



# Winnebago Museum Newsletter

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## President's Corner

Happy New Year from The Winnebago Area Museum! It is our hope you will have a fantastic 2026! Maybe you have made a goal to visit the museum, become a member or are interested in volunteering. Thank you to our local community for visiting us and sharing what a great museum we have in town. Please stop by and tell your friends to visit!



We are looking forward to great new things at the museum this year. But before we get ahead, a wrap up of some highlights from last year and the last few months.

The fall Events at the museum included the Soup Supper, Frosty Fest and Local Artist Open House. The Soup Supper on November 13 was a great success! We had Vegetable soup, chicken noodle, chili and potato soup, so delicious. Frosty Fest brought Santa for the families along with letter writing to the North pole, popcorn and cranberry stringing, angel ornaments and hot chocolate. The New Year began with the Local Artist Open House, with a variety of beautiful ceramics.

Other big new things at the museum included new water heater, new toilets with grab bars, new computers and new security system. All so very exciting and necessary! Personally, I'm not sure how exciting it is, but necessary!

Onto communication at the museum, we have our quarterly newsletter, website, Facebook and now a monthly newsletter called the History Hub. We started the email letter in October and it's for anyone who wants to hear what is going on each month.

A BIG thank you to all the dedicated volunteers! People work many hours to get ready for an event, gathering supplies, making decorations for tables and just working the hours we are open. Several new displays: Dr. Office, Basey Church, Interstate Power Company display and kitchen. The holiday decorating, fall décor to enhance our displays and Christmas decorating, take volunteer time also. **THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!**

We are excited for the new year, organizing and preparing for new displays are happening. February will bring a new local artist and March the Golash Supper. The board is working on a time line of the beginning of the museum to prepare for our 50th Anniversary. So much more news to share.

Merodee Grannis, President

## Dolls from the Beginning of Time

Did anyone in your family give or receive a doll for Christmas this year? They are such a standard gift for a little girl, and have been for years. Dolls were made as far back as 3000 B.C. Ancient dolls were made at home from wood, clay, rags or bone. Dolls of ivory or terra cotta have been found also. The best dolls, however, were made of wax. In ancient Egypt doll makers tried to achieve realism just as manufacturers do today. Dolls made in Ancient Greece, Rome and neighboring countries often had movable limbs.



Dolls became a business in the Middle Ages. Europeans began to produce dolls commercially in the 1300's. Doll factories in present day Germany were started in the 14th Century. Even before the 16th Century merchants showed dolls at trade fairs in Florence and Venice. They used clay, wood, wax, rags and paper mace (a paper and glue molding material). There was little change in doll making during the next 200 years.

Quality improved in the 17th Century. As competition increased in the field, dolls were made finer in the 1600's. Faces were finished smoother, eyes were able to move, and "lady" dolls were dressed in the latest fashions. Asiatic gum and alabaster (like marble) were used to make faces smoother. Doll makers hired expert stylists to be sure dresses would reflect current fashions.

Early 18th Century brought greater realism. Soft leather treated to feel like human skin was used to cover dolls' torsos, hands and limbs. In addition, many dolls had stylish wigs of human hair pasted onto fabrics, or made into wigs. In the late 1700's each manufacturer tried to dress his dolls more elaborately than those made by competitors. Shoppers considered attire as important as any other feature. The industry grew quickly. Prime doll sources in the 18th Century were Germany, France, England, Holland and Italy.

The primary goal in the 19th Century was human likeness. Manufacturers kept searching for newer material that could help make dolls look, feel real and also imitate the actions of real people. To make them more flexible, as well as durable, dolls were assembled with ball joints. Many new materials were tried successfully; such as rubberlike gum, glazed porcelain, unglazed parian and delicate bisque—also celluloid, metal, composition (a paste) and vulcanized rubber. America's vulcanized rubber dolls were the world's most popular in the 1860's.

An important change happened in 1860 when for the first time, baby dolls sat upright! America's composition dolls were smooth, good looking and practically unbreakable. Natural looking bisque gave them additional appeal. In the 20th Century dolls modeled after famous characters became popular, and the invention of sleeping eye dolls in 1911 was a big step.

The First World War forced American manufacturers to make bisque dolls, which they previously had to import from Europe. "Bye-lo-baby" and "Hebee" doll are names from that time. After 1917 America's doll makers took the lead and set the pace for the entire industry. Rubber drink and wet dolls usually came with layettes and accessories. Soft bodied baby dolls could bend at the waist (1942). Rooted hair came in 1950. Traditionally dressed brides and dolls that could walk became popular about 1946.

The 20th Century brought vinyl plastics for dolls whose bodies look and feel natural; whose hair is held to the scalp by its roots and can be washed, combed, curled and set repeatedly. (But not cut repeatedly!) It also brought us to the invention of the Barbie doll in 1959 and a whole new approach to playing with dolls.

## Step Back In Time



Do you recognize this section of railroad track?

Did you ever walk it? How about in the dark?



What is different about this 1976 Winnebago letterman's jacket?



What is this? Let us know what you think. It is 5 inches wide and rough metal.

## Museum site property sold

Plans are proceeding for the Winnebago Bicentennial museum with the announcement Wednesday night at the city council meeting that Harold Shields has sold his property adjoining Muir Library to the Winnebago Bicentennial Committee.

The committee has received a Bicentennial grant of \$4,000 to help with the project and a matching \$4,000 must be raised from the community for the museum.

1976

Part of the history of the museum. Visit us to find out more.

**"History illustrates who we are and why."**

## Sights and Events at the Museum

### Soup Supper



### Frosty Fest



## Meet Your Board Member

This month's newsletter featured board member is one of our newer volunteers at the Museum. Kevin Poole recently joined us as a volunteer and board member. Kevin is a lifelong resident of Winnebago and is the son of Jerry and Jane Poole. His father Jerry was very instrumental in the early years of the museum's forming. Kevin continues the tradition of exceptional knowledge and collection of Indian artifacts. Kevin graduated from Winnebago High School in 1976 and then attended Mankato Vo-Tech in their plumbing-HVAC program. After graduation he went to work for Guy Jenkins Plumbing in Winnebago. In 1986, he worked for Truman Farmers Elevator leaving there in 1999 to come back home to work for hometown Royer's Plumbing and Heating until his retirement in 2021. He was a member of Winnebago Volunteer Fire Department for 30 years retiring in 2009.

Kevin came to join us at the museum last year-2025, joining the board of directors right away. His specialty at the museum is Indian artifacts and history. He enjoys teaching young people about the history and facts of the Indian tribes that once lived in our area. He also is knowledgeable on Red Wing pottery items and other Winnebago history items which he collects. Kevin and his wife Kim have four children and enjoy family time and grandchildren. In his spare time, he likes to still search for artifacts, rock hunting, and hunting/fishing in the area. He is joined at the museum by his sister Ranae, who is also now volunteering, ensuring that the Poole family legacy at the museum continues.

Stop in to visit them soon.

- Steve Miner



The Museum now has merchandize for sale to help promote your local area museum. We currently have long sleeve t-shirts and canvas bags. Stop in and show your support in the community.



## Winnebago Area Museum—Back Page

The mission of the Winnebago Area Museum is to conserve research, interpret, and exhibit the artifacts and historical items from the area and share them with the public for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment.

The Museum has a PayPal account for on-line donations. Please support your local Winnebago Area Museum.



### Be a Volunteer—

We invite you to join us to do the background work of a museum— keeping records straight (archiving), designing exhibits, or publicity. Whatever your interests may be, we can find a place for you! Just come in on a Tuesday morning or Thursday afternoon or call about another time.

### **Board of Directors**

Merodee Grannis, President  
Stevan Miner, Vice President  
Colette Meidinger, Secretary  
Jean Anderson, Treasurer  
Jerome Behnke, Board Member  
Jim Grannis, Board Member  
Pete Haight, Board Member  
Hazel McCrury, Board Member  
Herb Pederson, Board Member  
Mark Peterson, Board Member  
Kevin Poole, Board Member

### Renew your Membership

if you haven't done it recently. Basic membership is \$35.00. We are supported and funded by our community and members who live further away also. We are grateful for your support at any level you choose.



The Museum is sending out a monthly email with current events, fun local history, info about our displays, and more. You can go to our web page to sign up or just scan the QR Code.



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