

# BELLE PLAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY SPRING NEWSLETTER 2011

Coming  
Soon!

## **Famous Midwesterners by Gary Anderson & Gina Miller**

How do you encourage students to recognize the importance of creativity in developing their own talents? One possibility is to show how creativity helped some Americans from the Midwest achieve greatness. This spring and summer, we'll bring you an exhibit with that goal in mind.

Gary Anderson, the Cedar Rapids artist who designed the museum mural, will premiere his incredible painted caricatures of twenty-six Midwesterners whose work still affects our way of life today. Movies, airplanes, automobiles, and plant genetics are just a few of the industries that have been generated by this creative group.

The exhibit will also feature presentations in which local students, under the guidance of teacher Gina Miller, portray some of these Midwesterners in fun and creative ways. In addition to the artwork and dramatizations, lesson guides will be available to help students and other visitors explore the creative talents of this group.

Join us beginning May 1 through the month of October for this celebration of creativity.

## ***Park It!***

### **Thirty Years of Driver's Training in B.P.**

Did you take driver's ed with Wallace Winkie? Do you have a fond memory of the experience? An entertaining or poignant story to tell? Send it to us because we're making a book! We're capturing thirty years of Belle Plaine history through stories of a common experience—driver's training.

Area art students will supply the book's illustrations based on stories submitted, making the book a true community effort. Original illustrations and stories will be featured in an upcoming museum exhibit. The deadline for submission to have your story considered for illustration is May 5 of this year.\*

The completed book will be on sale in the museum's gift shop, and all proceeds will be used for educational activities at the museum.

E-mail your story ([bpreamuseum@netins.net](mailto:bpreamuseum@netins.net)), phone it in (319-434-2079 or 319-512-3287), or drop it off at the museum (Thurs. – Sat., 2 – 4).



\* We may not be able to include a picture for every story, but we will include as many as we can. Some editing of stories may be required, but any edited text will be returned for your approval.

## **What's New with Our 2011 History Series?**

Each entry in this year's history series will be accompanied by a month-long exhibit that illustrates and highlights key events, stories, people, and places that relate to the lecture topic.

The addition of these exhibits is our response to the public's request for more information and education around the series and its topics.

April 17

**Rima Khachatourian Johnson**

*A Story from the Armenian Genocide*

May 15

**Nancy Wright**

*The History of Koszta*

June 19

**Peter Hoenle**

*The Iowa River Corridor*

July 17

**Mary Jennings**

*My Life in Germany during WWII*

Come in at the start of each month and be among the first to learn about that month's fascinating subject. Then return on the third Sunday for the lecture and discussion.

## What Else Is New?



*Park It!* will not be our only collection of local stories. Duronda Schlue will lead the effort to record oral histories of long-time area residents. This collection will chronicle life in the Belle Plaine area in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.



The Belle Plaine Area Museum is utilizing the recently purchased Past Perfect software for museums and a new laptop computer to catalog the many treasures at the museum. This comprehensive program allows for the inputting and organization of information about the items in the museum's collection as well as donor and contact lists. The Past Perfect program also contains many other record-keeping features that will be of benefit to the museum.

### Belle Plaine Trivia Quiz

1. What former B.P. resident wrote music for Hal Roach comedies?
2. What local family helped to cap Jumbo Well?
3. What was the name of Belle Plaine's first newspaper?

1. LeRoy Shields
2. The Palmer Family
3. The Belle Plaine Transcript, founded 1866

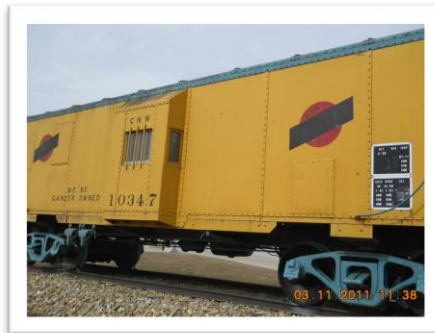
## National Railroad Days May 6 – 8

On May 7, railroad lovers across the country will be celebrating National Train Day. The day marks not only 142 years of trains rolling across America, but also the creation of the first transcontinental railroad. On May 10, 1869, the *golden spike* was driven into the last tie in Promontory Summit, UT.

Although that tie connected Central Pacific and Union Pacific railways, we're joining in the celebration. In this area, it was the Chicago & North Western Railway that had the most significant influence on our history. Chartered in 1859, the C&NW merged with other railways over the years to become one of the longest railroads in the U.S. It was acquired by the Union Pacific in 1995 and still travels through Belle Plaine today.

To learn about C&NW's impact on Belle Plaine, Luzerne, and the surrounding area, visit: [http://iagenweb.org/benton/history/town\\_histories/bellpln-cen.htm](http://iagenweb.org/benton/history/town_histories/bellpln-cen.htm)

As part of the three-day celebration, visitors will get the rare opportunity to tour Belle Plaine's depot, built in 1894 in the English style. Check the full schedule of events on our Web site or contact the museum (319-434-6093).



BP Area Museum 1950s Caboose

## Volunteer Spotlight Christene Vokoun

My husband Rick and I, along with our two sons Trey and Lane, moved to Belle Plaine from Iowa City in 2008. We purchased a 1908 Queen Anne Victorian in town and painstakingly began restoring it to its former glory. I have a passion for old Victorian homes and architecture. I am constantly amazed by the beautiful ornate details and craftsmanship on any old home or building I come across. This passion led me to the Belle Plaine Area Museum in the spring of 2010. I contacted the museum about giving a presentation on the historic homes of Belle Plaine. I had the immense pleasure of visiting and researching 17 architecturally and historically significant homes here. The presentation received such wonderful comments that I have agreed to do a historic home walking tour in the fall of 2011. I currently volunteer for the museum two to three days a week, researching the buildings and businesses on Main Street as well as planning for Belle Plaine's first National Train Days event. The museum is like home for me and I thank everyone involved for making me feel like a part of the family. I am looking to continuing to work with the museum staff to bring educational programs and activities to the Belle Plaine Area.

### Help us in our commitment to the environment.

Contact us to receive our newsletter in an e-mail or to let us know you can view it on our Web site.

[www.bpareamuseum.org](http://www.bpareamuseum.org)