

## Search for manager underway

The Portage Historical Society is accepting applications for the part-time position as Museum Manager. The manager will report to the board and is expected to understand and implement the mission of the Society and oversee operation of the Museum, and support fundraising, programming and exhibit initiatives. Details of the position are on the Museum website ([portagemuseum.org](http://portagemuseum.org)). Applications are due November 15.

*We've made it easier for you to renew your membership or purchase books from Portage Historical Society. See details inside to renew, give a gift membership or purchase a book for a gift.*

### Portage Historical Society

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Heather Smith

#### Museum Manager

(vacant)

#### Museum Docents

Laurie Deakins  
Judy Eulberg  
Sarah Mautz  
Linda Wendt

#### Newsletter Editor

Jane Considine

#### Contact Us:

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Portage, WI 53901

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**Website:**  
[portagemuseum.org](http://portagemuseum.org)

November 2019



## Portage Historical Society

### Museum at the Portage

804 MacFarlane Rd., Portage, WI

## Brick terrace nearing completion

The brick entrance terrace at Museum at the Portage is finally becoming a reality, according to Dave Eulberg who has sorted out the details with the brick vendor and the installer.

Originally it was the intention to have a walkway leading from the front of the Museum to the rose garden, but the project redesign was turned over to landscape architect Joel Engelland who offered a more economical and manageable plan for an entrance terrace which the Historical society board approved.

Eulberg reports that about 50 bricks have been sold,

with more than half of them 8"x8" bricks and the remainder 4" x 8" bricks. Bricks were purchased in honor of or in memory of about 50 individuals or families. He estimates the Historical Society will net a profit of about \$3,000 for sale of the bricks.

The vendor is Gift Bricks of Sturdevant, and the bricks will be installed by landscaper Tom Lewis of Montello. It is expected that the installation will be completed in November, and the landscaping by the terrace will be done in Spring 2020.

The design of the terrace allows for expansion when additional bricks are purchased in the future.

## Story, song and appetizers create successful event

UW professor Steve Ackerman brought the story of the ill-fated Edmund Fitzgerald to the Museum at the Portage for the annual members' night on Sept 11, and of course he brought the familiar Gordon Lightfoot song about the sinking of the Great Lakes freighter. Ackerman called upon his background in meteorology to help listeners understand the unusual weather conditions on Lake Superior that resulted in the tragic incident.

More than 50 members attended the popular event, held annually to salute Portage Historical Society members for their support.

An attractive and tasty array of appetizers was provided by PHS board member **Florence Schieber** added to the festivities. Thanks, Florence!

Portage Historical Society  
804 MacFarlane Rd.  
PO Box 727  
Portage, WI 53901



*Mark Curtis (Rogers, Arkansas) gave a presentation about curling to a group of avid, long-time curlers at the Museum at the Portage in mid October. He sported the Portage Curling Club jacket worn by his late father, "Doc" Curtis, who curled into his 90s.*

# Collection of Zona Gale books returned by retired educator

Retired educator and Portage High School graduate Paul Rux recently presented his collection of books by Portage author Zona Gale to the Portage Historical Society. The books have been in his possession for 60 years, and now will be shelved at the Museum at the Portage, the former home of the winner of the 1921 Pulitzer-Prize for Drama

Zona Gale gave the books to Elizabeth Seeman who worked at the home of Dan and Rose Grady, friends of Zona and her husband, William Breese. Zona wrote personal, brief messages to Elizabeth in three of the books. The pre-teen Paul Rux helped out with odd jobs at the Grady home on W. Pleasant St., and

when Dan Grady died, Elizabeth moved from the home and gave her collection of books to Rux. Rux earned his bachelor's degree in history from the University of Wisconsin, and then went on to earn his Master of Arts in Library Science and his PhD, also from UW. He studied at Trinity College in Dublin and Columbia University in New York City, and completed certification to teach at four institutions.

Zona Gale and the Wisconsin Free Library Commission were the focus of Rux's master's thesis. Gale was a member of the Commission from 1921-32, and its chair from 1921-24. The Commission was established in 1895 to provide "advice and counsel" to all free libraries in the state, and to communities that hoped to establish libraries. Its mission was expanded after a few years to include the provision for travelling libraries to rural communities without libraries.

Rux and his wife Jane now live in Mount Horeb.



Portage Historical Society will now own a copy of Christmas, (second from right, top row), thanks to Paul Rux. Many of the books he donated include personal messages from the author inside.

## Upcoming area events

Nov 14, 7 pm "Life on the Prairie before Badger Ordnance Works" at Badger Army Ammunition museum, See [badgerordnancehistory.org](http://badgerordnancehistory.org) for details.



Nov 16—Jan. 4: Exhibit "Ever Gleaming: 60 Years of America's Aluminum Christmas Tree" at Wisconsin Historical Society Museum on the Square in Madison.

Dec 14, 4-6 pm, "Living Windows," Downtown Portage, Stroll downtown Portage sidewalks to enjoy live vignettes from the past on display in store windows.



Dec. 14, 1 pm: Curator Talk: "Evergleaming." Wisconsin Historical Society Lead Curator Joe Kapler shares insights about artifacts and the history of the popular annual exhibit. \$5/adult. WHS museum, Madison

## Renewing easy with PayPal

When you're ready to renew your membership in Portage Historical Society, just visit the PHS website to use **PayPal** to send your payment on its way. The service moves your payment amount from your credit card or bank account to the merchant without sharing your financial information.

Renewing or a new membership may also be done the standard way: completing the form on this page and mailing it with your check.

### Building projects on board's to-do list

The Museum at the Portage is closed for the winter months, but the board of directors has several projects it's working on: moving the center wall to allow for expanded seating for events; following up with the City of Portage about possible water damage on the 2nd floor that may be coming through a dormer, and electrical work repair.

Winter tasks also include planning events for 2020, including the **annual dinner meeting**, which has been tentatively set for April 13. Watch for details in the next newsletter.

## Stories of the Upper Fox River



Coming Summer of 2020

WATCH THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY FACEBOOK PAGES FOR DATES AND TIMES OF THE 2020 EVENTS SEE YOU ON THE UPPER FOX!



PLAN YOUR 2020 SUMMER ON THE FOX WITH SPECIAL EVENTS: PORTAGE JUNE 5-7 AUG 15 MARQUETTE JUNE 13 SEPT 6 MONTELO JUNE 20 SEPT 5 PLUS MORE!!!

MUSEUM EXHIBITS VOYAGEUR CANOE TRIPS SPEAKERS KID'S ACTIVITIES SPECIAL EVENTS

FOLLOW THE FOX WITH PORTAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MONTELO HISTORIC PRESERVATION SOCIETY MARQUETTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Portage Historical Society

Membership levels:

Pierre Pauquette	\$20-\$49
Ansel Clark	\$50-\$99
Zona Gale	\$100-\$249
Julia Rusch	\$250-\$499
Fredrick J Turner	\$500 +

Enclosed is my check # \_\_\_\_\_ for my annual membership (January—December).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I am interested in:

- Helping with flowers or landscaping
- Helping with the newsletter
- Providing refreshments for events
- Assisting with set up of displays/exhibits
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form and your check to:

Portage Historical Society,  
PO Box 727, Portage, WI 53901

We thank you  
for supporting and preserving  
Portage history.