



Historical Perspectives

Discovering Our History

1860 Light Station and Resource Center



VOLUME 36, ISSUE 2

FALL 2025

THE LADY LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER

Please join PWHS on October 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the Edison Room at Inventors Brewpub for our Speaker Series presentation of *Lady Lighthouse Keeper: The Extraordinary Life and Times of Georgia Green Stebbins* with Ken and Barb Wardius.

Georgia Green Stebbins was suffering from tuberculosis when she came to the North Point Lighthouse in Milwaukee from New York in the mid-1800s to help her ailing lighthouse-keeper father. She ended up being an exemplary lady lighthouse keeper in an era when that was an uncommon profession for women.

Georgia was the longest tenured keeper at North Point. Join Ken and Barb Wardius, authors of books like *Wisconsin Lighthouses* and *North Point Lighthouse*, as they shine a light on Georgia's incredible story. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. after the members-only Annual Membership Meeting.



The 1888 Keepers quarters where Georgia lived from 1888 to 1907

Photos are the property of the [North Point Lighthouse Museum](#)

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- @1860LightStationMuseumPortWashingtonWI
- @porthistory

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Newsletter

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Membership

\$40 Individual

\$75 Household

Philanthropic Levels

\$250 Honor

\$500 Patron

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Port Washington, WI 53074

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www.pwhistory.org

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Historical Perspectives

is published 3 times per year

President's Message

Our Treasure

As a Grafton native, I visited Port Washington regularly—the smelt run, fresh fish from Smith Brothers on Friday, and the occasional prom/wedding venues. But I never began to understand Port Washington until I came to live here.

Just like everyone else, as a newbie I was gobsmacked with the glory and fury of the lake. Not long after, I became fascinated with the history. Our history is so different from inland communities, whose history is largely about settlement and commerce. Ours is about hiSTORY—the stories of the people who managed a living and home on this huge body of water that dishes out gifts and sacrifices in equal measure.

Our history is our treasure.

Communicating our shared history to visitors and developers is part of the job of the Port Washington Historical Society. Ours is not just a pretty place. Not just a shelter from encroaching environmental catastrophes.

Not just a financial opportunity for ambitious developers and investors. It's a community built on a vast, tempestuous lake. And really, while we understand change is inevitable, most of us want change to be based on our shared story and principles, not on following bright shiny objects.

People are brought here for the right reasons, whether they know it or not. They're attracted to visit or live or build a business because this place is authentic. Beautiful. Comfortable. Hard-working. Why? Because, I would say, of our heritage.

We don't want to lose who we were, because then we would lose who we are.



I think most of you understand this. It's why our membership has increased and why you donate gifts to the Society. More and more, your support is essential, and very much a part of our shared treasure. We don't donate to be part of an exclusive club, we donate because we don't want to lose who we are. Thank you from the bottom of my lake-washed heart.

*Barbara Joosse, President
Port Washington Historical Society
Board of Directors*



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

So far in 2025, it's been all hands-on-deck for the Historical Society. To our many volunteers, including our board of directors, who fill crucial roles, you have my sincere thanks. To the recent generosity of our many incredible friends, especially Kathy Bink, Sam DeMerit, Tom and Nancy Holley, Fred Nast, Ansay & Associates, and Port Washington State Bank, we are humbled with gratitude. We are also grateful to the community for "rounding



up" for the PW Historical Society this spring at the Fox Bros. Piggly Wiggly.

Several years ago, we bought a building, a storage condominium in Fredonia to be exact. This sizable investment was made so we have room to continue to collect and preserve Port Washington's history, especially larger items. You can learn more about what's planned in the future for

this space in the Resource Center Report.

Once again, our Spring Fling Committee (Mary Ackerman, Kate Brown, Diane Burkhalter, Julie Christensen, Jodi Dickmann and friends, Mary Flierl, Nancy Holley, Barb Joosse, Geri Zehren) brought in donations from forty individuals and businesses for sponsorships and live auction gifts. Another fifty individuals and businesses contributed merchandise and gift cards to our silent auction. The names of everyone associated with

(Continued on page 5)



RESOURCE CENTER NEWS

Since the establishment of the Port Washington Historical Society in 1991, the Society has been collecting items that reflect the history of the community. Many of these items went into furnishing the 1860 Light Station Museum. When the guest keeper program began in 2023, some of the Society items in storage went into furnishing the lighthouse apartment that they stay in while serving as guest keepers.

Over the years, collected items not in use have been stored in a variety of places culminating in the 2023 purchase of a unit in Fredonia that the Society had been renting since 2013 to store a variety of items, many of them large. Items in Society collections are used in exhibits that the Society

alog the contents.

Work has begun to organize the storage unit so that items can be moved there from the Resource



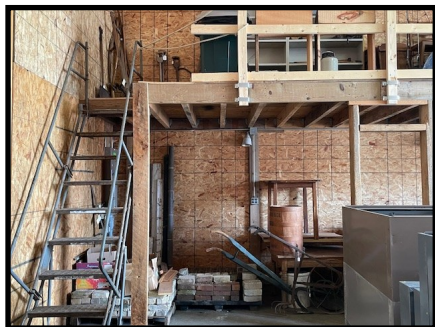
Center where space has become more limited. Recently the Society has been given additional storage files, and more recently, new shelving purchased by the Society and donated by one of our volunteers.

Once the unit has been organized and the shelving constructed,

part of the Society's collections can be moved into the storage unit. Archival pieces currently stored in the basement of the Resource Center can be better stored at the Fredonia unit.

Several issues at the Fredonia storage unit exist, including the narrow and unsafe stairs to the loft area where we store chairs and smaller items. It is hoped that in the future the stairs can be replaced and the lighting

(Continued on page 6)



creates. They range from Wisconsin Chair Co. items to the dental drill of Dr. Huwaschek or signs from businesses in the past. Over a period of several years, work was done to cat-

1860 LIGHT STATION REPORT

Lighthouses are so cool. They evoke a sense of nostalgia along with providing tales of adventures. They provide a beacon in the dark of night guiding ships out of harm's way and into safe harbors.



Keepers Mary Beth and Daniel (r)

For the past two summers, Resident Keepers acting as tour guides have shared the many fascinating stories of our 1860 Light Station with visitors while living in the private lightkeeper quarters in the second-floor apartment above the museum.

This year, Port Washington residents Nicole Sova and Dave Garacci returned for a second summer. During the week of Nicole and Dave's stay in July, Channel 5 in Green Bay filmed them in a story that will air in



Resident Keeper Joy



Keepers Dave and Nicole



Lightkeepers Carol and Pat

August, and local photographer Brian Slawson captured the couple dressed in period clothing for our marketing pieces. Thank you, Nicole and Dave. We are also grateful to Tom and Holly Spaeth who returned for a second year, this time to assist new

keepers on weekends.

Beginning in June, first-time lightkeeper couples from Pewaukee, Waukesha, Milwaukee, and the suburbs of Chicago became resident keepers, informing guests



Resident Keeper Pete (right)

from all over the world about Port's maritime history and taking them up to the lantern tower for an awesome view of Milwaukee, some twenty miles away. In August, two members of the famous Smith Bros. family return to Port to take up residence as volunteer keepers.

Next summer, the 1860 Light Station will again reopen for visitors from mid-June through August. In October of this year, we will begin accepting applications for Resident Keepers for the summer of 2026. If you're interested in serving as resident keepers next summer, you can

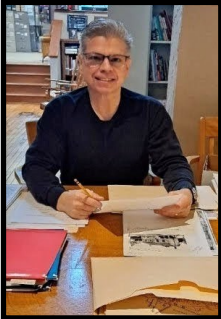
find more information and the application on our website at pwhistory.org. Be aware. The weeks fill up quickly!



Keepers Olivia and Reese

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Retirement has brought two new volunteers to the Port Washington Historical Society, Chris Scalone and Dale Palecek!



Chris Scalone

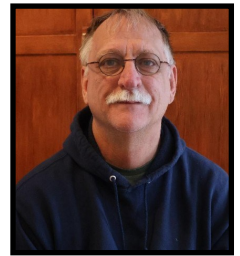
Chris has begun work at the Resource Center on Monday and Thursday afternoons as a greeter and researcher. Chris retired on January 2, 2025, after 21 years at Matrix Packaging in Saukville where he was the aftermarket parts and service director. Chris is a people person and enjoys learning and sharing the history of Port Washington with visitors to RC.

Dale retired from 42 years in broadcast television, ending his career as the chief programming and content officer at Milwaukee Public Television. He has volunteered to offer his talents as a videographer for the Soci-

ety. Dale is also a scuba diver and candidate for the Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council.

The Historical Society is always looking for volunteers to serve at the Resource Center and the 1860 Light Station. If you would like to share your knowledge of the area with visitors to Port Washington, consider joining our team. If your teenager needs service hours for school or scout projects, we might have a project or two suitable for them. Let us know.

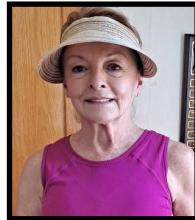
Sadly, the community, and the Society, lost Pamela Jean Cooper earlier this year. She volunteered as a researcher and archivist at the Resource Center. Pam completely reorganized and catalogued the Society's shipwreck files. She will be missed.



Dale Palecek

FORMER "COAST GUARD KID" VISITS

On June 29, 2025, Julie A. (Graham) Carufel revisited the 1860 Light Station. Julie lived on the first floor of the Light Station when it was used as housing for Coast Guard personnel from 1934 to 1993.



Julie's father, Charles Wayland Graham, was the officer-in-charge from 1959 to 1962 of what was then known as the Port Washington Breakwater Light Station.



(Continued from page 3)

these wonderful contributions can be found in the donation section of this newsletter. If you see our donors, thank them for supporting the Society, and please support their businesses. A huge thank you one and all for exceeding our revenue goal.

You may have noticed that there is a new home being built on a lot adjacent to the 1860 Light Station. We are sad that our conversations with the previous owner did not result in PWHS owning the lot. But we are happy to report that we were able to acquire a piece of that property that oddly runs behind the lighthouse and between

the lighthouse and the lifeboat exhibit. We did need to give up a small piece of our perennial garden, but we now have complete frontage along North Johnson Street from the vineyard to the lighthouse.

Finally, we are forming an ad hoc committee to begin planning for the restoration of the 1860 Light Station. The Generator Building and the addition at the back of the lighthouse, urgently need restoration. If you would like to join that committee and play a valuable role in determining the future role of our Light Station, please send an email to porthistinfo@gmail.com.

Have a wonderful fall, and I look forward to greeting you at the Annual Membership Meeting on October 22 at Inventors Brewpub, 6:00 p.m. RSVP via our website pwhistory.org/events.

*Dawn St George, PhD
Executive Director*



PAINT ON PORT PROJECT CONTINUES

In April of 2023 a Midwest Mosaic Mural was hung on the north side of the Twisted Willow restaurant in downtown Port Washington. This was the first of several murals that have been painted in Port. Concrete retaining walls and plain brick walls have been transformed into works of art in the past two years. There is a history that accompanies each mural.

The mural recently finished on the retaining wall on East Jackson Street celebrates Port's maritime history. It features images of Native Americans, early settlers, the shipwreck Niagara, the Lighthouse on the pier, the fish shanties, a coal boat, and more.

The beautiful mural was painted by James Barany, a professor at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. The mural was carefully laid out in a grid with each square assigned a part of the scene. The squares were painted one by one with the colors checked for accuracy. Barany used an undercoat and when finished, an overcoat to preserve the painting. To choose the images he researched the history of the town. He made the concrete retaining wall a palette that came to life.

Eileen Grace heads the Paint on Port project. She indicated that there will be five more murals painted with themes that highlight Port's history this year.



Photo courtesy of Alesia Ellefson of Port Washington

(Continued from page 3)

in the unit will be improved. We've applied for a Packer Foundation grant to help build more secure stairs and



Smith Bros. Shanty Restaurant chairs

provide better lighting. Fingers crossed.

With summer hours in full swing at the Resource Center, there has been a steady stream of people visiting the Franklin Street building seeking information and enjoying the exhibit on Paramount Artists and the NOAA exhibits on the Lake Michigan Maritime Shipwreck Sanctuary.

The Resource Center is open Monday, Thursday, and Friday 1:00-4:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00-2:00 p.m. through August with summer hours. Beginning in September, hours will revert to Monday and Thursday 1:00-4:00 p.m. for winter hours.

*Jackie Oleson & Geri Zehren
Resource Center Managers*



ST. MARY'S CHURCH TOUR WELL ATTENDED



Hundreds of history enthusiasts were captivated by Kevin Wester's engaging chronological history of St. Mary's Church organized by PWHS.

Wester began his tour on the outside steps of the current church with an hour-long presentation on the changes in the many buildings on the St. Mary's

campus. We learned that the original



church was located on the other side of Johnson Street!

Attendees then followed Wester inside for the second hour of his presentation which focused on hidden gems inside the church.

The Society is working with Wester to schedule another presentation for later in the year in either September or November.

Watch your email for that exact date.



MEAT BINGO RETURNS!

**WE HAD SO MUCH FUN,
WE'RE DOING IT AGAIN!**

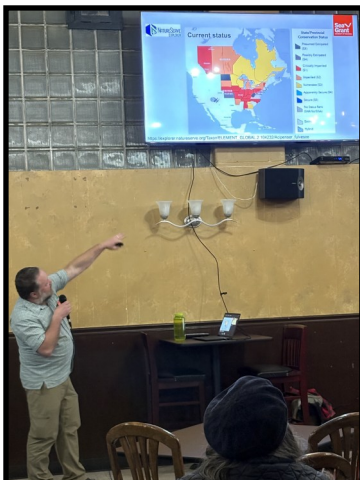


The Packers have a Bye Week, so don't miss out on our second Meat Bingo, this time at Gopher One Tavern, 605 W Grand Avenue, beginning at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 5. Doors open at 11:00 a.m. Arrive early to get a good seat!

Along with lots of raw meat up for grabs, there will be raffles and food generously donated by Tello's. We appreciate your support of the Society.



MORE PAST EVENTS ENJOYED BY ALL



Speaker Dr. Seilheimer



Ken, Dawn, and Barb in the Fish Day parade



Speaker Dr. Cornelius (left)

PWHS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

All current annual and lifetime PWHS members are invited to attend the Annual Membership Meeting of the Port Washington Historical Society on Wednesday, October 22.

The Membership Meeting, for members-only, will be held from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. in the Edison Room at Inventors Brewpub, 305 E. Washington Street in Port Washington. The Membership Meeting will provide an update on PWHS operations, as well as a vote on new board member appointments and renewals.

At 6:30 p.m., following the Membership Meeting, the Edison Room will reopen to the public for a 7:00 p.m. presentation by Barb and Ken Wardius on *Lady Lighthouse Keeper: The Extraordinary Life and Times of Georgia Green Stebbins*.

Please register for the public presentation on our website at www.pwhistory.org/events.

*The Port Washington
Historical Society
preserves and shares
community history
that connects the
past to the present,
with a view to the future.*

JOIN

The Port Washington Historical Society



Preserving the past for future generations

"Our mission is to create opportunities for inspirational discovery through preservation, education and exploration of the Port Washington area's history and its maritime environment."

The Port Washington Historical Society is supported through donations and memberships from individuals, foundations and corporations. By becoming a member you can help provide the support to ensure the continued success of the Resource Center and the 1860 Light Station and play a vital role in preserving the history of Port Washington.

ALL MEMBERS RECEIVE:

- Free admission to the 1860 Lighthouse Station and PWHS Resource Center
- Free admission to special events and speaker series
- Free guest passes for friends and family
- The *Historical Perspectives* newsletter
- Free admission to the Research Center at the Luxembourg American Center in Belgium, Wisconsin

YOU CAN ALSO JOIN ONLINE AT: PWHISTORY.ORG

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Choose your membership level

☐ Individual	\$ 40	Membership Level Amount \$ _____
☐ Family	\$ 75	Additional Gift Amount \$ _____
☐ Honor Donor	\$ 250	
☐ Patron Donor	\$ 500	Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

☐ Yes, I want to be a volunteer. Please send me more information.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

☐ VISA ☐ MC ☐ AMEX ☐ DISC ☐ CVV _____

CARD NO. _____ EXP _____

SIGNATURE _____

MAKE CHECKS OUT TO : THE PORT WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Port Washington Historical Society
P.O. Box 491 Port Washington, WI 53074



IN MEMORIAM

*Samuel DeMerit
Vincent Frederick Nast III
Joan Rooney
Erna Schatzman*



PWHS annual donor Fred Nast passed away unexpectedly on June 20, 2025. Fred became a major donor to PWHS with the announcement of our partnership with NOAA and The Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary. Fred was an avid Lake Michigan boater and former diver. This year's donation, which had been written before his untimely death, was brought to the Historical Society by his daughters Jessica Nast and Katie Nast Picciollo. It was a pleasure to trade stories about this kind and personable member that day. He will be missed.

It is with a sad heart that the Port Washington Historical Society acknowledges the passing of longtime member and supporter of the Society, Samuel DeMerit (also known as Bud). A further recognition of Sam will be included in our December newsletter.

Joan Rooney was a Life Member, accomplished musician, and stepmother to former board member Jack Rooney.

Although she was a member for not too long, Erna Schatzmann, a native of Germany who relocated to the United States in her youth, assisted the society with translations of selected old German handwritten texts and letters that were donated to the Society.

SEASONAL HOURS



Resource Center
Beginning in September:
Monday and Thursday
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

If you need more information or want to volunteer, call the Resource Center at (262) 268-9150.

1860 Light Station
through August 31:
Wednesday through Sunday
11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Beginning in September:
By Appointment Only
call 262-268-9150 and leave a message

Resident Lightkeepers and weekend volunteers needed for the 2026 season. Training for the program will be offered. For more information or to express interest in becoming a Resident Keeper or weekend guide, visit our website at pwhistory.org or call 262-268-9150.

NEW MEMBERS AND RENEWALS

*Mary Ackerman & Don Monnot
Regina Bares
Kristie Benedik
Allen Buchholz
Tom & Ruth Cloonan
Pam Craig
David Dickmann
Sue Didier
Colleen Dorman
Richard Ewig
Maggie Fassett
Greg & Tomi Fay Forbes*

*David Franks & Louise Mollinger
Elizabeth Konkul
Renata Luczkowska
Suzanne Maldonado
Terry and Mary Murphy
Joan Nicholas
Rod Petersen
Michael and Diane Pike
Pam Rundhaug
Paul Schmidt
Brian Stevens
Sri Vasudevan*



DONATIONS & MEMORIALS



SOCIETY DONATIONS

Elkhart Lake Study Club
 Fox Bros Piggly Wiggly - Port
 Janice Leone
 V. Frederick Nast
 Louise Mollinger & David Franks
 Nicole Sova & Dave Garacci
 Bob & Holly Wilke
 Geri Zehren

ANNUAL FUND

Samuel De Merit
 Mark Dybdahl
 Rick Ewig
 Greg & Tomi Fay Forbes
 Michael & Diane Pike

2025 GALA "SPRING FLING"

PLATINUM SPONSOR

Ansay and Associates
 Samuel DeMerit
 Thomas & Nancy Holley
 Port Washington State Bank

DIAMOND SPONSOR

Ned Bartelt
 Kathleen Bink

GOLD SPONSOR

Kate Brown
 Haley Dobre
 Mark Dybdahl
 Kent Knudsen
 Mary & Terry Murphy

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 Cadillac Inc.
 DDW Williamson a part of
 Givaudan
 Dream Port Harvest Market
 Michael Goebel & Associates,
 LLC
 Hollander Chocolate
 Lake Financial Group
 James & Mary Jo Pauly
 Mary Fran Lepeska
 Port Washington Lions Club
 Port Washington Saukville Rotary
 St. John XXIII Men's Society
 Mark & Catherine Schowalter

BRONZE SPONSOR

George & Mary Jo Bichler
 Ken & Lucy Buchholz
 Roland & Linda Chaloupka
 Choice Realty LLC

Eernisse Funeral Homes and
 Cremation Services

Mary Flierl
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 Terry & Carole K. Knudsen
 Newport Vintage
 Geri Zehren

GALA AUCTION DONORS

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 Bruce & Mary Becker Family
 and X-Cel Tooling
 Bernie's Fine Meats
 Big Baby Subs
 Blakesville Creamery
 Marie & Allan Blunt
 The Board Shack
 The Bog
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 Dooley's West Bend
 Grace & Marc Eernisse
 Faith In Waves
 Fork & Tap
 Gallery 224
 Michael Goebel & Associates
 Harbor City Fishing Charter
 Hollander Chocolate
 Jim & Carol Jarosz
 Kevin & Karen Jones
 Barbara Joosse
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 Kohler Services
 Kyote's Bar & Grill
 LA Hair Design
 Lakeshore Chinooks
 Luxembourg Cafe
 MG Designs Woodworking
 Mawicke & Goisman
 Memories Ballroom
 Missing Links
 Newport Vintage
 Jackie & Eric Oleson
 Ozaukee County Planning &
 Parks
 Pear & Simple
 Port Washington Historical

Society

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 Shalom Wildlife Zoo
 Starbucks/ Glendale
 Starbucks/Brown Deer
 Stone Creek Coffee
 Studio 231
 The Steerage
 Total Wine
 Twisted Willow
 Violets & Vintage LLC
 Washington House Inn
 Wild Birds Unlimited
 Geri Zehren

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Aathira Foods LLC
 Ardy Ahsmann
 Bruce Barr
 Mary Becker
 Richard Beimborn
 George & Mary Jo Bichler
 Kathleen Bink
 Ken & Lucille Buchholz
 Edward & Peg Callahan
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 Michelle Hinc
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 Jan Leone
 Judith Jones
 Kevin & Karen Jones
 Michael & Lize Keller
 Kent Knudsen
 Mary Fran Lepeska
 Louise Mollinger & David Franks
 Donald Monnot
 Jackie & Eric Oleson
 James & Mary Jo Pauly
 Thomas & Marlene Richart
 Michael Ryer
 Dawn St. George
 Grant Smith

(Continued on page 11)

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS



The Society could not exist without volunteers. We are blessed to have a large number that ranges in age from 12 to 85. They take on tasks that involve doing the business of the Society, working with the collections, keeping the 1860 Light Station open for visitors, working in the lighthouse garden, serving on the Board of Directors, greeting visitors to the Resource Center, helping to maintain our two buildings, responding to inquiries, and a whole lot more in between.

We thank most heartily these dedicated friends who do the most important and the most mundane of tasks.

And.... we invite you to join us. Talk to one of us or call to ask what you can do. Call us at 262-268-9150.

(Continued from page 10)

John & Virginia Taucher
Tania Tkachuk
Mary Jane Weiss
Geri Zehren
Marie Zirbes

GALA AUCTION WINNERS

Amy Anderson
Mary Becker
Richard Beimborn
George & Mary Jo Bichler
Kathy Bink
Ken & Lucille Buchholz
Diane Burkhalter
Mary Burmesch
Ed & Peggy Callahan
Roland & Linda Chaloupka
Julie Christiansen
Dennis Coffey
Andrea Cole
Lynn Cosentine
Majka Dewitz
Mike & Jodi Dickmann
Haley Dobre
Jane Frederick
Tom & Nancy Holley

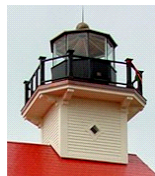
Kevin Jones
Barb Joosse & Chuck Whitehouse
Kent Knudsen
Ken Kozak
Mary Fran Lepeska
Don McCown
Louise Mollinger
Don Monnot
Jackie & Eric Oleson
Jim Pauley
Dawn St. George
Bill & Jean Schanen
Mark & Cathy Schowalter
Mary Kay Schuknecht
Grant Smith
Susan Van Vleet
Geri Zehren

SOCIETY IN KIND DONATIONS

American Legion Post 82
Kelly Brown - Cavalier Wine Bar
Mike & Julie Christiansen -
Mercantile Plaza
Gary Haseley
Kent Knudsen
Grant Smith

ARTIFACTS, ARCHIVES, AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Anonymous
Gerry Antoine
Gloria Arredondo
Rose Burns
Lynn Cosentine
Roger Crill
Ed Fish
Michelle Hince
Scott Hodorff
Lorna Nagler
Pam & James Nejedlo
Linda Nenn
Paul Neumyer
City of Port Washington
Port Washington Senior Center
Port Washington Woman's Club
Tim & Dione Prinsen
Saukville Area Historical Society
Alvin Schaut
Sharon Schuh
Philip Skowbo
Jo Ann Stade
Terry Wester
Geri Zehren



Port Washington Historical Society

P. O. Box 491
Port Washington, WI 53074-0491
www.pwhistory.org

Save the Date

Meat Bingo - Proceeds to Benefit PWHS

Gopher One Tavern, 605 W. Grand Ave., Port Washington
Sunday, October 5, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

October 22 (Wednesday)

Annual Membership Meeting
Edison Room, Inventors Brewpub, 305 E.
Washington St. at 6:00-6:30 p.m.

October 22 (Wednesday)

Ken & Barb Wardius presentation of *Lady
Lighthouse Keeper: The Extraordinary Life
and Times of Georgia Green Stebbins*
Edison Room, Inventors Brewpub, 305 E.
Washington St. at 7:00-8:30 p.m.

**For details and updates,
click here to visit:**

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PortWashingtonHistoricalSociety](http://www.facebook.com/PortWashingtonHistoricalSociety)

and

[www.facebook.com/
1860LightStationMuseumPortWashingtonWI](http://www.facebook.com/1860LightStationMuseumPortWashingtonWI)

and

www.pwhistory.org/events

Click