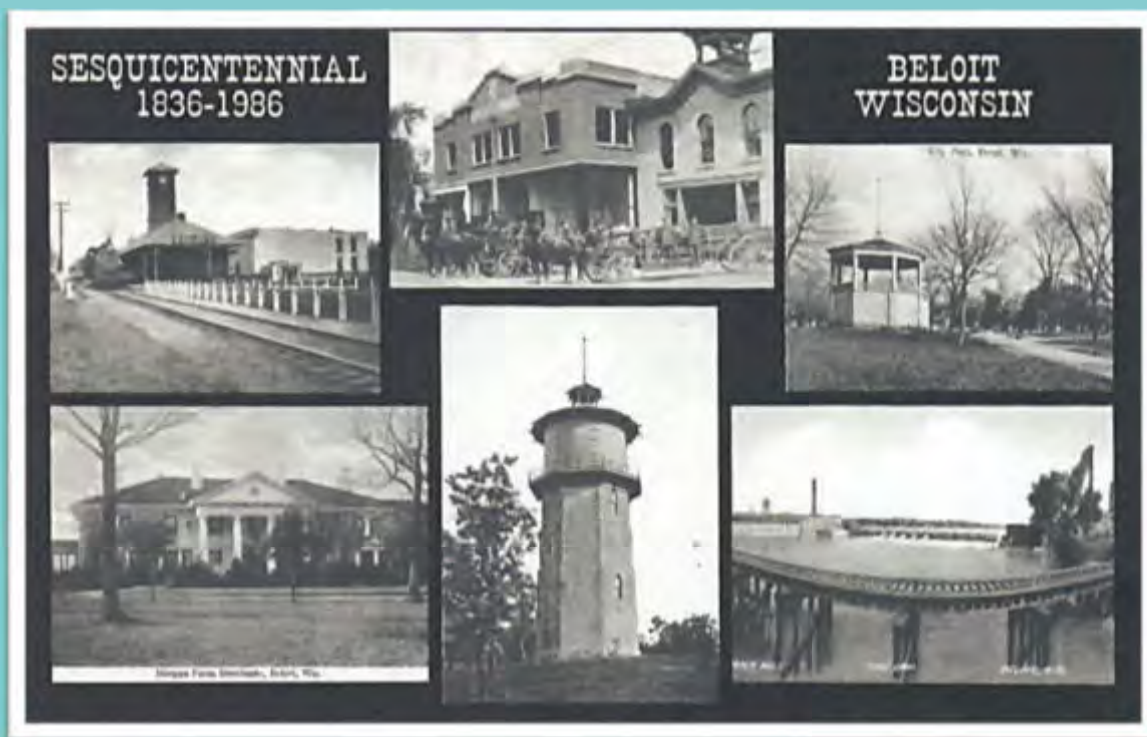
100 Years in the Past

Take a virtual tour of an exhibit celebrating the achievements of Beloit women getting the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment.

The exhibit will be available Sept. 12

- BHS website at www.beloithistory.org
- Beloit Historical Society Facebook page
- YouTube

Covid-19 has presented many challenges for BHS because we are closed. We are adapting programs, exhibits and gatherings to continue. One solution is a virtual tour of an exhibit which celebrates the achievements of Beloit women.



Postcard of Early Beloit Pictures
to Promote Beloit's Sesquicentennial 1836-1986

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1907 Outlook Club, one of the early women's organizations formed during Beloit's progressive era.

One hundred years ago life in the progressive era and the roaring twenties was a time of great liberation for many women. From 1890 through the 1920s women became leaders in a range of community movements. The exhibit, **100 Years in the Past** celebrates the achievements of Beloit women by specifically looking at women's *daily, social and political* roles. *Politically* during this time, women fought for civil rights and full citizenship—especially the right to vote. Suffragists in Wisconsin, along with many other states, helped to organize a nonviolent grassroots uprising of women that won them citizenship, political liberty, and the right to vote. **Wisconsin was the first state to ratify the 19th Amendment** once it was passed. It is important to recognize that the ratification of the 19th amendment did not address the racial terrorism that prevented (and still prevents) many people of color from voting.

Socially in the late 19th century and early 20th century, women of all backgrounds joined national and local organizations in great numbers. We can see the impacts of the grassroots uprising reflected in the many women's organizations in Beloit which formed during the progressive era and the years following. These active clubs in Beloit had major missions regarding social service work. These clubs hosted parties and social events for the community, but they also helped to raise community awareness and raise money for basic community services.

Finally, *daily* women's roles were challenged during this time as many joined the workforce. You can learn more by viewing our exhibit on You Tube, BHS website or Facebook. You will gain a holistic understanding of what life was like for Beloit **women in 1820**.

Cemetery Tour of WW II Veteran's Graves

The 75th anniversary of the end of WW II is September 2. BHS is in the process of planning a walking tour of Eastlawn Cemetery in October to mark this event and visit gravesites. Covid-19 has created a few issues, so details are not available at this time.

There will be a booklet available based on information in Beloit **Howard Swacina's** book **World War II Memories**. (right)

Please watch for information on our website, Facebook page and the Beloit Daily News.



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Beloit Tourist Camp



The last issue of *Confluence* featured an article about Morse Hills Golf Course which preceded the construction of Beloit Plaza/ Mall and the current location of Eclipse Center. The earliest notoriety for this stretch of land, however came about because of the Beloit Pageant of 1916 which was held on this land surrounding the frog pond. Approximately 30,000 people attended the event with app. 20,000 Beloiters involved in its production.

Many people do not realize that there was another activity of prominence for several years at this location beginning in 1921.

The Beloit Real Estate Board decided to equip a tourist camp on the property owned by Fairbanks-Morse just north of their foundry after the company had consented to the use of the land without a rental charge. Its favorable scenic location just off Riverside Dr., the main tourist artery into the city, was on high land with a good growth of hardwood trees. Fairbanks had used the camp area to house the laborers employed in the construction of the new foundry the summer before, so sanitary and water supply were already available. The Beloit real estate men got the facilities in shape and advertised the location to tourists with large sign boards on approaches to the city as well as putting the information in tourist bureaus in larger cities and in published road guides. In many cities, these sites were established by the city council and more elaborate facilities provided. The group decided to keep a register of guests who were using the camp and to get comments about the camp itself for future planning.

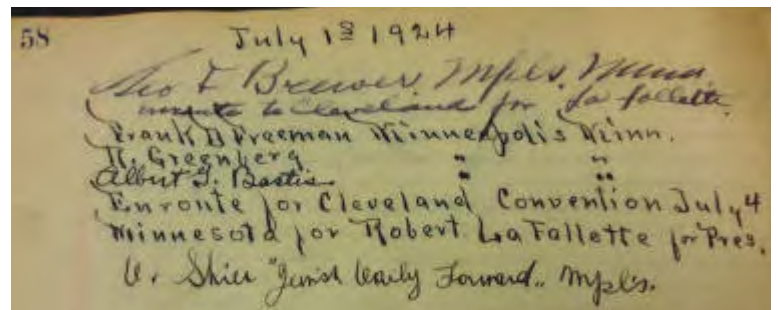
"It is no wonder that the tourists were enthusiastic. Located on a hill with evening breezes, the woodlands hide the city which is moments away. The broad Rock River gives the appearance of a silver lake disappearing in the distance at Big Hill—one of the finest views on the river" stated an article in the Beloit Daily News.

Hundred of exclamations of the highest praise came from tourists who visited the camp. Even people from the East who believed that nothing but "wild Injuns" are to be found in Wisconsin, burst out in praise for the Beloit site. *"This has Gotham beat by a mile not to mention Boston"* stated a party of New Yorkers in the camp registry. Visitors from California admitted the place was *"a real Paradise."*



The group decided to keep a register of guests who were using the camp and to get comments about the camp itself for future planning.

Entry in camp registry from Minn. group on way to Cleveland Convention for Robert LaFollette for Pres.



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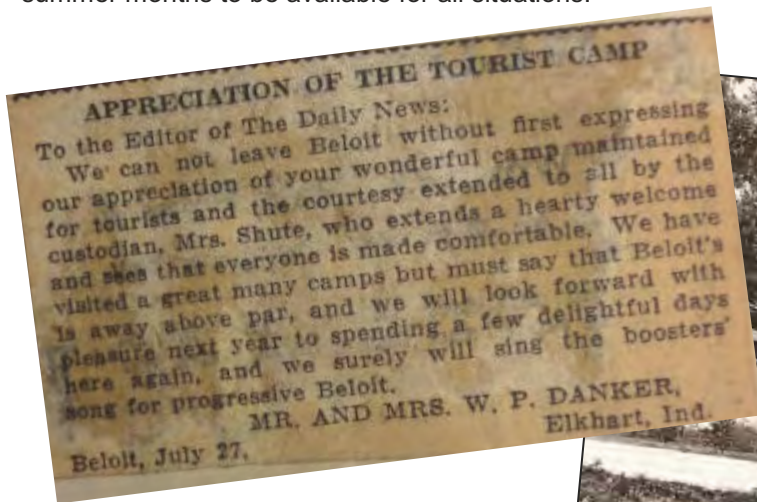
The camp proved to be extremely popular. Two years after its establishment, as a result of pressure from several civic clubs and the Real Estate Board, the city council took over operation authorizing a Public Property Comm. to spend \$3,000 on improvements. These improvements included construction of a frame building for protection during storms (also to be used as a camp store for supplies), increased number of tent platforms, electric lighting, construction of a number of outdoor fireplaces and a new fence. They also planned to make the camp available to Beloit citizens as a picnic grounds. The project carried with a vote of 10 to 6. A pay telephone booth was opened to the public and ice and grocery wagons made daily deliveries to the camp. Later a pier that was added across the concrete road proved to be very popular, and swimming parties were almost always using the place.

The "Mainstreet" of paved brick from the entrance on Riverside Dr., exited onto Henry Ave. Trees bordering the drive were whitewashed half-way up their trunks to mark the drive night-or-day. The place was known to be attractive and well-maintained with beautiful flowers on the grounds to greet the guests. This was done by managers Fred and Minta Shute who lived at 18 Pine St - right in the backyard of the camp. However, they camped on the grounds in the summer months to be available for all situations.

"Tourists seldom tire of the view. Evenings the fretwork of lights on Waverly Beach's coaster is reflected in the black of the river. The music comes across the water in softened snatches." reported another article in the Beloit Daily News.

Visitors came from all over. One newspaper account stated that guests had come from every state except Idaho that year. The camp also had foreign visitors from Canada, Mexico, Cape Horn, South America, England, Scotland and Argentina. Beloit Tourist Camp found itself famed as a picnic ground for people from out of town. Scores of small parties from a radius of 50 miles visited it weekly. One man, J. Sahlin of Oak Park, Chicago, found it so pleasant that he declared his intention of bringing his family of five children there every two weeks to camp overnight. The average number of tents each night ran from 20-30, and total annual attendance topped 5,000.

At first most tourist camps were free, a practice much appreciated by the tourists. After a few years, fees were charged. "Free" brought in panhandlers and loafers. The practice of charging fees tended to minimize the floaters. Around this time, Fairbanks-Morse planned to develop a golf course and clubhouse on the property for use by their employees. The city was extremely grateful for the use of this land to benefit the community but decided not to establish the camp at another location in the city. Camp visitors had to be content with beautiful memories of their stay along the river in Beloit.



A letter to the editor of the Beloit Daily News was sent by visitors from Elkhart, Indiana



Postcard from Beloit Tourist Camp

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The **Saturday Evening Post**, (Spring, 1972 issue), featured a great portrait of the smiling couple Julie and David Eisenhower. Why is this magazine cover included in **The Confluence**? This is the year that Beloit won the distinction of being named one of the nine **All-American Cities** (out of over 100 entrants), an award co-sponsored by The Saturday Evening Post and the **National Municipal League**. It is considered the highest honor that can be earned by an American community. Beloit received the news February 28, 1972. The following morning there was a flag raising and announcement celebration for the city at the Municipal Center.

Then, and in the preceding four years, Beloit was way down on itself. According to the Post the *"typical American city was placed on a water route which, over time, often became polluted. Factories of steel began to rain soot onto the streets. Frequently a railroad would cut the city in two."* What had made our cities great suddenly began to make them sick. *"The solution goes beyond the environment. It lies in the environment of the heart, the mind and the soul. **'The people are the city.'** And that in a nutshell is what the All American Cities Awards are all about. A city need not be a model community to win. Successful action, not perfection, is the criterion...A community must show major achievement of benefits to it as a whole. It must give evidence that these achievements resulted from 'citizen action.'*

Beloit points to "what citizen involvement can do for a community," and states that "People are problem solvers in Beloit. Three leaders from Beloit were **Robert Gilliam**, a fire fighter whose quietly dynamic influence as Coordinator, Black Resource Personnel, has persuaded black Beloiters to become active participants in problem solving; **Dr. Miller Upton**, President of Beloit College; and **Harry Moore**, President of the Beloit Corporation."



Other cities receiving the award were: Twin Cities of MN, Santa Fe Springs, CA, Placentia, CA, North Branford, CT, Lowell, MA, Jamaica, NY, Chickasha, OK and Carbondale, IL.



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We approach our problems by talking across the table, straight from the shoulder. That way we understand each other. Our leaders are not figureheads: they are shirt-sleeve participants who are deeply involved in the human dynamism that distinguishes Beloit – we have some 55 citizen groups involved in community betterment, having a total membership of about 1,800 people...every one of our key committees includes women members." The Beloit presentation in Atlanta bore all of this out. It was a team effort.

(Other participants were: Joe Moen, radio station manager; Bill Donahue, bank president; Gus Nelson, clergyman; Carl Balson, college professor and representatives from League of Women Voters, Beloit Daily News and others). They told of getting citizen approval of the library project, the formation of an economic development group, the college-community partnership, and of the role of the YMCA, YWCA, Boy's Club and other organizations that depend upon citizen support, not government money.

"One of the most successful Beloit projects has been a grass-roots renaissance of the arts. The Affiliate Artist Program was begun to support young artists. Last year more than 30 artists spent a week moving through Beloit, giving concerts. The week was brought to a climax with the Beloit Festival, which drew 5,000 listeners. For a community of 36,000, an audience of 5,000 is a remarkable crowd."

A week of celebration occurred with Beloit All-America City Days. Some of the activities were a banquet at the Holiday Inn, a luncheon at Hilton Hotel, a rally at the field house etc. Events featured guests such as the Hon. Patrick Lucey, Governor of Wisconsin; Wisconsin President of the League of Women Voters, Miss America, Laurie Lea Schaefer from Ohio etc. Storefronts featured banners and flags with pins and bumper stickers for citizens.

A traveling exhibit of the presentation was circulated among Beloit businesses and organizations. Each group was allowed to keep it for one week and many, many groups took advantage of this offer.

Recognition of our award was listed in the Senate Congressional Record on March 2, 1972, and the House Congressional Record on March 16. Our city manager received congratulatory letters and telegrams from mayors, governors, senators, representatives and cities from all over the country. A very proud day for our fine city and the beginning of a renewal that has continued up to this present day.

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New to the Collection

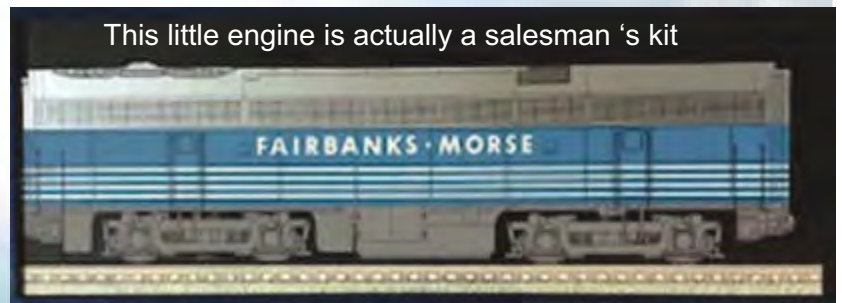
A collection of Fairbanks Morse memorabilia and awards was recently donated to the Beloit Historical Society by **Eileen Ginter**. The items were awarded to and purchased by her late husband **Donald Ginter** during his 37-year career with **Fairbanks Morse**. The donated items illustrate the creative use of marketing making ordinary items, such as ash trays and keychains memorable. The donation also included a scale, large prints of locomotives built by Fairbanks Morse, Quarter Century Club items, and a salesman's kit showing a variety of options to apply when ordering a locomotive. Ginter spent his professional career working for Fairbanks Morse as an engineer.

Donald W. Ginter was born on January 5, 1935 in Trenton, New Jersey. He married Eileen in June 1956 in Hopewell, New Jersey. After receiving his Mechanical Engineering degree in June 1959 from Drexel Institute of Technology in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Don accepted a job offer from Fairbanks Morse & Co. and was hired to the Engine Division headquarters and manufacturing operations in Beloit. He and Eileen moved across the country from Pennsylvania to Wisconsin to start their new life together. He started work at Fairbanks in October 1959 and retired in September 1996 after 37 years.

As an engineer, a portion of his job was to perform testing and quality checks on the large, commercial engines and generators, including Piestick and Colt-Pielstick engines after installation.

Don became a member of the Fairbanks Morse Quarter Century Club after 25 years of service and enjoyed the club's annual meetings and the opportunity to socialize with his Fairbanks Morse colleagues.

It may have been during his time at Fairbanks that he developed a love and deep passion for railroads and for industrial history. In the 1960s he became part of a small group of like-minded individuals who formed the Mid-Continent Railway Museum in North Freedom, Wisconsin. He was named curator of the museum and served in a volunteer capacity for more than 30 years. He was also instrumental in the formation of Lake States Railway Historical Association in Baraboo, Wisconsin and served as a Trustee until his death in April 2018.



This little engine is actually a salesman 's kit

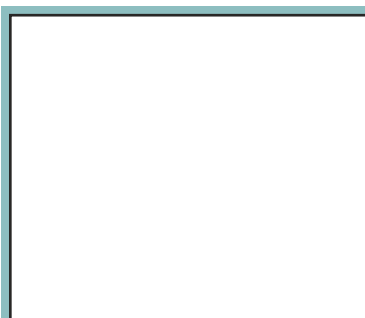
Welcome
New Members

Alice and Larry Olson

Great News!

Wisconsin Humanities Council CARES Relief Grant

We are honored to be a recipient for round 2 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Relief grant for general operating from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awarded through the Wisconsin Humanities Council. The Beloit Historical Society was chosen to be awarded \$5792 through a highly competitive grant application process. BHS was also a recipient in round 1 of the CARES Relief grant receiving \$7492 in June. Both awards will help support general operating costs, specifically payroll for the new **Program Coordinator Julia Schoenthal** and **Archivist Leith Rohr**. The Wisconsin Humanities Council supports and creates programs that use history, culture and discussion to strengthen community life for everyone in Wisconsin.



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Beloit can be proud of **John Baxter Kinne**, a very early U. S. Army **Medal of Honor** recipient. He was born in Beloit on Dec. 3, 1877, to Mary A. Esplin and William O. Kinne.

He entered active duty as a member of Company B, 1st North Dakota volunteers. He received the award for actions that took place on May 16, 1899, in the Philippine-American War. Private Kinne was one of a hand-picked group named "Young's Scouts" who were ordered by Chief Scout William Henry Young to rush a burning wooden bridge under intense enemy assault. They attacked and overcame the 600 member enemy force and put out the bridge fire. Private Kinne and five other scouts earned the Medal of Honor for this action. This citation was awarded by President Theodore Roosevelt on May 17, 1906.

After discharge, Kinne completed his medical degree in 1906 at Rush Medical College, Chicago. For over 30 years he was a highly respected physician in Aberdeen, Washington. He interrupted his career to command an ambulance company in France during WWI. He passed away July 19, 1954, and is buried in Aberdeen.

Kinne's personal journal has been turned into a book titled **Avenge the Maine: John Kinne's War** by John Durand. It is one of the most complete day-by-day accounts of a foot soldier of that war. It contains photos, maps and battle diagrams (created by the editor) to augment the information in the book.

TRIVIA TEASER

Question: Where was the first Wisconsin State Fair held in 1851?

Answer: Sponsored by the State Agriculture Society to showcase advances in agriculture machinery and products, the first fair was held on 6 acres of land along the banks of the Rock River in Janesville. After its debut, different cities took turns hosting until 1885. A Milwaukee location was the site from 1886-1891. The fair moved to its current permanent location in West Allis in 1892.

The first fair featured a 200 # squash and a quarter-acre plowing competition with teams of horses and oxen.

It attracted between 13,000-18,000 people which was reportedly the largest gathering in Wisconsin history at that time.

Apologies....

In our last issue, the last few lines of the answer to **Trivia Teaser** were cut off. Sorry.

Question: Beloit's oldest church (180 years) is beautiful **St. Paul's Episcopal** on Grand Ave. In 1890 the congregation voted to begin paying the rector's salary from member pledges. How was the salary paid before that decision?

Answer: Previous to that change by the membership, the rector's salary came from the rental of pews; and when a member gave up a more expensive one for a less expensive one, or decided to take only half a pew, it subtracted that much money from the rector's income. This put much stress on the rector to pay his own bills.



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Message from Donna



As summer passes, we miss seeing our members, general public and our volunteers, but understand this is necessary right now to keep everyone safe. The Lincoln Center remains closed to in-person visits to do our part to minimize exposure to the coronavirus. Although the Lincoln Center is closed to in-person visits, staff is hard at work answering research requests that we receive by phone and email to info@beloithistoricalsociety.com. We are also busy expanding our use of the internet, developing new programs using innovative methods and updating our exhibits.

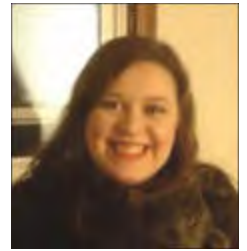
Please join me in welcoming **Julia Schoenthal** to the staff as the society's new Program Coordinator. She is applying her internet expertise and knowledge of museum collection management to the development of brand new programs.

The Board of Directors and staff have begun the planning process for the next 3-year Strategic Plan. Thank you to everyone who has participated in the strategic planning survey. Your opinions and suggestions are a valuable contribution that will help the board of directors determine the future direction of the society. Responses to the survey are being examined to determine categories of importance which aides in the creation of goals to accomplish during the next three years.

Thank you for staying in touch through mail, email and phone calls.

I hope everyone is safe, healthy and happy.

Welcome Julia Schoenthal Program Coordinator



Julia Schoenthal joined our staff this July as our new Program Coordinator, a part-time position with many responsibilities. Julia is from Stoughton, Wisconsin, and became interested in museum work as a child. She was obsessed with dinosaurs and was lucky enough to have parents who recognized this and took her to visit many museums. Those visits widened her love of learning about what life was like thousands of years ago and lead to her study of anthropology at Beloit College.

Julia was an assistant at Logan Museum where she changed exhibits, accessioned items, built mounts and pulled objects for classes to use in their studies. As part of her museum studies curriculum, she worked with our toy collection as a summer intern at BHS last year. She assessed the condition of our toys then inventoried, rehoused and explored the possible uses of the collection in the future. She said it *"was an awesome opportunity to learn the complete process of handling a collection from scratch"*. She also assisted with the inventory at Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead.

Her new duties at BHS are: community outreach, sharing information about BHS through social media and planning programs. Her overall goal is getting our collection accessible to the public. Her current projects are working with our three summer college interns to allow them to stay remote, helping to organize a virtual event for the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment ratification and putting together a cemetery tour and open house for the 75th anniversary of WW II.

Julia's future plans are to return to grad school in a couple of years and then to become a staff member of the DPAA (Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency) at their museum headquarters in Hickman, Hawaii. This agency identifies remains of prisoners of war or soldiers listed as missing in action or returned from other countries.

Julia lives in Beloit with her boyfriend Craig and their two cats. They are often joined by other kittens in their role as kitty foster parents for the Humane Society of Southern Wisconsin. She enjoys camping, reading and running.

Welcome aboard, Julia!

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			Card # _____	Exp _____	CVV _____
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Confluence Newsletter

*Sharing Beloit's History to
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Back of postcard sent from Janesville P.O. on Oct. 23, 1928

Beloit Tourist Camp

Two and one-half miles north on number 13, 51, 26.
Cottages, spring water, electric lights, play grounds
for children, service garage and refreshments.
...Charles Glover, Prop.

Details on pages 4 & 5 of this issue
(any volunteer to translate hand-written text?)

Beloit Historical Society Sustaining Memberships

Many Thanks to You!

Vonnie Adams
Joe and Ingrid Chamberlain
Rick Dexter
Teri and Don Downing
Dick Gerhard
Jim and Joyce Haight
Nicolette Meister/Kevin Larson
Jim and Cindy Packard
Sam and Judy Paddock
Charles Ricksecker
Michael Schnur
Jennifer Scott
Gary and Lois Swanson
Cole Swartz
John and Bonnie Wetter
Harry Wong M.D.
John and Becky Wong