



"the arts...share the vision"

Hometown Christmas



The Boone County Arts Council has assumed responsibility from the Chamber of Commerce for creating and selling Hometown Christmas prints and buttons. This year's featured artwork was designed and created by Belvidere's own Gary Simon. Although Hometown Christmas has passed, you can still purchase prints and buttons by calling the Arts Council at 815.544.6242 or 815.721.9880. Prints are available for \$15 each, while buttons are priced at \$3 each. Be sure to get yours soon.



Visit us at www.boonecountyarts.com, [@boonecountyartscouncil](https://www.instagram.com/boonecountyartscouncil) Instagram and Facebook. Phone 815-544-6242 for information

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Hometown Christmas

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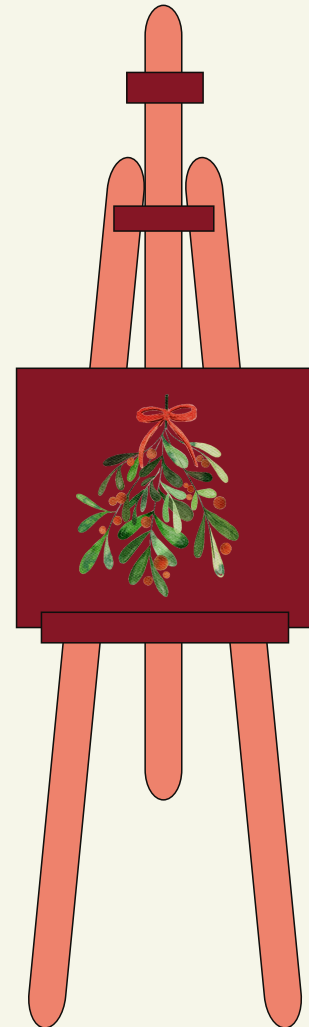
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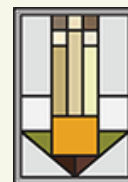
City of **Creativity**, *Nature Journaling*

Thank you! *Grant Announcement*

Art A Rama



Visit the Funderburg House
Gallery



the
Funderburg
house



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from the president

Greetings, and hello to everyone!

Heidi Thacker, President
Maria Werchowec, Past-
President
Lauren Hart, Vice President
Jean Twyning, Secretary
Karen Shifo, Treasurer
Brittany Bender
Debbie Carlson
Joanna Dowling
Michael Hart
Karen Kramer
Jeni Landsee
Karrie Pace
Gary Simon
Gary Thacker
Troy Yunk

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"The Arts...Share The Vision"
boone county arts council

Newsletter masthead
created by
Beth Luhman and Gary
Simon

It was a lively, busy summer and fall for the Arts Council, as we offered a broad spectrum of programs and events. In partnership with the Boone County Historical Society and the Belvidere Woman's Club, we took steps to revitalize the once annual Woman's Club Art Show. Additionally, we hosted another successful, well-attended Paint on State during Belvidere's Heritage Days, installed a new mural in downtown Belvidere, and presented a free eight-concert series at the Baltic Mill Stage in Belvidere Park, Candlewick Lake, and Vintage Wings and Wheels Museum. We also hosted the Fifth Grade Arts Festival at the Community Building while continuing to run our Funderburg House Gallery, which featured artists from the community.

You may have noticed my mention of several organizations with which we have collaborated. The Arts Council recognizes that partnership between organizations is essential for fostering innovation, expanding reach, and achieving shared goals. When organizations come together, they bring diverse insights, skills, and resources to the table, creating opportunities and ideas that would not exist otherwise. This kind of partnership allows for more efficient use of resources.

Ultimately, collaboration leads to a stronger, more interconnected community, where shared successes benefit everyone involved. By working together, organizations can serve broader and more diverse audiences, addressing complex issues with a more comprehensive approach. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, partnerships between organizations are not just beneficial—they are essential for sustainable growth and progress.

The Arts Council takes pride in being a part of a community that fosters mutual support among organizations, and we thank all those who have supported us. Your kindness and participation is essential to the success of our organization. We would also like to thank our Arts Council members for helping us achieve our goals through both financial support and volunteering for our events. We are deeply grateful for your generosity.

Happy Holidays to you all,

Heidi Thacker

Summer Events

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Concerts in the Park

The BCAC had another successful Concerts in the Park season this past summer. This was our 33rd year of bringing free summer concerts to Boone County. A few outdoor rainouts occurred because of our very rainy July. However, thanks to the Boone County Community Building, we were able to relocate the concerts inside. We also thank the Belvidere Park District for serving as our main concert location. The Park is a beautiful setting and the Park District's help is invaluable. Thanks also to our other Boone County concert locations - Candlewick Lake, Heritage Days at the Boone County Fairgrounds, and The Poplar Grove Vintage Wings and Wheels Museum.

We could not present our concerts without our sponsors - Byron Bank, Candlewick Lake Association, First Mid Bank, Sue Flott, Heritage Woods of Belvidere, Gary and Joan Ollmann, Savant Wealth Management, and UWHealth.

We look forward to next year's Summer Concerts in the Park beginning June 1, 2025. See you then!

The Boone County Art Fair

The inaugural Boone County Art Fair took place on June 9, 2024, in partnership with the Boone County Historical Society and the Belvidere Woman's Club. Set against the stunning backdrop of the Funderburg House and grounds, twenty gifted artists showcased their work to the community. Food trucks were on-site, and live music was performed by Lee Gardner. Joanna Dowling of WonderWorks led a children's nature journaling project for young attendees.

Two Best of Show cash prizes, sponsored by Rob and Kathy Funderburg, were awarded. Cindy Bear, a skilled watercolor artist, received the prize for visual art, while Bill Boyle won for 3-D art with his beautifully crafted chairs.

With this Art Fair, we celebrate and renew the legacy of the Woman's Club Art Show, a cherished event for many years at Big Thunder Park. Plans for next year's event are already in progress. If anyone is interested in participating as an artist, please contact the Arts Council at 815.544.6242.



paint on state

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Paint on State 2024



Drone photography courtesy, Nicolas Thornton Photography

This year for Paint on State we were excited to add a new element, the Disability Access Project.

Solutions Bank generously supported this new project which had several features:

- paint brush extenders for artists
- the option to paint on smaller plexiglass panels which could then be placed on the road
- adaptive painting tools such as sponges and other sized brushes
- designated wheelchair accessible parking spaces and entry to the event

We had a beautiful day for painting, with the event selling out quickly. Thank you to the many volunteers who packed bags ahead of time and who worked at the event to help it run smoothly. There were nearly 800 4 ft by 4 ft squares painted on State Street, bringing a wonderful splash of color to the downtown event.



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paint on state

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Paint on State 2024



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funderburg gallery

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At the Funderburg House Gallery, located at 605 N. State Street, the Arts Council was honored to feature the artwork of Chris Gardner, curator of the Boone County Museum of History. Chris showcased an impressive collection of stained-glass works alongside her exquisite floral drawings. Her art reception, held on July 19, offered guests the opportunity to experience her work firsthand. Visitors to the Funderburg House can now enjoy a custom stained-glass lamp Chris designed especially for the House, which will remain on permanent display.

Through the month of October and most of November, the art of Norm Knott graced the walls of the Art Gallery. Norm's collection included mixed-media drawings created by the artist during a time when he was facing significant medical challenges. Because of his artistic creations and humanitarian endeavors, Norm has received over 40 awards, including the 2010 Rockford Mayor's Arts Award for Art Educator and the 2023 Rockford Area Arts Council Award for Excellence in Service to the Arts. Norm's artist's reception was held October 11.

From November 26 through the end of February, the Arts Council Gallery is presenting the artwork of Belvidere resident Ann Castro. Please take the opportunity to take a look at the stunning results of her incredible skills.

As always, the Arts Council extends gratitude to the Boone County Historical Society for allowing us a gallery space in the Funderburg House. For further information about visiting the Gallery, please contact the Boone County Museum of History at 815.544.8391 or the Arts Council at 815.544.6242.



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for information



the
Funderburg
house

Fifth Grade Arts Festival

"the arts...share the vision"

Each year we open the Fifth Grade Arts Festival mornings with a light-hearted but deeply engaging performance by Chicago folk musician and teacher Mark Dvorak. As his time with the kids draws to a close he recalls a conversation with a friend and fellow artist (whose age at 103 always draws a gasp of excitement from the young crowd). In the conversation he has asked her, why do we make art, sign songs, write stories...why are they important? Her answer, simple but poignant, these are the things that help us say yes to life!



After more than a decade of facilitating the Fifth Grade Arts Festival in the fall of each school year, we continue to hope that the artistic experiences the students have will not only inspire their own creative endeavors, but help them find the threads of inspiration and meaning that will help them **say yes to life** in all their endeavors.

The images of the Fifth Grade Arts Festival are more powerful than any words we could use to describe these three days of art, music, dance and performance. Once again this year we welcomed the 5th grade classes from the District 100 schools to spend a day engaging with creative making and learning. Expertly hosted by the Community Building of Boone County and taught by practicing artist and performers local to the northern Illinois region. This year our students were taught dance by instructors from Rockford Dance Company, entertained by an interactive lunch time performance by the bands from Belvidere North and Belvidere High Schools. They had hands on experiences in mixed media, reuse art and painting and interactive experiences in photography and improvisation.

This powerful and empowering experience is made possible by our team of dedicated volunteers, those who begin planning the event nearly a year in advance and those who work in a variety of capacities both behind the scenes and with the students during the event. Our gratitude for them is immeasurable. We are also deeply thankful to the staff of the Boone County Community Building and the inspiring artist teachers who are an absolute treasure to our community. And finally our sponsors, without you our dreams could not become reality. **We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.**



Fifth Grade Arts Festival

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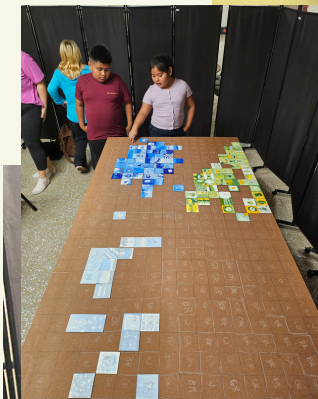


Fifth Grade Arts Festival

"the arts...share the vision"



Angie Scordato, our newest artist instructor for the Fifth Grade Art Festival is putting the final touches of wood glue on the mosaic mural project (below). The mural, designed by Angie was created by the combined efforts of each 5th grader in the District and Immanuel Lutheran. Wood tiles were individually painted and placed on a color-coded grid. The final mural is currently on a display tour, traveling between the district schools.



Mural News

"the arts...share the vision"

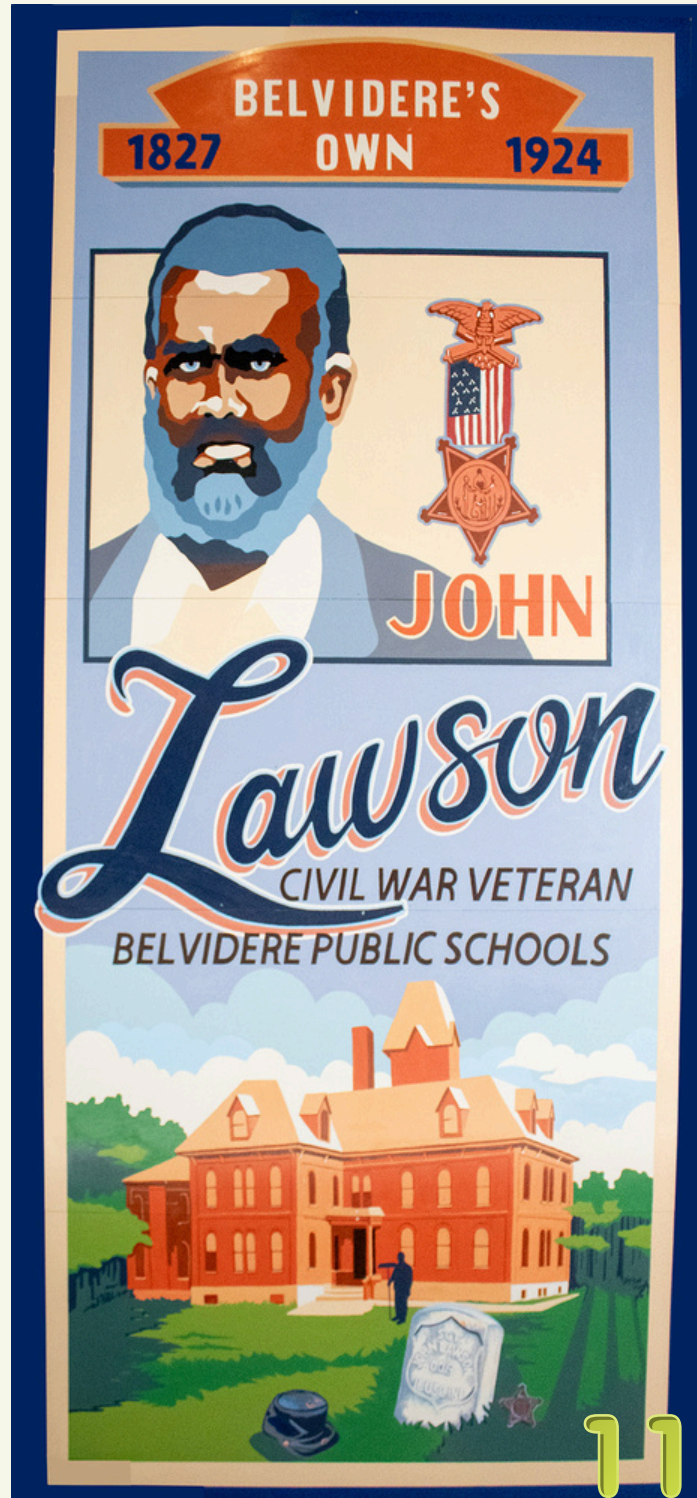
Mural Dedication Commemorating John Lawson June 29, 2024

On June 29, 2024, we proudly dedicated our latest mural, honoring John Lawson, a Civil War veteran and longtime Belvidere Public Schools employee. Lawson exemplified heroism and resilience, and we're grateful to have had several of his descendants attend the dedication ceremony here in Belvidere.

The mural was beautifully painted by Troy Yunk, a dedicated member of the Arts Council who has also taught art classes at Belvidere District 100 and coached track for many years. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the sponsors whose generous contributions made this project possible: the Community Building Complex, Walmart, Lois Ramon, Curt & Brenda Tobin, Jean & Jim Twyning, and General Mills.

Troy Yunk, Gary Thacker, Jeff Carlson, and Mike Meyers installed the mural, with support from the Gallanos, who kindly loaned us their lift. The dedication day also featured a luncheon held at the Belvidere Cemetery, with arrangements made possible by the Belvidere Cemetery and Sam Larson.

John Lawson, originally born John Killebrue in Virginia in 1827, began life as an enslaved person. When the Civil War began, he sought his owner's permission to fight. Instead of joining the Confederate Army, he courageously made his way north and enlisted with the Union Army in Company G of the 16th U.S. Colored Infantry from Illinois. During the war, he abandoned his original surname, Killebrue, adopting the name "Lawson" from his commanding officer.



Mural News

"the arts...share the vision"

Mural Dedication Commemorating John Lawson June 29, 2024

Honorably discharged as a sergeant, John returned to Virginia, where he married Lucy A. Spurlock. They later moved to Belvidere, settling at 320 W. Locust St., where they raised their children. John worked for the railroad before becoming a janitor for the Belvidere School District, where he served for many years. As a Union Army veteran, he became a member of the Grand Army of the Republic—a remarkable achievement for an African American man of his time.

After his passing on December 20, 1904, at his daughter's home in the Chicago area, John Lawson was brought back to Belvidere and laid to rest in the Belvidere Cemetery. Among those present at the dedication were his descendants, including Wylene Lawson Bridgeman, John Lawson, and other family members, as well as community members, Mayor Clint Morris, and State Senator Steve Stadelman.

This mural at 109 N. State St., joining the Fred Schulte mural, is part of our ongoing effort to honor local history and community heroes. A new mural is planned for 2025, and we look forward to sharing more details as plans unfold. Special thanks go to the Olvera family, the building's owners, for their support in hosting this important addition to our community.



Sister Cities Mural



The mural, designed and painted by Troy Yunk, reflects the partnership between Belvidere and its sister cities Vaux-le Penil, France, and Schwieberdingen, Germany. Dedicated during a Tri-City Rendezvous on September 20, the mural is located at 315 S. State Street.

Sculpture News

"the arts...share the vision"

Bronze Athletes Find Home at Rivers Edge

When David Prochnicki opened his restaurant Bourbon Street Lounge on Perryville in Rockford, he knew he needed a home for two bronze sculptures that had been left in the building. A friend suggested he give them to the Boone County Arts Council who in turn contacted Belvidere Park District. Todd Chapman and Gary Thacker then worked to repair and restore the pieces which are now on display inside River's Edge Recreation Center 1151 W Locust in Belvidere.

You may wonder what sport the young man on the right is playing. Drop by the Rec Center, walk toward the lobby view of the Kishwaukee River and take a guess. The boy keeps changing up his sport.... He has held a pickleball paddle, a frisbee, and a basketball. Some say he is surfing or getting ready to jump the hurdles.

Good things happen when we collaborate. A big thank you goes out to those who helped the athletes find a new place to play.



Nature Journaling

Nature Journaling is the practice of spending time in the natural world and recording one's experiences, questions, observations and wonder in words and sketches. It is a practice that brings together science, art and creativity while promoting wonder, curiosity and connection. Journaling in nature invites individuals to awaken their observational skills, learn about their local environment and make lasting records.

Nature journaling in a group environment offers the opportunity to grow in our connection to the natural world while building a community of like-minded creative naturalists who can support one another and learn together.

"Nature journaling is a practice that is highly beneficial both personally and environmentally, and is accessible to everyone. When you take the time to sit and observe nature with the intention to record what you see, you are creating a deep connection to your environment which will do nothing less than change your perspective on life. Slowing down to notice nature opens your eyes to a new world of wonder and also motivates you to value and take care of this precious world."

Journaling With Nature, www.journalingwithnature.com

Outdoor Activities:

- Walking / hiking / guided hikes
- Recording observations
- Writing
- Recording questions
- Recording sensory experiences
- Collecting as appropriate
- Sketching
- Painting
- Photography
- Discussion and sharing

Indoor Activities:

- Sketching and writing prompts centered around collected natural materials and objects
- On-line instructional videos
- Explore mediums and techniques
- Journal making
- Creating with natural materials, ie natural plant inks, charcoal, ecoprinting, pounding, pressing
- Guest Artists and presenters
- Collage
- Watercolor paint



Nature Journaling Resources

Wild Wonder Foundation

<https://www.wildwonder.org/>

John Muir Laws

<https://johnmuirlaws.com/>

The Nature Journal Connection

- 10 to 15-minute instructional videos with JML

<https://johnmuirlaws.com/the-nature-journal-connection/>

Drawing lessons

<https://johnmuirlaws.com/blog-archives/>

Alex Boon Art

www.alexboonart.com

Spark in Nature

www.sparkinnature.com

Journaling with Nature

<https://www.journalingwithnature.com/>

Journaling with Nature Podcast

<https://www.journalingwithnature.com/podcast>

Books written by Claire Walker Leslie and John Muir Laws

city of creativity

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Nature Journaling is...

The infographic features nine circular icons arranged in a 3x3 grid. Each icon is accompanied by a label below it. The icons are: a forest scene (Time Outside), a hiker silhouette (Exploration), a watercolor palette (Creativity), an open notebook with a pen (Writing), a monarch butterfly (Nature), a head silhouette with flowers (Mindfulness), a person sketching (Sketching), a globe with hands (Connection), and laboratory glassware with a plant (Science).

TIME OUTSIDE

EXPLORATION

CREATIVITY

WRITING

NATURE

MINDFULNESS

SKETCHING

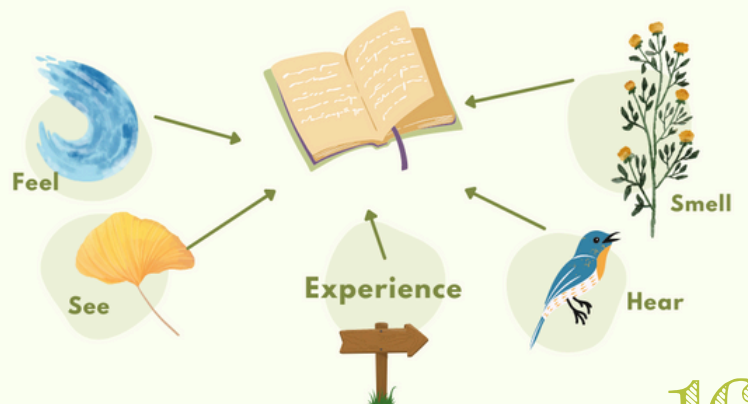
CONNECTION

SCIENCE

WondersWorks



Nature Journaling with your Senses



Weekly Nature Journal Prompts

Sunday

Reflect on the week, what did you notice, feel and experience?

Monday

Take a few moments to attune to your environment. Record what your senses tell you.

Tuesday

Record the colors of the day, with color medium or words.

Saturday

Make a map of your patch, neighborhood or local natural area.

Wednesday

Take your journal with you. Make note of the nature you encounter during your daily routine.

Friday

Choose a natural object to investigate and sketch.

Thursday

Sensory check-in: Take a few moments to attune to your environment. Record what your senses tell you.

Thank you!

"the arts...share the vision"

The Boone County Arts Council offers our sincere thanks to following foundations, organizations and individuals for recently donating to the following projects during 2024:

Boone County Community Foundation for the 2024 Fifth Grade Arts Festival

Community Complex Committee of Boone County for the 2024 Mural Project

Rockford Area Arts Council for the 2024 Fifth Grade Arts Festival

Solutions Bank for the 2024 Paint on State Disability Access Project

Walmart for the 2024 Mural Project

Dr. James Chapko for the 2024 Paint on State

Lois Ramon for the 2024 Mural Project

Curt and Brenda Tobin for the 2024 Mural Project

Jean and Jim Twyning for the 2024 Mural Project

NEW GRANTS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED

The Boone County Arts Council has been awarded a grant from the Boone County Community Foundation for \$3,000.00 for the 2025 Fifth Grade Arts Festival. The Illinois Arts Council has also awarded the BCAC a General Operating Support Grant for \$2,500.00. We truly appreciate the trust that these funders have in our programs for Boone County.

Thank you!



Support the arts in Boone County today!

"the arts...share the vision"



Donate to Art -A -Rama! Boone County Museum of History, 815-544-8391

Art- A -Rama is a community outreach of the Boone County Museum of History and the Boone County Arts Council, collecting new and gently used art and craft supplies for redistribution.

Please spread the word!

Anyone in need of art materials can visit the Art-A-Rama station in the lobby of the Boone County Museum of History.



www.boonecountyarts.com

