

BELOIT'S ANGEL MUSEUM ENDS 20-YEAR RUN

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Clint Wolf/Beloit Daily News Lisa Tommeraasen points to an angel figurine she likes at the Beloit Angel Museum on Saturday. She was among dozens of visitors who came to the Angel Museum's final day of operation after 20 years of displaying its angel collection.

BELOIT - Angel wings and halos were tucked away for the last time Saturday as the Angel Museum greeted its final visitors after 20 years of operation.

A steady stream of visitors made their way through the former church converted into the museum to get a final look at the angel figurine collection, or in some cases their first look.

"It's been here 20 years and this is my first time here," said Lisa Tommeraasen.

She had her eye on one angel in particular - a figurine of an angel with a horse resting next to it.

"I'm horse obsessed. I love that one," she said.

Around the corner, Caitlyn and Sarah McGinness of Janesville were perusing another case filled with angels.

"This is our first time. We've always wanted to come, but we never had the chance," Caitlyn said.

Joyce Berg, who owns the bulk of the 10,000 angel collection, said the museum has been fairly busy with an increase in visitors in the last month. As the final day approached, the museum has received attention from various media sources and that has added to the increase in visitors, Berg said.

"If we had this kind of business all along, we probably wouldn't be closing the museum," Berg said.

Berg's hope is to keep the collection together and sell all the angels to a single buyer. But if a single buyer is not found by Oct. 11, the collection will go up for auction.

"There's been some inquiries, but no one has made an offer yet," she said.

She said she will miss the museum and the people who have volunteered and served on the museum board, but she expects to stay in touch with her angelic associates.

"We'll all still in a way stay together at least until the auction," she said.

There also is a farewell event planned for 5-7 p.m. Oct. 13 at the Angel Museum, when Berg hopes everyone who has played a part in making the museum possible will come together and celebrate the museum's 20 years of operation.