When we think of a carnival, we tend to think of the Water Carnival near Paul Bunyan and Babe, but the waterfront was drastically different in the early decades of Bemidji before there was landfill and the extension of Third Street and the placement of our two famous statues.

In the first decade, a siding for the Minnesota & International Railroad came as far north as the alleyway between Second and Third Street and the tracks were east of Bemidji Avenue. This siding extended to the two-story frame buildings belonging to the Minneapolis Brewing Co. Beer Depot and the Theo. Hamm Brewing Co. At the end of Third Street, there was a concrete pier and a long promenade leading out to the band stand at the end of the pier.

For many years, the carnival set up its various rides and booths throughout the downtown area. In 1906, “Dare Devil Gregg” performed an act called “Leap the Gap” on his bicycle. The steep incline was erected at Beltrami Avenue and Fourth Street near the Pioneer office. He climbed to a high scaffold and rode a bicycle down a steeply-inclined board track and leaped a chasm of from twelve to fifteen feet, landing on the bicycle and riding off of the incline and down the street. The second day the gap was widened by another 10 feet, and he repeated the act.

The Demon Gregg Twins rode their bikes inside the cage of death, at Second Street and Minnesota Avenue, near the Merchant’s Hotel. In making the ride the last day, Mack Gregg fell twice. The falls removed several inches of cuticle from one of his arms, and he was given a severe shaking up, but was not otherwise injured. He started a third time and nervily went through with the ride.

The Bishop Brothers set up a revolving ladder in front of the Nicollet and Lakeshore Hotels, and in the evening there were performances on the double trapeze at Minnesota Avenue and Third Street. An act with aerial bars was set up by the Markham Hotel. The Ferris Wheel was located on Third Street, between Beltrami and Minnesota Avenues, near F. G. Tropman Co. and Schmidt’s City Meat Market.

The company’s Merry-Go-Round was pitched on Third Street, between Beltrami and Beltrami Avenues. However, this did not go over so well. The Merry Go-Round took up all but a few feet of the street and after some volatile discussion at an emergency Village Council meeting, it was voted to instruct the Commercial Club to compel the company to move the "merry" at once!

(Continued on Page 6)
President’s Report
by Sharon Geisen

The summer months are a busy time for the BCHS Board of Directors. We just had our annual meeting and elected a new slate of officers for the board. The slate of officers for 2016-17 is a slight shifting of board members in our four main officer positions. Thank you to all of the BCHS members and local families that attended the June 18th Annual Meeting. It was great for the Board of Directors to get to meet and visit with our BCHS members, and great to see such an amazing turnout for the Bemidji High School Marching Band performance and the wonderful presentation by Joy Riggs. The stories about G. Oliver Riggs and the Bemidji Boys’ Band were interesting!

The board of directors will be holding meetings over the summer to plan for several things, including:

- Activities at the Beltrami County Fair in and around the Doud Cabin and Sunnyside School
- Activities for our annual Depot Day in August.
- A fundraising dinner in the fall
- The Night We Light Bonfire in November
- The History Mystery on New Year’s Eve
- Collections planning and the Deaccession Project at the History Center
- Clean-up and painting at the History Center

We are always looking for volunteers to help with these events and projects. If you would like to volunteer for a two hour shift to greet visitors or run activities (like ice cream making or rope making) at the Doud Cabin during the fair, please contact us at (218) 444-3376.

Charlene Sturk joined the Board of Directors in March, and we are very pleased to have her on the board. Charlene is also serving as the Beltrami County liaison between the BCHS and Beltrami County. Our Bemidji City Council liaison is now Michael Meehlhause.

The summer months go by too fast but do not forget to bring your visiting family and guests for a tour of the Great Northern Depot. We have a first-class exhibit that all Bemidji and county members should be very proud to show off to their family and friends.

From the Desk of the Director
by Dan Karalus

It is about halfway through 2016, and BCHS remains on track. Visitation to our exhibits and programs holds steady, support from the local community is on the rise thanks in part to the hard work of the BCHS Board of Directors, and BCHS membership continues to climb. We thank you for your investment in local history!

Over on the left, Sharon notes many of the events and activities on tap for the summer and beyond. But there is more news to share! Here is a quick update about some of our current and planned exhibits and projects:

- Thanks to a grant from the BNSF Railway Foundation, we will unveil new exhibit displays on railroad history on Depot Day, August 6, 2016. Stop by to learn about local depots, railroad experiences, and more!
- Our Good Sports of the North exhibit ends on July 30. If you have yet to see it, set aside some time to explore stories about “Red” Wilson, Ojibwe lacrosse, the Birkebeiner, and more! Near the end of July we plan to welcome local sports figures to share their experiences with us. Look for details about that in our e-Newsletter, on our website, and in local press. And thanks again to Kent & Carol Wilson and the George W. Neilson Foundation for supporting the exhibit and to everyone who loaned items and shared stories. It was possible because of you.
- Thanks to our volunteers, our Deaccession Project is gaining steam, and we solved some collections mysteries! Look for a public notice soon about the first removal of items from our collections.
- Our Deaccession Project will turn into an interactive exhibit this winter! The exhibit will highlight the project and give visitors a chance to learn about the work of museums and their roles in local communities.
- Expect updates to our Trails Through Time exhibit over the next year. We plan to add new content this summer and next summer. Contact us with your ideas or to contribute to the exhibit.

The mission of the Beltrami County Historical Society is to provide connections to county history through public archives, collections, interpretive exhibits, and programs that educate, invite dialogue, and inspire self-reflection.

Volunteers
Kathy Anderson
Judy Dvorak
Georgia Erdmann
Nolan Ewert
Lily Jewell
Lynn Moore
Cecelia Wattles McKeig
Lindsey Medvec
Darla Sathre
Bill Underbakke

Staff
Dan Karalus, Exec. Director
Calendar of Events & Programs

July 9: Rhonda Fochs—Minnesota’s Lost Towns: Northern Edition
Retired educator and author Rhonda Fochs returns to the History Center on Saturday, July 9 at 2:00 p.m. to discuss *Minnesota’s Lost Towns: Northern Edition*. Her book tells the tale of over 125 northern Minnesota lost towns and locations across over 30 counties in Northern Minnesota. The latest edition explores towns that include: Aure, Debs, Saum, Nebish, Nary, and Lola, as well as many others! Learn how these places were created, how they grew and prospered, how they are categorized, and what you will find there today. The presentation features numerous historical photos and fun anecdotes! Free with paid admission to the museum, and FREE for BCHS members!

Find out more about Rhonda and her books on her website: [http://rhondafochs.weebly.com/](http://rhondafochs.weebly.com/)

July 16: Colin Mustful—U.S.—Dakota War of 1862
Historian and author Colin Mustful tells the story of the tragic and complicated history of the U.S.—Dakota War of 1862 through his novels *Fate of the Dakota*, *Grace at Spirit Lake*, and his latest book *Ceding Contempt*. Colin will visit the History Center on Saturday, July 16 at 2:00 p.m. to talk about the history of the conflict and his experiences writing and read excerpts from the books. The presentation is free with paid admission to the museum and FREE for BCHS members!

Find out more about Colin and his writing on his website: [http://www.colinmustful.com/](http://www.colinmustful.com/)

August 6: Depot Day
Get on board and visit the History Center from 10:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m. for Depot Day! Activities include: Speakers sharing stories of railroad experiences, telegraph demonstrations, the Northern Iron Horse Railroad Society’s model train displays, “Paint-A-Train” activities for kids (and adults!), a “Design-A-Depot” contest, Thomas the Train, Great Northern Depot tours, and more! **This year features the opening of new exhibit displays exploring local railroad history thanks to a grant from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Foundation!** Depot Day is FREE to the public. *Sponsored by First National Bank Bemidji, Paul Bunyan Communications, and Raphael’s Bakery & Café.*

**Depot Day White Elephant Sale:** Donate your used or new rummage sale items to the History Center to support local history! We will advertise and sell them on Depot Day. All proceeds go to BCHS. **Must deliver items to the History Center by Wednesday, August 3.** Pricing suggestions encouraged. We will donate or dispose of unsold items. Call us at (218) 444-3376 for more information or to schedule delivery outside of the History Center’s open hours (Wed-Sat 12-4).

August 10-14: Beltrami County Fair
Find BCHS at the Beltrami County Fair just inside the main entrance at the Doud Cabin and Sunnyside School. Step in the Doud Cabin to enter Beltrami County’s Pioneer Era. Have a seat in the Sunnyside School and challenge your grammar school knowledge with a vintage test or enjoy a presentation by Bemidji’s History Day Students. Make ice cream, churn butter, master your rope-making skills, enjoy a scavenger hunt, and socialize with our volunteers and BCHS Board Members. **Plus, explore Beltrami County’s many rural schools and past Beltrami County Fairs through new exhibit displays as part of the Beltrami County Sesquicentennial!** All of this and more at the Beltrami County Fairgrounds, 2 1/2 miles north of Bemidji off Highway 71. For more information visit: [beltramicountyfair.org](http://beltramicountyfair.org). For a more detailed schedule of activities visit: [http://beltramihistory.org/events](http://beltramihistory.org/events)

August 20: Dean Klinkenberg—The Mississippi Valley Traveler
On Saturday, August 20 at 2:00 p.m. Dean Klinkenberg discusses his latest Mississippi River book! Details coming soon!

*For the latest calendar updates go to our website: [http://beltramihistory.org/events](http://beltramihistory.org/events)
Have Swedish roots or practice Swedish traditions? Patrice Johnson, a food and culture writer from the Twin Cities, wants to hear your stories for an upcoming book with the Minnesota Historical Society about Swedish Jul in the upper Midwest. While primarily a cookbook, “Swedish Jul” will also contain short interviews and historical references that tie the recipes to the collective community: starting with ärtsoppa and Swedish pancakes, moving into baking and other Christmas prep, julbord and meatballs, and ending with aquavit, glögg and other cocktails. She will be conducting interviews this summer for book content and is currently searching for individuals who celebrate the holidays with Swedish traditions. If you are interested in contributing one (or more) Swedish recipes and allowing her to interview you for the book, please contact her at johnsonpatricem@yahoo.com or 612-220-0261.

In the meantime, enjoy this recipe for KLADDKAKA (Swedish Gooey Cake):

14 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted (plus more to prepare pan)
1 cup bittersweet chocolate chunks or chips
4 large eggs, beaten
1 cup sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ teaspoons Cherry Bark vanilla bitters
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon baking powder
Powdered sugar, fresh berries, and whipped cream for serving

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Generously butter the bottom and sides of a 9-inch springform pan. Cut parchment paper to exactly fit bottom of pan and place over butter; butter top of parchment.

Put the 14 tablespoons of butter in a small saucepan and melt over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally. Chop chocolate into small pieces. When butter is melted remove from heat and add the chocolate, stirring occasionally as it melts. Set aside to cool for 10 minutes.

Beat eggs and sugar together until light and fluffy; stir in chocolate, bitters, and vanilla. Carefully fold in the flour and baking powder, preserving the air from the whisked eggs. Pour into the prepared pan and bake for 12 minutes. Cool cake and remove from pan. Dust with powdered sugar and serve with berries and cream.

North Beltrami Heritage Center
182 Clark Ave N (Hwy 72)
Kelliher, MN 56650
(218) 647-8845

Wednesday—Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Saturday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

In commemoration of the dismantling of Kelliher’s water tower, the theme this summer at the North Beltrami Heritage Center is “Water.” Pictures of the tower, past and present, will be on display along with local lore about the tower. The City of Kelliher will be undertaking a major water and sewer project which will involve construction of a new water tower and a dismantling of the old tower which was built in 1907.

Blackduck Area History & Art Center
133 Main St, Suite B
Blackduck, MN 56650
(218) 835-4478

Thursday—Friday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Blackduck Area History & Art Center features stories, pictures, artifacts, and displays about Blackduck’s past. Visit July 9 for an open house displaying John & Sherry Gilstad’s Jewelry.
Jim Carrington stands near a storage shed at the home of his longtime friend Howie Schultz. BCHS Board Members Jim Aakhus and Sue Bruns help Howie remove boxes from the shed and fit them into the back of two vehicles as Carrington looks on, watching sixty some years of his work going by in thirty cardboard boxes of binders filled with sports stories he wrote during his six decades with the Bemidji Pioneer.

“Be careful when you open them,” he cautions, referring to the binders. “The tape has dried out, so the clippings will fall out.”

The binders are labeled and dated. An occasional box holds something other than clippings: sports reference books in one; a collection of trophies and plaques in another. Once the boxes are stowed inside the vehicles, the small convoy heads to the Beltrami County History Center, where the process is reversed: box after box is removed from the vehicles and stacked inside the History Center. Carrington poses for a picture outside the old Great Northern Depot, now the home of the History Center. “I haven’t been inside this building since it was a railroad station,” he says.

It is appropriate that he stands near the sign advertising a current exhibit: Good Sports of the North. Jim epitomizes a good sport: playing baseball as a young man, then coaching, announcing, reporting sporting events, and spectating most of his life. Howie Schultz describes him as the most knowledgeable man in the area, possibly in the state, when it comes to high school and amateur sports.

Now the collection of his work is represented by this impressive stack of boxes, the articles inside dating back to the 1950s.

Much sorting is needed and Jim’s stories will be saved for later reference at the History Center. If it were up to him, Jim would still be writing sports stories, but at least the fruit of his lifetime of work now has a more permanent home.

In one box is an award from 2011 honoring Jim for promoting wrestling for over fifty years. Jim Aakhus recalls Carrington’s long-running Mat Chatter column that highlighted high school wrestlers from across northern Minnesota. Howie Schultz describes Carrington as “the man at the microphone, announcing BHS wrestling meets for over 30 years. He wasn’t paid a cent for it.”

Other items include two plaques honoring Jim upon his induction into the BHS Wrestling Hall of Fame, recognition from the Minnesota Wrestling Coaches Association for being named the Wrestling Writer of the Year for 1998-99, another plaque from the Football Coaches Association, others from the BHS Girls’ Tennis team, the Bemidji Baseball Association, the Minnesota High School Baseball Coaches’ Association, and more. In just one box there are seventeen plaques, honors, or framed recognitions including a Certificate of Commendation from the Minnesota governor’s office, signed by Governor Rudy Perpich.

[Above] Jim Carrington holds one of his plaques next to his donation of records to BCHS in the History Center. BCHS staff and volunteers are currently processing the records.
The Dalton Brothers Hotel and Saloon was on the corner of Third Street and Beltrami Avenue, and the Merry-Go-Round probably interfered with business at the Lumbermen’s Bank, Schneider Brothers Clothing, Barker’s Drug, the Metropolitan Club, and the many saloons which existed on the block. A major fire destroyed part of the south side of the street in January 1906.

Over 100 merry makers came in on the afternoon train from Cass Lake on August 14, and August 15, 1906, was billed as “Blackduck Day.” Several hundred people arrived on the morning train to take in the attractions of the carnival, the horse race, and the ball game. Bemidji and Blackduck played a game of ball "for blood." Bemidji won the ball game by a score of six to one. "Red" Hazen was on the slab for Bemidji, and he pitched a fine game. He struck out the first three men who faced him, and in the second inning he "fanned" the first two batters who came to the plate.

Captain Lillo, the "human arrow,” performed his high dive into a net on the corner of Minnesota Avenue and Fourth Street near City Hall. There was a slight glitch, however, when Mrs. J. P. Duncalf ran into one of the guy wires with a horse and buggy late on the second evening. Mrs. Duncalf was driving a single rig south on Minnesota Avenue and when she came to the 100-foot ladder, she turned to the left to clear the obstruction. There were no warning lights hung out, and she was unable to see just where she was going. Suddenly her mare ran into a guy wire and started to run. She had her babe in her arms and had some difficulty in managing the animal, but finally succeeded in getting clear of the entanglement. But the wire had been loosened and as she drove by, Mrs. Duncalf saw the ladder swaying. The tall, slender ladder toppled toward her, and the woman was frightened nearly to death, then it gave a second lurch and fell with a crash toward City Hall. The rig passed the first crossing just as the ladder fell. The ladder broke in several places, but the ladder was repaired, and the show went on the next day. Mr. Duncalf owned several properties in Bemidji, including several cottages on Tenth Street, a home at 1001 Minnesota Avenue, and a saloon on Second Street.

Occasionally there was trouble with petty thieves and pickpockets during the Carnival, but at least one Bemidji woman taught a would-be thief a lesson. Mrs. Jinkinson was passing the corner by the Miles "Golden Club" Saloon at the corner of Third Street and Beltrami Avenue, when some unknown man grabbed her spectacles and threw a handful of cut paper in her face, nearly smothering her. He also grabbed her watch, but Mrs. Jinkinson gave him a hard rap over the head with her parasol and closed both her hands in his head of generous light hair, falling on top of him on the pavement. She proceeded to pound his head on the cement walk until the blood flowed freely and the man cried for help. The would-be thief made his escape in the crowd, but not before he had given a good sound drubbing. Mrs. Jinkinson appeared to be afraid of nothing, and she amply demonstrated to the onlookers that holdups on the streets of Bemidji would not be tolerated and that those who attempted anything of the kind would be handled roughly. Jinkinson co-owned a livery on Beltrami Avenue until it was sold it to A. M. Bagley in 1903. The Jinkinsons had a home at 413 Minnesota Avenue and a farm at Maltby.

The biggest attraction of the carnival was undoubtedly the balloon ascension and parachute leap by Captain Hi Henry. The captain ascended several thousand feet in the air, cut loose the parachute, and performed several thrilling acts while suspended at the bottom of a trapeze. The balloon was scheduled to go up from the vacant lot at the foot of Third Street near the city dock, but due to weather conditions, Captain Henry went up from the old ball grounds and the balloon sailed nicely. When Henry cut the

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On the Street Where You Live

(Continued from Page 6)

parachute loose, he swung to the southward and landed in the swamp back of Mississippi Avenue. He was bruised slightly on one leg, but beyond wet feet he sustained no further injury.

"Hi Henry," also performed the high dive act up to a few weeks before the carnival, but in an accident, he miscalculated a few minor conditions and landed on his head, so one of the other performers, Captain Lillo, performed the act under his supervision.

In 1912, the carnival occupied parts of Bemidji and Beltrami Avenues and Fourth and Fifth Streets. Two shows were held on the south end of the Library Park while Fourth Street between Bemidji and Beltrami Avenues was solid with attractions.

The Merry-Go-Round was so popular that by 1913, the Damschen brothers set up a Merry-Go-Round on the vacant lots near the Odd Fellows Hall at Fourth Street and Beltrami Avenue. [Many will remember this lot as the site of Herb’s Popcorn Stand]. Music was furnished by a big band organ and the Merry-Go-Round operated for several weeks. Finally, property owners who lived on the lots abutting the Merry-Go-Round site filed a complaint, and the operation was suspended until the opening of the Beltrami County Fair.

The Little Giant Carnival took place at Nymore from 1914 to 1918. There were 20 legitimate concessions on the streets of Nymore in 1916. The Little Giant Carnival returned to the streets of Bemidji in June 1919 only to experience a major fire which burned the Rex Theatre and McElroy Meat Market and caused serious damage to the carnival which was set up on Third Street. The top of the Merry-Go-Round was burned off, the monkey speedway was burned, several concessions were swept away, the wrestling tent went the way of the others, and the box office tent also went up in smoke.

There was one more week-long carnival downtown in 1920, but that seems to be the end of the carnival rides and concessions on the business streets of Bemidji. Interest shifted to the circus and a carnival presence at the county fair in the 1920s.

For more from Cecelia, visit: beltramihistory.org/blog
Also find more at Cecelia’s website: bemidjihistory.org

Ojibwe Imprints (Third Printing)

The Beltrami County Historical Society’s Ojibwe Imprints on Northern Minnesota by Leo Soukup and Charles Vandersluis is on its third printing. Now is the perfect time to purchase your copy! Read what the Minnesota Historical Society had to say about it in Minnesota History, Vol. 64, No. 8 (Winter 2015-16): 339 [excerpted below].

“In 2014 the Beltrami County Historical Society published Charles Vandersluis’ and Leo Soukup’s Ojibwe Imprints on Northern Minnesota (Bemidji, 300 p., paper, $29.95), a historical work several times over. It is essentially an enhanced reprint (Soukup’s contribution) of one volume of an ambitious 1974 three-part publication of oral-history interviews done in the 1950s, spearheaded at that time by Bemidji physician Charles Vandersluis with the help of the newly formed History Writers Club. This group of old settlers transcribed and edited the early tape recordings.”

“Ojibwe Imprints is the story of John G. Morrison Jr., a mixed-blood retailer and Indian Service employee whose life spanned the last years of treaty making, the era of reservation neglect and poverty, and the termination policies of the 1950s. Born in the waning fur-trade settlement of Crow Wing in 1873, Morrison spent his early years on White Earth Reservation and lived most of his adult life on Red Lake Reservation; he died in Bemidji in 1964. Seven chapters from the 1974 publication, comprising approximately half of the book and including maps and photographs, are his first-person reminiscences (Early Years at White Earth, Nelson Act, Sale of Red Lake Timber, Ditching Fever, etc.); many of these short sections end with a few pages of “History Writers’ Discussion of Above.” This original section concludes with a short essay on Morrison as collector of Indian relics and his obituary. The second half of the book is new material: Soukup’s welcome addition of endnotes, appendices (relevant chapters reprinted from other books and biographical sketches, for instance), sources, credits, and an index. And then, there are three CDs—the original interviews of Morrison in which his “low, rumbling voice” can be heard, speaking the words that became this book. Ojibwe Imprints is available in the Minnesota Historical Society museum store and from the Beltrami County Historical Society, 130 Minnesota Ave. SW, Bemidji, 56601; depot@beltramihistory.org or (218) 444-3376. For the latter, please include $3.69 shipping and handling per book and 7.875% sales tax.”
Sidetracked by Darla Sathre

I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream. Got milk? Don’t cry over spilt milk. Milk it for all it’s worth. Bread always falls on the buttered side. Know which side of your bread is buttered. This article may not be the cream of the crop, but it will mention a few creameries.

For centuries, butter was made by hand-churning at home. (Sidetrack: Actually, in very early days, cream was agitated into butter in leather bags, hanging from camels walking in the desert.) Major advancements in butter making came during the 1800s. The mechanical centrifugal cream separator was invented. Stephen Babcock, a Wisconsin chemist, devised a way to determine milk’s butterfat percentage. Pasteurization was developed. Methods of refrigeration and transportation greatly improved. Commercial creameries, many of them co-operatives, began to dot the country.

The 1910 Bemidji City Directory lists the Melges Brothers Company at 623 First Street, advertising “Creamery, Wholesale Foods, Produce and Candy.” In 1912, the Beltrami Farmers Creamery Association was listed at 117 Minnesota Avenue. In a 1913 Bemidji Daily Pioneer article, the public was urged to buy (actually, to demand) “Better Brand Bemidji Butter.” Through the years many other creameries came along. The Koors Brothers were a bit diversified; they had creameries at Bagley, Leonard, Shevlin, and Akely, as well as Bemidji, where they also ran a bakery. They advertised bread, butter, ice cream, confectionaries, crushed fruits, and fountain supplies. By 1923 the Bemidji Creamery Company on Third Street was advertising “Chief Brand” Fancy Creamery Butter, as well as pure buttermilk and fresh eggs. In the 1930s, the Russell Creamery Company advertised “pasteurized milk, cottage cheese and buttermilk, ice creams, sherbets, ices, and frozen dainties.” Other creamery names abound in this area, for example, Blue Valley, David Park, and more. But I am anxious to get to three more sidetracks!

Better tasting butter sold for more money, so buttermaking contests were held to encourage better butter quality. Points were given for flavor, composition, color, salt, and packaging. Only butters scoring 92 or more (out of 100) could be advertised as high grade. In national buttermaking contests, Minnesota (nicknamed the Bread and Butter state) was known for its high scores. It was rare for a buttermaker to get a perfect score, but in 1951 my husband’s maternal grandfather, Hugh H. Muckala, manager of the Bagley Cooperative Creamery, earned the title of Butter Champion by getting a perfect score of 100 at a Minnesota State Fair buttermaking contest.

Thinking about butter at the State Fair surely reminds you of the Princess Kay of the Milky Way butterheads carved there. Each weighs about 85 pounds, takes six to eight hours to carve, and contains about 192,000 calories! The 1985 Princess Kay, Stephanie Dickey of Leonard, worked at a cheese store in the mall in Bemidji and put her butterhead on display there. When asked what she finally did with her butterhead, she replied, “We had a wonderful party. The menu used butter for a pig roast, sweet corn, and hot buttered rum!”

Have you heard the term Milk Train? It came to be known as a train route that was short and easy, but originally was literally the train that picked up milk from the farmers and had to get it to the creameries as soon as possible to avoid spoilage. It had priority, and any other trains using the same rails were sidetracked so the Milk Train could get through!
Recent BCHS Events

Joy Riggs at the start of her “Sitting Pretty in a Pretty Little City” presentation about G. Oliver Riggs and the Bemidji Boys’ Band inside the History Center.

The Bemidji High School Marching Band performing “Night Watch” outside the History Center.

Bemidji Bands: Past & Present
BCHS 2016 Annual Meeting

Southside Restaurant
149 Convenience Ln SW
Bemidji—444-3133

Turtle River Electric, Inc.
4357 Minnkota Ave. NW
Bemidji—751-0286

The UPS Store
215 Paul Bunyan Dr NW
Bemidji—751-7179

VFW Post #1260
PO Box 1271
Bemidji

National Train Day

[L] Lego trains thanks to the Northern Iron Horse Railroad Society.

[Below] The BCHS baggage cart repurposed as a model railroad display thanks to the Northern Iron Horse Railroad Society.
Remembering Whitney Tarutis by Paul Kief (edited by Sue Bruns)

Whitney Tarutis was born Vytautas Edward Tarutis, anglicized to Whitney, as he became known in the Bemidji area legal community. Lithuanian was his first language and upbringing. As a young, aspiring singer and actor, he performed on the stage in Lithuanian-language productions. He met his wife, Eva, when they were both performing in light opera in the Chicago area. He went on to sing in Vaudeville as an end man in an octet. All the time he was performing, he was also attending college and the Kent Law School in Chicago. His agent believed his talents were exceptional and urged him to focus on acts which would feature him as a solo performer.

The time constraints of the two pursuits finally came into conflict, requiring him to make a choice between a career on the Vaudeville stage and a career in the legal profession. Whitney, with his signature dramatic flourish, told fellow lawyers that he chose the law over the stage. Those who tried cases against him in the courtroom were not so sure and often felt that he carried a bit of the Vaudeville act into the courtroom.

Arriving in Bemidji in 1948, Whitney purchased a farm in Grant Valley Township, about half a mile west of Bemidji which he and his family operated until the time of his death. He proudly cultivated the image of being a farmer-lawyer. At one point, when a Federal District Court judge in Fergus Falls announced that the case on which Tarutis was working would commence the following morning at 9:30 a.m., Tarutis protested that he would not be able to arrive so early. The judge, put off by being challenged, inquired why. Whitney said that he first had to milk the cows on his farm in Bemidji before he could come to court in Fergus Falls.

When he acquired a tavern in Cass Lake as a fee, Tarutis did not allow his new asset to remain idle. He refurbished it, relicensed it, rejuvenated it, and went aggressively into the tavern business. He often acted as a barkeep or waiter, dressed in starched white collar with waiter’s tie, and black arm bands on his shirtsleeves. He treated his customers as though they were honored guests, particularly lawyers who visited his place of business, providing the full royal Tarutis treatment, often with spontaneous selections from his musical background and with exquisite service, but never a free drink. The Tarutis Tavern became the classiest place in downtown Cass Lake.

Whitney also did a short stint in the Cass County Jail when he was cited for contempt by the lay Municipal Court Judge. Mid-morning he called a colleague, asking him to come to Walker to get him out of jail. When the colleague arrived in Walker in the early afternoon, he was ushered in to see Whitney in his cell. Other court figures, law enforcement officers, lawyers, and jail personnel came by to taunt Whitney, who admitted that he considered it all a lark until the stark reality of his situation hit him when his noon lunch tray was pushed through the slot in his cell door. Whitney paid the fine and got out of jail in time for supper.

As it happened, the Beltrami County Bar Association was holding its monthly meeting at the old Markham Hotel that night. He arrived late after the other lawyers had been imbibing in preparation for the meeting. Whitney was dressed for the occasion in his dapper suit, fresh shirt, overcoat, silk scarf, and fedora. He walked into the meeting room and, with a grand gesture, announced: “Fellows, I’m back!” He then removed his fedora, tossed it expertly onto the nearby hat rack, and bowed to the spontaneous applause from the Beltrami County Bar Association.

Whitney Tarutis died March 28, 2004, following a long battle with leukemia. His colleagues saw his passing as the end of an era with the loss of a flamboyant, articulate, and innovative courtroom practitioner who championed the causes of all types of clients needing representation in the courts of law in Bemidji and surrounding areas.

Whitney Tarutis is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery. Find more information about him on Find A Grave:
http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=119577998 [Above picture from same].
Thank you for the New and Renewed Memberships!

Susan Abbott
Allen Co. Public Library
David A. Anderson
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