



Portage Historical Society

The Museum at the Portage

804 MacFarlane Road • Portage WI 53901

September 2023 Newsletter

Member Appreciation Night

September 29

5:00 pm Social Hour

6:00 pm Presentation

Presenter: Alan Hanson, Curator at WHS
State Archive Preservation Facility



The Tommy Bartlett Show, previously known as the Tommy Bartlett's Water Ski & Jumping Boat Thrill Show, was a popular tourist attraction in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. The show was

created in 1952 by Wisconsin showman Tommy Bartlett as a traveling group of entertainers, based in Chicago, Illinois. After changing its base of operations to Wisconsin Dells, the performers continued to tour, performing at World's Fairs and U.S.O. shows. Over 20 million spectators have seen the show since its creation.

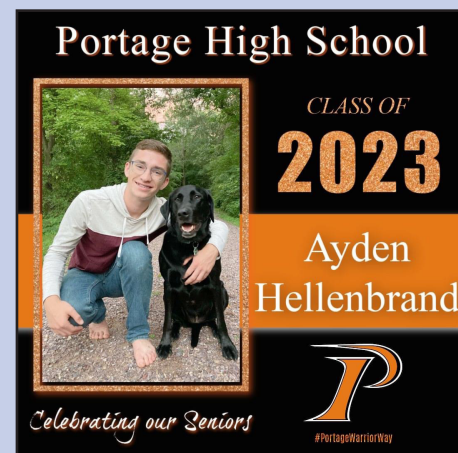
The Wisconsin Dells show was performed between late May and early September on Lake Delton. The show operated rain or shine. Despite the fact that the show took place entirely on the lake, Bartlett himself apparently only waterskiied once, on his 70th birthday, 32 years after the show's creation.

In 1978, Tommy Bartlett named Thomas Diehl president of Tommy Bartlett, Inc. and sold him a 25% stake in the company. Diehl is now the president,

general manager, and co-owner of Tommy Bartlett, Inc. He had joined the Bartlett organization in 1967, at the recommendation of NFL quarterback Joe Namath.

On September 16, 2020, the show announced it would permanently close due to financial losses from the COVID-19 pandemic.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



Ayden Hellenbrand, son of Tim & Kris Hellenbrand, received the John & Lila Waldman Portage History Scholarship for \$1,000 this spring. He is planning to attend UW Platteville-Baraboo campus majoring in Mechanical Engineering. In his essay, Ayden stated that field trips to local historical sites and museums make learning about history “fun and relatable”. Ayden also volunteered at the museum this summer helping out the group of ladies who are cleaning the storage area and organizing/inventorying our artifacts in the basement - he was a huge help! Congratulations to Ayden for winning the Waldman scholarship and best wishes to you at college.

HIAH SPEAKER SERIES

co-sponsored by the Portage Historical Society

Cultivating Perspective: The Creative Arts of Converging Cultures, 1832

Historic Indian Agency House • September 12 @ 6:30 pm

Free Admission



Mary Antoine – September 12

Historian, Author, French Heritage Corridor WI Rep.
French-Canadian Pièce sur Pièce Architecture and
Heritage in Wisconsin

FRIENDSHIP VILLAGE

On August 19, Jeff Grothman gave a presentation on Ansel Clark, Col. Frank Haskell, and many other important people in Portage's history. Michael Bablick, new city administrator, presented proclamations for Dr. Robert "Doc" Curtis, Kathryn Curtis, and Elayne Clipper-Hanson - citizens who promoted preserving our rich history.



Michael Bablick presented proclamations to family members of Dr. Robert "Doc" Curtis & Kathryn Curtis and Elayne Clipper-Hanson



CURATOR'S CORNER

Hello from the collections team! We have had a busy summer organizing and cleaning storage areas in the Museum's basement, in order to provide the best possible environment for the items in our collection. I want to thank volunteers Debbie Rohrbeck and Sandy Nachreiner for spending their Friday mornings sorting and filing items...with their help, we have made huge progress!

Over the spring/summer, the Museum has had several new donations. We feel incredibly lucky to have received multiple items from Trails Lounge, following the closing of the restaurant this spring. The largest of these items is a set of faux stained-glass panels depicting men portaging a canoe. These panels hung for many years in the restaurant, as a divider between the bar and the dining room. They are currently on display on the main level of the Museum, providing a colorful backdrop for our exhibit on the 1673 voyage of Marquette and Joliet.

Also donated this summer was a beautiful black wool cape, brought in by the Lucas family. The cape was purchased by Theodore (Theed) Lucas for one of his wives around the turn of the 19th century. The fine material and detailing on the cape, as well as very little wear on the fabric, suggest it was purchased for fancier events and not daily wear.

We greatly appreciate everyone who has donated to the Museum and helped us tell the story of this historic town. If you would like to donate an item to the Museum, we encourage you to email us at museumattheportage@gmail.com or come to the Museum on Fridays between 1 and 4 pm.



BECOME A MEMBER

The Museum at the Portage is maintained by the Portage Historical Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the history of the city and surrounding areas. Your gift of sponsorship in the Portage Historical Society will ensure that future generations will learn about Portage's remarkable past.

Welcome to our new members in 2023:

Mike & Caroline Bolgrihn
Dennis Brown
Katie Fleck
Carol Heisz
Joe & Kathy Houzner
Yvonne Marshall
Scott & Sara Reindl
Kristi Rickey
Amy Schleiss

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

Vicki Vogts, *president*
Suzi Hemler, *vice president*
Peggy Amend, *secretary*
Dave Eulberg, *treasurer*

Curator:
Sara Oostdik

Ann Marie Fuerst
Fred Galley
Jim Gorman
Mary Gorman
Nancy Kreier
Peg Malone
Sean Malone
Kathy Rowley
Florence Schieber
Heather Smith
Melody Brooks-Taylor

Docents:
Judy Eulberg
Sarah Mautz
Linda Wendt

CONTACT US

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(608) 742-6682 (only during open hours)

Website: www.portagemuseum.org

Email: museum@portagehistoricalsociety.org

Hours of Operation:

September & October

Thursday, Friday & Saturday at 1:00 - 4:00 pm