



# Winnebago Museum Newsletter

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## President's Corner

President's Corner April 2026

Thank you for being a Winnebago Area Museum Member! Your membership keeps us going and volunteers excited about sharing our museum. This museum is a treasure for the community of Winnebago. We have had two great events and one coming up.

The Local Artist Open House of amazing woodworking artistry happened March 22 and is on display until the end of the month. Our local woodcarver, Don Selvig, has kept busy with all of his creative wood figurines that are beautifully displayed in one of our cases. You can also view the work of marquetry wood art by W.E. Schneider. It's amazing too!

Our Famous Goulash Supper was held on March 24 and the décor was from the historic Winnebago School Smorgasbord. The food was delicious and the company from our community was great. Thanks everyone! The proceeds are going towards a heart on our building.

On April 25<sup>th</sup> we will have the May Day Basket Event, 1-3:00. All are welcome to create a basket to take home or to share with someone. We will have a variety of materials, flowers and candy for a basket. Come to share stories with friends about past May Day adventures and be creative in this spring celebration.

We have some Easter décor in the museum thanks to our wonderful volunteers. It's refreshing to see spring, and I always get the taste of Lemon Bars this time of year. My Mom always made them for Easter. I shared with my daughters the recipe from a note card I copied in my cursive handwriting. Probably from the "Golden Years of Cooking Presbyterian Style" 1946-1996 cookbook. Out of curiosity I checked out the Lutheran Church of Our Savior cookbook and the recipe is in there also. We do have both of these for sale at the museum. Couldn't leave out the St. Mary's Catholic Church 1988 cookbook, the recipe was in that too! So you have probably made this recipe, where you combine the butter, flour and sugar to make the crust you bake and then add the eggs and lemon. The finish was a thick lemon flavored powder sugar topping. So good!

Enjoy your Spring and may the farmers have a safe productive planting season!

— Merodee Grannis,



Please come into the museum and write down your favorite memory of the Winnebago area. We have an easy form for you to fill out so we can collect stories and memories of the Winnebago area. History can only be preserved through storytelling.

**WINNEBAGO  
AREA MEMORIES** *Remember this?*

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name your memory: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of memory: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Describe your memory along with people and places.

## A Look At How Our Ancestors Lived

This issue I am sharing a letter from the Stauffer family, and a story from my mother, **Ferne Phipps Kemp**. She wrote about her father, Chester Phipps, who carried mail here in Winnebago.

“One time a man on the street said to Dad, ‘you have an easy job.’ How wrong he was! In winter it was a hard job. Dad’s day went like this: at five o’clock in the morning he got up—shook the ashes down in the old base burner — and replenished the fuel. Then he went down the street a block to Grandfather Phipps’ place where there was a barn. He milked our two cows, harnessed the horses, Prince and Pet, for the mail route. He carried the milk home and by that time mother had the range going and had a warm breakfast ready.

After breakfast he drove the horses to the post office near Frank Masters’ grocery store. He made up the mail and started out. When snow was deep he used the ‘cutter’ or open sleigh. He was dressed in woolen underwear, heavy clothes and a fur coat and fur cap and fur mittens. Mother warmed a soap stone for his feet and wrapped it in newspapers to hold the heat. Many times Dad froze the tip of his nose. He carried a cold lunch from home and usually ate it at the Orlo Curtis home. He got back to town about four o’clock in winter, made up the mail and came home. In those early days of mail carrying, the carriers did not even get Christmas Day off.

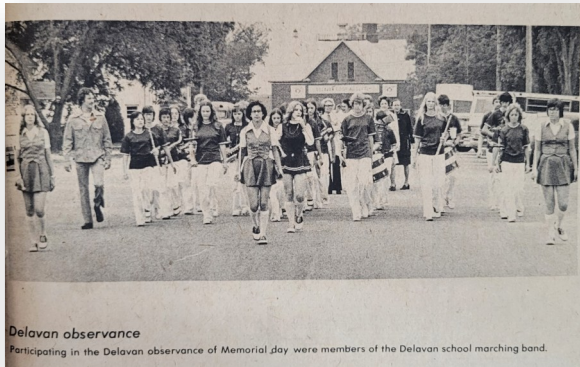
Chester carried mail by bicycle the first year. He next bought a Holsman car that looked like a buggy. This car was used in our Winnebago Centennial parade in 1956. It is now in the Jackson museum. His next car was a Model T Ford. He wore out two of them and then had a little Model A coupe. Dad liked people and he liked his job. .... He carried mail out of Winnebago for 32 years and retired in 1932.” D. Ferne Kemp

Next the letter written by **Clarice Stauffer** to her grandchildren:

“Dear Lee & Sarah, I hope you ask your Great Grandfather & Great Grandma to tell you stories about the time they were young and what Wyoming was like. I’m going to tell you a story that Aunt Mabel told me about my Grandfather.. My grandfather, Thomas W Hall, came to Winnebago City then went about 30-35 miles further west into Martin Co. which was very prairie-like—very few trees except close to the lakes and streams. He had built a cabin. Had to go way to Mankato for some supplies. Mabel thought he was probably driving an ox team. He couldn’t make it in one day so had to camp out on the way to Mankato and camp over night on the way back. On the way back he made camp for the night but the mosquitoes got so bad he hitched up his team and went back to a hill where the breeze kept the mosquitoes away. When he got to his cabin the Indians had been there and took some of his things.

Another time she told that he had a pony that apparently didn’t like Indians and would get very nervous when he could smell or sense they were around. This time Grandpa noticed his pony getting nervous. So he took him and his dog out onto the prairie. He got the pony to lie down in the tall grass. He and the dog, also laid down. The Indians came and again raided his Cabin and left without harming him. This was before he was married. When you see your Grandpa, Zack, you ask him to tell you stories about his life. I’ll bet he has some good ones to tell. Your Dad and Mom would probably like to hear them also.”

## Step Back In Time—May 1977



**Delavan observance**  
Participating in the Delavan observance of Memorial day were members of the Delavan school marching band.

### Memorial Day in Delevan



**Outside Ceremonies**  
Granada-Huntley seniors were the only area graduates able to convince the weather to cooperate and allow them to hold outside ceremonies. Kirk Halverson is shown speaking to fellow classmates at graduation last Wednesday night, May 26.

### Granada-Huntley Graduation



**WINNEBAGO GIRL SCOUTS** will be selling cookies door to door in Winnebago this Saturday. Among those selling will be, front row from left: Donna Kortuem and Brenda Gumbo; back row, from left: Lisa McClain, Terri Owen and Sue Kloeck.

### Girl Scout Cookie Time—1976

This May Blow Your Mind —

This is loosely quoted from the Mayflower Quarterly of May 1987.

“In the progression of ancestors beginning with 2 parents, 4 grandparents, 8 great-grandparents, we find by the 14th generation we already have 8,192 ancestors. ... If that progression continues, there are 1,048,476 ancestors by the 22nd generation, 8,387,808 by the 25th generation and 1,040,901,524 (yes, over one billion) ancestors by the time of William the Conqueror in the 11th Century. “[remember this was written in 1987].

This next idea gets even trickier: “Of course, a person does not have a billion *different* ancestors as the progression eludes to, for he does have many ancestors who he descends from many, many times over. An example would be the small villages during the early and middle ages in Europe and England where the same gene pool was re-enforced with the villages literally having 2nd to 20th cousin marriages going on and on for generations.”

The author goes on to say that the consequence of this startling information is that old history comes alive. We are bonded to the history of mankind. “To be conservative in the laws of probability, everyone during and before William the Conqueror is your blood relative.”

If you have difficulty proving or tracing a few lines of your genealogy, this whole idea may give you a large headache!

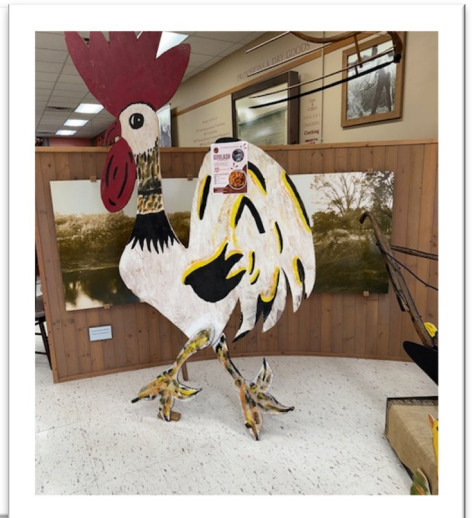
"Study the past if you would define the future."

## Sights and Events at the Museum

### Local Artist Open House



### Goulash Supper



## Meet Your Board Member

This month, our newsletter is rolling out the red carpet for the one and only Pete Haight. Pete is basically Winnebago royalty—he's lived here all his life and was born in the same farmhouse he calls home today. No, really, the house was likely built by his great-grandfather, and it's one of the last Sears houses standing in the countryside. Also his great grandfather was one of the first three doctors in Winnebago.

A proud graduate of Winnebago schools, Pete used to ride his horse into town several times a week—because nothing says “booming town” like trotting down Main Street. Eventually, Pete took over the family farm as the third-generation farmer. Still, he kept busy driving trucks and lending his farming skills to neighbors—if you needed help, Pete was just a holler away. Pete is the last one of four siblings: 3 sisters and 1 brother. Pete and his wife Shirley have two sons and are celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this year. Way to go Pete and Shirley!

If you've spent more than five minutes in Winnebago, you've probably heard the legend of Pete Haight—a man so devoted to the local museum he pre-dates even the concept of “museum membership.” Pete's lifetime pass was purchased way back in 1977, and rumor has it, he's worn out the carpet in every museum building in town. The guy's been president in the past as well as the unofficial snack provider (made by Shirley) —if there's a board officer title, Pete's filled it.

He was instrumental in the originations of the Winnebago Area Museum. From helping at the original location in the library to the purchase of the land where the grocery store is located and (after that new building didn't happen), he spearheaded the purchase of the four Museum buildings in our current location.

Pete's passion for the Winnebago Area Museum is legendary—if local history had a superhero, his cape would be plaid, and his superpower would be storytelling. If you ever wondered who knows more about Winnebago than Google, the answer is Pete. Got a question about the town's history? Forget the internet, go straight to the source down at the museum, and let Pete regale you with tales that are a history lesson and Wikipedia page of townfolk. Come in on any Tuesday morning to sip coffee, chat with Pete and enjoy Shirley's desserts. The Museum is lucky and grateful to have Pete as a board member.

— Jim Grannis (Winnebago Area Museum Board Member)



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 you 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.



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

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