

BELLEVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

“Everything we do is for the betterment of the City of Belleville.”

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THE MISSION OF THE BELLEVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS TO PROMOTE AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF THE HISTORY, CUSTOMS, ARTIFACTS, ARCHITECTURE, AND PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS. IT STRIVES TO ACQUIRE, MANAGE, AND PRESERVE ARTIFACTS, DOCUMENTS AND REAL PROPERTY SIGNIFICANT TO BELLEVILLE AND TO ENCOURAGE PRESERVATION OF THE CITY'S CULTURE, HISTORY, AND ARCHITECTURE.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Painting for auction of original Township High School Main Building. 10" x 20". Carolyn Karasek Needles, artist.



The BHS accomplished three major milestones this summer and we are anxious to show them off.

First, the Historic Garfield Street Saloon is now available for tours. We have significant displays relative to the history of the brewing industry of Belleville as well as other tidbits of our city's rich history. Tours are by appointment and can be scheduled by contacting Bob Brunkow at 618-236-7481 (leave a message).

Secondly, the long awaited 1956 General Electric Wonder Kitchen display at the Museum of Mid-Century Modern Architecture/Blazier House is 100% complete and ready for viewing. And thirdly, the Charles E. King Studio, featuring King's drafting table, is 95% complete and also ready for viewing. A huge thank you to King's son, James, for sharing the table with us. You may schedule a guided tour by contacting Margaret at 618-920-3261.

2025 PAINT HISTORIC BELLEVILLE ART AUCTION

Saturday, September 20 marks the annual Paint Historic Belleville Art Auction! Hosted at the Historic Garfield Street Saloon Museum (633 E Garfield), join us to admire the work of local plein air artists who have beautifully depicted historic Belleville sites, as well as live music and tours of the saloon museum!

Food will be available beginning at 11 A.M.; paintings on display from 11:30 A.M. - 1 P.M.; auction begins at 1 P.M. We hope to see you there!

NEXT CONCERT ON THE LAWN IS WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24



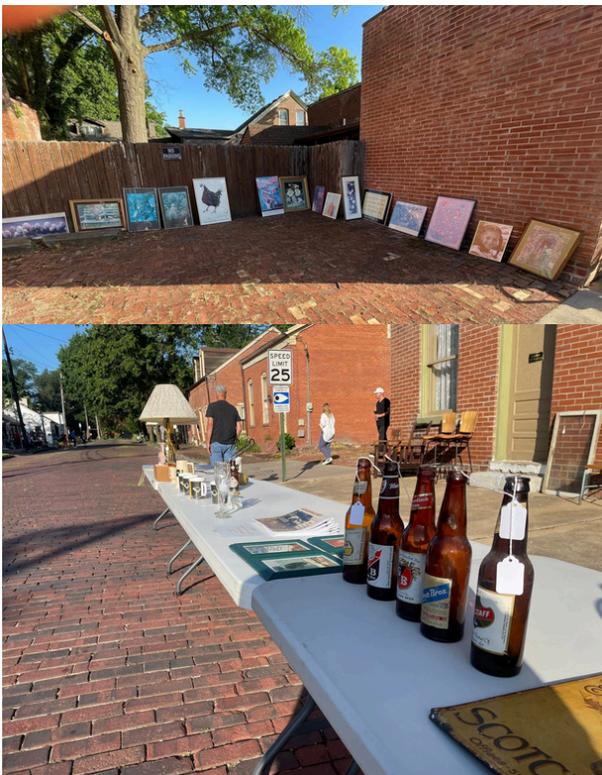
Thank you to the Belleville Philharmonic Society for a wonderful Concert on the Lawn in May! We had a great turn out for a tranquil evening of music and community.

Join us for our next concert on Wednesday, September 24 at 7 P.M. to enjoy the music of the McKendree University and Belleville West High School Jazz Ensembles! The Museum of Mid-Century Modern Architecture will be open at 6 P.M. for tours. Bring your own chairs, snacks, and drinks to take part in an unforgettable experience!

UPCOMING & RECENT EVENTS

COMMUNITY YARD SALE SUCCESS

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the community yard sale fundraiser, whether it be through labor, donations, or spreading the word! We look forward to planning additional community centered fundraisers in the future.



SAVE THE DATE FOR HOLIDAY EVENTS

The Belleville Historical Society will once again host two community favorites: the Mid-Century Modern Holiday Party and the Old Belleville Historic District Luminary Walk. Save the dates for two unique celebrations that you don't want to miss.

1950's Holiday Party: Saturday, December 6 from 7 - 9 P.M. at the Museum of Mid-Century Modern Architecture (6 Oak Knoll Place).

Luminary Walk: Saturday, December 13 from 5 - 9 P.M. on Garfield and Abend Streets.

THIS SUNDAY IS THE LAST DAY OF THE GARY KARASEK ART EXHIBIT

Due to popular demand, BHS has extended the display of Gary Karasek's Art Show through this Sunday, August 31! Featured is Karasek's St. Louis Arch Exhibit, where he interprets how famous artists would have depicted the Arch. This will be your last chance to see this wonderful exhibit, so be sure to stop by the Museum of Mid-Century Modern Architecture to see the Art Show before it closes. The art is available for viewing to the public this Sunday from 1 - 3 P.M.



President Larry Betz & artist Gary Karasek, and some of Karasek's work.



The newly created Charles E. King Studio at the Museum of Mid-Century Modern Architecture.

THE BELLEVILLE AIRPORT: THE OTHER FIELD OF DREAMS
BY BOB BRUNKOW

For nearly as long as Americans have been flying, Bellevilleans have been fascinated by air transportation and have sought to become part of the air transportation network. Belleville leaders were largely responsible in 1917 for the establishment of nearby Scott Field, with anticipation that commercial aviation might result from that military base to the economic benefit of the city. Due to advocacy 80 years later, the opening of the Mid-America St. Louis Airport at Scott in 1997 brought commercial aviation to the area.

In between the opening of Scott and the completion of the joint use airport there, civic leaders dreamed about developing Belleville's own municipal airport. By the late 1920s, city leaders observed that Belleville still needed a municipal airport. The Illinois State Aeronautics Commission lobbied city leaders in 1934 to apply for Civilian Works Administration funds to start the project, but the city government claimed to lack the money to complete the airport. So the city was left with a small airfield in the county on Millstadt Road, a mile or two from Belleville. This Harnist (later Welsch) Airport was capable of small-plane recreation flying, sightseeing flights, and aviation shows.

In May 1944, local investors once again saw the commercial value of an airport in Belleville. They incorporated Belleville Airport, Inc., and bought 77 acres near today's intersection of North Illinois Street and Frank Scott Parkway. Opening day was October 7, 1944. The airport was prepared for emergency flights and equipped to train pilots, repair aircraft, and rent planes. In 1946, Belleville Airport Inc., sold its property and disbanded, one of the partners observing that this airport was not suitable for flying because of the "proximity of utility wires."

It did not take long for a new group of flying enthusiasts to establish a new Belleville Airport about a half mile south of the old airport on the west side of Illinois Street. In 1947, they organized the Belleville Aviation Corporation and developed plans to establish an airport to handle private airplanes and commercial aircraft; the airport was completed in 1949 and offered flight training, facilities for private aircraft flying, facilities for the CAP now affiliated with the US Air Force, and charter flights "anywhere in the Western Hemisphere." After learning in 1949 that St. Louis was considering opening a passenger airport on the east side of the Mississippi River to be closer to downtown St. Louis, Belleville officials offered to buy Belleville Airport and lease it to St. Louis, but to no avail.

Belleville leaders continued to consider Belleville Airport's possibilities, but in 1952, Belleville Airport came to an end. Hugh and Katherine Edwards bought 177 acres of the airport to farm; all traces of the airport disappeared entirely in 1958 when they sold the land for a subdivision. The physical presence of Belleville Airport was gone, but the spirit behind it lingered. In 1960, the Belleville Chamber of Commerce lobbied for a special election to establish a Belleville Airport Authority with taxing authority to establish a municipal airport. The airport authority would build and operate a \$500,000 airport, believing that it would bring more industry to the area. However, voters defeated the measure by a margin of 23 to 1, demonstrating the "tax angry" sentiment of the people. Once again a lofty idea was grounded by economic reality.

*We Invite
the Public
To Visit the*



**BELLEVILLE
AIRPORT**

4 MILES NORTH OF PUBLIC SQUARE
ON ROUTE 159 -- (ILLINOIS STREET)

**Flying Instructions By
Competent Pilots**

DEMONSTRATION RIDES DAILY
FLYING BY APPOINTMENT

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Membership:

Membership forms for the BHS can be downloaded from our website, www.bellevillehistoricalsociety.org, by contacting us at bellevillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com, or at 633 East Garfield Street, Belleville, IL 62220.

Recent donations to the BHS have been received from:

Gary Karasek	Peggy Rasp	Mardy Eisloeffel	Tom Ball	David Braswell
Azizat Danmole	Tom Dailey	Tom & Janise Chamblin	Brenda Stein	
Anne Fischer Weygandt	Lana Shepek	Gus Werner	Dan Franklin	
Greg Downey	Ellen Becker-Law	Dan & Kristen Crockett	Larry Betz	

Supporting the Belleville Historical Society:

As a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, the BHS is authorized to receive gifts and donations that can bring tax benefits to the donor. Gifts to the BHS demonstrate support for the preservation of Belleville history. If you would like more information, please contact us at bellevillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com, or by mail: President, Belleville Historical Society at 633 East Garfield Street, Belleville, IL 62220. We welcome the opportunity to serve you.

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