

## President's Corner

### Rock Hunting

Recently I had a conversation with my cousin, Kevin Poole, his mom and my dad are brother and sister. As a long time resident of Winnebago, son of Jerry and Jane Poole, Kevin has Native American artifacts in the museum. The museum has several cases of artifacts from Jerry and Jesse Poole. He told me his dad got the interest from his Uncle Jesse. Many rock hunting walks happened on Jesse's farm south of Winnebago. The walks were 3-4 hours each time. Kevin said "a lot of walking and fresh air." He started walking with his dad around the age of 10. After a walk it was so fun to sit and share the discoveries.



He shared the best productive field walks happened in the spring after a rain. The walks were great father and son times, and some were three generations with Kevin's son. Another favorite walking spot was at Rice Lake. That location was full of wildlife along with finding Native American Artifacts.

Jesse was one of the museum's founding members and gave many artifacts to the museum. You will find a newspaper article on a display where he was interviewed telling about his rock hunting. Jane and Jerry Poole were great volunteers at the museum. We have a quilt of Jane's on display in the Heritage Room.

Come to the museum to see our Native American Artifacts on display from Kevin and his family along with many others. We are so proud of everything in that display. It's one of the greatest in Minnesota.

Spring will be here, and we will have that rain where you yourself can go on a walk and maybe find an artifact that someday will be at the museum.

Merodee Grannis, President

## Slat Back or Ladder Back Chairs

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Is there a slat-back chair in your basement or barn? As American as apple pie, they are true primitives. It is also sometimes called the 'ladder-back' chair. In the first half of the last century they were part of most American farmhouse kitchen sets. They were produced by skilled rural craftsmen or sometimes by the farmer himself. Because they were made in large quantities almost everywhere, many are still around. The story that goes with mine is that it was made by my great-great grandfather Latimer.

The slat-back was made in two forms— one with arms and one without. Armchairs are bigger and were more expensive. There are also children's versions which are miniatures of the adult's chair and sometimes footstool size. The construction is simple — the rear legs continue upward to form the back. The front legs are the same thickness. All the legs were made on a foot-driven lathe. There are rungs connecting the legs and holding things together. At the top of the back legs are turnings usually made with fine chisels. They are called finials and are sometimes intricate, sometimes simple. The slats, generally made from ash, go up the back evenly spaced. Three slats is the most common but there can be from two to five.

These chairs were usually demoted when their owner could afford city-made chairs. A slat-back found in a barn or attic could probably tell many stories. Corseted women in Victorian times had difficulty reaching their shoes to button them. They needed a low stool to rest their feet on and since there was usually a discarded slat-back in the barn, it would be shortened to make it the right height. This is one reason that when you find a slat-back they often seem shorter than they should be. The front rungs may also have two wide depressions worn in them from a farmer's boots because houses were drafty with cold floors. To keep their feet warm they used the chair rung to keep their feet off the floor.

A slat-back chair is likely to be covered with many layers of paint. Originally seats were made of woven cattails called rush or the inner bark of the hickory tree and done in a basket weave. Original seats were also coated with heavy paint to protect them and give them a longer life.

Hazel McCrury

## Sights and Events at the Museum



The whole crew with Santa at Frosty Fest



Jean helping string popcorn with kids



Pete with a home school group



Danny showing Indian artifacts to the homeschoolers



Open House for Joy Marsh's exhibit

## Our Newest Discovery is Art Shows - -

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The museum has by now has had several local artists display their work in our small, back gallery. Although our primary purpose is that of a history museum, we felt that many of our local artists do not get a chance to be seen. By having an Open House event for the featured artist, we have been giving people a chance to meet the person and admire their product. It has also proved to bring in people who have not been in the museum before, so that is a win/win.

Currently Joy Marsh is displaying her paintings along with some by her mother, Neva Pegor, who taught Joy to paint. This display is predominantly landscapes. Before this was Jenna Johnson, also an outstanding painter who does still life, portraits and landscapes. People have been very impressed with both of these exhibits and we have enjoyed visiting with you all.



Goulash Supper

## Meet Your Board Member

### Jerome Behnke

This month's newsletter features board member Jerome Behnke. Jerome was born in Mankato, Minnesota, and raised on his parent's farm in rural Minnesota Lake. He graduated from Minnesota Lake High School in 1967. For a year after graduation he worked for Milwaukee Railroad. He then attended Mankato Vo Tech School taking a class in appliance and refrigeration repair. Jerome then served his country in the US Army from 1969 to 1971 including a tour of Vietnam. After leaving the service he started working in Winnebago at B & L Manufacturing, later becoming Meterman. At B & L he oversaw inventory control, repairs an maintenance of electric fences and other products they offered.

When the business opened an art gallery, "The Brass Lantern", he oversaw the picture framing department. Jerome and his wife Sue then moved to Winnebago in 1978 as Sue started working in the insurance agency at First National Bank. In 1980 Jerome started working with Marshall Messer at his appliance repair business, Messer's Refrigeration, and shortly after Marshall retired, bought the business where he remained until retiring in January of 2020.

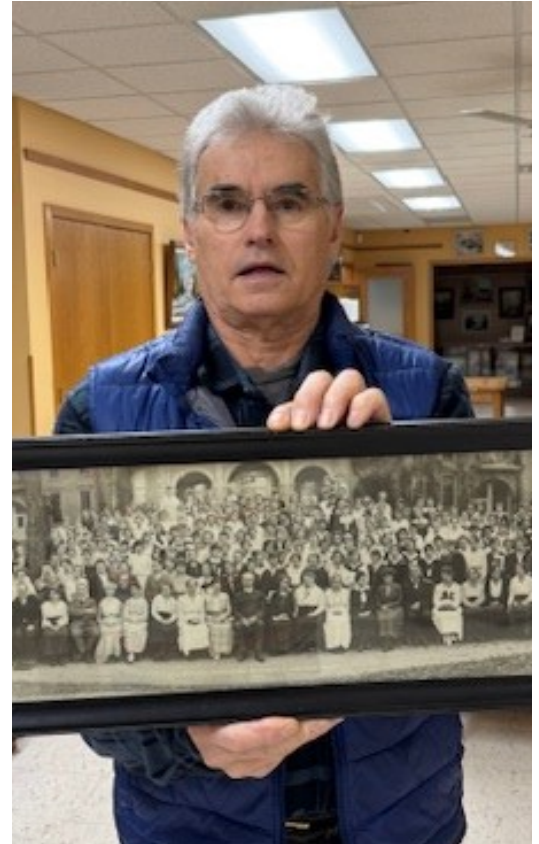
Jerome served on the Winnebago Fire Department for 31 years holding officer positions: first-ever training officer, assistant fire chief and fire chief for 4 years. He was also head of the maintenance department at St. Mary's Catholic church and in 1985 started as a member of the Parish Council which he continues to his day. Jerome is also a member of American Legion Post 82, takes care of the flags at the Winnebago Memorial site and helped with the Winnebago Moto-Fest and Brewfest in the years they were held. Jerome and Sue were elected to the Winnebago Hall of Fame in 2016.

Jerome came to the Winnebago Museum in 2021 and shortly after joined the board of directors. Some of his many duties at the museum he enjoys are maintenance of the various displays and items, restoration of donated items and updating and working on our military display which is the display he is most proud of at the museum. He also enjoys the farming section since he grew up on a farm.

Jerome and his wife Sue have two daughters, Mandy and Allison, and are blessed so far with four grandchildren who they really enjoy visiting and watching grow up. Jerome also enjoys being outdoors, especially fishing. He also enjoys yard work and gardening. Stop in the museum and visit anytime.

By Stevan Miner

(Addendum from last issue— Hazel forgot to mention that she finished college while living in California and has a degree in Business Management.)



### Winnebago Area Museum

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#### Mission:

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.

#### Be a Volunteer—

We are always seeking volunteers to join us to do the background work of a museum— keeping records straight (archiving), designing exhibits, newsletter design and 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 us about another time.

Be a Member—Basic Membership amount is just \$35 per year. Membership entitles you to a discount on the rental of the Heritage Room..

We are grateful for your support at any level you choose.



### 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
- Danny Rynearson, Board Member

#### Shop the Museum Mercantile

- Jewelry
- Pottery Crocks
- Cookbooks
- Yearbooks and more

#### The Heritage Room

A Meeting/Conference Room is Available for Family Reunions, Birthdays, Class Reunions, Clubs and Organizations., Graduations

A big screen TV is available with Zoom meeting capability.

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



#### Upcoming Events:

- March—April— Kim Allevan art display
- March 18—Goulash Supper
- April 26— May Basket party
- June 12— Talk on Vikings by Arn Kind