

**JUNE 2023**

# THE CHRONICLER

The Official Newsletter of the Polk County Historical Society

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

120 W. Main Street, PO Box 41, Balsam Lake, WI 54810

## MISSION STATEMENT:

Preserving the past for future generations by collecting a unique and enduring collection of Polk County history shared with the public through programs, exhibits and research.

## MUSEUM HOURS

2023 Season: 5/25 - 9/4

Thursday - Sunday

Noon to 4pm

Open on Memorial Day and Labor Day

## ADMISSION

No fee for admission.

Donations are greatly appreciated.

715-485-9269

Email:

[info@polkcountymuseum.org](mailto:info@polkcountymuseum.org)


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ELEVATOR FOR ALL

THREE FLOORS

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Follow us on Social Media!

 Polk County Historical Society

 @polkcountymuseum

## ANNUAL GIVEBIG

This year's St. Croix Valley giveBIG took place on Tuesday, April 25, 2023. The Polk County Historical Society had a goal to raise \$2,000 to help with creating new interactive exhibits, develop and execute more community events, and maintain our collections so they can continue to be enjoyed by visitors. While we did not reach our overall goal, we did raise enough money to get us started on all of our projects! We'll be sure to update you on the projects as we work on them.



We want to thank everyone who gave to the Museum during giveBIG. However, giveBIG isn't the only way to give to the Museum. While donations, both items and money, are always appreciated, you can also consider giving your time. We depend on our volunteers to help run the museum during our open season and we would LOVE it if you want to volunteer your time during this year's open season. If you're interested, email us at [info@polkcountymuseum.org](mailto:info@polkcountymuseum.org).



## NEW STAFF MEMBER

The Polk County Museum has a new Director! Brenna Weston comes to us from a former career as an archaeologist and in higher education. Brenna has Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Anthropology from North Dakota State University (Go Bison!) and has grown comfortable conducting research in a variety of settings including museums and archives. Brenna is at the museum Monday through Friday. Give us a call if you'd like to stop by and meet her!

## STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS

### Museum Staff:

**Brenna Weston, Director**  
director@polkcountymuseum.org

### Board of Directors:

**Jan Carlson, President**  
**Curtis Nelson, Vice President**  
**Caroline Rediske, Secretary**  
**John Adams, Treasurer**  
**Sharon Kelly, Polk County Representative**  
**Al Foxwell**  
**Larry Smetak**  
**Lisa Mosay**  
**Millie Enerson**

**Board meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month at 6:00 PM.**

## 2023 JOIN HANDS EVENT

The Museum hosted its annual Join Hands open house event on April 22, 2023. Each year in April, the Museum opens its doors on a Saturday to show appreciation to our current Board members and volunteers and to attract new volunteers and Board members from the community. The event allows folks to tour the museum and hear from current volunteers about what we do and how they can help, and, of course, refreshments are served!

Join Hands 2023 was organized by Board member and long-time volunteer, Larry Smetak (see his Volunteer Spotlight on the next page!). Larry has a passion for the museum and it's evident in his dedication to hosting a thoughtful event.

This year's Join Hands event resulted in the addition of our newest Board member and Treasurer, John Adams.



## HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED GIVING TO THE POLK COUNTY MUSEUM? CURIOUS ABOUT WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES?

What happens to your donations?

Your donations help us keep the museum up and running! With your donations we can:

- Purchase collection and archival materials to keep our items safe and preserved for future generations
- Develop, schedule, and provide refreshments for special events and speakers
- Build new exhibits and display new and loaned collections items
- Help keep the building and grounds clean and beautiful

### WAYS TO GIVE:

MAKE A DONATION ONLINE AT OUR WEBSITE:

[HTTPS://WWW.POLKCOUNTYMUSEUM.ORG/MEMBERSHIP](https://www.polkcountymuseum.org/membership)

OR MAIL TO: POLK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PO BOX 41, BALSAM LAKE, WI 54810

## 2023 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

We are pleased to announce this year's Scholarship winner is Osceola High School senior, Olivia Schiebel! Olivia submitted a truly wonderful essay detailing the history of the stone walls and stone buildings that were constructed at Interstate State Park by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. Olivia's personal connection to the stonework at Interstate through her great grandfather gave her essay a great personal touch. Come by the museum and see for yourself!



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: LARRY SMETAK

In our first edition of the Volunteer Spotlight, we are pleased to highlight volunteer and Board member, Larry Smetak. Hear from Larry about why he loves the museum! "I have brought at least 10 of my grandchildren to view our magnificent place and share a touch of history. On two occasions I had the privilege to speak to crowds here. I enjoy greeting area friends at the Lanesdale School, being with groups for school tours, as a board member for 3 terms and just mingling with guests. Some say History oozes from my background but I have truly enjoyed all the years together sharing history with youth."



## EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHT: GENERAL STORE

While there isn't a "before" picture included, many can remember the general store before it got a thorough reorganization and cleaning out. Now, visitors can walk in the store, look around and the items "for sale" and even play a game of checkers with a friend. This is part of our initiative to include more interactive areas for children and adults of all ages. Come into the museum to see more interactive displays!

### WAYS TO GIVE:

MAKE A DONATION ONLINE AT OUR WEBSITE: [HTTPS://WWW.POLKCOURTYMUSEUM.ORG/MEMBERSHIP](https://www.polkcourtymuseum.org/membership)  
OR MAIL TO: POLK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PO BOX 41, BALSAM LAKE, WI 54810



## REMINDER!

### Pioneer School Registration is OPEN

Do you have a child between 6 and 14 who's interested in learning about what a one-room school house was like?

Sign them up for one of our three-day Pioneer Schools! We have two sessions, August 8-10 or August 15-17, with spots filling up fast. For more information and to register and pay for your child's attendance, visit our website:

<https://www.polkcountymuseum.org/events>

## Save-The-Dates

### August 19

Speaker Series: Lois Joy Hoffman

### September 2

Speaker Series: Jim Swanke

### Labor Day

We are open Labor Day, 12:00 - 4:00 PM!

### Wine Walk

We have reserved our spot for this year's Wine Walk on Saturday, September 16 from 1:00 - 6:00 PM. Come by for some wine and lawn games!

### Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting will take place in October. Stay tuned for more information on where, the when, and how you can attend.

### Halloween

We will be hosting our annual trick-or-treating event this Halloween! We'll also be hosting a Night at the Museum with a spookier theme this year. Check our website and social media for more information.

## FREEDOM FEST 2023

The Museum participated in the annual Balsam Lake Freedom Fest over the July 4th weekend. The Museum continued the tradition of selling root beer floats, with the new addition of creamsicle floats, to hungry and thirsty attendees.

Special thanks to Wayne's Food's Plus in Luck for donating money for our ice cream and to Bernick's in Dresser for donating the root beer and orange sodas!



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