

# PORTAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Museum at the Portage  
804 MacFarlane Rd., Portage WI  
608-742-6682

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

Open 1-4, Thurs – Sat, April & May, Sept and Oct  
Open 1-4, Tues – Sat during June, July and Aug

## Songs of WWII spotlight for September event

The music of the World War II era will be featured at a special event on Tuesday, September 10 at the Museum at the Portage. Mary Eisenreich, a former music teacher from Ashwaubenon (near Green Bay) will present the one-hour program.

Ms. Eisenreich is a member of the Heritage Players who perform at Heritage Hill State Park. Her solo programs are also popular offerings for UW-Green Bay non-credit classes for retired adults.

The event is free for members of the Portage Historical Society and this year each member is encouraged to bring a guest.

“We know there are people in the community who are interested in Portage history and stories about Portage,” says Peg Amend, president of the Portage

### Friend or member?

Don't be confused if you are now referred to as a “friend” of the Portage Historical Society. At its July meeting the board of directors agreed that the term “member” may imply an obligation to attend meetings, serve on a committee, etc. “Friend,” on the other hand, suggests encouragement and support.

“And that's what we are hoping for from those who make a financial contribution,” says PHS President Peg Amend. “We want people to join PHS as “friend” and not worry that they will be pressed into service on a committee. Of course, we are always glad when people volunteer to help with a special event, or in the rose garden, or provide refreshments.”

Historical Society, “and we are hoping that they will want to become a ‘friend’ of the Society after having a chance to attend a special event.”

Doors will open at 4:30 pm and beverages will be served prior to the 5 pm program. At the conclusion of the program beverages and hors d'oeuvres will be served from 6-7 pm. In order to help plan for seating and refreshments, RSVPs are recommended. Call Peg Amend at 429-9214 or Kathy Rowley at 697-9631.

### Return to Friendship Village

A program of selected oral readings from Zona Gale's writing about Portage will start on 12:30 at the Museum at the Portage on August 17. The program is part of the annual Friendship Village Day honoring the life and accomplishments of Portage's Zona Gale. Members of the Portage Historical Society will participate, as usual, in the graveside ceremony at Silver Lake Cemetery earlier in the day.

The museum will open at noon and featured will be a small exhibit of Zona's books with her inscriptions to the people of Portage. As always, the museum will be continuously running home movies of Zona and William Breese and their family.

The program at the museum will conclude in time for Museum guests to get to the Civic League clubhouse for pie and ice cream.

# What's in your backyard?

Dick Lillie knows that treasure is in the eye of the beholder. Armed with his metal detector, he hunts for treasures in the lawns of Portage homes, and a good day will yield perhaps some wheat pennies (“wheaties”), buttons, marbles and parts for children’s toys, but the thrill is in the chase and the anticipation of what may be eight inches below the surface.

Dick is a former Portage Historical Society president and, like his wife Sally (née Dunn), a native of Portage. After he retired from the Department of Natural Resources, they moved back to their hometown. He was introduced to his hobby in 1986 and recently upgraded his equipment, purchasing a more sensitive detector making it possible to detect metal up to 12 inches below the surface.

Dick has sought treasure at three dozen Portage locations, spending on average about four hours per location. Prime hunting grounds are old lots where the lawn hasn’t been disturbed for decades. As might be expected, Dick yearns to get permission from landowners along the old tow paths, trails and roads and says the presence of the military and Native Americans make it likely that there are interesting artifacts below the surface. However, state and city regulations prohibit metal detecting on public lands or waterways. Metal detectors’ code of ethics outlines additional guidelines for hobbyists, such as getting permission to hunt, leaving abandoned property as it was found, and disposing of trash or litter.

A recent foray on a W. Conant St. property



*A recent search yielded these items: a pink plastic pig keychain fob, back of a Seth Thomas clock, barrel from toy popgun and scrap metal.*

yielded the following assortment: pink pig keychain fob, 14 pennies (dates 1941, 1944, 1948, 1952, 1954, 1961, 1963, 1982, 1989 and 1996), part of a Seth Thomas clock mechanism, base of a toy lead soldier, fishing lure, a lock, lead weight, two tin cans, a glass Bell jar lid, two pop can snap pulls, seven aluminum scraps, 22 nails, a copper gasket and the barrel of a toy cap gun.

The pink pig key chain fob was not a high-value item, but it was unique and Dick said he plans to take it to the next meeting of the Four Lakes Metal Detectors Club for their “find of the month” contest.

Aside from assorted scrap metal and nails, Dick says it’s common for him to find garden hose nozzles and horseshoes. The most interesting items he’s found are a medallion from a horse halter and a 1832 half dollar.



Dick, like others who have metal detectors, are sometimes asked to use the sensitive detectors to look for lost valuables. He once spent two to three hours/day for eight November days combing a corn maze for an heirloom wedding ring. He was walking back to his car, ready to give up, when he found the ring near the site where pumpkin customers rinse off their pumpkins.

If you are interested in finding out what’s in your backyard, call Dick to make arrangements.



## **PHS to host appraisal event**

### **With Mark Moran in 2014**

Experienced antique and fine art appraiser Mark Moran has signed a contract with Portage Historical Society to conduct appraisals on June 21, 2014. Since Moran started offering his services two years ago, he has appraised at more than 300 events. Forty items will be appraised, but individuals can make arrangements for private appraisal while Moran is in Portage. More details about the event next year will be available. For information about Moran and his services, see [markfmoran.com](http://markfmoran.com) or facebook page at <http://facebook.com/Markfmoran>

## **In Memoriam**

Loyal, passionate about history, traditional, honest and a gentleman were all words used to describe Merwyn Jenkins, past president of the Portage Historical Society. He passed away on July 13 while taking an afternoon drive. He was born in 1936 and graduated from Portage High School in 1954. After graduating from the University of Chicago, he enlisted in the Army, serving in Berlin during the Berlin Crisis of 1961. Following a successful career in California, he returned to Portage and became active in civic affairs. He will be missed by many family and friends.