

## Longtime Museum Maintenance Manager Retires

By Linda Ager, Museum Staff

Greg Misfeldt retired in October from his part-time position as Maintenance Manager. He started in 2001 and had been the museum's longest-serving employee in recent memory.

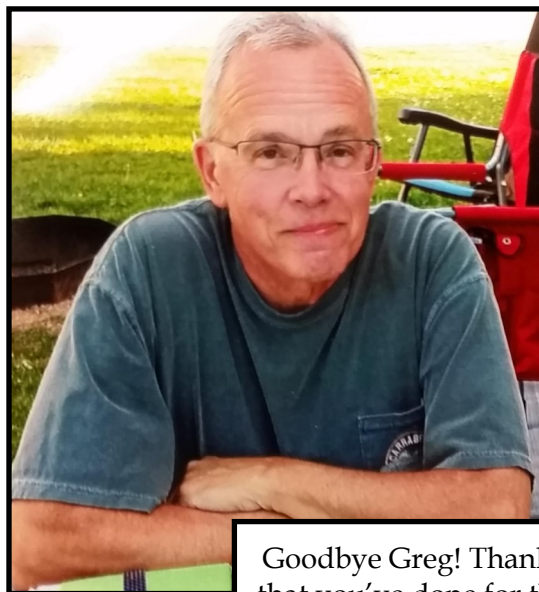
In the final weeks of his employment, Greg worked alongside new employee Cody Becker so that Cody could learn his way around a job that has many facets and around a building that has a lot of twists and turns. The museum has had many additions which sometimes require interesting engineering solutions for the maintenance manager.

Although Greg has routines for maintaining and cleaning the building, much of his time was spent on jobs that couldn't be planned because they were unpredictable or one-time jobs.

Greg said that problem solving is a large part of the job. Problems can be large, such as when ice and snow pile up where they aren't supposed to be, or small, such as fixing the office stapler that only Greg could load. Whether the job was large or small, Greg approached them all with the same can-do attitude. According to Assistant Director Dana Bertelsen, Greg was asked to do everything from fixing a "Pin the Udder on the Cow" game that kept blowing over in the wind, to trimming dowels for historic games, to digging up sod for the Civil War reenactors' fire pit during the Governor Hoard Celebration and then putting it back neatly.

A recent day was typical of the variety of odd jobs Greg did. That day Joel Winn stopped in with a duck stamp for Greg to hang in the duck hunting room, and Roy Hetts dropped by to change nameplates on trophies in the Dairy Shrine.

That variety of tasks was one thing that Greg appreciated about the job. On the rare occasion there was a job that Greg didn't like, "luckily... it didn't last too long," Greg said, singling out ice removal as a job he disliked.



Goodbye Greg! Thank you for all that you've done for the Museum.

Greg's favorite part of the job was working with people. Tammy Doellstedt, Volunteer Coordinator, said Greg worked with volunteers to paint the first floor of the Hoard House and the porch of the Foster House, move large artifacts, put up the Christmas tree each year, set up for the Fourth of July, and more.

"It is a fun place to work and everyone is easy to get along with," Greg said. "There is nothing bad about this job," he said, and then added with a smile "... other than the ice."

Greg said he has gotten a lot of positive feedback and has never heard a bad comment about the cleanliness of the building. Dana said, "His job was to make it so no one notices the building so that people could enjoy the events and exhibits." Tammy added, "Greg will be missed. He paid so much attention to detail and kept everything so clean for a building of this size. We routinely get compliments on how clean this building is."

Over the years, the job has changed as the building has expanded and as the event calendar has grown. Greg said that the number of activities to set up has increased in the last few years.

401 Whitewater Avenue  
 Fort Atkinson, WI 53538  
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www.hoardmuseum.org  
 www.facebook.com/hoardmuseum  
 Hours: Tuesday – Saturday  
 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
 Closed Sundays & Mondays

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 Cody Becker, Maintenance



## Merrilee's Musings

By Merrilee Lee, Museum Director



As Thanksgiving approaches, it always seems to be a good time to remember all that we're thankful for. Personally, I'm thankful for my family, friends, a warm home, a wonderful museum where I work, coffee, and my hot water heater. The last two might be a bit tongue-in-cheek, but think about all that coffee and your hot water heater do for you in a day! Life would be all cold water and uncaffeinated days. How dreary does that sound?

I am, as always, thankful for all of you. As members of the museum, you contribute in ways that you might not even realize. You support our events by attending them, you help publicize the museum when you say to other residents, "Have you been to our museum yet?," and you help financially underwrite all that we do here. Here are some fun museum membership facts to ponder:

- ~Our closest member lives across the street from the museum.
- ~Our farthest member lives in Canada. We also have members in Arizona, Florida, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and as close as next door in Illinois. Of course, most of our members live in Wisconsin.
- ~We have 25 businesses and 12 organizations as members.
- ~Our youngest member is Ewan, the 18-month-old son of Dana, our assistant director and her husband, Zach.
- ~Our oldest member is... Ok, we won't share who our oldest member is, but let's just say this person has been around longer than the museum has been here.

Regardless of where you live or your age, thank you for all that you do for the museum. In this season of gratitude, please know that we're thankful for you.

*Merrilee*

## Recent Events at the Museum

### ☛ Civil War Day and Governor Hoard Celebration ☛

More than 130 people attended our Governor Hoard Celebration and Civil War Day to enjoy a slice of birthday cake, learn more about Wisconsin's 16th Governor, W.D. Hoard, and delve into how immigration has shaped Wisconsin. Director Merrilee Lee presented, "The Downfall of Governor Hoard: The 1889 Bennett Law," Dr Nengher Vang of UW-Whitewater presented, "In Search of a New Home: Hmong Refugees and Hmong Americans in Wisconsin," and the Madison Civil War Roundtable led a discussion of Immigration in the Civil War.



### ☛ Hoard History Hour *Birds from Hoo's Woods* ☛

On Saturday, October 26, more than 140 people came to see five birds from Hoo's Woods Raptor Rehabilitation Center. Dianne Moller, HWRRC director, introduced audiences to a young bald eagle, a merlin falcon, two screech owls, and a barn owl. She entertained and educated the large crowd about each bird, its habitat, behaviors, and other amiable traits. Thank you to our co-sponsor, Rose Lake Friends, for helping to bring Dianne and her birds back to the Museum!



*Continued from page 1...*

Before retiring from his job at the museum, Greg retired from part-time maintenance jobs at the police station and the library, which he held concurrently with the museum position. He will continue to manage an apartment building.

"Back then, everything was a race," Greg said about his multiple part-time jobs, noting that he worked a lot of Saturdays and Sundays. "I look forward to the slower pace."

Greg said he will use his extra time to catch up around the house. He and his fiancée, Harriet, also plan to take the camper out more, including spending part of this winter in Florida. Greg said he is happy that they will be able to go to Wisconsin state parks on weekdays instead of fighting the weekend crowds.

Greg is also a water tower docent, is an artist, and an art glass collector.

"I really enjoyed working here and will miss it," he said. "But I won't drop out of sight."

Director Merrilee Lee said, "Greg was a wonderful member of our team and will be sorely missed. Greg was especially good at helping to find a solution for a problem. On more than one occasion, if we were speaking to a HVAC specialist regarding a problem, Greg would help "translate" the HVAC specialist's technical lingo to me so that I

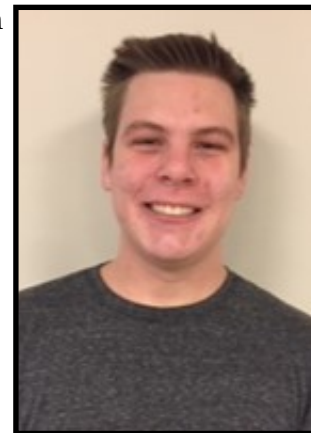
could comprehend as well. I truly appreciated his patience in helping me understand the mechanical intricacies of this building. Greg is so talented in so many different areas. He is a mix of a jack-of-all-trades and a Renaissance man. I'm so glad that Cody was able to spend time with Greg, learning about our building's infrastructure and overall maintenance."

Cody Becker, a Fort Atkinson High School graduate, has attended MSOE and plans to attend the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater at Rock County in the spring to continue his work toward a degree in civil engineering.

Cody was born in Kenosha and lived with his family in Colorado before moving to Fort Atkinson. Cody's father works in maintenance, and Cody said he learned a lot from his father while working along side him.

Cody said he enjoys hiking, tinkering, and playing with his two dogs.

Cody is getting to know our volunteers and members. Be sure to introduce yourself the next time you're at the Museum!



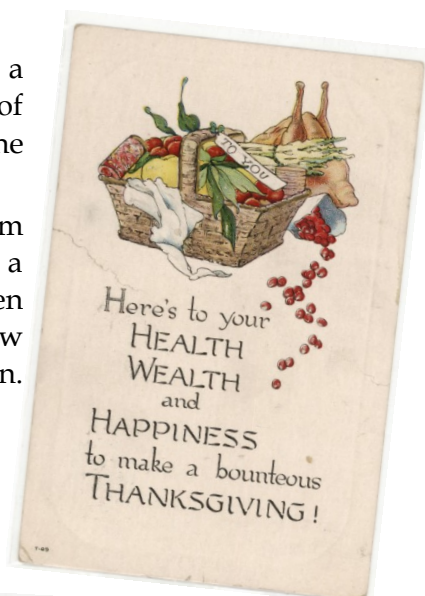
## From the Archives

Did you know that the Museum has a large postcard collection? Below are a few postcards from the Archive to help get us in the Thanksgiving spirit. All of these cards were mailed between 1910-1916 and have notes written on the reverse side.

The notes could have been written this year: "Have looked for a line from you every day but suppose you are busy all the time. Suppose you will have a nice time. Thanksgiving we will be all alone. The first time since we have been married. With love, Clara. [postscript] Write a few lines and let me know how you are." Another card read, "Wishing you a very Happy Thanksgiving season. I enjoyed your letter so much as I often think about the classmates."



The Hoard Museum is  
thankful for our more  
than 550 members!



## VOLUNTEER NEWS:

*Congratulations to our 2020 Volunteer Service Award Winners. The winners were announced at the September 20, 2019, Volunteer Party. Their biographies will hang outside of the Volunteer Office for the calendar year 2020, and will also be in the Volunteer Manuals located at the Archive and Greeter Desks.*

### 2020 Volunteer of the Year: Midge Nelson

To be considered for the Museum's Volunteer of the Year award, a person must be a member of the Historical Society, display reliability, flexibility, be a team player, volunteer more than 50 hours annually, have a diversity of service, and be enthusiastic, among other qualities. Well ... this year's candidate was a unanimous choice, and very deserving!

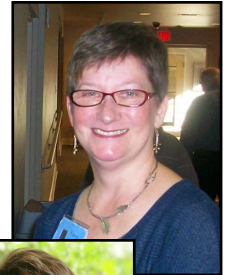


**Midge Nelson** began volunteering in 2011 and has a fantastic personality, a beautiful smile, and a can-do attitude. Even when things get a little harried, she holds her own. Midge is often seen at the Greeter Desk during our largest events and she is also willing to serve on Saturdays, which is our toughest time slot to fill. In her "free" time, she also is quite the baker and makes delicious cookies for our events ... literally hundreds of cookies a year! Midge, thanks for spending your valuable time with us! Midge is also very involved in the community, in her church, and with her large family. Thanks again, and *congratulations!*



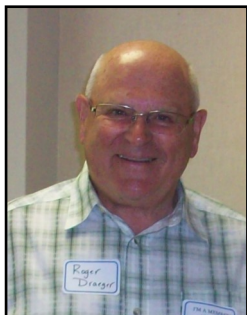
**Program Volunteer - Morning @the Museum: Bonnie Schaefer** Bonnie is the primary volunteer for our preschool program, *Morning @ the Museum*, which is designed to give preschoolers and their families time to roam the museum and interact with each other. The museum opens up early at 8:30 a.m. on the first Friday of the month during the school year. The program started in February of 2016. Bonnie chooses books that relate to the month's theme and does two storytimes during the morning. Her positive attitude and energy make all the little ones feel welcome. Thanks, Bonnie!

**Hit the Ground Running Award: Bonnie Geyer and Karen Gomez** This new award, *Hit the Ground Running Award*, honors volunteers who come up with a great idea, research it, implement it, and get others to join in! This award honors the visionaries who started the Hoard Historical Literary Circle, Bonnie Geyer and Karen Gomez. In this inaugural year of the book club, members have read *The Bark River Chronicles* by Milton Bates, *Aztalan*, by Bob Birmingham, *The Making of Pioneer Wisconsin* by Michael Stevens, Increase Lapham's Book *The Antiquities of Wisconsin* and Juliette Kinzie's book *Wau-Bun: The Early Days in the Northwest*. Not only do they read historical books, they take field trips. Members have gone to Aztalan, the Koshkonong Mounds Park, and Hebron Historical Society. Bonnie and Karen are both Historical Society Board Members and help serve at many of our special events. Thanks for making a great idea become a popular program!



**Baker of the Year: Jean Ehrke** If you have never eaten a cookie baked by Jean, you are missing out! Her lemon-iced butterfly shortbread cookies are to die for! She also tries out new recipes, and they have all been winners. Jean began volunteering at the museum in 1996. She retired from teaching home economics, and she puts her training to good use. Jean also serves at the Greeter desk. Her family raised Holsteins, so Jean is well versed in farming issues and interacts well with visitors. She is a huge Badger football fan, and she tries to attend every game.

**Archive Assistant: Jane Van De Hey** Jane is one of the newest volunteers at the Hoard Museum, serving for the past two years. She is a retired art teacher. Jane is a very active volunteer, working three to five shifts per month at the museum. Her work in the archives involves citing old newspaper clippings to help us catch up on a backlog. This task takes attention to detail and patience. We wisely did not show her all the clippings at once! Jane also has been active in working in Collections, helping to set up exhibits, and assisting with special events. Jane, we hope you are around for many more years. Congratulations!

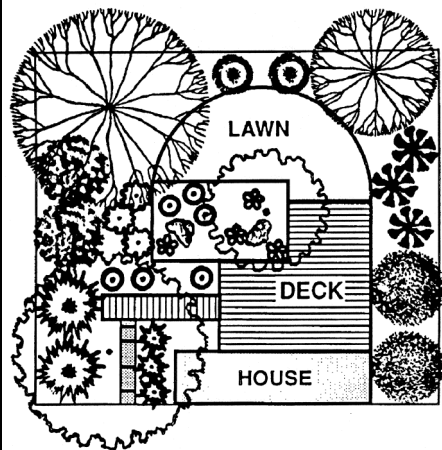


**Greeter of the Year: Roger Draeger** Roger has been serving at the museum for 20 years. He is a busy man so we treasure the time he spends with us. Roger is caring, curious and very welcoming to all of the visitors. He grew up on a dairy farm so he can hold his own in a conversation with visitors to the National Dairy Shrine. Roger is young at heart and helps lead children's activities during Dairy Day and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Roger also serves as a Foster House docent and helps deliver posters for our upcoming events. His family has longtime roots in the community, and we think they have discovered the fountain of youth. Roger, here's to 20 more years of service!

## Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum

### ☞ Landscape and Garden Design— Garden Education Program ☞

Saturday, November 23, 2 p.m.

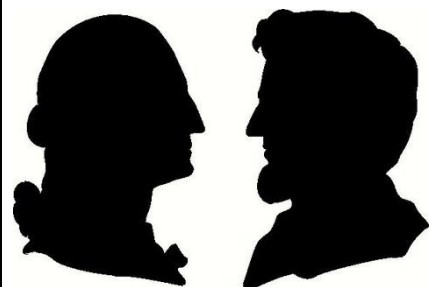


Our last Garden Education program of the year will focus on general landscape design. Master Gardener Beverly Dahl will review the questions property owners should keep in mind when thinking about starting or changing their yard. We'll also look at how to choose and arrange the various elements in a yard and the plants within a shrub border or flower garden. And finally, we'll look at landscape plans in general, how they are used to decide how many plants are needed, where plants should go, and how a plan can be used for long-range planning. Join us and start dreaming of next year!

### ☞ Morning @ the Museum Pre-Kindergarten Program ☞

First Friday of the Month, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

The Museum opens an hour early for preschool children and their families or teachers on the first Friday of the month during the school year. This time allows little ones to explore the exhibits at their own pace with their family or teachers. Each month features a theme that focuses on a holiday, season, or Museum exhibit. Storytime is at 9 and 9:45 a.m. and crafts are available throughout the morning.



December 6 - Gingerbread Day

*There will be no program in January due to the proximity to the holidays.*

February 7— Presidents Day

March 6— Dr. Seuss Day

### ☞ Winter Workshop ☞

Saturday, November 30, 11 a.m. - 2p.m.

Join us the Saturday after Thanksgiving for fun for all ages. Join us between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. with your friends and family to explore the Museum and to make environmentally friendly bird feeders. These shaped birdfeeders are charming and useful. While here, enjoy some wintry cookies and apple cider. You do not need to register to attend. This workshop is free, but donations are gratefully accepted.



## Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum



### ☞ Gingerbread House Contest ☛

Past Entries from the Gingerbread House Contest.

**Registration: Tuesday, December 3–Friday, December 6**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Gingerbread House Contest is open to all artists and bakers from around the region. This year's categories are Original Designs (made by scratch or by kit) or Building Replicas (made by scratch or by kit). Construct your favorite house or make one of your own unique design. Enter as an individual or make your house as a group! For more information or for an entry form, stop by the Museum office or go to [www.hoardmuseum.org](http://www.hoardmuseum.org).

### ☞ Holiday Open House ☛

**Saturday, December 14, 1-4 p.m.**

Come to the Hoard Historical Museum and join the festive fun during our annual Holiday Open House! The event is free and open to the public. Donations appreciated.

Interactive activities include children's holiday crafts and the opportunity to build and decorate your own gingerbread house out of graham crackers and candy. While you're here, you may enjoy holiday treats created by the Museum's volunteer bakers, admire our holiday decorations, take in an exhibit on winter in Fort Atkinson, hum along to holiday music, and vote for your favorite entry in the Gingerbread House Contest!



Vote for your favorite gingerbread house during Museum hours from Tuesday, December 10 through 1 p.m., Saturday, December 14. Gingerbread House winners, including the winner of the People's Choice, will be recognized at 2 p.m. during the Holiday Open House.

Did you know that the Museum uses historic flatware for special events, room rentals, and our annual meeting held each spring? Our flatware is from two collections, a "Municipal Building" set of spoons and a second set of similar design. We originally had 125 place settings, but pieces have gone missing through the decades and we now we only have 109 complete sets for events!

This fall, one gentleman returned a fork he put in his breast pocket for safe-keeping! Has something similar happened to you? Does any other organization have the "Municipal" set? They have 'VICTORS CO A1+ OVERLAY IS' on the back. If they are sitting unused, we would be very grateful to add them to our kitchen.



*Hoard* HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
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**Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum:**

- November 23:** ♦ *Landscape and Garden Design* Garden Education Program, 2 - 3:30 p.m.
- November 30:** ♦ *Winter Workshop*, Make and take bird feeder crafts, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- December 6:** ♦ *Morning @ the Museum* Pre-K Program, *Gingerbread Day* 8:30-10:30 a.m.
- December 14:** ♦ *Holiday Open House and Gingerbread House display*, 1 - 4 p.m.  
*Gingerbread House Contest Rules available at Museum and on  
Museum website. Registration and drop off Tuesday, 12/3-Friday, 12/6!*
- December 24-26:** ♦ *Museum Closed for the Holidays*
- December 27-28:** ♦ *Museum Open! Bring your out-of-town guests to explore our history!*
- Dec. 31-Jan. 1:** ♦ *Museum Closed for the Holidays.*

Questions about our events? Contact the Museum office by calling (920) 563-7769 or emailing [info@hoardmuseum.org](mailto:info@hoardmuseum.org).